

**THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY
IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS.
Complex causation and preliminary data on 28 third-wave
democracies**

Abstract:

What combinations of structural conditions and actor-based logic of behaviour go towards explaining the consolidation of democracy? This is the central research question of my thesis project.

Consolidation of democracy (CoD) refers to the persistence of and visible consensus on liberal democracy and on the ways in which the most important partial regimes are organised. It is best measured with items that refer to actors' behaviour. My theoretical hunch is that a combination of structural and actor-based explanations for CoD is needed to answer the research question. I show that such a combination is possible only if the structural conditions for CoD are specified by using the technique of QCA rather than regression analysis. In the empirical part of this paper, I present some preliminary results of the exploration of the data for my DV.

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1 Introduction

What explains the success and the failure in consolidating third wave democracies? This is the central research question of my thesis project. For reasons that will become clear in due time, this core question is split up into three sub-questions: 1) Which structural factors explain most of the variation in CoD? 2) What different kinds of combination of structural factors are necessary for CoD? 3) What kinds of combinations of actor-based factors are needed in which structural context in order to ‘produce’ CoD?

The present paper is aimed at giving a broad overview of the structure of my research project, the core conceptual decisions that have to be made, and the first empirical findings that have been generated. Hence, in a first section, I briefly deal with the issues of defining, conceptualising, and operationalising the dependent variable “Consolidation of Democracy” (CoD). In the following section, the problem of how to explain CoD is addressed. Here, I underline two features that can be found in the present literature. First, there are two competing and, by and large, unconnected theoretical strands, the structural and the actor-based approach. Each one contains a large number of hypotheses on relatively different factors. And, second, it seems to be common knowledge now that CoD is a phenomenon that is ‘produced’ by different combinations of factors in the different democratised countries. I make the argument that, as a consequence of these two features, one should, first, try to combine the most important hypotheses from the structural and the actor-based theory strand and, second, allow the explanations of CoD to be more complex and less parsimonious than is usually the case in larger-N, regression-based studies. In a lengthier part, I explain why the method of QCA plays the key role in combining structures and actors and in dealing with complex causality.

In a final, empirical section, I present some initial, preliminary results of the exploration of the data on CoD for 28 countries over the period 1974-2000. This data is taken from a new data set on measuring the entire democratisation process of third wave democracies.

2 The dependent variable CoD

Due to the space limitations, I just briefly present the definition, conceptualisation and operationalisation¹ of my dependent variable CoD. That is to say, I neither provide a literature review nor any further justification for my conceptual choices.

¹ Here, I follow Sartori’s (1984) basic ‘guidelines for conceptual analysis’. For him, concept formation involves the clarification of the basic meaning, the way it is conceptualised, and how it should be measured. Sartori (1984) uses the labels ‘declarative definition’ (basic meaning of the term), ‘denotative definition’ (concept), and ‘operational definition’ (indicators).

Democracy in my project is defined in terms of a liberal democracy as a “[...] type of political regime in which (1) meaningful and extensive competition exists among individuals and organised groups for all effective positions of government, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; (2) a highly inclusive level of political participation exists in the selection of leaders and policies, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and (3) a sufficient level of civil and political liberties exists to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.” (Gasiorowski/Power 1998: 742). One property of this definition is that it includes both an electoral and a liberal component in the meaning of democracy.

The basic meaning of CoD is that of the ‘expected persistence of a liberal democratic regime’.² Hence, CoD is defined as follows:

- 1) *A democracy is consolidated if it is expected to persist.*³ (static notion of CoD).
- 2) *The consolidation of democracy is the process in which the time horizon of the expected persistence is extended.* (dynamic notion of CoD)

One step down on the ‘ladder of generality’ (Collier/Mahon 1993, Sartori 1970), CoD is conceptualised exclusively in behavioural terms. That is to say, in contrast to some other scholars (e.g. Linz/Stepan 1996, Merkel 1996, Diamond 1999), I do not include attitudes into the concept of CoD. Hence, the conceptual (i.e. denotative) definition of CoD states as follows:

- 1) *A democracy is consolidated if it is expected to persist because the actors maintain consensus⁴ over the way liberal democracy is designed in their country.* (static notion of CoD).
- (2) *CoD is the process in which actors secure the persistence of liberal democracy by constructing consensus about the design of their democracy.* (dynamic notion of CoD).

The combination of the CoD concept with the definition of liberal democracy leads to the following conceptual model of a consolidated democracy

Figure 1: Conceptual model of a consolidated democracy

	Electoral component of democracy	Liberal component of democracy
Actors’ Behaviour	Use and compliance of and consensus on electoral rights	Use and compliance of and consensus on liberal rights

As indicated in Appendix 1, each cell of this model is measured with a set of different items, which are taken from a larger list of indicators developed by Schmitter (2000).

² For a similar point of view, see Schedler (2001) and Munck (2001). For an extended summary of the many different meanings attributed to the term CoD, see Schedler (1998) and Waldrach (1996).

³ I prefer to use the term *persistence* proposed by Easton (1965: 84) rather than *stability* or *survival*. Stability implies an overly static notion (Fuchs/Roller 1998: 38f) and thus contradicts one of the unique capacities of democratic systems, namely, to “change their norms and institutions consensually in the face of changing conditions” (Schmitter/Guilhot 2000: 139).

⁴ Notice that here consensus is understood as an instrumentally-based (i.e. behavioural) rather than a normative (i.e. attitudinal) commitment to democracy (see Schedler (2001: 76f) for a discussion of this distinction).

In sum, CoD refers to the persistence of and the visible consensus on the fundamental norms of liberal democracy and on the way in which it is organised. Conceptually, CoD takes place in the behavioural dimension. Empirically, it is measured with a set of 12 different items. In the following section, the issue of explaining CoD is addressed.

