

Comprehension

PASSAGE – 1 An early debate in the empirical study of political democracy concerned the measurement of democracy. Initial work employed dichotomous indicators and incorporated stability into political democracy measures. Evidence accumulated showing that this approach could adversely affect analyses, particularly in the study of income inequality. At an intuitive level, it is appealing to divide the world into democracies and non democracies. And the idea that the persistence of democratic institutions should be included in any measure appears attractive. But the procedures have shortcomings. Dichotomizing democracy lumps together countries with very different degrees of democracy and blurs distinctions between borderline cases. For example, are democratic practices entirely absent from Mexican politics? Does the return of elections to Argentina mean that it is a full-fledged democracy? Does the suppression of the Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka assign that country to the nondemocratic rank? The difficulty in answering these questions reflects the inherently continuous nature of the concept of political democracy. Further, labeling some countries as democratic invites insensitivity to persisting political inequalities in even these states, because it implies that they are fully democratic, democracy is specified in advance as an all-or-nothing matter. The other pivotal measurement issue centers on the fusion of stability and democracy. This fusion in empirical measures makes it impossible to interpret observed associations of "democratic stability" with other variables, because it is never clear whether degree of stability or degree of democracy is the operative factor at work. For example, countries that developed earlier are more democratic than late developers, net of their level of industrialization. This hypothesis is supported if one uses stable democracy index as the measure of democracy, but not if one uses a measure that excludes the stability component.

1. According to the passage, why there are certain limitations to dichotomize democracy?
2. What does the passage say regarding fusion of stability and democracy?

Comprehension:

Q1

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The passage states that these are limitations to dichotomizing democracy. Dichotomous approach generalizes democratic countries that have various levels of democracy and makes it difficult to focus on unique circumstances in such states. The passage uses examples such as politics in Mexico and the elections in Argentina to highlight the importance of analyzing the true depth of democracy. Hence, the dynamic nature of democracy makes it difficult to dichotomize it.

Q2

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According to the passage, combining democracy and stability into democratic stability leads to difficulty in finding the relation of it with other variables. The fusion makes it difficult to assess whether the degree of democracy or stability is the main factor impacting the target variable. Therefore, the fusion of these two elements makes further analysis difficult.