FREEDOM AS CAPABILITY
How the capability approach can improve our understanding of freedom in established democracies

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Abstract

Annual measures of democracy are one of the most important tools used by scholars in understanding democratic quality in a cross-national manner. This thesis argues that there are limitations with existing measures of democracy, and presents a new measure of democracy which employs a more expansive definition of freedom: freedom as capability. A central component of measures of democracy is the definition of freedom which they employ, as this heavily influences the way that a measure with the concept of democracy. Different definitions of freedom are tied to different models of human agency, placing different demands on what is required for individuals to be able to function freely as democratic citizens. Considering the closeness of the relationship between freedom and democracy in democratic theory, this is an important issue for measurement to address. Identifying the degree to which this influences contemporary understandings of democratic quality, this thesis examines the way that the concept of freedom is incorporated into existing measures of democracy. It finds that the definition of freedom which is most commonly employed in measures of democracy is the definition of freedom as non-interference. This is problematic since freedom as non-interference is poorly suited to identifying the current problems arising in established democracies, especially those associated with growing inequality. It is argued that freedom as capability, a definition of freedom developed through the capability approach, is a definition of freedom which can provide further insight on the quality of democracy in established democracies, because it identifies different types of constraints which individuals face when engaging with the political process. The new measure of democracy created employs the definition of freedom as capability to demonstrate how measures can be developed which are more sensitive to problems being encountered in established democracies. The measure emphasises problems associated with economic, educational, and health inequalities, as these can represent constraints which limit the freedom of citizens to engage in the political process. In doing so, the thesis presents a measure of democracy which is better equipped to identify meaningful differences in the quality of democracy in established democratic societies. The output of the new measure of democracy is compared to other popular measures of democracy to demonstrate that theoretical
differences in conceptualising democracy translate into real differences in measurement output.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) this thesis comprises only my original work towards the completion of the Doctor of Philosophy;

(ii) due to acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

(iii) this thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliography and appendices.

Signed,

Jeremiah Thomas Brown
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Introduction

Contemporary scholarship on democracy is filled with debate about the health of democracy across the world, and for the first time since the Cold War, there is a sense that democracy as a system of governance may be on the decline. Recent works have discussed democratic decline in various forms (see for example: Armingeon & Guthmann 2014; Ágh 2016; Erdmann 2011; Allan 2014; Kurlantzick 2013; Bermeo 2016; Diamond 2016; Klaas 2016; Mair 2013; Norris 2011; Dalton 2004; Foa & Mounk 2016; Bartels 2008); and whilst there are a variety of causal explanations given as to why democracy is under threat, this growing body of literature that posits that there are cross-national problems being experienced in established democracies around the world. One important aspect of understanding the cross-national nature of the issues facing democracy has been the through the reports created by various cross-national measures of democracy (see for example: Freedom House 2015; The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. 2016; Lührmann et al. 2017).

Over the last year, the sense of threat has exploded from the academic sphere and into popular media discourse following the outcomes from Brexit and the 2016 US Presidential Election. Media outlets have treated the rising citizen discontent with the political status quo as a crisis for contemporary society, and a serious challenge for the long-term legitimacy of democracy as a political system. Whilst there has been a lack of clarity with much of the terminology employed by media commentators, concerns within the mainstream media about the potentially authoritarian nature of a Donald Trump presidency highlight the degree to which democracy is being challenged as the only legitimate political regime type. Notably, there is a clear sense in which the concerns over the status of democracy in the world have moved from the sustainability of democracy in consolidating democratic societies, and have transitioned into concerns about the viability of democracy in established democratic societies. In short, questions have turned from whether developing countries can become democratic, to the question of whether established democracies can remain democratic.
The central position which freedom occupies as an ethical concept signifies just how important it is to our understanding of whether the world we live in is a good one. It is hard to conceive of anyone arguing against the proposition that, all other things being equal, a world with more freedom is a better world – with the number of charities and non-government organisations that aim to increase human freedom in the world attesting to this fact. Based upon the close connection which exists between freedom and democracy at the theoretical level, declining democratic quality should be alarming to anyone concerned with the long-term prospects of a world where individuals have a high degree of control over the kind of life which they can choose to live.

Whilst there are a variety of ways to think about freedom, one of the greatest achievements of the modern world has been to substantially increase the number of people who are free to exercise control over the type of life which they can live. Of course, as noted by important scholars of freedom like Isaiah Berlin, there are variety of definitions of freedom through which we can understand this claim. We can think about the growth of freedom as a growth in terms of a classical liberal definition of freedom advanced by scholars like John Stuart Mill, with individuals generally enjoying greater legislative protection than ever before. Alternatively, we can think of this growth of freedom as occurring in terms of more expansive conceptions of freedom, which focus on the types of opportunities and life decisions which individuals are able to choose between, advocated for by scholars like Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. Whilst the thesis explores definitions of freedom advocated for by Mill, as well as neo-Republican scholars like Phillip Pettit, the more expansive approaches to freedom serve as the core foundation of the thesis.

Whilst the global increase in freedom is tied to many different human advancements, the proliferation of democracy as a political system is certainly one of the most important in contributing to this global increase in freedom. Furthermore, not only has democracy been important in increasing the degree of freedom which individuals have had over time, the potential for the abuse of power in undemocratic countries suggests that the continued existence of democracy is essential to preserving the status of freedom in the world. Thus, the work of scholars to evaluate, improve, and preserve the status of democracy in the world is closely
tied to the long-term development of a world where people can live freely. This commentary provided by scholars ensures that the status of freedom in the world remains something which is scrutinised, and in turn, ensures that the institutions which promote and protect freedom in the world themselves remain protected. If we take the protection of democracy to be closely connected to the achievement of these goals, then it is deeply important that we understand the quality of democracy in the world.

It is also important to ensure that potential issues of democratic decline are not overstated (or understated), and thus to approach understanding them in a rigorous manner. One very good way to do this is to use measures which evaluate the quality of democracy in a cross-national manner. This provides insight into variations in countries with otherwise similar economic circumstances, and can help develop an understanding as to what is driving different outcomes across societies. However, as this thesis will argue, as currently constructed there are problems associated with using measures of democracy for this undertaking. Specifically, current measures of democracy are constructed using relatively minimalist theories of democracy, with the work of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl serving as the theoretical foundation of the majority of measures of democracy. Whilst their work deals with important issues associated with the health and functioning of a democracy, they present relatively narrow conceptions of freedom, which limits the degree to which they engage with the various types of freedom possessed by individual citizens in a contemporary democracy. If we want to understand the health of established democracies, it is worth considering whether more expansive conceptions of freedom can provide insight on the topic.

This leads to the central question which this thesis investigates: **Are existing measures of democracy constructed in a way that properly measures the freedom of citizens in established democracies?**

In addressing this question, the argument of the thesis is structured around six core propositions, outlined below:

I. There is substantive diversity in the conceptualisation of freedom in theoretical debate – especially with regards to what makes freedom normatively desirable.
II. The definition of freedom which is best suited to explaining the relationship between freedom and democracy in established democracies is the definition of freedom as capability, which has been developed through the capability approach to human welfare.

III. An evaluation of existing measures of democracy suggests that the current measures employ the definition of freedom as non-interference.

IV. By failing to include the concept of freedom as capability, existing measures do not adequately incorporate the concept of freedom into the evaluation of democracy.

V. If freedom as capability is used to measure freedom as a component of democracy, then there is a substantively different picture regarding the quality of democracy in the world.

VI. It is important that the quality of democracy is measured accurately because the degree to which we can understand complex phenomena in the world is closely connected to the quality of the measurement instruments which we use to understand them.

**Different Definitions of Freedom**

There is extensive debate about how the concept of freedom should be defined. The different definitions are tied to different evaluations about what is essential to whether people are free or not, and in that sense, disagreement about definition is tied to other underlying moral disagreements. In emphasising different essential characteristics about what it is to be free, different definitions of freedom are equipped in different ways to address various problems which can be experienced by individuals, and the societies in which they live. The argument throughout this thesis is that the definition of freedom as capability is the definition which is best suited to understanding the relationship between citizens and the democracy in which they live.

The definition which is most commonly employed currently in the measurement of democracy is the definition of freedom as non-interference. As a definition which looks at the restriction of options which are imposed by both the state, and other individuals, it can provide valuable insights about how well a democracy can function. It is a definition well suited to identifying the nature of
institutional protection for individual interaction with democracy, because it can identify the type of options which individuals hold from a legislative perspective. It is thus useful for identifying what a citizen is allowed to be from the perspective of the state. It explains the constraints on the state in controlling individuals, and identifies states which overstep these bounds. These are deeply important observations with respect to the functioning of a democracy, yet they are not exhaustive in terms of explaining the relationship between the citizen, and their capacity to interact with their democracy. It explains only what citizens are prevented from doing, not what they are plausibly able to do. As the constraints on citizens shift from being primarily set by the state, towards being primarily being associated with circumstances, it becomes worthwhile considering how more expansive conceptions of freedom can provide further insight.

The definition of freedom as capability, developed through the capability approach to human welfare, provides a more expansive understanding. Whilst not discounting the importance of the legislative freedom which individuals enjoy, it also engages with the question of what other kinds of constraints an individual might face when deciding if they are free to do something. This includes material constraints, like a lack of money, as well as other constraints like a lack of education. By acknowledging the importance of constraints, people are only described as free to do things which they are actually able to do, and in this way the definition of freedom as capability helps to explain the range of options available to someone. In turn, the definition enables an understanding of how people might evaluate their options, and how that evaluation might differ to an external evaluation. Some options, whilst not prevented by the state, or by anyone else, might nonetheless be unavailable because of a range of other possible constraints that an individual might be experiencing. In many ways these constraints are important in describing how citizens are able to interact with the political process, and in that sense, provide valuable insight into the degree to which the legislative freedom which they enjoy can actually be utilised.

The depth of engagement with the concept of democracy, and indeed any concept, is limited by the information which is employed to understand it. Hence, if scholars of democracy want to understand the relationship between citizens and the
democracy which they live in, then it is crucial to employ a definition of freedom which captures the salient information. The argument developed throughout this thesis is that there is much salient information contained within the definition of freedom as capability, that is missed by using other definitions of freedom. This information can be considered salient for a variety of reasons, but arguably the most important reason is that contemporary research is identifying these issues as substantial problems for different democracies.

The Importance of Measures of Democracy

In the context of comprehending democracy as a regime type as it is practiced, the relatively recent phenomenon of measuring democracy by evaluating annually the democraticness of each country has provided scope to consider the position of democracy from year to year in a new and unique way. It enables the detection of marginal shifts and the better detection of broader trends, such that those interested in gradual change can identify it much more readily than was previously the case. The annual measurement of democracy also ensures that scholars are able to position developments in one or a small number of countries within a broader global context, thus ensuring that important changes in those cases are not overgeneralised. Whilst the measurement of democracy still remains imprecise, the types of trends which the annual measurement of democracy has enabled scholars to identify have increased the bounds of what scholars of democracy have been able to investigate.

Perhaps more than any other area, measures of democracy have enabled much more nuanced comprehension of processes of democratic consolidation and regime transition, by allowing scholars to compare cases in a way that has enabled more precise cross-case comparison than was previously available. This in turn has provided the space to establish which trends and attributes are associated with successful democratic transition, and the trends associated with more problematic cases of transition and democratic failure. In that sense the development of quantitative measures of democracy has enabled the condensing of information in a way that allows scholars to investigate democracy across the world using a large number of cases, which has been illuminating with regards to the relationships which democracy has with other important political outcomes. Hence, as a tool of
understanding, measures of democracy are important to a variety of different disciplines within the social sciences.

Measures of democracy also serve as an important barometer of democratic health for the public, with the annual results of the most popular measures widely published and discussed in the media. Although measures are contestable, they provide an entry point into discussion about political changes occurring in countries, and ensure that gradual changes are still noticed. Results released by Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Score are discussed on social media platforms like Twitter, and help to frame public debate about which countries are more or less democratic than others. In this way measures of democracy are not just an academic resource, but also can be thought of as providing a public good.

Another area where measures of democracy are important is the manner through which they shape political engagement across countries. They have long played an important part in shaping how aid groups approach funding and support for developing countries, with increased government transparency (often included in measures of democracy) often being attached as an aid condition from NGOs and the US, and with the data produced by measures of democracy being central to the work undertaken by many international organisations and NGOs (Munck 2009, p.1). In this way measures of democracy have become an important instrument for policy development and evaluation as well as for academic research.

Types of Democratic Decline

The importance of current measures of democracy to academic scholarship is evident in much of the literature evaluating the degree to which democracy over the last decade has experienced a decline. Often leveraging off trends established by recent reports from quality of democracy measures, different decline narratives have centred upon different facets of democracy which are in decline based upon these measures. The aspects of democracy which have been considered in these accounts are varied. However, quantitative based accounts of decline have either been based upon variations largely associated with developing or consolidating democracies rather than established democracy, or have employed indirect indicators of democratic decline.
The recent Journal of Democracy special issue titled ‘Democracy in Decline?’ highlights the nature of the limitations of existing measures of democracy. The issue features a collection of perspectives on the degree to which democracy is experiencing a global recession at present. The papers within the issue employ the Freedom House index of democracy, and the narratives about democracy in the world are developed largely through this paradigm. The entries within the issue debate how current trends visible from democratic measures can be interpreted – whether democracy is stagnating, declining, or whether there may be an effect associated with measurement error.

Some of the narratives are very straightforward, with Larry Diamond (2015; see also 2016) summarising a variety of different ways in which we might think of the world currently experiencing either a point of democratic stagnation or of incipient democratic decline. The simplest basis for thinking of democracy as in decline is that there is a decline in the total number of democracies in the world, or, alternatively, an increase in the number of countries "backsliding" towards authoritarian status (Diamond 2015). This idea takes the number of countries which are democratic to be important – an idea which pays little regard to changes in more established democratic societies. Elsewhere triangulating his evaluation through a variety of different analyses, Diamond (2016, p.82) favours the understanding of democracy as in decline, because of “the deepening authoritarianism in the nondemocracies, and the decline in the functioning and self-confidence of the world's established, rich democracies.” Evidence for the first part of this narrative is to be found in a diminishing average for scores across all countries in the Freedom House measure of democracy, and evidence for the second part is to be found in declines in the established group of democracies (primarily using quality of governance indicators, rather than measures explicitly focused on evaluating democracy).

An alternative way to think of democracy as in decline is that there is a decline in the democraticness of a number of strategically significant swing states which are of geopolitical importance, and which also exert a high degree of influence on their neighbours (like Russia, India, and China) (Kagan 2015). The importance of these states makes their declines noteworthy, because their decline is likely to
precipitate further decline in other countries in the future. Furthermore, the decline in these key states is associated with the degree of influence which democracies occupy in the international sphere diminishing, with authoritarian regimes increasingly having a key role to play in shaping international political institutions like the UN. Based upon this view, we can observe a decline in democracy through the decline occurring in these important swing states (especially in the case of Russia).

Another narrative is that there has been decline in the quality of democracy for some countries, largely due to poorly structured new democratic societies which possess low institutional capacity (particularly post-Communist states) (Fukuyama 2015). This view suggests that scholars may have previously overestimated the actual feasibility of sustaining democracy in newly democratic countries. The changes they have experienced are largely to be expected and in that sense it is an overstatement to think that democracy is experiencing a period of decline – it is instead a reversion back to how these countries would otherwise be expected to have performed based upon their previous institutional quality. The declines being experienced are thus expected declines, and hence do not warrant the degree of concern which they are otherwise being afforded.

To the extent to which these narratives of democratic decline are based upon variations observed in measures of democracy they can all be understood as centred upon developing, rather than consolidated democracies. This suggests that either there are not serious problems threatening the health of established democratic societies, or alternatively, that current measures of democracy are inadequately equipped to identify the problems which these democracies might be facing. The argument developed throughout the thesis is that it is the second which is the case.

**Established Democracies in Crisis?**

Despite the limitations of current measures of democracy at identifying problems within established democracies, there are other indicators which suggest that established democracies around the world are currently experiencing a range of issues which threaten the long-term viability of the democratic political project. If established democracies fail, then it is plausible to think that democracy may become discredited as a political system.
There is a problem of an increasingly disengaged citizenry in established democratic societies, who have grown dissatisfied with and increasingly disconnected from an elite political class (Mair 2013; Marsh & Miller 2012, pp.154–182; Good 2014, pp.111–148; Waylen 2015). This is a problem because if democracy is to be rule by the people, for the people, then it stands to reason that the people who do the representing must be of the people. When candidates are seen to not be of the people, that is, when they are seen to represent an elite class that is considered different to the ordinary citizen, they have the potential to push ordinary citizens away from politics, as they come to see politics as ‘not a space for them’. Faith in democracy is undermined as citizens are persuaded to adopt a perspective that certain democratic institutions have been taken over by ‘out of touch’ representative options, with elites who fail to reflect their values, or fail to represent their interests (von Beyme 2011, p.59). In short, the erosion of faith can lead to either disaffection with democracy as a concept, or at least the view that democracy is not working for me. In that sense, how politics connects to individual citizens is of substantial importance, as is the way that they perceive the outcomes of the democratic regime which they live in. Since the perceptions and engagement of democratic citizens is essential to the proper functioning of democracy, this is a substantive problem for democratic polities.

In conjunction with this increasing disconnect, other scholars highlight problems for established democracies associated with an increasing influence from corporate interest and unelected elites driving policy decisions (Allan 2014, pp.121–129; Beetham 2011). Furthermore, numerous “rich developed countries with … expansive welfare states are all facing a long-term crisis of fiscal sustainability” (Fukuyama 2012, p.11). In many of these countries there is a hollowing out of the middle class. Moreover, there are also rising issues of wealth inequality which threaten the long-term health of advanced industrial societies (Piketty 2014; Schäfer 2013; Hacker 2006; Bartels 2008).

With regards to a growing global trend of income inequality which has been highlighted recently by Piketty (2014), there are troubling implications for likely further democratic decline. The most basic consideration is that there is ample evidence “to support the fundamental notion that economic distribution is
important for democratic survival” (Reenock, Bernhard & Sobek 2007, p.693). In conjunction with being problematic because of the theoretical political equality gap which wealth inequality can create, the implications of rising economic inequality are also troubling because of the strong empirical evidence that there is a negative effect on support for democracy associated with income inequality across established democracies (Andersen 2012, p.400). Furthermore, this is troubling since economic inequality does not just help to shape attitudes towards democracy, there is also clear evidence that low socio-economic status negatively shapes political participation in a number of different ways (Quintelier & Hooghe 2013).

These issues are closely associated with a range of other growing problems which have been identified in established democracies. Rising inequality and declining political participation can be connected to problems associated with increasingly negative attitudes towards democracy, democratic institutions, and democratic representatives. Over the last two decades scholars have devoted large amounts of attention to these growing problems of eroding trust and declining democratic support in established democratic societies (Dalton 1999; Newton 1999; Webb 2013; Norris 2011; Armingeon & Guthmann 2014; Mounk & Foa 2016). From this literature a clear body of evidence has been developed which shows an overall trend of declining support for democracy and declining satisfaction with democratic regimes. In conjunction with the declining levels of trust, there have also been diminishing levels of political participation. These accounts have grown increasingly troubling, with continued decline precipitating “a serious crisis of representation, participation, and legitimacy” (Waylen 2015, p.495). The most alarming recent development in the empirical basis of the argument for a current trend of declining democratic support in established democracies can be found in the work of Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk (2016). Foa and Mounk find a declining belief amongst democratic citizens (especially in the United States) that it is essential to live in a country which is governed democratically, whilst simultaneously finding an increase in the number of individuals who believe that having a democratic political system is a very bad way to run the country. This finding is coupled with an identification of increasing support for authoritarian rule – with an increase from one in sixteen thinking it would be good or very good for the army to rule in 1995, up to one in six in the most recent wave of the World Values
Survey (Foa & Mounk 2016, pp.12–13). These two elements are combined to form a hypothesis that democracy may be deconsolidating in the United States and in parts of Europe, because increasingly “citizens of democracies are less and less content with their institutions” (Foa & Mounk 2016).

Most recently, these issues have contributed to rising support for populist movements in established democratic societies which have gained increasing media attention, becoming a central feature of public political discussion in 2016. The political backlash associated with this disengagement and increasing dissatisfaction is noted in the most recent EIU democracy report, which highlights the role that dissatisfaction with the political elite had in electing Donald Trump, as well as the role that anti-establishment sentiment played in the outcome of Brexit (2017, pp.10–13). There is also a growing body of literature which seeks to explain why populism has taken root across a number of different countries, with competing views as to the primary cause (Inglehart & Norris 2016).

**One Explanation for These Problems**

Whilst in many ways democracy has enjoyed a largely unchallenged position for the last two and half decades as the eminent regime-type in the international sphere, the abovementioned recent developments suggest that substantive issues are now threatening the long-term viability of democracy. One aspect of these problems which is noteworthy is that they can be thought of from the perspective of being problems at the level of the individual – i.e. issues which accrue from a sufficiently large number of individuals exhibiting the same problem. For example, the problem of disengagement is a problem occurring collectively – because there are many people who are politically disengaged, yet it is a problem at the individual level, because it is individuals who are deciding to disengage. To better understand how individuals are connected to the political process at the macro level requires an appreciation of the kinds of challenges which are being faced across the society.

One way to think about these problems is through the position of the individual in contemporary society, and the kinds of challenges which they are facing to living a free life of their own choosing. If we accept that individuals would like to live a life which they have control over, and in which they make meaningful decisions in, then it makes sense to ask how they might respond to situations where
this is not occurring. The capability approach articulates a notion of freedom which provides the space to connect the abovementioned problems to diminishing prospects for many ordinary citizens in established democratic societies. It positions the long-term options which face people face in their day-to-day lives as connected to the way in which they might experience the political process, which is thus important if we want to understand how they are likely to interact with the political system which they live in. Some aspects of this connection are not immediately obvious, and thus need to be sketched out.

Whether it is a consequence of the fallout from the recent economic crisis, or only correlated with it, there is nonetheless a sense in which recently the promise of a good life for individuals who work hard is no longer a guarantee. Whereas decades of economic prosperity in many established democracies like the United States distributed gains across society, increasingly the long-term prospects for low-skilled labour are becoming unsecure, and groups who could previously earn a decent living through hard work are now facing diminishing life prospects as their job prospects continually decrease. Connected to this is the fact that in a number of countries social mobility is relatively low or declining (Goldthorpe & Mills 2004; Murray 2012; Clark 2014), intergenerational income mobility is declining (Chetty et al. 2014), opportunities are diminishing (Putnam 2015), and there is a sense in which the future prospects for many are filled with despair (for example: Vance 2016).

The continued dominance of democracy as a political regime type over the last twenty-five years ensures that many of these problems are seen through a lens that attaches blame for them to democracy. This is because they have happened squarely under the watch of democratic governments, and whether or not it is an appropriate source of blame, many individuals link these issues with rising global free trade (Hoffman 2010). Indeed, in the context of how these problems relate to democracy, the issue isn’t so much what ends up being blamed, but rather the underlying anxiety and diminished control which they are associated with. These are a recipe for political disengagement, and likely also have the potential to exclude individuals from being capable of engaging in the political process.
Returning to the idea that freedom as capability provides a way to think about the prospects which individuals hold in terms of the kind of life which they might be able to lead, it becomes clear how diminishing long-term options can be understood as a reduction in the freedom which individuals have. As their long-term prospects diminish, the options available to them decrease. If we accept that people are likely to be dissatisfied with these diminishing prospects, then freedom as capability provides a rubric for evaluating the proportion of the population who may be in a position where they might experience political disenfranchisement. In this way it provides a space to identify the number of citizens who might have legitimate grievances that democracy is not delivering them freedom. In turn, it is a mechanism which might be included into the measurement of democracy to help identify the degree to which the citizenry of established democracies possess a sufficient level of freedom so as to be able to properly engage in the political process, and to live a life of their own choosing.

**The ‘Gap’ Addressed by the Thesis**

Whilst there is a growing body of literature which examines quality of democracy measures, many aspects of measurement remain underexplored (Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016). Until recently, measurement practice has been relatively unsophisticated and measures have served primarily as basic classifications of regime type. This thesis explores the implications of this with regards to how it impacts understanding established democracies.

There are three distinct elements to the choice of question which need to be expanded upon: Why focus on measures of democracy? Why concentrate on freedom? And why focus on established democracy?

As outlined above, measures of democracy provide a very useful way of understanding democracy in the world. They can enable insight into changes which are occurring in the world which otherwise might be very difficult to observe because of the subtlety with which they are happening. Alternatively, they can act as a deterrent for governments who might be concerned with the negative implications of undertaking a particular action – for example, cracking down on a protest might result in a lowered score with an organisation like Freedom House, which in turn might impact the amount of foreign aid which they receive. Measures
of democracy are also useful for the general public, and can provide a mechanism of warning when the long-term health of a democracy is under threat.

The decision to concentrate on freedom is based upon the central role which freedom plays in the day to day lives of individuals. It is one of the central concepts of politics, and how freedom is conceived in any political theory (or understanding of the world), becomes a defining feature as to what that view takes to be important about the world. In coming to understand how well measures of democracy evaluate established democracies, it makes sense to think about it through the paradigm of freedom because it is one of the core ways to think about the position which individuals occupy within their society. As an element of the theorising of the measurement of democracy, it also tends to be underexplored because there is a relatively low level of engagement with individuals in measurement. By excluding the notion of the individual largely from the measurement process, insufficient space has been available to explore the concept of freedom. Whilst there are limitations with respect to the amount to which the individual can be included into measurement, it is important to understand the constraints which individuals face in their capacity to interact with their political system. In established democracies, legislative constraints on political engagement are not the only salient fact in understanding how individuals interact with the political process. Hence, the thesis establishes how the freedom as capability which individuals possess can be included into the measurement of democracy.

The decision to focus on established democracies is slightly more complicated than the other two decisions. The most important dimension to it is that democracy as a political project can only succeed if established democracy can succeed. Hence, my concern is with first establishing a framework to properly understand the problems which established democracies are currently experiencing. It is my belief that freedom as capability provides that framework through the way that it connects all citizens to the state, and pays attention to why citizens might be unfree to do something even though they have the legislative freedom to do so. By exploring these ideas I hope to make more visible the way in which some of the problems experienced by democracy presently are problems of democracy.
The Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Thesis

The thesis develops two separate narratives to answer the research question presented. The first narrative is centred upon coming to understand the current construction of measures of democracy. This narrative focuses upon how existing measures are currently constructed, on why they are constructed that way, and what tasks this enables current measures to be used for. The second narrative contained within the thesis is centred upon understanding which conception of freedom is most suitable for evaluating the relationship between citizens and established democracy. This is a complicated task with a number of different elements which are outlined below in the thesis structure. The first step is to develop a way to think through a variety of different definitions of freedom and the relationship which they have with democracy. The framework chosen for the task is one which is present in some of the most influential work on freedom presented in the last century – a modified form of Isaiah Berlin’s value pluralism.

Value pluralism as a framework points to the importance of asking why measures are constructed in the way that they are, and takes seriously the idea that structuring measures in different ways enables engagement with diverse issues which are addressed in democratic theory. A component of this is an understanding that some issues that are emphasised in one theoretical account of democracy are completely absent in another. As a framing mechanism, this raises the issue of how a narrow conception of democracy might miss elements considered essential to more expansive accounts of democracy, indeed, it suggests that these accounts are likely to be based on fundamentally different concerns. Whilst the theories of democracy engaged with in this thesis are relatively bounded (focusing specifically on theories of democracy popular in the measurement of democracy), and in this way there remain many plausible alternative conceptualisations of democracy which could be developed into different measures, it nonetheless presents a way of thinking about the practice of measuring democracy that emphasises elements of democracy which are currently missing. A further idea underpinning much of the pluralist perspective is that the formulation of complex concepts is tied to human experience – and this thesis suggests that the living experience of many democratic citizens is currently either absent from measurement, or paid insufficient regard.
The Thesis Structure

Chapter One begins by outlining the value-pluralist framework which underpins the theoretical approach of this thesis to understanding measures of democracy. The chapter then turns to the comprehension of four competing conceptualisations of freedom: freedom as non-interference; freedom as self-mastery; freedom as non-domination; and freedom as capability. The chapter makes the case that the different definitions are underpinned by differing understandings of what makes freedom a normatively valuable concept. It is argued that the features presented in each definition are at times contradictory and hence cannot be reduced into a singular definition of freedom. This demonstrates the diversity in theoretical accounts of freedom, and highlights what is essential to each different account. In doing so, the chapter signals the kinds of issues which may be underexplored if only one definition of freedom is used when measuring democracy.

Chapter Two examines two of the central theoretical accounts of democracy which underpin current measures – those of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl – with a key focus on the conception of freedom which they present. It then outlines a third theoretical account of democracy, largely based upon the work of Guillermo O’Donnell. The chapter highlights the different approaches to the position and role of the individual citizen in each of the different accounts of democracy. This demonstrates how using a definition of freedom as capability as the foundation of a theory of democracy produces a different account of the requirements for adequately measuring the quality of democracy. In doing so, the chapter will suggest that measures of democracy which fail to properly account for the agency of citizens, understood through the paradigm of freedom-as-capability, will inadequately capture the elements of democracy which make it such a desirable political system.

One central component in understanding how measures of democracy are currently shaped involves understanding how they have been shaped over time, and what has influenced the changes and continuities in measurement. To understand these changes, Chapter Three presents an examination of the first measures of democracy. This chapter frames the manner in which measurement of democracy started, and the factors which have continued to shape the development of measures over time. This chapter highlights the similarity between the original
measures of democracy, and contemporary measures of democracy. This similarity is noteworthy because the context of measurement can be understood as changing – from the Cold War era when measurement began, to the post-Cold War context where support for democracy has been the dominant political position.

Chapter Four presents an analysis of the definition of freedom used in existing measures of democracy. This chapter summarises the overall status of the concept of freedom within the measurement of democracy by looking at which definitions of freedom are measured, how much that definition of freedom is weighted within each measure, and by discussing which measures are the most popular. This chapter highlights the prominence which the definition of freedom as non-interference occupies within the measurement of democracy.

The capability approach has provided a variety of important theoretical insights which extend beyond the development of a definition of freedom as capability. Chapter Five canvasses the core theoretical features of the capability approach, and how they relate to the measurement of freedom as capability. These various insights provide a context for the development of a new measure of democracy, and show how the capability approach differs from other accounts of welfare. This is important for ensuring that the essential features of the approach are included in the measure which is outlined in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six first uses the theoretical insights considered in Chapter Five to evaluate a measure of democracy which uses the capability approach as part of its conceptualisation, David Campbell’s Democracy Ranking. The structure of this measure is then used as a basis to develop a new measure of democracy which is sensitive to other essential aspects of the capability approach. The new measure, the Better Democracy Index, is constructed using data from the Better Life Index (BLI), produced by the OECD. The chapter explains the various capabilities which are measured by the BLI, to justify their selection in the new measure.

Chapter Seven outlines the outputs of the new measure of democracy. The outputs are compared with other measures of democracy to demonstrate the differences between including and excluding capabilities from the evaluation of democracy. The chapter highlights the biggest changes in the evaluation of the quality of democracy across the countries included in the analysis. The countries
considered are discussed in relation to existing research which identifies problems in these different democracies. In doing so, the chapter develops the argument that a more expansive definition of freedom may be required to properly understand the quality of established democracies.

The Conclusion brings together the different threads explored through the thesis to restate the case that more comprehensive indicators are required to measure the quality of established democracy sufficiently. The Conclusion outlines the directions where the capability approach can further provide insight into the evaluation of established democracies, and which can be used to improve upon the new measure presented. It discusses the diminishing long-term life prospects currently experienced by many citizens in established democracies, and connects this issue to political dissatisfaction and disengagement which is a substantive issue to the legitimacy of democracy. In doing so, it will be shown that more comprehensively including individuals into our understanding of the functioning of democratic systems will enable a more nuanced engagement with democracy as it exists in the world.
Part One

Part One outlines the core theoretical aspects of the argument of the thesis. Chapter One addresses the basis upon which different definitions of freedom might come to be valued. Chapter Two outlines the connection between these different definitions and three prominent approaches to conceptualising democracy, which are employed in the measurement of democracy. Taken together, Part One of the thesis addresses why we would value different definitions of freedom, and then how those different definitions translate into differences about what is essential to democracy. This is an important precursor to understanding why different measures of democracy emphasise different attributes of democracy in their evaluations.
Chapter 1: Conceptualising Freedom

Freedom is an incredibly powerful concept. It is invoked in all manner of discourses, and serves a significant role in contemporary moral and political discussion. Importantly, freedom is a polysemous concept, with various definitions being employed in different contexts. This chapter will first present the case that to properly engage with the concept of freedom, one must acknowledge that there is a number of plausible definitions of freedom which each give different answers as to what is morally significant about freedom. Through this paradigm the chapter will outline four competing families of definitions of freedom, and discuss the extent to which these differing conceptions each address different philosophical questions. The worth that each question contributes to the concept of freedom will be discussed, and it will be argued that by understanding each definition as heavily informed by different questions and concerns, it can be seen why debate over the definition of freedom is intractable. In demonstrating this, the chapter will aim to show the worth of a pluralistic understanding of freedom, and will make the case that it is only in coming to recognise the worth of the varying definitions of freedom that one can fully appreciate the moral significance of freedom as a concept.

This chapter contributes to the overall thesis by establishing the essential characteristics of the different definitions of freedom considered in relation to the measurement of democracy. In doing so, it sets up the comparison later in the thesis of the different definitions of freedom, and makes clear the different types of narratives which the various definitions are best equipped to address. As the value pluralist framework discussed below will imply, this is an important undertaking because it is only through coming to understand the worth of each definition that they can be adequately compared. In terms of the six core propositions outlined in the introduction, this chapter addresses the first proposition, demonstrating the substantive diversity in the conceptualisation of freedom in theoretical debate. In conjunction with Chapter Two, it also addresses the second proposition, by establishing the characteristics of the differences between the various definitions of freedom, and then elaborating in Chapter Two on how they translate into different accounts of what democracy requires to function.
1.1 Value Pluralism

There is an extensive body of literature that seeks to address the question of how the concept of freedom\(^1\) should be defined. In the contemporary context, much of the literature is positioned in relation to Isaiah Berlin’s (2013) public lecture and subsequent essay, ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’, which is a highly significant point in the discussion of the distinction between positive and negative liberty. Berlin’s work has been debated at great length, and numerous articles have been written that seek to clarify, support, or refute Berlin’s distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ liberty. The emphasis on which side of the division is correct, on whether freedom should be understood as either a ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ concept, has underscored the vast majority of debate. There is certainly value in clarifying precisely what is meant by a particular definition of freedom, however, the emphasis upon the rightness of one definition over that of another has obfuscated one of the central contentions brought forth by Berlin, and one of the central themes explored throughout his political philosophy. In focusing on the correct definition of freedom, Berlin’s (2013, p.238) contention that “conflicts of values may be an intrinsic, irremovable element in human life” is often inadequately addressed, or altogether ignored. This is problematic, because this is the basis of Berlin’s argument that constructing a singular cohesive system of moral valuation without losing any value is a flawed and impossible task. Moreover, it is of fundamental significance in coming to discuss a concept like freedom, as it serves to highlight that we should be looking at the varying paradigms through which freedom can be considered valuable, rather than just advocating for the one that we are most sympathetic to.

The similarities between debate over how to define democracy, and how to define freedom, suggest that insights from one debate can inform our understanding of the other. As such, value pluralism has important implications not just for theorising freedom, but also for theorising democracy. Because the choice of theoretical model is so important for how concepts are measured, having a good evaluative framework to identify differences between models is an important undertaking. In short, it ensures that we engage with why something is important to

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\(^1\) Following the conventions of the literature discussed in this chapter, the terms freedom and liberty are treated as interchangeable in the ensuing discussion.
a measure, not just what it is that we are measuring. This ensures that critique is not just focused on difference, but also upon what motivates the differences in accounts presented.

A central component of Berlin’s broader political philosophy was a desire to place values within their contexts, and this is reflected in his understanding of value pluralism as a central facet of political philosophy. A conception of value pluralism is also central to the theoretical framework which is present throughout this thesis, and forms the backdrop against which the broader exploration of measures of democracy is undertaken. This chapter adopts this approach explicitly by presenting the various reasons through which different conceptions of freedom can be understood as being found to be appealing. The chapter explores how each conception can be understood to frame freedom in a way that possesses utility – and specifically in a way that an alternate conception would not possess.

The core of value pluralism is based upon three distinct premises, which, when taken together have important implications for resolving issues within political philosophy (Bacon 2010). The first premise of incommensurability, is a belief that values will conflict and cannot be reduced into each other – for example, the value of freedom will at times produce conflicting demands to the value of equality, and these demands cannot be reduced into each other without something being lost. The second premise is that each value possesses many plausible and distinct interpretations – for example, the various conceptions of freedom which are explored later in this chapter are distinct from each other. The third premise is that there is a diverse range of ways to live well as a person, and these different ways of living are connected to the realisation and appreciation of different values. These different ways of living well can occur within and across societies, and it is not a requirement to decide what constitutes living well to be able to acknowledge that a diverse range of people do live well in a variety of contexts. Diversity in living well is important for coming to understand how different conceptions of values are formulated – they articulate solutions to different problems which individuals encounter in the world. This idea is explored below through the different issues which competing conceptions of freedom are able to address.
Operating together, these three premises combine to give a view that: values conflict, values can be conceived of differently, and values are conceived of and attributed worth based upon diverse human experiences. If we accept that people value their own experiences above those of others, it becomes clear that the resolution of conflict over how values are to be constructed is somewhat intractable. People are likely to be unwilling to restructure their understanding of morally substantive concepts in a way that contradicts their own lived experiences. In the context of evaluating democracy, it is the underlying reasons for valuing a particular conceptualisation of democracy which are likely to be the basis of intractable disagreement. For example, there are substantive differences in the model of democracy which results from valuing democracy for the outcomes which it provides for citizens, as opposed to valuing it because it is an effective mechanism of power sharing. The first perspective is tied to a form of egalitarianism, whereas the second perspective emphasises the value of democracy in reducing conflict.

The advocacy by Berlin for the rejection of a monistic system of moral value is arguably the most important contribution of his essay. This point has been made by Charles Taylor (1989, p.66), who approvingly cites Berlin’s discussion of value pluralism to suggest that “if further progress is attained in the theory of freedom ... it will be against the background of Berlin’s work.” In making this case, Taylor draws on Berlin’s (2013, p.239) assertion that we should be highly sceptical of the possibility that “all good things, or all bad things for that matter, are reconcilable with each other.” It is argued that philosophers must recognise the problematic nature of attempting to assimilate all moral values into the one singular system of valuation – it must be accepted that ultimately moral values will conflict with each other. Once this is accepted a much more nuanced discussion of the value of freedom, as well other morally good concepts, becomes available, since one is not forced into trying to reduce each concept into a single overarching theory of moral value. Instead, the possibility arises for comprehending where the tensions between freedom and other morally significant concepts are located. In taking this position, the importance of understanding what makes freedom a morally valuable concept becomes much clearer, as it is pivotal to any attempt at trying to resolve where these tensions between freedom and other significant moral values are located – it is only through an awareness of these differing perspectives through which freedom is
regarded as valuable are we able to fully comprehend the manner in which freedom is important.

The attempts to develop value pluralism into a comprehensive ethical doctrine have been focused on developing a suitable underlying value or framework to reconcile different ethical perspectives – an undertaking which has been closely tied to the liberalist project. There is disagreement amongst value pluralists about the basis upon which a framework should be developed, with competing values favoured for differing reasons. One value which features prominently is that of autonomy, which forms the basis upon which Joseph Raz builds his account of pluralism – a position shared with Berlin (Nussbaum 2011a). Autonomy is treated as the ability to make free decisions, and to choose between options. On this account of pluralism, autonomy encourages us to evaluate different perspectives based upon how they preserve option spaces for individuals – which below will be seen to be reflected in Berlin’s preference for a non-interference based conception of freedom. In many ways, this perspective is reflective of a classical liberal position, and John Gray criticises Berlin’s move straight from a pluralist position into advocacy for liberalism as a universalist doctrine.

Gray (2000) presents an alternate version of value pluralism, with the pragmatic notion of *modus vivendi* forming the bedrock of his account of what is valuable in liberalism as a political doctrine. Because Gray favours the aspect of *incommensurability* in his interpretation of value pluralism, the implications of value pluralism are a transition away from principles and rational consensus as the basis of valuing a version of liberalism, towards an account where the prominence of toleration is the primary basis for valuing liberal value structures (for this reason some describe Gray as presenting either a theory of post-liberalism or anti-liberalism). For Gray, pragmatic solutions are an essential feature of modern politics, and living in modernity requires a willingness to make to concessions to those who we deeply disagree with about what constitutes a good life. Tolerance, understood as a condition of peace, is thus the crucial element to determining how to evaluate issues on Gray’s view, and the concessions which should be made are those which best serve to preserve the peace. Notably, Gray’s view emphasises the
importance of tolerance for the preservation of peace, rather than based upon a deep respect for the views of others.

Defending aspects of Berlin’s articulation of the implications of value pluralism, George Crowder’s formulation of value pluralism as a political doctrine sheds valuable insight into the mechanisms through which competing conceptions of the good can be contrasted with each other. Crowder (2002, p.3) argues for a sophisticated account of pluralism, whereby “value pluralism is not mere ‘plurality of belief.’” Crowder suggests that reasonable disagreement is a pivotal aspect of pluralism, and it is this dimension which leads us to favour some accounts of acceptable conduct rather than others. Whereas Gray’s conception pays attention to simply allowing each culture to continue so long as conflict is avoided, Crowder’s view is proposing a way to (at least partially) resolve conflict, and favours cultures or conceptions of the good which are suited to accommodating reasonable disagreement. In doing so, Crowder argues against the idea that value pluralism is a relativist doctrine, which it can be interpreted as through Gray’s articulation.

The difference between these two branches of value pluralism can be thought of as the way that they are either oriented more towards the pluralist or the value aspect of value pluralism. Gray’s position leans towards the pluralist side, in that his interpretation of incommensurability posits a radical rejection of settling disputes of value. This is pluralist in the sense that it emphasises the diversity of views, and avoids evaluating them. Conversely, the position of Crowder emphasises the value dimension, as he favours the development of a framework to evaluate different conceptions of value – a version of liberalism. Whilst there is a question as to how adequately Crowder’s approach overcomes the notion of incommensurability favoured by Gray, it does present a more coherent approach to conducting democratic politics because it attends to the reality of compromise which is central to policy formulation. Democracies enact policies for a plurality of interests, which involve mediating a variety of competing interests. Crowder provides a bridge to engage that process, whereas Gray’s perspective has a limited capacity to overcome differences within society. In that sense, Crowder’s version of value pluralism might be thought of as being more attentive to addressing living in a plural society.
Irrespective of which of the two branches of value pluralism is the most favourable, they share commonalities with regards to how they can be applied as a theoretical framework of evaluation. The clearest aspect of similarity is to move away from settling the question of the *rightness* of interpretation of different values. Instead of this, focus should be placed on how different definitions of value are constructed, and then coming to understand why they might be favoured by those who prefer that definition. This is done by developing a deep account of a particular conception of value (like freedom as non-interference), which is then connected to the kind of worldview which it can be understood as representing (why someone would prefer this definition over another).

Thus, as a theoretical framework for understanding the position of freedom in the practice of measuring democracy, value pluralism provides a mechanism to consider the definitional features of different measurement structures, and the associated views which go along with them. It is the views about what the purposes of measurement are which form an important aspect in understanding why they are constructed in the way that they are. This also suggests the locus around which difference can be found across measures, as it helps to interpret the aspects which are essential to the evaluation they are being constructed for. In asking the question of how well current measures of democracy measure advanced democracy, I am presenting a fundamentally different concern to that explored by previous measures. As will be outlined through the thesis, the historical purposes of measures of democracy have been largely attached to differentiating between democracy and non-democracy, rather than evaluating higher level democratic principles.

**1.2 Freedom as Non-Interference**

To differentiate between two central groups within the conceptualisation of freedom, Berlin\(^2\) breaks the differing conceptions of freedom in half into both ‘negative’ freedom, and ‘positive’ freedom. Negative freedom, or *freedom from*, is defined by Berlin (2013, p.194) as the view that “I am normally said to be free to the

\(^2\) It is important to note the political context at the time that Berlin develops his distinction between positive and negative freedom. Berlin is writing during the early stages of the Cold War, and as will be discussed in Chapter Three, the Cold War is an important factor in much of the understanding of how freedom and democracy should be defined, especially in relation to the measurement of democracy.
degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity.” This definition of freedom is often referred to as ‘freedom as non-interference,’ since the absence of interference is the determining characteristic. Because of the manner in which liberal theory places the will or the desires of the individual at the centre of decision making and at the centre of the political sphere, this definition of freedom is often seen as closely tied to the liberalist project (Miller 1991). This linkage of definitions of freedom as non-interference to the liberal tradition is evident in Berlin’s strong utilisation and reference to the works of foundational liberal scholars John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Hobbes3, in crafting and justifying the definition of freedom as non-interference. In turn, the importance of these foundational thinkers in shaping the measurement of democracy becomes evident through the influence which the non-interference definition of freedom has had in the broader development of democratic theory.

John Stuart Mill (1974, p.72) outlines the importance he places on understanding the rules of social interaction in stating that “what these rules should be is the principal question in human affairs.” In distinguishing between the relative merits of positive and negative freedom, Berlin draws heavily upon the work of Mill (1974, p.72) to emphasise that “the only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way.” Encapsulated in this statement, and featured as a central theme in Mill’s ‘On Liberty,’ is the view that individual freedom is itself a moral good. In making this case there are a range of different arguments which outline why freedom as non-interference is a moral good, although the one most commonly applied by liberals appeals to the sentiment that man is “a being with a life of his own to live” (Berlin 2013, p.200). In this argument value is placed upon individual freedom by claiming that there is no rational way to justify preferring the interests of one person over another in the abstract. There is no better or worse set of prior value which can be attributed to individuals to differentiate them, and they are thus equal. Freedom becomes the mode through which individuals can ascribe meaning to their life, and in this sense can be understood as the primary mechanism of value. This process of determining value for oneself is

3 Although Hobbes is not regarded as a liberal theorist by many, much of his work and method is employed by liberal scholars in generating the strains of liberal political theory that draw upon social contract theory, as such, it is plausible to include him in the liberal tradition.
regarded as good, and hence, freedom is itself regarded as a moral good. Because Berlin's value pluralist perspective is concerned with providing the maximum amount of space for individuals to decide for themselves what they take to be of significance, this is the definition which he favours.

One aspect of freedom as non-interference that makes it appealing, especially from the perspective of measurement, is that it initially is a simple definition of freedom to observe (Taylor 1979, p.179). In part, this simplicity makes it a definition of freedom that may find itself preferred in any environment heavily associated with the scientific traditions. It is thus no surprise that it finds strong roots in the liberal tradition, which is full of theorists who seek to develop an account of social interaction based on the scientific model – primarily based in a combination of observation and rational inference. In conjunction with this close attention to the scientific model, the definition of freedom as non-interference can be seen as fitting well with an empiricist theory of knowledge because it is a theory that places freedom as external to the agent, and so no questions about the internal workings of that particular agent need to be addressed to describe whether or not the agent is free. By virtue of being a purely external account, freedom in the non-interference definition is more readily observable than any other definition of freedom, and as will be outlined in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, this has contributed to it being the definition most commonly employed when measuring freedom as a component of the measurement of democracy.

It is important to note that generally negative freedom is regarded as specifically freedom from interference by other individuals (or by the state). Although it is possible to develop an account of negative freedom which treats all impediments as creating instances of unfreedom, generally there is a preference for solely defining freedom in regards to interference by other agents. In making this division, it is often claimed that defining freedom to include all impediments “is much too broad” (Parent 1974, p.434). In part, this is to do with the central concern of many liberal theorists being with what the rules that govern human interaction should be. Proponents of negative freedom tend to disregard naturally occurring impediments to action as being morally significant, because this shifts the discussion of freedom away from interaction between individuals, and moves into a
space where the protection of freedom can lack any kind of normative value. Proponents of negative freedom are wary of equating an action being physically impossible as a natural state of being with an action being impossible because another individual renders it unavailable.

On this conception it can be seen how negative freedom is an opportunity concept, whereas positive definitions of freedom are an exercise concept. The defining feature of negative freedom is the principle of non-interference, which represents a concern with the non-limitation of options, and in turn with the preservation of the maximum number of possible choices. Positive freedom is an exercise concept because an individual is only free when they exercise their freedom in a particular way, or more broadly, “one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one’s own life” (Taylor 1979, p.179). Here there is a clear difference about what is essential in the notion of freedom. In the negative conception, what one can do is the only significant issue, with “freedom beginning where politics ends” (Miller 1991, p.3). Conversely, in the positive conception, why someone does something is also a point of significance.

The moral currency of the definition of freedom as non-interference is often located in its claims to neutrality about precisely what a good life is. This is appealing because it makes no claims to a prior understanding about what it is that people ought to do with their freedom. It aims to be neutral towards resolving the question of what it is that a good life should be, and in turn, it allows for the advocacy of the protection of freedom without requiring agreement about what freedom should be used for. Here it can again be seen why the definition is popular with liberals like Mill and Berlin, who want to ensure that individuals are able to decide for themselves how they should live.

This particular perspective can be arrived at in a number of different ways, but it is quite straightforward the manner in which it can be seen to appeal to the contractarian model of morality favoured by early liberal thinkers like John Locke and Immanuel Kant (Cudd 2013). Furthermore, the extent to which the contractarian model underpins much of the liberal project means that it continues to be a prominent source of moral valuation in theoretical discussion (Waldron 1987). On a very simple account of the contractarian model, people should
hypothetically consent to protecting freedom as non-interference at a societal level for reasons of self-interest, since it is rational to preserve the maximum amount of options available to ourselves. In getting any kind of moral theory off the ground, it is worth acknowledging the weight of the claim that individuals are “the person most interested in their own well-being” (Mill & Himmelfarb 1974, p.174). I only need to be willing to preserve my own capacity to choose for myself to see the mutual benefit in protecting this same capacity for others. It is along this vein that freedom as non-interference also appeals to the central theme of utilitarianism, whereby morality is grounded in the wish of the individual to satisfy their own preferences. This kind of definition of freedom can also be seen as potentially only taking a minimalist position on moral commitment, since defending freedom as non-interference only requires an individual to be self-interested. It should also be noted that in being an area populated with theorists concerned with understanding limitations of legitimate political action, it is unsurprising that social contract theorists favour a definition of freedom that is centred upon relations between an individual and society. The definition of freedom is very convenient for the kinds of moral inquiries which they want to conduct.

Theories of freedom as non-interference can be understood as informed by an attempt to understand the relationship between the individual and society. The kinds of moral perspective which they can be associated with often seek to first identify what it would be to impinge upon an individual’s freedom, and then to address the instances where it is legitimate for a society (or other individuals) to do so. The most hard-line proponents argue that all that matters is the preservation of liberty, or at least that the preservation of liberty is more important than the preservation of any other morally significant concept; whereas less hard-line theorists regard freedom as one value amongst others that can be used to formulate a broader conception of justice, and these theorists are at times willing to make concessions with regards to liberty in order to preserve other morally significant concepts. It is a definition of freedom that is relatively simple to observe and comprehend, and thus is relatively straightforward to discuss. The extent to which the definition of freedom as non-interference remains neutral to how freedom should be used also makes it appealing to advocates of a Berlinian form of value pluralism. To them, the definition coheres with conserving the maximum amount of
space in which people can make decisions about how they should live, and hence, it can be viewed as best serving to promote and protect value pluralism within a society.

In the context of measurement, this definition of freedom is often observed through the paradigm of the legal rights and protections which individuals hold. Based upon the central role which voting rights and the protection of free speech occupy within the measurement of democracy, this is the definition which is most central in current measurement. Furthermore, it is readily observable to the extent to which measures of democracy can track governmental interference with individuals. For example, when governments restrict the right to free speech or protest, this is a readily observable phenomenon – as will be seen with the definitions below, that is not necessarily the case.

As a component of understanding the institutional mechanisms in a democracy, freedom as non-interference is valuable as a definition to explain what kinds of legislative protection individuals enjoy. It provides a clear understanding of what the state can and cannot do, and what the individual can and cannot do. Yet, in established democracies, where these rules are normalised, and the rights which citizens enjoy are effectively the same, this definition cannot explain meaningful differences in who has the capacity to engage in the political process. Considering the degree to which problems associated with political engagement are becoming a central feature of literature on established democracies, it is important to ask whether this definition is sufficiently equipped to identify these problems.

1.3 Freedom as Self-Mastery

The non-interference based definition of freedom is contrasted against the concept of positive freedom, which extends beyond interference by other agents, and is heavily associated with the importance of the “wish on the part of the individual to be his own master” (Berlin 2013, p.203). In this family of definitions, the central concern is that I desire to be in control of myself, to make my own decisions, and that I desire “to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from the outside” (Berlin 2013, p.203). Positive freedom is in this sense about being in control of oneself, and in this manner, it can be termed freedom as self-mastery (Carter 1999). Whereas
the family of definitions that are located around freedom as non-interference are quite similar, the family of definitions which exist around the concept of positive freedom are “very diverse indeed” (Miller 1991, p.4). Because of this diversity, the ensuing discussion of positive conceptions of freedom at times draws on some of these distinctly different conceptions. The purpose of the discussion is not to present a singular coherent picture of one definition of freedom as self-mastery, rather it is to highlight some of the facets amongst the myriad of definitions which can be seen as making freedom as self-mastery appealing.

