Direct Democracy Worldwide

Challenging the common assumption that models of direct democracy and representative democracy are necessarily at odds, *Direct Democracy Worldwide* demonstrates how practices of direct and representative democracy interact under different institutional settings and uncovers the conditions that allow them to coexist in a mutually reinforcing manner. Whereas citizen-initiated mechanisms of direct democracy can spur productive relationships between citizens and political parties, other mechanisms of direct democracy often help leaders bypass other representative institutions, undermining republican checks and balances. The book also demonstrates that the embrace of direct democracy is costly, may generate uncertainties and inconsistencies, and in some cases is easily manipulated. Nonetheless, the promise of direct democracy should not be dismissed. Direct democracy is much more than a simple, pragmatic second choice when representative democracy seems not to be working as expected. Properly designed, it can empower citizens, breaking through some of the institutionalized barriers to accountability that arise in representative systems.

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Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
To Ro, Naomi, and Mati
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I remember exactly how I became interested in the study of political science. It was about thirty years ago, during the spring of 1980, in Uruguay, the country where I was born. At that time, Uruguay was under military rule and the military attempted to ratify – via a plebiscite – a new constitution that sought to establish a new order in the country, essentially a militarily protected democracy. A few days before the plebiscite, I asked my father how he was planning to vote. With no knowledge of the political leanings of my schoolmates’ parents (and perhaps fearful that they were members of the military regime), he sat me on his lap. Softly and calmly, he told me that he and my mother were voting against the military, but that I could not tell anyone... ANYONE! When I asked why they were voting “no,” he explained that sometimes the “bad guys” govern, and that he and my mother did not want that kind of future for Uruguay. My intuition then pushed me to ask why, if they were the bad guys, they were governing, when of course the good guys should be governing the country. I do not remember what my father told me then, but I do recall the perplexed look on his face. My confusion was later exacerbated in my search for an answer as to why the military accepted their disastrous defeat.

After the transition to democracy in Uruguay had been completed and democratic rulers were governing the country, I decided to study political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During my years in Israel, I lived in a kibbutz in the north of the country, Kibbutz Yehiam. Participating in several of the members’ assemblies on Saturday nights at the collective dining room, I was inspired by a completely new democratic experience. It was then that I experienced the most obvious and clear example of a participative, deliberative, direct democracy that I could ever imagine. But I soon realized that the kibbutz was not Israel and that a democracy could not exist only in meetings on Saturday nights. Something else must be in place.

By that time, political science had already become my obsession, and later I pursued a Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame. Though it was not to be my dissertation topic, my very first paper was on the subject of direct democracy.
From that time forward, I developed a secret intellectual love affair with direct democracy. When I returned to Latin America to begin my professional career, the constant search for improvements to democracy forced me to make, more often than not, new dates with my old intellectual love. Those dates formed the prelude to this book.

Since that time, I have become immeasurably indebted to those who have supported me in my intellectual pursuits – indeed, they are too numerous to acknowledge here. Yet, at the risk of forgetting someone, I cannot start to express my gratitude to my professors at the University of Notre Dame: Michael Coppedge, Robert Fishman, Andrew Gould, Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell, and Benjamin Radcliff. They taught me not only to organize scattered ideas but also to think. Yet I would not be exaggerating if I said that, in certain regards, I learned more from my classmates than from anyone else: Dan Brinks, Rossana Castiglioni, Andreas Feldmann, Carlos Guevara-Mann, and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, who were, and in a way still are, an informal working team.

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Also, I would like thank EFE for the picture reproduced in Figure 1.3, the Communal Archives of Rottenburg for letting me use the ballot displayed in Figure 4.1, and Pablo La Rosa for the picture reproduced in Figure 7.1.
Abbreviations

AFAP       Administradora de Fondos Previsionales (Administrator of Pension’s Savings Funds), Uruguay
ANCAP      Administración Nacional de Combustibles, Alcohol y Portland (Nacional Fuels Company), Uruguay
ANTEL      Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (National Telecommunications Company), Uruguay
AUTE       Sindicato de Trabajadores de UTE (Workers’ Union of UTE), Uruguay
CAFTA      Central America Free Trade Agreement
CFU        Commercial Farmers Union, Zimbabwe
CI-MDD     citizen-initiated mechanism of direct democracy
GDP        Gross Domestic Product
LPI        legislative popular initiative
LPP        Ley de Participación Popular (Law of Popular Participation), Bolivia
MAS        Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism), Bolivia
MDD        mechanism of direct democracy
MPP        Movimiento de Participación Popular (Popular Participation Movement), Uruguay
OECD       Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS        ordinary least-squares analysis
ONAJPU     Organización Nacional de Jubilados y Pensionistas del Uruguay (National Organization of Pensioners), Uruguay
OSE        Obras Sanitarias del Estado (National Water Supply Company), Uruguay
PIT-CNT    Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores-Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (Inter-Union Workers Plenary–National Workers Convention), Uruguay
PPP        purchasing power parity
QCA        qualitative comparative analysis
### Abbreviations

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<td>SUTEL</td>
<td>Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de las Telecomunicaciones (Workers’ Union of the National Telecommunications Company), Uruguay</td>
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<td>TD-MDD</td>
<td>top-down mechanism of direct democracy</td>
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<td>TDP</td>
<td>Turkmenistan Democratic Party</td>
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<td>TSCS</td>
<td>time-series cross-sectional</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTE</td>
<td>Administración Nacional de Usinas y Transmisiones Eléctricas (National Electricity Company), Uruguay</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union–Popular Front</td>
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<td>ZAPU</td>
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