3 Explaining CoD: how to deal with complex causal situations

Since the study of CoD is a popular and also relatively ‘young’ social science topic, the number of competing theories, hypotheses and variables used to explain this phenomenon is exceptionally large. In general terms, two opposing theoretical strands can be identified: first, explanations based on structural conditions⁵ and, second, actor-based, process-driven analyses. Of course, behind each of these two labels, a variety of approaches is again hidden (for a list of the major hypotheses in both theory strands, see Appendix 2). Although very often the claim for combining both theory strands is made (e.g. Kitschelt 1992, Karl 1990, Lipset 1993:16ff, O’Donnell/Schmitter 1986, Bunce 1999:7, Zhang 1994, Gasiorowski/Power 1998), very little progress has been made to integrate the enormous number of approaches and findings into a broader and more coherent set of theories on CoD (Munck 2000:19ff, Munck 2001). Put more succinctly, the field of CoD is characterised by causal heterogeneity/equifinality and conjunctural causation/ interaction effects; the rich literature on CoD has not yet been used to create ‘thick and general theories’ (Munck 2001), i.e. theories that are context-sensitive and generalisable at the same time, and which combine structural and actor-based explanations.

If the claim for combining structures and actors is so prudent and if the emphasis on allowing for causal complexity seems so promising for understanding more about CoD, why has it hardly ever been put into practise in larger N studies? In short, why is it so difficult to combine structures and actors? Notice that these questions point to two different, although related, issues: First, the more specific topic of how to combine structures and actors. And, second, the more general problem of how to methodologically deal with complex causal situations. In the following section, I specify these problems and offer some solutions to them.

A summary of the problems at stake when an integrative, thick theoretical and empirical approach is aimed, is provided in Appendix 4. Scholars who want to combine structures and actors in order to reach a more comprehensive explanation of CoD have to resolve problems located at the theoretical and the methodological level. Due to the space limitations, I will only discuss the methodological

⁵ By structural conditions, I refer to those characteristics of the cases that do not change easily over time or that even cannot change under any circumstances. This means that the structural factors lie beyond the actors’ scope of influence. They are sometimes referred to as temporally distant factors. In contrast, actor-centred factors shed light on the kind of configuration of actors and the contingent decisions they take in a given structural context. These are the temporally close factors. In my case, this means that actor-based factors occur after the transition, i.e. during the democratic period.

obstacles and solutions. Concerning the *theoretical/ontological* issues, I limit myself to the following brief statements.

The basic dividing line between structural and actor-based approaches (not only) to CoD is the perception of the nature of the actors' decision, identities, and values: Structuralists interpret them as a product of the structural context to which they are exposed. In contrast, in actor-centred approaches, actors' behaviour and attitudes are seen as pre-existing and, thus, independent from the structures (Mahoney/Snyder 1999). One theoretical/ontological solution to overcome this dichotomy and to combine structures and actors can be labelled as the 'structured contingent choice-approach' (Karl 1990). Here, it is assumed that, after all, the structural contexts always leave at least 'a small margin of manoeuvrability' (Mahoney/Snyder 2000: 202). In other words, structures influence actors without fully determining their actions.

From a *methodological* point of view, structural factors are most commonly analysed in a cross-sectional, large-N research design using standard statistical techniques like regression and reducing the effects of single variables to be linear, additive, and unifinal (Munck 2001: 135). In contrast, actor-centred explanations of CoD are realised in a longitudinal, small-N research design using qualitative historical methods that allow the effect of variables to be non-linear, interactive, and equifinal. This type of research usually requires a well-grounded knowledge of the cases.⁶

In general terms, I suggest is a twofold strategy to bridge these two approaches: First, I ask different research questions and try to answer them with different methods ('multi-track approach', Munck 2000). This is not done very often in one and the same study of CoD. However, in a second step I try to go beyond this parallel but unconnected use of different approaches and methods: I argue that the application of the method of QCA opens a way that can truly connect structures and actors ('multi-method approach', Munck 2000).

Let me explain this in greater detail. Remember that the main research question of my project is: How can CoD be explained? I then break this down into three different but cumulative questions. Each of them will be answered with a different method and the results of the previous question are the basis for the analysis of the following one. Going through each of the questions, one after the other, helps to clarify my methodological solutions to the problems of dealing with causal complexity.

(A) The *first research question* is as follows: Which structural factors explain most of the variation in CoD? Regression is the most widely used and powerful tool allowing the different structural variables to compete in explaining most of the variation of the dependent variable. It therefore shows which is the strongest predictor of CoD. In other words, regression shows the mean effect of each variable

⁶ Put differently, the attempt to combine structures and actors in order to explain CoD leads directly into the well-known debates in comparative social science held under labels like 'quantitative vs. qualitative research', 'variable oriented vs. case oriented approach', 'theory testing vs. theory generating', and - to some extent - 'deductive vs. inductive science'.

among all cases, holding all other factors constant. This is an important step to get a first idea of the relative importance of the different independent variables and, if necessary, to reduce their number by eliminating those that have been proven to be insignificant predictors of the outcome. However, in the context of my dissertation, there are several substantial and practical arguments for the limited usefulness of regression and in favour of the application of QCA.

Firstly, on the more practical level, the medium number of cases I observe (25-30), in combination with the relatively high number of independent variables (IV) renders the regression results quite unreliable. Secondly, as I have mentioned above, the literature on CoD agrees that there are no necessary and/ or sufficient conditions for CoD. In other words, the field of CoD is reigned by causal heterogeneity/ equifinality and conjunctural causation/ interaction effects. Both features cause severe problems for regression analysis, even more so under the constraint of a low N. Hence, certain variables that might have a crucial impact on the outcome in some cases but not in others, would appear to be insignificant and, wrongly, disregarded in further empirical research and theory building (problem of equifinality). The same would happen to those variables that exert their impact on the outcome only in combination with other variables (problem of conjunctural causation). What is needed is a method that is able to detect such causal heterogeneity and interaction effects even with a modest number of cases.

Thirdly, the strength of regression in terms of parsimony (i.e. coming up with one single equation) converts into a weakness when structural and actor-based factors are aimed at being combined: Instead of estimating the overall mean effect of each single variable across all units of observation, the specification of (different) real-existing structural contexts that lead to CoD is needed. The formulation of different equations – each of them only true for a subset of cases – recognises the complex causality in terms of interaction effects and equifinality. Parallel to this, these equations are the complexity-reduced and formalised descriptions of those structural contexts that all lead to CoD and in which the actor variables can be inserted.

