The Voice of the People

James S. Fishkin

... The deliberative poll is unlike any poll or survey ever conducted. Ordinary polls model what the public is thinking, even though the public may not be thinking very much or paying much attention. A deliberative poll attempts to model what the public *would* think, had it a better opportunity to consider the questions at issue.

The idea is simple. Take a national random sample of the electorate and transport those people from all over the country to a single place. Immerse the sample in the issues, with carefully balanced briefing materials, with intensive discussions in small groups, and with the chance to question competing experts and politicians. At the end of several days of working through the issues face to face, poll the participants in detail. The resulting survey offers a representation of the considered judgments of the public—the views the entire country would come to if it had the same experience of behaving more like ideal citizens immersed in the issues for an extended period.

A deliberative poll is not meant to describe or predict public opinion. Rather it prescribes. It has a recommending force: these are the conclusions people would come to, were they better informed on the issues and had the opportunity and motivation to examine those issues seriously. It allows a microcosm of the country to make recommendations to us all after it has had the chance to think through the issues. If such a poll were broadcast before an election or a referendum, it could dramatically affect the outcome.

A deliberative poll takes the two technologies, polling and television, that have given us a superficial form of mass democracy, and harnesses them to a new and constructive purpose—giving voice to the people under conditions where the people can think....

... The deliberative poll has not developed in a vacuum. It builds on important work in encouraging citizen deliberation. It also builds on the movement toward public journalism....

... We gathered the national random sample for the first deliberative poll, April 15–17, 1994, at the Granada Television Studio in Manchester, England. We attracted participants by paying their expenses, offering them a small honorarium, telling them they would be on national television, and advising them that they would be part of an important experiment in democracy....

What did the event accomplish? It demonstrated the viability of a different form of opinion polling and, in a sense, a different form of democracy. As we have seen, Americans have long struggled with how to adapt democracy to the large nation-state. Face-to-face democracy cannot be applied to large states. Even in Rhode Island, the anti-Federalists could not gather everyone together to hear all the arguments on either side. It was for this reason that the Federalists boycotted the referendum on the U.S. Constitution and said that the only appropriate method for making a decision was the elected state convention. A *representation* of the people, in the form of those elected to go to the convention, would be able to hear all the competing arguments and make an informed decision.

But recall the persistent anti-Federalist worry that no *elected* representation would be representative. Ordinary people like them—farmers, laborers, people without a great deal of education—would tend to get left out. The lawyers and judges and wealthy elite of the day would make the decisions. The elected microcosm, in other words, would not be a genuine microcosm —and might not consider or understand *their* interests.

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Democracy, even in the elitist sense of the Founders, was only revived by the notion of elected representation. But another form of representation lay hidden in the dust of history. It was employed by the legislative commissions, citizens' juries and the Council in ancient Athens (the crucial body that set the agenda for meetings of the citizen Assembly). This other method was selection by lot or random sampling. In one sense the use of random sampling in politics was revived by opinion polling. After all, what is a random sample, at bottom, but a lottery? But in the ancient Greek form, and in the form employed in the deliberative poll, opinions are taken not from isolated citizens but from citizens meeting together, deliberating on common problems. These polls represent the considered judgments of the polity, not the top-of-the-head reactions of isolated citizens. Institutions that speak for the people need to be both representative and deliberative. The ancient Greek innovation was a random sample of citizens who deliberated together and in that way realized both values. And this is the form I propose to adapt to the television age.

If this new—and very old—form of democracy were employed in a general election, at the beginning of the primary season, or before a referendum, then the recommending force of the public's considered judgments, broadcast on national television, might well make a difference to the outcome. Recall Samuel Popkin's argument that voters are inclined to follow cues as arbitrary as President Ford's choking on a tamale in San Antonio. Surely, the cues formed from an elaborate deliberative process should be worth paying attention to. When broadcast on national television and disseminated in the press, the deliberative poll can affect the public's conclusions, but it can also affect the way that public frames and understands issues. If televised deliberative polls succeed in communicating the deliberative process, they can help transform the public agenda to the agenda of an engaged public—to an agenda citizens will care about, and be attracted by, because it will be framed in terms that speak to their concerns in ordinary life. . . .