The notion of freedom as self-mastery is often linked to an understanding that rationality distinguishes human beings from the rest of the world, whereby people act according to more than just base instinct. There is an emancipatory dimension to this definition of freedom, because positive freedom “is realized in living a particular way of life in accordance with a conception of virtue” (Plant 2011, p.625). On this model, there is a sense in which people desire to have control of themselves, and to overcome their desires which do not cohere with their best interests. In appealing to these desires, Berlin contends that positive freedom requires an element of rationality, so that individuals can be seen as acting freely only when they are acting in a way that reflects reasoned control over their own desires. According to this understanding, a person who cannot overcome a desire – for example, someone who is experiencing drug addiction – is not actually free, because they are not their own master, and instead they are a slave to that particular desire. Unlike the definition of freedom as non-interference, it can be seen how this notion of positive freedom is primarily internally focused (Miller 1991).

In paying attention to the internal workings of the agent, definitions of positive freedom can be seen to have a substantially different set of concerns than definitions of freedom based upon non-interference. In part, the manner in which positive freedom examines the extent to which an individual has control over their actions is highly informative about the kinds of philosophical concerns that underlie this kind of definition. Initially, by engaging with the question of the extent to which individuals have control over their action, the associated question over whether human beings have free will is opened up. This concern is sidestepped by the definition of freedom as non-interference, since that definition places an
understanding of barriers to freedom as purely external to the agent (proponents of freedom as non-interference must assume that the agent is internally free in order to place freedom as external to the agent). This is not a trivial move, since the notion of holding individuals as morally responsible for their actions rests upon the idea that they can be seen as engaging in some form of *self-determination*, this is “the essence of blame – the holding someone responsible for committing a wrong – that it is targeted on the agent himself” (Pink 2004, p.8).

Without engaging in an extensive discussion of the topic, it must be noted that by avoiding the question of what the preconditions of free will are, there is a substantial challenge associated with assigning blame for action. As a result, it can be argued that proponents of freedom as non-interference leave little room for a sophisticated account of decision-making and moral culpability. People are assumed to be freely deciding to do whatever they do unless they are being interfered with externally, and so it is difficult to take account of why people suffering from things like extreme stress or mental illness might be regarded as less responsible for their actions. In short, for someone to be free is to be able to be held responsible for how they act, and conversely, to “lack freedom of the will in a certain area of activity ... implies straightaway that [someone] should not be held responsible for what they do” (Pettit 2001, p.1). Because of this, it can be seen how theorists interested in understanding why someone has acted in a particular way may be much more inclined toward the definition of freedom as self-mastery – as it leaves space for a substantial engagement with the question of how much control they have over their actions. Further to this, notions of freedom which open up the internal workings of the agent are able to take account of problems of false consciousness which do not register on externally based accounts (Taylor 1979). Thus, there is more appeal to this definition than just an acknowledgement that the question of free will exists, as understanding freedom through the notion of self-mastery also opens up considerations about how people go about exercising their freedom. This in turn enables a commentary on the types of decision making processes people might be using when they act, which provides a space for discussion to occur about good and bad kinds of decision making.
If a definition of freedom remains neutral with regard to how freedom should be used, it remains difficult to articulate why certain types of freedoms should be regarded as more important than others. For some, this is a substantial strength to the definition of freedom in a positive conception. On this view, it is highly important that a definition of freedom is able to account for why we would think that restricting an individual’s freedom to cross a road is not as significant as restricting their freedom to practice their religion (Taylor 1979). Here advocates of positive freedom can suggest that remaining neutral to how freedom should be used is in fact not the strength that negative advocates take it to be, at least insofar as discriminating between which specific types of freedom might be more significant than others (Carter 1999). By holding the justification of an action as being important, definitions of positive freedom are better equipped to understand why being free (or not free) to undertake certain actions is more important than being free to do others.

The motivation for acting one way or another becomes fundamentally significant in this model of freedom, and hence it can be seen how this kind of conception of freedom can also be seen as appealing to a range of perspectives concerned with promoting particular notions of how one should live a good life. The most striking example of this approach to defining freedom is present in the deeply influential works of Immanuel Kant. For Kant, it is of fundamental significance that individuals can recognise the rationally appropriate way to act, and true freedom is found in the freedom of rational self-determination (Patten 1999, p.55). In the overcoming of desire, and in the subjection of desire to a rationally correct way to behave.

Berlin argues that defining freedom as self-mastery is unsatisfactory because of the political ramifications which stem from it. Once individuals start to critique how other people go about exercising their freedom, there is a strong inclination to go about ‘helping’ them to come to good ways of exercising their freedom, and much more problematically, preventing them from engaging in bad ones. If certain lifestyles and modes of decision-making are considered to be the right ones, then it may be the case that people should be persuaded to act in this fashion. Berlin employs Mill (1974, p.173) to highlight that this is problematic, because when it
comes to doing what is best for ourselves, “all errors which [we are] likely to commit against advice and warning are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain [us] to what they deem [our] good.” Berlin posits that if reason has a function in the conception of freedom, such that we might stop someone from acting in a way that is contrary to their best interests, it opens up the door to the misalignment of an individual’s best interests so that someone can act against another person’s best interests but claim to be acting for their benefit. This is a serious issue, as there is much salience to this observation that acting in someone’s apparent best interests, contrary to their stated will on an issue, is a sleight of hand that has long been employed by despots to justify gross wrongdoing. This is an area particularly close to Berlin, and many have commented that his experience as a youth in repressive Bolshevik Russia is crucial to his understanding of the apparent ease with which the concept of positive freedom can be misappropriated (Flikschuh 2007).

Although it certainly is concerning, this problem is not necessarily fatal to the account of freedom as self-mastery. It is possible to hold a view that there are better and worse manners through which individuals can make decisions, whilst still protecting the space for people to make those decisions. On this view, we may think poorly of a particular lifestyle or action, but still respect and defend the ability of the person to act in that way. This position is defended by Taylor, who contends that the step from valuing some modes of living and decision-making more than others, to forcing everyone to cohere with those same ideals is not one that many models of positive freedom are required to take. To adopt this kind of understanding is instead to caricature the notion of positive freedom. It is a caricature because it fails to take account of the importance and prominence that self-realisation, and the ownership of a particular decision holds in the model of freedom as self-mastery. In essence, this criticism ignores the degree to which the definition is linked to the wish on the behalf of the individual to be their own master. In turn, the criticism fails to note the role that authenticity has to play in freedom as self-mastery, specifically, the degree to which it matters that individuals are themselves the makers of a given decision, and that it does not come to them externally.
Accounts of positive freedom are ultimately based in a concern with how and when people can be understood to be in control of their actions. Because of this, the definition of freedom as self-mastery can be seen to be much more internally focused than the previously discussed account of freedom as non-interference. This conception of freedom can be seen as appealing to a number of different perspectives, particularly those which are concerned about notions of moral culpability and responsibility. It is a definition of freedom which is well equipped to understand why people might act in a manner contrary to reason, and in turn, it opens up a space for discussing the blameworthiness of people who act in this manner when it impacts upon others. Indeed, it is a conception that is generally aimed towards understanding why people can often feel that there is a sense in which they genuinely feel as if they are not in control of themselves.

Whilst much of Karl Marx's work extends beyond the central focus of a thesis on measuring democracy, his work is deeply important to understanding material inequality, an important element of the capability approach discussed below. Indeed, the work of Marx is an important precondition to much of Sen's work on inequality, as Marx “has been a powerful mover of mankind in providing a focus of attention on inequalities arising from class differences” (Sen 1978, p.105). We can think of Marx's conception of freedom as “the full and unhindered self-actualization of the human “species-essence” in history … both in the form of physical necessity and in the form of social relations” (Walicki 1988, p.11). The social element of Marx's thought, concerned with an emancipatory rational identification of the struggles fellow members of the proletariat connects rationality and society in a way similar to many other scholars of the self-mastery tradition, and can be set aside. It is the recognition of material inequality as of fundamental significance to the freedom of individuals which is a core insight of Marx. It is the foundation upon which core normative aspects of the capability approach are developed, and whilst Marx does not feature prominently in discussions of the capability approach more generally, his work should be recognised for developing some of the theoretical framework of the approach.

The mechanism through which this definition is primarily visible in accounts of democracy is in the literature which is centred upon rational deliberation and the
democratic process. It is the least readily observable definition of freedom, because of the degree to which it focuses upon the internal justifications for decision-making. Whilst the reasons which are given by politicians for policy ideas which they present can be treated as the basis for their views, evaluating the quality of these accounts in a nuanced fashion remains implausible. The perfectionist nature of freedom as self-mastery means that what constitutes good and bad justification needs to factor into analysis of democratic decision-making, which is both a complex idea, and a highly controversial one. Hence, as a concept to be measured and evaluated, rational justification or deliberation is very slippery – it is currently still too hard to quantify at the individual level. Because of the nature of the challenges associated with operationalising the definition of freedom as self-mastery at the individual level, and the large amount of space required to elaborate on those challenges, freedom as self-mastery is considered in a secondary manner throughout the thesis.

1.4 MacCallum’s Triadic Understanding of Freedom

Before continuing on to discuss the other two conceptions of freedom, it is worth making note of Gerald MacCallum’s (MacCallum 1967) important article ‘Negative and Positive Freedom,’ which is strongly critical of the division made by Berlin. MacCallum (MacCallum 1967) is sharply critical of the fact that disputes about the nature of freedom often revolve around groups attempting “to capture for their own side the favourable attitudes attaching to the notion of freedom.” By identifying this MacCallum seeks to point out where the conversation about the definition of freedom has become confused, arguing that the multiplicity of definitions given for freedom are the consequence of polemists manipulating the definition to best serve their needs. MacCallum characterises this as a significant issue, arguing that there can only be one definition of freedom, and to attempt to hold multiple competing conceptions simultaneously ultimately renders any understanding of freedom as incoherent and unintelligible.

MacCallum contends that to adequately define freedom one cannot start with a politically motivated purpose in mind, a challenge which he levels at Berlin. MacCallum instead wants to craft a definition that is politically neutral, and which is purely descriptive. To do so, he presents an understanding of freedom as a triadic relationship, whereby freedom should be understood in terms of the relationship
which exists between something (an agent or agents), preventive conditions, and outcomes (MacCallum 1967); which can be formally expressed as:

\[ X \text{ is (is not) free from } Y \text{ to do (not do, become, not become) } Z. \]

This is where \( X \) ranges over agents, \( Y \) over preventing conditions, and \( Z \) over actions, conditions of character, or circumstances. MacCallum emphasises that freedom ought to be regarded purely as a descriptor, and points out that this is the way that the term freedom is generally used in everyday speech. Whilst there are some issues with MacCallum’s overall argument, the triadic conception of freedom which he presents is quite useful for thinking about how the measurement of freedom can be approached.

In attempting to render a definition of freedom that is politically neutral, MacCallum seeks to move the political aspects of freedom into the triadic components, so that the real area of contention is actually in how we go about defining \( X \), \( Y \), and \( Z \). In doing so, MacCallum attempts to open up a discussion on a number of important questions like: who or what should be regarded as agents? What might be regarded as an acceptable or unacceptable form of preventing condition? What constitutes a morally notable action, condition of character, or circumstance? Based upon MacCallum’s understanding, achieving a consensus definition of freedom can only be accomplished by resolving disputes across these domains. Whether that is possible, or plausible, seems decidedly unlikely, nonetheless, MacCallum’s contention is that it is across these domains that the concept of freedom does its work as a morally significant value.

The utility of MacCallum’s definition is that it serves as a bridge between the non-interference tradition of defining freedom, and the capability based conception outlined below. MacCallum’s work helps to identify where the non-interference tradition may fail to adequately capture that which is most salient about defining freedom in established democracies. This is because for the most part, non-interference represents a normalised constraint on action in established democracy, and so it becomes decreasingly important in describing what is essential to the everyday experience of freedom which individuals have. Whilst it is important that individuals are not interfered with, once this norm is established, it loses its
significance as the essential descriptor of what constrains the options and choices available to individuals.

1.5 Freedom as Capability

The definition used for the measure presented in the second half of the thesis, freedom as capability, is a contemporary definition of freedom which has been pioneered by Amartya Sen (1980, 1992, 1999, 2005, 2013) and developed extensively by Martha Nussbaum (1992, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2011b, 2015). The definition of freedom as capability comes from the broader work of the capability approach, and treats the plausible constraints on action which individuals face to be of central significance to understanding what they are free and not free to do. In that sense, a basic form of freedom as capability fits into the triadic framework outlined above.

As articulated by Nussbaum, freedom as capability is part of a project to construct a theory of basic social justice, operating in conjunction with associated values of human dignity, the threshold and political liberalism. Although originally pioneered by Sen as an approach to welfare economics, Nussbaum further develops the theory of freedom as capability by drawing on the Aristotelian notion that there are requirements to living a life worthy of human dignity (Nussbaum 2015). Nussbaum (2011b, p.18) focuses on the question of “what is each person able to do and to be?” and contends that in order for people to live a life worthy of human dignity, there is a minimum threshold level of “opportunities, or substantial freedoms, which people then may or may not exercise in action.”

What is important in the capability based definition of freedom is that individuals are only free to the extent that they actually are able to exercise their freedom. This is a key point of difference with the non-interference based definition – as the absence of interference does not necessarily mean that someone is free to do something. Simply put, the definition of freedom as capability is that:

*we are free to undertake an action, only to the extent to which there are no plausible constraints prohibiting us from undertaking that action.*
One of the appealing characteristics of this definition of freedom is that it reflects how the term freedom is conventionally used. Although in day-to-day living people do not use the formal jargon of talking about constraints upon their freedom, it is easy to comprehend how an individual saying, ‘I am not really free to go on a holiday, because I cannot afford to,’ is coherent with the idea that absent the capability to do something, an individual is not free to do it. Consider the example of someone asking her friend to go and get a coffee later that afternoon: the friend might respond that yes, they are free and would like to get a coffee; or they might say something like, they would really like to, but unfortunately, they have to work this afternoon; alternatively, they might say something like, they would really like to, but that they have already agreed to go and have a coffee with someone else; or they might say, they would really like to, but unfortunately they can’t afford to this week. None of these constraints can be regarded as ‘hard’ constraints, that is, none of them render it as physically impossible for the friend to go and get a coffee. Nonetheless, it can be seen that these various commitments constrain the options available to the friend in this example, and that they are the kinds of commitments that can be understood as important for reasonable people to hold to. As such, it would be implausible to expect the friend to violate any one of those commitments, and indeed, being a person who didn’t hold to these kinds of commitments might make them someone who people would be less inclined to be friends with. If we shift the activity considered from being politically neutral, towards being an activity which is important for being able to effectively participate in the political process, then it becomes clear how freedom as capability can be important in a democracy. For example, if it is important to attend expensive networking functions, then certain forms of political engagement may become closed off from citizens who cannot afford to participate.

There is a strong normative element to the freedom as capability definition, and yet, it is possible to use the notion purely as a descriptor, by not attaching any evaluative aspects to the description given (Alkire 2008). Consider how in the above example the extent to which the friend is unfree to go and get a coffee is distinct from the question of whether there are serious moral implications which arise from whether or not they are free to get a coffee. In a world where the kinds of constraints which individuals face are primarily opportunity or resource based, this kind of
description of freedom is more salient than a legislative one. In established democracies, where respect for rights and civil liberties is normalised, the largest factors shaping political action are likely to be who has access to the requisite resources to engage in the process, and how individuals perceive their capacity to impact the political process.

Nussbaum (2011b, p.28) acknowledges the potential to separate the evaluative and descriptive components of freedom as capability, highlighting that the capability approach does not necessarily “tell us what to value.” It is in this space that Nussbaum and Sen diverge, as although Sen’s project is highly normative, Sen is primarily concerned with generating a theory that can describe and compare what kinds of capability individuals hold, rather than being concerned with the crafting of a systematic theory of social justice. This emphasis is the source of some criticism of Sen’s construction of the capability approach, with some suggesting that there is little substantive moral force to his position, and that it needs to be supplemented by other theories (Robeyns 2008; Qizilbash 2008; Srinivasan 2007). Conversely, Nussbaum (2011b, p.28) regards the fundamental component of her project as being an attempt to address the question of “which are the really valuable [capabilities], which are the ones that a minimally just society will endeavour to nurture and support?” Freedom as capability, when attached to the other elements of Nussbaum’s theorising about social justice, thus becomes a “broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements” (Robeyns 2005, p.94).

This second dimension of freedom as capability, whereby it can be seen as a normative theory that aims at addressing what the minimum requirements are for living a life worthy of human dignity, provides a great deal of moral currency for this definition of freedom. By asking the question of which characteristics of freedom are most important to living a life worthy of human dignity, it takes very seriously the way in which freedom is relevant to people in the world. That is, it asks and takes seriously the question of what sort of life can a given individual plausibly expect to live? That this question is central to the notion of freedom as capability is reflective of a broader commitment to improving the lives of people in developing countries, who often may not be capable of exercising freedom that they legislatively possess.
It also represents a clear awareness of the fact that in the face of genuine hardship, it is highly implausible to expect people to do or be certain things, even if they hold the legislative freedom to do so.

In thinking about the types of hardships and difficulties which can render an individual unfree, it is worthwhile returning to the triadic understanding of freedom outlined by MacCallum. It is feasible to think of freedom as capability as expressed in this formula, with people as agents; with the plausible limitations to freedom that an individuals face being constraints or barriers to action; and with the types of freedoms that are required for living a life worthy of human dignity as being (potentially) desired states of being or outcomes. For example, inadequate access to resources can be plausibly understood as a barrier to an individual being able to do, or be, a particular thing. In the context of Nussbaum’s desire to create a theory of not just freedom, but also of social justice, it is worth opening up and interrogating the question of what kinds of constraints or barriers to action can be considered as being morally significant. Opening this question up enables a direct engagement with the question of what kinds of barriers there are to living a life worthy of human dignity, and in turn, asks whether it is possible to minimise the extent to which people fail to possess a threshold level of freedom as capability in a given society?

Related to the question of precisely what the threshold amount of freedom as capability should be, is the question of who is responsible for ensuring that everyone has a sufficient amount of freedom. Because of the direction of emphasis of the theoretical development of the capability approach being towards the developing world, there is relatively little discussion of precisely who should be providing the freedom in question (Ibrahim 2014). In addressing this issue, it remains important to remember that because much of the capability approach is focused upon the Global South, the position of obligations to provide capabilities for others remains under-theorised. At present the only accounts that address this problem speak of the responsibility to provide freedom as capability as primarily falling to governments, with there being more work required to better develop an account of how to deal with issues of distributing freedom across a society when there are limitations to how this might be achieved. In this sense, the capability
approach to freedom remains primarily a descriptive based theory, where it has little to say about who is responsible for providing freedom.

Freedom as capability can be best understood as a definition concerned with what kinds of constraints can prevent people living a life of their own choosing. Underpinning this idea is the question of what threshold level of freedom is required to live a life worthy of human dignity. These concerns are motivated by an awareness of the extent to which people in the real world can have a substantial lack of capability to act in a way that they might otherwise wish to, particularly in the Global South, where resource scarcity remains a substantive factor in limiting the type of lives which individuals can lead. In addressing these questions, there is a clear connection between the notion of freedom as capability, and the attempt to craft a theory of social justice that is concerned with how people live in the real world. The definition of freedom as capability can also be viewed as valuable because of the way in which it captures the essence of how the term freedom tends to be used conventionally.

In the context of measuring democracy, the definition of freedom as capability provides a unique framework for understanding the individual in the modern world. Specifically, it moves beyond concern for non-interference into the domain of being able to carry out actions. If we accept that many of the developments in increasing human freedom through the twentieth century were based in expanding the protection which individuals enjoyed to pursue their own ends, then the flow on is that now it is imperative to turn to who can and can’t actually carry out the actions which they are not prevented from undertaking. In short, the capability based conception of freedom is the next step after the legislative protection of freedom, and it follows that contemporary grievances experienced by individuals in modern societies might be understood through this framework.

1.6 Republican Freedom

Another understanding of freedom is the neo-republican conception of freedom, most recently championed by Quentin Skinner (1984, 1998, 2012) and Philip Pettit (1997, 2001, 2003, 2016). This family of definitions of freedom is identified by some theorists as being the oldest, and using the terminology coined by Benjamin Constant, can be understood as the ‘liberty of the ancients’ (Schmidtz
& Brennan 2010). In this republican conception, “we are free to the extent that we do not find ourselves under the domination of others, subject to their will and exposed to the vicissitudes of their desires” (Larmore 2001). As a part of this conception “to be a free person is to be a citizen of a free political community” (Miller 1991, p.3). One can only be truly free in a free political community because it is the only way to ensure “the continued enjoyment of our personal liberty” (Skinner 1984, p.204). In turn, to be a free a political community is to be one which is self-determining, and not externally influenced by foreigners. This definition of freedom is much more obviously politically focused, insofar as it situates being free as both a component of one’s relation to the community, as well as the makeup of the community itself.

Pettit (1997, p.21) critiques Berlin’s binary of positive and negative liberty by arguing that “mastery and interference do not amount to the same thing.” Pettit (1997, pp.21–22) situates the republican definition in between the two concepts of freedom given by Berlin, in “the intermediate possibility that freedom consists in an absence ... of mastery by others, not in an absence of interference.” When speaking of being under the domination of others, Pettit (1997, p.22) means that “the dominating party can interfere on an arbitrary basis with the choices of the dominated, ... at will and with impunity.” In the republican notion of freedom, it is the potential for arbitrary interference that denotes domination, rather than interference occurring. Hence, the essential element of freedom is located in the notion that it is problematic for people’s lives to be subject to the arbitrary external influence of others. Like the account of freedom as self-mastery, the central concern of the republican conception of freedom is that of control. Whereas freedom as self-mastery aims at identifying what it takes for one to be in control of oneself, the republican conception is only concerned with the extent to which we are not controlled by others. In this sense, it is a much more externally focused account of freedom, and because of this it avoids engaging with the question of whether or not freedom should be understood in terms of rationality. It is also a negative account of freedom, since it exists as the absence of something – in this case, the absence of domination by other individuals.
Despite both being negative accounts of freedom, there are some strong points of departure between the republican and the non-interference based conceptions of freedom. Pettit contends that one major reason that we should prefer the republican definition to the definition of freedom as non-interference is best typified through the case of the master and the slave. Suppose that there was a slave who could always convince their master that the slave should be able to do whatever it was that they wanted to do at any given point in time, so that the master never prevented the slave from doing as they wished. In this particular case, the slave is not actually ever interfered with since they are never prevented from doing whatever it is that they want to do. Consequently, in this particular case the slave would be regarded as free using the definition of freedom as non-interference. This is problematic though, as “the non-interfering master remains still a master and a source of domination” (Schmidtz & Brennan 2010, p.14). In the Republican tradition, any account of freedom which treats a slave as actually being a free person is one which is inadequate, and for this reason the definition of freedom as non-interference is rejected as being insufficient.

This leads back to the point that the republican conception of freedom is also much more politically oriented than the non-interference based conceptions. As stated above, to be a free person requires living in a society that is free, and consequently, being a free person requires a commitment to protecting the free status of one’s society. Although not necessarily requiring that a polity be a strict democracy, republican theories of governance require that “citizens play an active role in government, so that the laws that are enacted in some sense reflect the wishes of the people” (Miller 1991, p.4). As such, republican notions of freedom require a commitment of individuals to institutions which safeguard against totalitarian despotism, and “individuals have a duty to participate actively in politics” (Patten 1996, p.29). On the republican account failure to follow this duty is a failure to safeguard one’s own freedom, and it is problematic to will one’s own freedom but fail to act in a way that protects it (Skinner 1984). In essence, the republican conception of freedom draws on the question of what a coherent picture of society and the individual might be, such that being free is both a part and a consequence of being in a society.
The republican definition of freedom holds appeal for a number of reasons. In part, it successfully situates itself between two of the strengths of the negative and positive conceptions of freedom. It is able to draw on the moral currency afforded to the negative view of interference, going further though, and highlighting that the potential for arbitrary interference can be a sufficiently problematic state of affairs. It also draws on the moral currency afforded to the positive traditions view that there some forms of actions which can be regarded as more significant than others. In particular, the republican approach to freedom highlights that actions which are politically relevant are especially significant. By speaking of domination and control, republican conceptions of freedom also draw on the value of the individual’s desire to be their own self-master, although it leaves unexamined the types of concerns that might be raised with regard to self-control and the overcoming of desires. Another area where one can regard republican conceptions of freedom as being morally valuable is the extent to which they connect freedom to the domain of the political. If one consciously holds that comprehending what it is to be free requires an acknowledgment and awareness of human existence in a community, one may desire to connect living as a free person in part to the manner in which one engages with the community.

There are two aspects of the republican conception of freedom which are particularly relevant for the measurement of democracy. In the context of the measurement of democracy, freedom as non-domination signifies the importance of evaluating various forms of inequality within a democratic society. This is because it can be readily identified how large forms of inequality have a high potential to generate relationships of dominance. In this vein, one space where domination can be located is in the disconnection of representatives from ordinary citizens (where representatives are taken to belong to a class of political elites, rather than being ordinary citizens). Measures which pay regard to this phenomenon capture an important dimension of the republican concern for domination because the division between ‘elites’ and ordinary citizens is a key area where democratic fragmentation can occur. The second aspect of the non-domination conception of freedom which is relevant to democratic measurement is the notion of political participation – whereas other definitions are agnostic to whether citizens engage in the political
process (provided they have the space to do so), there is a clear imperative within the republican tradition to actively participate in the political process.

1.7 Concluding Remarks

What then are the overall similarities and differences between the various conceptions of freedom outlined? Both the Republican and non-interference based definitions of freedom suggest that there is something very important in being able to independently come to do and be the things which we desire, without being pushed or influenced by others. These two approaches to freedom tap into the notion of control, but as a negative idea where it is important that individuals are not being controlled or interfered with by others. This can be contrasted with, but also combined with, the manner in which definitions of freedom as self-mastery also situate a high degree of importance on the notion of control. These definitions contrast with each other because the two negative accounts place the issue of control as external to ourselves, and emphasise that people should not be controlled by others. Whereas the self-mastery definition asks the question of what is it to be in control internally? What is it to be our own master? These are definitions which can at times be combined because they are ideas and questions that for the most part are complimentary. Irrespective of where these points come into tension, it is evident that a central notion to freedom is that of being in control, and if one is concerned about being in control of oneself, does it not make sense to think about it both internally and externally?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1 Differences in Emphasis of Each Definition of Freedom</th>
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<td><strong>Resources/relationships included</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Freedom as capability</td>
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<td>Resources excluded</td>
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<td>Freedom as self-mastery</td>
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Table 1.1 demonstrates a simple way to think about the difference in emphasis across the four different families of definitions of freedom. Each definition emphasises a different element across two distinct axes. The first axis is whether it is an individually focussed, or socially focussed definition (this is where social is taken to mean interpersonally focussed). The second axis is whether the definition
focusses on resource disparities or lack of resources as a component of freedom, or whether it excludes this aspect from analysis. It is important to note that the table is not one that exclusionary, but rather that it highlights what each definition emphasises.

As the above table shows, freedom as capability is directed towards issues in a different area than the other three definitions. Whilst it certainly can be said that defenders of freedom as capability would be quick to draw on the impact of lacking control in living a life worthy of human dignity, it is clearly not the paradigm through which capability theorists tend to engage with the notion of being free. Instead, capability theorists come at the notion of freedom from the ground up. They draw on the question of what kinds of things matter to being a person, and in turn, ask how individuals come to possess these things. This leads to a substantially more expansive interpretation about what constitutes the limits to freedom, and opens up considerations about material limitations to freedom as agents live in the world. This is a point of departure from the other definitions because it very clearly opens up the domain of freedom as moving beyond an account of the social world. Access to resources, which does not feature on the other accounts of freedom, is quite obviously a very important component of the account of freedom as capability. Inadequate access to resources is at times one of the most significant constraints to action for the poor, and subsequently, can be construed as substantially significant in understanding the kinds of decisions which they are able to make in their lives.

Taken together, these differing definitions of freedom point to a model of freedom where to be free is to be in control of oneself, and in conjunction with this, to be free is to be capable of actually pursuing the types of things that one desires. It is not hard to think of this kind of conception working in the abstract, however, this idea is not one which is at all times coherent, as tensions can arise between being in control of oneself, and being able to pursue the things that one desires. How this tension is resolved within a particular theory is informative about what the locus of value is within that theory, and in turn, points to the kind of philosophical and political issues which that theory takes to be of central concern. Moreover, there is also the question of how different interpretations and approaches to freedom can be employed to address political problems which arise in the real world. If there is
intrinsic disagreement about how freedom should be conceptualised, yet individuals must nonetheless interact to resolve disputes which pertain to freedom, then how should they resolve these disputes? The first step must surely be coming to understand what the nature of the dispute is – in this case, this would be coming to understand precisely what it is that is valued in the notion of freedom. To use the example from the start of the chapter of an individual desiring control in the non-interference conception, they may not wish to be taxed, despite the fact that it will help improve the capability of other members in their community with pursuing the types of things that they might desire. In this dispute the notion of the threshold invoked by Nussbaum can be informative, as it is likely that most people would accept that it is more important that some kind of minimum amount of capability is protected, rather than the ability of a particularly wealthy individual to preserve their wealth. Nonetheless, there are those who would insist that preserving control over their own wages was a more central consideration for preserving freedom. It seems that there is little that one can do to persuade individuals on either side of the argument. Libertarians like Robert Nozick who regard a transaction of this kind as unjust certainly have a legitimate case in questioning how far a redistribution of this kind should go. However, they also must account for why individuals who are inadequately provided for should accept the continued existence of this unequal distribution. This is one of the central questions of politics, and the relationship between individuals and the state remains open to debate.

Whilst it is possible to combine the different definitions of freedom based upon the areas which they overlap, once challenged by morally significant issues, it is simple to pull them apart. Hence, to properly take account of freedom and the manner in which it is employed in argument and in society at large, an awareness is required as to what makes specific definitions preferable. This chapter has outlined what underpins support for each of the definitions which have been presented, freedom as non-interference, freedom as self-mastery, freedom as capability, and freedom as non-domination. Each definition of freedom is meaningfully different to the others, such that they are likely to produce different evaluations about the status of freedom for individuals in the world, and there are valid reasons for subscribing to each of the differing conceptions of freedom. It is implausible to believe that one definition of freedom will ever be found to be compelling by everyone, and this
implies that a better strategy is to engage with freedom in the world through an appreciation that each contributes something to understanding what it is to be free. This bears important implications for instances where the different conceptions suggest alternate actions are called for, particularly in instances where there are important outcomes at stake. In the broader context of this thesis, it implies that there should be an attentiveness to the varying elements of freedom which make it such a substantive normative concept when evaluating freedom in the world. Measuring only one definition of freedom is likely to only capture a very narrow sense of what it is that makes freedom valuable, and thus, for projects that engage with the evaluation of freedom, it is important to consider the limited sense in which freedom is being captured. For a given measure it may be the case that the relevant aspect of freedom has been evaluated, but, it is imperative to consider the implications of the definition chosen, and to consider what the consequence would be if a different definition was employed. This is the primary objective of the next chapter.
Chapter 2: Individuals and Democracy

The previous chapter established the central features of four different definitions of freedom, demonstrating the substantial diversity which exists in understanding what it is to be free. This chapter will argue that in the context of measuring the quality of established democracy, the capability based definition of freedom may be the most useful for understanding the quality of democracy in the world. This is because the capability based definition of freedom provides the best framework for understanding the connection between the citizen and the state. Furthermore, a theory of democracy based upon the definition of freedom as capability may also be the most desirable institutionally framed conception of democracy. To demonstrate why capability is the definition of freedom which best explains the connection between freedom and democracy, the chapter will first examine the position which democracy as an ideal occupies in the construction of different institutional accounts of democracy. The first half of the chapter presents three contrasting approaches to conceptualising democracy as a political system. The accounts covered represent distinct approaches which position freedom in a different way within the conceptualisation of democracy as a political system, and range from minimalist to expansive. The second half of the chapter discusses these different accounts in the context of democracy as an ideal, and employs some observations about the desirability of democracy as an ideal to outline why freedom as capability is the definition which is most suitable to explaining the relationship between freedom and democracy. This section also engages with contemporary scholarship on less institutionally focussed accounts of democracy, to highlight the desirability of using a capability based definition of freedom. In this section it will be argued that the ideal of democracy is connected to something fundamental about what it is to live as a person, through the role which it serves as the political system best suited to enabling individuals to live a life of their own choosing.

This chapter addresses the second proposition outlined in the Introduction, that the definition of freedom as capability is the definition best equipped to understand freedom in established democracies. In exploring the relationship between democracy and freedom, the case will be made that the concept of agency is central to understanding this connection between democracy and freedom. This
argument will be made by proposing that it is a serious problem for democracy if citizens encounter circumstances that inhibit their capacity to exercise agency, because it can undermine their ability to function as citizens. Here agency is defined as the ability to exercise meaningful control over the decisions one makes. This conception of agency is a thick conception of agency, whereby the plausibility of undertaking alternate courses of action is a central feature of having meaningful control over the decisions one makes. This is a conception of agency which is heavily informed by the capabilities approach, as it does not limit potential constraints to solely the domain of wilful interference by other agents.

2.1 Popular Institutional Accounts of Democracy

In understanding what the ideal of democracy is, in the context of this thesis it is informative to focus upon how this has been explored in the literature associated with measuring democracy. Although it is not uniformly the case, measures of democracy have primarily been derived from institutional or systems-based accounts of democracy, and so those will be the primary focus of the ensuing discussion, and in the next chapter I will turn to the historical origins of this. The approach taken here is to consider increasingly expansive conceptions of democracy, pointing out the aspects which make them more normatively appealing. Hence, I will start with more minimalist accounts which have been popular in the contemporary literature, and then outline how these contrast with more expansive conceptions. It is prudent to begin by discussing the minimalist perspective advanced by Joseph Schumpeter (1942) in ‘Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.’ This is because much of the democratic literature in the latter half of the Twentieth Century “is elaborated within the framework established by Schumpeter and based on his definition of democracy” (Pateman 1970, p.3). Moreover, this influence is particularly noteworthy in understanding institutional approaches to defining democracy, and in turn the manner in which democracy has been conceptualised in measurement.

Following Schumpeter, the work of the highly influential Robert Dahl will be explored. Dahl’s influence is such that to some he represents the “profession’s most authoritative voice on democratic government” (Ringen 2008, p.283). Dahl’s contribution to the evaluation of political systems is impressive, and as Chapter Four
highlights, the number of measures which cite his definition of polyarchy as the conceptual basis for their framework make it impossible to understand measures of democracy without reviewing his definition.

The third approach to conceptualising democracy outlined will be the one presented by Guillermo O'Donnell. Although O'Donnell’s definition of democracy is not as widely influential as the definitions presented by Dahl and Schumpeter, it is becoming increasingly popular through the influence it has in approaching measurement through the paradigm of the quality of democracy (Munck 2016, p.5). One reason for this increasing popularity is because it is more expansive in the normative aspects of democracy which it seeks to incorporate, which makes it a valuable account to assess where the other two approaches may be inadequately engaging with democracy as an ideal. One dimension of the normative appeal present in O'Donnell’s theorising on democracy is that he incorporates aspects of freedom as capability into his understanding of democracy. Since the thesis is based on an intuition that some of the problems which are currently being experienced in established democracies are strongly connected to the experience of limited freedom as capability possessed by a growing number of citizens, it makes sense to concentrate on the theory of democracy which has most thoroughly developed this conception of freedom into its underlying framework.

Before moving to the discussion of the different accounts of democracy, it is important to justify the limited scope of the discussion being presented. The first decision related to this is the choice to focus specifically on theories of representative democracy. The basis for this decision is the emphasis of the thesis on engaging with existing measures of democracy. In choosing to focus on existing measures of democracy, the types of accounts engaged with are naturally tied to those which feature in measures of democracy. Since democracy as it exists in the world today is largely practiced in a representative form, and this is the form which measures focus upon, this leads to attention being payed to the features which measures currently emphasise. It is only through grasping the basis of existing measures that the differences which they have with more expansive measures can be understood. Tied to the notion of representative government is the central focus of the discussion around elections. This emphasis is based largely upon the degree
to which the electoral process is the core space for conferring legitimacy in the first two accounts discussed. Furthermore, elections remain the single most important feature used to categorise regimes in existing measures.

The scope of the discussion is also coherent with a recent work by Gerardo Munck (2011), which positions these three theoretical approaches to democracy as the central nexus upon which future research should be developed from. Munck frames the three accounts as being complimentary in how they relate to democratic measurement, noting that they enable engagement with different types of questions, and in turn, suit different research agendas. Munck’s construction of the relationship uses one of Schumpeter’s most important contemporary advocates in discussing the position of his elite model of democracy – Adam Przeworski. Przeworski favours Schumpeter’s minimalist account because he thinks that we should not expect more from democracy as a political system than any other systems. In doing so, Przeworski advocates for distinguishing between democracy, and the effects which it has upon a country, and much of his work has focused upon the relationship which democracy has with economic development (see for example: Przeworski 1985, 2009, 2016; Przeworski & Limongi 1997; Alvarez et al. 1996; Przeworski et al. 2000). There is utility in thinking of democracy in this way, but it is less useful for understanding established democracies, because it does not interrogate the central features of variations between established democracies.

As this thesis is ultimately a practical undertaking evaluating the ability of current measures of democracy to adequately identify problems being experienced in established democracies, it would be difficult to justify basing the ensuing discussion around radical critiques of contemporary models of democracy. Whilst they provide utility, and deserve exploration elsewhere, they signify a radical departure from the accounts around which current measures are constructed. Adopting that approach would position this thesis more towards being a purely theoretical critique, rather than one which is primarily centred on bridging the issues of the relationship between theory and measurement practice. If the theories engaged with are located too far away from the way that measures are constructed, it becomes challenging to reconcile the two different perspectives in a useful way.
2.2 Schumpeterian Elite Democracy

Fundamentally minimalist in nature, Schumpeter’s view of democracy as an institutionally focused account of elite political competition is one which has influenced a variety of democratic measures (Vanhanen 2000, 2003; Przeworski et al. 2000; Alvarez et al. 1996). On Schumpeter’s view there is little use in coming to understand democracy through abstract theory, and instead, it is towards the mechanisms of the democratic process which confer legitimacy upon the arrangement of the state that understanding should be directed. According to Schumpeter (1942, p.241), “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.” In Schumpeter’s model, the essential feature of the democratic method is the procedure of contestation, and the role of citizens is to confer legitimacy upon the government by choosing who is to lead. Democracy is not meant to be rule by the people in any expansive sense, it is meant to be much closer to assent by the people, an idea encapsulated in the view that voters do not decide the issues, but rather, they “confine themselves to accepting this [candidates] bid in preference to others or refusing to accept it” (Schumpeter 1942, p.251). Evidently, this view of democracy is quite clearly not about individuals expressing their will in any comprehensive sense.

The elite based nature of Schumpeter’s (1942, p.235) definition of democracy is partially attributable to his deep scepticism of the ordinary citizen, who he characterises as demonstrating “a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field.” In advancing his procedural definition, Schumpeter is sharply critical of the Enlightenment tradition which precedes him, objecting to the optimistic understanding of the person as a rational political actor which it presents. Against this model Schumpeter outlines a fundamentally pessimistic view about the ability of ordinary individuals to exercise rationality, and comes “very close to offering an explicit attack on the very idea of the individual human agent” (Held 2006, p.179). Drawing upon the susceptibility of the masses to crowd psychology and advertising techniques, it is argued by Schumpeter that the ‘popular will’ is a social construct which is too easily manipulable, and which is often
irrational. Drawing upon the perceived lack of ability by citizens to make good evaluative judgements about politics, Schumpeter (1942, p.242) limits their role to that of selecting leaders, thereby “leaving all the room we may wish to have for a proper recognition of the vital fact of leadership.” In doing so, Schumpeter seeks to invert the classical doctrine of democracy, which places the political in the control of the polity, by reorienting the role of the people to be producing a government.

In the Schumpeterian model the requirements for democracy to successfully function are minimalist in nature. As summarised by O'Donnell (2010, p.15; from Schumpeter 1942, pp.289–96), the conditions required for the success of the democratic method are:

“(1) Appropriate leadership; (2) “The effective range of policy decision should not be extended too far” (3) The existence of “a well-trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition endowed with a strong sense of duty and a no less strong esprit de corps”; (4) Political leaders should practice a good amount of “democratic self-control” and mutual respect; (5) There should also exist “a large measure of tolerance for the difference of opinion,” for which ... “national character and national habits of a certain type” are apposite; and (6) “All the interests that matter are practically unanimous not only in their allegiance to the country but also to the structural principles of the existing society.”

These conditions provided by Schumpeter can be seen to be conditions for sustaining a model of elite democracy, without generating unrest from ordinary citizens. The above requirements all engage with the process of governance, and place little emphasis on the position of the individual within society. Citizens are to remain dutiful, and bow to the wisdom of the elite political managers who he considers substantially more effective at making reasonable decisions. Contained within this view is a clear sense in which Schumpeter wants the ordinary citizens to get out of the way of the elites, so that they can get to the business of running government. Furthermore, Schumpeter does not set a precondition for who is included as a citizen within a democratic polity, and so leaves open the space for the unproblematic exclusion of specific groups within a society from the democratic process.
Schumpeter’s perspective is informed by a deep scepticism of the notion of the ideal which he identifies in the classical tradition, characterising the approach to studying democracy in the classical tradition as unrealistic. As outlined in his critique of existing classical conceptions of democracy, Schumpeter departs sharply from the Enlightenment approach to understanding governance which preceded him. Instead, he seeks to develop a top down account which is derived from the actual functioning of democracy as a political system. In doing so, he creates an account of democracy which is one of political method, an approach which ultimately places limits around what democracy can be understood to be. Schumpeter’s account of democracy then becomes one which seeks to explain the process of political legitimacy in the least demanding terms possible, thereby characterising the role of the ordinary citizen in minimalist terms such that “in Schumpeter’s democratic system, the only full participants are the members of political elites in parties and in public offices” (Held 2006, p.184). What matters then in the Schumpeterian model is the electoral contestation element of democracy, as this is the rubric through which legitimacy is conferred. Contrary to many theorists focused upon the ideal of democracy, Schumpeter has very little space in his model to engage with the notion of freedom, and his account is developed in a space that is as far removed as possible from the individual capacity to exercise freedom, instead engaging only with the political elites. Hence, in the Schumpeterian model of democracy, the ordinary citizen can be fundamentally understood as beneath the political system, as the role they serve is to legitimise the control exerted by those in power. As will be seen in the discussion below, this is an inadequate conceptualisation of democracy, because it does not contain many of the features which make democracy normatively desirable.

In the context of measuring democracy, the account which Schumpeter provides is one centred around power sharing arrangements. Specifically, measures based upon the Schumpeterian model are very election-centric, and deal largely with the transfer of power among elites. This means that the citizen is largely absent from measurement, with the only real area of interest being the extent to which enough citizens have contributed (voted) to ensure the legitimacy of the electoral outcome. In the Schumpeterian model, the egalitarian elements which are common in later democratic theories are largely absent, and so there is little regard for the
concept of political equality across members of the society. In short, measures framed on the Schumpeterian conception are minimalist and categorise as democratic any regimes which hold elections – an idea which is increasingly being seen to not properly reflect democratic values (see for example: Collier & Levitsky 1997; Levitsky & Way 2002). Measures framed in this way will be blind to many of the problems which contemporary democracies may experience because the space to explore these problems is largely removed from the scope of the measure. Important issues as basic as deliberate voting disenfranchisement are missing from measures built on this account of democracy, a problem which is currently identified in a number of contemporary democracies, especially the United States (López-Guerra 2014; Scher 2011; Johnson 2016; Stepan & Linz 2011).

The overemphasis on elections also makes measures limited in their capacity to provide utility for the growing body of literature on competitive authoritarian states (see for example: Levitsky & Way 2002; Gill 2014; Brancati 2014; Pepinsky 2014; Buttorff & Dion 2017; Gehlbach et al. 2016; Bermeo 2016). In doing so, it means that measures are likely to miss important differences across societies that actually impact how we would perceive the quality of democracy. Notably, missing these differences can impact the relationships which scholars observe, with one example being the way that education becomes a marker of political disengagement in competitive authoritarian states, rather than a marker of political engagement (Croke et al. 2016). Considering just how widely accepted this relationship is, it raises important questions about the degree to which missing these important regime characteristics calls into question the quality of measurement instruments.

2.3 The Polyarchy Definition of Democracy

Following on from the Schumpeterian systems based approach to understanding democracy, Dahl’s conception of democracy, or polyarchy as he often terms a less demanding version of it, has also been widely influential in the formulation and conceptualisation of a number of measures of democracy (Coppedge & Reinicke 1990; Teorell et al. 2016; Bollen 1980; Gasiorowski 1996; Coppedge, Alvarez & Maldonado 2008). Dahl’s conception, whilst also system based, is much more appreciative of the normative aspects of democracy than the definition presented by Schumpeter. Based upon this appreciation of the
normatively appealing attributes of democracy, Dahl sets more demanding requirements for precisely what should constitute democracy than those proposed by Schumpeter, and Dahl takes a dynamic approach to advocating in favour of democracy by drawing upon its various facets to argue why it is valuable.

An important factor in Dahl’s work worth noting is his distinction between the actual and the ideal, which is a consequence of his view that the realisation of many political concepts is incredibly difficult to achieve in the real world. Whilst this same observation leads Schumpeter to abandon the ideal notion of democracy and pursue a purely system account, Dahl is more sensitive to the ideal aspects of democracy and incorporates an acknowledgement of these aspects of democracy into his approach. When incorporating the ideal into his understanding of democracy, Dahl (2005, p.187) makes a point of stressing that we should distinguish between the actual and the ideal, and he emphasises the difficulty of achieving the ideal of democracy in cautioning that “we should be aware that in ordinary language, we use the word democracy to refer both to a goal or ideal and to an actuality that is only a partial attainment of the goal.” In the case of democracy, Dahl (1971) argues that at present, there are no political systems that sufficiently meet the requirements to be classified as a democracy, and instead, current political systems aspiring to the title of democracy should be categorised with the less demanding title of polyarchy.

In comprehending the difference between the ideal and the actual experience of democracy, it is worth noting the gap proposed between polyarchy and democracy in Dahl’s work. Dahl (2005, p.189) defines polyarchy as consisting in:

“(1) Elected Officials. Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in officials elected by citizens. (2) Free, fair and frequent elections. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon. (3) Freedom of expression. Citizens have a right to express themselves without danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology. (4) Access to alternative sources of information. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative and independent sources of
information ... not under the control of the government or any other single political group ... and these alternative sources are effectively protected by law. (5) **Associational autonomy.** Citizens have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups. (6) **Inclusive citizenship.** No adult permanently residing in the country and subject to its laws can be denied the rights that are available to others and are necessary to the five political institutions just listed.”

These attributes attend to the two core components which Dahl takes to constitute democracy: public contestation and the right to participation. Whilst the two aspects of democracy are in some ways related to each of these factors, they can be seen as more closely linked to one rather than the other. The first two listed components ensure the provision of competition, as the officials must compete in elections. The remaining four components enable the effective participation by those involved in the electoral process, as they ensure that the ability to participate effectively is not compromised.

As can be seen, these conditions of polyarchy are much more attentive to some of the normative aspects of democracy than those proposed by Schumpeter. In particular, the last condition of inclusive citizenship is a point upon which Dahl (1989, p.121) is sharply critical of Schumpeter’s definition, highlighting the inability of this conception to identify the exclusion of blacks in the American South as undemocratic. Following this observation, it is suggested that Schumpeter’s minimalist definition “leaves us with no particular reason for wanting to know whether a system is “democratic” or not” (Dahl 1989, pp.121–22). Thus, Dahl can be seen as noting that for an account of democracy to be worthwhile, it must capture at least some of the ideal elements that make it a desirable political system. Despite the polyarchy model being a more expansive approach than that given by Schumpeter, there are still spaces where there are issues which can be raised, with one potential issue being that the rights listed are no guarantee that each citizen will be able to properly participate in the political process, only that they cannot be prevented from doing so.
The issue of participation is explored more fully in Dahl’s conception of ideal democracy, which has six distinct features which he believes are essential. An ideal democracy would require effective participation, equality in voting, enlightened policy understanding, final control of the agenda, inclusion, and fundamental rights. Effective participation requires that each individual within the demos is able to make their views known about what policy should be. Equality in voting is protected such that “every member must have an equal and effective opportunity to vote, and all votes must be counted as equal” (Dahl 2006, p.8). Enlightened policy understanding requires that each member of the demos is able to have “equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their likely consequences” (Dahl 2006, p.9). Final control of the agenda ensures that “the policies of the association would always be open to change by the demos, if its members chose to do so” (Dahl 2006, p.9). Inclusion ensures that every member of the demos is included and able to participate in each of the other categories. Finally, fundamental rights are the manner through which members of the demos can secure each of the abovementioned requirements for democracy, and thus “is itself a necessary part of an ideal democratic order” (Dahl 2006, p.10). In Dahl’s conception, it is only when all of these ideals are realised that a political system can be regarded as truly democratic.

The dynamic nature of Dahl’s advocacy for democracy is evident in the extent to which he engages both strong normative and empirical components in his argument, and in this way it can be seen how substantively Dahl’s perspective moves beyond the Schumpeterian approach. Dahl outlines in ‘On Democracy’ that there are ten distinct advantages that the ideal of democracy has over any other feasible alternative. Dahl’s (1998, p.45) list of advantages are:

“(1) Avoiding tyranny; (2) Essential rights; (3) General freedom; (4) Self determination; (5) Moral autonomy; (6) Human development; (7) Protecting essential personal interests; (8) Political equality; and In addition, modern democracies produce: (9) Peace-seeking; and (10) Prosperity.”
The normative advantages presented by Dahl can be broken up into relatively simple appeals to both freedom and equality, which are discussed below\(^4\). In constructing his argument in favour of democracy, Dahl draws heavily upon differing aspects of freedom, and the first five points given by Dahl can be understood as appeals to various aspects of the notion of freedom outlined in the previous chapter.

Dahl’s appeals to freedom can be summarised very simply. It is uncontroversial to suggest that avoiding tyranny is a good thing; whilst there is a diverse range of reasons for this, the most obvious is that tyranny can be viewed as bad through the way in which it represses people. This can be taken as an appeal to notion of freedom as non-interference, since it is predicated on the negative evaluation of the prevention of people living their lives in a way that they would want to. Rights can be notionally understood as an essential building block which people depend upon in order to have their freedom protected. They also can be understood as most stable in a democracy, through the manner in which any changes would require at minimum a degree of popular assent. Along these same lines, in much the same manner as classical liberal theorists like John Stuart Mill, Dahl argues that democracy is best suited to protect the general freedom of individuals. Self determination in the sense employed by Dahl can be viewed as utilising one’s capacity to carry out actions to live one’s own life, as one determines it ought to be lived, and can be linked to the notion of control that was discussed at the end of the previous chapter. Moral autonomy represents having the freedom to choose upon the kinds of values one subscribes to, and again can be viewed as an appeal to the inherent value that exists in being free to decide things for oneself. The seventh item on the list, protection of essential personal interests, can also be viewed as an appeal to securing one’s freedom, as Dahl (1998, p.52) argues that you can protect your own personal interests “only if you can participate fully in determining the conduct of the government.”

For Dahl, the role of equality in democracy is two-fold. The first role is the way that democracy treats the life, liberty, and happiness, of each citizen as of equal

\(^4\)The final two advantages have been omitted from the discussion, as they are outcomes at the system level, which is a separate topic.
worth. Democracy appeals to the idea that there is nothing inherent in people that can be used to differentiate between them, and thus they should be regarded as inherently equal. The second role that equality plays is in the domain of political equality. Political equality is important instrumentally because it plays an essential role in the maintenance of democracy by ensuring that citizens are able to protect their freedom and interests from governments, through their capacity to make government accountable to popular scrutiny (Dahl 1989, pp.130–131). Both of these points about political equality are a fundamental departure from Schumpeter's elite based model, which can be understood as actively hostile to the egalitarian principles of democracy through the critique it presents of the ordinary citizen.

On the list of advantages Dahl appeals to the broader notion of equality explicitly through his inclusion of political equality. In advocating for the notion of political equality, Dahl (2006, p.4) argues for two reasonable assumptions which he believes are "hard to reject in reasonable and open public discourse." The first assumption which Dahl (2006, p.4) makes is "that all human beings are of equal intrinsic worth, that no person is intrinsically superior to another, and that the good or interests of each person must be given equal consideration." This is what he terms the assumption of intrinsic equality. According to Dahl, a troublesome question follows from this assumption, the question of who should decide what the good or interests of a person might be. We might be able to decide what the good is for ourselves, but how do we arbitrate instances where we have interests which conflict with others? From this problem the second assumption arises, which occurs if we restrict our focus to the government of a state. The second assumption is that "among adults no persons are so definitely better qualified than others to govern that they should be entrusted with complete and final authority over the government of the state" (2006, p.4). In backing up this second assumption, Dahl (2006, p.5) employs Lord Acton's famous and oft quoted proposition about human nature that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." On Dahl's view, without maintaining political equality, those with more power will become concerned with protecting it, irrespective of the intentions they might have held when they initially came to that power.
Whereas Schumpeter's model of democracy was characterised as placing the citizen beneath the state, Dahl's polyarchy model can be seen as bringing the citizen into a more even position with the democratic state. Whilst at its heart Dahl's theory is one of the political system, it is much more attentive to the role which individual citizens occupy within the democratic state. This attentiveness to the individual is visible in Dahl's conception of polyarchy through the way that the deliberate political disenfranchisement of citizens is rendered problematic to democracy, and the protection of civil and political liberties which are present in Dahl's model are valued for the role they serve to the individual. However, Dahl does not present a comprehensive preference for the individual, as he does not ensure that political equality is achieved, and instead only ensures that it is not actively prevented. This can be problematic for democracy if there are instances where important political activities like running for public office which can't be undertaken by all the citizens in the regime, since this evidently is a threat to the political equality which the citizens actually possess.