The method of QCA (Ragin 1987, 2000) has the potential to reach all this, i.e. to detect interaction effects, to allow for equifinality, and to add actors to the structurally defined contexts - even with a limited number of cases.⁷ Taking all this into account, it is appropriate to state that a regression-based analysis is an important and necessary but, nevertheless, insufficient step towards explaining CoD. There are good arguments showing that QCA has some features that make it an appropriate method for studying CoD.

⁷ Until now, QCA has hardly been used in the field of CoD studies. The only study I know of is Grassi (2000). However, this study is limited to Latin American cases. And, even more important, he only uses the simple, dichotomous version of QCA instead of its fuzzy set extension. Especially the incorporation of fuzzy set theory and the current development of a computer program make the application of QCA much more suitable for cross-national studies.

(B) As a consequence, the *second research question* I ask states: What different kinds of combination of structural factors are necessary for CoD? This question needs further specification: One combination of structures is necessary in a certain subgroup of countries but not in another. Put the other way round, each subgroup of cases is defined by the different combinations of structural variables that have shown to be necessary in order to produce the outcome in these countries. Or, rather, the presence of these (combinations) of structures has shown to make CoD ‘possible’.⁸ The detection of these different structural contexts that all lead to CoD can be realised with QCA.

However, they are not sufficient in the sense that one cannot be sure that it is they which cause the outcome! Why is this? Due to the lack of theories that are able to model such complex causation and to formulate the respective hypotheses, a key feature for inferring causation from these empirical findings is missing. We are therefore left with a mere correlation between various phenomena. Put succinctly, QCA is likely to produce results that are not foreseen because social scientific theories are too weak (Ragin 2000). However, QCA is a powerful means to describe the successful cases in a complexity-reduced and formalised way without becoming as parsimonious as regression does. Thus, in order to infer causality one needs to further specify the causal link between the structural context and the outcome. I believe that it is here where actors have to be brought into the picture. It depends on the actors’ decisions and behaviour - embedded in a specific structural context - whether the process leads to CoD or not.

(C) Consequentially, my *third research question* states as follows: What kinds of combinations of actor-based factors are needed in which structural context to produce CoD? To repeat, the aim of this question is to link the structural conditions with the outcome CoD by referring to an actor-based perspective. Put differently, the previous research step showed the necessary but not the sufficient conditions, or, the enabling but not the ultimately decisive ones. As said above, structures always leave a small ‘margin of manoeuvrability’ (Mahoney/Snyder 2000: 198, 202) for the actors.⁹ Hence, the task is to find out which combination of structural factors interacts with what kind of actor constellation and the decisions taken by them. From a methodological point of view, there are basically three different options for realising such a ‘structured contingent choice-approach’ (Karl 1990).

Firstly, one could set up a game theoretical model¹⁰ for each group of countries that has shown the same structurally defined context leading to CoD. A second methodological option consists in doing several in-depth, case-based, historical analyses. Here, the idea is to select one country from each subgroup of structurally similar countries and to link these structures with the outcome in a narrative

⁸ I want to thank Charles Ragin for his various insightful comments on this and the following points on how to apply QCA in a stepwise manner.

⁹ This margin of manoeuvrability is hidden in the error term of the regression equation.

¹⁰ See the volume edited by Blossfeld/Prein (1998) for an extended discussion of how to link game theory with large N analyses. For a discussion of the obstacles for linking game-theoretical approaches with knowledge generated with other methods, see Munck 2000:15f, 24).

style, particularly concentrating on the crucial decisions taken by the most relevant actors.¹¹ A third option is to re-run QCA, this time adding the actor-based factors. Basically, the idea is to introduce actor-centred factors as variables into the QCA solutions found for the structural factors. This could reveal the interaction between certain configurations of actors and the relevant structural factors.¹² At present, I am trying to discover what the different technical solutions for this fairly unusual ‘two-step’ QCA analysis (first structures, then actors in structures) are and which might suit my purposes best. Due to the limited space here and the preliminary nature of the possible solutions, I will not go into any further detail at this point.

Despite all the unresolved issues, however, I clearly favour the last option. It seems to be the only methodological approach that is feasible in the context of my dissertation, characterised as it is by constraints in terms of time and resources. I am aware that – due to the lack of strong theoretical expectations – this approach has an inductive tendency and, because of this, the risk of producing theoretically unresolvable results should not be underestimated.¹³ However, the aim remains to explain CoD and to do so by contributing to the theoretical literature.

4 Empirical Part: Exploring the data on CoD

In this section, I present some preliminary data on my dependent variable CoD. In a first step, I analyse which of the CoD items is the most difficult and the easiest ones to achieve and how these patterns of difficulty differ across the regions. Based on these findings, I, secondly, develop a region-specific weighting scheme for the CoD indicators. This enables me to produce two different scales for the CoD concept – one that is based on the simple scores and another, weighted one, which takes the region-specific difficulty of the items into account. I, thirdly, compare the countries’ ranking on the simple, unweighted CoD scale and then, fourthly, check, whether there is a change in country-rankings if one switches from the unweighted to the weighted CoD index. By aggregating the twelve indicators into a CoD scale CoD I implicitly assume that all measure the same underlying one-dimensional phenomenon. Thus, in order to check whether this assumption can be made, I statistically test for the one-dimensionality of the data in a final step.

¹¹ This approach of ‘contrasting the context’ (Grassi 2000: 14, fn 6) would contribute to further theory-building if similar patterns of actor constellations and of decisions taken (their timing, sequence and speed) can be found in structurally similar countries.

¹² Notice that I implicitly assume a uni-directional, or non-reciprocal relation between structures and actors. Actors act in the given context and they are influenced by these structures without shaping it (Mahoney/Snyder 2000: 198). As a consequence, it is appropriate to interpret the approach that I suggest as more inclined towards structural than towards actor-based explanations of CoD.

