1 *Understanding democracy once more*

In place of an introduction

The worldwide growth of democracy

Most studies discussing the concept of modern democracy emphasize events following the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence, a time when democratic regimes started to spread across the world. Democratic systems, however, were preceded by various forms of pre-democratic government – representations of citizens' assemblies that made decisions about national or community developments. In smaller communities, such governing bodies were gatherings of either all free men or representatives elected by all free men, while in larger societies they were summoned by a ruler – a king or a monarch. While not democracies, these various forms of representative assemblies resembled democratic governments in form and in their process of decision making. Specifically, in the primeval, small villages of Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) and in Italian towns, every male citizen could participate in the village/town meeting and could vote and decide on the main issues concerning their communities' development. This form of direct governing changed to indirect representation when the population in such communities grew. By the eleventh century, for instance, wealthy Italian towns such as Pisa, Siena, and Genoa, among others, established municipal councils with elected councilors that decided about the towns' development. The prior councils that included all citizens were replaced by councils of only wealthy merchants and nobility representing the needs or will of the whole population.

In states or countries headed by kings or monarchs, citizens' assemblies were rare; however, when they existed, such assemblies included only members of dominant social classes. For example, the thirteenth-century English parliament of Simon de Montfort comprised an equal number of representatives of each upper-strata social group: two

knights as representatives from each county, two affluent city dwellers from each city, and two wealthy members of each borough that voted on decisions proposed by a ruling king. A little more inclusive was the English parliament summoned by King Edward I, who periodically added representatives of a lesser social rank to counterbalance the limited support shown by the nobility. Also more inclusive was the first European parliament established in fifteenth-century Poland by King John I Albert, called the *Sejm*. The *Sejm* was a national institution of considerable importance. It was an assembly of local gentry and burghers initially gathered by the king to raise funds for the country. However, it gained unusual and excessive power after the crown accepted a rule that no new law could be established without approval by the *Sejm*, the rule called *Nihil Novi*. Unfortunately this democratic-type rule tremendously limited the power of Polish kings and eventually, with an added right of veto given to each member of the *Sejm*, led to the country's partition and occupation.

The path to the development of modern forms of democracy was opened by the revolutions in France and in America in the late eighteenth century, and democratic systems were established in various parts of North and South America, in Europe and Africa and, by the end of the nineteenth century, in Asia. Although most of the first democracies were not consolidated or longlasting, a steady increase in the number of democratic transitions signaled the coming era of democracy (Gurr, Jagger, & Moore 1990; Fukuyama 1992). The remarkable growth in the democratization of countries over the past forty years has captured the political imagination of the world and, not surprisingly, there has been a relatively recent increase in the curiosity of scholars, policy-makers, and the public alike as to which factors contribute to, or modulate, democratic growth (Lipset 1994; Przeworski et al. 1996, 2000). So has democracy, at last, won the contest for the support of people throughout the world? Hardly. "Democratic governments (with varying degrees of democracy) exist in fewer than half of the countries in the world, which contain less than half of the world's population" (Dahl 1989, 1). Also, "Many young democracies emerge in the presence of challenging initial conditions such as widespread poverty and inequality, economic dependence on a small range of commodities and high levels of ethnic fragmentation among other social divisions ... initial conditions may also motivate politicians to centralize political and economic power, rather than

distribute it more widely" (Kapstein and Converse 2009, 2, xv). Nonetheless, as Fukuyama and McFaul argue, the benefits of democracy and democratic coexistence significantly outweigh the costs; therefore, democracy's spread should be promoted and not discouraged (Fukuyama & McFaul 2007).