These features lead to a legalistic emphasis in terms of the aspects of democracy which are measured based upon Dahl's polyarchy definition. Because Dahl's account pays a large amount of attention to the protection of civil and political liberties, it implies that transgressions in these areas are the central way to identify issues which can undermine the legitimacy of a democracy. Whilst these are undeniably important issues that need to be considered, they are not sufficient to safeguard political equality. Whilst Dahl acknowledges the potential for economic inequality to translate into political inequality, this is not a prominent issue in his conception of democracy, and thus it is unsurprising that measures based upon his definition largely ignore this issue. The other aspect which is central to measures based upon Dahl's theorising on democracy is the legitimacy of elections. They form a key focus, as they represent the space where democratic citizens confer legitimacy onto the government. In a sense, the electoral process reflects the culmination of the conferral of rights granted elsewhere, as they are of little use without the electoral space which can be used to hold representatives to account.
2.4 Citizenship as Agency

More normatively oriented than Dahl’s approach to democracy, O’Donnell (2010, 2004) advances an account which places the political regime of democracy as subordinate to the ideal of democracy. O’Donnell develops his account from the starting point that the only way in which state power can be legitimate is the degree to which it is conferred legitimacy through the connection of citizens/agents to the state (O’Donnell 2010, p.10). This is because ultimately all state power emerges from those within the polity – and so the way in which the people within the polity are connected to this process is of fundamental significance. Hence, in theorising democracy, the account given by O’Donnell treats the relationship between the individual and the state as central. In this way O’Donnell can be thought of as being concerned with the question of political justification in much the same vein as the Enlightenment tradition of making arrangements rationally justifiable to individuals.

In O’Donnell’s model of democracy, the elements which make it a normatively desirable concept are also fundamental to understanding how it should operate in practice. A consequence of this positioning of the political regime as subordinate to the ideal of democracy is that O’Donnell does not believe that exhaustive system-based definitions of democracy can ever completely capture the ideal of democracy. One reason for holding this view is that there is no way to ensure that there will always be fair elections, or satisfactory resolution of political conflict, since there will always be disagreements in academia and in practical politics with regards to precisely how conflicts over how these matters should be resolved. This can be thought of as reflective of the notion of incommensurability explored in the previous chapter, as there will remain different reasonable ways to think of resolving a given dispute in a fair way.

This leads O’Donnell to propose thematizing the reasons and issues which might undermine the functioning of a democracy in order to reveal the principle components of democracy which cannot be compromised. Thus, in presenting his definition of democracy, O’Donnell aims towards the ideal components rather than outlining a list of procedural requirements which enable the identification of instances where democracy is achieved. A component of this approach is tied to the
emphasis which O’Donnell places on individuals conferring legitimacy upon democracy. This results in O’Donnell (2010, p.23) arguing that political democracy contains three kinds of essential components: “one, fair elections; two, the positive, participatory rights of voting and eventually trying to be elected, jointly with taking part in activities related to the exercise of those rights; and, third, despite their undecidability, a set of freedoms that surround and are necessary supports for the likelihood of such elections and their related participatory rights.”

The first two components can be treated as implicitly the same principles which Dahl embraces, as these are very close to what Dahl seeks to accomplish with the more explicit requirements he outlines. Much of the substantive content in the first two components can be thought of as implicitly linked to commonly held democratic notions of political equality and popular sovereignty. In this sense, the basic institutional framework provided by O’Donnell is effectively the same as that given by Dahl, and the point of difference is located on the threshold levels which constitute meeting those requirements. The third component of O’Donnell’s definition is worth exploring, as this is where he diverges from the perspective given by Dahl, and further moves beyond the perspective given by Schumpeter. In part this divergence is connected to a deeper appreciation for the requirements of equality – that is, O’Donnell takes the provision of participatory rights to be an insufficient condition to ensure democratic legitimacy, because not all citizens will be able to participate equally. As will be seen below, O’Donnell instead sets a higher threshold for the enactment of these rights – the possession of a sufficient level of freedom (understood as capability), which enables citizens to actually engage in the political process.

O’Donnell’s account differs to Dahl’s by more thoroughly connecting the relationship between freedom and fair elections. When exploring these areas in his conception of democracy, O’Donnell (2010, p.21) develops a more robust account of the role of participation, noting that even if Dahl’s polyarchy conditions are met “they cannot fully guarantee that elections are fair.” There are two aspects to the more demanding approach to fair elections. The first aspect presented by O’Donnell is in some ways a semantic one, as he argues against the feasibility of ever producing a complete list that includes every possible requirement to ensuring that an election
is fair. To make this argument O’Donnell (2010, p.21) posits that there can never be an exhaustive list of the precise requirements which ensure that an election is fair because “the freedoms that surround fair elections are inductively derived.” The semantic element to O’Donnell’s argument rests in the objection on the grounds that the requirements for fair elections cannot ever be fully listed based solely on the nature of the task, whereby the process of induction cannot be exhaustive, due to the subjective nature of induction. However, this criticism becomes much more forceful when coupled with the observation that the freedoms which have been taken as “potentially relevant to fair elections, have undergone significant changes over time” (O’Donnell 2010, p.22). The forcefulness of the argument presented rests in the fact that the requirements to conducting fair elections do not remain static over time and thus any list will ultimately be imperfect in another context even if it is to the one in question. Here it is this point on contextual variability which gives the argument weight, as this is where disagreements often occur in critiquing historic democratic projects, rather than objecting purely because in principle the fairness of elections cannot be fully specified.

This problem is evident in the context of measuring democracy, where measures like Polity are susceptible to critique for inadequately engaging with who counts as a citizen in a given society (think of Polity regarding the United States as a full democracy whilst maintaining the practice of slavery), and thus missing something that undermines the fairness of the election at the point of inclusion in electoral process of the political regime. This objection is not that in principle a perfect list of procedural fairness is unattainable and therefore attempts to specify electoral fairness should be abandoned, rather it is a critique about the adequateness of the list presented.

The most substantial aspect where O’Donnell’s account of democracy differs from those of Dahl and Schumpeter is that he develops an account of the regime which robustly incorporates the citizen\(^5\) into understanding democracy in the world, treating the relationship between the two as being a transactional one. The

\(^5\) For the purposes of this discussion I am setting aside the question of who should and should not be counted as citizens. Instead, I will assume that barring reasonable exceptions (like the exclusion from voting of criminals) that suffrage should be universal. This is because the emphasis of the chapter is on the relationship between citizens and the state, rather than who should count as citizens.
The transactional aspect of the relationship is situated in the political democracy legally awarding rights and freedoms to the citizen, which grants them the status of being an agent. This in turn generates towards citizens the “presumption of capacity to make choices that are deemed sufficiently reasonable as to have significant consequences, in terms of the aggregation of votes and of the incumbency of government and/or state roles” (O’Donnell 2010, p.25). Whilst it is not a requirement that citizens exercise these freedoms and engage in the political process, it is nonetheless the case that the legal system treats all democratic citizens as “equally capable of effectuating [these freedoms] and their correlated obligations” (O’Donnell 2010, p.25). Irrespective of whether citizens participate by voting, this positioning of citizens as agents means that they are considered as more than just voters, by virtue of the rights and freedoms which they are attributed, and they can also be held legally and morally accountable for their actions within the political democracy where they hold membership. The presumption of capacity is a fundamentally different notion about the role of the citizen to that proposed by Dahl and Schumpeter, because it sets an expectation about how the citizen can be minimally required to act. It sets a floor which citizens must meet in order to be able to function in the society, whilst also setting a precondition for the democracy to provide for its citizens this capacity. This transactional notion of the relationship between individuals and the state is substantively different from the conceptions presented above, whereby it is only the individual who confers legitimacy upon the regime (although the individual does remain protected to some degree from the state).

To place a requirement that citizens act as agents raises a question of what constitutes agency and whether or not there are circumstances which may inhibit the ability of individuals to exercise their agency. In O’Donnell’s (2010, p.173) model, it is the capability approach which is best able to explain what it is to have agency, since “an adequate capability set allows individuals to ... decide, with reasonable autonomy, knowledge, and responsibility, the course of one’s life.” This characterisation of agency as the possession of an adequate capability set is heavily informed by the position occupied by the capacity for choice in the construction of the citizen as an agent. It opens up the space to explore social conditions which may or may not enable agency, and raises these potential conditions as a central
consideration when understanding the role of citizens in the democratic process. As such, it is essential that a democratic society provide the capacity for choice presupposed in the awarding of agency.

It is on this point that the difference in the view of freedom favoured by O'Donnell becomes clear, relative to the definition preferred by Dahl. Dahl only explicitly protects the legislative freedom of citizens, whereas O'Donnell builds in the idea that citizens are actually able to exercise their freedom. As citizens come to lack control over the options which they have in their life, it becomes clear how they can become closed off from the political process. Moreover, the types of preventative conditions which O'Donnell emphasises as limiting agency are clearly couched in the terms employed in the capability based conception of freedom.

The implication of this view on the provision of agency for the democratic citizen results in an extra condition on the evaluation of democracy. Namely, it presents the requirement to identify instances where citizen capacity for choice is undermined, especially with regards to the instances where this is connected to political participation. Arguably a very qualified version of this can be found in less expansive definitions of democracy, whereby the coercion of citizens is identified as a problem for democracy because it removes their ability to exercise their freedom. However, the provision of the necessary supports for acting and deciding in the political process in a positive sense entails a much more comprehensive account of what it is to be able to properly have the capacity to engage in this process. The requirement that citizens be able to do so in a positive sense moves this approach past only considering instances of freedom as non-interference, because non-interference does not ensure that an individual thereby overcomes all of the preventative conditions to carry out the activity in question. As outlined in the last chapter, the identification of instances of this kind is precisely what the capability approach is best equipped to do. Before demonstrating why this more expansive approach to conceptualising freedom within democracy is more appealing than the versions given by Dahl and Schumpeter, I will highlight why these issues are not adequately addressed by deliberative and participatory accounts of democracy.
2.5 Deliberative and Participatory Accounts of Democracy

Whereas the institutionally focused accounts outlined above have a more empirically grounded focus in how they engage with the concept of democracy, deliberative and participatory theories of democracy are more normative in their orientation and tone. They present accounts of democracy which most closely align with the self-mastery conception of freedom because they suggest there are legitimate and illegitimate ways to make democratic decisions, and those processes of legitimation are tied to a particular conception about how individuals should be acting in a democracy. We can contrast this with the above definitions, which are value-neutral to the extent to which they do not require citizens to undertake specific actions to legitimate a decision, but rather create pre-conditions where there is sufficient space for individuals to engage in the political process. That is, the participatory and deliberative side requires specific types of action by citizens for decisions to be legitimate, whereas the other side only requires the space for citizens to act and effectively engage in the political process for decisions to be taken as legitimate.

Whilst both deliberative and participatory theorists emphasise different characteristics as being essential to having real democracy, they both emphasise an extension beyond just basic preference satisfaction through elected representatives. Despite the different focus of these two theoretical approaches, it is worth noting that both have core insights which align with a theory of democracy based upon the capability approach. The insights made by participatory theorists point towards the significance of spaces to engage in the democratic process, and the insights developed by deliberative theorists about the importance of competency in deliberation highlight the importance of understanding how individuals go about making their decisions. To demonstrate this, the following section will sketch out how each account aligns with the capability approach derived understanding of the citizen and democracy outlined above.

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6 The main difference across the institutional accounts outlined above is the extent to which individuals are able to engage as a prerequisite for the process to be sufficiently democratic. We can consider Schumpeter’s perspective as a minimalist version, Dahl’s as a middle version, and O’Donnell’s as an expansive version.
As succinctly noted by David Held (2006, p.231), “the story of democracy contains both a celebration of the end of arbitrary rule and paternalistic politics, and anxiety that democracy could mean rule by the rabble.” We can think about participatory accounts of democracy as linked to the first half of that statement, and deliberative theories of democracy as linked to the second half of the statement. Participatory accounts of democracy seek to produce a tighter connection between individuals and the processes of democratic decision-making – in that sense they are concerned with reducing the paternalistic and arbitrary nature of decisions. Conversely, we can understand deliberative theorists as addressing the fact that “whenever deficiencies in political judgement are found, it is usually because such judgments are ... that are uninformed and/or short-sighted and/or self-interested” (Held 2006, p.232). Deliberative theories are thus concerned with constraining the ways in which democratic decisions come to be made.

The logic that underpins the participatory approach is that if we take the idea that individuals should be connected to the political process seriously, then it follows that we should seek to increase spaces where citizens can engage and participate in the political process. Hence, participatory theories of democracy seek to address the limitations of having a large gap between democratic decision making and individuals. As Pateman (1970, p.110) argues:

“it is only if the individual has the opportunity directly to participate in decision making and choose representatives in the alternative areas that, under modern conditions, he can hope to have any real control over the course of his life or the development of the environment in which he lives.”

It is noteworthy that the terms used in Pateman’s description align closely with the terminology present in the articulation of the capability approach, and there is a real sense in which the concerns of participatory democracy are closely aligned with a capability based theory of democracy. This is highlighted in the fact that expanding the role of the individual is important since “the argument of the participatory theory of democracy is that participation in the alternative areas would enable the individual better to appreciate the connection between the public and the private spheres” (Pateman 1970, p.110). As Chapter Five will discuss in more depth through the notion of adaptive preferences, the lack of space for further citizen engagement
in the political process may ultimately be connected to the degree to which citizens are disinterested in politics.

As far as increasing the potential for individuals to engage in the political process is possible, it preserves the capacity for individuals to retain their political power, and thus increases the degree to which individuals can have their views reflected. It would be odd to suggest that increasing democratic participation would decrease the democracy which is present. However, placing participatory requirements invalidates certain choices or options in the political process. That is, it limits the potential for individuals to abstain from the political process, and it can also create a fatigue-like effect, where people are unable to defer decisions which they do not see as being worth dealing with. If we are to remain value-neutral towards how individuals should act politically, then we cannot require democratic participation from those individuals. Hence, whilst the overall argument of this thesis is that ensuring there is space for individuals to participate in the democratic process is a core requirement for democracy, the argument is not that we must require participation. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, a core feature of the capability approach is that individuals should be free to make important life choices for themselves, and thus, where possible, choices should not imposed on individuals.

There are a variety of perspectives as to what constitutes the best approach to deliberative democracy, and it is worth considering the various requirements that deliberative scholars look to make on democratic processes. As John Dryzek (2000, p.1) frames it, deliberative theorists are centrally concerned “with the authenticity of democracy: the degree to which democratic control is substantive rather than symbolic, and engaged by competent citizens.” The concern with the notion of ‘competent citizens’ is one which warrants challenging. It warrants challenging because the expectation that citizens are competent in order to engage in the political process can be viewed as a mode disenfranchising disadvantaged and marginalised individuals or groups (see for example: Kravchenko 2009).

The tying of the legitimacy of a democratic process to the ‘competency’ of citizens raises substantial issues in the context of what counts as reasonable and competent. What one person takes to be a legitimate reason for a decision, another may take to be totally irrelevant. If one takes the value pluralist approach outlined
in Chapter One seriously, then it becomes an open question as to whether we can reconcile good and bad reasons in a way that treats individuals with equal regard. That is, by preferring certain deliberative strategies over other ones, we construct a situation where we exclude certain forms of valuation and deliberation. The limitation in doing so is that there is no ‘objective’ way to arrive at which decision-making processes are inherently good, and which are inherently bad. The result is that a deliberative approach will lead to the privileging of mainstream perspectives, since they fit most closely into the standard mode of deliberation in a society (Tully 2002, p.223). In a similar vein, Adam Przeworski (1998) has critiqued the fact that because equality often doesn’t exist between deliberative participants, it becomes likely that “deliberation can lead to ‘ideological domination’ of groups endowed with more resources” (Crespy 2014, p.84).

An alternative approach to Dryzek’s is that of Gutmann and Thompson (1996), who stress less demanding standard for deliberation, seeking to understand deliberation under ‘non-ideal’ conditions. Their claim is that “deliberative democracy asks citizens and officials to justify public policy by giving reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by it” (Gutmann & Thompson 1996, p.52). Yet, it remains unclear how this approach can deal with those whose lives and options that do not conform to the mainstream. Indeed, the direction of this points to an important power dynamic which the deliberative approach misses at the outset: who sets the basis for what counts as justifying public policy? Moreover, what count as reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by them?

Ultimately, we arrive at a position where it appears that there is a deeply technocratic edge to the deliberative approach (Pastorella 2016). It becomes technocratic to the extent to which deliberative practices favour the mainstream, and thus limit the scope of change we might expect to see. Yet, if radical change is required in a democracy, it may be the case that it is required because mainstream practices are ineffective. In the context of growing populist movements around the world demanding widespread change based upon extreme dissatisfaction with the status quo, it remains unclear whether excluding individuals based upon their deliberative approach is an appropriate strategy to maintaining democratic legitimacy.
This leads to the point that a substantive flaw in the overall argumentation of the deliberative approach is that it is ultimately targeted towards the outcomes of democracy as the basis of legitimacy. There must be sufficient deliberation for actions to be democratic. The underlying assumption of this deliberative approach is that only certain kinds of deliberation, and certain kinds of outcomes are acceptable. In making this move, for scholars like Habermas there is an overreach on the importance of rationality as a concept (Mouffe 2000). It becomes the centrally defining feature of how decisions can be made legitimately, and this results in the devaluation of alternate perspectives of valuation.

In the context of this thesis, the critique of the deliberative approach presented by Iris Marion Young (2001) along these lines is particularly compelling. Young highlights the degree to which deliberative approaches are limited in their capacity to address structural inequalities. According to Young there are specific spaces where fighting against structural inequality in a democracy requires engaging in practices that are counter to those outlined as permissible by a deliberative democrat. Young argues convincingly that the deliberative approach is unappealing to a well-intentioned social justice advocate, since the advocate may need to engage in a variety of different persuasive communication strategies to accomplish their goal. In developing this perspective Young highlights that we should not just be worried about how we deliberate, but also who will be able to deliberate.

The core point made by Young is the central importance of structural inequalities in shaping the ways in which deliberation is meant to be carried out in a polity, which simultaneously is linked to the kinds of outcomes which can occur for those who are already disadvantaged. As this thesis is concerned with the way in which inequality and disadvantage shape the opportunities available to individuals to effectively engage in the political process, this critique of the deliberative approach is one which resonates.

The argument of this thesis is that it would be more compelling to ensure that citizens possess the means to effectively engage in deliberative practices. In societies where there are too many individuals who are structurally disadvantaged in such a way that would constrain them from being able to properly engage in
deliberative practices, it becomes irrelevant what kind of deliberation is taking place. This is because the only deliberation is the deliberation of elites, since they are the only people able to engage in the deliberative practices. Here we can see that whilst the thrust of the deliberative approach is to improve the public policy outcomes in the democratic state, deliberative theorists can be read as sharing a pessimistic account of the individual citizen in line with Schumpeter (Held 2006, p.235). Whereas Schumpeter is considered in his decision to limit the influence of ordinary citizens on the political process, it seems that deliberative theorists accidently exclude those who are disadvantaged in their polity.

Rather than focussing on the practices of the polity as the foundation of a theory of democracy, which can be potentially exclusionary, it is better to consider the relationship between the individual and the state. As O'Donnell demonstrates, there is an important aspect of reciprocity between the individual and the state, such that there is an obligation on behalf of the state to ensure competency in individuals. Once individuals are able to engage in the political process, they should be able to engage however they choose to (provided they don't negatively impact upon their fellow citizens). The precise nature of the relationship between individuals and the state is thus of substantive importance, and the next section will address this issue.

2.6 The Relationship Between Individuals and the State

The question of which political regime type is most desirable for people to live under is one which is central to politics. It is tightly bound to questions about what it is to live as a person, and who should decide what constitutes the best way to live. The approach to answering these questions which emerged through the Enlightenment period is that individuals ought to decide how they want to live for themselves. Based upon this answer, that individuals should decide for themselves. The Enlightenment tradition has endowed us with the perspective that social arrangements should be made rationally justifiable to all. Whilst this view is not unproblematic, it remains the case that the best justification for how social arrangements should be made is one that appeals to a reasoned understanding of how individuals would want to live. The ensuing discussion draws upon this tradition, whereby social arrangements should be justifiable to individuals, to
understand why democracy is the political system which is most favoured in contemporary political discourse.

A central feature of theories of democracy is the manner in which every citizen is, at least in principle, equally a part of the political decision-making process. Each individual is considered morally significant as a citizen through the ability they have to impact democratic politics, and no individual is given preferential treatment to advance their own political interests. As seen in the three accounts above, the precise mechanisms through which citizens are able to impact democratic politics varies across models of democracy, and different theories perceive the role of the individual citizen in different ways. Despite the different ways in which decisions occur in different models of democracy, in each case it is evident that importance is placed upon the notion that citizens have a say in how they are governed, and a defining feature of democracy is that there is a formal mechanism like voting through which this can occur. For this reason, it can be seen that the input which citizens provide in governance is a substantive component of democracy.

The ability of democratic citizens to shape and decide upon policy is generally not treated as unbounded, with real world democracies placing limits upon the authority which the state can exercise upon citizens. The tension that exists between the preservation of maximal citizen input and control of governance, and the issues which arise from the tyranny of the majority, remains a controversial issue to democratic politics. Liberal theorists have long considered the degree of control by the majority to not be tolerable beyond a certain point, and the influence of this view can be seen in the way that real world democracies take a constitutional form, whereby individuals possess rights which cannot be taken away. The Bill of Rights in the United States is the most obvious example of this – with the state prohibited from impinging upon its citizens in various ways, regardless of popular sentiment. This problem of the tyranny of the majority, where the majority possess the ability to exert dominance over a minority group in democratic politics, is one which has been extensively explored in democratic theory, and the problem of the tyranny of the majority is considered to be a central issue for democracy, receiving extensive treatment from key democratic scholars like James Madison (1787), John Stuart Mill (1974), and Alexis de Tocqueville (2000). In each case these foundational
democratic thinkers propose that the solution to the tyranny of the majority is to limit the ability of the majority to interfere with other citizens, through limiting the types of interference which can be justified by the will of the majority. This solution to the tyranny of the majority is one which is dominant in the democratic tradition.

This limitation of state interference with citizens is a key component of democracy, and the protection of citizen rights in the contemporary constitutional democratic model can be seen to place the citizen as a more important political unit than the state because it gives primacy to the protection of individuals, rather than to the range of options available to the democratic state. Couched in this limitation to democracy as it functions in the world is the notion that ideally, democracy is not reflected in the majority exerting popular dominance over the minority, or at the very least, it can be construed as the view that popular control is not the most significant aspect of democracy, and that certain concessions must be made to the preservation of the free status of individuals in a democratic society. This notion of the primacy given to individual citizens over the powers of the state, which will henceforth be referred to as the principle of individual priority, is one which is central to the normative worth of democracy as a political system.

There are important consequences for understanding democracy which arise from the principle of individual priority. Notably, the principle of individual priority can be used to unpack the relationship between freedom and democracy, because it opens up the manner in which the regime and freedom are positioned in relation to each other. In unpacking this relationship there are two different families of perspectives which can explain the status of individual priority in democratic theory, and these two families of perspectives give two distinct conceptualisations of the value of freedom to democracy. The first family of perspectives treat voting as valuable because of the function it performs in the political process in a democratic political system, and give individuals priority only because doing so preserves the process of voting. Broadly speaking, arguments of this kind can be categorised as valuing outcomes which occur from collective decision-making – democracy is valued for what it achieves, not what it represents, and citizens must be free so that they can contribute to the society freely in the decision-making process. This can be contrasted against the second family of perspectives, where the
principle of individual priority is valued because it represents the preservation of self-determination for citizens, and the resultant freedom is valuable for the sake of the individual.

The first family of perspectives treat the individual as a separate and distinct political entity from the state, and therefore hold that democracy as a political system should be theorised separately from relations with the individual. The notion underpinning this perspective on individual priority is that individual priority is required to preserve the equal status of citizens as voters, and in turn the equality of individuals in the voting process should be protected so as to preserve the integrity of the decision-making process. Here individual priority is valued for the contribution it provides to maintaining the state, not for the value that it might provide to the citizens themselves. This family of views is best characterised as in the tradition of Schumpeter’s systems based approach to understanding democracy, since it positions the value of voting as being derived through the contribution it makes to the overall system. On the Schumpeterian elite based account of democracy, this value could be attributed to the understanding that those selected will be better at determining policy in the interest of the common good. In this conception of democracy, all that matters is that citizens can in principle contribute to decision-making equally, and it is only the direct interference with citizens with regards to voting which can be construed as a problem for democracy.

This is a fundamentally minimalist account of democracy because it takes democracy to be a political system which can be wholly understood through the paradigm of voting procedures. In doing so, perspectives of this kind can be seen as being separated from the moral issue of why it matters whether individuals are interfered with by the democratic state, since they only engage with the question of voting through the impact it has upon the continued position of the state as democratic. This is problematic, as it reifies the process aspects of the system, without properly attending to what makes these processes valuable. In turn, the value it ascribes to democracy contains a degree of circularity in the way that the individual citizens space in the decision making process is only valuable because this is how the decisions are made in the democratic political system – it does not address what purpose this decision-making procedure exists for. As suggested by
David Held (2006, p.185), the implication of adopting an approach of this kind to valuing democracy is that “little remains of the case for democracy except the sheer ‘protection-against-tyranny’ argument.” This is a very shallow account as to why democratic theorists value the inclusion of individuals in the decision-making process, and does not properly grasp the normative ideals of democracy since it says nothing about why an individual might value their status as a citizen – of why they would want to be able to vote, or indeed, at an even more important level, it remains disconnected from why they would even value their own freedom. On this view, democracy would have to be valued solely upon instrumental grounds, as the best method of decision-making available, since it ignores the specific reasons which the within system features of democracy are considered valuable.

The second perspective which arises from the principle of individual priority is that the democratic state exists as the sum of individual citizens, and thus cannot be properly conceptualised without understanding the relationship between citizens and the state. This perspective emphasises that the value which is provided by everyone being an equal citizen can be located in the justifiability of the political system to individuals, and in their ability to be a part of the process of political determination within their society. This perspective takes the position of citizens within society to be of significance to democracy, and in doing so opens up the space of what might influence and inhibit voting in ways that are problematic to democracy. This perspective values the act of voting through what it is an expression of, not just for the act itself. Whilst there are a range of competing views as to what the act of voting expresses, one plausible interpretation is that it is an act based upon the preservation of a degree of freedom for the individual. Thus, this second perspective can be characterised as taking more seriously the importance of the individual priority because this position is much more sensitive to the question of why individuals might value their status as citizens, and it is more sensitive to why being able to vote might matter through a much more thorough consideration of what undermines this process.

7 It is also quite clearly an expression of political equality, which might be valued for a variety of reasons.
The difference between these two approaches can be located in the direction of emphasis upon which they turn. The first perspective emphasises the preservation of the integrity of the state through the way that it values the contribution of the voting process to the continued freedom of the state. Here, democratic political systems must preserve the status of citizens so that the system can remain democratic. This is a position that only engages with democracy as a system, and ignores the ideals which underpin democracy. Ultimately, this is an unsatisfactory account of democracy, because it does not provide a compelling reason as to why individuals ought to value democracy. It leaves the work of valuing democracy to the kind of benefits which might accrue from the outcomes which democracy can provide as a political system. It leaves the worth of democracy to the purely instrumental domain.

In contrast, the second perspective values voting as an expression of self-determination, and so emphasises the value of voting to the individual rather than the state. On this view democracy must preserve the free voting status of citizens because that is a component of their ability to be self-determining, and this is a key paradigm through which democracy is morally valuable. This second perspective highlights that there is something more substantive underpinning democracy than voting, since voting is a means and not an end in itself. By placing the value of democracy in this space, in the space of the worth that democracy has to individuals, it provides a much more compelling account of why individuals might value democracy. In considering the worth democracy holds to individual citizens, through the paradigm of their ability to vote it can be seen that the value that underpins this is the desire to be a self-determining agent.

2.7 The Importance of the Citizen in the Functioning of Democracy

In all three of the institutional accounts of democracy provided above, the democratic citizen contributes to the functioning of the democracy at the level of voting. Furthermore, each sets conditions such that this is a fundamental feature to what democracy is. Hence, if voting is compromised, then in turn, the democraticness of the regime will be. The important factor to consider then is what can compromise the integrity of voting. One way that this can be done is by removing the right of citizens to vote, so, as mentioned in the discussion of individual priority,
this is prohibited from occurring by ensuring that the right to vote for citizens is protected. A further requirement to the continued functioning is that citizens cannot have their ability to vote be subject to removal by the remainder of the polity (although there are ambiguities around this aspect of Schumpeter’s account as he leaves it up to the society to decide who should be treated as a citizen). These are the direct institutional requirements where it is the literal casting of the vote which cannot be removed from the citizen in order to preserve the integrity of the process. But are there further requirements? Schumpeter’s account does not unequivocally outline further requirements, and his highly pessimistic approach to the reasoning capabilities of ordinary citizens leaves a degree of ambiguity as to the significance of candidates manipulating the voter. This can be contrasted to Dahl and O’Donnell, who both clearly set further requirements.

In order to protect the integrity of the electoral process, Dahl specifies conditions which help to ensure that individuals are able to engage properly in the election, by way of protecting access to information, freedom of expression and ensuring the protection of associational autonomy. All three of these areas are significant for similar reasons, which are typified in the experience of the protection of access to information. The protection of the informational component is valuable as it implies that judgements should not be made in an arbitrary or misinformed manner – there is something going on underneath the decision which is made when voting, something to do with what voting is an expression of in the democratic process. This is not to say that there is a correct way to vote for a particular citizen, but rather, to say that voting should reflect the evaluation of the citizen made upon an accurate portrayal of the candidates in question, so that the vote is a reflection of the given citizen’s determination, and not a result of some form of manipulation. If the citizen is manipulated, then there is a sense in which the vote that they give is not owned by them, at least not in the sense that they made their decision in a way that is attributable to them, rather it is attributable to the manipulation which they have been subject to. In part then, this concern about the validity of information available to citizens implies a potential to undermine the capacity for choice over the different options available in an election.
In presenting a desire to protect the space for individuals owning their choices, by ensuring they can be made based upon accurate information (that is, information not solely controlled by the state, or by any single source), it is implied that the removal of this can undermine the functioning of democracy. This requirement is advanced along very similar lines to the presumption of agency advanced by O'Donnell, insofar as it is very similar to the requirement for the provision of agency to citizens, and there is something important which is lost when citizens do not have free access to information. The difference between the two perspectives rests on how far they extend this issue, with Dahl only interested in instances which actively seek to undermine capacity for choice (i.e. the monopolising of information sources in a society, or the misrepresentation of the facts in the sources which are available), whereas O'Donnell advances the claim into a positive position (i.e. that citizens can actually access the information, not just that it might exist). Dahl, in being concerned about the diversity and integrity of information available, demonstrates a concern about circumstances which can undermine the functioning of a democracy, but does not follow the requirement all the way through to the point of problematizing instances where citizens might experience circumstances which undermine their ability to exercise the capacity for choice.

It is an incomplete approach to understanding democracy to only problematize some instances which undermine the functioning of democracy, whilst regrettably accepting others. Different underlying causes may lead to the same problem, but if the impact of the problem upon the functioning of the democracy is the same, then in terms of understanding the functionality of that democracy, the problem is still the same. There may be other underlying considerations which make one type of circumstance undermining a democracy substantively different to another kind, but if our interest is in understanding the proper functioning of a democracy, then this difference appears to be a secondary consideration. For example, extreme financial hardship may prevent individuals running for public office, thereby impacting political equality, and the way that this impacts political equality is similarly problematic whether the cause of this is the deliberate monopolistic control of some members of a wealthy society, as opposed to a poorer society where this occurs by chance. In both cases the potential to
undermine the functioning of a democracy posed by a lack of political equality in the society remains constant, even if there are substantively different moral evaluations which might be made about the causes of this lack of political equality. A differentiation can be made between the identification of the problem, and the evaluation of the causes of the problem.

What becomes clear from this consideration is that the control an individual citizen has over the choices which they make is an important component of democracy. It matters to the functioning of the democracy that individuals are able to decide freely for themselves, and it also matters to the individuals themselves. This consideration in turn suggests that to understand the relationship between freedom and democracy, it is important to pay attention to the position which control and choice occupy within a given definition of freedom. As proposed in the previous chapter, and as seen in the conceptualisation of democracy presented by O'Donnell, the definition of freedom most suited to opening up the notion of capacity to choose is the definition of freedom as capability. For these reasons it is prudent to employ the definition of freedom as capability when attempting to identify issues associated with the functioning of a democracy, and thus, the definition of freedom as capability has worth to contribute to evaluating the practice of democracy in the world.

2.8 Defining Democracy

Bringing together the above arguments, we can think about the definition of democracy presented by Dahl as containing many of the necessary elements for a functioning democracy, but not being sufficient. What Dahl’s account misses is that we need to properly understand how inequalities outside of enfranchisement can continue to shape the capacity for individuals to engage in the political process. Whilst we might not require that citizens engage in the political process, the necessary space (that is, the rights and legislative protection to use those rights) must be guaranteed for citizens. As this chapter has argued, democracy also requires the plausible capacity to engage in the political process, and so an additional consideration is that there should be no constraints on engaging in the political process owing to inequality of opportunity. Dahl adds a minor qualification to this end in his original statement, but only as a footnote. The experience of
contemporary democratic societies may suggest that this point may be one which needs to be much more prominent.

If we want to understand how democratic a society is, then we can build upon Dahl’s definition, such that democracy is present when there are:

1. *Elected Officials.*
2. *Free, fair and frequent elections.*
4. *Access to alternative sources of information.*
5. *Associational autonomy.*
6. *Inclusive citizenship.*
7. *Equality of opportunity to live well in the polity and participate in the political process.* Citizens are capable of engaging in the political process and not substantively constrained from engaging in the political process in their society because of resource inequalities within that society (or other types of socially distributed inequality).

This seventh criterion is derived from the definition of freedom as capability. This criterion takes regard of the degree to which resource constraints both prevent individuals from engaging in the political process, and also shape the way they view themselves in relation to the political process. The second component is as important as the first, because it means that consenting to not being able to engage in the political process due to a lack of resources, would not mean that this criterion had been met. In the vein of the Republican conception of freedom, it is the potential (or in this case lack of) to engage in the political process that is at issue. The degree to which individuals are constrained is a limiting factor in the equality of the polity, and in turn undermines the democraticness of the process in question.

By the phrase ‘participate in the political process’, it is meant that the full enjoyment of all the various political rights which a citizen holds. That is, being able to engage in public debate, being able to discuss political issues with fellow citizens with an equal opportunity to speak to those of influence, and being able to run for public office without concern about the financial (or other) cost of doing so. To the
extent to which these things are not enjoyed in a democratic polity, then the polity becomes undemocratic. It becomes undemocratic because political equality becomes undermined.

2.9 Concluding Remarks

The key question which this thesis is examining is how freedom should be incorporated into the evaluation of democracy. The standard practice when measuring democracy is to develop conceptualisations from institutional, or system-based accounts of democracy, and so this chapter has examined three distinct conceptualisations of democracy which are fundamentally institutional in nature. Schumpeter’s definition of elite democracy was characterised as inadequate because of the way that it positioned the citizen as beneath the state, and presented the role of the ordinary citizen as being simply to legitimise the competitive struggle for power amongst political elites. Dahl’s conception of democracy, whilst more expansive than Schumpeter’s, was also regarded as inadequate, in that it only captured some of the aspects which make democracy a desirable political system. It was suggested through the notion of citizen functioning within a democracy that Dahl’s model failed to identify certain instances of citizen agency being undermined, and this was characterised as problematic. O’Donnell’s conception of citizen agency was employed to further justify the usage of the definition of freedom as capability when evaluating democracy, through the broader ability to evaluate capability to choose. It was proposed that because it is a better model for properly understanding instances where the functioning of democracy can be undermined, it is preferable to use the definition of freedom as capability rather than the definition of freedom as non-interference when evaluating democracy. To help explain why the definition of freedom as non-interference is commonly employed within the measurement of democracy the next chapter will explore how measures of democracy were originally formulated, and the issues associated with measurement which have shaped the way which measurement practice has evolved over time.
Part Two

Part Two of the thesis presents the empirical analysis of measures of democracy. Chapter Three traces the development of the measurement of democracy. This is an important component in understanding why measures are structured the way that they are today. Chapter Four presents an analysis of the definition of freedom present in contemporary measures of democracy. Chapter Four demonstrates the prominence of the definition of freedom as non-interference, and is thus essential to the overall argument of the thesis, as it provides the impetus for the creation of the new measure of democracy which is developed in Part Three of the thesis.
Chapter 3: The Foundations of the Measurement of Democracy

Before evaluating existing measures of democracy, there are three key issues responsible for shaping measurement efforts which need to be outlined. The three factors are the origins of measures of democracy, the limitations associated with inadequate access to data which political scientists have had to overcome, as well as the conceptual and measurement issues which continue to shape measurement practice today. The origins of measurement are important because measures have tended to evolve in response to existing work, and each new measure can be viewed as a response and attempt to improve upon the previous efforts. In making this point, the ensuing analysis will outline the significance of the approach adopted by early political science researchers on how to conduct political research in a scientific manner, and the relationship this had with the formulation of measurement practices within political science. It will be contended that the early commitments of the discipline of political science became the commitments of those responsible for measuring democracy. Hence, it will be argued through the chapter that to understand what initially shaped the measurement of democracy requires an appreciation of the role played by its relationship to political science as a discipline. Alongside this, the role of data and its relationship to measures of democracy will be examined and it will be posited that access to data was an equally significant factor in shaping the early measurement of democracy. This will lead into a discussion of the more substantive measurement issues which have been considered by scholars employing measures, to give a sense of what contemporary limitations continue to inhibit measurement of democracy. These limitations matter, as they substantively shape the areas where scholars work to improve existing measures.

This chapter, in conjunction with Chapter Four, addresses the third proposition outlined in the introduction, namely, that the non-interference based definition of freedom is the definition which is currently the most commonly employed definition. This chapter considers the first systematic attempts at measurement in outlining why this definition is the definition which is employed. The similarities which are shared with the measures presented in the next chapter
help to demonstrate why it is important to grasp the views shaping early measurement construction, since aspects of these views persist today, and continue to shape measurement practice.

3.1 The Foundations of Measuring Democracy

As highlighted by James Farr (1988), the definition of political science is a particularly contentious topic, with a multitude of interpretations available as to what constitutes the political, what we should mean by science, and in turn, how these two concepts might intersect to form political science. The history of the measurement of democracy is to a large extent bound up within the history of political science, and shares a similar set of issues. There are competing interpretations which can be given as to what constitutes the origin point of the measurement of democracy, as well as competing plausible interpretations of how the measurement of democracy fits into the broader discipline\(^8\) of political science. The starting point to begin a discussion on the development of the measures of democracy, as it is conceived here, is found at the point where political scholarship becomes connected to quantitatively focused political research. Hence, the interpretation presented here is that the roots of the contemporary measurement of democracy can be found late in the nineteenth century, with the formulation by John W. Burgess of the first school of political science in the U.S. at Columbia University in 1880.

This starting point has a number of facets to it which are worth highlighting. The first point to be noted is the location, with the emphasis on America linked to the extent to which American scholarship has been associated with the rise of quantitative political science – with many historians of the discipline regarding it as a distinctly American phenomenon (Crick 1959; Kenny 2006; Somit & Tanenhaus 1963; Gunnell 2002; Farr 1995; Berndtson 1987). In large part this is because it is the work of early American political scientists that is often credited with driving and shaping the manner in which quantitative methods would become an increasingly

\(^8\) It should be noted that the term ‘discipline’ is used here loosely. I am sympathetic to the notion presented by various scholars that there are problematic aspects to employing the term discipline to describe the work classified as political science, and that there are serious limiting factors to any attempt to craft a history of such a discipline (for an expanded discussion of this see Chapter One in Collini, Winch, & Burrow, ‘That Noble Science of Politics’ (1983)).
influential part of the discipline. Closely related to this is the idea expressed by James Farr (1995, p.132) that, in many ways, the changing approach to understanding the subject matter of political studies, and how to investigate it, “may be understood as a response to the problems of political life in the first century of the new United States.” On this view America is the location of the new approach to studying the problems, as well as the source of at least some of them. Alongside the locational aspect of the definition is the temporal one. One key notion that lends credence to using 1880 as the origin point at which to begin the discussion of the measurement of democracy is the fact that, as David Gow (1985) highlights, it is noteworthy that in this same year Columbia University also offered the first course in statistics at an American university. Making this even more salient to the current study is the fact that the course was titled ‘Social Sciences and Statistics.’ This is important, as this represents a key moment in the creation of demand for the sophisticated measurement of democracy – that is, it is the first real instance of techniques being made available which can properly utilise sophisticated measures of democracy. Whilst there are instances of statistics being used in relation to politics prior to this, they are isolated and in some sense represent individual endeavours not linked to a broader project to expand the techniques and associated understanding of how political research should be conducted. They can be characterised as stand alone endeavours.

This period is important for another reason as well. Despite it being over fifty years before systematic cross-national national-level indicators of political systems come into being, this early period of empirical, quantitatively focused political science generates certain philosophical and epistemological commitments amongst empirically oriented political scientists. The key contention presented here is that these commitments come to play a major part in shaping the measurement of democracy. These commitments are fundamental to understanding the structure of early measures of democracy because these ideas shape the position that theory takes in the development of empirical political science, and in turn, they inform the manner in which theory is incorporated into early quantitative research projects.

9 For an expanded discussion of the absence of connection and coherency in these kinds of projects, see Anthony Oberschall’s (1965) summary of ‘Empirical Social Research in Germany’, especially the concluding chapter.
These commitments serve to define the framework around which democracy is conceptualised, and thus, in trying to measure democracy objectively, these early researchers measure a very specific definition of democracy – one which is primarily oriented towards the mechanics of the political system in practice.

In charting the usage of and creation of measures of democracy, it is important to pay attention to the development and utilisation of quantitative methods within the discipline of political science. This is because the utilisation of quantitative methods within the discipline is closely related to the creation and evolution of measures of democracy as this is what creates the demand for these measures. Gary King (1990, p.2), in a seminal piece which summarises the usage of quantitative methods in the discipline of political science, characterises “five distinct stages in the history of political methodology.” The stage which King regards as the first, and one that I will turn to shortly, is the first proper engagement with the utilisation of quantitative methods in the discipline, which King identifies as beginning in the 1920's. However, preceding this stage is the stage briefly mentioned earlier – where the epistemological framework which informs early quantitative political science takes shape. As will be seen below, this stage is significant in shaping the overall paradigm through which measures of democracy are constructed. Furthermore, it is significant because of the role that it can be seen as serving within the “transformation of American political science from discourse to discipline” (emphasis in original text - Farr, 1995, p. 132).

Summarising the intellectual evolution of the preconditions which would go on to shape the formulation of political science, and in turn, early measures of democracy, Bernard Crick’s (1959) widely influential study of ‘The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions,’ charts the evolution of the ideas underpinning the scientific approach to politics in the American context. The book offers a strong critique of aspects of political science leading up to the 1950’s, which Crick characterises as being more defined by ideology, rather than by being objectively scientific. Despite a heavily critical focus, Crick’s work provides a

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10 King acknowledges that there are earlier instances of the utilisation of quantitative methods in the discipline, citing Ogburn and Goltra (1919) on ‘How Women Vote’ as the first quantitative paper on politics to be published in a political science journal.

11 For an excellent summary of how Crick’s study fits into the broader narrative of recording the history of the discipline, see John Gunnell’s (2004) ‘Telling the Story of Political Science.’
thorough analysis of the development of the ideas preceding the outburst of measurement which came about in American political science in the late 1950’s and 1960’s. In particular, Crick presents a thorough discussion of the influence that the desire for empirically based conceptions of political systems would have in shaping the work of many political scientists years later. In doing so, Crick (1959, p.74) interrogates the role of scientism in shaping the early formulation of the discipline, and critiques the manner through which it is connected to what he characterises as an ideologically informed simplistic moralism.

In examining the origins and early growth of American political science, Crick (1959, p.103) identifies the work of A. Lawrence Lowell in 1898 as “among the first to systematically apply statistical techniques to politics.” Alongside Lowell, Crick (1959, p.95) identifies Frank Goodnow, James Bryce, Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles Beard, and Arthur Fisher Bentley, as being responsible for “a profound change in academic political thought.” It is these scholars in particular that Crick notes as driving the movement towards a distinctly American political science, which seeks to distance itself from grand theorising popular within Europe, and is instead concerned with doing politics by empirically engaging with the real world. According to Crick (1959, p.103), the shared sentiment amongst these thinkers, expressed by Lowell in his ‘Essays on Government,’ is that “the real mechanism of government can be understood only by examining it in action.” These early works of the American political science movement differed substantially from those which came before them by “carving out an empirically distinct turf and involved a rejection, rather than a reworking, of European grand theorizing” (Munck 2007, p.36). It is these thinkers who created the impetus for the American political science movement that would ultimately create the demand for the measurement of democracy. It is also these thinkers who help to shape the process of empirical theory building that becomes popular within the work of those who construct these measures of democracy.

The key dimension in which these early political scientists differed from previous scholars is that they engaged a rejection of grand theorising, not merely a reworking of how theorising was conducted. Hence, in presenting the role that they played in shaping the discipline, Crick emphasises the extent to which they
transitioned away from the traditional approach of grand theorising towards building an understanding of politics from the ground up. Whilst not inherently problematic, this transition was perceived to at times present an overly simplistic approach to the theoretical issues associated with developing empirically derived theory. The broader hostility to theory is expressed in the sentiment that “political philosophers have generally followed two equally futile and fruitless paths: either the path of pure speculation leading to a supernatural or metaphysical theory, or the path of legal analysis, leading to juristic theories of the state” (Ellis 1927, p.773). This concern, which is raised by Crick, is shared by others working through the first half of the twentieth century, and is reflected in the literature that critically engages with early empiricist and quantitative political science research. For example, the University of Virginia’s Robert Kent Gooch (1928) was highly critical of a failure to acknowledge that the scientific and inductive method should be treated as complementary to the existing techniques and modes of theorising, rather than supplanting them entirely. In developing this critique of an unsophisticated approach to political theory, Gooch (1928, p.256) cites early empirical political scientists voicing attitudes that “metaphysics is useless and dangerous; [that] idealism has no touch with reality; [that] rationalism and analysis yield only empty abstractions; [and of treating] … the realm of the \textit{a priori} [as] a ‘sublime cloudland.’” Gooch’s critique is itself heavy-handed in the extent to which it problematises various aspects of empirical research, but it identifies a hostility to non-empirical approaches that ultimately develops into a systemic problem for many empirically oriented scholars when they turn to measuring political concepts in the world.

The shift in theorising in these early political scientists has a variety of consequences, with the most notable being the “establishment of a specific intellectual orientation – quantitative methodology” (Sylvan 1989, p.86). Here quantitative methodology is taken to mean more than just an understanding of methods, it is also heavily related to the position with which these methods should occupy in the field of political science. In effect, at this time the quantitative method was regarded by those committed to it as a way of understanding, a way characterised as distinctly scientific, and as objective and separate to the inclinations of the researcher (Seidelman & Harpham 1985, p.69). In summarising this time period within political science, Raymond Seidelman and Edward Harpham
characterise the climate as one where “political theory, philosophy of history, formalist descriptions of institutions – all were thought to be mere speculation.” As a result of this, normative theorising was rejected or ignored, at least insofar as it related to conducting empirical research. For these early political scientists, to understand a concept was to observe it and comprehend how it operated in the real world. As P. Sargant Florence’s (1929, p.ix) well received early text on statistical methods in political science outlines, the function of “political science is the study and discovery of fact in the indicative mood, free from moral implications, and from optative and imperative attitudes”. Whilst it should be noted that Florence demonstrates a clear awareness of the limitations of quantitative methods within the text, it is the decoupling of ‘fact’ and ‘moral implications’ that is important to the current discussion – specifically, Florence, and his contemporaries can be understood as viewing the concepts they seek to investigate as being devoid of moral content. This is problematic, as the manner in which political concepts are defined is itself an act of the political. What one calls democracy, and indeed, good democracy, is itself a political decision which can have significant consequences. Hence, the extent to which proponents of empirical political science scholarship in this early period are tacitly making decisions, without necessarily being aware of the types of decisions being made, bears exploring.

The manner in which the definition of democracy is treated as a non-decision is informative about the influence of scientism for these early researchers. Specifically, it demonstrates the extent to which the concept of democracy is linked to its institutional features – that is, the manner in which it functions as a system (Riggs 1970, p.84). The problematic element to deriving the definition in this fashion is that it is a definition that is based upon the current subjective experience of democracy, whilst being positioned as objective. Doing this misses the significance of the framing of the research matter. Hence, by creating an empirically derived definition based upon how democracy is practiced by regimes which already exist, it creates a number of potential issues. The first issue is the extent to which the definition crafted is based in the experience of a particular political system which is only one amongst a myriad of potential models for democracy, with some like Fred Riggs (1970) arguing that to properly study political systems requires a substantively more diverse range of classificatory titles for how a given system
should be situated. As the global experience of democracy has increased, the
diversity of experience in various countries has encouraged a more nuanced
understanding of this problem, with more attention paid to the type of democratic
model in a given location.

A second but closely related issue is the extent to which deriving a definition
from the position it already occupies in the world limits the attention given to the
types of outcomes one should expect from the political system in question. That is,
if existing political systems which are categorised as democratic do not successfully
achieve the types of outputs democracy is expected to achieve from a normative
perspective, we may end up setting a lower standard for what a democracy ought to
achieve, and in turn, may not properly assess how well a democracy is actually
functioning when it is measured. Thus, one of the important consequences of an
overly empirical approach is that it forecloses the inclusion of many elements of
democratic theory which can otherwise provide insight about the status of
democracy in the world. This is a problem, as these more normative aspects of
democracy tap into the essential characteristics which make democracy a desirable
political system. In short, an overly empirically derived account does not attend to
why it matters whether a society is democratic or not – and instead risks the
conflation of achieving minimum standards of democracy with maximal accounts of
democracy. For example, there are substantial differences between what is essential
in Dahl’s account of democracy outlined in the last chapter, as opposed to that of
Schumpeter. An overly empirical account has the potential to miss the significance
of these differences, because they are not attached to any kind of ideal.

Whilst the Cold War context of early measurement in some ways limited the
impact of these issues, they are nonetheless important. We can think of the Cold War
as limiting the impact of these issues because the primary purpose of the early
measurement endeavours was to differentiate between democracies and non-
democracies in a very minimalist sense. This approach carried over into the
evaluation of the Third Wave of democracy, where the essential feature of measures
of democracy for many research undertakings was identifying regimes that had
become democracies, and the features of their political system associated with this
change.
Notably for understanding measures of democracy in the contemporary context, elements of the Cold War experience of evaluation continue to be influential. Specifically, the conceptualisation of the Freedom House measure – which is one of the two most prominent measures of democracy. The Freedom House measure of democracy is constructed by an organisation which has a specific political agenda, and it is evident that aspects of this agenda are present in early evaluation. In particular, the organisation's own account of its history summarises how in the 1970s: “With Marxist regimes, juntas, and military strongmen holding sway over swathes of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, Freedom House responded with programs that combined research and analysis, advocacy, and on-the-ground involvement in crisis areas” (Freedom House 2017). Further to this, the understanding of democracy which the organisation presents is one deeply embedded in a US-centric framework, as the organisation views itself as “a strong voice for a U.S. foreign policy that places the promotion of democracy as a priority” (Freedom House 2017).

Whilst the exact amount of influence is hard to discern, it is clear that during the Cold War Freedom House had a role in shaping the attitudes of policymakers, and “politicians approvingly cited Freedom House statements and the group’s members routinely testified on Capitol Hill” (Bon Tempo 2012, p.226). Freedom House advocated for a kind of Cold War liberalism, whereby “human rights were subordinate to a broader agenda of “freedom” and hinted strongly that the Soviets and their allies were the chief threats to freedom” (Bon Tempo 2012, p.233). Part of the political agenda of the organisation translated into the aspects of freedom included in their analyses (the current measurement structure is considered in depth in the next chapter). For instance, many of the dimensions of freedom not included in the measure were considered to be too politically controversial, and it “defined human rights as political and civil rights, while all other rights were secondary or logical outgrowths” (Bon Tempo 2012, pp.232–233). In short, the organisation structured a definition of freedom that emphasised uniquely liberal democratic characteristics, and factor analysis of their coding decisions has been used to demonstrate a coder bias against more ideologically Marxist-Leninist countries (Bollen & Paxton 2000, p.77).
Referring back to the various definitions of freedom explored in the first chapter, it can be seen how these politically motivated decisions are attached to valuing different underlying features about freedom. In looking to emphasise differences with the Soviet political structure, the legalistic aspects of the non-interference definition become increasingly prominent. Indeed, Berlin acknowledges that some of the contrasts in the definition which he emphasises are related to the political climate of the time. Moreover, much of the later literature engaging with the distinction between positive and negative freedom given by Berlin highlights the Cold War context of his writings (see for example: Flikschuh 2007).