¹³ The importance of inductivism to advance theorising on CoD should be underlined though: “It is [...] crucial to note that even if causal theorizing is molded to a greater degree by deductive thinking, causal theory about substantive issues necessarily involves a combination of inductive and deductive modes of thinking (Munck 2000: 43). Ragin (2000), as well, recommends the back and forth between ideas and evidence as the most fruitful way of generating knowledge with QCA.

4.1 Frequency of CoD items

A first glance at the relative difficulty of the CoD items across the six regions displayed in Table 1, reveals that most CoD traits display the same patterns of difficulty in all our regions. Look, for instance, at the bottom of each of the frequency ratings: Among the three last items, we always find - without any exception - the items C5 (electoral volatility has diminished significantly) and C8 (second rotation in power).¹⁴ A glance at the top quarter of the frequency rankings reveals that item C9 (agreement on association formation and behaviour) belongs to the easiest CoD features in all the regions.¹⁵

Table 1: The CoD items ranked by frequency (1974-1999/2000)

SE			SA			CA			CEE			FSR			ME NA		
item	sum	weight	Item	sum	weight	Item	sum	weight	Item	sum	weight	item	sum	weight	item	sum	weight
C2	75	1	C2	75	1	C9	62	1	C2	69	1	C2	24.5	1	C9	28	1
C3	75	1	C9	72.5	1	C1	55	1	C9	68	1	C3	22.5	1	C11	21.5	2
C4	72.5	1	C10	70.5	1	C10	55	1	C6	67.5	1	C9	21	1	C10	20	2
C9	68.5	2	C3	58.5	2	C6	44	2	C3	67	1	C12	16	2	C2	19.5	2
C10	67	2	C11	52.5	2	C2	43	2	C4	65	2	C4	14.5	2	C4	19.5	2
C11	63	2	C7	48	3	C12	38.5	2	C10	62	2	C11	14	2	C3	16.5	2
C12	63	2	C12	47	3	C11	32.5	3	C12	47	3	C7	13	2	C7	12	3
C6	58	3	C4	46	3	C3	31.5	3	C11	45.5	3	C6	12	2	C6	11.5	3
C7	55	3	C6	38	3	C4	31.5	3	C7	42	3	C10	9.5	3	C12	9.5	3
C5	47.5	3	C1	35	3	C7	28	3	C1	36.5	3	C8	3	4	C1	8.5	3
C1	47	3	C8	24	4	C5	21	4	C8	20	4	C1	1.5	4	C8	7	3
C8	22	4	C5	11	4	C8	17	4	C5	17.5	4	C5	1.5	4	C5	0	3
∅	59.5		∅	48		∅	38.5		∅	50.5		∅	13		∅	14.5	
max*		27	max		30	max		29	max		28	max		28	max		29

* Maximum weighted score that can be achieved per country and year in the respective region

Let us briefly have a closer look at each region's ranking of item difficulty. In SE, no problems at all exist to fulfil the basic standards of the democratic electoral procedure: regular elections are held, their outcomes are widely respected (C2), the elections are free and fair (C3) and no parties or groups reject the previous electoral conditions (C4). In addition to this, Spain Greece, and Portugal, by and large, perform relatively well in accomplishing agreements on the partial regimes, i.e. on the formation and behaviour of associations (C9), on the executive format (C10), on the territorial division of competencies (C11), and on the rules of ownership and access to the media (C12).

In contrast, in SA, and even more so in CA, even such fundamental features of a minimal definition of an electoral democracy, as, for instance, the holding of elections that are free and fair (C3) and whose results are widely respected (C4), are not always accomplished. Especially in CA, these basic electoral items rank astonishingly low, just above the first and second turn-over (items C7 and C8) and

¹⁴ To this, C1 (no significant political party advocates changes in the existing constitution) could be added, with the notable exception of CA, where this item belongs to the easiest ones to achieve.

¹⁵ Such a coherence in the item frequency makes us feel confident that our twelve CoD indicators measure the same underlying concept. Nevertheless, we will statistically test for this in due course.

the electoral volatility indicator (C5).¹⁶ The FSR seem to have less problems of fulfilling the items C2, C3, and C4. However, it is the only region in which the agreement on the executive format (C10), i.e. the question whether the democracy should be presidential, parliamentary, or any kind of mixture, seems to be relatively difficult to achieve.

Due to the similarities of the patterns of difficulty across the regions, the different weighting schemes have a certain resemblance, none of them, however, being identical. Hence, I expect to find some differences in the country rankings when I compare the weighted with the unweighted scores. Before doing so, I first have a closer look at the unweighted CoD scores.

4.2 Comparing the simple CoD scores

Table 2 displays the sum total for the 12 CoD items for each country and year. In addition, the sum of each country's CoD scores over time has been calculated. Notice, however, the problems with comparing the sum of CoD scores of different countries and to derive from this actual the degree of CoD: Most of the country differences in the sum of scores are an artefact of the different starting points of the CoD processes. The earlier a country starts, the higher its sum of scores because, once an item has been achieved and remains unchanged, its scores get accumulated over time. This is why the sum of CoD scores are standardised by dividing it by the number of years for which the country is already in the process of CoD.¹⁷ In addition, this ratio is then expressed in percentages of the highest possible score (i.e. 12 in the case of the unweighted CoD scores). In this way, we are in a better position to compare our CoD scores across different regions. This is why I do not refer to the simple sum of CoD scores over time, but only to the annual scores and to the percentages achieved on the CoD scale, which can be found in the last two rows of Table 2.

¹⁶ This bad performance of CA in the electoral component of democracy can only partly be explained by the impact of Mexico's decades long record of rigged elections on this.

¹⁷ There might be another, more subtle way of standardising the scores: Instead of using the calendar time, one could introduce an analytical time by looking at each country's scores over the period of, let's say, twelve years after the founding elections were held.