Most ambitiously, the Deliberative Poll can be thought of as an actual sample for a hypothetical society—the deliberative and engaged society we do not have. Ideally, we should get everyone thinking and discussing the issues. But as we have seen the forces of rational ignorance are powerful. Yet although we cannot get everyone actively engaged under most conditions, through the deliberative poll we can do the experiment and get the microcosm engaged—and then broadcast the results to everyone else. Citizens in the microcosm are not subject to rational ignorance. Instead of one insignificant vote in millions each of them has an important role to play in a nationally televised event. With true engagement and attention from the microcosm this representation of the public's judgment becomes a voice worth listening to.

One of the key decisions we made in planning the British Deliberative Poll sheds light on the experiment's aspirations, both in Britain and in the United States. The problem was the seemingly simple issue of where in the schedule to place the small-group discussions. We struggled with two different models of how these discussions serve the deliberative process. One is by *absorption*, the other is by *activation*. In one model the respondents *absorb* information from competing experts, mull that information over in small groups, and form their conclusions. On this model the participants would spend a great deal of time listening to competing presentations of relevant factual materials and then they would process those materials in small group discussions.

In the second model, we attempt to do something far more ambitious. There, the small group discussions come first, before participants have any contact with experts or politicians. On this strategy, we facilitate the citizens' melding into groups first, identifying their key concerns first, establishing rapport among themselves first, setting the agenda of the questions and concerns

they wish to raise first—and only then put them together with the competing experts and competing politicians. The second model, instead of absorbing its agenda from the experts, energizes a public voice coming *from* the citizens so that it can speak *to* the elites. This strategy was followed in the Manchester experiment, and it set an example for how we hope to conduct future deliberative polls. . . .

The logic is very simple. If we take a microcosm of the entire country and subject it to a certain experience, and if the microcosm (behaving in the way we would like ideal citizens to behave in seriously deliberating about the issues) then comes to different conclusions about those issues, our inference is simply that if, somehow, the entire country were subjected to the same experience as the microcosm, then hypothetically the entire country would also come to similar conclusions.

Of course, it is unlikely the entire country ever would approximate the experiences of a deliberative poll. Even when there is an intense debate, it may well be dominated by attack ads and misleading sound bites. But the point is that if, somehow, the public were enabled to behave more like ideal citizens, then the deliberative poll offers a representation of what the conclusions might look like. That representation should have a prescriptive value. It is an opportunity for the country, in microcosm, to make recommendations to itself through television under conditions where it can arrive at considered judgments.

Earlier I emphasized four democratic values—deliberation, nontyranny, political equality, and participation. I noted that efforts to fully realize all four have usually been unsuccessful. In particular, the move toward mass democracy—a move realized by increasing participation and political equality—has had a cost in deliberation. By transferring the effective locus of many decisions to the mass public, the system is far less deliberative than it would have been had those decisions been left in the hands of elites—elected representatives and party leaders. The deliberative poll, however, offers a *representation* of a democracy that meets all four conditions. With a deliberative atmosphere of mutual respect, tyranny of the majority is unlikely. When all the citizens are effectively motivated to think through the issues, when each citizen's views count equally, and when every member of the microcosm participates, the other three values are realized as well. Fully realizing those values throughout the entire society may be hypothetical. But we can see, in microcosm, what deliberation, political equality, participation and non-tyranny would look like.

Suppose, hypothetically, that the new institution of Deliberative Polling somehow became as accepted a part of our public life as, say, conventional polling is today. Deliberative Polling at the state and local level need not be unusual or expensive. Transportation is a key component of the expense on the national level, and local deliberative polls would not face such a hurdle.