Some scholars believe that, even though there is no current alternative to democracy as a principle of legitimacy, democracy may stand unchallenged in principle and yet in practice be formidably challenged in its performance (Holbrook 2008). It is with this understanding that we need " ... to seek theories that integrate both spheres, accounting for areas of enlargement between them" (Putnam 1988, 433). Therefore, the first section of this book is devoted to the content of recent theoretical and empirical debates on democracy and democratic processes, including definitions of democracy and the meaning of democracy's interpretations, as well as analyses of the development, rate, and trajectory of democracy by means of factors that lead to the establishment and sustainability of a democratic system. Such research is particularly pertinent to our understanding of the contemporary world, especially research that considers that the descriptive studies accounting for current reality do not satisfy the curiosity about what contributes to the initiation of democracy, democracy's growth or its delayed development, or regression from a democratic system.

After an initial introduction to existing interpretations, the ultimate goal of this book is to provide an empirically driven "road map" that describes the processes of adoption of democracy by various countries, as well as countries' democratization and re-democratization, and that ultimately serves to design a *threshold model* of democracy's development and sustainability. To create the model, I integrate and empirically assess the contribution of external and regional influences, diffusion supported by accessible information, as well as development and modernization factors in democracy's growth. These factors that lead to the likelihood of the successful adoption and growth of democracy are called "development" (concerned with endogenous processes of a country) and "diffusion" (referring to exogenous factors).

The threshold model helps to design a prediction scheme for the world's democratic or non-democratic future. Thus, from this discourse on democracy's diffusion, which combines an account of worldwide democratization and factors leading to democratization, stems a proposition of a threshold model of democracy adoption. The threshold

model is, in turn, applied to predict a future democratic or non-democratic world. Consequently, the volume concludes with a prognosis of the worldwide scope and rate of democratization until the second half of the twenty-first century.

Democracy: definitions and concepts

Democracy is an ancient political system that dates back more than two millennia; hence, over time, many scholars have analyzed and interpreted the concept of democracy, and "the very fact that democracy has such a lengthy history has actually contributed to confusion and disagreement, as 'democracy' has meant different things for different people at different times and places" (Dahl 2000, 3).

In general terms, democracy has been described as a political system that should guarantee to every adult citizen the right to vote, as well as "avoiding tyranny, essential rights, general freedom, self-determination, moral autonomy, human development, protecting essential personal interests, political equality, peace-seeking and prosperity" (Dahl 1989, 45). Two interpretations of the content and meaning of a democratic system have prevailed: first, democracy was viewed as an ideal, imaginary model, where the system is assessed as it should be; second, it was viewed as an existing reality, where the system is assessed according to what actually exists. Dahl calls the first interpretation an ideal type or a "value judgment," whereas the latter is an "empirical judgment" assessed according to an existing reality (Dahl 1989, 31).

In terms of particular characteristics, democracies vary significantly. The differences range from the degree of openness of ruling elites to inclusion of minorities within the governing body to the scope of guaranteed rights for social minorities. Thus, many of the oldest democracies that were generally considered to have had a consolidated democratic system were not always fully democratic (e.g., France in the 1950s was viewed as a weakening democratic state with limited civil rights). Also, in Western liberal democracies that are regarded as the most consolidated democratic systems, many citizens, including women and ethnic/racial minorities, were for decades excluded from the right to vote. Women received the right to vote a hundred years after most of the oldest liberal democracies were established: in the United States in 1920, in Canada in 1918, Britain in 1928, in France in 1944 and in the nearly 200-year-old democracy of Costa Rica in 1936.

This contradicts democracy's concept of the provision of equality to all citizens (Markoff 1996) and the fulfillment of the common desire of people to be recognized as equals (Tilly 2007). The treatment of Albanian minorities in Serbia or the Muslim population in Greece demonstrates the existence of other recent democracies that do not provide rights to minority citizens (Dinstein 1992).[1]

Similarly, many scholars perceive newly democratized African countries as weak because of a lack of unifying ideological principles, and because these contries do not embrace the concept of balance of power by their polity (Kissinger 2001; Kapstein & Converse 2009). In some of these democracies, the general laws and guiding principles of democratic rule are interpreted according to the convenience of the ruling elite, not democratic principles (Tilly 2005), making the African democracies weakly democratic in practice (Prempeh 2010, 19). Therefore, according to some academics, across periods of world history "democracy disappeared in practice, remaining barely alive as an idea or a memory among a precious few" (Dahl 2000, 3).