In SE, the highest CoD score is achieved by Spain (81.8%), followed by Greece (77.9%), and Portugal (72.7%). The SA country group is lead by Argentina (71.2%), followed by Brazil (61.8%) and Chile (60.6%). The least consolidated democracies in our SA sample are Bolivia (49.5%) and Peru (38.3%).¹⁸ In CA, Honduras (83.3%) is the leading country.¹⁹ With a notable distant, Mexico (46.2%) and Guatemala (44.3%) follow. In the FSR, the Ukraine (48.1%) ranks highest and Belarus (4.7%) lowest, whereas Georgia (25%) and Russia (24.7%) have changed their positions – by only a small margin though. In CEE, Slovenia (81.7%) displays as the most successful case, followed by the Czech Republic (71.3%) and Poland (70.4%). Even Bulgaria (69.2%), Hungary (65.9%), Romania (65.4%) and Slovakia (68.3%), countries which are ranked lower in the CEE context, still receive remarkably high percentages in comparison to most of the other cases. One of the highest within-region variation can be observed in the group of MENA countries. The leading democracy, Turkey (39.5%), is so far ahead of almost any of the other MENA countries – especially Tunisia (1%) and Egypt (4.2%), but also Morocco (15.4%) and Palestine (16%) – that one could argue that it does not belong to this set of cases – at least not in terms of its democratisation progress.

It is interesting, to look at the different speed with which the countries advance in consolidating their democracies and how there seems to be regional pattern of tempo. If we take SE – the region that is commonly seen as the most successful one in terms of CoD – and compare it with CEE – i.e. countries for which many analysts in the early nineties predicted a difficult time to consolidate democracy, due to the simultaneous economic, social, and political challenges – we find something interesting in the data: Not only have the CEE countries already achieved high CoD scores, but also most of them did so in much less time than their SE counterparts 16 years before them – leave aside almost all the other third wave democracies. If we set as a benchmark a score higher than 10, then we see that it took Spain 10, Greece, 14, and Portugal even 15 years to achieve this. For the CEE countries, the respective figures are lower, sometimes less than the half; Bulgaria 6, Czech Republic 9, Hungary 9, Poland 9, Romania 7, Slovakia 9 years, and Slovenia 3 years.

In sum, most of the findings on the degree of consolidation of countries and regions violate severely common sense nor theoretical expectations. However, some scores for individual countries deviate to such an extent that we are reminded to further enhance the quality of that data. Now, in order to make

¹⁸ The fact that Chile does not rank highest on the Southern American CoD scale might be at odds with the common sense. However, let us not forget that Chile is still struggling to resolve several core issues along the process towards further consolidation. First and foremost, one has to mention the lacking consensus of the key political actors on the existing constitution. In addition to this, Chile is still waiting for experiencing a real first (and, of course, second) turn-over in power. To all this we have to add the constraints imposed on the elected representatives exerted by non-elected veto groups, mainly the military. All of these features form part of our CoD criteria and they are commonly referred to as key issues in the literature as well. Hence, there are good reasons for the lower ranking of Chile, at least if the standard CoD indicators are applied.

¹⁹ The score of Honduras is so counter-intuitively high in relation to the other CA countries – but also in relation to all other countries in our sample – that we suspect this to be the result of a coding error. This is even more likely since Honduras belongs to those countries, which have only be coded by one person yet and, hence, the data at our hand is only a preliminary version.

results even more comparable across different regions, let us apply the region-specific weighting schemes developed above and check, whether this leads to any changes in the ranking of countries.

4.3 Comparing the weighted with the simple CoD scores

Table 3 displays the percentages each country achieves on both the simple and the weighted CoD scales. Underlined country names indicate that these cases changed the rank position within their region and the arrows indicate the direction of change of a country's inter-regional rank greater than two positions.

Let us, firstly, take a look at the overall distribution of cases among the two CoD indices. The range of possible values in both cases runs, of course, from 0% to 100%. Notice however that the maximum of 100% is only a theoretical one since it could only be achieved in the case of an 'instant consolidation'. That is to say, it only would occur in the case of a country that meets all twelve CoD items in the first year. This is impossible because some of our items require the passing of a certain amount of time, or better, the holding of more than one election (item C7 and C8 (first and second turn-over), the same as the electoral volatility item C5). Nevertheless, one important property of the CoD scales is that those countries that are able to keep on fulfilling the CoD criteria over a long time period, manage to asymptotically approximate the theoretical endpoint of the index. Hence, this way of scaling the progress in CoD, reflects one of the well-established assumptions in the literature – namely that the 'age' of a democracy contributes to its degree of CoD.²⁰

Having said this, we can assert that the countries are spread among almost the full (possible) range of the scales, i.e., the respective figures run from almost 0% to ca. 85%. And further, they do so in a fairly even manner.²¹ Nevertheless, some country clusters can be identified. Notice that the clusters are identical on both the simple and the weighted CoD scale. In the highest quintile, we find the suspicious case of Honduras, but also the expected countries Spain, Slovenia²² and Greece. The next quintile is lead by Portugal. In addition to this, it contains the three SA democracies Argentina, Brazil, and Chile plus the rest of the democracies from our CEE subgroup. The third quintile at the middle of our CoD indices is a kind of catchment basin. In it, we find all those countries that perform either worse (Bolivia and Peru, in the case of SA; Mexico and Guatemala for CA), or better (Turkey, in the case of MENA; Ukraine for the FSR)

²⁰ Put differently, it makes a difference whether a country has accomplished many CoD traits over the last 3 or the last 13 years and the CoD index I present here is able to reflect this difference.

²¹ This finding of a 'normal distribution' might be very helpful once I use this data as the dependent variables in regression analysis.

²² If we concede that Honduras' position is, at least partly, caused by coding errors, then Slovenia is almost the most successful case in our entire sample. It fulfils 74,1% of our t-c_CoD(w) scale. Only Spain ranks slightly higher (74.7%), but the already matured 'young' democracies Greece (71.8%) and Portugal (63.3%) follow with a notable distance. This rank position is not too much a surprise since it reflects a widespread opinion about Slovenia, namely that it has become boring to talk about this country because, politically, it has settled down as a well-performing democracy that is highly likely to persist in the future.

than their regional neighbours. In the last two quintiles, at the bottom of both CoD scales, we exclusively find countries from the FSR and MENA.