The experience of serious citizen deliberation seems to have a galvanizing effect on the participant's interest in public affairs. So far the evidence for this proposition has been largely anecdotal, but we hope to study this phenomenon systematically in follow-ups with participants in the British project. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is a *continuing* effect. In the same way that the citizen mentioned earlier was galvanized to read "every newspaper every day," we might imagine that he continues to be a far more engaged citizen—discussing public issues with others, being more aware of the media, and becoming more likely to participate in public or civic affairs. If Deliberative Polls ever became a staple of public life, we would end up with a society of more seriously engaged citizens—one which was not just a *representation* of how all four democratic values could be achieved but rather an *embodiment* of their achievement. Just as the apparatus of selection by lot in ancient Athens involved so many citizens, so often, that it seems to have galvanized an active citizenry, it is not inconceivable

that selection by lot for Deliberative Polls could, someday, have the same effect on our country.

It is not inconceivable, but it is, admittedly, unlikely. Such a flourishing of a new institution is clearly utopian, even as a matter of aspiration. But the image helps clarify an ideal—a picture of the reconstructed role of citizen, not just on television but in actual life. At a minimum, the deliberative poll can articulate the considered judgments of an informed citizenry and broadcast those conclusions to the nation. It provides a different, and more thoughtful, public voice. Other innovations and other institutions would have to be relied on if we are to create a seriously engaged mass citizenry as a routine part of our national life. . . .

To make a democracy that works, we need citizens who are engaged, communities that function, and media that speak *for* us as well as *about* us. If we pay attention to the conditions under which citizens become reconnected to political life, we can create a public worthy of public opinion—and public judgment. It would indeed be "magic town" if we brought such a spirit to the entire country.

Defining and Developing Democracy

Larry Diamond

The basis of a democratic state is liberty.
—Aristotle, *The Politics*

Since April of 1974, when the Portuguese military overthrew the Salazar/Caetano dictatorship, the number of democracies in the world has multiplied dramatically. Before the start of this global trend, there were about forty democracies. The number increased moderately through the late 1970s and early 1980s as several states experienced transitions from authoritarian rule (predominantly military) to democratic rule. In the mid-1980s, the pace of global democratic expansion accelerated markedly. By the end of 1995, there were as many as 117 democracies or as few as 76, depending on how one counts. . . .

The Best Form of Government

. . . The normative perspective underlying this book is that democratization is generally a good thing and that democracy is the best form of government. However, democracy is not an unmitigated blessing. Dating back to Aristotle (and to Plato, who had even less sympathy for democracy), the key shapers of democratic political thought have held that the best realizable form of government is mixed, or constitutional, government, in which freedom is constrained by the rule of law and popular sovereignty is tempered by state institutions that produce order and stability.[3] Aristotle saw that, in a state of pure democracy, "where the multitude have the supreme power, and supersede the law by their decrees . . . demagogues spring up," and democracy degenerates into a form of despotism.[4]

Thus, as Locke, Montesquieu, and the American Federalists asserted, only a constitutional government, restraining and dividing the temporary power of the majority, can protect individual freedom. This fundamental insight (and value) gave birth to a tradition of political thought—liberalism—and to a concept—liberal democracy—that are central to this book. As elaborated below, I use the term *liberal* to mean a political system in which individual and group liberties are well protected and in which there exist autonomous spheres of civil society and private life, insulated from state control. . . .

Even if we think of democracy as simply the rule of the people, as a system for choosing government through free and fair electoral competition at regular intervals, governments chosen in this manner are generally better than those that are not. They offer the best prospect for accountable, responsive, peaceful, predictable, good governance. And, as Robert Dahl cogently observes, they promote "freedom as no feasible alternative can."[6] . . .

Up to a point consistent with the principles of constitutionalism and representative democracy, government is better when it is more democratic. This is not to argue that even electoral democracy is easily attainable in any country at any time.[7]

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3. Gabriel A. Almond, "Political Science: The History of the Discipline," in *A New Handbook of Political Science*, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 53–61. See also David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), chaps. 1, 2.

4. Aristotle, *The Politics*, edited by Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1292.

6. Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), chap. 8; quotations at 88 and 89.

7. There are certain economic, social, and cultural conditions for democracy to be viable, but they are often overstated, and we should be cautious about

However, more democracy makes government more responsive to a wider range of citizens. . . .