Thus, it may be puzzling to determine the causes of the development of democracy, particularly as many researchers and policy makers consider democracy the ultimate political system that is most beneficial to societal development. Scholars' curiosity could be also stimulated by the lengthy history of democracy and its diversified nature across countries and across time (Tilly 2007).

Causes of democracy's development

As the recent history of political thought suggests, academics have devoted equal attention to analyses of the development of democracy as to democratization processes. Starting with the powerful work of de Tocqueville (2009) through modern analyses, examinations incorporated theoretical investigations and pragmatic proposals that concentrated on several issues. Led by analyses of the taxonomy of democratic models (Held 1995) and democracy's prerequisites and

[1] Incidentally, in stark contrast were the communist countries and authoritarian government of the Soviet Union that granted equal rights to women from the time of inception of the communist political system in 1921. These rights included the right to vote and a quota system that guaranteed women election and representation in the top political offices of nearly one third of members (Tuttle 1986).

definitions (Dahl 1989, 2000), these examinations addressed the required responsiveness of a democratic government to its citizens (Dowding, Goodin, & Pateman 2004), development and sustainability of democratic governance (Tilly 2005, 2007), the concept of justice in relation to the democratic system and the importance of trust and rule of law (Rawls 1999; Tilly 2005), the honesty and integrity of the ruling elite (Kapstein & Converse 2009), citizens' inclusion in the governing process (Dahl 1989, 2000), and civil society and participatory citizenship (Skocpol & Fiorina 1999; Somers 1993). Other examinations concentrated on fairness in the distribution of economic and natural resources within democratic countries (Kapstein & Converse 2009, xix–xx) and across countries (Wallerstein 2001), and on social justice and its distribution (Dowding, Goodin, & Pateman 2004; Etzioni 2004). Studies on the factors that generate democratic growth (Schwartzman 1998; Skocpol 1998), the spread and diffusion of democratic systems (Huntington 1997; Wejnert 2005), and democratic movements (Tarrow 2005) concentrated on the assessment of worldwide growth in the number and strength of democratic systems.

Two distinct points of view dominated interpretations concerning the development and growth of democracy in the world. Some scholars believed that the prevalence of democracy is inevitable and thus marks an era of prosperity and human rights. Such an era is dominated by the cultural values of independence, individuality, and freedom (Fukuyama & McFaul 2007; Inglehart & Welzel 2005, 2009), values and appreciates individual achievement, and leads to the end of the world's history and the end of the last man (Fukuyama 1992; Mandelbaum 2004, 2008). A contrasting point of view is expressed by scholars who studied the crises of modern liberal democracies. These scholars believed that democracies are failing and hence, the time of worldwide democratization is coming to an end. Democratic supremacy will be replaced by authoritarian rule that, like democracy, supports a modernized market economy (Gat et al. 2009; Kagan 2008; Kaminsky 2013). The failure of democratic development was also perceived as resulting from the inequality of worldwide economic development, generated by the world-system dependency of underdeveloped countries on well-developed states (Wallerstein 2001).

Democracy as a political system is, therefore, far from the uniform political structure that most academics refer to as an ideal type of democracy. Rather, it is characterized by many divergences, changing

its form and nature when oscillating between more and less democratic governing. Regardless of differences between countries, the goal and principle of democracy remains the same – countries are striving to obtain rule by people and equal rights to their fullest extent. The uncertainty, prolonged history, changing nature of democracy, and multiple, still-unanswered questions regarding democratic growth make the subject of this study particularly intriguing and worth addressing.