Secondly, if we look closer at the rank performance of individual countries, we see that almost no intra-regional change in the country rankings occur once we weigh the time-corrected CoD items by their degree of difficulty. Only in CEE, the Czech Republic and Poland change their positions, the latter appearing as the most consolidated CEE democracy on our weighted CoD scale. By and large, this lack of intra-regional changes of rank positions shows that none of the countries in our six subgroups takes an exceptionally region-specific difficult road towards CoD. Instead, they all seem to follow a similar basic sequence when compared to their neighbours.

Table 3: Country ranking on simple and weighted CoD scores (1974-1999)

	CoD %	Rank changes*	CoD(w) %	
Honduras	83.3		Honduras	82.4
Spain	81.8		Spain	74.7
Slovenia	81.7		Slovenia	74.1
Greece	77.9		Greece	71.8
Portugal	72.7		Portugal	63.3
Czech	71.3		Argentina	61.0
Argentina	71.2		<u>Poland</u>	60.9
Poland	70.4		<u>Czech</u>	58.9
Bulgaria	69.2		Bulgaria	58.8
Slovakia	68.3	↑	Brazil	57.0
Hungary	65.9		Slovakia	55.7
Romania	65.4		Hungary	53.4
Brazil	61.8		Romania	51.3
Chile	60.6		Chile	46.1
Bolivia	49.5		<i>Sample mean</i>	<i>41.8</i>
<i>Sample mean</i>	<i>49.4</i>		↑ Turkey	39.7
Ukraine	48.1		Bolivia	37.0
Mexico	46.2		Guatemala	36.2
Guatemala	44.3		Ukraine	35.7
Turkey	39.5		Peru	34.4
Peru	38.3		↓ Mexico	30.8
Georgia	25.0		Russia	18.1
Algeria	25.0		Algeria	17.9
Russia	24.7		Georgia	15.7
Palestine	16.0		Palestine	13.8
Morocco	15.4		Morocco	12.2
Belarus	4.7		Egypt	5.2
Egypt	4.2		Belarus	3.4
Tunisia	1.0		Tunisia	0.4

- *Only changes in the rank position greater than 2 are indicated with an arrow
Underlined countries are those that change their position within their region

Thirdly, in addition to this, hardly any major changes occur when we look at the cross-regional country ranking. However, there are three main exceptions: Brazil, Mexico, and Turkey. Brazil moves up three positions and now ranks tenth in the entire sample. Mainly, this is caused by the fact that Brazil in 1994

achieves its second turn-over in power (item C8). Since this is accomplished by just a few countries, item C8 has received a weight of 4. This explains the steep rise in weighted CoD scores that Brazil experiences from 1994 onwards (see Appendix 5 for the weighted CoD scores per country and year).

Mexico, in contrast, moves down three rank positions once we take the items' difficulty into account. Not only does it rank below all other countries from SE, SA, and CEE, but it also achieves a lower percentage of the t-c_CoD(w) scores (30.8%) than Turkey (39.7%) and the Ukraine (35.7%)²³. Remember, a low ranking on the t-c_CoD(w) scale reflects the combination of three issues: Firstly, the country does not fulfil many of the CoD traits, secondly, it is in the process of CoD since a relatively long time and, thirdly, the (few) items it accomplishes are the easy ones, i.e. those that any other country in the respective region is able to attain as well. Mexico, apparently, combines all this and, thus, ranks low on our t-c_CoD(w) index.²⁴

Summing up the findings, it can be stated that – *in grosso modo* – both the overall ranking of individual countries and the ranking of regions along the two CoD scales do not contradict the expectations based on the common sense and previous observations in the scholarly literature. The fact that the aggregation of the 12 CoD indicators into one CoD scale produces, by and large, sensible results already provides some evidence that the my data on CoD forms a one-dimensional space. Of course, the assumption of one-dimensionality cannot rest on such an eye-bowled procedures but requires a more formalised test. One way of doing so is the reliability test using Cronbach's alpha.

4.4 Scalability analysis

The dimensionality of theoretical concepts and empirical data is a persistent issue in empirical social science in general, and in the measurement of democracy, in particular.²⁵ As always, aggregating different indicators to a 'bounded whole' includes the risk over committing a 'reification error'. This error consists in putting things that do not belong to each other together (Collier/Adcock 1999: 544).²⁶ Hence, in order to establish the risk over committing such an error, it is necessary to statistically test the assumption of one-dimensionality for the data on CoD²⁷.

²³ Notice, however, the relatively large difference between Mexico (30.8%) and the country on the next lower rank, Russia (18.1%).

²⁴ However, let us not forget that Mexico shows a clear trend towards CoD since the last few years, mainly by holding free and fair elections (C3) that brought an end to the PRI dominance, which lasted for more than half a century. And, most importantly, the electoral conditions and its outcome have been accepted by all major political parties (C4), including the losing ones.

²⁵ For a recent debate not only on this critical issue, see Munck/Verkuilen (2002) and the recent debate it triggered in *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1.

²⁶ Or, as Michael Coppedge puts it: "The worst tactic for coping with multidimensionality is to assume blindly that all the components are unidimensional and barrel on, adding or averaging these apples and oranges" (Coppedge 2002: 37).

²⁷ In case the items all lie on the same dimension, one can go one step further and ask whether they all tip the same position of the underlying dimension or whether there is a hierarchy in terms of 'severity' of items, i.e. whether some of them are easier to achieve than others. For an application of the Guttman scaling in the measuring of democracy, see Coppedge/Reinicke (1990) and, recently, Baker/Koesel (2002).

As mentioned, one statistical technique for testing whether the data is one-dimensional is reliability analysis.²⁸ The value of Cronbach's alpha varies from 0 to 1,²⁹ where 1 indicates perfect one-dimensionality. In general, with a value above .7, one can reasonably well assume a one-dimensional space in the data (Santos 1999), i.e. the reification error when aggregating the different indicators into one single index is sufficiently small.