Normatively, I assume here that accountability of rulers to the ruled and government responsiveness to the diverse interests and preferences of the governed are basic goods. So also are the minimization of violence in political life and of arbitrary action by government. And so, above all, is liberty. Increasingly in the twentieth century, the freedoms of the individual to think, believe, worship, speak, publish, inquire, associate, and become informed, and the freedoms from torture, arbitrary arrest, and unlawful detention—not to mention enslavement and genocide—are recognized as universal and inalienable human rights. . . .

Liberal democracy provides, by definition, comparatively good protection for human rights. However, there is no reason that electoral democracy and liberty must go together. Historically, liberty—secured through constitutional, limited government and a rule of law—came about before democracy both in England and, in varying degrees, in other European states. And today . . . there are many illiberal democracies, with human rights abuses and civil strife. These two facts have rekindled intellectual interest in liberal autocracy as a better, safer, more stable form of government for many transitional societies.[11]

In times of very limited education and political consciousness, when the franchise could be confined to a narrow elite, liberal autocracy was possible. In today's world, it is an illusion, a historical anachronism. Save for two island states with populations of 100,000 each (Tonga; Antigua and Barbuda), there are no autocracies in the world that could possibly qualify as liberal.[12] And there will not be any significant ones in the future, for liberalism insists upon the sovereignty of the people to decide their form of government—and these days, according to Marc Plattner, "popular sovereignty can hardly fail to lead to popular government."[13] In an age of widespread communication and political consciousness, people expect political participation and accountability much more than they did in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. The only way the demand for meaningful political participation and choice can be suppressed is to constrain liberty. Thus, as noted above, there is a powerful association between democracy and liberty: "countries that hold free elections are overwhelmingly more liberal than those that do not."[14] Indeed, the more closely countries meet the standards of electoral democracy (free and fair, multiparty elections by secret and universal ballot), the higher their human rights rating.[15] . . .

positing them as "prerequisites." See Larry Diamond, "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered," in *Reexamining Democracy: Essays in Honor of Seymour Martin Lipset*, edited by Gary Marks and Larry Diamond (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992), 93–139.

11. Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (1997): 22–43.

12. And even these governments are not very liberal, for the same reason that liberal autocracy is generally not possible: when Antiguans and Tongans demand real democracy, they are harassed by the state or the ruling party. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1996–1997* (New York: Freedom House, 1997), 125, 488. As I explain in greater detail below, each year Freedom House rates countries on a scale from 1 to 7 on two measures, political rights and civil liberties (1 being most liberal). It also classifies all the countries in the world as to whether or not they are electoral democracies. Of the countries that are not electoral democracies, only the above two have scores of 3 on civil liberties (and none has better than 3).

13. Marc F. Plattner, "Liberalism and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 2 (1998): 171–180; quotation on 175.

14. Ibid., 173.

15. Russell Bova, "Democracy and Liberty: The Cultural Connection," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 1 (1997): 115, table 1. The difference in average rating on the Humana human rights scale between countries that clearly have electoral democracy and those that clearly

The above positive benefits of democracy derive, as Russett notes with respect to interstate peace, from both the norms and the political institutions that characterize democracies. But which democracies? For peace and development and for the just treatment of minorities, is it enough that governments come to power through free, fair, and competitive elections? Or do these objectives require other features of democracy—a rule of law, free information, civil liberties, and a distribution of power that produces a horizontal accountability of rulers to one another? What do we mean by democracy?

Conceptualizing Democracy

Just as political scientists and observers do not agree on how many democracies there are in the world, so they differ on how to classify specific regimes, the conditions for making and consolidating democracy, and the consequences of democracy for peace and development. A key element in all these debates is lack of consensus on the meaning of *democracy*. . . .

. . . By and large, most scholarly and policy uses of the term *democracy* today refer to a purely political conception of the term, and this intellectual shift back to an earlier convention has greatly facilitated progress in studying the dynamics of democracy, including the relationship between political democracy and various social and economic conditions.[31]

do not is enormous: 85 to 35. For a description of this 100-point scale (with 100 being the top score), see Charles Humana, *World Human Rights Guide*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

31. Severe, persistent socioeconomic inequality may well be (as some scholars find) a major threat to political democracy. But to establish this, we must first have a measure of democracy that is limited to features of the political system. For an effort exhibiting this approach (and finding), see Zehra F. Arat, *Democracy and Human Rights in Developing Countries* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1991). For a critique of the incorporation of socioeconomic criteria into the definition of democracy, see Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* 23, no. 1 (1990): 2.