The overly empirical interpretation of how the science part of the term political science should be understood had important consequences for the discipline. Most important was the extent to which those who subscribed to the view that political science should emulate the natural sciences emphasised the utilisation of the scientific method. Driven by a sense of dissatisfaction with the irrebutability of various forms of theorising present in alternate perspectives within the field – in their distinctly unscientific approach to understanding politics – much of the early work by these empirically oriented scholars is modelled very explicitly upon the scientific model present in the natural sciences. This in turn lead to the emphasis upon empirically derived theory, developed as an observational understanding of the world, which undervalued the work of those who did not conform to the same framework. This resulted in a substantial amount of conflict, and the subsequent hostility with which the various scholars have treated opposing methodological and epistemological outlooks within the discipline of political science is widely acknowledged (Manicas 1989). However, in the context of measuring democracy, this hostility is of fundamental importance, and elements of it persist. It remains an important consideration, since often “qualitative and quantitative researchers differ sharply in their approaches to specifying concepts” (Goertz & Mahoney 2012, p.206). Indeed, one of the core premises of this thesis is the degree to which broader definitions present in more philosophical approaches to democracy and freedom can provide valuable insights missed by narrower understandings of these concepts.
The sharp divide in approaches to concept specification radically shapes the manner through which early approaches to measurement in the discipline are conceived. For example, in his Preface to ‘The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science,’ (1953, p.ix) David Easton outlines his concern that “it has become increasingly difficult to appreciate why political theory should continue to be included as a central part of political science.” Although Easton is attempting to build a bridge between political theorists and those who are committed to the science element of political science, it can be understood as very much a relationship that favours the scientifically minded political scientist.

It is important that those utilising measures of democracy maintain an awareness of the intellectual history that has helped to shape the way in which the measurement of democracy has been understood. Attention should be paid to the conflict and tension which arose between those adopting the natural science model, and those concerned with normative aspects of politics. This conflict continues to be noteworthy today (Kasza 2010; Goertz 2005; Goertz & Mahoney 2012), and it is important that those crafting measures of democracy are able to comprehend and maintain an awareness about the contestability of the measures they present. In particular, it is important that measures of democracy pay attention to the normative aspects associated with the concept of democracy, as this is an important component in providing the concept of democracy with meaning.

3.2 Data Availability and the Measurement of Democracy

Alongside the issue of precisely how concepts being measured should be framed, early political scientists had to overcome the limitations represented by inadequate access to data. This section will examine the manner in which data availability changed in the early years of political science. Attention will be given to the early attempts to coordinate data within the discipline. Alongside this, the views of scholars towards the data available to them will be examined. In doing so I will outline how the issue of data availability impacted upon the research conducted on democracy in these early years. Of particular note is the extent to which the availability of data potentially inhibited the scope of research questions available for political scientists, as well as limiting the manner in which they could answer the questions they did pursue.
Prior to the 1920's political scientists faced extensive challenges with evaluating political systems in a nuanced fashion, in large part because data availability was quite limited, and “the first quantitative political scientists relied on direct empirical observation, as distinct from data collection” (King 1990, p.3). In coming to understand the availability of data for these early political researchers, Charles Merriam’s comments on the matter are highly informative. Widely acknowledged for his role as the founder of the highly influential Chicago School and influential in the Behavioral Revolution (Seidelman & Harpham 1985), Merriam’s (1921) article summarising ‘The Present State of the Study of Politics’ can be understood as “a first turning point in the evolution of U.S. political science ... [as] a manifesto for a new science of politics” (Munck 2007, p.41). In evaluating ‘The Present State of the Study of Politics,’ Merriam (1921, p.176) bemoaned the lack of information available to political and social science researchers, highlighting that “there is neither fund nor personnel available for extended surveys of many important fields regarding which politics should speak with some authority.” On this basis Merriam (1921, p.176) urged his colleagues to action, pointing out that “only through the organized and persistent effort of many scholars can this defective situation be made a satisfactory one.” However, the efforts to generate data for political study lacked uniformity during this period, and thus research tended to be focused upon distinct events, with scholars of the time lamenting the fact that systematic evaluations were prevented through the disparate nature of the data available (Hall et al. 1924). In understanding the relationship between data and the measurement of political systems, the contribution of those inspired by Merriam is significant, with his work instrumental in driving the effort of “systematic data collection which gained considerable momentum during the 1920’s” (King 1990, p.3).

This effort of systematic data collection would eventually be responsible for some of the first proper attempts at the measurement of democracy. However, it would be some time before those attempts would be properly made, with the impact of Merriam’s agenda not properly felt until after World War II when “the behavioural revolution swept through the field in the 1950s and 1960s” (Munck 2007, p.41). It was not just the collection of data that was an important consideration for those in the discipline, as researchers also had to consider the
storage and infrastructure required to properly utilise the data being obtained. As Erwin Scheuch (2003, p.387) recounts, up until the 1960’s the data available was often isolated to specific individuals and departments, and in exploring the idea of a shared World Archive at the First Conference on Social Science Data Archives in 1962, concerns were raised about the ability to maintain “knowledge about the conditions under which the data in various countries was collected.” Whilst reputable data was available from a variety of organisations, its scattered nature did not “permit ready comparison of a wide range of refined, ordered, and politically relevant material” (Deutsch et al. 1966, p.85). Furthermore, at the time it was felt that the lack of access to “adequate data handicaps both undergraduate and graduate teaching, as well as faculty research, and restricts the potential usefulness of scholarly work to the makers of public policy” (Deutsch et al. 1966, p.85).

Although it was not a systematic measure of democracy at a global scale, Russell Fitzgibbon’s (1951) ‘Measurement of Latin-American Political Phenomena: A Statistical Experiment’ is noteworthy for a number of reasons. The measure itself was constructed via an expert survey of ten leading Latin-American experts, who were asked to evaluate a range of social, economic, and political factors in 20 countries. Although it has been the subject of various criticisms (Hill & Hurley 1981; Kelly 1998; Hill 1980), Fitzgibbon’s measure was an enduring one, with the expert survey being conducted once every five years up until 2005. In part, the extended time period which the data was recorded over was valued, and “few other quantitative projects in academia can boast of this half-century perspective” (Kelly 1998, p.6). It is interesting to note the difference in conceptualisation which Fitzgibbon presented to other prominent researchers of the time, and Lipset (1959, p.74) is critical of the study for including standard of living and educational levels as a component of analysis because “these latter factors may be conditions for democracy, but they are not an aspect of democracy as such.” The factors considered on the expert survey conducted by Fitzgibbon evaluated education level, standard of living, as well as the more commonly employed measures of civil liberties.

In terms of systematic attempts to collect data, Stein Rokkan (1966, p.6) identifies the Yale Cross-Cultural Survey in 1937 as a moment of decisive progress – with the survey eventually being built up in 1949 into the Human Relations Area
Files (HRAF). Although the HRAF were primarily anthropological summaries of societies “based upon a variety of source documents (books, articles, and manuscripts)” collected for cross-cultural comparison (HRAF 2015), they were nonetheless significant as they were “an extensive repository of coded information on a sample of the world’s known societies” (Rokkan 1966, p.6). In terms of the scale associated with the project, the HRAF can be understood as a step in the direction towards democratic measurement – and it is no coincidence that one of the scholars involved in the summarisation of this data – Robert Textor (1967) – would eventually create a companion to ‘A Cross-Cultural Summary’ in conjunction with Arthur Banks (Banks & Textor 1963) titled ‘A Cross-Polity Survey.’ Whereas the cross-cultural survey was “a basic handbook of information on a sample of 400 societies,” the cross-polity survey was “a pioneering attempt to apply the HRAF-techniques to national polities rather than societies” (Rokkan 1966, pp.6–7).

A similar project to ‘A Cross-Polity Survey,’ the ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators’ (Russett et al. 1964) is of equal importance as a formative measure of democracy, and at the time of publishing the two were regarded as “the two most ambitious and voluminous cross-cultural comparisons ever on the basis of aggregate data” (Scheuch 1966, p.135). Along with the HRAF, these two works were the subject of lively discussion at the UNESCO conference on cross-cultural and longitudinal research in New Haven in 1963 (Scheuch 2003, p.387). The role of Yale in the construction of these measures should be noted, with the handbook explicitly a product of the Yale Political Data Program, and ‘A Cross-Polity Survey’ being written by a Yale-affiliated scholar (Textor was an anthropologist who worked at Yale at the time, but cites a chance encounter with an old colleague from Cornell as being the catalyst for the project (Banks & Textor 1963, p.v)). An important component to both projects, the Yale Political Data Program was informed by a dedication “to the gathering, analysis, and critical evaluation of quantitative data relevant to domestic political developments and to the background conditions of foreign policy in different countries” (Deutsch et al. 1966, p.81).

Positioning the academic worth of their work, the authors of the ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators’ characterise it as a new endeavour attempting to address “the gaps in the existing data and the problems of the
comparability of those data that do exist” (Russett et al. 1964, p.5). The authors differentiate their compilation from the work which has preceded it, categorising existing measures (and the associated analyses of those measures) as falling into four different categories: primarily economic; economic growth; social and cultural; and political. The first category, measures and comparisons which are primarily economic, are characterised by Russett et al. (1964, pp.5–6) as being explicitly economic, and it is argued that “a wider scope is necessary for political and social research.” The second category, economic growth, is once again primarily focused upon economics, although papers in this category explore the relationship between economic growth “and such indicators of social change as urbanization and the spread of mass media” (Russett et al. 1964, pp.6–7). The third category, social and cultural, is primarily understood to involve the inclusion of information on societies at all levels of development, and is regarded as being anthropological in nature – with the HRAF being used as a notable example. The fourth category, political, is for measures that include some social and economic variables. Russett et al. (1964, p.8) place ‘A Cross-Polity Survey’ in this category, and outline some key points of differentiation between the two compilations.

As Russett et al. (1964, p.8) perceive it, the most obvious point of difference for their text is located in their decision to limit themselves to only quantifiable variables, whereas Banks and Textor incorporate ‘soft’ judgemental variables as a component of their analysis. Whilst this enables a more inclusive data set for Banks and Textor, it is argued that this significantly reduces the reproducibility of the Banks and Textor findings. Another key point of difference highlighted (and one that continues to be an issue in the measurement of democracy) is the decision by Banks and Textor to dichotomise the variables in their study. It is argued that this results in a significant loss of information, and their contemporaries note that it places “severe limits on the kind and sophistication of analytical techniques available to them” (Russett et al. 1964, p.8). Because of these substantive differences within the data being categorised, it is argued that the two volumes should be understood as complimentary to each other, rather than competing (Russett et al. 1964, p.8).

In examining the other texts presented by Russett et al. (1964), a few efforts are noteworthy, with the work of W.S Woytinsky and E.S. Woytinsky (1955) in
particular being an exhaustive attempt at assembling a large body of data which also contains a detailed amount of information relating to the manner in which variables have been categorised. However, one key issue pointed out by the authors is that their study uses a variety of statistics which are not readily comparable – outlining the fact that the data used for much of the study uses a variety of methods of classification and time scaling (Woytinsky & Woytinsky 1955, p.xlv). As such, their volume is not particularly useful for a scholar looking to make precise comparison, and as the authors point out, their statistical tables are designed for laymen rather than those who are technically capable and proficient in statistics. Despite the lack of readily comparable data on a number of topics, there is a large collection of information present in the text, and Woytinsky and Woytinsky provide an interesting commentary on the state of government in the world in their section on government, with the accompanying descriptive statistics helping to justify the commentary which they provide. There are a broad array of sources used to compile the data present although like Russett et al., and Banks and Textor, the primary basis of the data used is from the United Nations and is sourced from various reports.

Another project noted by Russett et al. is Seymour Martin Lipset's (1959) ‘Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy.’ Lipset’s work is noteworthy for its prominence as a seminal study, and is widely regarded as an important text in empirical democratic theorising (Neubauer & Cnudde 1969), sparking extensive debate about the nature of the relationship between democracy and economic prosperity. Although Lipset’s work provides measures which categorise democracy, it is presented in a fashion that examines a smaller subset of social information. It is primarily geared towards comparing the relationship between democratic and non-democratic political systems, and thus can be best understood as analysis rather than as providing a proper measure of democracy. Lipset’s work is also noteworthy in generating a response measure from Phillips Cutright (1963), which scores countries for their political development. Cutright’s measure is not an explicit measure of democracy as there are no classifications assigned to the scores received, with the measure evaluating the composition of the legislative body on a three-point scale, yet it is worth mentioning as it often receives attention in works discussing early measurement efforts (see for example: Bollen & Paxton 2000; Hill 1980).
The works of the ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators,’ and ‘A Cross-Polity Survey,’ can be differentiated from the other compilations of data available at the time based upon the manner in which the data presented is designed to be used by those interested in analysing political systems. These are data sources compiled to be used by political scientists. Thus, they are compiled in a manner that is sensitive to the types of relationships political scientists at this time are interested in, and are formed in way that coheres with understandings of political systems present at this time. Precisely what this means will be explored in the following section by reviewing a number of the indicators present in each of the texts.

### 3.3 Indicators of Political Systems

The chapter has so far explored why these early data compilations were created, as well as the demands which they were designed to meet, but what did they look like? This section will outline some of the variables present in ‘A Cross-Polity Survey,’ and then turn to the variables present in the ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators.’ Following on from this, I will briefly summarise the methods of analysis that are used by the two volumes, and outline why these methods have been presented. In presenting this, I hope to show how these researchers understood their efforts, as well positioning the access to resources available to researchers at other institutions.

The ensuing analysis follows Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen’s (2009) framework of conceptualisation, measurement and aggregation which has become the benchmark standard in the analysis of democracy. Munck and Verkuilen stress the importance of being clear about each aspect of measurement, since each contributes to the overall validity of the evaluation being made. Conceptualisation refers to how the concept being measured is defined – that is, what characteristics are taken as constituting the given concept. The second component of the framework, measurement, refers to the indicators used to evaluate the concept being evaluated. The third component, aggregation, refers to the way that each individual indicator is weighted in overall measure.

On the first instance, conceptualisation, there is no explicit definition of democracy presented in either text. The authors instead include variables at various levels which are taken to be potentially interesting for those wanting to conduct
analysis in a variety of domains. What can be discerned from the characteristics though is a focus on the inclusion of variables which might be of note in the Cold War context. Whilst the ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators’ does not provide any explicit theoretical definition of democracy, there is a discussion of various works associated with the analysis of democracy, and one can take this as being informative about the underlying theoretical approach to democracy which the authors hold. It should be noted that there is a high degree of conceptual ambiguity for ‘A Cross-Polity Survey’ because of the aims of the project, which are in part to provide the maximal number of possible variables for other scholars to use in their own analysis. In doing so, the authors refrain from constraining possible units of analysis to their own version of democracy.

There are much clearer insights which can be made about the precise nature of the measurement decisions for each dataset. In terms of measurement, ‘A Cross-Polity Survey’ contains 57 primary variables, and includes data for 115 different independent polities. The primary variables (referred to by Banks and Textor as raw-characteristics) range across a number of different categories, and “approximately two-thirds of these raw characteristics are of direct political significance ... [and] the remaining one-third of the characteristics are political in a derivative or environmental sense” (Banks & Textor 1963, p.5). The primary variables included are on either nominal or ordinal scales, depending on the variable in question.

Once these primary variables have been coded, they are divided into secondary variables which are dichotomised “in a variety of strategically promising ways” (Banks & Textor 1963, p.5). Overall, there are 194 different finished characteristics given, which are then cross-tabulated with each of the other characteristics in an extensive computer printout (the book is approximately 1400 pages). Neither the raw-characteristics, nor the finished characteristics are grouped and categorised by Banks and Textor into distinct conceptual areas as is commonly done now when political systems are measured. The raw characteristics provided can be roughly divided into the following categories:

- Demographic
- Economic
• Educational
• Government Type
• Historical Experience
• Legislative Structure
• Political System
• Power Structure and Distribution
• Position of the Military and Police

It is important to note here that the data set is structured to measure political systems more generally, rather than specifically democracy, and thus the salient point of differentiation for many of the political system variables is across system type. By this it is meant that there is no differentiation between good and bad cases of the system type in question. In part, this is because Banks and Textor are concerned with creating a picture of all of the independent polities currently existing. However, it is primarily a consequence of their decision to dichotomise all of the variables which they have included.

The ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators’ contains 75 distinct variables for 135 countries. Of note is the decision to include only ordinal variables, there are notionally no coding decisions made by authors – instead the only real decisions made are in how the variables are defined. The variables given are divided into 9 distinct categories, which are listed below:

• Human Resources
• Government and Politics
• Communications
• Wealth
• Health
• Education
• Family and Social Relations
• Distribution of Wealth and Income
• Religion

Of particular note is the manner in which Russett et al. (1964) attempt to address the challenge of identifying different types of political systems using only
quantitative data. Their solution is to provide five different variables that look at voting patterns. The variables in question examine (Russett et al. 1964, p.viii):

- Votes in national elections as a percentage of voting-age population
- Votes for Communist Party as a percentage of total vote
- Votes for religious parties as a percentage of total vote
- Votes for Socialist parties as a percentage of total vote
- Votes for non-communist secular parties as a percentage of total vote

Whilst there are evidently some issues with using this as a way to differentiate the different types of regime, it is nonetheless an interesting attempt to use purely quantitative data to investigate political systems. It is also interesting as it is emblematic of the view that a quantitative account of something is inherently value-neutral. As can be seen from the categories listed, the measure is also targeted towards identifying communist and socialist states. This is reflective of the Cold War context which caused measures to prioritise differentiating across regime types in a way that paid attention to the political conflicts of the time.

In comparing the makeup of the two data sets to each other, a few key points stand out. As has already been mentioned, the decision by Banks and Textor to dichotomise their variables is one that impacts the overall quality of the data presented. Whilst this enables the construction of the cross-tabular print out which forms the main body of the work, it nonetheless inhibits the manner in which the data can be effectively engaged with. However, it should be noted that the decision to present the data in this way is related to the extent to which the authors are attempting to make the data accessible for a wide variety of scholars. By being able to refer directly to the text without having to conduct their own analysis, scholars lacking access to similarly sophisticated technology were not prohibited from engaging with the data set.

Not only was the ability of readers to interpret the data a factor in the construction of Banks and Textor’s measures, so too was the type of questions which scholars of the time were interested in. A key element of the measures construction is the goal of Banks and Textor (1963, p.11) to “stimulate the generation of hypotheses on the part of the professionally trained reader.” Implicit in this is the
construction of spaces to find and generate hypotheses about the relationship between regimes and different aspects of society. In that sense the measures are not just measures of regimes, but also measures which can be used to understand the impact of regime type on aspects of governance.

However, constructing a measure in this way is primarily targeted towards across-case comparison and evaluation, rather than identifying differences within-case. In this context the across-case differences are differences across regime type. This is the most important detail about early measures, as this emphasis on across-case different persists into the current measurement structure. For example, the Polity IV measure of democracy has been criticised for ‘squashing’ variation across higher level democracies (Munck & Verkuilen 2009), because it’s emphasis is on distinguishing across regime type, rather than identifying within regime differences.

Banks and Textor’s open-access approach can be contrasted with that of Russett et al. (1964). The ‘World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators’ contains an entire section dedicated to the analysis of trends and patterns in a theoretically sophisticated way, using regression to test hypotheses about some expected relationships. The authors outline that this is a preliminary analysis, and their decision to provide this analysis in part is motivated by showing the kind of relationships which can be explored using their data. Whilst they are in part demonstrating the utility of their measure, it can also be seen that they are primarily concerned with constructing a measure which suits their own research agenda, rather than trying to create a measure to stimulate other researchers. This is a potential issue for some contemporary measures of democracy as well, as many measures are constructed by scholars with the purpose of investigating a specific question (or set of questions). This basis can inform the construction of measures, and thus can result in measure skewed towards criteria suited to answering that kind of question.

The final category to consider for the two measures is that of aggregation. However, the fact that there is no explicit definition of democracy for either measure means that there is also not an explicit aggregation strategy for them. This is because if there is no overall concept structure, then there can’t be an aggregation procedure evaluating that concept.
What can be seen in the two measures is that they bear some resemblance to newer measures in the way that they evaluate democracy. This will be made evident through the in-depth exploration of contemporary measures of democracy presented in the next chapter. The focus on across-case difference is an aspect which has remained as a feature of democracy measurement, with only very recent engagement with the potential for substantial differentiation of the quality of different democracies (Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016). Measures have also continued to reflect similar value judgements about the objectivity of interval-scale indicators present in the approach of Russet et al. Another dimension which has remained is the focus on the procedural elements of democracy – especially with regards to the prominence of elections.

3.4 Persistent Issues for Measurement and Existing Evaluations of Democratic Indexes

In the last three decades the accuracy of the measurement of democracy has become an increasingly popular topic amongst scholars of comparative politics and methodologists, and has also become a growing topic of interest for some democratic researchers. In particular, the last decade has seen a proliferation in the number of studies scrutinising the quality of existing measures of democracy. Studies on the topic have focused upon a wide range of areas as efforts have been made to improve measurement practice. Whilst not exhaustive, issues raised by scholars have covered each of the three key categories required in the formulation of indexes of democracy: conceptualisation, measurement, and aggregation. Like measures of democracy themselves, analysis of measurement practice has become increasingly sophisticated. The earliest articles on the topic focused primarily upon disputes associated with the notion of concept validity as raised by Giovanni Sartori in 1970. Later work has drawn upon this notion of concept validity to scrutinise the choice of indicators which have been used to capture key concepts associated with democracy. More recently research has used advanced quantitative techniques to examine the replicability of democracy scores, as well as examining the extent to which there is random and systematic errors in the data used to measure democracy. Whilst there are still issues in a variety of areas, it is increasingly clear
that scholars working on and engaging with measures of democracy are setting higher standards for measurement practice.

Concept validity has long been considered as a substantive component of democratic analysis, with Sartori’s article in 1970 on the topic of concept misformation “widely recognized as a foundational statement within comparative politics and political science” (Collier & Gerring 2009, p.3). Sartori outlines the ladder of abstraction involved in converting a broader concept into smaller, measurable indicators, and highlights the potential for concepts to become misformed if they are not properly conceptualised when they are measured. Drawing on work from philosophy of language, Sartori (2009, p.22) discusses the relationship of meaning that occurs “between the extension (denotation) and intension (connotation) of a term.” In this discussion, Sartori argues that scholars of comparative politics need to ensure that they are adequately paying attention to this relationship when they attempt to measure concepts. Specifically, he criticises the potential to conflate operational definitions with definitions which are the actual meaning of the word, highlighting that “while it is obvious that an operational definition is a declaration of meaning, the reverse is not true” (Sartori 2009, p.28). By this, it is meant that to operationalise a concept is a statement about what one takes the concept to be, but the manner through which a concept can be operationalised does not itself limit the overall definition of that concept. Sartori infers from this observation that scholars should base measures upon minimalist conceptions, as it helps to prevent conceptual stretching. Whilst that emphasis upon minimalisation is not shared here, the importance of Sartori’s (2009, p.28) critique is still noted, and is appreciated in the manner that it highlights the need for scholars to “distinguish between definition of meaning and operational definition.” This observation outlines an important standard for measurement practice with regards to understanding how to capture concepts properly, as well as setting a standard for how these concepts should be discussed. It highlights that serious attention needs to be paid to the gap between the operational definition, and the definition of meaning. When discussing democracy, scholars need to be careful that the operationalised definition of democracy does not by default become the accepted definition, and should instead differentiate between definitions which are shaped by measurement limitations, and the actual concept of democracy. This is an issue
which underpins this thesis, and in the context of measuring democracy, scholars must ask how closely a given operational definition of democracy suitably matches up with the definition of meaning, and if it does not, what are the consequences?

One of the key issues associated with creating measures of democracy is precisely what numerical form democracy should be measured as, or alternatively, what scale democracy should be scored on. Throughout scholarship evaluating measures of democracy, it is widely acknowledged that “scaling is a critical issue in measurement and one that has garnered considerable controversy” (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015, p.1492). In this area there is extensive dispute over whether indicators of democracy should be dichotomous, polychotomous, or continuous – that is, should indicators differentiate solely upon the basis of democracy and non-democracy; different types of democracy and non-democracy; or should there be a spectrum from non-democracy through to democracy? Based upon the type of research question scholars are employing measures to investigate, it can be seen how each classification scheme has its own strengths and weaknesses.

As discussed above, early measures of democracy often employed dichotomous classification schemes. In part, this can be attributed to earlier research being primarily comparative across regime type, comparing democracies to non-democracies. José Anotonio Cheibub, Jennifer Ghandi, and James Vreeland (2010, p.97) argue that using a dichotomous indicator makes sense when analysing differences between democracies and dictatorships, since there are theoretically meaningful differences across the two categories, and the within category differences are often “incidental to the issue[s] at stake.” This perspective is often advanced through the position that whilst “democracy can be more or less advanced, one cannot be half-democratic” (Przeworski et al. 2000, p.57). The justification for this view is summed up by Tatu Vanhanen (2003, p.66) as a belief that “it is one thing to argue that some democracies are more democratic than others, but it is another to argue that democracy is a continuous feature across all regimes.” Against this, it has been increasingly argued that there is a degree of arbitrariness about deciding on the very close cases as to what does or does not count as a democracy, since it is becomingly increasingly common for regimes to hold competitive multiparty elections, whilst demonstrating authoritarian
tendencies (Diamond 2002). Others have pointed out that there is also an associated challenge of deciding precisely when to characterise a change of regime type as occurring (Hadenius & Teorell 2004, p.3). It thus becomes potentially arbitrary or ambiguous as to what is a democracy, and what is not. Moreover, there remains the fact that “without careful regime classification, it is impossible to adequately study important substantive issues related to political regimes” (Mainwaring, Brinks & Pérez-liñán 2001, p.39). Another important consideration is that increasingly comparative analysis is focused upon comparing democracies to other democracies. Taken together, the issues of appropriately recording the time of regime changes, and a lack of sensitivity to differences within democracies, suggest that there are limits to the effectiveness of dichotomous measures when attempting to answer important questions about democracy in the world.

One response to the challenge of dealing with differences within democracies has been to classify democracy using polychotomous variables. It has been argued that using polychotomous variables is desirable, since the subtypes used in empirical analysis of democracy are often “critical components of the main substantive arguments presented by researchers, often advancing the author’s overall characterization of the case or cases in question” (Collier & Levitsky 1997, p.432). By differentiating based upon the type of democracy, scholars are better able to understand whether various relationships have more to do with subtypes of democracy, rather than with democracy as a regime type in general. However, dichotomous and polychotomous numerical classifications can be problematized on the grounds that “dichotomizing democracy lumps together countries with very different degrees of democracy and blurs distinctions between borderline cases” (Bollen & Jackman 1989, p.612). Irrespective of the number of subtypes of democracy which a polychotomous classification system employs, it still faces difficulty in differentiating between good and bad cases of the subtype of democracy in question. This can potentially have implications for scholars attempting to conduct an empirical analysis. For example, if the cases of hybrid democratic regimes in the world tend to be low quality cases of hybrid democracy (perhaps because they were favoured in regions which had poor political climates at the time they were implemented, which is arguably the case in the Latin-American experience), an analysis that failed to take account of this could potentially
mischaracterise the relationships which hybrid democratic regimes have with other salient political outcomes.

Based upon these criticisms, some scholars have favoured using continuous measures of democracy, arguing that democracy is best understood in a way that differentiates between cases of good and bad democracies more substantively. This ability for measures to differentiate across the quality of democracy is important, and as Bollen and Jackman (1989, p.613) highlight, “since democracy is conceptually continuous, it is best measured in continuous terms.” Furthermore, continuous measures enable more nuanced characterization of individual democracies relative to each other, and help to prevent the phenomenon of bunching which occurs when comparing advanced democracies with some democratic indexes (Coppedge et al. 2015, pp.16–17). Despite the capacity for more nuanced assessments, once the impact of errors is factored into continuous measures of democracy, the confidence with which they can be differentiated is somewhat limited, and “even when countries receive different scores, their scores may not be significantly different because of measurement error” (Coppedge et al. 2015, p.16). Secondary analysis of various continuous measures has demonstrated the extent to which difference cannot necessarily be treated as significant, because the magnitude of the error range is larger than the observed difference (Treier & Jackman 2008). Indeed, it has been argued that “in contrast to binary indices, the levels in these ordinal indices are not qualitatively different from each other” (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015, p.1493). Moreover, there are problems of unrecognised within case difference in some measures, with David Armstrong (2011, p.653) highlighting that “there is considerable variation in regimes within the same original Freedom House categories.” As shown in Shaun Treier and Simon Jackman’s (2008, p.213) analysis of the Polity dataset, if scholars are not cautious in their approach to employing existing continuous data for analysis, then “the risk of inferential error is high.” Hence, whilst logically consistent with the continuous nature of the concept of democracy, there remains debate over the desirability of continuous measures of democracy.

In conjunction with addressing the numerical form measures should take, analyses of measurement have also examined the potential for problems associated
with the accuracy of indicators used to measure democracy. Early articles on the topic examined the role that choosing different indicators played in producing inconsistent relationships between democracy and a range of desirable characteristics (Bollen & Jackman 1989). For example, Kenneth Bollen (1980, p.370) highlights the dispute between Christopher Hewitt (1977) and Robert Jackman (1974) over the relationship between democracy and the prevention of income inequality as a case of a dispute based upon two different conceptions of how both income inequality and democracy should be measured. Later articles on the topic of indicators have more fully developed these issues by highlighting the potential for subjective biases to impact the results obtained from measures (Ward 2002; Bollen 1993; Bollen & Paxton 2000; Mainwaring, Brinks & Pérez-liñán 2001; Beck & Katz 1996). Other studies have highlighted the impact that using different indexes has in exploring relationships with democracy, with research showing that “using the same model and the same-country years but different measures of democracy generate different results” (Casper & Tufis 2003, p.200). Furthermore, there remains no consensus on precisely which indicators should be used to measure democracy, with more recent analyses of current measures pointing out that “there are important differences across the indices in terms of what they are measuring” (Munck 2009, p.61).

As well as evaluating the impact of conceptual issues resulting in systematic error in the measurement of democracy, researchers have employed statistical techniques to investigate the scope of random error within the existing datasets on democracy. Recent studies have attempted to assess the impact of both random and systematic measurement error by using latent variable analysis to examine the replicability of scores for democratic data sets (Treier & Jackman 2008; Pemstein, Meserve & Melton 2010). Importantly, testing the replicability of scores and testing the potential for measurement error, are problem areas where measurement practice is increasingly improving in, although recent studies suggest that there is still a substantial amount of work required to reduce the frequency and magnitude of errors in current measurement.

Other studies have focused upon issues associated with the conceptual validity of existing measures of democracy (Munck & Verkuilen 2009; Adcock &
In these assessments of conceptual validity, scholars have analysed the degree to which the attributes used in measurement “are constitutive of the concept under consideration” (Munck & Verkuilen 2009, p.16). Analyses of this kind have attempted to assess the degree to which definitions used by measures of democracy range from being minimal to maximal, as well as reviewing the degree to which the indicators used in measures capture the concepts which they are supposed to. The literature examining the conceptual validity of measurement has primarily focused upon the scope of current measures (that is, whether measures are maximal or minimal), rather than the type of definition being employed. This is in part informed by a desire “to distinguish issues of measurement from fundamental conceptual disputes” (Adcock & Collier 2001, p.533). However, it is important that both these aspects are adequately examined since the fundamental conceptual disputes surrounding the definition of democracy are often located in what makes democracy a morally desirable political system. The extent to which these disputes are not attended to in current literature remains an issue, and a recent paper on the topic by Gerardo Munck (2016, p.21) highlights that “the limitations of a minimal definition of democracy are increasingly apparent.” This chapter contributes to this existing literature by presenting a systematic examination and summary of the type of definition of freedom which is employed in current measures of democracy.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

The first section of this chapter outlined the role occupied by the early development of political science in coming to shape early approaches to measuring democracy. The second section of the chapter built upon this in discussing the manner in which early political scientists sought to overcome the limited access to data which they had. It was suggested that the works of Banks and Textor, and Russett et al. are important as the first measures of democracy which could be widely used by other scholars to conduct statistical analysis on a range of topics associated with democracy. These measures were explored in detail to give a picture of what early endeavours looked like, which will be contrasted against contemporary measurement efforts in the next chapter. Some of the similarities which persist in contemporary measures were also noted to suggest that some
elements in the approach to measurement have remained consistent across the
development of measurement.

The wide range of issues canvassed in the fourth section of the chapter show
the current issues which are salient within extant literature on measures of
democracy. This section outlined the conceptual and measurement challenges faced
by current research efforts, and in turn, the solutions proposed by various scholars
to address these problems. An appreciation of the various issues covered
throughout this chapter adds a significant degree of depth to the understanding of
contemporary efforts to measure democracy by helping to explain why measures
are structured in the way that they currently are. The next chapter will build on this
discussion in analysing existing measurement efforts, to further demonstrate the
prominence of the non-interference based definition of freedom in current
measurement.
Chapter 4: Existing Measures of Democracy

This chapter will present an analysis of measures of democracy used in the contemporary study of democracy. The key purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate the prominence of the position occupied by the definition of freedom as non-interference in current measurement of democracy. The analysis will primarily focus upon the engagement each measure has with the concept of freedom, summarising the type of definition given for freedom, and the weighting which freedom receives as a component of the overall measure of democracy. Alongside this, the theoretical basis given by the authors for many of the measures will be considered, to highlight the influence of Schumpeter’s and Dahl’s views in the overall measurement of democracy. From this analysis, the chapter will demonstrate that contemporary measurement of democracy primarily emphasises the definition of freedom as non-interference when freedom is measured as a component of democracy. It will be argued that this definition of freedom can be partially connected to the type of scale and classificatory system preferred when measuring democracy, and thus is at times presented as a measurement consideration, rather than a theoretical one. This chapter serves to highlight that measures of capability receive minimal attention within the measurement of democracy, and thus opens up the worth of exploring whether capability can be included into the evaluation of democracy, which will be the task of subsequent chapters.

The analysis presented in this chapter will be constructed across four different dimensions. The first dimension is the dimension of popularity – this dimension pays attention to which measures are most commonly used by scholars. By engaging with this dimension I aim to show the prominence of the non-interference based definition of freedom by demonstrating the popularity of measures which employ this definition. The second dimension will cover conceptualisation, with a specific focus on the definition of freedom which is present in various measures of democracy. The third dimension considered will be the indicator selection of the various measures of democracy, this will be used to highlight some of the differences in how evaluations are made across the different measures of democracy. The fourth dimension of the analysis will present the
aggregation practices of measures of democracy to investigate the manner in which freedom is weighted as a component of democracy. In analysing this dimension, I will highlight how important the relationship between freedom and democracy is characterised as being within the various measures of democracy.

It is important to note that there is a gap between the measurement of the quality of democracy, and the measurement of whether regimes are democratic. Many of the measures considered in this chapter emphasise the measurement of whether regimes are a democracy or not, and pay little attention to the differences between democracies. Whilst focusing on the type of regime may be the best approach when the primary goal of measurement is to distinguish between democracies and non-democracies, it makes it much harder to understand the differences between democracies. Moreover, the central aim of this thesis is to identify which definition of freedom is most prominent in measures of democracy, and in that sense, the approach taken to measurement is a secondary issue. Whilst the approach to measurement certainly frames what is likely to be included in measurement, it is a different topic to what is actually included in measurement. Nonetheless, we should remain aware that these differences in approach to measurement of democracy are a part of the decision process in deciding what to include in the measurement of democracy.

4.1 Analytical Framework

The framework used in the ensuing analysis is based upon the framework for the analysis of data presented by Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen (2009) in ‘Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: An Evaluation of Alternative Indices.’ As outlined by Munck and Verkuilen, there are three separate core challenges which must be overcome to properly construct a measure of democracy; these challenges are: conceptualisation, measurement, and aggregation.
The three challenges can be understood as at times complimentary, rather than distinct from each other. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, when democracy is measured, the logical structuring of the concept needs to be mapped out in a way that enables it to be measured. This is undertaken by breaking it down into key attributes, which in turn are broken down into the components of each attribute. In the work of Dahl, the key attributes of democracy can be thought of as contestation and participation. These attributes are in turn made up of distinct components – for example, as the concept tree in Figure 4.1 demonstrates, contestation in a democracy requires both the right to form parties, and the freedom of the press. These could be broken down further again if required into subcomponents, until the point where the feature in question can be observed and measured. The base level indicators used to measure freedom will be the core focus of the ensuing analysis – however, because the level that freedom is measured at differs amongst indicators,

**Figure 4.1 The Logical Structure of Concepts**

the level of analysis across measures cannot be given here as a single level.

```
+-------------+             +-------------+
| Concept     |             | Democracy   |
|-------------+             |             |
| Attributes  |             |             |
|             | Contestation| Participation|
|             |             |             |
| Components  | Right to    | Access of    |
| of Attributes| form parties| parties to |
|             | Freedom of  | public financing|
|             | the press   |             |
|             | Right to    | Extent of |
|             | vote        | suffrage   |
|             | Fairness of |
|             | the voting  |
|             | process     |
```

This Figure has been reconstructed based upon Munck and Verkuilen (2009, p.21).

*Note:* This example has two levels of abstraction, labelled “attributes” and “components of attributes,” One could introduce a third level of abstraction, called “subcomponents of attributes,” and go even further. However, no matter how many levels of abstraction are introduced, attributes at the last level of abstraction, generically labelled as “leaves,” are used as the starting point for the task of measurement. In this example, Right to form political parties is a “leaf.”
The analysis in this chapter will primarily focus upon the conceptualisation of freedom in measures of democracy generally, with particular attention given to the most popular measures. In attending to the more popular measures, some of the subcomponents which are used in those measures will be examined, because this highlights the actual process of concept construction which goes together to form the definition of freedom which the measure is categorised as having. More broadly the analysis given will comment on how the investigators constructing the measure generally refer to the concept of freedom, to ensure that limitations like access to data which have shaped the measure do not undermine the comprehension of the definition of freedom which the author possesses. This secondary step is taken because it is plausible that investigators may be conscious that the type of available indicators which can be used to measure freedom only allow for a minimalist definition of freedom to be measured. In this sense, it leaves room for investigators to take heed of Sartori’s advice to be aware of the potential gap between the operational definition of freedom which they employ, and the actual definition of freedom. These two sections will thus be combined to assess the overall nature of how investigators deal with the various definitions of freedom. This will be used to characterise the conceptualisation of freedom which each measure has, and in turn, will enable an analysis of the position which freedom occupies within measurement.

The chapter analyses the conception of freedom given for measures of democracy which have been considered noteworthy by other studies of measurement in the extant literature. The measures of democracy included in this analysis are based upon studies by: Hadenius and Teorell (2004, p.31); Munck and Verkuilen (2009, p.14); Coppedge et al. (2015, p.8); Pickel et al. (2015, p.512); Diamond et al. (2016); and Munck (2016, p.3). The attempt was made to be exhaustive in the measures included, and so any measure referred to within the literature on measuring democracy has been included in the following analysis. Studies of comparative politics have also been explored, in order to identify any additional measures.

It should be noted that whilst not all the measures included explicitly label themselves as measures of democracy, those which can be regarded in some respect as an attempt to capture and record key facets of democracy to better understand
political regimes in the world have been included in the ensuing analysis. Table 4.1 lists the measures, the type of classification scheme used to define democracy, the definition of freedom present within the measure if one is present, and the ‘impact’ of the index based upon Google Scholar citations.

The classification scheme used to measure democracy is noteworthy, as it helps to characterise the overall picture of democracy which is present. The ‘impact’ of the indexes is important, as it helps to characterise the overall approach taken to freedom within the field. Whilst the method of evaluating ‘impact’ using Google Scholar citations is crude and has serious limitations – notably the reporting of false positives, and the issue of not registering citations – it is nonetheless informative. False positives are instances where a measure is cited, but it is likely that the citation is not directed towards the measure, but rather it is directed towards the theoretical contribution which the paper has made.

The method used to measure the ‘impact’ is based upon a similar study by Coppedge et al. (2011), part of which looked at the popularity of a narrower set of measures than is reviewed here. Whilst there are problems with using this impact evaluation, is helpful in ascertaining a rough picture of the prominence of various measures, and this picture is discussed briefly in the analysis of the measures. No weighting was given based upon a measure’s age. Whilst this does mean that older measures are likely to have more citations, this also reflects the familiarity which researchers are likely to have with established measures.

Before continuing on, some comments should be made about why the datasets included have been taken to be a ‘measure of democracy.’ The most important comment, which is in regards to why each measure has been included, is that they have been included because each is trying to say something about the status of democracy in the world.

Some are obviously direct measures of democracy, like Kenneth Bollen’s Political Democracy Index, whilst others only capture democracy as a component of their measure, like the Polity IV Index. However, it is clear from reviewing these

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12 Web of Science citation metrics were not used to calculate citations because of the emphasis which is placed upon journals in their metric. It results in the under-reporting of the citation scores for the measures which are not presented in journals – which is a particularly pertinent issue because the two most popular measures are not journal based.
measures that democracy is an important component of what they capture. Another
point to be noted is that the terminology used by the various measures differs
substantially. Some measures present indicators which are percentages, some call
their variables scores, whilst others refer to them as indicators. This is whilst each
is attempting to measure effectively the same thing. For the sake of clarity of
analysis, I have used the term given by the original source. This means that at times
terminology is different across the comparison or discussion, when the concept or
variable in question is effectively the same. Finally, I have where possible referred
to the various measures as either datasets or measures, rather than indexes. This is
because not all of the measures engage in the process of indexation, either only
measuring a single feature, or alternatively, not presenting an overall aggregated
‘democracy’ score.

4.2 The Popularity of Different Measures of Democracy

Understanding the popularity of the various measures of democracy helps to
frame the remainder of the chapter by establishing which measures warrant the
most attention when creating an overall picture of the measurement of democracy.
This task is important, because when ascertaining how freedom is incorporated into
the evaluation of democracy the question of which measures get used is just as
significant as the question of which measures exist. By including this component of
analysis, the chapter will demonstrate the overall proliferation of minimalist
accounts of democracy within existing measurement. Furthermore, this style of
analysis has been used elsewhere in the literature to help investigate the
prominence occupied by various measures (Coppage et al. 2011, 2015). In
conjunction with a summary of the overall conceptualisation of freedom within
measurement, this secondary component of analysis will help to present a clear
picture as to the dominant status of the definition of freedom as non-interference in
current measurement of democracy.

Extant literature comparing existing measures of democracy regularly cites
the Polity Index and the Freedom House measure of Political Rights and Civil
Liberties as the two most commonly used in academic research and policy
assessment (Diamond, Green & Gallery 2016). The analysis presented by evaluating
citations coheres with this observation, and helps to validate the emphasis of the
ensuing discussion as primarily focused towards these most popular measures. There are a variety of reasons which have contributed to the popularity of the two measures, with the extended time period which they have existed for being the most notable reason.

On the other end of the spectrum, it is worthwhile noting the lack of prominence given to the Global Democracy Ranking created by David Campbell. This measure presents a much more expansive conception of freedom, and it is unfortunate that it has not received more attention. Another measure which at present has not received much use, which presents a more comprehensive analysis of the concept of freedom is the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project. A large part of the lack of citations for the V-Dem project is the new status which is possesses, having only officially made available all of its data at the end of 2015. The V-Dem project is interesting in that it presents multiple definitions of freedom, and multiple definitions of democracy, enabling scholars to evaluate the status of democracy in the world based upon their own ideological and analytical preferences. As suggested by Diamond et al. (2016, p.74), the novel approach of providing multiple definitions may enrich the study of democracy in the world, and the penetration of the measure into the work of those studying democracy may increase the accuracy with which claims can be made about democracy. Based upon the pluralistic approach adopted by the V-Dem measure, it has not been incorporated into a single category in the ensuing discussion, and is instead included at the end. In part, this is because it is impractical to talk of the conceptualisation and aggregation practices present for the measure, since there are multiple definitions and weighting procedures which it employs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index, Authors, &amp; Year</th>
<th>Classification Scheme</th>
<th>Definition of Freedom</th>
<th>Impact*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polity IV (Marshall, Jaggers &amp; Gurr 2014)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>4,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom House (2015)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>1,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Democracy Index (Bollen 1980)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadenius (1992)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Democratization (Vanhanen 2000, 2003)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>None present</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyarchy (Coppedge &amp; Reinicke 1990)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arat (1991)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the Quality of Democracy (Altman &amp; Pérez-Liñán 2002)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Democracy Score (Pemstein, Meserve &amp; Melton 2010)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) (2016)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Poverty is considered as a component of freedom</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Regime Change, Reich (2002); &amp; Gasiorowski (1996)</td>
<td>Ordinal, with a residual category</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy Barometer (Merkel et al. 2014)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness-Contestation (Coppedge, Alvarez &amp; Maldonado 2008)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Ranking (2015)</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a ‘Good’ Democracy? (Morlino 2004)</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernhard, Nordstrom, &amp; Reenock (BNR) (2001)</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>None present</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Conceptualisation: The Definition of Freedom Present in Measures of Democracy

This section of the chapter is the core of the analysis being presented. By characterising the different definitions of freedom presented in the various measures of democracy, it enables an analysis of the overall conceptualisation of freedom which measures of democracy employ. The definition of freedom presented is the focus of this analysis, but as a prior consideration it should be noted that the measures can be differentiated between based upon “at least three major debates over the measurement of democracy” (Boix, Miller & Rosato 2013, p.3).

These debates are reflective of the three distinct areas associated with the construction of an index as presented by Munck and Verkuilen, and elsewhere have been conceived in the terms of components (attributes of democracy), numerical form (the numerical scale which it makes sense to categorise these attributes upon), and measurement (precisely how the measures should be observed, as well as how they should be combined) (Boix, Miller & Rosato 2013, pp.3–5). The manner in which the different positions within these debates translate into the different definitions of freedom presented is a consideration in the ensuing discussion. This is because these positions contribute to the framing of the definition of freedom present.
The measures are grouped by both their definition of freedom presented, as well as the classificatory scale used to measure democracy. The discussion presented in this section will centre upon the types of scales which are used in the various measures, which is a central point upon which some measures can be differentiated. In this section the claim will be developed that there is a relationship between the definition of freedom presented, and the way that democracy is classified.

4.3.1 Measures Which Exclude Freedom from the Evaluation of Democracy

The first conceptual dimension which measures can be divided up along is the inclusion of the concept of freedom. This is the most obvious dimension upon which to divide measures in the context of the thesis. Evidently, the exclusion of the concept of freedom from the evaluation is regarded as problematic based upon the discussion presented in Chapter Two.

Of the measures being evaluated, there are five which do not employ an indicator to evaluate freedom: the Democracy-Dictatorship measure (Alvarez et al. 1996); Vanhanen’s Index of Democratization (Vanhanen 2000); BNR (Bernhard, Nordstrom & Reenock 2001); BMR (Boix, Miller & Rosato 2013); and the Lexical Democracy Index (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015).

Of these measures, the common theme in conceptualisation is to adopt a minimalist interpretation of democracy, basing their measure around the notion of political competition, and the notion of participation. The Democracy-Dictatorship measure is positioned as evaluating the notion of competitiveness from within Schumpeter’s conception of democracy (although the authors state a preference for the usage of Dahl’s term of ‘contestation’). The Lexical Democracy Index is also positioned as Schumpeterian (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015, p.1495), evaluating democracy in the terms of electoral contestation. There is a minor qualification to this, as suffrage is treated as a condition for higher level democracy, only being relevant once elections count for something (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015, p.1497).

The other measures variously position their definition as being based upon the minimalist polyarchy position adopted by Dahl (Vanhanen 2003, p.56; Boix,
Miller & Rosato 2013, p.5; Bernhard, Nordstrom & Reenock 2001, p.783), although in excluding the political rights component associated with this definition, it can be seen that these measures do not entirely cohere with the definition as it is presented in section 2.3.

These measures are defined as specifically evaluating electoral democracy, and on this view “electoral refers to election, tout court” (Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015, p.1495). In making this exclusion of political rights, the definitions presented appear to more accurately reflect the Schumpeterian perspective that democracy is found in the process of elections.

The central theme which is present in each of these measures is the desire to address questions about what makes countries adopt the institutional features of democracy – which based upon the definition given is the feature of adopting elections. The measures thus base their definitions with an eye towards maintaining a high degree of simplicity in the distinction which they make about the definition of democracy and non-democracy, and aim to evaluate based upon conditions of sufficiency. The indicators noted above (with the exception of Vanhanen) are thus of a binary, yes-no kind. It results in an interpretation grounded around the facts of the institutional system that is present. This is informative about why freedom is excluded as a component of the analysis, since, as discussed in the analysis of Schumpeter’s model, it places the individual as beneath the role of competition when understanding democracy. It gives priority to assessing the system. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Theoretical Basis for the Definition of Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of Democratization (Vanhanen 2000; 2003)</td>
<td>Dahl’s contestation and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernhard, Nordstrom, &amp; Reenock (BNR) (2001)</td>
<td>Dahl’s contestation and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boix, Miller, &amp; Rosato (BMR) (2013)</td>
<td>Dahl’s contestation and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Democracy Index (Skaaning et al. 2015)</td>
<td>Schumpeterian competitiveness (although suffrage is a condition for high levels of democracy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
resultant decisions about measuring democracy which are then made can be seen as directly influenced by this, as the researchers demarcate the electoral component from everything else.

The problem about adopting this technique is that it does not pay sufficient regard to the features which underpin fair elections – a notion which is essential to the inherent value of democracy. In turn, it causes problems of classification with regards to what some scholars refer to as hybrid regimes. In this sense, it is not clear that restricting variables to a basic level can sufficiently entail clarity of analysis – the sharp distinction which they aim to achieve is one that barely captures anything worthwhile about the concept which they seek to investigate. Indeed, the argument could be made that having measures of democracy like this is in part responsible for the recent literature examining democratic backsliding trends from Post-Communist states (see for example: Bermeo 2016; Diamond 2016; Erdmann 2011).

4.3.2 Measures Which Include Freedom and Use an Ordinal Classification of Democracy

The conceptualisation of democracy is more expansive in the measures that include freedom than in the measures which exclude freedom. Within the measures that include freedom, there is theoretical diversity with regards to precisely how democracy should be defined. Although the ordinal measures and the interval measures do tend to have distinct characteristics. Of note in the Ordinal measures is the commonality of adopting a rights-based conception to what counts as freedom. Whilst each measure words it in slightly different ways, the end result is to create a definition that ensures that individuals are not infringed upon by their government.

Measuring and then classifying democracy based upon an ordinal scale is the most popular methodological approach employed at present. Whilst there are substantial differences between them, it is the approach adopted by the two most popular measures – Polity and Freedom House. It is also the most commonly employed approach in the measures which are being evaluated, and the influence of Dahl is evident in many of the measures.

Based upon the number of measures which use this scheme of classification, it is worthwhile considering the two most popular, as they are informative about the
general trends present in the other measures as well. In doing so I will discuss their treatment of freedom, the theoretical basis upon which they base their evaluations, as well as the categorisations which they apply to democracy.

### Table 4.3 Ordinal Measures of Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Theoretical Basis for the Definition of Freedom and Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polity IV (Marshall et al. 2014)</td>
<td>Derived from Gurr’s (1974) analysis of Authority and Authority Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadenius (1992)</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyarchy (Coppedge &amp; Reinicke 1990)</td>
<td>Dahl’s polyarchy definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arat (1991)</td>
<td>Non-interference based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the Quality of Democracy (Altman &amp; Pérez-Liñán 2002)</td>
<td>Based upon Dahl’s polyarchy definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Regime Change, Reich (2002); &amp; Gasiorowski (1996)</td>
<td>Based upon Dahl’s definition (Gasiorowski 1996, p.471)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a ’Good’ Democracy? (Morlino 2004)</td>
<td>Definition is positioned as most reflected by the work of Beetham (1999; Morlino 2004, p.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Democracy Index (Skaaning et al. 2015)</td>
<td>Schumpeterian competitiveness (although suffrage is a condition for high levels of democracy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Matrix of Democracy (Lauth 2015)</td>
<td>Procedural definition based upon examination of existing measures (Lauth 2015, p.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polity IV presents a unique definition of democracy. It is calculated by the addition of a number of different attributes, with composite scores added together to designate what type of regime is represented, with the definition of democracy employed being:

“Democracy is conceived as three essential, interdependent elements. One is the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies and leaders. Second is the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive. Third is the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens in their daily lives and in acts of political participation” (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr 2014, p.14).
The definition given is noteworthy in comparison to the others, because there is no explicit dimension of freedom in the indicators present (discussed below), and instead, the presence of freedom as a concept is one that has to be inferred.

In coming to understand the theoretical framing which underpins the Freedom House indicators, it is interesting to note that whilst it is now a widely popular measure of democracy, the creator of the measure, Raymond Gastil, did not originally perceive it as such. In evaluating his time working on the project, Gastil (1990, p.26) notes that whilst freedom has always been associated with democracy, "it was years before [he] understood that the survey was essentially a survey of democracy." Instead, at its creation it was originally taken to be purely a measure of freedom. This is an important fact in helping to determine why the measure was originally less focused upon the institutional mechanisms of democracy. The measure has changed over time away from the original emphasis specifically upon measuring freedom, and now also investigates political rights. According to the methodology report produced by the project, the contemporary measure of “Freedom in the World assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or government performance per se” (2014, p.1).