Democratic history is marching on: historical overview of the trajectory and rate of worldwide democratization

The assessment of trends and progress of democratic developments across the world over time required construction of a comprehensive database incorporating indicators characterizing the democratic system and nature of democratic/non-democratic countries. This study is based on the derived database *Nations, Development and Democracy: 1800–2005* (Wejnert 2007) that integrates socioeconomic and political factors related to democratization for 177 members of the international system (20 of which are historical, 157 of which are contemporary countries) for the years 1800–2005.[2] A total of 65 annually recorded socioeconomic, demographic, political, and diffusion variables are included in the dataset.

Database and measurements

The database *Nations, Development and Democracy: 1800–2005* (Wejnert 2007) is derived in large part from two major datasets: *Polity IV: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transition Datasets, 1800–2009* (Marshall, Jagger, & Gurr 2009, 2011) and indicators of *Freedom in the World 1994–2009* (Freedom House 2009). The socioeconomic, demographic, and political variables are derived and merged from Marshall, Jagger and Gurr (2009) and Banks' (1993) *Cross-National Time Series, 1815–1973*. In addition, variables were coded from descriptions of political, economic, and social institutions in volumes of the *Statesman's Yearbook*; the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (Taylor & Jodice 1982); Osmanczyk's (1982)

[2] Included are only those countries that are recognized as independent members of the international system with populations greater than 500,000 in the early 2000s (Gurr & Jagger 1995a; Marshall, Jagger, & Gurr 2009)

Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations; and the journal *Freedom Review's* annual reports published by Freedom House (Freedom House 2009). Bollen's (1998) database *Liberal Democracy Indicators 1950–1990* was used to record data that were missing in the above datasets.

Included in the *Polity IV* dataset is an eleven-point scale developed by Jagger and Gurr (1995a); Marshall and Gurr (2012) that assesses level of democratization. The index is composed of major components that represent characteristics of democracy: (a) competitiveness of political participation, (b) regulation of political participation, (c) competitiveness of executive recruitment, (d) openness of executive recruitment, and (e) constraints on chief executives. These five components are in keeping with the definition of political democracy as the "extent to which the political power of elites is minimized and that of non-elites is maximized" (Bollen 1980), which is similar to an ideal model of democracy assessed according to its principles rather than performance (Dahl 1989, 38). Each component is weighted 0–3 or 0–4 on the basis of the presence of 2–7 characteristics per component, and a total democratization score is the sum of the five components' weights.

In Jagger and Gurr's system, a maximum score of 10 depicts a fully developed democracy, whereas a minimum score of 0 represents a lack of democracy. On the basis of their research, Gurr (1974) and Gurr, Jagger, & Moore (1990) designated a score of 7 or more as representing *coherent, stable democracies*, and scores ranging from 1 to 6 as *incoherent* or *transitional democracies*. Clearly, countries that have low levels of democracy also may have some level of autocracy. An index of autocracy is included in the *Polity IV* dataset and in the database *Nations, Development and Democracy: 1800–2005* (Wejnert 2007). However, given this study's focus on the prediction of the rate of democratization, autocracy scores are not considered, regardless of their potential enrichment of the understanding of polity development.

The significant advantage of using the *Polity IV* dataset (Marshall, Jagger & Gurr 2009) is its incorporation of longitudinal data from 1800–2008. No other available dataset provides an index of democratization level across all sovereign countries over a comparable time span. However, there are some disadvantages to using *Polity IV* indicators of democracy that are worth briefly mentioning. First, there is some degree of subjective interpretation of monographic and other source materials in deriving democracy scores. Second, Western liberal

democracies are attributed very high democracy scores. For instance, France was awarded a score of 10 from 1930 until 1941 even though during this time French women did not have the right to vote (women received this right in 1944). Similarly, the United States has had a score of 10 since 1870, despite visible discrimination and lack of votes for women and people of color. And Costa Rica was considered to be highly democratic for nearly a hundred years before women obtained the right to vote in 1936 (Tuttle 1986). Furthermore, Switzerland has been given the highest score for democracy (10 out of 10) since 1848, although women received the right to vote only in 1971.[3]