Where conceptions of democracy diverge today is on the range and extent of political properties encompassed by democracy. Minimalist definitions of what I call electoral democracy descend from Joseph Schumpeter, who defined democracy as a system "for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."[32] Huntington, among others, explicitly embraces Schumpeter's emphasis on competitive elections for effective power as the essence of democracy.[33] However, Schumpeter's

32. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper, 1947), 269. For Schumpeter, Held explains, "the democratic citizen's lot was, quite straightforwardly, the right periodically to choose and authorize governments to act on their behalf" (*Models of Democracy*, 165). Schumpeter was clearly uneasy with direct political action by citizens, warning that "the electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede" (283). Thus, his "case for democracy can support, at best, only minimum political involvement: that involvement which could be considered sufficient to legitimate the right of competing elites to rule" (ibid., 168). This is, indeed, as spare a notion of democracy as one could posit without draining the term of meaning.

33. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 5–13, esp. 6; Samuel P. Huntington, "The Modest Meaning of Democracy," in *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum*, edited by Robert A. Pastor (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989), 15. For similar conceptions of democracy based on competitive elections, see Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 27; Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (1994): 1; Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5–6; J. Roland Pennock, *Democratic Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 7–15; G. Bingham Powell, *Contemporary Democracies: Participation,*

concise expression has required periodic elaboration (or what Collier and Levitsky call "precising") to avoid inclusion of cases that do not fit the implicit meaning.

The seminal elaboration is Dahl's conception of *polyarchy*, which has two overt dimensions: opposition (organized contestation through regular, free, and fair elections) and participation (the right of virtually all adults to vote and contest for office). Yet embedded in these two dimensions is a third, without which the first two cannot be truly meaningful: civil liberty. Polyarchy encompasses not only freedom to vote and contest for office but also freedom to speak and publish dissenting views, freedom to form and join organizations, and alternative sources of information.[34] Both Dahl's original formulation and a later, more comprehensive effort to measure polyarchy take seriously the nonelectoral dimensions.[35]

Electoral Democracy

Minimalist conceptions of electoral democracy usually also acknowledge the need for minimum levels of freedom (of speech, press, organization, and assembly) in order for competition and participation to be meaningful. But, typically, they do not devote much attention to them, nor do they incorporate them into actual measures of democracy. Thus (consistent with most other efforts to classify or measure regimes), Przeworski and his colleagues define democracy simply as "a regime in which governmental offices are filled as a consequence of contested elections" (with the proviso that real contestation requires an opposition with some nontrivial chance of winning office and that the chief executive office and legislative seats are filled by contested elections).[36] Such Schumpeterian conceptions (com-

Stability, and Violence (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 3; Tatu Vanhanen, *The Process of Democratization: A Comparative Study of 147 States, 1980–88* (New York: Crane Russak, 1990), 17–18; Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 16; Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10–11.

34. Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 2–3. Dahl uses the term *polyarchy* to distinguish these systems from a more ideal form of democracy, "one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens" (2).

35. Ibid., app. A; Michael Coppedge and Wolfgang H. Reinecke, "Measuring Polyarchy," in *On Measuring Democracy: Its Consequences and Concomitants*, edited by Alex Inkeles (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1991), 47–68.

36. Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 1 (1996): 50–51. Their methodology is more comprehensively explained in Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, and Adam Przeworski, "Classifying Political Regimes for the ACLP Data Set," Working Paper 4, Chicago Center on Democracy, University of Chicago. Many other approaches to conceiving and measuring democracy in quantitative, cross-national analyses have also tended to rely on indicators of competition and participation (whether dichotomous, categorical, or continuous), but some of these were gravely flawed by their incorporation of substantively inappropriate indicators, such as voter turnout or political stability. (On this and other conceptual and methodological problems, see Kenneth A. Bollen, "Political Democracy: Conceptual and Measurement Traps," in Inkeles, *Measuring Democracy*, 3–20.)