It is the operationalisation of the personal autonomy and individual rights criterion that draws most strongly upon normative aspects of the various conceptions of freedom, and is thus pertinent to further examination. Within the subcategory of personal autonomy and individual rights, there are three distinct areas that are measured. The first indicator is whether “citizens enjoy freedom of travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education” (2014, p.15). This indicator fits primarily into the non-interference based definition, but also draws in part upon the notion of freedom as non-domination, as it seeks to identify instances where “state or non-state actors determine or otherwise influence a person’s type or place of employment” (2014, p.15). The second indicator is for economic freedom and property rights, and fits neatly into the non-interference based definition of freedom. The third indicator measures whether “there are personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family” (2014, p.15). Although the definition is still grounded in the non-
interference based conception of freedom, this category attempts to tap into some of the normative issues that provide moral worth to more expansive definitions of freedom.

Of particular note is the explicit engagement with gender relations, with one indicator capturing whether “women face de jure and de facto discrimination in economic and social matters, including property and inheritance rights, divorce proceedings, and child custody matters” (2014, p.15). The prominence given to the oppression of women represents a sharp departure from the Polity Index, with one of the facets of the measure also assessing if “violence against women, including wife-beating and rape, [is] widespread, and [whether] perpetrators are brought to justice” (2014, p.15). That domestic relations are incorporated into the measurement is important, and draws out some of the critiques which feminism has provided of democracy as obfuscating power relationships in the home. The extent to which issues of power are related to domination suggests that it is plausible to consider this measure as capturing aspects of the notion of freedom as non-domination, although it should be noted that this is capturing instances of occurrence (prosecution and reported crime), rather than potential cases.

As can be seen in the contrast between Polity and Freedom House, there are differing degrees to which ordinal evaluations of democracy theorise freedom. There are also quite substantive differences to do with the categorisations used to classify the regimes based upon both the number and range used. A general trend though is to have levels of democracy, with associated preconditions. This suggests an engagement with the fact that democracy is not a binary, all or nothing concept, and instead, there are degrees to which regimes can be described as democratic. To some degree this observation can be applied to how the measures also treat freedom. As noted with the Freedom House definition, it is based in a non-interference conception of freedom, but it also extends further by engaging with some more normative questions about who possesses freedom, and by including (in an albeit unclear way) relationships of power and dominance which can be considered external to government. Here it can be seen how there is a tentative appreciation for a more expansive conception of freedom, without fully committing it into the measurement.
There is a high degree of popularity of Dahl’s definition of democracy within the ordinal measures of democracy. It features prominently in the theoretical foundations of Coppedge and Reinicke (1990, p.52), who operationalise the eight institutional requirements put forth by Dahl for a functioning political democracy, and use his term Polyarchy as the name for their measure. Dahl’s work is also prominent in the definition given by Gasiorowski (1996), as well as Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002, p.86), who explicitly frame their evaluation around the attributes noted by Dahl. In employing Dahl, each of these authors favour the non-interference definition of freedom, as it is reflective of the minimalist bent to the polyarchy aspect of Dahl’s work (as distinct from his discussion on the potential attributes of the ideal democracy).

The other ordinal measures of democracy also apply a non-interference based definition of democracy, although it is noteworthy that some of the measures adopt what can be described as a middle-path approach to defining democracy and the associated attributes (Merkel et al. 2014; Lauth 2015). The middle-path approach seeks to position the measure as situated amongst the theoretical discourse surrounding the evaluation of democracy, with the authors attempting to avoid presenting either a maximalist or minimalist perspective. The middle path is an interesting approach to the fundamental disagreement with regards to how democracy should be defined, and helps to address some of the problems which come about from the standard practice of scholars preferring a minimalist definition as a starting point.

However, there are implications from adopting this approach, with it ultimately limiting the engagement with some of the more expansive aspects of democracy. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the case that adopting the middle path is value neutral, as there are important facets to maximalist approaches that are entirely lost when they are only partially attended to. For example, the notion of agency in O’Donnell’s conception of democracy is entirely lost by adopting a middle-path approach, since it requires a much more thorough engagement with the position of the individual in the society than otherwise is considered in the broader literature. It takes an acknowledgement of a whole new space, namely what shapes individual capacity for choice, that is not taken to be important in minimalist
accounts. To maintain an engagement in the middle area – that of non-interference – is thus not a neutral solution.

The adoption of an ordinal approach to measuring democracy enables a more nuanced engagement with the experience of democracy because it leaves more room to evaluate the regime in question. It enables coders to exercise a degree of flexibility in the way that they engage by allowing them to differentiate between obviously different cases which are missed by solely focusing on a procedural conception of democracy as only elections. Whilst there are still limitations in the measurement presented, as flexibility also means that there can at times be coding decisions which are made in a grey zone where it could be decided one way or the other (Goertz 2005, p.20), it means that major within case differences are limited. By not restricting evaluation to a binary classification, it is ensured that more of the democratic experience is engaged with, and in turn enables more depth to the evaluation. What becomes clear from contrasting ordinal and binary categorisations of democracy is that there is more depth to the concept than can be captured by only evaluating one dimension.

4.3.3 The Definition of Freedom in Interval Measures of Democracy

There are a diverse range of approaches to evaluating democracy which are present in the interval based measures of democracy. The ones which adopt the definition of democracy given by Dahl I will not consider in detail (Bollen 1980; Coppedge, Alvarez & Maldonado 2008; Vanhanen 2003; Pemstein, Meserve & Melton 2010), as they present a very similar approach to evaluating democracy as a number of the ordinal measures, only differing in the nature of the indicators which they employ (by using continuous measures).

From a theoretical perspective the key difference with these interval measures as opposed to the ordinal measures covered above is that the interval measures which employ factor analysis attempt to use multiple sources to reduce the impact of coder bias, which is taken to be a problem amongst some of the other measures which they engage with. This is important as it can be taken to reflect an emphasis on using statistical methods to develop the concept being measured, rather than constructing a top down theoretical approach.
David Campbell’s (2008) Global Democracy Ranking represents a theoretically different approach to democracy than the others which are presented throughout the chapter. Campbell bases his framework for evaluating democracy upon the definition of democracy presented by Guillermo O’Donnell (2004). In
basing his definition upon O'Donnell’s work, Campbell explicitly incorporates the capability approach into his evaluation to consider the overall citizen ability to engage in the political process. The manner in which Campbell constructs his measure will be more fully explored in Chapter Six, as it is discussed in the context of the creation of the new measure of democracy, where there is more space to explicitly discuss the elements of the capability approach which Campbell’s measure employs, and the related features and limitations of the measure.

The Economist Intelligence Unit measure is noteworthy for the explicitness of the aspects of freedom which it evaluates. The authors frame the measure as more expansive than the minimalist polyarchy model, aiming to provide a more comprehensive account than they find in extant minimalist measures (The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. 2015, p.43). In generating a more comprehensive analysis of democracy than the minimalist perspective, it considers a much more far reaching set of freedoms and notionally engages with questions of the ability to use freedom for all in considering the “extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms (Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study)” (The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. 2015, p.55). The measure also takes account of the position of various minority groups within the society as a part of some of the indicators, but not as a specific indicator. Hence, although the authors express a preference for a more inclusive measure, the manner in which this is evaluated is not explicitly made clear, but there is at least some acknowledgement of more than non-interference in considering the range of individuals who can access various freedoms, not just that they possess them in a legislative sense.

The definitions of democracy presented by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) and in the Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) are standard (both are produced by the same institute), but it is worth commenting upon the other components of their evaluation which are also conducted. Specifically, both include poverty as a component in their assessment of freedom, although it is not regarded within the context of democratic evaluations. In this sense a more comprehensive assessment of freedom is presented, although the exclusion from the evaluation of democracy limits the impact it has upon the understanding of democracy they advance. It can be discerned from this exclusion that the definition of freedom
favoured in the conceptualisation of democracy is thus one that is at least partially divorced from the functionality of citizens as considered at the end of Chapter Two. However, it is worthwhile noting that this positioning of poverty as external to democracy is potentially a consideration informed by other measures of democracy and the manner in which those other measures structure their evaluations. In part, it is difficult to determine whether this is the case because the methodology presented by both does not explicitly favour a particular conception of democracy – instead, both measures construct their own definition.

Overall the interval scale measures of democracy can be taken to be more expansive than the definitions presented in the ordinal measures. Whilst they are still similar in their approach, with most based upon Dahl’s conception of a minimal requirement for evaluating democracy on the grounds of contestation and participation, there are more expansive aspects which some measures seek to incorporate. In part, this can be attributed to interval measures having a less strict categorisation requirement – they do not necessarily need to be quite as restrictive in their measurement definition. That is not to say the measures don’t need to be precise, but rather, that these measures have the capacity to score democracies along a more fluid path. Differences which improve a democracy marginally can be included in a way that an ordinal scale can have difficulty incorporating, because the categories in ordinal scales are often squashed (that is, there are not many distinct groups, and so within case difference can be substantial). Despite more sensitivity in some measures to the features of democracy which make it more desirable to individuals (like the EIU attention to gender issues), there is still a large amount of space for measures to increase their engagement with the normative aspects of democracy.

4.3.4 The Different Models of Democracy Measured By V-Dem

The V-Dem project has developed five distinct measures of democracy, that are constructed out of around 390 different variables. The measurement effort is extensive, and reflects an engagement with a diverse range of theoretical accounts of democracy which extends beyond the other measures considered above. One aspect which is particularly praiseworthy is the attempt to generate a dataset that begins 1900, and the type of analysis which the new measure enables make it a
useful measurement tool moving forward. However, developing the dataset for such an extensive period of time which has serious limitations with respect to data availability. For this reason, many of the variables which V-Dem generate are developed as subjective expert evaluations, rather than based upon objective data.

This usage of expert judgements may be a potentially problematic way to evaluate some aspects of the political system, especially dimensions where those making evaluations may be disconnected from the people or problems they are evaluating. For example, whilst there is evidence that inequality has been growing as a problem over the last three decades in the United States, it has only recently been treated as potentially problematic in scholarship. When reading through some of the questions which V-Dem use to develop their indicators, it becomes evident that these evaluations are very discretionary. Whilst V-Dem engage a variety of error estimation techniques in trying to ensure that they overcome problems of coder reliability, the contestability of evaluations make some of the principles evaluated potentially limited in the arguments which can be made from them. Where possible, measures should be based upon objective characteristics, rather than subjective evaluations which are primarily based upon perceptions, or popular sentiment. If popular sentiment is wrong, then evaluations may become skewed, and problems which are arising in a given democracy may be missed.

The five different models of democracy measured in V-Dem are: electoral, liberal, deliberative, participatory, and egalitarian. Each different measure is theorised with unique dimensions to it, so that each represents a different principle which is being evaluated. The electoral model reflects the standard minimalist account discussed above, with the principle evaluating the various aspects of electoral integrity in a given country. The liberal principle measures a standard non-interference based range of criteria. The liberal principle also requires little comment, with it being similarly reflective of standard approaches to conceptualisation within measurement. The other three models are worth further consideration.

The deliberative principle evaluates the “process by which decisions are reached by a polity” (Lührmann et al. 2017, p.40). The primary basis for this evaluation is found in the public reasoning which is presented by officials in
justifying a policy choice, and the ways in which representatives try and persuade the public about policy. Setting aside the specifics of each criteria and how closely it connects to theoretical debates\textsuperscript{13} on what constitutes appropriate deliberation for a democracy, it is worth highlighting that the measure is a clear attempt at expanding measurement in a direction that is responsive to contemporary theoretical developments. Although the measure doesn’t explicitly evaluate freedom as self-mastery, the attenuation to the rational deliberation present in the polity captures elements of the definition at a state level. Specifically, it focuses on the idea that discourse dominated by passionate but irrational dialogue is problematic, which is aligned with the notion of rational overcoming present at the individual level of the definition of self-mastery.

The measure tapping into the principle of participation presents a more expanded conception of political participation than just electoral turnout. This extends beyond standard accounts of participation found in other measures, considering the level of participation at local and regional levels, as well as in civil society organisations and in the mechanisms of direct democracy which a country has. Whilst looking at a more demanding account of democracy, the measure does not actively engage a more expansive definition of freedom. Hence whilst some aspects of the measure are worth greater consideration, it is in a domain which falls outside of the focus of this thesis.

The principle of egalitarian democracy is one which is more reflective of the central concerns raised throughout the thesis. This measure aims to evaluate the degree to which inequality impacts the quality of democracy in a country. As noted above though, there are limitations in the identification of this, as it is based upon expert judgements, rather than objective data points. Whilst the controls used by V-Dem ensure that the data which they collect is not systematically experiencing coding problems within their analysis, the absence of objective variables tethering their analysis to the real-world limits some of the validity of the claims which can be made about the data. That is, if experts are systematically wrong in how much of a

\textsuperscript{13} There are a diverse range of debates about what constitutes deliberation worth including in our understanding of democracy (see for example: Walzer 1999; Crocker 2008), and there is not the space here to give them proper attention and the depth of discussion which would be required to properly evaluate these measures in relation to the broader theoretical debates in question.
problem they see inequality as being in a polity, then there is no way to identify this in the measure presented, because there is no external equality metric which it is compared to. Despite the measurement instrument limitations, there are aspects of the definition of freedom as capability which the egalitarian measure aims to evaluate. These include the evaluation of equal access to power, and notionally evaluating the equal distribution of key resources across groups in the society.

The underlying socioeconomic aspect of this which is investigated is stated to be “the extent to which wealth and income translates into political power” (Coppedge et al. 2017, p.257). The measure incorporates the attributes of health and education by identifying whether these factors influence the capacity of individuals to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens (Coppedge et al. 2017). For example, educational equality is evaluated on an ordinal scale by asking “to what extent is high quality basic education guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens?” (Coppedge et al. 2017, p.260). It is not clear exactly what is meant by basic rights as adult citizens, and in turn, it becomes unclear how extensively the range of options available to individuals is considered in the evaluation. Because the measure is presenting a subjective evaluation, it becomes quite important what is meant by the evaluative framework presented. There is a broad range of plausible interpretations of the phrasing of these variables, which is as broad as between being able to survive in the society, as opposed to being able to afford to run for public office. Whilst this open-ended phrasing enables analysis of a myriad of regime types, it is limited in its applicability to evaluating established democracies. We can’t tell if the measure is comparing the minimal requirements to live, or the maximal requirements to achieve the highest level of political power. If one of the central problems being experienced in established democracies is that there is a growing sense of disconnection between elites and ordinary citizens (as raised in the Introduction, and considered later in the thesis), then we should be concerned with plausible barriers between these categories (i.e. what constraints limit becoming a representative), not just base level constraints.

Whilst the measurement structure of V-Dem is promising, the inclusion of objective indicators for many of the more normatively oriented indicators would enhance their utility. The indicators used in the new measure presented in Chapter
Six demonstrate that this is possible, although challenges with ensuring there is access annually to data for all countries remains an issue.

4.4 Measurement: The Indicators Used to Measure Freedom and Democracy

This section outlines the various measurement practices adopted by measures of democracy. A core consideration in this section is whether measures use nominal, ordinal, or interval scales. It is found that it is most prominently dichotomous, nominal measures which tend to underemphasise the importance of freedom in evaluating democracy. This claim will be attached to the notion that dichotomous measures tend to overemphasise the relationship between elections and democracy, situating this as the primary (or in some cases the only) relationship which defines the democraticness of a regime.

4.4.1 Indicators in Measures Which Exclude Freedom from the Evaluation of Democracy

A common feature across the measures which exclude freedom is the inclusion of political competition indicators. Political competition in the measures which exclude the measurement of freedom is evaluated through the outcomes which occur from elections. To evaluate this characteristic of democracy, these measures focus upon the election itself, although this is evaluated in different ways across the measures.

The Democracy-Dictatorship measure presents an ordinal evaluation of the notion of elections, whereby the Chief Executive and the Legislative components of the government must be elected. The Chief Executive is coded as: directly elected; indirectly elected; or not elected at all; and the Legislature is coded as: no Legislature; non-elective Legislature; or elected Legislature (Alvarez et al. 1996, pp.7–8). The same coding categorisation is adopted by Boix et al. (Boix, Miller & Rosato 2013, p.8). These are each determined by coders who have to decide which score is appropriate for a given country, and as discussed elsewhere, this can produce issues of coder reliability.

This can be contrasted with the Vanhanen Index of Democratization, which presents an interval measure of competition, since Vanhanen seeks to present a numerically objective measure of democracy free of subjective coding decisions.
Based upon a view that there needs to be a reflection of actual competition in the election, the competition variable is measured “by subtracting the percentage of votes won by the largest party from 100” (Vanhanen 2003, p.56). Despite the variations in indicator selection, each of these measures evaluate elected officials as the salient feature of a democracy.

Participation as it is included in these measures is evaluated by suffrage. Whilst suffrage is an essential feature in ensuring that participation can occur, it is not the only feature. Suffrage does not entail the various protections required to ensure that a vote can be made in an informed manner through the provision of free information. It further fails to ensure that the individual possessing the vote is able to participate elsewhere in the society as a fully enfranchised individual. Nor does it expressly prohibit the coercive influencing of voting. So that even if the metric of percentage of population which voted in an election is included (as in Vanhanen (2003, p.56)), there is no clear indication about how their vote may have been compromised. Hence, to only evaluate suffrage is to capture an inhibited form of the right to participate, in that it only evaluates those who participate, and not the effective provision for those individuals to participate.

4.4.2 Indicators in Measures of Democracy Which Include Freedom

One of the key features of the ordinal approach is to give levels to the classification of democracy. The number and name of the levels of democracy varies depending upon the particular measure, but the general notion can be summarised as being: non-democracy; partial democracy; and full democracy.

As the most prominent measurement of democracy used at present, any understanding of the process of measuring democracy needs to include an assessment of the Polity indicators. In the Polity IV Index there is no explicit category used to measure freedom, and instead, the definition of freedom employed must be discerned from the way that it is operationalised amongst the attributes of democracy which are measured. The Polity IV Data Series aims to rank regimes on a 21-point ordinal scale. The different possible categorisations are: (-10 to -6): Autocracy; (-5 to 0): Closed Anocracy; (1 to 5): Open Anocracy; (6 to 9): Democracy; and (10): full democracy. The measurement criteria used to classify the regimes are based upon “six component measures that record key qualities of executive
recruitment, constraints on executive authority, and political competition” (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr 2014).

The actual measurement of civil liberties is not properly articulated though, as Polity “do not include coded data on civil liberties” (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr 2014, p.18). The fact that there is no clear variable that describes freedom explicitly is problematic, with the closest measure to freedom being “the magnitude to which decision rules constrain the executive’s actions” (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr 2014, p.24). In conjunction with the executive constraint variable, the variables for political competition and opposition also contain components that pertain to freedom.

The two variables measuring political competition capture the degree to which “the political system enables non-elites to influence political elites in regular ways” by assessing the “regulation of political participation [and] the extent of government restriction on political competition” (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr 2014, p.25). From these indicators it can be seen that the Polity IV Index presents a minimalist definition of freedom, since it is restricted to solely the domain of the constraints placed upon the executive and the extent of government interference in the political process.

Again, the scores assigned are given by coders, rather than objectively derived. This introduces issues associated with coder reliability in the data set, with this being identified as an issue for both Polity and Freedom House (Coppedge et al. 2015; Pickel, Stark & Breustedt 2015).

Regimes in the Freedom House score are classified as being one of three types: free; partly free; or not free. This regime classification is derived from two core conceptual categories: political rights and civil liberties. The political rights dimension is primarily used as a categorisation for the electoral process present in a country (or a therein lack of). To form the political rights score, countries are evaluated upon the three subcategories of: the electoral process; political pluralism and participation; and the functioning of government (Freedom House 2014, pp.6–7). These can be set aside for the remainder of the discussion, as they are the institutional features of democracy. The civil liberties category is broken up into
four subcategories: freedom of expression and belief; associational and organisational rights; rule of law; and personal autonomy and individual rights.

A common thread amongst the various interval measures is that they often incorporate one or more latent attributes into their analysis in order to present an analysis which they take to be more coherent with the real world. For example, Coppedge et al. (2008, p.634) develop their measure as a factor analysis of other measures of democracy to examine the degree to which contestation and participation are persistent dimensions of democracy. A similar approach is adopted by Pemstein et al. (2010) who build their measure as a latent variable model derived from ten other measures of democracy.

4.5 Aggregation: The Overall Weighting of Freedom in the Measurement of Democracy

This section examines the overall incorporation of the concept of freedom into the measurement of democracy. This will be done by summarising the aggregation procedures which are used to weight the various elements of democracy that then form the definition of democracy presented in a given measure. The weighting which freedom receives in nine of the most popular measures will be reviewed to consider the overall position of freedom within these measures. The purpose of this section is to highlight the varying status of freedom as a general component of democracy in measures. Hence, this section will help to convey the extent to which the concept of freedom is given attention within measures of democracy. It should be noted that in some of the measures of democracy, one of which is featured here, Coppedge and Reinicke (1990), a Guttman scale is used and so freedom is not weighted as a component of analysis.

As can be seen in Table 4.5, there are a number of different approaches to weighting freedom as a component of measuring democracy. As already noted, both the Democracy-Dictatorship measure and the Index of Democratization do not incorporate freedom into their evaluations, so a score of 0 is given. Arat uses four distinct components in her evaluation of democracy, with coerciveness the measure of freedom present, which is weighted as 25 percent. Polity, although not explicitly giving a definition of freedom which it measures, can be taken to measure freedom through the measurement of Constraint on Chief Executive, which is worth 33
percent of the score awarded for democracy. Hadenius and Bollen both present measures where freedom is weighted as half of the score for democracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Percentage of Score Attributed to Freedom</th>
<th>Attributes of Freedom Measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polity IV (Marshall et al. 2014)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Constraint on Chief Executive (not an actual measure of freedom though)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom House (2015)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Democracy Index (Bollen 1980)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Press freedom; freedom of group opposition; government sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadenius (1992)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Organizational freedoms; freedom of opinion; incidence of political violence and repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Democratization (Vanhanen 2000; 2003)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyarchy (Coppedge &amp; Reinicke 1990)</td>
<td>Guttman Scale</td>
<td>Freedom of expression; freedom of organization; freedom of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arat (1991)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Coerciveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the Quality of Democracy (Altman &amp; Pérez-Liñán 2002)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Effective civil rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economist Intelligence Unit</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Economist Intelligence Unit measure is interesting in that a number of the indicators partially capture characteristics of freedom in both a non-domination and non-interference sense. However, there is only one category that explicitly measures freedom, through the evaluation of civil liberties. This issue with the EIU measure in part reflects why an analysis of this kind has not been conducted before
– there are substantial issues associated with disentangling the definition of freedom present in a measure more generally, as well as with some specific measures. How do we interpret such a measure? These are open questions which scholars should begin to debate, as there is a high degree of ambiguity in much of the measurement currently conducted (it should be noted that these problems of ambiguity are probably irresolvable, as it may not be possible to get instruments capable of measuring one specific thing with no influence from any other related concepts).

Finally, Freedom House weights freedom the most out of all of the measures. This is coherent with the original aim of the measure as discussed above, which suggested it originally was conceived as a measure of freedom and then later came to be a measure of democracy. A visualisation of the Freedom House aggregation procedure can be seen in Figure 4.2. It can be seen in Figure 4.2 that some components of freedom are regarded as more important than others, through the higher weighting they receive.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.2.png}
\caption{Aggregation Procedure for Freedom House}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14} The aggregation procedure for freedom house has been included because of the later usage of the Freedom House measure in the Better Democracy Index. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.
The differing approaches to weighting freedom are informative about an overall diversity of opinion about precisely how important freedom is to the functioning of democracy. In the context of the thesis this is significant, as it highlights the degree to which this space is one where there is continued need for discussion amongst those seeking to evaluate democracy. Whilst it is plausible to think that opinions will continue to diverge, the degree to which there is difference in the measures presented suggests that this is an area that is under-discussed in the existing literature (Pickel, Stark & Breustedt 2015; Lauth 2011; Munck 2016; Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016). Recent developments within the literature have identified that there is an absence of understanding individuals outside of the institutional rights which they hold (Mayne & Geissel 2016). Although scholars have acknowledged the impact which different definitions of democracy can have in evaluative outcomes, the degree to which they have explicitly focused upon the dimension of freedom is not currently addressed in the literature. As the range of aggregation approaches suggests, this is an issue that goes beyond just the conceptualisation level, as it can impact the overall importance assigned to other characteristics of the regime as well.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

The analysis presented in this chapter has suggested that measures of democracy which employ the definition of freedom as non-interference are the most common, and they are also the measures which are the most popular.

This chapter contributes to the growing body of literature on measuring the quality of democracy by presenting a clear analysis of the current definition of freedom which is dominant. In doing so, it provides a bridge between theoretical debates about the worth of freedom, considered in Chapter One, differences in theoretical models of democracy, considered in Chapter Two, and measurement efforts. By reconstructing the theoretical model of freedom present in various measures, it serves to demonstrate the areas where the evaluation of freedom is not fully explored. The remainder of the thesis contributes to the literature on quality of democracy measurement by further exploring how freedom can be included into evaluation.
Returning to the discussion of the factors which shaped the early measurement of democracy considered in Chapter Three, it is worth considering the extent to which those same issues persist in contemporary measurement. One of the key reasons given for creating measures of democracy was to analyse and compare democracy to other regime types. Based upon the characteristics which scholars sought to compare, it made theoretical sense to divorce the socioeconomic factors shaping a society from its classification as a democracy. Often for these scholars of democratization, the causal mechanism driving the development of democracy was increased socioeconomic development of some kind (different accounts emphasise wealth, education, or some combination of the two). Because these accounts placed development and modernization as the central explanation for democratization, it was not included as part of the definition of democracy. In these cases, it can be seen how the nature of the explanation given precludes the inclusion of various facets which it otherwise can be argued constitute a component of democracy. In essence, for these researchers the definition is shaped by the explanation. For some scholars of democracy, these questions persist, as does the resultant preference for not including these elements as a part of measurement.

Despite these issues, it remains the case that the most comprehensive theoretical accounts of democracy demand that measures of democracy evaluate more expansive features of the regime as a part of the democracy itself. If scholars want to come to understand the status of democracy in the world, as it is conceived as an ideal, it can only be accomplished through evaluating democracy using more demanding standards. As outlined in Chapter Two, the notion of freedom as capability underpins the conception of agency which O’Donnell presents in his more ideally focused definition of democracy, and it is only when we come to understand the capability which citizens have to choose freely that we can properly understand the quality of democracy in the most ideal sense of the term. Hence, to establish that democracy can be evaluated in its most normatively appealing conception, I will now turn to discussing whether it is possible to evaluate the concept of freedom as capability to the level where it can be integrated into measures of democracy.
Part Three

Part Three of the thesis presents the new measure of democracy. It begins by outlining the core theoretical insights of the capability approach. This is important, since these insights are closely tied to the definition of freedom as capability, and are essential for grasping how relative deprivation can influence democratic citizens. In developing a measure built upon insights given by the capability approach, it is worthwhile highlighting the aspects of the approach which the measure is most sensitive to, and those which remain underexplored (but which can be further developed in the future). Chapter Six presents the structure and aggregation procedure of the new measure. Chapter Seven summarises the output of the new measure, and then compares the new measure to two existing measures of democracy to demonstrate the empirical differences that arise when using a more expansive conception of freedom in the evaluation.
Chapter 5: Measuring Capability as a Component of Democracy

The capability approach contains much more than just the expansive conception of freedom which it presents. It contains a critique of existing paradigms of evaluating human welfare, as well as a variety of other insights about how to think about poverty and agency. This chapter draws on these various insights to outline how the capability approach can be operationalised for the measurement of democracy. To that end, the chapter discusses the various theoretical insights which have been provided by the capability approach, with reference to how they are related to the measurement of democracy. The chapter begins by tracing the development of the capability approach, because contained within the development of the approach there are important insights about the new informational spaces which the approach explores, as well as why these origins have contributed to the failure of the approach to gain popularity as a component of measuring democracy. The chapter then outlines how some of the core theoretical insights of the approach translate into measurement, pointing out that there are different ways in which the capability approach can be incorporated into understanding democracy in the world. A core distinction made in the discussion is between the descriptive and normative elements of the capability approach, highlighting that some of the more controversial aspects of the approach can be bracketed off from the measurement of capabilities.

The key contention of this thesis is that extant measurement of democracy does not adequately incorporate the concept of freedom. This contention is based upon three core claims. The first claim is that freedom as capability should be measured as a component of democracy. This claim was advanced in the first two chapters of the thesis by outlining the relationship between freedom and democracy. The second claim, that the definition of freedom employed in current measurement of democracy is a minimalist, non-interference based definition, was advanced in the previous two chapters. These chapters outlined the manner in which measures first developed, and then presented a summary highlighting the extent to which current measures of democracy are based upon minimalist
conceptions that employ a definition of freedom as non-interference. The third claim, that freedom as capability can be measured as a component of democracy, is developed throughout the remainder of the thesis. This chapter outlines what is essential to the capability approach, and how these elements can be operationalised. Chapter Six will further develop this by presenting a new measure of democracy that incorporates measures tapping into the notion of freedom present within the capability approach. Chapter Seven demonstrates the degree to which the inclusion of the capability approach can further provide insight to the measurement of democracy, and enhance our understanding of democracy in the world.

The guidelines for the measurement of complex concepts outlined by Munck and Verkuilen (2002) discussed at the beginning of Chapter Four are used as a basis for the remainder of the thesis. Munck and Verkuilen stress the importance of having clarity around the conceptualisation, measurement (indicator selection), and aggregation when evaluating complex concepts. Conceptualisation deals with the clarity of concept specification. Measurement (especially indicator selection), deals with the coherency between the variables used for evaluation, and the concept which they are supposed to measure. Measurement also deals with the reliability of measures which are being used (Adcock & Collier 2001). Aggregation deals with the weighting of the concept being measured, which is important for ensuring that one attribute is not overemphasised in the evaluation.

This chapter focuses primarily upon the conceptualisation of the capability approach by attending to the various theoretical insights which the approach raises. In turn, these insights are used as a guideline in thinking through which aspects of the capability approach are central to measurement, especially in the context of democracy. It is important to be clear on the various theoretical aspects of the approach so as to show what can and can’t be included in measurement of capability as a component of democracy, and thus highlight areas where alternative evaluation might be required. Specifying the various insights made by the approach is important, so that it is clear what is present and what is missing in the measure presented in Chapter Six, especially since the argument is not that the capability approach is exhaustively incorporated into the new measure. The measure presented instead demonstrates the kind of insights which the definition of freedom
as capability can provide to analysis of the quality of democracy in established democracies.

5.1 The Origins and Orientation of the Capability Approach

In order to assess the potential for measuring freedom as capability as a component of democracy and understand the added utility it has to other measures of freedom, the original orientation\textsuperscript{15} of the capability approach first needs to be grasped. That is the focus of the capability approach to answering the three questions of: What is poverty? How many people experience poverty? How poor are the people who experience poverty? This section summarises the origins of the capability approach, outlining how the origins of the approach ground the overall evolution which the approach has undertaken over the last thirty years. In this section the manner in which the origins and orientation of the capabilities approach, as a theory of welfare economics, help to explain why it has remained underutilised in the study of established democratic societies. One particular feature which is important is the fact that much of the work employing the approach has been conducted on developing countries, which has shaped the way that the approach has been theorised. In conjunction with this, some of the various critiques which stem from the capability approach that make it a more complex account of well-being than other mainstream welfare accounts will be explored.

When first presented by Amartya Sen in 1979 at his lecture at Stanford University for the ‘Tanner Lectures on Human Values,’ Sen initially described the capability approach as an attempt to address the inadequacies of utilitarian and Rawlsian accounts of justice at properly outlining various problems related to welfare equality. At this nascent stage, Sen articulated the approach as based upon a notion of basic capability equality, which extended further than the emphasis of

\textsuperscript{15} As a theory of welfare, the capability approach engages heavily with the concept of poverty, and examines closely how the opportunities and options available to individuals can differ substantially even when they have the same legislative rights. In the broader context of the thesis, this exploration of the shaping of opportunities and options available to individuals is important, because it extends beyond those experiencing poverty. In the context of the argument being made for the thesis, we might give a degree of equivalency between poverty and relative deprivation which individuals might experience. Hence, in the ensuing discussion, it is important to note how the approach treats the limitations which arise from poverty, as these same insights are relevant to those who experience relative deprivation.
the Rawlsian position upon primary goods distribution, and rejected the utilitarian position advancing utility maximisation. The notion of basic capability extended further than the other two approaches through a core concern for “a person being able to do certain basic things” (Sen 1980, p.218). On Sen’s account, to experience poverty is to experience a deprivation with regards to the range of options which you can be described as able to choose from, where those different options are associated with an ability to do certain basic things. For example, someone who has no access to affordable housing can be described as experiencing poverty, in the sense that they are deprived of access to shelter – a basic human right.

This emphasis on basic capability equality was primarily targeted towards problems of poverty and distribution, and it is in these areas that Sen’s work has been most well received (Robeyns 2008; Canova et al. 2007; Fukuda-Parr 2003; Muffels & Headey 2013). Sen demonstrated the desirability of his approach as opposed to the other two by outlining some of the potentially problematic implications of subscribing to the other two theories. Central to Sen’s argument was the point that within a society utility may increase, and primary goods may increase, but not in a way which meaningfully increases the capability to decide the kind of life that individuals can lead. In crafting this critique, “the human development approach was born from a marriage of economics and philosophy” (Nussbaum 2015, p.1). However, despite it being a defining characteristic of the approach, the marriage between economics and philosophy is at times an unhappy one, because there is a larger attribution of prestige to economics over other the disciplines which adopt the capabilities approach. This in turn has influenced the extent to which different disciplines and issues associated with the approach feature more prominently in the extant literature, with the economic dimension generally given greater prominence.

Part of the prominence of the economics component of the capability approach derives from the manner in which the approach was first articulated (Nussbaum 2015). Notably, early formulations of the capability approach by Sen emphasised the inadequacy of the dominant accounts of economics to explain what is wrong about poverty, and a major implication of Sen’s initial basic capability equality approach is the inadequacy of employing GDP growth as a measure of
human development. This is drawn from the fact that national GDP growth often fails to translate to substantive increases for the poorer individuals in society in both economic and non-economic contexts. If the goal of providing development aid is to help those experiencing poverty, then our framework for understanding how effective aid is should take that into account. In this way Sen’s capability approach has been presented as a critique of the previously dominant economic approaches to understanding human development, especially in the context of the developing countries, and it has been described as “an alternative development paradigm that challenges standard economic frameworks” (Ibrahim 2014, p.2). It places the central question of development around how well economies provide welfare for their citizens, rather than around how much wealth is being generated (Sen 1980).

The natural fit of Sen’s capability approach with critiquing extreme poverty, which is more commonly associated with low income countries, has resulted in it being primarily regarded as a framework for evaluating developing countries (Alkire & Santos 2014). This is unfortunate, because as Chapter One highlighted in the overall discussion about varying approaches to defining freedom, the approach has valuable insight to shed upon the experience of poverty in the developed world, especially in the context of understanding whether individuals can live a life of their choosing (Burchi & De Muro 2016, p.125). Whilst there have been attempts to develop more theoretically oriented accounts of how the capability approach can inform democratic citizenship, these are not structured from the position of evaluating established democracies (see for example: Anderson 1999; Anderson 2010). The approach treats the control over the choices which individuals make to be important to understanding how these choices are connected to their overall well-being, and in doing so highlights how important choices are for living a good life. In turn, this helps to differentiate an understanding of freedom based upon the capability approach from other theories of freedom. In short, the capability approach places emphasis on preserving the space to make choices that are meaningful, as well as ensuring that individuals have the material means to choose between different options: it matters when individuals cannot choose how they want to live, especially to those individuals.
The capabilities approach was further developed by Sen and Nussbaum through the 1980’s, and was partially operationalised in 1990, in the first Human Development Index (HDI) which was presented by the UNDP in the Human Development Report (HDR). According to Sen, capabilities lists need to exist for a purpose, and the purpose of the HDI was to catalogue human development and the alleviation of poverty in the ‘global south’, in a context that was responsive to the everyday lives of the people it was evaluating, which previous measures did not adequately capture. Within the paradigm of the capabilities literature, this aspect of being a more expansive measure or theory is referred to as engaging with a broader informational space (Comim 2001). Sen (2005, p.159) has since referred to the capability list which he helped develop for the HDI as a minimalist one, which was focused upon “minimally basic quality of life, calculable from available statistics, in a way that Gross National Product or Gross Domestic Product failed to capture.” The measure used to catalogue human development in the first HDI was made to “focus on the three essential elements of human life – longevity, knowledge, and decent living standards” (UNDP 1990, p.12). The levels of conceptualisation for the HDI can be seen in Figure 5.1.

To calculate the value of the HDI, three steps are undertaken. The first step is to “define a measure of deprivation which a country suffers in each of the three variables – life expectancy, literacy, and (the log of) real GDP per capita” (UNDP 1990, p.109); and these values are then scaled to a value between 0 to 1, where 0 is the minimum value across all countries, and 1 is the maximum value. The second step is to define an average deprivation indicator, which is the average of the three scaled variables. Finally, in the third step this average is subtracted from 1, so the

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**Figure 5.1 Concept Tree for the HDI**

- **HDI**
  - **Longevity**
    - Life expectancy at Birth
  - **Knowledge**
    - Literacy
  - **Decent Living**
    - Purchasing power to buy commodities (log of Real GDP per capita)
HDI = 1 – average deprivation index. Whilst it is obviously limited in the factors of the human lived experience which it evaluates, the HDI is valuable in understanding areas of human poverty, although it is a metric which is primarily suited to evaluating the experience of poverty in the ‘global south’, based on the intersubjectivity of scoring countries in relation to each other.

The third question of the approach, of trying to ascertain how poor the people are who experience poverty, is one which helps to frame and differentiate between varying cases of poverty, and represents a central concern for the creation of measures of capabilities (Alkire & Foster 2016). The diverse range of capabilities which individuals can hold represent different spaces in which people can experience deprivation, and in turn, experience poverty. This has led to those who employ the approach differentiating between unidimensional poverty and multidimensional poverty (Alkire et al. 2015). For example, someone might experience unidimensional poverty if they were income deprived, but experienced no other kind of deprivation; whereas, if they were income deprived and experienced health deprivation, then we would describe that person as experiencing multidimensional poverty. Hence, even though the two people might be equally poor with respect to income, we can describe the person who is also experiencing poverty in the domain of health to be poorer than the other individual.

As will be discussed below, measurement of multidimensional poverty is more difficult to undertake than unidimensional poverty, since it requires information about the individual (or household) in question across each domain being measured (Callander, Schofield & Shrestha 2012). To understand the amount of multidimensional poverty in a society requires knowledge of the connection across each domain. Conversely, for unidimensional poverty, measures for each individual in the society do not need to be connected, and so data does not need to be linked.

In terms of the type of data required, this means that multidimensional measures require micro-level disaggregated data for each individual, whereas unidimensional measures can be calculated from macro-level data.

5.2 The Information Made Available by Using the Capability Approach

The informational space which the capability approach operates in is a central component of what differentiates the capability approach from other
welfare accounts. In turn, the expanded informational space which the definition of freedom as capability enables analysis of democracy to employ provides a bridge to more nuanced evaluation of established democracies, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven.

Sen argues that one of the reasons that the capability approach is preferable to other accounts is the way that it provides a more expansive informational basis when making evaluations. The informational basis, as the name suggests, is the information which is used as the basis upon which evaluative moral judgements are made. This is a valuable feature because “informational *exclusions* are important constituents of an evaluative approach” (emphasis in original text) (Sen 1999, p.56). Whilst not all information is relevant when making evaluations, in principle, an assessment is more likely to be accurate when it engages more information. Furthermore, the more informational spaces which are engaged with, the more morally salient facts which are likely to be uncovered.

In the context of the capabilities approach, the informational space of possible choices which an individual might be plausibly said to have represents a more expansive informational space than Utilitarian and Rawlsian accounts (Clark 2005). This is evident in considering the informational spaces visible in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2 Model of Capability Path for an Individual with Different Informational Spaces](image)

In making moral judgements, the Utilitarian informational space account is grounded in evaluating based upon either the overall preference satisfaction (choice), or output achieved as the source of relevant information (functionings),
whilst the Rawlsian welfare account is grounded in the distribution of primary goods (resources) as the source of relevant information (Wendelspiess Chávez Juárez 2015). This can be contrasted with the informational spaces engaged with by the capability approach, which instead focuses upon the overall plausible actions an individual is capable of undertaking (often in the capabilities literature this is called someone’s capability set), which is informed by a number of potential areas (resources, preventative conditions, and conversion factors\(^{16}\)). This differentiation becomes salient when considering the fact that different people require different amounts of resources to generate the same outcomes (functionings\(^{17}\)), based upon the different abilities (conversion factors) which they have to translate those resources into the given outcome.

The approach was initially targeted towards understanding individual context specific needs, by highlighting the extent to which some individuals require more than others to achieve the same basic capabilities in certain areas. Sen uses the example of the extra needs of a cripple to highlight the deficiencies in both the Utilitarian and the Rawlsian welfare accounts. According to Sen, the case of a cripple who requires more resources to achieve the same functionings as other people demonstrates the problematic nature of the Utilitarian account. This is because the Utilitarian account suggests that we should give less to those who require more to achieve the same capabilities as others, because they do not optimally use those resources. Whilst it is not as problematic, in Sen’s example the Rawlsian account is indifferent to the inability of the cripple to translate resources effectively, and Sen argues that it is a mistake to treat “disabilities, or special health needs, or physical or mental defects, as morally irrelevant” (1980, p.215). Here the informational space which is excluded by the other two accounts is taken to be one which is morally relevant.

\(^{16}\) A conversion factor can be thought of as the amount it takes an individual to transform a given amount of resources into a particular outcome. The differences which individuals have in converting resources into outcomes are important, because it they reflect important differences in terms of what constrains the options available to an individual. For example, a person who is taller might require additional food to avoid being malnourished rather than a shorter person.

\(^{17}\) In the literature of the capability approach, functionings are the achieved outcomes an individual obtains. This might be a state based action like reaching a certain level of fitness (which may subsequently then decline), or it might be a definitive outcome like learning how to drive a car.
Another element of Sen’s (1999, p.62) overall critique of Utilitarian theories of economics is the notion of adaptive preferences, which is a principle that takes into account the fact that “our desires and pleasure-taking abilities adjust to circumstances, especially to make life bearable in adverse situations.” This aspect of Sen’s critique is primarily targeted towards theories which centre their evaluations upon preference satisfaction, because often preferences are constructed in a way that undermines the best interests of the individual in question (Sugden 2006). This aspect of Sen’s critique can be linked to the informational space of choice – that is, it helps explain why individuals might convert one option into a functioning, rather than another. The notion of adaptive preferences helps to explain how and why individuals may be inclined to undervalue things or states of being which they cannot achieve. This element is important, because it helps to explain why asking individuals if they are satisfied with the choices they make in their own lives is an insufficient approach to understanding their relationship to the choices which they are able to make. The problem of adaptive preferences is one which is overcome by evaluating the opportunities available to individuals, because it explores the informational space within which they are able to construct their preferences.

The early development of the capability approach as a critique of mainstream economics has ensured that it has remained a theory which is primarily engaged with in problems of distributive justice, especially in the context of human development (Frediani 2016). By operating within this paradigm, the approach has not been adequately theorised for usage in established democratic regimes (Claassen 2009), and instead, it has been a mode of critiquing regimes which fail to address to extreme poverty. The nature of the poverty explored in these regimes has enabled some potential issues for measuring freedom as capability to be deferred, as identifying extreme poverty does not necessarily require fine-grained measures since there is a greater consensus on the kinds of capabilities which it is important that everyone has. As the assessment of capabilities moves further away from the most basic kind, it becomes more controversial as to which capabilities are morally significant, as well as controversial as to who is responsible for ensuring people can adequately develop their capabilities.
The nature of the problems which the capability approach is targeted towards addressing suggest the utility which it can add towards measures of democracy. It engages with the question of non-coercive forms of democratic disengagement in a way that other conceptualisations of freedom do not. In particular, it enables an elaboration of the underlying causes for democratic system dysfunction, at least with regards to the kinds of grievances which citizens have towards the political establishment that drive political disengagement. Based upon the central space which political disengagement and disenfranchisement have come to occupy in discourse on the health of democracy in both the academic and public sphere, this is a substantive difference to other accounts of freedom. The extra informational space which is engaged with is of deep importance, as it enables the evaluation of the relationship between individuals and the political system that can begin to tap into the factors shaping substantive changes in the conduct of democratic politics.

5.3 The Core Theoretical Insights of the Capability Approach

The notion of informational spaces helps as a rubric through which to consider the various theoretical insights which are made by the capability approach, and how they relate to the measurement of democracy. These various theoretical insights are thus considered below through that framework. Because of the space constraints which exist for the thesis, these specific insights are not considered exhaustively, but rather in a way that highlights what is essential to them, and how this can be captured in measurement.

Notably, these different theoretical insights relate to the measurement of democracy in different ways. Some of the insights speak to limitations on agency, and thus contribute to an understanding of democratic measurement that engages with the constraints on the agency of citizens. One element that is central to this is the different understanding of human agency which the capability approach provides. Hence, the inclusion of the capability approach into measurement involves not just grasping the definition of freedom it presents, but also how that definition of freedom is connected to a broader model of agency and decision-making. In turn, this model of agency and decision-making helps to explain the negative impact
which relative deprivation can have upon how individuals might engage with the political process.

5.3.1 The Relationship Between Individuals and Human Development

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the capability approach was originally conceived as a critique of existing measurement approaches to interpreting human welfare. One core dimension which was essential to this critique was an articulation of the problem with using single macro-level indicators to evaluate societal economic development (Sen 1978). This can be roughly construed as the critique of utilitarian evaluations of economic development which treat GDP growth as a sufficient measure of economic development. The core of this critique was that these societal level measures of progress missed the experience of poverty and deprivation of the individuals within a given society. It was possible that GDP growth could increase without ever improving the lives of any of the impoverished people within a country. This is a problem, since if the purpose of development is to improve the living standards within a society, it is important to measure development in a way that is sensitive to this purpose in the evaluation which is being presented.

We can think about this insight as expanding the informational space for the evaluation of development. Specifically, this insight points to the incorporation of the individual into the evaluation which is being undertaken. This in turn leads to the selection of indicators that are sensitive to the welfare distribution within a society, rather than just an evaluation of the overall wealth or welfare which a society possesses. This is reflected in the way that the capability approach has been used to critique the selection of GDP growth as a marker of economic progress, when measures which are more sensitive to the distribution of wealth gains for a society are available. This represents a transition from the informational space of the societal economic achievement space, into an evaluation that is (at least partially) linked to the specific individuals within that society. Economic gains (or other welfare gains), are thus mediated through the informational space of individuals within that society. In the context of measuring democracy, this means that where
possible measures should aim to incorporate an analysis of individuals, rather than just focusing upon macro-level evaluation.

5.3.2 The Recognition of Plausible Constraints as a Sufficiently Limiting Condition for Human Action

The key theoretical insight of the capability approach which is the most relevant to this thesis is the recognition of the role that ‘soft’ constraints play in shaping the range of options available to individuals. In turn, the notion of human freedom is central to the capability approach (Zimmermann 2006), grounding the various insights which the approach makes. Consequently, the capability approach develops a theory of human freedom that is sensitive to the limitations individuals face when choosing which actions they undertake, and which they do not (Verd & Andreu 2011). The implications which arise from the recognition of plausible constraints on action are an important feature of the definition of freedom as capability.

As a consequence, the capability approach implies it is worth coming to understand the range of soft constraints which individuals are likely to face in engaging with the political process. If we return to MacCallum’s (1967) triadic understanding of freedom that was introduced in Chapter One, we can see a way to incorporate these constraints into the evaluation of the freedom of individuals in a democratic society (when thinking about their capacity to interact with the political process). The triadic definition can be expressed as:

\[ X \text{ is (is not) free from } Y \text{ to do (not do, become, not become) } Z. \]

Here we can see that soft constraints can occupy a space in the category of \( Y \) to shape the capacity of individual \( X \) to interact in the political process \( Z \).

This insight suggests that soft constraints should be made into an informational space which is explored in the evaluation of democratic citizens,

\[ \text{Soft constraints can be contrasted with hard constraints, such that hard constraints represent instances of extreme preventative condition (i.e. being locked up), whereas soft constraints represent instances of evaluative prevention (i.e. deciding one lacks the resources to afford undertaking an activity).} \]
because they can shape the capacity of the individual to engage in the political process. It is worthwhile considering what the threshold is for what constitutes a constraint of a sufficient level to prevent engagement in the political process. However, a robust evaluation of this would involve an analysis which is beyond the scope to be performed in this chapter (and in the thesis more generally). An alternative approach is to treat circumstances that inhibit the capacity to interact in society as a sufficient condition to plausibly constrain political engagement. On this basis it is reasonable to treat the experience of poverty as a sufficiently high level of constraint. The next chapter will more fully explore this idea in relation to a variety of different types of indicator, when discussing the measure created using the Better Life Index.

5.3.3 The Recognition of and Emphasis Upon Multidimensional Poverty as a Component of Understanding How Much Poverty Individuals Experience

The three central questions which underpin the capability approach emphasise the role that capability deprivation can have in diminishing the life an individual can lead. The consequence of this is to ask just how much deprivation an individual is experiencing. This question is important, because it suggests engaging with the notion of multidimensional poverty. This leads to an awareness that there are a variety of different ways in which an individual can be capability deprived, and that these different deprivations can interact to further restrict the options available to an individual. In short, when asking how much poverty an individual is experiencing, an awareness of the interaction between different domains can highlight instances of extreme deprivation in much greater depth than only thinking about poverty from a unidimensional direction (Alkire et al. 2015).

From the context of informational spaces which this theoretical insight highlights as important for the evaluation of capability deprivation, the most obvious is the ability to connect analysis across a variety of capability domains. This connection is important, as it is deeply associated with notions of poverty traps, where it is the cumulative disadvantages which individuals experience that further serve to limit their capacity to escape their circumstances (Kakwani & Silber 2008; Saunders 2015, 2008; Wagle 2009). Whilst other accounts of welfare may
acknowledge this as a problem, it is the prominence which is placed on understanding the soft constraints which individuals encounter that highlights why understanding the impact of multidimensional poverty is so important. The limited data availability for the analysis of cross-national multidimensional poverty means that the data included in the new measure is not multidimensional. As more cross-nationally comparable measures of multidimensional poverty become available, it would be worthwhile revisiting the indicator selection which has been made for the new measure, as it would ideally include multidimensional measures.

5.3.4 The Recognition of Constraints on Action Often Experienced in a Gendered Way

One of the most important contributions of the capability approach as an evaluative framework has been the way that it helps to characterise the multifaceted nature of the inequality which women experience (Robeyns 2008). As outlined by Nussbaum (2011b, pp.1–16), many of the ways in which women encounter disadvantage and inequality can be understood from the perspective of the diminished capabilities which they often possess, which are less visible from an account that only focuses on their economic welfare. By opening up these different areas of deprivation as a component of understanding gender inequality, the capability approach engages with an informational space more well suited to understanding how gender can shape the options available to women and men in different ways (Saleeby 2014; Robeyns 2003).

Nussbaum powerfully illustrates this through the case of an Indian woman, Vasanti, who comes from an upper-caste family, but who has no formal education, has no support network, and has no control over her household’s allocation of resources. In this scenario, the type of life Vasanti is able to lead is largely subject to the decisions which are made by her husband. Vasanti is the victim of domestic violence, but has difficulty in leaving her husband because she is substantively restricted in the options available to her which would enable her to leave – since she cannot support herself initially if she decides to leave, and has a weak support network to turn to. She turns to her brothers to support her when she leaves, and is lucky that they are willing to provide for her in the short term – for many women this is not the case though. She depends on the support which her brothers can
provide her, which in turn means that her options are again contingent on the way that others respond to her situation. In this instance, she can only undertake activities or work that her brothers approve of, and thus continues to experience constraints on exercising her freedom that males would be much less likely to experience.

In the context of measuring human welfare, the capability approach has played a prominent role in the development and increasing sophistication of measures used to understand the nature of gender inequality around the world (Fukuda-parr 1999; Robeyns 2003). Cases like Vasanti’s have been used to highlight the way in which deprivations which occur beyond the economic sphere can contribute to substantial constraints upon the actions which individuals are able to undertake. Furthermore, the capability approach has contributed to the analysis of gender inequality through the way that it has been a strong component in the theoretical structure of the human development reports, within which emphasis has been placed upon addressing the area of gender inequality (with it being the central theme of the human development reports) (Alkire 2005).

From the perspective of evaluating gender inequality as a component of the quality of democracy, there are various perspectives which can be adopted. One perspective is to explicitly include measures which contrast the capability achievements of men and women as a component of analysis. This is the approach adopted within the measure presented by David Campbell which is discussed in the next chapter. There are limitations to using this approach, because the differences in various capability achievements can at times be based upon choice, rather than explicitly being based upon limitations which are problematic. Instances of clear and deep inequality are straightforward to determine and evaluate, because there is such a strong gendered element to the inequality experienced, but as the nature of the differences become more morally controversial to include in analysis, it can become difficult to decide what is appropriate to include. This problem is further exacerbated in the context of trying to determine the way in which gendered relations impact political engagement in societies which possess higher levels of gender equality. This results in challenges associated with aggregation and indicator selection, that require more space than can be given in this thesis.
An alternative approach is to treat evaluations of gender inequality as being at least partially incorporated into measurement through the inclusion of indicators which are sensitive to the types of exclusion which is more gendered in nature. This can capture the outputs of deprivation, although it still does not highlight the gender-specific differences in capability achievement. In the context of evaluating gender inequality in established democratic societies, it remains the case that some of the more structural elements to inequality would be hard to operationalise as a component of measurement, whilst there also remains problems with using more crude measures. Based upon the complex nature of gender inequality with regards to political engagement (and limitations in data availability), it has been set aside from the measure created in the next chapter. However, it remains an important area for future research to consider.