In Table 4, I display the results of various different reliability analyses. If I base my analysis on the CoD items measured over the time period 1974-1999, all values for Cronbach's alpha easily exceed the 0.7 benchmark. No differences in terms of reliability are found between the simple and the weighted scores. All this holds up once I split the data into the six sub-regions. Hence, these results can be taken as a first hint that the data forms a single dimension for each of our three concepts plus the combination of LoA and CoD.

Table 4: Cronbach's alpha (base: all years)

	N	CoD	CoD(w)
All countries	(745)	.9514	.9247
Southern Europe	(81)	.9005	.8417
South America	(135)	.9183	.8581
Central America	(81)	.9027	.8841
CEE	(183)	.9711	.9472
FSR	(109)	.9204	.9148
MENA	(157)	.8567	.8461

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha (base: different points in time)

	CoD	CoD(w)
All countries		
1976	.8991	.8947
1980	.9133	.8817
1985	.9440	.9246
1990	.8651	.8885
1995	.8669	.8506
1999	.9318	.8672

(N=28)

However, these results can be rejected by pointing out that I based my analysis on time-series data. This implies that the different values for one and the same variable, measured in different years, are not independent from each other and, consequently, are likely to correlate highly with each other. Seen at from this perspective, the high values for Cronbach's alpha would be an artefact of the auto-correlation of the time-series character of the data. In order to control for this, I calculate Cronbach's alpha at different

²⁸ For a good overview of the different one-dimensional scaling techniques, see McIver/Carmines (1981) and Pennings/Keman/Kleinnijenhuis (1999).

²⁹ Nichols (1999) points to the fact that although the theoretical range of alpha is 0-1, in practice - under certain conditions - there can be negative alpha values.

points in time. The results are displayed in Table 5. As can be seen, all values are higher than 0.7. And, again, weighting the items does not lead to a change in the one-dimensional character of the indicators³⁰.

In sum, these (preliminary) results of the reliability analysis imply that I can assume that my data on CoD forms a one-dimensional space and, consequently, it is possible to rank the countries along a single CoD scale.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to give a broad overview of the structure of my thesis, in which I aim to explain the consolidation of third wave democracies. I especially focussed on methodological issues concerning my explanatory ‘model(s)’ and on the presentation of some preliminary data on the dependent variable CoD.

Throughout my study, I define democracy in processual terms as a liberal democracy that is composed of an electoral and a liberal dimension. Saying that such a democracy is consolidated means that it is likely to persist in the future. I argued that, in order to assess the degree of CoD, one has to look at the behavioural dimension of social reality. Empirically, this can be done with a set of twelve items, taken from a larger data set that is currently being constructed at the European University Institute in Florence, guided by Prof. Philippe Schmitter and jointly organised with the author.

Concerning the issue of how to explain CoD, I argued in favour of combining the main hypotheses from the two (opposing) theory strands, i.e. the structural and the actor-based approach. I have outlined that such an integrative approach can best be achieved through the stepwise answering of separate but cumulative questions: First, the structural conditions for CoD should be analysed and then one should focus on the constellation of actors and their decisions in those CoD-facilitating structural context. I underlined the fact that, methodologically, one is best able to deal with such a complex causal situation by using the method of QCA.

To conclude, let me point to some of the most pressing issues for advancing with my project. Firstly, data on CoD for additional countries has to be collected and some of the already existing data has to be revised. Secondly, I have to become more concrete about which causal conditions I want to include in my study and how they can be operationalised for a larger set of countries. Thirdly, once the ‘property space’ (Ragin 2000) is set up, data on the causal conditions – both structural and actor-based ones – has to be

³⁰ Unfortunately, I cannot perform the same reliability analyses for each region separately. The combination of a relatively low N (3 to 7) and many items to scale (7 to 15), plus the different democratisation-timings and tempos of our countries, renders the results of such an analysis, by and large, meaningless.

collected. And, fourthly, a solution to the problem of how to (technically) put in practise the stepwise application of QCA that I suggest has to be found.

Appendix 1: Concept of CoD with indicators

Electoral component of democracy	Liberal component of democracy
C2: regular elections are held and their outcomes are respected by public authorities and major opposition parties	C1: No significant political party advocates changes in the existing constitution
C3: The elections have been free and fair	C6: Elected official & representatives not constrained in their behaviour by non-elected veto group within country
C7: 1st rotation-in-power or significant shift in alliances of parties occurred within the rules established	Agreement, formal and informal, on:
C8: 2nd rotation-in-power or significant shift in alliances of parties occurred within the rules established	C9: association formation and behaviour
C4: No significant parties or groups reject previous electoral conditions	C10: executive format
	C11: territorial division of competence
C5: Electoral volatility has diminished significantly	C12: rules of ownership & access to media

Appendix 2: Structural and actor-centred theories of CoD

a) Structural factors for CoD formulated in fuzzy set hypotheses

The more a country belongs to the set of countries that are ...

- socially and economically developed ... (Modernisation theory)
- dominated by Christian instead of Muslim religion ... (Cultural theory: religion)
- ethno-linguistically homogeneous ... (Cultural theory: ethnicity)
- experienced with democracy ... (Historical approach I)
- characterised by Anglo-Saxon colonial heritage... (II)
- characterised by a soft authoritarian instead of a harsh totalitarian past ... (III)
- presidential instead of parliamentary... (Institutional theory)
- characterised by a pacted transition to democracy... (Mode-of-transition approach)
- close the centres of Western hemisphere countries ... (International approach I)
- late-comers in the third wave ... (International approach II)

... the more it belongs to the set of consolidated democracies.

b) Actor-based hypotheses on CoD

- Winner of the first election
(old vs. new elite/ right vs. left)
- Type of military
(strong vs. weak/ controlled vs. uncontrolled by civilians/ hierarchical vs. non-hierarchical)
- IMF Austerity program
(socially accepted vs. accompanied by protests)
- Economic reform
(low vs. high degree of privatisation)