As an alternative approach that explicitly includes the behavioral, noninstitutional dimensions of democracy, the combined Freedom House scales of political rights and civil liberties, described below, are increasingly being used in quantitative analysis. For examples, see Henry S. Rowen, "The Tide Underneath the 'Third Wave,'" *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 52–64; Surjit S. Bhalla, "Freedom and Economic Growth: A Virtuous Cycle?" in Hadenius, *Democracy's Victory and Crisis*, 195–241. While the Freedom House data is available annually, it goes back in time only to 1972, and the criteria for scoring have become stricter over time (particularly in the 1990s), creating problems for

mon among Western foreign policy makers as well) risk committing what Terry Karl calls the "fallacy of electoralism." This flawed conception of democracy privileges elections over other dimensions of democracy and ignores the degree to which multiparty elections (even if they are competitive and uncertain in outcome) may exclude significant portions of the population from contesting for power or advancing and defending their interests, or may leave significant arenas of decision making beyond the control of elected officials.[37] Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl remind us that, "however central to democracy, elections occur intermittently and only allow citizens to choose between the highly aggregated alternatives offered by political parties, which can, especially in the early stages of a democratic transition, proliferate in a bewildering variety."[38]

In recent years, electoral conceptions of democracy have expanded to rule out the latter element of ambiguity or misclassification; many now exclude regimes that suffer substantial reserved domains of military (or bureaucratic, or oligarchical) power that are not accountable to elected officials.[39] But still, such formulations may still fail to give due weight to political repression and marginalization, which exclude significant segments of the population—typically the poor or ethnic and regional minorities—from exercising their democratic rights. One of the most rigorous and widely used measures of democracy in cross-national, quantitative research—in the "polity" data sets—acknowledges civil liberties as a major component of democracy but, because of the paucity of data, does not incorporate them.[40]

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interpreting changes in scores over time. The appeal of a simple dichotomous measure such as that used by Przeworski and his colleagues is precisely the relative simplification of data collection and regime classification and the ability to conduct a straightforward "event history" analysis that analyzes changes toward and away from democratic regime forms. Encouragingly, the Freedom House ratings and other measures of democracy are generally highly correlated with one another (Alex Inkeles, introduction to *Measuring Democracy*). In fact, Przeworski et al. report that the Freedom House combined ratings for 1972 to 1990 predict 93 percent of their regime classifications during this period ("What Makes Democracies Endure?" 52). However, as we see in chapter 2, since 1990 the formal properties and the liberal substance of democracy have increasingly diverged. Thus, the substantive validity of measures that focus mainly on formal competition may be particularly suspect after 1990.

37. Terry Lynn Karl, "Imposing Consent? Electoralism versus Democratization in El Salvador," in *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980–1985*, edited by Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva (San Diego: Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, Center for US/Mexican Studies, University of California at San Diego, 1986), 9–36; Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," 14–15; Karl, "The Hybrid Regimes of Central America," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 3 (1995): 72–86.

38. Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 3 (1991): 78.

39. Collier and Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives." A seminal discussion of reserved domains appears in J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings: Notion, Process, and Facilitating Conditions," in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 64–66. See also Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 10; Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is," 81; Guillermo O'Donnell, "Illusions about Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 34–51; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 3–5.

40. On the Polity III data set, see Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr, "Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with the Polity III Data," *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 4 (1995): 469–482. On the Polity II data (which

Freedom exists over a continuum of variation. Rights of expression, organization, and assembly vary considerably across countries that do have regular, competitive, multiparty elections in which votes are (more or less) honestly counted and in which the winning candidates exercise (most of the) effective power in the country. How overtly repressed must a minority be for the political system to be disqualified as a polyarchy (a *liberal* democracy)? . . .