5.3.5 The Consequences of the Notion of Adaptive Preferences

The notion of adaptive preferences developed within the capability approach has important implications for the limitations which arise from using measures which are solely subjective in nature. This is one of Sen’s chief criticisms of a utilitarian welfare account (Alkire et al. 2014, p.7). Because people are highly adaptable, and are likely to change their preferences and evaluations based upon their circumstances, it can be problematic to only use subjective evaluations of the opportunities available to individuals (Burchardt 2009).

For example, individuals growing up from a young age in an environment where the attendance of university is very uncommon may come to view attending university as an outsider activity, and thus devalue this as an option which they would want to undertake. In turn, if they are then asked whether they are satisfied with their level of education, they are likely to say that they are satisfied with not attending university, because they have already devalued this as an option. Alternatively, in an environment where political engagement is very low, individuals may come to view undertaking political action and activity as a waste of time. Whilst they are not actively prevented from undertaking political action, they come to devalue it in such a way that it becomes unlikely that they will become politically engaged.
This is an important insight which the approach raises, because it points to the limitations with using subjective, self-evaluations of options available to individuals. Ultimately, the evaluation of the range of choices which are available to individuals is separate from those choices. We should ask ourselves how someone from another set of opportunities would feel about those same opportunities, and how they might be impacted if their circumstances changed in the same way. In doing so, we can come to understand that whilst someone may be satisfied with a diminished opportunity set, this does not mean that we should not be concerned about them having a diminished opportunity set. Their assessment of their own circumstances may be valid for them, but that is different from the aggregate evaluation which those same circumstances might receive.

The notion of adaptive preferences is important to understanding the role that inequality and disadvantage can play in the political process. It is plausible to think that as individuals become more disadvantaged relative to the rest of their society, they may see themselves as less able to act in the same spaces in an equal manner. Whilst one response from disadvantaged individuals might be to mobilise and try to overcome their disadvantage, an equally plausible response is to devalue the space where one can no longer act effectively. This is important for the political process, since, undertaking actions like running for political office can require a large amount of resources (Achen & Bartels 2016; Bartels 2008, 2009; Mandle 2013; Gilens 2005, 2012). If individuals view themselves as lacking the resources to compete in the political process, then they may remove themselves from the process, or come to devalue the importance of living in a democracy (Alon 2009; Orenstein 2012). In turn, the political process becomes the domain of the economically powerful, and policy comes to reflect the interests of the wealthy (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2005). Whilst scholars have not given a comprehensive account tied to adaptive preferences to explain this process, the logic underpinning the argument is clear.

More generally, the notion of adaptive preferences suggests that it may be problematic to treat individual evaluations of options as the same as the range of options which they possess (Burchardt 2009). They are distinct in a way that suggests that they operate in different informational spaces – i.e. the evaluation of
options is distinct from the options themselves (Sugden 1998). For example, how I feel about whether or not I can buy a Ferrari is distinct from whether or not I can buy a Ferrari. If they are given equivalence, then it is plausible to think that evaluations of them will fail to adequately identify more problematic capability sets, because individuals may still be satisfied with them. In the context of evaluating the quality of democracy, the notion of adaptive preferences implies that it is not sufficient to evaluate citizen levels of satisfaction with their political climate, as this may miss potential areas for grievances which other individuals in similar circumstances might share.

5.3.6 The Role of the Environment in Shaping the Opportunities Available to Individuals

The other theoretical insight which differs the capability approach from other welfare accounts is that the capability approach explores the relationship which individuals have to the environment around them in a much more comprehensive fashion. In turn, this has enabled the approach to be used to develop more comprehensive theories of sustainable development (Ballet, Koffi & Pelenc 2013; Pelenc et al. 2013; Gutwald et al. 2014; Lessmann & Rauschmayer 2013). In these accounts, the future prospects for society are increasingly being made significant, especially with reference to the treatment of the environment. Within the approach the question is asked as to what constitutes sustainable development and what do we owe to future generations. Although these are not novel questions unique to the capability approach, the way in which the philosophical writings within the approach have emphasised the importance of the relationship between individuals and the environment is different to other welfare accounts.

More generally when discussing sustainable development, there is a commonly acknowledged nexus “between environmental and economic and social factors, which manifests at many levels” (Uitto 2016, p.441). The capability approach provides a way to consider how these areas interconnect in the way that they impact upon the lives of individuals. In that sense, the capability approach provides the informational space to explore how these interconnected problems manifest as constraints on the kinds of choices which individuals can make. From
the context of evaluation, we can think about the kinds of constraints which environmental factors place upon the choices available to an individual, especially when they interact with other aspects of capability deprivation. These interactions can range from the relationship between environmental factors and health deprivations, through to the interaction between environmental degradation and income poverty. For example, we often see pollution occurring much more in neighbourhoods and regions where poverty is higher (Lessard, Alcala & Capitman 2016). In doing so, it becomes salient that diminishing quality in the environment one lives in can have a strong impact on the range of outcomes which individuals are able to achieve.

From the context of measuring democracy, evaluations can either be targeted to the individual level, or to the societal achievement level. Ideally, measures could isolate the distribution of environmental quality across a society in order to identify individuals who live in areas where environmental quality is particularly low. However, for incorporating this into measurement of democracy, current measures at the cross-national level are not standardised in a way that enables cross-national comparison with reference to specific individuals. Instead measures only capture the overall societal outputs, primarily with respect to carbon emissions. If measures are to be sensitive to this aspect of the theoretical insight provided by the capability approach, ideally they would do so through the rubric of individual level analysis, so as to directly evaluate how environmental quality impacts the options available to individuals.

5.4 The Definition of Freedom as Capability

Before continuing on to outline the requirements for measuring freedom as capability, it is worth rearticulating a clear definition of precisely what freedom as capability is:

“We are free to undertake an action, only to the extent to which there are no plausible constraints prohibiting us from undertaking that action.”

As Chapter One articulated through the discussion of a value pluralist framework, there are a variety of reasons to value competing definitions of freedom. What matters to whether we are free on the capability based definition of freedom
is the kinds of constraints which might prohibit us from undertaking an action. In particular, it is a definition which emphasises that the most relevant constraints to a given action often do not stem from any kind of legislative prohibition, or coercive action. Instead, these constraints may be any number of different things which might plausibly prevent us from undertaking an action.

The utility in adopting a definition like this is that often we are not directly thwarted by other individuals in being unable to undertake an action. Nonetheless, we would describe ourselves as unable to undertake that particular action. For many individuals the most important choices which they will make in their life will in no way be constrained by any other people. Yet, they will be constrained in the choices which they are able to make. If we want to understand the connection between certain actions, and the basis upon which individuals do, or do not undertake those actions, then it is vitally important to identify what is shaping their decision-making. This same logic applies to the relationship which individual citizens have with the political process, and if scholars want to understand the overall connection between citizens and their polity, it can only be done by incorporating a definition of freedom that captures how they are connecting to the polity.

5.5 The Conceptual Requirements for Measuring Freedom as Capability

As the above discussion has highlighted, there are a variety of different aspects to the capability approach, which, when taken together inform the evaluation of capabilities. The core dimension from the perspective of this thesis is that of measuring freedom as capability, and the requirements for doing so are explored more fully here.

As was shown in the previous chapter, most measures of democracy approach the measurement of freedom from the perspective of non-interference. Generally, measures of freedom of this kind are constructed by using ordinal classifications, with differing assessments of how free individuals are based upon an evaluation of the status of rights which individuals hold within their society. The rights individuals hold are then also considered based upon incidence of transgressions against those rights – i.e. are those rights regularly respected, or
rights in name only. For example, one aspect of the Freedom in the World (Freedom House 2014, p.7) measure of democracy measures freedom of expression and belief with a coding procedure which asks coders to rate:

"Is there open and free private discussion?

- Are people able to engage in private discussions, particularly of a political nature (in places including restaurants, public transportation, and their homes) without fear of harassment or detention by the authorities or powerful nonstate actors?
- Do users of personal online communications – including private email, text messages, or personal blogs with a limited following – face legal penalties, harassment, or violence from the government or powerful nonstate actors for critical remarks?
- Does the government employ people or groups to engage in public surveillance and to report alleged antigovernment conversations to authorities?"

As can be inferred from this coding guideline, the assessment is made based upon observations about instances of transgression against these norms. Notably, these assessments don’t hold any particular data requirements, provided there is a sufficiently large amount of reliable data produced to develop judgements from. By this it is meant that informational requirements aren’t in a standardised form – in one country observations and commentary available in a (reliable) newspaper might be sufficient to warrant a change in evaluation, whereas in another country a change might occur because of information produced in the work of an aid organisation.

Depending upon the measure in question, coding procedures vary, as do the different basis which is given for the score awarded. The most commonly used annual measures (Freedom House, Polity, and Economist Intelligence Unit), employ a method of writing country reports which summarise the basis for the score awarded, and note any events which may be cause for concern or be potential instances of improvement. Although there are some issues of transparency with
regards to precisely why one score is awarded rather than another (so there is always some degree of arbitrariness to the score which is awarded), the measurement practice of listing the events in a country regarding these classifications provide some insights into the basis for changes in scores.

This is fundamentally different to the way measuring freedom as capability is approached. Freedom as capability requires measurement at the individual level, which places fundamentally different data requirements on those wishing to evaluate it in the world. These demands fit into the traditional demands of welfare evaluation, which is best performed using micro-level data.

It is widely acknowledged within the literature on capabilities that the operationalization of the concept is one of the key issues facing scholars (Chiappero-Martinetti et al. 2015; Ibrahim 2014). Whilst opportunity based measures of capability are generally regarded as preferable because they more adequately capture the core ideas essential to the approach – namely, the overall options which people can be plausibly said to have available to them – opportunities are substantially more difficult to observe than realised states of being. For this reason, despite the preferability for a measure that captures opportunities, until recently, extant measures of capability have been measured by using realised states. Overall there are a number of decisions which need to be made with regards to the precise manner in which measures are crafted. These decisions range across a number of areas, some of which have already been discussed. Alongside the evaluative dimensions, the informational spaces which are included in an evaluation of capabilities need to be decided upon.

The above discussion connected to Figure 5.2 suggests that there are six specific areas which can be considered as possible informational spaces to be considered when evaluating capabilities: resources, potential options, functionings, conversion factors, preventative conditions, and choice. Ideally, the evaluation of an individual’s capabilities would be a perfect measure of their entire capability set – that is, the range of all possible options available to that individual. In practice, this is effectively impossible to calculate, as the range of options is continually changing based upon a variety of dynamic factors. Instead, when considering the conceptual
requirements for measurement, it is more pertinent to ask whether a sufficiently large portion of an individual's capability set can be calculated, such that it is possible to describe them as possessing meaningful control in their life (this is a central theme of the capabilities approach, especially in the work of Nussbaum). Moreover, evaluations of capability which aim to assess poverty do not need to assess maximal option sets (i.e. all the possible options available to the most well off), since the primary focus is to identify cases where people do not have a capability set which renders the individual possessing it with meaningful control over their own life. Although some of the informational spaces appear more relevant than others in making this calculation, it is still pertinent to consider each one when discussing what can be measured because each area contributes to the overall value of the capability approach as an evaluative framework.

As outlined earlier in the thesis during the discussion of the conceptualisation of measures of democracy, there are a number of challenges which need to be overcome in order to adequately measure complex concepts. The first and most obvious requirement to consider is whether the concept in question – in this case freedom as capability – is one which is measurable, and some have contested whether this is possible for opportunity concepts (Sugden 1998). Usually the measurability of a concept is attached to the degree to which it is readily observable, but because complex concepts are often not readily observable, measurement generally entails breaking up the concept into subcomponents and using multiple indicators to capture the various aspects of the concept. In order to understand which aspects of the capability approach can be measured, it is worthwhile considering how observable each informational space is.

In the context of measuring freedom as capability, the opportunity set which an individual possesses is the most important aspect of the evaluation being made. This is the range of potential options which they hold, and with a minor qualification\(^{19}\) can be regarded as the freedom as capability which they possess. However, the latency or abstractness of the opportunities that an individual

\(^{19}\) The potential options available to an individual are mediated by their adaptive preferences, and so the capability set which they possess is not necessarily just the potential options they possess – some of those options may be rendered untenable because of their adaptive preferences.
possesses makes it a particularly challenging concept to measure. There is difficulty in measuring an individual’s capability set for a number of reasons, but the most obvious is the complex interaction between the other spaces which determine the limitations which individuals experience. This becomes clear when taking into account the different abilities of individuals to convert opportunities into functionings – that is, the fact that access to the same resources does not generate the same set of capabilities for every person. This is an issue because it means that measuring the capability of individuals may require taking into account the diversity of ability to convert resources into functionings, so that the measurement of capability may need to be closely tethered to the specific individual which it refers to. A further consideration to make with regards to the capability set an individual possesses is that this set is a function of the other informational spaces, and so it is only measurable to the extent to which they can be measured (although measuring the other spaces is no guarantee of being able to evaluate the capability set).

The next most important domain to consider is the primary determinant of the capability set: the access to resources which individuals have. Resources in this context is a broadly encompassing term, which refers to anything external to the individual which they might require in order to achieve some particular outcome or activity. This includes not just material resources, like money, but also non-material resources like education. Generally, like in the case of the HDI, it makes sense to subdivide resources up into more specific categories, or domains, based upon the nature of the resource in question. These different resource domains are then used to create decision vectors, where the vector is the resultant opportunity set generated by the intersection of the different resource domains the individual has available to them (Sen & Foster 1999). Some of the interactions can be seen in considering what data would be required to evaluate all of the capabilities for an individual required on Nussbaum’s universal list, as seen in Table 5.1. For example, the intersection of the variables bodily health and play may create a capability vector where the two points intersect to determine the range of leisure activities which an individual can undertake. In some domains possible resources being evaluated have no maximal value, but it is possible to construct a list of specific resource minimums which are taken as required for individuals to live a life of their
own choosing, for example, there is no maximal level for how much public physical space is available to interact with others in, but the absence of such space is problematic. Much of the assessment of resources required to live well might be subsumed under a variable that evaluates access to income of a certain level, in a similar fashion to the access to a decent living standard variable in the HDI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capability Type</th>
<th>Potential Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Life</td>
<td>Life expectancy, in conjunction with access to sufficient monetary resources to ensure that an individual can be well-nourished and live well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bodily Health</td>
<td>Healthcare access available. Potentially could be calculated by number of instances of curable diseases resulting in death and chronic illness within the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bodily Integrity</td>
<td>Instances of criminal interference encountered by individuals are minimal, and citizens do not need to fear for their safety – could be calculated with crime statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sense, imagination, and thought</td>
<td>Individuals are free to express themselves both intellectually and artistically without fear of interference by others – could be calculated with tertiary education availability to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Emotions</td>
<td>People in the society have access to spaces where they can experience meaningful relationships outside of their work and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Practical Reason</td>
<td>Education is available to all to a degree where they can develop practical reasoning skills and attain a level of literacy and numeracy required to function in a society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Affiliation</td>
<td>Individuals are free to associate with others and have the space to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other Species</td>
<td>Animals are treated with respect in the society, instances of animal abuse recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Play</td>
<td>Do individuals have leisure time available to them? Calculated by the average hours worked per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Control over ones environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Political</td>
<td>Ability to engage in the political process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) Material</td>
<td>Ability to gain various types of employment and property ownership rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The challenge of presenting a measure sensitive to individual abilities to convert resources into functionings presents some problems for evaluating capabilities at the societal level. First and foremost, it is difficult to ascertain precisely what limits the ability of individuals to convert resources into functionings, and by how much. In some cases, like the example of the cripple
employed by Sen, it is straightforward to identify individuals who require more resources to generate the same functionings as others (the cripple might require access to a specifically modified type of transportation). In other cases, like that of mental illness, the challenges faced by individuals to convert resources into functionings may not be readily obvious, nor is it clear how much their illness might impact their ability to generate functionings. The relatively unobservable nature of some potential conversion factors suggests that it is a difficult variable to measure. However, where possible it is important to preserve this informational space as a component of analysing capabilities, since sensitivity to the conversion abilities is important to the normative appeal of the capability approach through the way that it differentiates it from other welfare accounts.

The challenge of taking into account conversion ability is an issue which continues to receive attention within the capabilities approach, with some scholars arguing that the measurement of capabilities is inimical to the capabilities approach (Comim 2008). This perspective is couched in the notion that failure to remain sensitive to individual ability to convert resources into functionings presents a reductivist account of the capabilities approach. In particular, it is argued that ignoring this facet of the approach undermines the value of the informational space critique presented by Sen, which differentiates the capabilities approach from other welfare accounts. It is thus argued by some that “measurement might [inherently] entail a limitation of informational spaces used in evaluative assessments” (Comim 2008, p.157). This issue becomes a problematic one if measures are no longer sensitive to the different needs of individuals to achieve capabilities, because this represents a narrowing down of the informational space employed in the approach, and in turn, undermines some of the strengths of the approach. Hence, the notion of being sensitive to differences between individuals represents a key consideration for the viability of measuring capabilities, as it is a central consideration in the original formulation of the capability approach. However, the inability to directly include the conversion factors as part of the evaluation of capabilities is not necessarily fatal to the attempt to measure capability. A possible solution to the problem of their lack of clear observability is to evaluate them from achieved functionings.
Measuring (different dimensions\textsuperscript{20} of) functionings, or realised states, is in principle straightforward. It requires the observation of the various outcomes which are considered to be of interest. If the functioning represents one which is likely to be the result of a limited range of potential options for an individual, it can then be problematized, and on this topic Sen has argued that there are differing degrees to which the gap between opportunities and functionings can be viewed and interpreted (Sen 1999). Specifically, in certain cases it can be reasonably assumed that a certain kind of functioning demonstrates an absence of capability. For example, people generally do not choose to starve, and so if there are a number of people starving in a society it can be assumed that they do not have the opportunity to eat – since it is highly unlikely that they are demonstrating a functioning which they would wilfully choose. This observation is applied to other areas, like the absence of a suitable source of shelter, which can also be taken to be a situation where there is a deprivation of choice, rather than a wilfully chosen functioning. Evidently this is most applicable to cases of extreme poverty where the non-functioning represents a potentially life-threatening situation. People do not regularly choose to be sick, or to be illiterate, instead, they live in circumstances where they do not have access to the appropriate treatment, or to an adequate level of education for the society in which they live.

This notion can be partially applied in the case of measuring functionings so as to pay sufficient regard to the problem of conversion factors discussed earlier. Whilst it is not possible to measure the conversion ability for each individual, if one is using a realised state model, it becomes possible to identify whether there are specific groups which encounter systemic problems at achieving functionings which they are likely to choose. For example, if one particular ethnic or racial group experiences high levels of income poverty within a society, it is likely that they are subject to circumstances impacting their ability to earn an income which are different to the other members in the society, rather than choosing to experience income poverty. Depending upon the type of non-functioning which is displayed, it

\textsuperscript{20} Within the literature the different dimensions are generally referred to as vectors.
may be the case that it warrants further investigation, or, alternatively, the non-functioning may be unproblematic because it is the result of a deliberate selection.

Consider the following two cases: The first case is the low number of Amish people voting in the United States, with their non-voting regarded as unproblematic because it is based upon a religious decision, and not the deprivation of the capability to vote. Conversely, many African-Americans with low socio-economic status do not vote, and whilst it is not the only cause, at least part of the issue can be attributed to the difficulties they face getting on the electoral roll, and this is problematic because some unregistered voters are not unregistered by choice – they lack the opportunity to be enrolled to vote because they might not have the appropriate identification which is required to register. Along these lines it is possible to measure functionings, and then from the functionings determine if there are systemic issues of capability deprivation, either for the overall society (there is mass failure to achieve certain basic capabilities), or there is capability deprivation for a specific group or groups (there are specific instances of failure to achieve certain basic capabilities). It is particularly important to pay attention to the types of individuals which might have greater difficulty converting opportunities into functionings, as they may be more prone to experiencing capability deprivation than other groups – and this is an issue that measures ought to be sensitive to if they are to adequately reflect the core values that underpin the capability approach. The groups that this most pertains to are groups with special needs, with mental or physical illness, or groups who face discrimination from some members of the community.

For more complicated cases, where it is not clear whether lower rates of functionings are based upon the decisions of individuals, or instead are outside of their control, the evaluation which should be made is best served by considering the case in question. That is, what is the nature of the functioning in question? If it is a functioning which is politically significant, then it may be worth including it as a category of evaluation. However, this is largely determined by the purpose of the

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21 For example, the usage of minor criminal offences as a mechanism to disenfranchise African-Americans is considered a serious problem by a number of scholars (Stepan & Linz 2011; Johnson 2016)
evaluation being performed. In the context of this thesis, measurement is undertaken for the purpose of evaluating whether citizens can effectively participate in their democracy – so non-functionings which are likely to inhibit this are more problematic than other forms.

The other possibility for the measurement of the capability approach is to measure opportunities without taking into consideration the conversion factors which different individuals possess, which is the approach currently taken. This requires the construction of the overall set of opportunities which are available to an individual (Sen & Foster 1999, p.200). Previously this was regarded as an overly difficult task, based upon inadequate access to data (Anand, Krishnakumar & Bich 2011, pp.205–6), however, this situation is steadily improving and access to data is now at a level where the construction of crude measures of opportunity have started to be developed. Notably though, there are still substantive limitations associated with this data, with more work required before full cross-national data sets are available which can evaluate a broad range of opportunities which individuals possess. Thus, existing measures of capability can be divided up into two distinct types, measures constructed using data at a micro-level and a macro-level.

The measurement of capabilities is closely tied to the evaluation of poverty, and as Sabine Alkire (2016) outlines in an extensive overview of available poverty data and measures, there are over 750 multidimensional poverty surveys which have been conducted. Despite the large number of surveys conducted, there are still numerous limitations with the evaluation of capabilities in a cross-national setting. The most important issue is that of standardisation, as the various surveys consider different topics, and ask different questions that limit the capacity for researchers to combine surveys. Consequently, the development of sophisticated cross-national measures of capabilities remain limited. The most breadth is covered by the HDI, but this measures development in a way that does not enable proper analysis in established democracies because it is primarily a measure for developing countries. The most advanced measure, the Better Life Index, is explored in the next chapter where it is used to construct a new measure of democracy. The limitation of the BLI is that it is created by the OECD, and thus there are numerous countries which it does not cover. Despite this, it highlights the degree to which the inclusion of
capabilities can be valuable, and signals what kinds of analysis might be possible in the future as the movement towards standardised poverty measurement results in more consistent data availability.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has canvassed the core theoretical features of the capability approach, and how they relate to the measurement of freedom as capability. This is an essential task for properly constructing a measure of freedom as capability, as it ensures that the core components of the definition are incorporated into the analysis, as well as helping to identifying which elements might be missed in a given measure. The core elements of the approach were taken to be:

- The relationship between individuals and human development
- The recognition of plausible constraints as a sufficiently limiting condition for human action
- The recognition of and emphasis upon multidimensional poverty as a component of understanding how much poverty individuals experience
- The recognition of constraints on action often experienced in a gendered way
- The consequences of the notion of adaptive preferences
- The role of the environment in shaping the opportunities available to individuals

In identifying these various theoretical critiques raised by the approach, the way that each element relates to the evaluation of individual freedom as capability was included.

Taken altogether, it can be seen that the measurement of freedom as capability is ideally conducted as a multidimensional measure which also evaluates capabilities which are external to the economic sphere. In particular, measures should be constructed in a way that either explicitly evaluates gender inequality, or implicitly does so by evaluation of factors that capture inequality of capabilities where individuals of different genders are likely to have substantially different capabilities. The other core component discussed was the notion of adaptive preferences. This notion has important implications with respect to indicator
selection, as it suggests that being overly reliant on measures which are subjective evaluations can be problematic – as individuals are likely to value the options which they have, regardless of how differently individuals from a different position might value those same options.

The next chapter will use the discussion presented in this chapter to evaluate the integration of the capability approach into David Campbell’s measure of democracy. It will then use the discussion to outline the construction of a new measure of democracy, which is centred upon the usage of the definition of freedom as capability. By reviewing these theoretical aspects of the capability approach more broadly, the different informational spaces engaged with by these two measures will be much clearer. As such, the way in which they are more expansive than other measures of democracy will also be much clearer.
Chapter 6: A Better Measure of Democracy – Using the Better Life Index to Construct a Capabilities Based Measure of Democracy

A key dimension of the thesis is the analysis of the plausibility of measuring capabilities as a component of evaluating the quality of democracy. To demonstrate that creating a cross-national measure of this kind is plausible in the near future, this chapter presents a measure of democracy that uses data generated from the Better Life project, an initiative by the OECD to evaluate quality of life across OECD countries. As noted in Chapter Four, David Campbell’s measure of democracy is the first to attempt to integrate the capability approach into the measurement of democracy. The first section of the chapter provides a detailed discussion of the structure of David Campbell’s measure of democracy, outlining the extent to which it evaluates capabilities as a component of assessment. The chapter also considers the way in which Campbell’s measure is sensitive to the various theoretical insights which were discussed in the previous chapter. The depth of the analysis of individual citizen capabilities within the measure is considered, to suggest that there is still much more room for an expanded evaluation of citizen capabilities. The second section of the chapter demonstrates this gap in outlining the various aspects of individual capabilities which are included as a component of evaluation in the Better Life Index (BLI). The third section of the chapter outlines the structure for a new measure of democracy which is more capability oriented than Campbell’s measure, which is termed the Better Democracy Index because of the central role of the increased data availability provided by the BLI. This section outlines the indicator selection, the weighting of each indicator, and the aggregation procedure for the measure. The final section of the chapter discusses the aspects of the capability approach which are present within the new measure, and acknowledges the limitations present with respect to which important theoretical aspects are absent.
6.1 A Starting Point: The Inclusion of Capabilities in Campbell’s Measure of Democracy

David Campbell has drawn upon the theoretical framework developed by Guillermo O’Donnell to try and construct a measure of democracy that pays attention to the notion of capabilities, and the mechanisms through which they contribute to the political process. However, Campbell’s measure does not receive a high degree of attention within the measurement literature, which is likely in part due to the irregular time frames at which the data is updated, and the relatively recent construction of the measure. Despite this, Campbell’s measure demonstrates the first proper attempt to include the notion of the capabilities of democratic citizens within the analysis of the system of democracy, and is thus a valuable starting point to begin the construction of a new measure of democracy which also aims to include measures of citizen capability. Although the discussion below highlights that there are clear limitations in the degree to which the measure captures some important aspects of the capability approach, it is the clear attention to the approach in the theoretical framing of the measure that differentiates Campbell’s measure from others, and makes it worthwhile commenting upon.

The discussion below is organised around the standard analytical framework for understanding the structure of measurement of democracy. This framework is the division between the concept level, the measurement (indicator) level, and the aggregation structure within a measure popularised through the work of Munck and Verkuilen (2002; 2009). This framework enables an analysis of the precise points where Campbell’s measure departs from other measurement structures, and thus enables insight into the areas where more informational space is explored (and can be further improved). The concept level reflects the distinct concepts which are used to organise the measure. The measurement level reflects the dimensions within that concept that are operationalised, with a secondary indicator level reflective of the distinct indicators which are used to evaluate the subcategories present at the measurement level. A visualisation of this can be seen in Figure 6.1, which summarises the different levels for Campbell’s Democracy Ranking, with the aggregation of the measure visible below in Table 6.1.
6.1.1 The Concept Level in Campbell's Measure of Democracy

As the notion of concept level (or category level) can help identify, Campbell's measurement of democracy is different from others in the way that it has separate concept spaces of evaluation. Campbell's measure has distinct space available for the assessment of both political institutions (through the category of Quality of Politics), and for the assessment of societal contributions to the political system (through the category of Quality of Society). This increased informational space is linked to the usage of O'Donnell's work as the theoretical basis for concept construction within Campbell's measure. Elements of O'Donnell’s different approach to the standard systems or institutional approach were outlined in Chapter Two, but are worth repeating here based upon how they translate into different measurement categories than other measures of democracy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Democracy/Concept Level</th>
<th>Quality of Politics (50%)</th>
<th>Quality of Society (50%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subcategory/Measurement Level (&amp;weighting %)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political Dimension 50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economy 10%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators (&amp;weighting %)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political rights: Freedom House 25%</strong></td>
<td>GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2005 international $) 25%</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Civil liberties: Freedom House 25%</strong></td>
<td>GDP per capita, PPP (current international $) 25%</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Global Gender Gap Report: World Economic Forum 25%</strong></td>
<td>Central government debt, total (% of GDP) 12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Press freedom: Freedom House 10%</strong></td>
<td>Inflation, consumer prices (annual %) 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Corruption Perceptions Index: Transparency International 10%</strong></td>
<td>Unemployment, total (% of total labour force) 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Change of the head of government -- last 13 years, peaceful 2.5%</strong></td>
<td>Unemployment, youth total (% of total labour force ages 15-24) 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party change of the head of government — last 13 years, peaceful</td>
<td>Life expectancy at birth, female (years)</td>
<td>Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)</td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)</td>
<td>Research and development expenditure (% GDP)</td>
<td>Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The conceptual logic for the inclusion of a distinct category of Quality of Politics does not require much comment here, as the manner in which the subcategories within this institutional component of democracy contribute to the quality of democracy is not being contested. With the only point worth raising being Campbell’s approach of treating the two categories as conceptually distinct. This makes sense based upon the fact that there is a clear difference between the institutional features of a society, and the actors which inhabit that society. For example, whilst they tend to be related, knowing the legislative features of a political system does not inherently provide any information about the distribution of the capabilities of the various individuals to act within that system. In a related manner, there is no clear theoretical basis for the development of an unequal aggregation or weighting procedure to combine the two – i.e. there is no clear logic that suggests that the Quality of Politics is responsible for seventy percent whereas Quality of Society should be worth thirty percent. If there is no clear basis for weighting one concept over another, then the logical weighting procedure should be to treat them equally – as Campbell does.

The fist point of departure in O’Donnell’s theoretical approach is that if we take democracy to be analysed as a system, then we should regard the individuals within that system as contributing to the overall functional ability of the system. This means that the overall functional ability of citizens is connected to the extent to which a system can be described as being a properly functioning democracy. Minimalist accounts of democracy measurement understate this connection by not providing the informational space to evaluate the functional ability of citizens. This problem is present in accounts which present a binary classification of democracy and non-democracy, because there is no space to evaluate the degree to which citizens are able to properly function within the system.

From a theoretical perspective O’Donnell (2004, p.24) has attempted to address the absence of the citizen in measurement by outlining what he considers the minimal sufficient set of conditions that would lead to “only the necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the existence of fair and institutionalized elections.” In these conditions which O’Donnell outlines, in conjunction with the preservation
of human rights, human development is explored and there are a number of specifications which draw upon the notion of capabilities, so that citizens are able to properly exercise their agency autonomously.

Campbell argues for an ideologically neutral position with regards to how democracy should be defined. Campbell contends that current debates across freedom and equality as aspects reflect a left/right divide over what is most important about democracy, with right sides emphasising ‘freedom’, and the left sides emphasising ‘equality’. To avoid setting himself on either side of this conflict, Campbell (2008, p.30) constructs his index out of what he takes to be a neutral, good governance oriented approach, by evaluating equality that is non-political, and so “non-political performance could refer to the economy, health, knowledge, and gender equality.” However, as this thesis has argued, these factors are deeply connected to political equality – it’s odd to suggest that they are not indicators of political equality, since they heavily shape political outcomes and opportunities.

Campbell’s measure aims to convert this theoretical notion into the measurement of democracy through the inclusion of the measurement of quality of society. As Campbell (2008, p.35) argues, when combined together the five non-political dimensions are equal to the political dimensions, “implying that in a broader democracy understanding the political system also carries a responsibility for the other sectors of society (and the environment).” Thus Campbell’s measure divides equally across the two concept areas of quality of the political and quality of society, so that “Quality of Democracy = Quality of Politics + Quality of Society” (Campbell 2008, p.34). In this way, we might think of Campbell’s measure as conceptualising two distinct chambers or categories for the quality of democracy – the quality of the institutional political framework (under the name of Quality of Politics), and the degree of quality with which the society can engage with the institutional framework (the Quality of Society). The broader structure of Campbell’s measure can be seen above in Table 6.1, and the features of the measure are discussed below.
6.1.2 Measurement Level and Indicator Selection in Campbell's Measure of Democracy

The Quality of Politics in Campbell's Measure

The category of Quality of Politics in Campbell’s measure is one which evaluates the standard components found in many other measures of democracy. We can think of this category as capturing the democraticness of the institutional framework of a given country, with this category measuring the sub-categories of: political rights; civil liberties; gender equality (in legislation); press freedom; perceptions of corruption; and the transfer of political power.

The inclusion of these political indicators reflects the commonly held views within existing measurement, and, it is clear that even with a capability based measure of democracy that these institutional features would remain an important component of democracy. Whilst there may be more radical theoretical accounts which do not treat the institutional or legislative dimensions as a core component of democracy, as a topic it is peripheral to this discussion, and requires more extensive engagement with then there is space to undertake here. Campbell (2008, p.34) justifies the inclusion of this dimension on the grounds that “without acknowledging the political system, it does not appear appropriate to talk about democracy.” Moreover, with regards to democracy, capabilities are at least partially contingent upon the continued legal protection to exercise those capabilities which are actually possessed by individuals, and so legal freedoms and the accompanying political system should still be included as a component of measurement.

The Quality of Society in Campbell's Measure

Campbell (2008, p.41) weights the category of Quality of Society as worth fifty percent of the score for Quality of Democracy. Within the Quality of Society, equal weighting is given to the dimensions of: gender; economy; knowledge; health; and regard for the environment. Hence, each of these sub-categories of the Quality of Society is worth ten percent in the overall measure for quality of democracy. These are the dimensions which represent Campbell’s attempt to implement the capability approach into his measure. Although it is important to recognise that the
measures are primarily of societal achievement, not of individual achievement or deprivation.

In terms of the type of indicators which Campbell’s measure uses to evaluate capabilities of citizens, it follows the unidimensional indicator approach discussed in Chapter Five, with a dashboard set of indicators used to create the overall score for each dimension. Table 6.1 shows the subcategories and the indicators used to measure them. As can be seen, the indicators are not multidimensional, instead reflecting indicators of distinctly separate data points, which are primarily measures of performance at the national level.

In understanding the indicator selection it is important to note that a core dimension to Campbell’s conceptualisation (as it relates to this thesis), is to think of capabilities from the perspective of societal development. In that vein, many of the indicators which Campbell selects reflect overall measures of societal progress, rather than indicators which capture instances of capability deprivation at the individual level. This is congruent with the broader understanding of the capability approach as being a framework of human development, which, whilst oriented much more closely towards individuals, is nonetheless an undertaking of societal analysis. The breakdown of each category by the type of measure is visible in Table 6.2. As can be seen from Table 6.2, of the five different Quality of Society categories, two (Environment, and Health) only present measures that evaluate societal achievement, rather than instances of deprivation. Whilst they represent an attempt to engage with some of the core normative aspects of the capability approach, they do so through the aggregated societal level, rather than at the individual level. In this way Campbell’s measure can be thought of as presenting a different normative model of democracy, although one that still presents a relatively small engagement with the capabilities of individual citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.2 Quality of Society Indicators – Type of Measure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy Measures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2005 international $)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP per capita, PPP (current international $)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central government debt, total (% of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment, total (% of total labour force)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment, youth total (% of total labour force ages 15-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 emissions (kg per 2005 PPP $ of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per unit of energy use (constant 2005 PPP $ per kg of oil equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity production from hydroelectric sources (% of total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Socioeconomic-Educational Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour force, female (% of total labour force)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment, female (% of female labour force)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary education, pupils (% female)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School enrolment, secondary, female (% gross)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School enrolment, secondary, female (% net)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School enrolment, tertiary, female (% gross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth, female (years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth, total (years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health expenditure per capita, PPP (constant 2005 international $)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health expenditure, public (% of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health expenditure, private (% of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds (per 1,000 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians (per 1,000 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School enrolment, secondary (% gross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School enrolment, secondary (% net)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School enrolment, tertiary (% gross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil-teacher ratio, primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the three categories which include measures that incorporate citizen deprivation, some comments can be made. The first indicators that include some elements of deprivation, are in the Economy category, through the evaluation of unemployment rates within a polity. However, the unemployment rate, whilst a measure of the number of people currently not holding a job, is not a strong indicator to use to evaluate deprivation without any supplementation, because it doesn’t engage with the persistence of unemployment (i.e. whether it is short-term or long-term unemployment). Individuals experiencing unemployment might only experience a very brief period of unemployment and by quickly returning to work avoid being at risk of capability deprivation as a consequence of job loss. Alternatively, they may possess a high level of wealth, and thus not be at risk of experiencing capability deprivations. Hence, if possible it is worthwhile evaluating the persistence of unemployment, as this supplements the breadth of the analysis with the depth of deprivation which can be experienced through the duration which an individual needs to deal with being unemployed. This is also why multidimensional measures are worthwhile, as they can further enable the triangulation of those who lack the resources to sustain themselves during longer periods of unemployment.

The second category that presents some evaluation of citizen deprivation does so through the explicit rubric of gender equality. This category summarises the relative opportunities that are actually available for women. In that sense, this measure can be thought of as a measure of group deprivation, rather than a measure that captures the overall deprivation experienced by individual citizens. This is because the indicators evaluate specifically the achievements for women, and thus miss deprivations outside of this group.
The other category where Campbell includes measures which tap into notions of citizen’s deprivation is through the category of Knowledge – with reference to the achievement of schooling across at the secondary and tertiary level. This measure can be thought of as engaging more directly with instances of deprivation from the cross-societal perspective, as it can identify the share of individuals within a society which might be experiencing relative deprivation in the domain of education. For example, in a society where eighty percent of the population have attained an upper secondary level education, it is reasonable to regard the remaining members of society as experiencing a form of education deprivation which could have substantive implications for political engagement, and the capacity to engage in the political process.

Referring back to Table 6.1, from the perspective of aggregation we can see that the different evaluations of deprivation reflect a relatively small proportion of the measure. The aspects which evaluate deprivation in the Knowledge subcategory reflect 25 percent of the category, which translates into 2.5 percent of the overall evaluation. The same weighting is given for the combined unemployment measures within the subcategory of the Economy. The measure for subcategory of Gender and Socioeconomic-Educational Equality is one which captures aspects of group deprivation, but does not present an overall societal evaluation of the distribution of capabilities. This can be tied back to the focus on the overall category with the evaluation of society altogether, rather than with the evaluation of individual capabilities and how they can contribute to the political system. Whilst this is a valuable undertaking, it nonetheless means that there is much space which can be explored in expanding the inclusion of the individual with respect to the capabilities which they possess.

6.1.3 The Integration of the Capability Approach into Campbell’s Measure

As the above list shows, Campbell’s measure attempts to integrate some of the core theoretical components of the capability approach into measurement. In returning to the various theoretical insights considered in the previous chapter, some of the elements of Campbell’s measure are worth noting. Campbell includes
elements of the environmental aspect of the approach, as well as a strong engagement with the gender equality aspect of the approach.

Whilst the environmental measures are limited in their engagement with concerns relating to sustainable development – only tapping into it through the measurement of emissions outputs and hydroelectricity output – the presence of the category represents a sensitivity to this dimension of the capability approach. This inclusion is important, and demonstrates the degree to which Campbell’s measure emphasises the theoretical aspects of the capability approach, rather than conceding to measurement challenges (since the category has substantive challenges associated with cross-national measurement).

The strong engagement with gender inequality also demonstrates the strong theoretical connection to the capability approach. As one of the central normative theoretical insights of the approach, the inclusion of the evaluation of gender inequality represents a marked difference from other measures of democracy. Specifically, the measures engage in different informational spaces raised by various theorists in the capability approach when critiquing cruder measures of human development which miss the experience of women in developing societies. The measures engage with the accessibility of employment for women, and engage with the notion of under-education of women as well. These are two areas which are of primary importance in being able to maintain control over one’s life, and as such, represent two important areas for engaging with the opportunities possessed by women in a given society. This is the aspect of the measure that whilst narrower in its evaluation, is most inclusive of the theoretically more expansive definition of freedom which the approach advocates in favour of.

As an attempt to integrate the evaluation of capabilities into the process of measuring democracy, Campbell’s measure provides a good template. Even though there are limitations in the indicators which are selected, the approach to conceptualising the measurement categories clearly reflects the reasons why the capabilities approach can be valuable if it is included. Notably, the distinct separation and creation of two categories at the concept level shows how there is a space which adding in capabilities evaluations can contribute to measurement. The
limitations discussed above reflect problems with the indicators used to measure the categories with respect to the inclusion of individuals, but they do not necessarily reflect a problem with the organisation or approach of measuring two distinct categories. It is for this reason that much of the conceptual structure and conceptual logic within Campbell’s measure can be used as a practical guideline for a subsequent measure, and is thus used later in the chapter.

6.2 A Better Source of Data: How the Better Life Index Assesses Different Dimensions of Capabilities

Chapter Five canvassed the conceptual underpinnings of measuring capabilities as an abstract notion, and the central concern of the chapter was in the central theoretical elements of the capability approach and how they relate to measuring democracy. The chapter was focused on the more abstract ideas involved in the capability approach and how they can be operationalised, rather than on the specifics of how a particular measure is constructed. This chapter draws on the conceptual discussion earlier in employing the BLI to construct a measurement framework that incorporates crude evaluations of citizen capabilities as a component of assessment. This new measure is centred upon the definition of freedom which the capability approach provides, and treats the other insights as secondary to the analysis being constructed. This is because the research question is primarily about how freedom can be more expansively included into the measurement of democracy, using the capability approach as framework for developing a more expansive definition of freedom.

The Better Life Initiative started by the OECD in 2011 represents an attempt to produce a comprehensive cross-national evaluation of well-being, with the initiative generating the construction of the BLI. The conceptual underpinnings of the initiative are largely based upon the capability approach, and the BLI operationalises many dimensions of the approach in the evaluation of well-being which it provides. Because of the central role which the capability approach plays in the formulation of the measure, the BLI measures well-being in societies across a range of different categories, with a number of headline indicators for each of the categories included (see Table 6.3). As can be seen from the list of categories and indicators, the BLI categories closely align with Nussbaum’s capability list discussed
in Chapter Five (the only category missing from the list is the relationship which individuals have with animals). The measure is somewhat complex in the way that it is structured, with different weighting assigned to the various indicators.

The indicators which are used within the measure tap into the notion of deprivation to varying degrees, and the degree to which each indicator captures deprivation is worth noting in relation to understanding how it relates to functioning in society, and in turn, the evaluation of citizen capability to contribute and function within a democratic system. The differing degrees of evaluating explicit deprivation is in part because the measure is a general measure of well-being achievement which is used for cross-national comparative purposes, and some of the indicators are of an aggregate nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3 Better Life Index Categories and Indicators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td>Income</td>
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<td>Jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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### 6.2.1 Case Selection

It is important to justify the selection of the countries which are discussed below, and in turn, included in the measure of democracy which is then created from the Better Life Index data. The choices for inclusion are first limited by which countries have cross-nationally comparable data. The second domain where there are case selection choices which need to be justified is the theoretical domain.

With respect to the data availability – the countries included in the new measure are all countries which have provided data for each domain to the OECD. This is an important limitation, with numerous theoretically relevant countries excluded because of lack of data availability – the number of studies evaluating democracy in Latin America, for example, mean that the inclusion of more Latin American countries would have been worthwhile.

With respect to the theoretical basis for the countries included, the logic for the countries included is as follows: exempting Russia and Turkey, every country included is coded by the Economist Intelligence Unit measure of democracy as being either a Full or Flawed democracy. The original basis for the creation of the new measure is to evaluate whether a more expanded conception of freedom can help us understand the quality of democracy in countries in a more nuanced way. Whilst the initial basis for the measure was driven by a view that current measures don’t provide enough scope to properly evaluate established democracies – the argument of the thesis is true for new democracies as well. Hence, whilst not all of the countries included might be regarded as established democracies – the inequalities which the measure identifies are still relevant to those democracies. As such, there is no reason to exclude any of the countries which are categorised as either a Full or Flawed democracy.

The basis for the inclusion of Turkey and Russia requires some more clarification though. The first reason for including them is to identify how the
measure treats countries which are non-democracies. It is worthwhile identifying whether there are substantive differences between democracies and non-democracies on the new measure, since identifying these differences is one of the reasons scholars have measures of democracy. The comparability of the scores for these non-democracies to democratic countries is worth considering, as it may suggest that these countries are not as different to democratic nations as we might otherwise think based upon other measures of democracy. By including them, it ensures that comments about the ability of the measure to be applied to non-democracies can be made. Moreover, it helps to provide a relative guide for understanding how substantial the differences are between the better democracies and non-democratic regimes.

6.2.2 Categories Within the BLI

Although the work of Nussbaum makes a compelling case that each distinct category in the capabilities list which she provides is important, it is also reasonable to hold that the different categories within the BLI relate to the measurement of democracy to varying degrees. To include each category into a measure of democracy with equal weighting would be deeply controversial, as each interacts with the capacity to interact in the political process in different ways. Instead, the approach adopted is to include the least controversial categories in the measure proposed below, and leave the expansion into more controversial measurement for future work. The inclusion and exclusion of each category is briefly discussed below from the perspective of whether or not it should be included in measuring democracy, with a strong emphasis on the specific indicators which are used in the BLI, as these are the indicators being included in the Better Democracy Index presented below. The discussion of each dimension and indicator presented here is brief, and an evaluation of the basis for including each category warrants further expansion elsewhere. This is because the measure being constructed is primarily for the purposes of demonstrating that a measure of capabilities can be constructed, rather than presenting a robust and comprehensive measure – an undertaking of that magnitude goes beyond the scope of a PhD project, with contemporary measures of democracy constructed by teams of researchers (for example, see the
extensive number of staff on the Varieties of Democracy project, or the Democracy Barometer project).

6.2.3 Measures in the BLI Which are Included in the New Measure of Democracy

Income

The indicators for income do not directly provide a clear marker of deprivation, as both indicators primarily refer to the average national income, which does not provide a guideline as to those at the bottom end of the scale. Here the influence of the BLI as a measure of societal well-being is evident – it is targeted towards evaluating the broader societal achievements, rather than emphasising the more problematic elements of the distribution associated with those achievements. However, despite not having a clear headline indicator of income deprivation, it is important to note here that some of the metrics provided in the BLI can be broken down and viewed through educational distributions, or the 80/20 income quintiles. This is used as a marker of inequality within the achievements observed, although only some of the measures have data which can be broken up in this way. Depending upon the measure in question, inequality in achievement is measured either using educational distribution, or income quintile. Where the quintiles are used, the bottom quintile is compared to the average score, rather than comparing the bottom quintile to the top quintile.

Figure 6.2 shows the income gap between the average income in each country, and the average income of those in the lowest income quintile, and Figure 6.3 highlights the disparity in the ratios between the lowest quintile to the average national income. Both figures are sorted by the ratio of the income of the lowest quintile compared to the national average income. This gives a sense of what the lowest quintile have, relative to the average citizen, which can be thought of as in turn reflecting the relative resources which they hold as compared to an average citizen. When viewed in this way, it can be seen how substantial the income gap is for citizens in some countries, relative to others. This ratio is an important one to consider for the potential to engage in the political process, as it represents one where individuals can clearly be identified as having a substantially lower set of resources to leverage in engaging in the political process. Based upon the range of variation which these indicators highlight across some of the advanced
democracies, they have been included in the new measure. Furthermore, it is important to include an indicator which taps into the variation with which inequality is being experienced across different democratic countries, since there is a growing body of literature positioning this as an important political problem faced by contemporary democracies (Keeley 2015; Morelli, Smeeding & Thompson 2015; Stiglitz 2012; Andersen 2012; Loveless 2013; Bartels 2008). Elements of this growing body of literature will be explored in the following chapter when discussing the outputs of the new measure, and in the conclusion with respect to how our understanding of these issues might be further expanded upon with the availability of new data.
Figure 6.2 Income Gap Between Lowest Income Quintile and Average Income (sorted by the income ratio in Figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3 Ratio of Lowest Income Quintile to Average Income

Not only capturing aspects of capability deprivation, the framing of the notion of dominance across income groups becomes more visible as the gap in resources which people have to engage in the political process becomes more pronounced. It is striking that the Nordic countries have the lowest ratios of the high-income economies, with the ratio possessed by the lowest quintile .15-.20 higher than the ratio in the United States. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, economic inequality is a substantial issue in the United States, but it is important to identify how different the experience of the United States is to other democracies in a similar economic position. Another dimension of difference which has been explored in literature on welfare states is the difference between the Nordic model of social democracy, and others (Brandal, Bratberg & Thorsen 2013). Whilst there is an extensive body of literature that engages the different types of welfare states, there is not the space to discuss it here. Although the different approaches to welfare translate into different outcomes, that is narrower concern than the overall question of the thesis, which is centred upon the overall conception of democracy, rather than in differentiating between outcomes associated with sub-types of democracy – however, this may be an area where the development of new measures of democracy which integrate capabilities can enable further research.

The measure of income will be included in the BDI by evaluating the ratio of the bottom quintile to the national average income. This measure helps to identify the degree to which the bottom quintile is disadvantaged relative to the average citizen, and is a guide towards the problem of economic inequality which might impact the political process.

Jobs

Closely tied to the notion of income and employment, the indicators for jobs represent strong markers of deprivation and potential deprivation. As a baseline indicator, the employment rate and long-term unemployment rate provide a relatively straightforward measure of how engaged in the labour market individuals are. When combined they enable an analysis that can highlight the problem of persistent unemployment, as well as the degree to which employment might be of a short-term nature within the economy. This is a valuable statistic to consider because it taps into the different employment experience of ordinary citizens and
those with lower opportunities for stable high quality employment. Furthermore, it taps into a dimension where there have been substantive issues in the contemporary democratic experience in multiple countries (particularly in Greece, Spain, and South Africa – see Figure 6.4). In each of the three examples highlighted, there is dissatisfaction with the economic circumstances which a large number of individuals possess. In Greece, this has had important implications for the functioning of government, with national referenda associated with the related economic crisis and how it should be dealt with (Papadopoulos 2016).

Across the two different indicators it can be seen that there are substantial differences across the countries listed (see Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5). Whilst differences can be seen in the employment data, it is important to supplement these statistics, as there are potential distortions which can occur relating to factors like underemployment or non-participation in the labour market because of giving up on finding a job – which the inclusion of measures of job insecurity partially helps to identify. The indicator for job insecurity evaluates:

“the expected earnings loss, measured as the percentage of the previous earnings, associated with unemployment. This loss depends on the risk of becoming unemployed, the expected duration of unemployment and the degree of mitigation against these losses provided by government transfers to the unemployed (effective insurance)” (OECD 2016, p.3).

Although the measure imperfectly taps into job insecurity – through an evaluation of income lost – it still captures some worthwhile information that can help understand the impact of job loss, and associated concerns about this phenomena. Furthermore, identifying increasing instances of underemployment or labour market insecurity are also informative about potential deprivation, as they capture the importance of how damaging constant anxiety about losing one's job can be (Vulkan 2012). In the context of understanding deprivations individuals are likely to experience, existing research also shows the impact of job insecurity on generating lower health and mental well-being outcomes (Mcgann, Moss & White 2012; Rugulies et al. 2008). As such, the measure of job insecurity is an important marker of how individuals are experiencing their job, and in turn, it taps into an important area associated with how they may participate in their community.
Figure 6.4 National Long-Term Unemployment Rate

Figure 6.5 National Employment Rate

The category of jobs is included in the measure through the evaluation of the employment rate, the long-term unemployment rate, and the measurement of job insecurity. The three measures taken together give a summary of the job market which helps to identify circumstances where the employment sector is precarious, and in turn might detrimentally impact the degree to which citizens are in a position to engage properly in their community. Although employment does not explicitly connect to the political process, the experience of Greece highlights that the political implications for the sustainability of democracy may be dire in circumstances of severe unemployment and underemployment (Armingeon & Guthmann 2014).

**Education**

The category of education taps into an important dimension of potential deprivation. Measuring the percentage of individuals holding different levels of education provides a good account of the distribution of potential job opportunities, as it highlights those who are at risk of deprivation when low-skilled job opportunities are poor. In conjunction with the above data that highlights the differing quality of work available to those with lower levels of education, this identifies how many individuals are in those circumstances. This is because it readily identifies the number of individuals who might be relatively unskilled compared to the rest of their society.

The distribution of education is an important phenomenon to consider because of the increasingly important role it plays in shaping the quality of job opportunities available to individuals. Moreover, research on political participation and political engagement demonstrates that education plays an important role in equipping citizens with the skills to engage in the political process (Hillygus 2005; Scervini & Segatti 2012).

As can be seen in Figure 6.6, there is substantial variation across the percentage of students who have completed secondary school. Where there are substantial issues associated with an unequal distribution of education in society, we can expect that it may negatively impact the potential for political engagement by those at the bottom end of the distribution. Consequently, it is worth identifying the education gap in terms of the quality of education, as well as the level of education which individuals hold. Figure 6.7 illustrates the education gap in each
country, with the gap between the average PISA scores achieved by students from the lowest income quintile, and the national average.