Appendix 3: Cases

	Data complete	Coding in process ^a	Not yet in data set
Southern Europe	Spain	Greece, Portugal,	
South America		Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile	Paraguay, Uruguay
Central America		Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras	
Eastern Europe ^b	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia,	Albania, Slovenia	
Former Soviet Republics	Ukraine	Belarus, Russia, Georgia, Mongolia	Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia
MENA ^c	Turkey, (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia)		

^a Countries in this column have only be coded by one person yet

^b Countries in this row have only coded from 1980 on. The value 0 is assumed for all items between 1974 and 1980

^c Countries in this row do not belong to the universe of cases of my thesis because they do not have experienced a transition away from autocracy yet. The exception is Turkey, the only MENA country that I will include in my study

Appendix 4: Dimensions of structural, agency, and integrative explanatory approaches

	Structural approach	Agency approach	Integrative approach
A) Theory			
Concept of agency	Over-socialised	Under-socialised	'Margin of manoeuvrability'
Concept of structure	Generative model	Constraint model	
Primary explanatory variables	Objective conditions	Subjective state of actors	First structures, then actors
Aim of comparison	Probabilistic generalisation	Deterministic individualisation	Context sensitive generalisation
Temporal focus	Distant factors	Proximate factors	First distant, then proximate
Level of analysis	Macro	Micro	First Macro, then Micro
B) Methodology			
N	Medium to large	Small to medium	Possible from small to large
Techniques	Statistical techniques	Historical narratives, Game Theory	QCA
Empirical design	Static cross-sectional	Longitudinal	First cross-sectional, then time-sensitive
Assumed nature of causation	Linear, additive, unifinal	Interactive, equifinal	Interactive, equifinal

Based on Mahoney/Snyder (1999, 2000)

Appendix 5: Weighted Compound CoD scores (1974-99)

	SE		SA		CA		FSR		CEE			MENA														
	Spain	Greece	Portugal	Argentina	Chile	Brazil	Bolivia	Peru	Mexico	Guatemala	Honduras	Ukraine	Russia	Georgia	Belarus	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	Turkey	Algeria	Egypt	Morocco	Palestine
1974	0	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1975	0	10.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1976	0	12	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1977	9.5	12.5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978	12	13	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1979	17.5	13	10	0	0	0	0	2	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1980	17.5	13	11	0	0	0	0	6.5	7.5	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	2	0
1981	16	14.5	11	0	0	0	0	6.5	7.5	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	2	0
1982	16	16	13.5	0	0	0	0	6.5	7.5	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	2	0
1983	17.5	16	12	5	0	0	0	6.5	7.5	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1.5	2	0
1984	17.5	16	10.5	17.5	0	3	3.5	6.5	7.5	2	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	0	1.5	3	0
1985	19	19	13.5	18	0	3	9.5	9.5	7.5	5	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	0	1.5	3	0
1986	22	20	13.5	16.5	0	3	9.5	9.5	7.5	5	23	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	0	1.5	3	0
1987	22	23	13.5	15	0	3	9.5	9.5	7.5	5	23	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	0	1.5	3	0
1988	22	22	13.5	15	0	8	9.5	9.5	7.5	5	23	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.5	0	1.5	3	0
1989	22	26	15.5	17.5	6	17	9.5	9.5	7.5	5	27	0.5	1.5	0	0	0	0	1.5	4.5	0	0	8.5	5	1.5	3	0
1990	22	26	21.5	18.5	10	20	9.5	11	7.5	8	27	0.5	1.5	0	0	7.5	11.5	9.5	8	3.5	12.5	8.5	5	1.5	3.5	0
1991	22	26	21.5	20	12	20	9.5	11	7.5	8	27	6.5	1.5	3	0.5	14.5	12.5	9.5	13.5	8	12.5	11.5	5	1.5	3.5	0
1992	22	26	23	20	12	20	9.5	13	7.5	8	27	9.5	2.5	4.5	0.5	13	14.5	9.5	16	11	13	11.5	4	1.5	3.5	0
1993	22	23	23	19	16	20.5	14.5	13.5	7.5	9	27	9.5	7	4.5	0.5	11	14.5	9.5	18.5	11	13	11.5	4	1.5	3.5	0
1994	23	23	23	22.5	16	26	14.5	13.5	11.5	10	27	11.5	7	4.5	3	16.5	16	17.5	19.5	11	14	11.5	5.5	1.5	3.5	4
1995	23	24	23	22.5	16	26	14.5	14.5	11.5	10	27	12.5	9	4.5	0	21	16	17.5	19	11	14	14.5	4	1.5	3.5	1
1996	25.5	27	27	19.5	16	26	14.5	14.5	12.5	22	27	14.5	8.5	4.5	1	21	18	20.5	19.5	22	15.5	14.5	5	1.5	3.5	7
1997	25.5	26	27	21	16	26	18.5	14.5	15.5	22	27	14.5	8.5	5.5	1	15	18	20.5	21	22	15.5	14.5	6.5	1.5	3.5	4
1998	25.5	26	27	21	16	26	18.5	14.5	15.5	22	27	16.5	8.5	5.5	1	22.5	22.5	24.5	24	22	23	14.5	6.5	1.5	8.5	4
1999	23	26	27	22.5	16	26	18.5	14.5	15.5	22	27	14	12.5	3	1	22.5	21.5	24.5	24	22	23	14.5	6.5	1.5	8.5	4
74-99	464	504	410.5	311	152	273.5	200	216.5	232	168	478	110	71	39.5	8.5	164.5	165	164.5	187.5	143.5	156	184	57	30	71	24
Øreg	459.5			230.5					57.5		292.5					163.5								73.2		
Ma*	27			30					28		29					28								29		
%t-c	74.7	71.78	63.33	60.97	46.1	56.97	37.03	34.37	30.76	36.21	82.41	35.71	18.12	15.68	3.36	58.75	58.93	53.39	60.89	51.25	55.71	39.66	17.86	5.17	12.24	13.79
%reg	69.94			47.1					18.21		49.79					56.5								17.76		

*Maximum weighted score that can be achieved per country and year in the respective region

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