In light of these problems:

(1) The authors of the database adopted rigid scores and rules of coding democracy in *Polity III* and *Polity IV* data as an attempt to limit subjectivity (see Jagger & Gurr (1995b) and Marshall & Gurr (2012) for details).
(2) Jagger & Gurr (1995a) tested the convergent validity of their democracy scale by comparing it against scales developed by other researchers, such as Gasiorowski (1993), Bollen (1980), Arat (1991), Vanhanen (1990), Coppedge & Reinicke (1990), and Freedom House (annual 1973–1994). Correlations ranged between 0.85 and 0.92 ($p < 0.01$), indicating comparability of the various scales with their own scale (Jagger & Gurr 1995a). Moreover, the Jagger and Gurr scale correlates highly with that of Bollen (1980), which is based on the two major components of political liberty and popular sovereignty ($r = 0.89$, $p < 0.01$; Jagger & Gurr 1995a).
(3) In this book, to assess the validity of the *Polity IV* dataset, the indicators were drawn from the broadly used *Polity III* dataset (Jagger & Gurr 1995b) for the years 1800–1994 and extended with the *Political Freedom Indicators* (Freedom House 2000) for the years 1995–1999. The comparability of *Polity IV* with *Polity III* was assessed with the extended scale by correlating data, and a correlation score of above 0.9 was obtained. High correlation scores indicate the similarity of *Polity IV* with the previously frequently used *Polity III* dataset, and attest to the validity of the *Polity IV* dataset, justifying its use in this study.

[3] Indeed, the significantly diminished importance of election outcomes is associated with Switzerland's collective executive that in great part relates to the long-term exclusion of women from the right to vote.

Nonetheless, the dataset of *Polity III* (Jagger & Gurr 1995b) and subsequently *Polity IV* of Marshall, Jagger & Gurr (2009) met with criticism. Przeworski et al. (2000) argue for correcting the weakness of the *Polity IV* scale through the inclusion of (a) an assessment of democracy focusing on competition for office via free election, (b) existence of more than one party, and (c) alteration of political power. At the same time Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán (2001) propose to use a trichotomous measurement of democracy. They also argue that many existing scales violate major democratic principles, being biased toward leftist governments and being assessed too leniently in earlier years in comparison to the 1990s and 2000s. According to the authors, the definition of democracy should include assessment of the real power of elected officials, whether or not they rule *de facto*, and its focus on governmental protection of civil liberties, including freedom to elect. Hence, measurement of inclusiveness of franchise should be added to the scale, such as an assessment of whether or not elections trigger mass civilian protests. As another correction, the authors propose scales that include democracies with one-party systems where the electorate is satisfied with the party in power, as exemplified by Japan (Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán (2001), 42–48).

Furthermore, Bowman, Lehaucq, and Mahoney (2005, 941) questioned the validity and accuracy of the existing, long-term datasets (such as the *Polity III* and *Polity IV* data), as incorporating data-induced measurement of democracy. The authors proposed measurements that rely on a broad range of data sources and experts' opinions. As such, substantive knowledge of countries would limit miscoding and biased selection of one measure over others. Consequently, regardless of high correlations between measures of democracy of different scales, Bowman, Lehaucq, and Mahoney (2005) believe that limited data or data inadequacy create substantive implications for the validity of many comprehensive, longitudinal datasets.

It is impossible to dispute the valid points of the raised critiques; nonetheless, considering the longitudinal nature of the study and its focus on the character of processes of democratization, I agree with Dahl (1989, 199) that "although at this point a complete, reliable, and current account of all democratic countries in the world appears to be unavailable, the two datasets *Polity III* and *Freedom House* allow fairly good estimates of democratization." In this study, therefore, an index of democracy was drawn from the datasets *Polity IV,*