Figure 6.6 Percentage of Individuals with Secondary Level Education

Figure 6.7 Education Gap Between Lowest Income Quintile and Average Income

Education is included in the BDI through the measurement of the percentage of citizens who have completed an upper-secondary level of education, and through an evaluation of the education gap in PISA scores for the bottom quintile and the average citizen. The first indicator, the rate of upper-secondary level of education, taps into the broader inequality of education within a given society. The second indicator, which evaluates the education gap, helps to evaluate the inequality in quality of education which exists between poor and average members of a society.

Health

The category of health represents one which is commonly employed to demonstrate substantive differences which accrue from unequal societies. It is also one which is commonly employed in the critiques presented using the capability approach (Burchardt & Vizard 2014; Callander, Schofield & Shrestha 2012). As a commonly desired good, it is easy to identify instances where individuals experience deprivation, because all things being equal people desire being healthy. The subjective health indicator evaluates the rate that individuals report that they have “good” or “very good” health. There are limits to this measure though as there are potential reporting issues – with the OECD noting that there are likely cultural influences which shape the responses in different countries. With the particularly low score of Japan being a notable example.

However, if we focus on the ratio between the lowest income quintile and the national average in reported health outcomes, some of these cultural differences can be mitigated, as the cultural influences are less likely to be specific to only one part of the income bracket. The health outcome ratio in Figure 6.9 reveals that there are some substantial differences across the countries included. If we accept that health is likely to influence the potential to engage in the political process, it is evident that there are some substantive problems with the level of difference in some of the countries presented. Taking the ratios present, we can see that the difference is observed across one in fifty individuals for Australia and New Zealand, whereas it is a difference of one in five in Japan, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Germany. Whilst there are some issues associated with the overall accuracy of the ratios (as some countries achieve higher outcomes for the bottom quintile than the average citizen), it is nonetheless clear that there are differences across the countries, which
can be used for comparative purposes, provided they are supplemented with other data like the data used in Campbell’s measure, which tracks objective societal achievements. This can be done if the distribution is combined with the overall achievement so as to pay regard to the health achievements of the society as a whole. Whilst citizens may be relatively disadvantaged, it is still worth paying attention to the absolute health achievements they experience. This helps to ensure that countries which have an experience of low quality health generally do not score higher than countries which have relatively high standard, which also have some inequality in health outcomes. For example, the health outcomes of South Africa are more equal than those achieved in Switzerland, yet, as can be seen in Figure 6.10 the life expectancy is much lower, a reflection of the various serious health issues which the country continues to face (Mooney & McIntyre 2008).
Figure 6.8 Self-Reported Health Gap Between Bottom Income Quintile and Average Individual

Figure 6.9 Self-Reported Health Ratio

Figure 6.10 National Average Life Expectancy

The BDI includes two distinct indicators for the measurement of the category of health. The measure uses a comparative indicator of the equality in self-reported health status, to evaluate difference in health outcome across the various countries included. The BDI also incorporates an evaluation of the average life expectancy of each country to ensure that the overall health achievements of the society are also included in the analysis.

6.2.4 Measures in the BLI Which are Not Included in the New Measure of Democracy

Housing

Housing is a core requisite for living and functioning in a society. However, as a measure that evaluates the degree to which citizens are capable of interacting in the democratic political process (especially in advanced post-industrial societies), it is hard to evaluate the nature of limitation using the indicators within the BLI. The measure which most closely taps into the nature of relative deprivation which is included in the BLI (in a way that might reflect instances of citizens being limited in their capacity to engage in the political process), is the measure of dwellings which are without basic facilities. However, the measure is substantially limited with the degree to which it can capture meaningful differences across different countries that are advanced democracies – the highest level of deprivation amongst countries which are currently scored is one percent of dwellings in Australia, which leaves little scope for evaluation across the different countries. Moreover, most of that score for Australia is likely attributable to rurality and the challenge associated with connecting these facilities to functioning amenities, rather than because of explicit instances of inability to build dwellings that can adequately support individuals. For this reason, the most practical solution is to exclude the category of housing as currently measured in the BLI, although future research could potentially expand evaluation as access to more nuanced indicators is developed.

Work-Life Balance

Related to the economic indicators of income and the quality of jobs is the notion of work-life balance. Research on the work-life balance changes over time suggests that there is a problem of rising overwork which is having a negative impact on the lives of ordinary people (Hunnicutt 2013). As identified in the work
of Nussbaum (2011b) and others in the capability approach (Rippin 2015; Muffels & Headey 2013), it is important that individuals are able to enjoy leisure time and engage in recreational activities outside of their work. As work hours increase, the spaces where individuals are able to express themselves becomes restricted and can rob them of the joys of living. There is also the potential to experience isolation if individuals working hours are too high, as they can lack the time to socialise, and maintain quality relationships (Hunnicutt 2013). Despite this, the precise way to integrate this dimension into measurement requires further exploration, as there are a range of questions associated with how it should be weighted – especially with regards to how differences should be evaluated across societies. Moreover, there is a question as to how much space work-life balance would occupy in the analysis if it was included into measurement. In lieu of including a partially controversial measure with a negligible impact (by underweighting it in the aggregation procedure), work-life balance has been left to potential inclusion in the future.

Quality of Support Network

The indicator of the quality of support network is tied to the idea that having close connections with others people who we can depend on when we are in need is valuable, and the maintenance of these relationships is important to preserving mental well-being, and in turn well-being more generally. The indicator measures the percentage of respondents who believe they have someone who they could depend on if they were in trouble. Despite the importance that having a support network holds for individuals in day-to-day living, there are again questions as to how to incorporate it into the overall evaluation of the ability of individuals to engage in the political process. Whilst it does represent a degree of embeddedness in the community, it does so from the perspective of interpersonal relationships, rather than from explicit community engagement. It is hard to grasp precisely how this indicator, as currently measured, fits into evaluating democracy from a theoretical perspective.

Environment

The category of environment may become an increasingly important one in the coming years. Already an important issue in newly industrialised countries like China where air quality is highly degraded in many urban areas, the consequences
of climate change may be degrading environmental quality in many other societies. As a basic requirement to being able to live a long and healthy life, it is important that the quality of the environment is tracked (Brezzi & Sanchez-serra 2014). The importance of the environment which individuals can live in is also an important theoretical insight, with a number of authors employing the capabilities approach to argue this (Ballet, Koffi & Pelenc 2013; Lessmann & Rauschnayer 2013; Pelenc et al. 2013). Despite this, there is little meaningful difference which can be observed using the existing measures in the BLI in a way that connects to individuals, with the metrics present being access to clean water (where there is not meaningful difference), and air pollution, which is not an individually oriented measure (it measures CO₂ emissions for the country). Whilst this category speaks to core concerns of the capability approach, it does so through a rubric outside of the individual, and as the BDI is primarily a measure evaluating the various individual citizen capabilities, it falls outside of the paradigm of the measure.

Relative Safety

The relative safety which individuals feel within their society has important implications for who feels like they are able to go out into the community. This is something which can impact the capacity for individuals to engage in the political process. However, this notion is already captured to a large extent through the evaluation of the legislative freedom individuals enjoy. One of the core decision rules for indicator selection proposed by Munck and Verkuilen is to avoid multiple measures of the same concept, and hence whilst relative safety a valuable category at the broader conceptual, the indicator is excluded because of the conceptual closeness it shares with the non-interference indicators which are already included – to include it would overemphasise this characteristic in the evaluation.

Life Satisfaction

Determining the space that life satisfaction should occupy within measurement of democracy is a complex decision. Whilst it is important to identify the members of society who possess deeply held grievances about their lives, life satisfaction is a highly subjective measure. In much the same way that self-reported health status is potentially influenced by cultural norms, life satisfaction is subject to social conditioning. Furthermore, in much the same way that adaptive
preferences can impact the way that individuals value the options available to them, we can expect that they are likely to come to value the life which they live, regardless of the circumstances they are in. In part because of this there is a strong scepticism about how much insight life satisfaction indicators can provide from those within the capability approach (Robeyns 2003, p.63; Anand, Hunter & Smith 2005, p.18; Anand et al. 2009). The theoretical basis can be tied back to the adaptive preferences dimension of the notion of agency which is developed through the approach. In that sense, we should be cautious about being overly invested in the level of life satisfaction which individuals report when evaluating their capacity to interact with the political process.

In conjunction with these theoretical issues, there are reasons which can be tied to the available data that also suggest that we should be cautious about including it as an indicator. The first reason is that there is only data available for the national average level of life satisfaction, with almost half of the countries not having available data which can be broken up by those experiencing deprivation. Moreover, unlike self-reported health status, there are not complimentary measures which can be used to supplement the evaluation, and so the life satisfaction which individuals report cannot be tied to any other rubric as a support for the measurement provided. As such, it makes it hard to justify the inclusion of evaluating life satisfaction. Hence life satisfaction has not been included in the BDI.

6.3 Conceptualisation, Aggregation, Weighting, and Indicator Selection for the Better Democracy Index (BDI)

This section outlines the various conceptualisation, aggregation, weighting, and indicator selection decisions which altogether enable the various dimensions of potential deprivation to be evaluated effectively in a transparent manner. As can be surmised from the nature of the indicators used in the BDI which have been selected from the various BLI measures, the BDI is primarily a measure which evaluates the inequality of the achievement of various capabilities in a democracy. This emphasis on the inequality of capability distributions, refers back to the definition of

22 Although we should disregard this to the extent that individuals are living in extreme conditions, for example, we would generally expect that individuals being tortured would not find this a valuable experience.
democracy stated at the end of Chapter Two, and helps to identify instances where the relative capabilities of citizens may inhibit their capacity to engage in the political process. Even if the measures don’t capture explicit poverty or deprivation, they still identify instances where there is substantial relative deprivation. In the absence of setting absolute minimal standards for each category involved in evaluation, this represents an effective way to engage with the relative capabilities which individuals have to engage in their democracy. This has been avoided because setting minimal absolute standards is a deeply complex undertaking, and one which would be highly controversial. Conversely, it is somewhat straightforward in identifying relative deprivation, and in that sense, doing so is less controversial.

The definition of democracy used for the new measure is taken from the theoretical discussion presented in Chapter Two. Referring back to the definition of democracy outlined in Chapter Two, democracy requires:

(1) *Elected Officials*.

(2) *Free, fair and frequent elections*.

(3) *Freedom of expression*.

(4) *Access to alternative sources of information*.

(5) *Associational autonomy*.

(6) *Inclusive citizenship*.

(7) *Equality of opportunity to live well in the polity and participate in the political process*.

**Figure 6.11 Better Democracy Index Conceptual Relationship**

As Figure 6.11 demonstrates, democratic quality is found in the combination of the institutional structure, and the citizen capacity to engage in the political
process. The two main conceptual categories of political institutions and the citizen capability distribution are given equal weighting, following on from the conceptual outline provided by Campbell. This is based upon the view that citizens and institutions are mutually reinforcing in the democratic process. A system cannot remain democratic where either component is undermined, and thus as a starting point it makes sense to commence with equal weighting granted to each category. Moreover, this coheres with the standard approach advised by Munck and Verkuilen to treat categories as equal unless there is a strong basis for weighting them unequally. A secondary reason for using an additive scale rather than a multiplicative one is to avoid compounding any issues associated with the calibration of the measure. As will be discussed in the next chapter, there are some problems associated with the way in which the measure is calculated which means that it is worthwhile restricting the interaction it has with the other side of the measure.

The indicators employed in the capabilities category of evaluation are each of the indicators listed above in the discussion of the BLI (which are restated below). The category of political institutions, which is responsible for half of the score awarded, is evaluated using the two separate dimensions of the Freedom House Freedom in the World score. Within the category of political institutions, one subcategory is evaluated using the measure of political rights, and the other is evaluated using the measure of civil liberties. The scores awarded in these categories are calculated as a proportion of the maximum possible score available, which is out of forty for political rights, and then out of sixty for civil liberties. Since each score is a proportion of the maximum score, each value ranges between 0 to 1.

Providing a category of political rights and civil liberties ensures that countries which perform well on the various capability deprivation measures are still punished for lacking a democratic institutional framework. This is important, as it ensures that the capacity for these individuals to engage in their political process is not overstated.

Because the various indicators included in the evaluation of capabilities subcategories are based upon different scales, they need to be normalised for
inclusion into the overall measure. The normalisation procedure chosen is the min-max method outlined in the ‘OECD Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators’ (OECD 2008, p.85). The basis for this decision can be found in the type of data provided, and existing research which comments on these categories in the various countries included in the measure.

Each of the capability indicators included are normalised using the following formula:

\[ l_{qc} = \frac{x_{qc} - \min_c(x_q)}{\max_c(x_q) - \min_c(x_q)} \]

Where \( l \) is the score for a specific indicator \( q \), and \( x \) is the given score for country \( c \). That is, each indicator expresses the country score, minus the minimum country score for that specific indicator, which is then divided by the maximum country score for the indicator minus the minimum country score for the indicator. This gives each score a value in between 0 and 1. The scores awarded for each indicator are then combined together using the aggregation procedure outlined in Table 6.4 to calculate the overall capabilities achievement score for each country.

For measures which are negatively oriented (the Unemployment rate, and Job Insecurity), the indicator is first converted into a positive direction by subtracting the value from 100 (since both negative measures are percentages). Indicators are then normalised over the range from 0 to 1, so that each country is scored based on the position which they occupy within the distribution of all countries.

For each category, there is at least one country included in the analysis which is experiencing problems associated with the distribution of the particular indicator in question. In each of these cases, the minimal value for a country achieved represents a level of achievement which could potentially undermine the capacity for an individual to interact in the political process (see below and Chapter Seven). Hence, it is sufficient to treat this as a floor level, with the maximal value reflecting an appropriate ceiling – whilst higher levels of achievement might be possible, it is important to keep these levels as close to the experience of real world democracies
as possible. This is because if the measurement standard is set too high, then the measure will be incapable of differentiating between any cases since they will all have the same, or very similar scores.

For each different category, there is literature which supports the treatment of the bottom scoring countries as achieving a problematic score. For the category of jobs, Greece represents a country which has experienced great strain on the democratic process based upon economic hardship caused by the recent financial crisis (Cordero & Simón 2016). The continued experience of long-term unemployment and a struggling labour market threatens support for democracy more generally in Greece, and it is plausible to think that it is doing so in a way that may undermine the continued functioning of democracy. As elaborated upon in the next chapter, the United States currently faces issues associated with the problem of substantial income inequality (Stepan & Linz 2011), which may be impacting the political process and the engagement of democratic citizens (Solt 2010). There are substantial issues associated with inequality of access to a quality education in South Africa (Ndimande 2016), as well as issues associated with health outcomes (Mooney & Mcintyre 2008). This is discussed in more depth in the next chapter when evaluating the measures differences with other existing measures.
### Table 6.4 Better Democracy Index Indicators with Aggregation and Weighting Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Democracy Measured</th>
<th>Political Institutions (50%)</th>
<th>Citizenship Capability Distribution (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subcategory (&amp; weighting %)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Dimension</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Jobs 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators (&amp; weighting %)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Income 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political rights: Freedom House</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Education 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Health 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Employment Rate</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Insecurity</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory &amp;weighting %</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Dimension</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as proportion of maximum</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>score</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Insecurity</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The measures for Long-term Unemployment Rate, and Job Insecurity have been reversed, as they represent a negative rather than positive indicator, i.e. a lower unemployment rate is better.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Electoral Processes</th>
<th>Political Pluralism and Participation</th>
<th>Functioning of Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight (out of 40)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Freedom of Expression and Belief</th>
<th>Associational and Organisational Rights</th>
<th>Rule of Law</th>
<th>Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight (out of 60)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of the subcategories included in the measurement of the citizenry capability distribution has been given equal weighting. This decision reflects the fact that there is no clear basis for weighting any as more valuable than another. This reflects the standard approach to measurement construction.

The indicators within each subcategory have been given equal weighting except for the indicator of job insecurity within the subcategory of jobs. Job insecurity was given reduced weighting because it is included as a way to supplement the other two measures included, and because there are some limitations with the metric itself. The indicator was weighted as half as valuable as the other two measures, because it is generally less important than the other two measures which are included in the analysis. These other two measures capture more generally the relationship between individuals and job opportunities in the given democracy, whereas the indicator for job insecurity captures specifically the experience of individuals who have lost their employment. It is important to still include though, as it helps to include the safety-net which exists in each society for those who do lose their job.

Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 outline the weighting procedure for the two different Freedom House categories which are used to form the institutional dimension of the BDI. These tables are there to demonstrate the base concepts involved, although as stated, this side of the measure is separate to the other dimension, which represents the core contribution of the thesis. For a comprehensive breakdown of each of the definitional elements of each indicator involved, refer to the Freedom House Methodology (2014).

6.4 How the New Measure Relates to the Theoretical Critiques Present in the Capability Approach

If, as the last chapter highlighted, the capability approach is primarily a theoretical framework for understanding poverty, should it be involved in evaluating democracy? The key contention of this thesis is that it should be, since poverty represents a unique challenge to democratic legitimacy. Specifically, poverty or capability deprivation can substantively impact the way in which democratic citizens can interact with and engage in the political process, and as
such, widespread poverty and capability deprivation represent a space where democratic quality can be inhibited. Recent work emphasising the distinction between measuring democratic quality and simply using measures of democracy as a mode of regime classification has enabled a more thorough engagement with these kinds of problems, because it enables a wider engagement with the concept democracy. The new measure, the BDI, focuses primarily on the distributions of the various capabilities being evaluated because that is the essential component in the argument being made about using an expanded definition of freedom. In each case, it is plausible to hold that those falling into the position in question experience deprivation relative to the rest of their society, in a way that can potentially inhibit their participation in the political process.

The new measure can be contrasted with Campbell’s measure in some important respects. Campbell’s measure is one which aims to incorporate the various theoretical critiques which are raised by the capability approach, that more obviously critique existing evaluative paradigms. Hence, as mentioned above, Campbell’s measure includes explicit categories focusing upon gender inequality and environmental outputs. These categories are largely absent in existing measurement, and thus represent a measure which is more normatively oriented than previous attempts, and one which is informed by the capability approach.

Conversely, the theoretical aspects of the capability approach present in the measure developed within this chapter are subtler in how they include the capability approach. The most obvious way in which the capability approach is included in the new measure is the employment of the definition of freedom as capability which arises from the capability approach. The indicators selected implicitly combine this theoretical insight with the notion of adaptive preferences to consider how individuals can be plausibly put off from the political process. The point here is to move away from evaluations centred upon satisfaction with the political process, and to minimise the degree to which exclusion must explicitly be occurring in order to be rendered a problem for democracy. This is an important departure from previous measurement because it much more explicitly includes the individual citizen – one of the key theoretical insights mentioned in the last chapter.
The other real aspect of difference between the two measures is how extensively individuals are incorporated into evaluation. The new BDI indicators in the society category are all measures of (potential) deprivation for individuals within a society, and specifically employ distributional metrics, rather than overall societal measures. In this way thresholds of potential deprivation are more easily observable, as opposed to determining deprivation from something like GDP, which is included into Campbell’s measure. This difference can be seen to take seriously the theoretical insight that it is important to include the relationship between the individuals in a society and the development which that society has achieved.

In comparing the two measures, it is evident that each engage the capability approach in different ways. Campbell’s measure emphasises the normative outputs of the approach, that is, the measurement categories included emphasise the critiques which the approach has developed. The new BDI measure is instead informed more by the evaluative insights which the capability approach has raised. The emphasis on the evaluation of the freedom as capability which individuals hold is at least partially divorced from the normative evaluation of such an evaluation. These two different approaches highlight the degree to which the capability approach has a high degree of insight to provide more generally in understanding the practice of democracy.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the conceptual framework for a new measure of democracy, the Better Democracy Index. It was developed in part following on from the only measure of democracy which currently employs the capability approach, David Campbell’s democracy ranking index. The previous section outlined how these two different measures are quite distinct in the aspects of the capability approach which they employ in their theoretical framework. As such, they can be clearly taken to focus on very different elements of the capability approach. The new measure was constructed using the various data made available through the BLI project, and the various categories within the BLI were considered in the context of how they fit into the new measure being constructed, and the measurement of democracy more generally.
The new measure will be compared to two popular existing measures of democracy, the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, and the Polity IV regime classification measure in the next chapter. The next chapter will outline the outputs in the context of the problem of economic inequality which is currently a popular topic in democratic scholarship, to highlight how the new measure may be more sensitive to some problems which are receiving increasing attention within democratic scholarship. In doing so, Chapter Seven will highlight how employing the definition of freedom as capability as a component of democratic assessment can improve our understanding of the status of democracy in the world. Thus, the next chapter will show that there is an empirical justification for expanding our framework of democratic assessment, as well as the theoretical justification which was outlined earlier in the thesis.
Chapter 7: How Does a Capability Inclusive Measure Compare with Other Measures of Democracy?

The argument underpinning this thesis is that as a theoretical issue, widespread citizen capability deprivation represents a serious problem for the health of a democracy. In much the same way that limited opportunities available to individuals can shape the kinds of options available to them, relatively low capabilities may shape how they are able to engage in the political process. To help ensure the political equality of the polity, and to help ensure the legitimacy of the democracy in question, citizens need to be able to effectively participate in the political process. If there are substantial levels of inequality, across a variety of capability domains, then this may limit the degree to which individuals are willing or able to engage in the political process. This chapter will help demonstrate how this theoretical and empirical argument is connected to democracy in practice, by showing the variation in the evaluation of the quality of democracy which occurs when using a measure that includes a capability measure.

The first part of the chapter explains the type of variations which the Better Democracy Index is able to capture. It explains how the measure is primarily one which identifies inequalities in the societies in the evaluation. The ways that these inequalities reflect meaningful information about the freedom possessed by individuals within the countries evaluated is explained. This explanation is then used to justify the claim that the BDI is a measure that is much more sensitive to the experience of individuals than the measures of democracy which were discussed in Chapter Four. The way that these inequalities in freedom can translate into functional pressures on a democracy is in turn considered to highlight why the BDI provides meaningful insight that differs from other measures of democracy. The next section lays out some hypotheses about the outputs from the BDI in comparison to two other measures of democracy, the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, and the Polity IV Democracy Measure. This section explains how the BDI captures a difference reflected in the welfare state literature, which the other measures of don’t. The choice to use the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, and the Polity IV Democracy Measure – because of their different theoretical approaches to democracy – is explained in more depth in this section.
This sets the background to the insights which the new measure can provide. The chapter then outlines the contrasting outputs from the Better Democracy Index presented in the previous chapter with the two other measures of democracy. The outputs are used to show how an analysis of the quality of democracy in the world can be improved by incorporating metrics which evaluate capability inequalities for citizens in a given democracy. The comparison presented is across two domains – how do the measures compare overall, and how do they compare for specific countries.

The overall comparison is based upon how the measures reflect each other. If they are highly reflective of each other, this would suggest that whilst there is a theoretical basis for constructing a new measure of democracy, the empirical utility of such a measure is somewhat limited. The overall comparison demonstrates that this is not the case, and that there are differences in the inequality in the democracies which are included in the analysis. The suggests that there is a strong empirical basis for a claim that the new measure is capturing something which is distinct from other measures of democracy.

The outputs from the new measure are discussed in the context of contemporary scholarship on democracy in specific countries. For each country which receives a lower score on the new measure, when compared to the other two measures, the way that the observed difference relates to scholarly literature on the countries is discussed. This demonstrates that the inequalities which are identified by the new measure are those which reflect scholarly concerns. In turn, this is used to suggest that the insights provided the new measure have theoretical validity, and that the output generated has utility for evaluating inequality that might be problematic for established democracies. The way that these outputs contrast with the outputs of the other two measures is discussed, this highlights that the measures are sensitive to different theoretical concerns.

Returning to the list of propositions outlined in the introduction, this chapter addresses the fifth proposition, that when freedom as capability is used to measure freedom as a component of democracy, then there is a substantively different picture regarding the quality of democracy in the world. This is demonstrated by the
differences which are identified between the BDI, and the two other measures discussed through the chapter.

### 7.1 What the Better Democracy Index Measures, and Why It Matters

The BDI measures two distinct aspects of democracy, which are important to understanding the quality of democracy in a given country. The first aspect is the democraticness of the institutional framework which a country holds. This is a standard approach in the measurement of democracy. As Chapter Four made evident, the institutional framework of a country is the central component currently included when measuring democracy. In essence, this dimension relates to the evaluation of constraints on government, as well as the way in which power is transferred in a society. As Chapter Two discussed, these are essential features of democracy regardless of how expansive a definition of democracy is.

The second dimension of democracy which is included in the measure is the distribution of the capabilities of individuals across the domains of income, jobs, education, and health. The evaluation of these capabilities captures important inequalities which exist in established democracies. These inequalities represent a type of potential constraint upon individual action which fits into the MacCallum triadic model of freedom. If we think about that model as a rubric for evaluating the freedom as capability which individuals have (such that agents x face constraints y on actions z), then we can start to think of distributional inequalities as a type of constraints (y), on citizens participating or engaging in the political process (z).

The identification of political and economic inequality as problem for democracy is hardly novel, with political equality, and inequality more generally, being a topic which is treated as significant from a variety of democratic theorists. For example, political and economic inequality became an increasingly central issue.

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23 This is hardly the only dimension of inequality which is of importance to a democracy. There can be inequality between racial or ethnic groups. There can be serious problems of inequality between genders. As the broader literature from the capability approach makes clear, these are deeply important kinds of inequality. Presently though, this kind of inequality remains difficult to differentiate – and it is not possible to do so using the data from the BLI. Moreover, from a theoretical perspective, there is not the space within this thesis to fully explore how these inequalities might best be included as a component of analysis. However, a more developed future variant of the BDI might incorporate these kinds of inequalities into the analysis provided.
in the work of Robert Dahl\textsuperscript{24}, as he strived to understand the kinds of issues which were impacting American democracy in recent decades. If we return to the central position his work occupies in the theoretical construction of measurement of democracy, it becomes increasingly clear just how relevant his concern about this issue is for the thesis. This section explains how the inequalities captured by the BDI can be understood to capture an important aspect of democratic quality, and not just an expanded definition of freedom than other measures of democracy.

It is important to acknowledge that the claim that the BDI measures individual experience is one which is contestable. For example, it could be argued that the measures included in the BDI are aggregate in nature, and combined in a way that reduces much of the complexity available about the experience of individuals. Against that argument, it can be contended that the distributional inequalities which individuals experience are an important facet of their lived existence. We don’t need to know which specific individuals hold a degree of relative deprivation to appreciate that those who are relatively deprived might experience their society in a different way than their fellow citizens. Moreover, we don’t need to know the capabilities of all citizens to be able to identify those who exist below a certain threshold of relative disadvantage in their society. Thus, the primary way that individuals are included is to identify how individuals at the bottom end of the polity are situated relative to average citizens. Although modern economics and political rhetoric identifies inequality as a societal phenomenon, which can be a problem at the societal level, it is a phenomenon which is experienced by individuals. Moreover, the way in which individuals towards the bottom of the distribution can experience inequality, as relative capability deprivation, can have implications for how they can function in their society. It can also shape how they perceive their position in their society. Considering the notion of adaptive preferences which is an important component of the capability approach, the combination of these two things can be seen to influence both capacity to engage with the political process, but also desire to. If we are concerned not just with the degree to which individuals are actively prevented from participating in their democracy, but also with the kinds of things that exist as plausible constraints on

\textsuperscript{24} Dahl’s final work was ‘On Political Equality’ with an emphasis on rising economic and political inequality in the United States.
political engagement, then it becomes clearer why we should be concerned about this.

The inequality evaluated by the BDI is across economic, health, and educational domains. Each form of inequality is different in the way that it might shape the opportunities available to individuals, and in turn, they differ in the type of constraints which they might place upon individuals. However, the interrelationship which can occur between each type of inequality means that any one domain has the potential to influence the others – a central component of why multidimensional poverty is such a prominent issue for advocates of the capability approach. For example, experiencing relatively low levels of health can translate into limited employment opportunities available to individuals, as they become unable to work. Conversely, a lack of employment opportunities, or a relative lack of income, can translate into poor health outcomes for individuals, if they fall ill and cannot afford adequate healthcare. Whilst each type of inequality is important, it is plausible to think that the potential for economic inequality to more readily translate into other inequalities makes it a more pressing issue to identify and discuss.

There are a variety of causal explanations given for the negative effect of inequality on political equality (especially economic forms of inequality), but one which is widely cited is the rational choice model presented by Goodin and Dryzek (1980). Their model proposes that individuals shape their political engagement in part based upon their relative ability to have an impact politically. Poorer individuals might regard themselves as possessing much lower relative capacity than other members of their society to influence the political process, and so choose not to engage in the political process. Conversely, wealthier citizens are able to amplify their voice on a given issue, and thus are more likely to see the fruits of their engagement in the political process (Bartels 2009; Gilens 2005; Page, Bartels & Seawright 2013). Consequently, it is argued that “citizens might be right in thinking that some people exercise much more influence than others and that those others should, quite rationally, regard political participation as a waste of time” (Goodin & Dryzek 1980, p.274). In this way, the nature of the inequality which is present is also of significance, since more extreme disparities in the potential to influence the
The political process will likely translate into different evaluations by those on the lower end of the distribution, and in turn decrease the willingness to participate. In more equal societies, individuals might be more likely to participate even though they possess less wealth in their relative context, because they are close enough to the rest of their society that they view themselves as able to influence the political process in a meaningful way.

The rational choice model is coherent with the logic of adaptive preferences which underpins the capability approach, and it can be further extrapolated to suggest that these same individuals might also actively devalue the very idea of participating politically. The logic present in this view is that if someone cannot plausibly see themselves as being able to engage effectively in the political process, then they should treat this as an activity that is not worth undertaking. If individuals are incentivised to value the options which they hold, and devalue the options which they cannot see themselves as plausibly being able to pursue, then it follows that they should treat the political process as problematic in some way. One way that they might come to view the process as problematic is the very reason which they see themselves as not willing to engage in it – that is, it is structured in a way that is unfavourable to them. In turn, they may come to devalue democracy as a political system. Irrespective of whether or not these citizens remain represented in their political system, if there are factors driving them to become politically disengaged, then these factors are worthy of attention.

If we think about this kind of effect as the potential for inequality to act as a form of functional pressure on a democracy, then inequality can be understood as being problematic for the quality of a democracy. Inequality can act as a functional pressure in the sense that as inequality increases, such that there are sufficiently large number of individuals who are in a position where we might expect them to disengage, then the functioning of the polity as a democracy can come under threat. The relative lack of a particular thing (whether it is education or income, or another type of important resource), may be such that it becomes a type of constraint on individuals engaging.

There is a potential for each of the subcategories of inequality which are measured in the BDI to generate this effect. Substantial inequalities in income may
translate into individuals viewing themselves as incapable of competing in the political sphere with those who are more well off. In societies where there are substantial inequalities in employment opportunities, it is plausible to see those with poor opportunities becoming disaffected and becoming politically (and socially) disengaged. Popular recent works have suggested that this kind of effect is happening in the United States (Vance 2016; Putnam 2015). Inequalities in the health outcomes of citizens can equally constrain individuals from engaging in the political process, through the kinds of activities which they can undertake. Educational inequalities can also translate into a lack of social mobility for those at the bottom of the educational distribution (Jerrim & Macmillan 2015; Rauh 2017).

There is an increasing body of literature which emphasises that issues of declining mobility may be arising in established democracies, especially in the context of the United States. Other measures of democracy are not sensitive to these kinds of issues, and do not treat them as potentially being an issue for individuals in societies which might be experiencing high levels of inequality. It is simply not within their theoretical scope to treat these kinds of inequalities as being problematic for democracy.

The number of individuals as a share of the population which this would need to happen to for the democraticness of a polity to be undermined is unclear, but the position of the bottom quintile represents a good starting point. A democracy should be concerned with having a population where one in five citizens are experiencing a substantially lower set of capabilities, as this can plausibly undermine political equality for that group. In thinking about electoral dynamics and the nature of competitive elections in most societies, it is plausible to hold that one fifth of the voting population represents a group sufficiently impactful as to potentially shape the outcome of who attains government, and what kinds of decisions they might make. Further argument about what number is the appropriate number to treat as the threshold which might be tolerable (ignoring normative concerns) would require more space than is available to discuss here, and so is set aside. It is important to note though that this is a concern which cannot be addressed through a measure which uses the definition of freedom as non-interference, since non-interference does not engage with questions of why individuals might act one way rather than another.
7.2 Choice of Measures and Expectations

Before presenting an analysis of the output which the BDI has, it is worthwhile outlining expectations about how the BDI will compare to the other measures included in the comparison, the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, and the Polity IV Democracy Measure. It is also worthwhile justifying the selection of the two other measures included in the comparison. Doing so provides insight into how the new measure can be useful in understanding differences across regimes around the world. It also demonstrates how the various insights of the measure can be considered as applicable across various bodies of literature associated with regime outputs, as well as literature associated with democratic decline. This section explains both in the context of literature associated with the welfare state, as this literature informs some of the expectations as well as the selection of the measures which are compared.

7.2.1 Choice of Measures

The choice of the different measures in the comparison is based upon the discussion of different theoretical approaches to democracy presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Four outlined how the first measure included in the analysis, the Polity IV Democracy Measure, is a measure which is best understood as reflective of a Schumpeterian minimalist conception of democracy. The basis of this measure is that we should only focus on the most basic elements of democracy in determining whether countries are democratic – that is, are basic rights protected, and can people vote? Societies where those two requirements are met are at the standard required for a full democracy.

The second measure included in the comparison is the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index. This index has been selected because it reflects a much more expansive account of democracy, in line with Dahl's approach to theorising democracy. Whilst the EIU measure doesn't explicitly define itself in relation to Dahl, Chapter Four highlighted the ways in which it was the most expansive of the measures that still aligned with the Dahlian democratic approach. Chapter Four highlighted that does not contain any metrics that explicitly evaluate constraints that aren't infractions on rights, but the wording of their coding
practices leaves this open to interpretation, such that it can be taken as notionally more expansive than some of the other Dahlian measures.

In contrast to other measures of democracy, the BDI presents an attempt to get at the very important phenomenon of rising inequality in established democracies in a way that is not limited to overall aggregate measures. Whilst there is some reduction of information associated with the experience of individuals, a sufficient level of information is retained to ensure that the measure is sensitive to citizens which we should be concerned about. By problematizing distributional inequalities at the bottom of the polity, the measure engages with a unique kind of constraint which individuals might face in engaging with the political process. In that sense, the measure evaluates individuals through the same logic that the capabilities approach applies to poverty measurement. It’s not asking which kind of constraints definitively prohibit political engagement, but rather, which kinds of constraints might seriously go towards pushing people away from the political process. In turn, this suggests that the measure is aiming to identify countries where there may be problems of inequality associated with those likely to experience relative deprivation in their society. The Conclusion considers ways in which the measurement might be further expanded to increase the degree to which we can identify problematic experiences of citizens associated with inequality.

7.2.2 Expectations About the Differences Between the Measures

Chapter Five highlighted the core insights which the capability approach provides. This chapter has restated the importance of the notion of adaptive preferences, since it demonstrates the importance of identifying individuals who experience substantive disadvantage in their society. One way that we can develop expectations about the differences we can expect to see from the BDI in comparison to the other two measures is to refer to literature that identifies different national approaches to inequality, especially in relation to the development of a social and economic safety-net. One body of literature which does this is the welfare state literature, which makes empirical and theoretical comparisons about approaches to public policy, particularly on advanced capitalist societies. Since a core motivation for the thesis is understanding the difference between established democratic
societies, it makes sense to use the welfare state literature as a foundation for developing our expectations about how various states might perform on the BDI.

The welfare state typology provides an interesting framework to use for considering the output of the BDI for multiple reasons. The first reason is that the welfare state literature considers different approaches to the welfare of citizens. Considering the fact that the capability approach is fundamentally a theory of welfare, then it is a particularly promising space to consider because it offers a bridge for thinking about the linkage between the state and the capabilities or opportunities available to individuals. The second reason that the welfare state literature provides an interesting framework is that it is a literature that has started comparing responses to the recent financial crisis in the context of differences across democracies (see for example: Kiess et al. 2017). This literature identifies differing degrees of welfare program retrenchment across societies based upon different approaches to welfare.

Within the literature on welfare states, there is a substantial amount which evaluates and compares different types of welfare states (see for example: Nolan & Olivera 2015; Chauvel & Schröder 2014; Prasad 2016; Kuitto 2016; Korpi & Palme 1998; Brady & Bostic 2015). Of particular note is Gösta Esping-Andersen’s (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism,* which has been hugely influential in the extensive discussion over different types of welfare states (van Kersbergen & Vis 2015; Deeming 2017). Esping-Andersen’s typology identifies three different kinds of welfare state: the liberal welfare state, the conservative welfare state, and the social democratic welfare state. Whilst debate exists over whether this typology is one which can adequately categorise all existing welfare regimes (Arts & Gelissen 2002); it is nonetheless one which is used extensively to consider the differences across welfare states today (van Kersbergen & Vis 2015). In Esping-Andersen’s typology, these different regime types vary across two important domains – the degree of market decommodification, and the kind of solidarity or social stratification which is present in the society. Decommodification refers to “the degree to which a service is rendered as a matter of right, and the degree to which a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market” (Arts & Gelissen 2002, p.141). Solidarity is the extent to which the protection offered is broad or
narrow, i.e. who can receive support. Taken together, the two areas are deeply relevant for understanding how societies address the gap between disadvantaged and ordinary members in their polity.

Liberal welfare regimes are regimes which offer less market protection to their citizens than other welfare regimes. This is because liberal welfare regimes “include low levels of decommodification and include high levels of market stratification” (Deeming 2017, p.405). Consequently, they tend to leave more space open to inequality. Whilst they may provide specific policy mechanisms for addressing these inequalities, liberal welfare regimes offer the most space for individuals to be disadvantaged.

Conservative welfare states offer moderate decommodification. In the conservative welfare regime, “the direct influence of the state is restricted to the provision of income maintenance benefits related to occupational status” (Arts & Gelissen 2002, p.142). For these states, only certain kinds of disadvantage might be taken to require addressing, and so conservative welfare states might perform poorly in some areas where disadvantage is not taken to be a concern.

Social democratic welfare regimes offer the highest degree of market protection for all their citizens. These regimes provide “a system of generous universal and highly distributive benefits not dependent on any individual contributions” (Arts & Gelissen 2002, p.142). This ensures that citizens are protected from the excesses of the market, and thus maximises the opportunity for individuals to act freely in their society.

We can compare the inequality across countries to identify countries where there are higher levels of inequality in the various categories included in the measure. As noted in the previous chapter and discussed further below, for each category there is at least one country which is experiencing issues related to inequality, which can be identified by the measure. Whilst more nuanced data would be required to precisely identify the relative level of deprivation which is experienced by individuals, there is sufficient information to be able to discriminate across cases of lower and higher levels of inequality which in turn impact citizens towards the bottom end of the distribution.
In hypothesising which types of regimes are likely to score lower on the BDI comparative to other measures of democracy, the expectation can be developed that it will be the liberal welfare states which offer the least accessible safety nets which are the most likely to encounter a lower score. This is in conjunction with the countries where the safety net is the lowest amount. The expectation is that citizens in these countries will face the largest gap between being in the bottom quintile, and being an average citizen. The next most likely to perform poorly would be the conservative states, where only some provisions are given, and where only certain things might qualify an individual for assistance. The expectation is that the social democratic welfare states will perform the best on the BDI.

It is also important to note that within the theoretical literature there is a high degree of variation between the liberal welfare regimes, compared to the social democrat welfare regimes. In line with this, my expectation is that there will be much more variation across the liberal states, with liberal states being the most likely to have a substantially lower score on the BDI, compared to the other two measures. The conservative welfare regimes will likely vary more than the social welfare regimes, but not as much as the liberal regimes.

A final issue is that there is variation within the welfare state literature as to which countries should be classified in which way (Deeming 2017). Rather than presenting a list with expectations for each country which would require an in-depth explanation of each countries classification, I will instead reserve specific comments to the countries which are given further analysis below. Moreover, some of the countries discussed below are not classified within the welfare state literature. Those countries are not directly discussed, as it would require more space than there is available to adequately explain the way that they have been discussed. Despite these limitations, the welfare state literature provides a good framework to understand the differences in understanding the quality of democracy which the BDI enables compared to the other measures.

7.3 Comparing the BDI to the EIU and Polity Measures of Democracy

This section presents a comparison of the BDI, the EIU democracy rank, and the Polity democracy score. There are two distinct ways in which this section will compare the measures which are evaluated. The first is to look at an overall
comparison, which looks at how the overall distribution of scores from the new BDI measure compares to the two other measures of democracy. This gives an overall sense of how the BDI measure differs from the EIU and Polity measures, and provides insight into what the various strengths and shortcomings of the measure might be. The second way in which the measures will be compared will be through a comparison of how the measure provides different evaluations of particular countries.

As the above outline signals, the core of the comparative discussion will be related to the problems of inequality amongst citizens being experienced in various established democracies currently. Specifically, the case of the United States will be considered in relation to the rising problems of inequality which are currently being experienced there. The United States receives specific attention based upon the way in which it’s score has been adjusted in the EIU measure on the last published round of the democracy score which they produce (the 2017 edition, which provides scores based upon 2016 evaluations). The new score resulted in the adjustment from the status of the United States as a Full Democracy, into the category of Flawed Democracy, although this ranking can be considered as marginal, as the United States is right on the cusp of still being a Full Democracy on the score provided. This decision is considered in depth below.

The basis for the other countries selected is the degree to which the BDI presents a different output to the other two measures of democracy considered. As the argument of the thesis is that employing a capability based dimension to the measure results in a potentially different evaluation of the quality of democracy in a country, it is important to discuss the countries where this does occur. These countries will be considered through the different evaluations of the quality of democracy which they receive, and how that evaluation relates to various literature evaluating some of the specific components of those societies. The countries included in the discussion is outlined below in relation to the measurement output, where the differences are visible.

7.3.1 Overall Comparisons of the BDI, EIU, and Polity Measure of Democracy

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the BDI scores, broken down to the level of the subcategory scores, with the table organised by the BDI score achieved. This sets
the background for the ensuing discussion and shows the breakdown of the output from the new measure. It’s important to be clear about which dimensions of the measure contribute to the score, and hence the disaggregated scores from the measure are presented. It’s important to think through which categories and subcategories are contributing differently to the overall score which a country has. This is important because it can help identify whether countries are varying in their institutional and capabilities scores, or whether the two are very closely related.

The highest overall BDI score received is by Iceland, with the score effectively the same as the score received by the EIU measure (9.51 as opposed to 9.50). This suggests that there is some congruence between the two measures, although it is worth noting that that highest score\textsuperscript{25} for the capabilities category is 0.90, which is achieved by Iceland. Considering the importance of the capabilities score to the overall argument of the thesis, it is worth considering the output of these scores. Of all the countries in the BDI, South Africa achieves the lowest score in the capabilities category (0.22). As will be discussed below, this is reflective of a range of issues associated with inequality which are experienced in South Africa currently. Considering the status of South Africa as a democracy based upon existing measures (EIU categorise them as a Flawed Democracy), this is noteworthy.

\textsuperscript{25} It needs to be acknowledged that this score may reflect challenges associated with achieving a maximum possible score, which may be potentially an issue if it demonstrates that the measure is too focused upon an ideal type of democracy. However, developing a better measurement instrument that could address this requires first acknowledging that this is a domain worth further exploring, and as such, represents a problem for in depth exploration in the future, rather than here.
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<th>Income Score</th>
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<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.42</td>
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</table>

243
From Table 7.1 it can be seen that Russia is the only country which receives a higher capabilities score than institutional score, although it also receives the minimum score out of all of the countries included. As noted in the previous chapter, Russia and Turkey are the only two countries included in the analysis which are listed as hybrid or authoritarian regimes based upon the EIU measure. Their inclusion helps to identify how the evaluation presented translates into less democratic countries, and gives a sense of how different the two countries are from the other countries included. It is important to include these countries into the analysis rather than only including democracies, since it can give a sense of the differences across regime type. With the growing body of literature considering competitive authoritarian states (see for example: Levitsky & Way 2002; Croke et al. 2016; Haggard & Kaufman 2016), it is worthwhile considering how the BDI might evaluate non-democratic regime types as well. This becomes especially clear when we consider the fact that the combined score for Turkey is above South Africa, which is generally regarded as either a Flawed or Full democracy, depending upon which measure is used.

We can think of the output of the measure in a comparative sense in two ways. The first way is to think about how the measure compares to the other two measures in a purely numerical sense – that is, how do the scores given to countries vary. The second way which we can compare the measures is to think about how they differ in their analysis in a relative sense – how do the relative position of countries change? Table 7.2 provides a simple summary of the score which each country receives from the BDI as well as the EIU measure and the Polity measure. Here we can see the basic format of a purely numerical comparison, as each score is lined up next to the other two measures. The relationship between the BDI and EIU measure is somewhat complicated, and a more thorough comparison is conducted below with Table 7.3. The differences between the BDI and Polity measure are more obvious. Whilst there are some questions associated with whether or not the measures can be regarded as fully equivalent, the differences across the measures are still worth discussing. As can be seen in Table 7.2, the Polity scores do not enable any real differentiation across the highest scoring countries. Of the 38 countries included, only 11 countries receive lower than the maximum score of 10.00, with
Iceland receiving no score from Polity. This reflects a challenge with respect to identifying within category difference in the Polity measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>BDI Score</th>
<th>EIU Score</th>
<th>Polity Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.11</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>8.74</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>9.01</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>9.15</td>
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<td>8.39</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<td>8.36</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>10.00</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
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<td>7.85</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>7.31</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<td>7.78</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil (non OECD)</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of identifying outliers in the numerical differences which they present, Belgium, Israel, and Turkey are the only countries which receive higher scores on the BDI than they receive from Polity. In the case of Belgium, the score improvement is as a consequence of the improved score received from the institutional category, rather than as a consequence of the capabilities dimensions – the institutional category has an overall score of 0.97, and the combined score from the capabilities dimension is 0.66, compared to an overall Polity score of 8.00. This suggests that whilst the institutional dimensions (as calculated through Freedom House’s measurement) are relatively strong in Belgium, the capabilities dimension does imply that there are some potential problems in Belgium. The same is true for Israel, which receives a capabilities scores of 0.68, which when converted onto a ten-point scale is below the Polity score of 7.00. The difference for Turkey is not attributable solely to the increased institutional score, as the capabilities score of 0.49 is above the 4.00 which Turkey receives from Polity. This difference suggests that the measure may treat non-democracies differently than the Polity measure does (although the score is roughly the same as the score EIU gives). This difference in the score awarded might need to be revisited if the measure is further developed.

Table 7.3 presents a comparison of the BDI and the EIU score changes, the country rank changes, and the various country classification changes which occur across the two measures. There are a variety of ways to compare the outputs of the BDI with the outputs of the other two measures. Of the 38 countries presented, 23 receive a lower score on the BDI than on the EIU measure. Considering the degree to which there might be minor fluctuations in the scores which countries receive, it is worth considering not just this absolute numerical change, but also whether there are differences in regime classification. As this reflects the designation which each country receives, which is often the key identifier that people look at when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>BDI 2016</th>
<th>EIU 2016</th>
<th>Polity 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

Note: Data for the BDI score and EIU score is from 2016. The most recent wave of data available for Polity IV measure is from 2015.

*Iceland does not receive a score from the Polity IV measure.*
comparing countries, this is a reasonable space to begin with. As mentioned above, a third way to compare the measures is to consider whether or not there have been substantial variations in the rankings which countries receive – this can suggest that there has been a relative shift in the quality of the given democracy which is worth considering. Finally, it is worth paying attention to the differences in the scores attained in the various categories within the BDI measure. This gives a sense of how the dimensions might relate to each other.

It is important to consider the categorisations which countries receive on a democracy measure, because it can play a pivotal role in public discussion, where media outlets report changes between classification type. Changes in regime classification are much more exciting to the general public than a marginal shift in the score which a country receives, and can stimulate discussion and debate about changes which a regime is undergoing. This is also true in the way that regime classification can be an important component of which countries are granted aid, and which countries are not (although this is more an issue for consolidating, rather than established democracies).

In terms of the expectations listed above, we can see that the social democratic welfare regimes (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland), form the top scoring countries (this is excluding Iceland, which is not given a typology in much of the literature (for example, see: Arts & Gelissen 2002)). Arts and Gelissen (2002, pp.149–150) note within the literature prototypes for specific types of regimes, and it is worth noting how they both score. The prototype for the conservative regime is Germany. Germany sits in with a mixture of different countries which slightly dropped in score on the BDI in comparison to the EIU measure, and dropped only one rank across the two measures. The prototype for the liberal welfare regime is the United States, which is discussed in more detail below.
Table 7.3 Comparison of BDI and EIU Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>BDI Score</th>
<th>EIU Score</th>
<th>Score Change</th>
<th>BDI Rank</th>
<th>EIU Rank</th>
<th>Rank Change</th>
<th>BDI Status, Using EIU System</th>
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There is a total of 11 differences across the different regime classifications, with the United States and Italy also being just on the cusp of achieving the status of Full Democracy with the EIU measure (sitting only 0.02 points out of this classification), but being reduced to sit more fully into the category of Flawed Democracy in the BDI measure (being both around 0.40 points below the threshold of Full Democracy). It is noteworthy that six of the countries which are not congruent sit closely together to the bottom of the Full Democracy categorisation, and their status might suggest that it is worthwhile considering adjusting the threshold for the categorisation of regime status of countries listed as Full Democracy’s (and if the data set is increased to include more hybrid and authoritarian regimes, they might also require calibration in measurement).

Setting aside the issue of regime classification calibration, it is worth considering the direction of changes which have occurred, as this can be informative about the changes observed. As mentioned above, there is a group of countries near the top end of EIU’s Flawed Democracy group which are all shifted upwards in their score and subsequent classification, namely: Czech Republic, Japan, Poland, Slovenia, France, Belgium, and Estonia. In each of these cases, the increased score can largely be attributed to the institutional dimension of the measure, with each scoring above 0.80 in that category, without scoring above 0.80 in the capabilities dimension. One possible way to address this problem might be to consider using a combined multiplicative and additive aggregation method. However, the aggregation technique on the original measure was kept straightforward to keep it clear which dimensions were influencing the scores achieved. Russia also receives an increased ranking, moving from authoritarian to being a hybrid regime. As already stated, the inclusion of the non-democratic countries was primarily for explorative purposes, and they are not the emphasis of the analysis presented. For this reason, Russia is not discussed below. The countries which receive a lower

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*26 The calibration of the measure was not overly considered since the primary purpose was to identify how including capabilities shaped the numerical differences. Whilst measurement calibration is important, as it ensures the validity of a measure, higher-end classification calibration would likely be a process of reflective equilibrium, which is best developed after already building the measure, and then applying it in an in-depth way to a number of countries. Rather than adopt controversial classification practices based upon modelling techniques, the view was taken to adopt the same classification scoring system as the EIU measure, and speak to future changes to classification as a way to improve the measure.*
classification are: South Africa, Mexico, and Spain, which are discussed below. These countries are each notable in that the inequality which they experience is high, and it translates into the capabilities score which they receive.

Along with the countries which have received a change in the classification which they receive, it is also worth considering any major changes in the relative ranking which countries receive. There are eight countries which experience a rankings decrease of at least five places when moving from the EIU measure to the BDI: South Africa, Chile, Spain, Israel, the United States, Italy, Ireland, and New Zealand. The decrease in score for New Zealand is consistent with recent work that suggests rising inequality is becoming a problem there (Rashbrooke 2013), although as identified by the BDI the score is in line with many of the other countries still categorised as a full democracy. Ireland is similar to New Zealand, in that the categorisation remains the same, with a lower score in the two economic equality dimensions of the capabilities score. Neither case is elaborated further below, as they have remained in the same categorisation, and their overall score has declined by less than 1. Israel is similar in that it also does not require further comment as it has remained unmoved from within the Flawed Democracy classification, moving only five rankings, and only decreasing by 0.39 points.

Figure 7.1 provides a visual representation of the distribution of the different outputs from the BDI and EIU democracy scores. The Figure has a line of reflection on it, to demonstrate the cases where countries score higher on the BDI or the EIU measure – countries below the line are those which score lower on the BDI, countries above score higher on the EIU measure. There is enough variation around the line to suggest that whilst the measures are similar, that they are also sufficiently different that they are distinct from each other. What this suggests is that the inequality which the measure identifies is not distributed across the countries in a uniform way. If the measures loaded effectively onto each other, then whilst theoretically different, the new measure would not be contributing a particularly unique empirical evaluation of democracies in the world. Thus, in demonstrating the variation across the two different measures, we can see that there is an empirical basis for arguing that the two measures are different.
The cases of the United States, Spain, and South Africa have been highlighted in Figure 7.1 as they each reflect some differences between the two measures, which are elaborated upon in the following section. A more general observation from the plot which can be noted is that the majority of the cases fall below the line of reflection, showing that the BDI tends to give scores that are relatively lower than the EIU. There is a large cluster of scores from the EIU measure just under the threshold for the ranking of Full Democracy, and there is some arbitrariness to the nature of these categorisations. Because the EIU do not present the underlying indicator scores for each subcategory, it is not clear why they have changed the ranking from one score to another across each year. This raises questions of replicability, because it is not clear what score has been assigned from year to year.

Figure 7.1 Plot of BDI and EIU Democracy Score

Note: The red line is a line of reflection, which demonstrates where the scores would sit if the two measures load onto each other in a way that suggests that they award roughly the same score.
for a given indicator. This is particularly troubling for controversial coding or score assignments. For example, one can argue that the change of the status for the United States from Full Democracy to Flawed Democracy on the most recent report (2017), with a new score of 7.98, is more related to the election of Donald Trump than to a readily identifiable change in an indicator within the measure. In that sense, the change can be construed as more politically motivated, rather than based upon an assessment of the democracy in question. By basing the analysis presented on the distribution of capabilities as the BDI does, the measure avoids these kinds of issues of potential coder bias which are otherwise difficult to overcome. Even if multiple coders are used, it remains clear as to the basis for the score awarded – it has been calculated from the OECD data, and the Freedom House scores (Freedom House present the subcategory scores for their measure, and whilst issues have been raised with earlier versions of their coding, each subcategory can be checked).

In the same way as Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2 demonstrates how well the measures reflect each other. Below the line denotes a higher score on the Polity Democracy score, and above the line denotes countries which score higher BDI. As can be seen from Figure 7.2, there are substantive differences to the distributions given by the BDI and the Polity measure. This is largely reflective of the issue of ‘bunching’, which dichotomous, or less nuanced indicators are often criticised for having (Coppedge et al. 2011; Skaaning, Gerring & Bartusevi 2015). The phenomenon of ‘bunching’, where scores are condensed into a single tight group, is visible in the scores for the Polity measure, with a large number of the scores which are assigned condensed into the score of 10. This issue of condensing can inhibit the capacity of scholars to use the measure in meaningful analysis, since cases where there is large within case difference cannot be identified. This problem is particularly pronounced for trying to evaluate more sophisticated definitions of concepts, and helps to show how strongly the capabilities dimension of the evaluation enables a strong contrast with the more narrow conception presented in the Polity measure. It ensures that there is space for an analysis based upon meaningful difference, and in turn, it ensures that scholars are able to make more meaningful within-case comparison.
Figure 7.3 presents a comparison of the scores awarded from the two dimensions of the BDI. Again, there is a line of score reflection, which highlights that the only country to receive a higher score on the institutional category in the BDI is Russia. Related to the calibration issue mentioned above, one possible reason for this is that the capabilities dimension is an ideal-type measure, where higher scores are harder to achieve, whereas the score for the institutional dimension is derived from the Freedom House measure which does award the maximum possible score. The relationship between the two dimensions is worth considering, and is reflective of previous literature which has treated many of the elements measured within the capabilities dimension as being an output of democracy (like the list of benefits

Figure 7.2 Plot of BDI and Polity Democracy Score

Note: The red line is a line of reflection, which demonstrates where the scores would sit if the two measures load onto each other in a way that suggests that they award roughly the same score.
which accrue from democracy that Dahl presents which was discussed in Chapter Two). These arguments are set aside here, as they are peripheral to the topic of this chapter, and the basis of those arguments were addressed in Chapter Two in arguing for the validity of O’Donnell’s conception of democracy.

![Comparison of the Capabilities Score and Institutional Score](image)

**Figure 7.3 Comparison of the Capabilities Score and Institutional Score**

Note: The red line is a line of reflection, which demonstrates where the scores would sit if the two measures load onto each other in a way that suggests that they award roughly the same score.

### 7.3.2 Specific Country Based Observations About the Differences Between the BDI, EIU, and Polity Measure of Democracy

Moving past the distributional outputs of the different measures, it is worth considering the experience of some specific countries. The countries considered are
those which show meaningful difference across the BDI and EIU measures, as discussed above. The contrast with the Polity measure is largely ignored, because of the phenomenon of bunching listed above. If Polity was included in the discussion, the discussion would be focused upon highlighting the degree to which a lack of capacity to discriminate across established democracies is a general issue for the measure. The reasons for these differences in output are considered to highlight the different informational spaces which have utility for scholars interested in incorporating those elements into evaluation. The countries discussed below are Mexico, Spain, South Africa, and the United States. The discussion of each country is very brief. The purpose of the discussion is not to go into depth about the issues identified, but instead, it is to demonstrate that the scores reflect concerns raised by scholars with more in-depth knowledge of these countries. In essence, this highlights that the variations identified are not arbitrary, but instead reflect problems which it is worthwhile including in measurement.

Mexico

Mexico is discussed here because of the change which it experiences across the two measures. Mexico is classified as a Hybrid regime based upon the BDI measure (using the same classification system as the EIU measure), and as a Flawed Democracy by the EIU measure. Mexico receives a decreased classification in the BDI measure because of the higher levels of capability inequality which it has (it scores 0.43 on the capabilities category and 0.66 on the political institutions category). In that sense, it is the impact of inequality in Mexico that is most worth paying attention to. The low score for Mexico is primarily attributable to the domains of economic and educational inequality. The complexity of the political changes experienced by Mexico in recent years make an in-depth discussion of its output from the different measures difficult, as there is not the space to address some of the complexity of the experience. Moreover, much of the primary literature discussing Mexico is written in Spanish, limiting the accessibility to some of the commentary. Consequently, the specifics of Mexico's recent political experience are set aside, and this brief section focuses on the basis for Mexico's score as it relates to the BDI, and how this score coheres with some of the literature which discusses problems of inequality associated with democracy in Mexico.
Mexico, and Latin America more generally, has been the topic of extensive research which has evaluated the impact of substantive inequalities on the process of democratization, and upon political participation (Levine & Molina 2011; Piester 1997). Moreover, for Mexico there is an extended history of problems of poverty (Piester 1997). In some Latin American countries (including Mexico), economic liberalisation is taken to have had a powerful negative effect, with globalisation and free trade ultimately increasing poverty and inequality in Latin American societies (Kacowicz 2013). It should be noted though that inequality in Mexico occurs across a variety of domains, not just in the economic sphere, which is reflected in the outputs at the subcategory level for the BDI.

The BDI score for income inequality in Mexico is the lowest out of all the countries in the measure. This reflects the fact that it is widely accepted that economic inequality persists as a substantial issue for Mexico, with Mexico having the highest level of inequality amongst the OECD countries (Meza 2015, p.289). Recent work on Mexico highlights that there are substantive problems of inequality, with impoverished citizens experiencing political marginalisation and decreased political opportunities. This work suggests that in Mexico, approximately 80 percent of the population is experiencing, or are vulnerable to experiencing poverty (Pedroza Flores, Villalobos Monroy & Reyes Fabela 2015). The seriousness of this problem is reflected in the negative score attached to the income subcategory, with Mexico scoring 0.00. Here, it is evident the degree to which Mexico’s income inequality is beyond the level experienced by the other established democracies included in the analysis.

Various neoliberal reforms have had the effect of narrowing opportunities for political action, and of disincentivizing the poor from participating in Mexico’s political process (Holzner 2010, p.197). Some of the inequalities in Mexico have been tied to social capital theory to suggest that the inequality present has an impact on political participation in Mexico (Klesner 2007, 2009). As Claudio Holzner (2010, p.3) argues, “in Mexico political opportunities and incentives are not distributed equally, and this inequality explains much of the difference in political activity between the poor and the rich.” In short, the decline in classification across the two measures reflects the degree to which concerns of inequality are captured by the
BDI measure. The high levels of economic inequality are also translated into health and education inequalities. There is research that identifies inequality in health outcomes, and healthcare access which is tied to economic resources (Barraza-Lloréns, Panopoulou & Díaz 2013; Servan-Mori et al. 2014). There is also research that points to strong educational inequalities, both associated with regional issues, and with economic inequality (Pedroza Flores, Villalobos Monroy & Reyes Fabela 2015). This identification of growing educational inequality is reflected in the measure.

These various inequalities are clearly reflected in the BDI, with it highlighting the comparatively high levels of inequality experienced by Mexico. Whilst Mexico is not considered an established democracy on the EIU, the extent of these problems is worth considering when evaluating the quality of democracy in Mexico (which is still considered a Flawed Democracy on the EIU measure). If we think of high levels of economic inequality as potentially presenting a type of constraint on less wealthy citizens being able to meaningfully interact in the political process, then it is worth asking whether the level of economic inequality which is present in Mexico is a problem for the health of democracy there. The argument of this thesis is that this is a real problem, and that this threatens the long-term viability of Mexico as a democracy. Returning to the idea of the calibration of classifications, we might ask whether Mexico’s score means it should be treated as a Hybrid regime, or as a Flawed Democracy? This is a space where further theorising the implications of unequal democratic citizen capacity to engage in the political process is important. I will return to this idea at the end of the chapter.

Spain

Spain is worthy of consideration in the comparison of measures because Spain has the largest decline in ranking based upon the BDI, with the country also transferring from being a Full Democracy, into being a Flawed Democracy. This change is largely attributable to the impact which the recent financial crisis has had on the income and jobs dimensions of Spanish society, with the two scores for these categories being 0.37 and 0.31 respectively. Taken together these indicators highlight that the two categories are an important point of difference between Spain and the other countries measured, and are a potential area of concern.
This observed change is coherent with concerns raised by Mariano Torcal (2014), that the outcomes of the financial crisis may be eroding support for democratic institutions in Spain, as well as in other European democracies (Armingeon & Guthmann 2014). Indeed, there is a growing body of literature which explicitly looks at the relationship between the recent financial crisis, and the related support for and trust in democratic institutions throughout Europe (Schäfer & Streeck 2013; Armingeon & Guthmann 2014; Jensen & Jespersen 2017; Brusis 2016; Morlino & Quaranta 2016); and it is worth noting that this literature implies that this same issue is reflected to a lesser degree in the decline observed in Ireland (Papadopoulos 2016; Dotti Sani & Magistro 2016), although Ireland still retains its classification as a Full Democracy.

In terms of the informational space which is being engaged with, it is apparent that by opening up the way that people are experiencing the economy and job market enables a more nuanced evaluation of their relationship to the political process. That this connects to existing research for Spain, and Europe more broadly, is encouraging as it suggests that the measure may provide a more nuanced account of the quality of democracy in Spain, as opposed to the EIU measure. As literature on inequality and the impact which it has on democratic engagement implies (Bartels 2008), the identification of these kinds of issues is significant for understanding the overall health of democracy.

**South Africa**

South Africa has the largest gap between the score given by the BDI and EIU democracy index. In that sense, the example of South Africa is most striking in showing the gap between the EIU scores, and the BDI scores. Whilst there are important aspects of institutional structure which support the functioning of South African democracy, there is also research suggesting that there is a growing sense of disengagement and powerlessness being experienced by young South Africans (Wasserman & Garman 2014). In the context of the argument being presented in this thesis, it is troubling that the sense “of powerlessness has already started to breed a sense of being disengaged from the political system and their ability to influence policy-making” (Wasserman & Garman 2014, p.404). These types of concerns are coherent with the erosion of support for democracy over the long term,
and are significant in the context of contemporary research which flags these kinds of attitudes as problematic (Foa & Mounk 2016).

Furthermore, this growing sense of disengagement is also experienced in a society which has widespread inequality, much of which is still linked back to the experience of the apartheid regime (Collins 2017). Some research looks at the culture of political elitism, suggesting that there is a problem of representatives regarding themselves as VIPs, who are better than the ordinary citizens (Rapatsa 2016). There are issues associated with the educational opportunities for citizens, which continue to reflect some of the racialized elements of the apartheid regime (Ndimande 2016). These educational issues are in turn reflected in the employment opportunities for individuals, with South Africa having a high unemployment rate (Anand, Kothari & Kumar 2016). There also remain persistent health issues, reflected in the BDI score for the category (Mooney & McIntyre 2008). These various problems are reflected in the low overall capabilities score which South Africa achieves, with the overall score being 0.22 for the category.

In terms of the low capabilities score which South Africa receives, the score can be attributed to a low score in each of the different subcategories. Economic inequality is the largest contributor to the score, with both the income score (0.01), and the jobs score (0.16) being very low for South Africa. These two combined economic factors suggest that there are large gaps in the economic prospects of citizens in the bottom quintile, and the average citizen. The educational score of 0.44 is the highest score which any of the subcategories receives, but even this score is indicative of problematic levels of educational inequality. The health subcategory score is reflective of the abovementioned health issues present in South Africa, and suggests that economic inequalities also translate into poorer health outcomes for disadvantaged citizens.

Considering the ways in which racial inequalities are often translated into political inequalities, the degree to which the inequality in South Africa occurs along racial lines is deeply problematic. The racial nature of the inequalities present would suggest that a measure which included racial inequality as a component of analysis would score South Africa at an even lower level, with the “between-race component of South African inequality still at world beating levels” (Leibbrandt, Finn & Woolard
This is an important area to consider for further research, and understanding the racial element of South African inequality should be paramount in any exploration of the role that inequality may play in eroding the effectiveness of democracy in South Africa.

Notably, these issues remain underexplored in current measures of democracy, as suggested by the substantive gap between the BDI and EIU scores, as well as with the larger gap with Polity. Once again, it is only through engaging the informational space where inequality occurs that these issues can become visible.

**The United States**

The score for the United States is worth considering for two reasons. One is that it is a country which until the last EIU annual report was classified as a Full Democracy. As noted above, the adjustment which it received in the most recent report was one which can be thought of as potentially being politically motivated, rather than based upon an observed change in the institutional features of the United States democratic experience. This can be contrasted with the evaluation which the United States receives from the BDI. The income and health scores received suggest that there may be substantial issues growing with respect to inequality in American democracy. These concerns are widely held amongst contemporary scholarship (Massey 2004; Attanasio, Hurst & Pistaferri 2012; Smeeding 2005; Bratberg et al. 2016; Stepan & Linz 2011; Bartels 2008), and are reflected in the above discussion.

In conjunction with moving from the upper bound of the Flawed Democracy classification into the middle of that classification, it is noteworthy that the United States’ ranking declined by 9 when using the BDI instead of the EIU ranking. This is the equal second largest ranking decline, and highlights that the United States has problems of relative inequality, when compared to many other countries which are similarly positioned on the EIU score. This is worth noting, because it suggests a point of potential difference with other democracies that are otherwise regarded as similar, and hence signals a topic worthy of further investigation. Moreover, the identification of this kind of variance implies that there is meaningful difference which occurs within the informational space which the BDI measure taps into. In turn, this suggests that the further development of more sophisticated
measurement instruments for the evaluation of citizen capabilities would be a worthwhile undertaking. The potential directions which this can be taken in are considered below with reference to a more sophisticated account of the capability approach than is used within the BDI.

In terms of the precise source of the lower score which the United States receives from the BDI, it is worth considering the subcategory scores. The score for the subcategory of income which the United States receives is particularly troubling (0.26), suggesting that income inequality is a serious issue. This score suggests that those who are in the bottom quintile in the United States are substantially disadvantaged relative to the average citizen. As stated above, this score is reflective of contemporary scholarship which is increasingly flagging economic inequality as a serious problem for the United States – with Larry Bartels work on the topic being a noteworthy example. If we accept that this economic inequality is having a detrimental effect on the political process in the United States, then the identification of it as a component of measurement is worthwhile.

Like South Africa, there are substantial problems of racial inequality in the United States. A measure sensitive to racial inequality would identify these problems more directly, which in turn would translate into a lower score for the United States. Whilst the measure created does not identify these problems clearly, it is worth noting that the direction of future research which it suggests is one where this would be a core issue to be explored. To address these problems of racial inequality would require much more space than is available here. However, the new BDI measure represents a new starting point to develop a more nuanced measure that could be sensitive to problems of racial inequality, where the inequality was of various distributional capabilities. The same point would be true of constructing a measure that attends to societies where there is substantial gender inequality. The BDI represents a new way to think about measuring democracy that treats inequality as a substantial issue that should be measured in an objective way. In doing so, it sets forth a blue-print which can be leveraged to develop even more normatively oriented measures.
7.4 What the BDI Demonstrates

Overall the brief summary of differences raised in this section highlight that the BDI can tap into informational spaces which other measures of democracy currently do not engage with. The fact that the new measure is much more comprehensive than the other measures in the way that it can identify countries experiencing issues associated with inequality suggests the utility of exploring the evaluation of capabilities as a component of analysis when evaluating democracy in the world. As highlighted above, these observations are coherent with the literature which considers the experience of the various countries in question. The countries were only discussed briefly because the core point is not the specifics of each case, but rather, the fact that the output of the measure can be connected to literature which supports the observed results.

The difference in the insights provided stems from one essential point of difference to the other two measures considered – the inclusion into the evaluation of democracy of potential constraints that might seriously influence a large number of citizens and their prospects for political engagement. Current measurement leaves the relationship between inequality and democracy out of evaluating the quality of a democracy. By bringing the experience of individuals much more comprehensively into the evaluation, the relationship between individuals and their democracy becomes much clearer. This is an essential point of difference at both an empirical and theoretical level. The empirical level has been outlined through the above discussion of the differences in the evaluative output which the measures provide. This is an important contribution in the development of more sophisticated metrics to evaluate the quality of democracy in the world. It enables a point of difference at the theoretical level for the evaluation of democracy, by demonstrating that measurement efforts can use different theoretical models of democracy and still be effectively evaluated.

To reiterate, individuals are included in the measure by identifying those individuals who are likely to experience relative deprivation. Even if one does not think that is sufficient to count as fully incorporating the individual into the evaluation of democracy, it is a step towards more fully theorising individuals within the political citizen, relative to other measures of democracy. The BDI does
not capture all of the aspects of their political experience, yet it captures some salient aspects for understanding political equality in a given polity. These inequalities remain absent from the current construction of measurement, and as such, the new measure taps into a new informational sphere which can help us understand the quality of a given democracy. This is because the new measure helps to identify a variety of constraints which might inhibit or impact upon how individuals relate to and engage with their democracy. That constitutes a form of meaningful difference between individuals in a democratic polity, because it can identify spaces where individuals might be potentially turned off of the political process. In turn, it represents a form of meaningful difference amongst citizens that has serious implications for the functioning of a democracy. As the above discussion highlighted, the BDI captures salient variations in this domain, as they are variations which reflect scholarly concerns about the countries which were outlined.

More generally, the BDI demonstrates that the difference in conceptualisation which it represents has a real impact on the assessment which is given for a variety of countries. This is true when comparing it to both the EIU measure, which most of the comparison presented throughout the chapter has focused upon, but also in comparing it to the Polity measure. The differences that the BDI has with the Polity measure are greater – which is reflective of the greater gap in conceptualisation. From this, it is clear that further incorporation of individuals, and the capability approach, into the measurement of democracy is likely to further produce differences in our interpretation of the quality of democracy in the world. This suggests that further theoretical exploration of the relationship between democracy, individuals, and the capability approach would be worthwhile in enhancing our understanding of the quality of democracy.

7.5 Issues With the BDI

Despite the insights provided by the new measure, it is also worth considering how the measure might be further developed to increase the quality of the assessment provided, as well as tap into other problems which contemporary democracies are experiencing. These issues can be located at both the conceptual level, and at the measurement level.
The first point to note is that whilst the BDI presents a measure sensitive to individuals, it is quite crude. The construction of the measure is tied to a small set of indicators, which ideally would be more expanded in the range of ways that they evaluated the four subcategories included. Furthermore, as the last chapter discussed, there are a variety of theoretical arguments which would be worth returning to about the various other subcategories which were excluded on the grounds that they could not be properly measured in a way that reflected meaningful difference based upon the available data. In that sense, the ideal indicator selection to best evaluate freedom as capability, as it pertains to the capacity for individuals to properly engage in the political process, is worth further exploring. This is worth exploring from both a theoretical perspective, and from the perspective of data availability. As noted in the previous chapter, and throughout the thesis, data availability has played in important role in shaping the construction of this measure, and of other measures of democracy as well.

The second point, which has been discussed at some length throughout this chapter, is the issue of measurement calibration. As the BDI is a first attempt at integrating freedom as capability into measurement, it doesn’t make sense to concentrate on the issue of calibration, which is why it has largely been left aside in the construction of the measure presented here. The BDI has been presented in a way where the conceptual and comparative clarity of the measure have been emphasised, to demonstrate how the different conceptual model contrasts with other measures of democracy. Considering the deeper normative roots of the measure, which are associated with complicated theoretical arguments, the calibration of the BDI is tied to a variety of important, controversial judgements, which are best explored in dialogue with other scholars, rather than as a PhD project.

A third point is the issue of how noisy the measure is likely to be over time, considering fluctuations in the scores of the top and bottom countries changes the overall distribution. At the top level, as the top-scoring society improves, it establishes a potentially higher available level of equality or societal achievement. Changing the scores awarded to other countries to reflect this is a positive, as it reflects the fact that a higher possible standard is attainable. As for the problems
associated with shifting the bottom of the distribution, one possible solution might be to either start with a zero-value (so that the minimum score is not the bottom of the distribution), or to use a score tied to the first-year minimum. That way values are compared to the tethered minimum, and the only change to the structure of the distribution would be shifting the upper-limit as more equal scores are achieved.

The fourth area where the measurement could be further developed is in relation to the types of inequality which it evaluates. At present, the BDI does not distinguish between identity based differences which individuals hold, but from a normative perspective, there may be inequality between certain groups which it would also be worth evaluating. As discussed above, substantial inequalities between men and women, as well as along racial lines, might be regarded as particularly problematic, and thus worthy of attention as a component of assessment. This has not been included in the new measure, in part because there are still some problems associated with data accessibility for cross-national comparison which can be broken down at the level of race and gender. Alongside the issue of having data in a format that is cross-nationally comparable, there remains the challenge of establishing how indicators of racial equality might be integrated into the measure in a way that does not impact cross-national comparison. Gender continues to be a dimension upon which there remains inequality in many established democracies, and it would also be worthwhile giving extended attention to how to integrate measures of gendered inequality into an analysis of democratic quality. Whilst the new measure does not capture these issues directly, it opens up the informational space where inequality experienced by these groups can be readily identified. In that sense, the new measure can be thought of as a precursor to the development of measures that also pay attention to specific identity based inequalities.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has summarised the output from a new measure of democracy, the BDI. The primary question which this thesis addresses is whether the concept of freedom is adequately included into the measurement of established democracy. The new measure presented in this chapter demonstrates that the answer to this question is: no, existing measurement of democracy could be improved by including a
more expansive definition of freedom. This was made visible through the contrasting picture which the new measure gives about the quality of democracy in four different countries. In each case, the observations made by the measure were consistent with literature that explores those countries. In doing so, the measure highlighted why a more expansive account of freedom can provide insight – because it is connected to the experience of individual citizens. Moreover, the measure was able to identify differences in relation to the welfare state literature. Specifically, it identified that social democratic welfare states are better than other welfare regimes at providing freedom as capability to their citizens.

The construction of the BDI is one of the core contributions which this thesis provides to the existing literature on measuring democracy. It provides a framework for expanding the measurement of freedom as capability as a component of democracy. In doing so, the thesis helps to theorise a more comprehensive inclusion of the individual into the measurement of democracy. By demonstrating the congruence with literature on welfare regimes, this chapter and the thesis more generally also demonstrates the empirical validity of the measure, in highlighting that the measures outputs are consistent with existing literature.

The BDI is not without limitations, and those were considered to suggest directions for future work on improving the measure. The Conclusion will further develop the ways in which the measure might be improved in the future by considering areas where the indicators can be expanded or refined. These areas will be closely tied to the identification of other ways in which the experience of inequality and disadvantage can be measured to help provide meaningful insight about capabilities which individuals hold in established democracies. The Conclusion will also restate the argument of the thesis.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the question of whether existing measures of democracy are constructed in a way that properly measures the freedom of citizens in established democracies. The first part of the thesis developed the theoretical scope of differences in defining the concept of freedom, and how those differences were related to different institutional accounts of democracy (the accounts of Schumpeter, Dahl, and O'Donnell). The second part of the thesis assessed how measures of democracy were originally constructed, and then analysed how freedom was incorporated into more recent measurement attempts. This demonstrated that there was a clear preference for the definition of freedom as non-interference in the measurement of democracy. The third part of the thesis developed a measure of democracy which employed a measure of freedom as capability to demonstrate that it was possible to measure alternative definitions of freedom as a component of democracy. This measure highlighted that there is a real difference in understanding the quality of democracy in some established democracies when a more expansive definition of freedom is used.

By demonstrating the clear differences between existing measures of democracy and the new measure of democracy developed in the thesis, it has been clearly shown that current measures of democracy do not properly measure freedom in a way that enables enough depth in the analysis of freedom in established democracies. In doing so, the thesis has demonstrated that the critique of existing measures is not just theoretically valid, but also empirically valid. To demonstrate the critique across these two different domains, the thesis has engaged with a range of different academic areas of research. The thesis has engaged with literature ranging from political science, economics, and political philosophy, through to the evaluation of poverty and development studies. The argument presented throughout the thesis sits at the nexus of three distinct areas of work – the broad literature of the capability approach (including both its philosophical and empirically oriented dimensions), the aspects of political philosophy associated with theorising freedom, and the quantitatively focused literature associated with the measurement of democracy. At present, there are large parts of these bodies of literature which do not speak to each other.
It is the connections developed through the breadth of content covered that is central to the worth of this thesis. The insights which the capability approach has for conceptualising freedom, and in turn democracy, are important insights for thinking about how we should measure democracy. Yet, each of these insights exist within subfields which do not necessarily speak readily to each other. As such, a core component of this thesis has been trying to bring these distinct areas together to craft a new measure of democracy which brings these differing insights together. The breadth of issues which have been covered through the thesis suggests why a similar attempt at investigating the broader position of freedom in measurement has hitherto remained absent from the literature. Even with bracketing off some of the more complicated peripheral issues, there are still many different non-trivial issues related to measuring freedom as capability, and measuring democracy, which have been covered throughout the thesis, some of which deserve more attention than it has been possible to grant within the space of this thesis. The overarching theme of the thesis, that a more expansive conception of freedom is useful for understanding the freedom of citizens in established democracies, is one which can provide insight on a range of issues facing democracies today. By building a measure of democracy that uses this expanded definition of democracy, scholars have a new tool to understand established democracy today, which differs substantially from those which have existed in the past.

8.1 The Findings and Implications of the Thesis

Chapter One examined the diverse conceptualisations of freedom which might be used to think about freedom in the world. This chapter presented the case that there is no singular definition of freedom which might become universally dominant, because different definitions of freedom ultimately address different theoretical issues. Although the intractable nature of disagreement about how to define controversial concepts like freedom is widely accepted amongst scholars of political theory, it remains a relatively underemphasised characteristic when discussing the construction of measures of democracy. To differentiate the engagement with the concept of freedom in the thesis from the broader literature,

27 It is important to acknowledge that whilst equality has been discussed at times throughout the thesis, especially in Chapter Seven, with more space the themes discussed throughout the thesis as they relate to equality could be explored at much greater length.
it was important to demonstrate an awareness of the broader theoretical literature on freedom, rather than only discussing the technical aspects which pertain to measurement. Hence, Chapter One highlights what is essential about the four different definitions of freedom presented in order to enable an understanding of what is missing when these definitions are not included in measures of democracy, and indeed, what kinds of critiques the different definitions point towards when they are excluded. Although the rest of the thesis emphasises the capability based definition of freedom, an awareness of the other definitions is valuable, as it enables an understanding that even if the capability based conception is incorporated into measures of democracy, there would still be other definitions which could contribute to an understanding of the relationship between freedom and democracy. Indeed, one area where future research should be developed is to build measures of democracy which are sensitive to those other definitions of democracy.

Chapter Two draws upon the insights in Chapter One to highlight the different accounts of freedom present in the different process based accounts of democracy currently used in the theorising of measures of democracy. The argument presented in this chapter was that there is the theoretical scope for a much more expansive account of the citizen than that which is currently included in measures of democracy. Whilst Guillermo O’Donnell’s more expansive conception of democracy presented in the chapter is one which has existed for some time, it is nonetheless important to highlight the differences present compared to the more traditional accounts of Dahl and Schumpeter. The most important difference which O’Donnell’s account has with the other two is the scope which it possesses to include the individual citizen as a component of evaluation. This idea is explored in the chapter through the notion of individual priority, and I argued that we can see the importance of the individual when we place pressure on the role they are supposed to occupy in the political process.

The first section of the thesis which is formed by these first two chapters, when taken together, represents the theoretical basis of the thesis. This section demonstrates that there are theoretical grounds for exploring the relationship between freedom and democracy as it is currently structured in measures of democracy, because there is scope for a more expansive definition. They provide the
groundwork for exploring the gap between freedom as non-interference and freedom as capability in measures, by pointing to the way in which each different definition focuses on different issues which can be encountered by democratic citizens. In doing so they highlight the importance of addressing the question of whether or not there is a substantive difference between the different conceptions of freedom, and in turn, show that it matters which definition of freedom is present.

The second section of the thesis, Chapter Three, and Chapter Four, turns to the empirical realities of precisely how democracy has been measured in the past, and how it continues to be measured today. Chapter Three addresses which factors have shaped the structure of early measures of democracy. This chapter reveals a thread which runs through the remainder of the thesis, namely, that access to data has played a highly significant role in shaping how measures of democracy are constructed, and that access to data will continue to play an important role in the foreseeable future. This is an important observation because it highlights the degree to which the largest current challenge to including measures of citizen capability as a component of democracy remains the issue of whether there is suitable data availability to construct sufficiently high quality measures of capability. The chapter also points to the important role that the political climate played in the early emphasis of measures of democracy. It is argued that there were practical reasons for preferring a clear simple measure during the Cold War, which, whilst valuable at the time, remains a feature of measures today, in a way that is unhelpful to understanding many important aspects about democracy in the world.

The chapter also highlighted the important role that scientism played in the theoretical frameworks which underpinned early measurement endeavours in political science. Although this point is secondary to the broader research question, it provides an important insight into why measures are constructed in the way that they are. Furthermore, it provides an insight into the kind of approach to measurement (and the study of politics more generally) that may seek to reject a more expansive measure which incorporates freedom as capability. Hence, although the insight is one targeted towards the historical development of measurement, it remains relevant to understanding why a more normative account might not have gained more traction already within the field. If scholars of political science continue
to share similar positivist tendencies in their approach to normative aspects of the study of politics, albeit in a more sophisticated way, then it is likely that measures will remain minimalist in conceptual content. This aspect of the chapter highlights the fact that it is important to understand the implications of the discipline of political science tending to favour more positivist frameworks, and to consider the role that this plays in the construction of measurement.

Here it is important to note the fact that the practice of description is in itself a normative act. It is a normative act because it constitutes a decision about which characteristics warrant attention in the description being given, and which do not. In making this judgment, a decision is made with regards to what is important about the phenomenon being described. Where positivists seek to provide an uncontroversial definition of democracy, they position themselves to provide a shallow account that misses aspects of what is important to democracy, especially with regards to why it is a desirable political system. This fact has played out in the original construction of measures, and it is a good change within the construction of quality of democracy measures that newer measures are paying attention to this problem.

Chapter Four provides the core summary of existing measures of democracy. It outlines the degree to which existing measures of democracy are dominated by the presence of the definition of freedom as non-interference. This is central to the research question, as it provides the evidence that current measures of democracy employ measures of freedom which are non-interference based. In many ways, this is the core observation provided by the thesis, and it provides a valuable framework which can be used to understand which problems might be missed by current measures. In making this finding, the chapter delivers the basis for the creation of the new measure of democracy, by highlighting the fact that presently freedom as capability is absent as a component of measuring democracy.

The third section of the thesis presents the new measure of democracy to demonstrate how freedom as capability can better help us to understand the quality of democracy in established democratic societies. This section is where the capability approach is also discussed in relation to measurement to highlight the
other peripheral insights which the approach has, which are important for understanding how freedom as capability should be measured.

Chapter Five provided an in-depth discussion of the central features of the capability approach, and how those features relate to measurement. The chapter provides valuable insight into why it is worthwhile using the capability approach rather than an alternative welfare account to understand individual well-being. Furthermore, understanding what is essential to the capability approach is a core requirement for understanding what the approach can contribute to measurement. Without this knowledge, measures may only provide a superficial account of capabilities, and thus miss important insights which could otherwise be made. The chapter addresses some of the substantive differences between unidimensional and multidimensional measures of poverty (and capabilities), and continues the exploration of to the notion of data availability by discussing the prospects of evaluating capabilities as a component of democracy.

Chapter Six presents the measurement structure for the new measure of democracy. To do this, it first evaluates David Campbell’s measure of democracy, which attempts to integrate aspects of the capability approach into the evaluation of democracy. The aggregation and weighting procedure of Campbell’s measure is considered to develop the structure for the new measure, and to identify the aspects of the capability approach which Campbell’s measure captures, and the aspects which it does not. The data which is made available by the OECD through the Better Life Project was also discussed to outline which indicators were appropriate to include in the new measure being constructed. The various inequalities across the variables were shown to highlight the degree of variation across countries.

Chapter Seven demonstrated the empirical validity of the theoretical argument which has been made throughout the thesis, by showing the difference between the BDI and the EIU democracy score, and the Polity IV democracy scores. The findings made through the measure demonstrated that there were differences in the capabilities distribution across the various countries included in the analysis. The inequality which was identified was then considered in the context of existing scholarship on the various countries to show that the measure was capturing real differences.
The findings from Chapter Seven can be linked to a broader research paradigm that looks at the impact of inequality on the quality of democracy in established democracies. The thesis has considered this through the inequality of freedom as capability which citizens possess in established democracy, but it can be considered in narrower or more expansive ways. The inequality evaluated can be expanded to reflect larger time periods, and consider the longer-term trends associated with things like social mobility, and intergenerational income mobility. It can also be narrowed, and evaluate just economic inequality of various kinds. One reason for narrowing the evaluation to just economic inequality would be that health and educational inequalities often occur along economic lines. As such, measuring those two categories of inequality can be thought of as examining how effectively economic inequalities are transformed into other kinds of inequalities. Focusing on just economic inequality could potentially enable a more nuanced engagement with economic inequality, albeit at the expense of the engagement with those non-economic categories. I will turn now to some of the literature which considers economic inequality to help connect some of the outputs identified by the measure with broader literature that investigates these problems.

8.2 Established Democracy and Inequality

One dimension upon which the new measure of democracy presented in the thesis can be differentiated from other measures of democracy is tied closely to the idea of inequality. Specifically, the notion that growing capability inequality might threaten the long-term viability of democracy in established democratic societies. Capability equality can be evaluated in a variety of ways, and it is worth finishing the thesis by considering more generally how inequality is being explored in relation to established democracies, to outline how the measure presented in the thesis might be further expanded. It is also worth considering how the measure which is presented relates to the existing literature with respect to the type of inequality which it evaluates to suggest other ways it might be expanded upon in the future.

Historically the research on economic development and democracy has reviewed it as a phenomenon driving societies to adopt a democratic form of government, with the positive effect of economic development driving the
establishment of a strong middle-class. One aspect of economic development is the associated increase in education across society, “which in turn promotes political attitudes conducive to democracy” (Muller 1997, p.134). In earlier work on democratic transitions (see for example: Lipset 1959), the middle class emerges as an important driver in demanding increasing political input, and thus as a strong advocate for increasing democratic governance. Understood in relation to democracy, development beyond a certain point was taken to decrease, rather than increase inequality, with research up to the 1990’s looking at the relationship between inequality and democracy as an inverted U-shaped phenomenon (Muller 1997, p.135). This perspective is being challenged by more recent developments, as wealth inequality is growing in many democracies.

Whilst the overall arc of economic development for many countries is improving with respect to the relative size of the economy, there is a growing consensus that there may be problems associated with the distribution of these economic gains within countries. A commonly emerging thread in contemporary research is that over the last four decades the gains from economic growth are being disproportionately accumulated by the wealthier members of societies across the globe at a growing rate (see for example: Piketty 2014; Stiglitz 2012; Piketty & Saez 2001; Lakoff 2015; Atkinson 2015; Morelli, Smeeding & Thompson 2015; Bartels 2008). This issue has moved beyond just academic discourse, with popular movements like Occupy Wall Street bringing discussion of economic inequality into the mainstream media, and “inequality is now at the forefront of public debate” (Atkinson 2015, p.1). Indeed, the prominence which inequality as an issue has occupied has increased dramatically in the last two decades, and it is now recognised by organisations like the IMF and the World Bank as a serious threat to the sustainability of societies across the world (World Bank 2016, p.31; Kacowicz 2013, p.25; Stiglitz 2012). The growing recognition of inequality as an issue in the public domain suggests that more exploration in the academic context is warranted.

One core area of economic inequality which is often evaluated is the domain of wealth inequality. Wealth inequality is distinct from income inequality in terms of the kind of influence which it can be attached to. Wealth inequality is also distinct from income inequality in that it is much harder to evaluate, because there is less
readily available data on it. The BDI measures income inequality rather than wealth inequality because of the constraints of the availability of data, but it would be worth adding measures of wealth inequality as more nuanced data becomes available.

Because of the role that financial resources can play in shaping political outcomes, long-term wealth inequality can lead to political outcomes which represent the interests of those at the top of the income distribution, and generate further inequality (Loveless 2016; Lakoff 2015). This is especially true in cases where the growth in inequality facilitates a greater difference in between individuals at the top and bottom, and reduces the size of the middle-class through a hollowing out process, with some arguing that this is happening in established democracies like the United States (see for example: Sitaraman 2017; Bartels 2008). Because of the role that the middle class plays in maintaining stability in democracy, this can be deeply problematic (Lakoff 2015, p.426). In the context of this thesis, emphasis has been placed on the relationship between those towards the bottom of the various distributions, and the average person, but it is worth keeping in mind the other kinds of problematic changes which might be occurring.

The identification of growing wealth inequality has resulted in inequality becoming an increasingly important issue in economics research, although as Atkinson (2015, pp.14–16) argues, it is still treated by many as a peripheral issue, rather than a central issue for the discipline. How to prevent and reverse the growth of inequality is becoming an important topic of research, although it is also worth noting that there are those who argue against addressing income inequality. Those arguing against addressing inequality stress that the overall benefits of growth are restricted when redistributive policies are adopted, and that this ultimately fails to solve the problems which arise from inequality (Conard 2016); or alternatively, they contend that the “potential for improving the lives of poor people by finding different ways of distributing current production is nothing compared to the apparently limitless potential of increasing production” (Lucas 2003, p.20). In part, this disagreement contributes to mixed attitudes towards and attempts at addressing rising income inequality, however, irrespective of the sentiments about how income and wealth inequality should be addressed, it is widely acknowledged
that wealth inequality is rising, especially with respect to a growing share of income being transferred to the top income and wealth groups (Kanbur & Stiglitz 2016).

Outside of the discipline of economics empirical research on the relationship between inequality and democracy has been steadily increasing in the last decade. Much of the work has built on the established view that there are strong negative effects on democracy caused by high levels of inequality (Loveless 2016, p.1004; Andersen 2012); and research output investigating inequality has increased as it has become clear that inequality is having a negative impact on the democratic process in numerous countries (Lakoff 2015; Jensen & Jespersen 2017), especially in the United States (Bartels 2008; Smeeding 2005). Whilst theoretical work has addressed the notion of inequality and democracy as far back as Aristotle, the nature of the relationship is becoming more well understood as more empirical research has been conducted in recent decades. This has enabled more sophisticated accounts of how inequality impacts democracy, and scholars are improving their understanding of the nature of this relationship. The new measure which has been constructed will further enable analysis of the variation in inequality in a cross-national perspective, and in this way can further contribute to developing our understanding of the empirical relationship between inequality and democracy.

A graphical representation of the variation in wealth inequality can be seen in Figure 8.1, which shows the substantial variation in the share of net wealth which is owned by the top one percent in seventeen different OECD countries. Here it can be seen that whilst wealth inequality is a cross-national problem, there are a diverse range of experiences within national contexts. It is worth considering whether the more extreme cases of wealth inequality have a substantial impact on the functioning of these societies as democratic polities, through the way that they shape the engagement and capacity to engage of the citizens within them. As was highlighted in Chapter Seven, aspects of this growing trend are visible in the BDI measure, with the measure identifying countries where there are more substantive gaps in the outcomes which are achieved in the four capabilities domains which are included.
A central dimension of the relationship between inequality and democracy which is being explored in the growing body of literature is the impact which inequality has upon political participation (Loveless 2016), especially with reference to voter turnout (Solt 2008; Anderson & Beramendi 2012; Solt 2010). Based upon the nature of the relationship between income inequality and democratic participation, recent work suggests that rising inequality is a particularly troubling phenomenon. As existing research on the influence of inequality on democracy has shown, “income inequality exerts a consistent, independent, and significantly negative effect on turnout” (Anderson & Beramendi 2012, p.726). In short, “rising income inequality has a de-mobilising effect, particularly for ‘the poor’” (Loveless 2016, p.1003). With citizen participation being a central requirement for the functioning of democracy, this is a substantive issue facing contemporary democracies. Irrespective of the precise causal drivers of the suppressing effect which inequality has on political participation, it is important that it is incorporated into understanding the quality of democracy, because it has been identified as having such a negative impact on political participation.
Considering the rising prominence of these problems, it would be worthwhile exploring the relationships that exist between the new measure of democracy presented, political participation, and attitudes towards democracy. The argument advanced throughout the thesis implies that we should expect to see the inequality measured in the BDI impact upon these two areas, as they are both tied to the views of individuals. It would be worth identifying whether societies which have a lower quality of democracy on the more expansive measure presented also perform worse on participation and upon attitudes towards democracy.

8.3 Contributions to the Literature

This thesis makes a variety of contributions to the existing literature on measuring the quality of democracy. The overall contribution of this thesis is to take many of the insights which the capability approach has provided in a variety of different spaces, and to turn those insights towards the practice of measuring democracy, especially with reference to understanding the relationship between individuals and the democracy which they live in. As a direct contribution to the literature, this is developed by exploring how freedom is conceptualised in existing measures of democracy, and also by exploring the theoretical aspects of the connection between the freedom of individuals, and the democracy they live in. The thesis also contributes to understanding the manner through which measures of democracy have developed, in relation to theoretical framing of measurement, as well as evaluating the role of data availability as a factor in measurement construction. As a research output, the primary contribution of the thesis is the creation of a measure of democracy which employs a more expansive definition of freedom. If we consider how different the new measure is from existing measures, then this represents a substantive contribution, as it represents a new tool which scholars can use to engage with questions about the health of democracy in established democratic societies.

The relatively recent development of the capability approach as a systematic way of thinking about freedom and well-being means that it is still being integrated into many different disciplines (Robeyns 2005). The primary advocates of the capability approach still regard it as at least partially incomplete (Claassen 2009), with some issues in the approach as a comprehensive ethical doctrine which still
need to be worked through (Nussbaum 2011b). This can result in ambiguity in conceptualisation, as there is disagreement as to which capabilities matter, and in which contexts they matter. These disagreements contribute to the fact that there is much more consensus with regards to identifying those experiencing absolute rather than relative capability deprivations (Kwadzo 2015). Consequently, where the capability approach has been employed in political science scholarship as a tool of evaluation, it has tended to be used in the context of developing and middle-income economies, rather than high-income countries (Burchi & De Muro 2016). For these countries, the difference between relative poverty and absolute poverty is much smaller, and thus definitional issues in measurement of poverty are less controversial. In addition to the relatively more challenging task of conceptualising those experiencing deprivation in high-income countries, the urgency associated with addressing extreme poverty has directed attention towards countries where there are substantively higher levels of extreme poverty.

Further exacerbating the disconnect between measures of democracy and measures of capability is the degree to which the capability approach has been primarily employed as a tool of economic analysis, rather than a tool of political analysis. In essence, measurement has been applied to find spaces where development can be improved (for example, in the HDI), rather than to critique distributional outputs as a political problem for democracy. In the context of high-income countries where capabilities are considered, evaluations of the distribution of capabilities remain a separate problem from the functioning of democracy (Rippin 2015; Burchardt & Vizard 2014; Vizard & Speed 2015). This thesis has filled some the gaps in this part of the literature by helping to demonstrate that the capabilities approach has insights to provide on the relationship between individuals and the democracy which they live in, especially in established democracies. The clearest insight provided has been to outline how inequality can act as a type of constraint on the types of options which individuals might view themselves as holding. This situates the approach as a tool of political evaluation, and treats the associated outcomes which are identified as deeply connected to political issues, rather than as a separate question of social justice. Hence, as a contribution to the literature this thesis develops the case for measuring capability...
as a component democracy, and builds a measure to demonstrate the empirical differences which arise from using this different definition of freedom.

This thesis also contributes to the growing body of literature on quality of democracy measures. The literature already canvasses issues ranging from conceptualisation (Pinto, Magalhães & de Sousa 2012), through to replicability of measures (Pickel, Stark & Breustedt 2015), and is growing rapidly with further contributions in those areas. In many ways arising as a response to Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen’s (2009) seminal piece identifying problems in the conceptualisation of extant measures of democracy, the literature on measuring the quality of democracy is working to greatly improve the care which scholars adopt when employing measures of democracy (Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016). This thesis contributes to that task by highlighting the narrow conception of freedom which is currently available in existing measures of democracy. In providing this evaluation, the thesis reveals some of the limits existing measures of democracy have, and points to important issues for democracy which the most popular existing measures are ill-equipped to identify. Based upon the public function which measures like Freedom House often perform, where they inform the wider public about the health of democracy across the world, an awareness of the problems which these measures are unable to identify is valuable (Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016).

The core contribution of the thesis to the literature is that it presents a theoretical perspective that differs from those currently popular within the measurement literature, in the way that the individual is positioned in relation to democracy. The dominant perspective within the literature on measuring democracy as it relates to the individual is to position them externally to the evaluation, and to think of the outcomes which they experience as democratic outputs (Geissel, Kneuer & Lauth 2016, p.576). Recently, attempts have been made that seek to incorporate individuals tend to include the individual in relation to their perspectives on the quality of the democracy in which they live in (Pickel, Breustedt & Smolka 2016). The perspective presented here is to include citizens within the understanding of the quality of the democracy they are situated in. Not just with respect to how they evaluate their democracy, but rather, with respect to the degree to which they can be plausibly described as facing constraints on engaging or
interacting in the political process, based upon the capabilities which they possess. This is an important differentiation, as it positions the relationship between the individual and their democracy in a much more prominent way. In turn, this suggests that when engaging in the practice of democracy, for the long-term viability of a democratic society, attending to the concerns of the broader population may be required rather than just focusing on attending to the concerns of a sufficient number of citizens so as to form a governing majority. Whilst this may be acceptable in more minimalist accounts of democracy, like those advocated for by Schumpeter and Przerwoski, it may be detrimental to the long-term support which individuals have for democracy as political system, and ultimately undermine the sustainability of democratic regimes.

An underlying sub-theme of the thesis is the degree to which the prospects for future generations of democratic citizens may be becoming more polarised, and for those on the lower end of the distribution, their prospects may be becoming substantively worse (Autor & Dorn 2013). Whilst there is existing literature that engages with this phenomenon, it is primarily economics based literature (on this see: Frey & Osborne 2017). This thesis links the economic literature to the practice of evaluating the quality of democracy to suggest that future prospects might also play a formative role in the quality of the functioning of democratic society. The literature on measuring democracy that provides any discussion of future prospects does so on the basis of the sustainability of society (Campbell, Carayannis & Rehman 2015), rather than on the viability of the opportunities available for different groups of citizens. These are issues which impact on how individuals might live and function in their society, and thus are an important component in understanding how someone might relate to their society. If the argument is compelling that the opportunities which citizens have are important for how they can contribute to their democracy, then it follows that these issues are of equal significance for the long-term prospects of democracy.

The thesis has also grappled with the historical factors which shaped earlier measurement endeavours – a notion which is valuable to scholars interested in the history of the discipline. Furthermore, understanding the factors which shaped early measurement construction remains important to comprehending the
construction of contemporary measurement, insofar as measures remain constrained by the data and conceptual construction of the preceding measures. This continued influence is evident in the way that new measures often integrate old measures as a component of evaluation – for example, Campbell’s democracy ranking system bases half of the score awarded on the existing Freedom House score. Whilst it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel when constructing a new measure, it is important to understand why the wheel spins in the direction that it does.

Most importantly, by highlighting the differences in evaluation when different definitions of freedom are employed, the thesis demonstrates the degree to which this is a crucial axis upon which we can understand democracy. The empirical validation of this argument represents a valuable contribution to the literature, by demonstrating that the current measures of democracy may be missing important features of a democracy in their evaluation. The absence of these features is particularly salient in evaluating established democracies, where the primary differences between democracies are not occurring in the non-interference based paradigm. Instead, it is in the day-to-day freedom as capability which individuals possess which shapes their engagement with the political process in a much more substantive way. Considering the importance that is placed upon democracy as a political ideal, it is essential that it is evaluated effectively.

8.4 Potential Avenues for Further Research

There are many avenues where the research presented in this thesis can be further developed. The first area is in the development of more comprehensive cross-national multidimensional capability indicators. The measures used to evaluate the capability dimension of the BDI are relatively crude, and would be well served by being developed to include an increasingly sophisticated account of the capabilities of individual citizens. The second area where future research can be conducted is to work on the calibration of the new measure. As highlighted in Chapter Seven, there are some issues with the classification of the different democracies which were evaluated by the measure. By developing the calibration of the new measure, it would further enhance the understanding of established democracies. Considering the pressing questions raised by Mounk and Foa about
whether democratic deconsolidation can occur in established democracies, it is worthwhile refining our understanding of the quality of democracy in established democracies. One way of doing that is with better measurement instruments for scholars. The BDI is a step in the right direction, but it can only be developed into a more refined tool through extensive debate with other scholars about some of the more nuanced issues the measure aims to explore.

One major area for potential future research is to increase our understanding of how individuals relate to the long-term opportunities which they have available to them, and how they then connect those prospects to the political process. There are a variety of reasons which suggest that this would be a worthwhile research endeavour. The way that an account of freedom as capability can be used to understand the success of populist candidates in recent times suggests that this is an important phenomenon for established democracies where prospects are diminishing. Irrespective of the content of the decisions people make in the political process, it is important to come to understand the factors which influence how they make those decisions. This becomes particularly pertinent in the context of the findings in the recent work by Achen and Bartels (2016) that often, the process through which individuals make political decisions is far from rational, and the effects of this are most pronounced in economically troubling conditions. If populists are drawing appeal from a disenchanted working class who see a diminishing future for themselves ahead, then it is worthwhile understanding how they convert those feelings into a political perspective.

There remains the insight raised by Nussbaum that those who employ the capability approach as a tool of evaluation in development often ignore some of the more important philosophical dimensions to the approach (Nussbaum 2015, p.10). It may be worthwhile exploring this critique in a systematic way to evaluate whether there are specific aspects of the approach which are underemphasised as a consequence of this phenomenon. The analysis presented in Chapter Three suggests that this is likely the case, as the presence of positivist tendencies was taken to shape the construction of measurement endeavours in the construction of early measures of democracy.
Another potential avenue for future research is to explore how people conceive of their freedom in day-to-day life, and how different circumstances impact how people understand their freedom. The basis of this thesis is on defending a comprehensive conception of freedom which also includes the limitations which plausible barriers to action play in preventing individuals from acting as they otherwise might like to. It would be worthwhile to explore the relationship between systemic deprivations and conceptualisation of freedom generally to ask the question: do people who possess less freedom as capability think of freedom in different terms to those who have more opportunities?

8.5 To Conclude:

This thesis evaluated the question of whether measures of democracy were constructed in a way that properly measured the freedom of citizens in established democracies. It was found that there is substantial scope to increase the degree to which freedom is incorporated into the measurement of democracy. This was demonstrated by constructing a new measure of democracy which used a more expansive definition of freedom. It was argued that this more expansive measurement of democracy brings it more in line with the lived experience of democratic citizens in established democracies, and in turn, brings measures of democracy more towards an analysis sensitive to democracy in the real world. From a normative perspective, the measure presented in the thesis increases the degree to which measurement captures the features of democracy which make it a desirable political system.

The problems which democracies face today should be factored into understanding the health of those democracies. If democracies are not equipped to deal with these problems, then this is a fact which should register in how we understand them. Currently, the polarisation of the opportunities available to citizens in democracies is increasing, and it is creating increased pressure for change in many democratic polities. The polarisation of opportunities is linked to the rise of wealth inequality, as well as other forms of associated inequality, and this remains a prominent issue which democracies need to address. The way that literature identifying some of these problems is consistent with the observations made by the measure presented demonstrates that it reflects real world problems. In turn, it
suggests that the measure created in the thesis is one which is a tool that scholars can use to further understand the quality of democracy in established democracies.

The thesis has explored the various reasons that the measurement of democracy is currently constructed the way that it is: there are data limitations which have shaped measurement; there are theoretical disputes which have shaped definitional decisions; there are technical developments which have enabled more comprehensive data collection and analysis; and there are theoretical developments which have not yet fully been incorporated into the discipline of political science.

Whilst there remains some amount of work to developing and theorising a comprehensive, robust, cross-national measure of democracy that integrates the capability approach into evaluation, the prospects are strong for such a measure to be developed in the short-term. This has been demonstrated by developing the capabilities inclusive measure presented in the thesis. This measure is a starting point to a longer conversation about how a normatively oriented measure which employs objective data can be used to better understand democracy in the world. The measure demonstrates that no longer is data availability going to provide a legitimate basis for the exclusion of capabilities form the measurement of democracy.

If a system is a system of ‘the people’, then it can only be properly understood with some degree of reference to ‘the people’. Including more expansive measures of freedom increases the presence of ‘the people’ in the measurement of democracy, and thus enhances our empirical understanding of a more normatively oriented definition of democracy. Hence, in creating a measure which is more expansive in its conception of freedom and democracy, this thesis contributes a measure which is more aligned with what makes democracy worth valuing. In that sense, this thesis is not just a theoretical critique, nor an empirical analysis, but rather a bridge between two equally important areas of scholarship which engage with democracy.
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