By the minimalist definition, Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Russia qualify as democracies. But by the stricter conception of liberal democracy, all (except perhaps India as a whole) fall short. In fact, the gap between electoral and liberal democracy has grown markedly during the latter part of the third wave, forming one of its most significant but little-noticed features. As a result, human rights violations have become widespread in countries that are formally democratic.

Liberal Democracy

Electoral democracy is a civilian, constitutional system in which the legislative and chief executive offices are filled through regular, competitive, multiparty elections with universal suffrage. While this minimalist conception remains popular in scholarship and policy, it has been amplified, or precised, to various degrees by several scholars and theorists. This exercise has been constructive, but it has left behind a plethora of what Collier and Levitsky term ''expanded procedural'' conceptions, which do not clearly relate to one another and which occupy intermediate locations in the continuum between electoral and liberal democracy.[41]

How does *liberal* democracy extend beyond these formal and intermediate conceptions? In addition to the elements of electoral democracy, it requires, first, the absence of reserved domains of power for the military or other actors not accountable to the electorate, directly or indirectly. Second, in addition to the vertical accountability of rulers to the ruled (secured mainly through elections), it requires the horizontal accountability of officeholders to one another; this constrains executive power and so helps protect constitutionalism, legality, and the deliberative process.[42] Third, it encompasses extensive pro-

Polity III corrects and updates to 1994), see Ted Robert Gurr, Keith Jaggers, and Will H. Moore, ''The Transformation of the Western State: The Growth of Democracy, Autocracy, and State Power since 1800,'' in Inkeles, *Measuring Democracy*, 69–104. Although it does not measure civil liberties, the democracy measure of the polity data sets goes beyond electoral competitiveness to measure institutional constraints on the exercise of executive power (the phenomenon of ''horizontal accountability'').

41. Among the expanded procedural definitions that appear to bear a strong affinity to the conception of liberal democracy articulated here, but that are somewhat cryptic or ambiguous about the weight given to civil liberties, are Karl, ''Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America,'' 2; Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 43–44, 46.

42. Obviously, the independent power of the legislature to ''check and balance'' executive power will differ markedly between presidential and parliamentary regimes. However, even in parliamentary regimes, democratic vigor requires striking a balance between disciplined parliamentary support for the governing party and independent capacity to scrutinize and question the actions of cabinet ministers and executive agencies. For the political quality of democracy, the most important additional mechanism of horizontal accountability is an autonomous judiciary, but crucial as well are institutionalized means (often in a separate, autonomous agency) to monitor, investigate, and punish government corruption at all levels. On the concept of lateral, or ''constitutional,'' accountability and its importance, see Richard L. Sklar, ''Developmental Democracy,'' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no. 4 (1987): 686–714; Sklar, ''Towards a Theory of Developmental Democracy,'' in *Democracy and Development: Theory and Practice*, edited by Adrian Leftwich (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 25–44. For the concept and theory of ''horizontal

visions for political and civic pluralism as well as for individual and group freedoms, so that contending interests and values may be expressed and compete through ongoing processes of articulation and representation, beyond periodic elections.

Freedom and pluralism, in turn, can be secured only through a "rule of law," in which legal rules are applied fairly, consistently, and predictably across equivalent cases, irrespective of the class, status, or power of those subject to the rules. Under a true rule of law, all citizens have political and legal equality, and the state and its agents are themselves subject to the law.[43]

Specifically, liberal democracy has the following components:

• Control of the state and its key decisions and allocations lies, in fact as well as in constitutional theory, with elected officials (and not democratically unaccountable actors or foreign powers); in particular, the military is subordinate to the authority of elected civilian officials.

• Executive power is constrained, constitutionally and in fact, by the autonomous power of other government institutions (such as an independent judiciary, parliament, and other mechanisms of horizontal accountability).

• Not only are electoral outcomes uncertain, with a significant opposition vote and the presumption of party alternation in government, but no group that adheres to constitutional principles is denied the right to form a party and contest elections (even if electoral thresholds and other rules exclude small parties from winning representation in parliament).

• Cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups (as well as historically disadvantaged majorities) are not prohibited (legally or in practice) from expressing their interests in the political process or from speaking their language or practicing their culture.

• Beyond parties and elections, citizens have multiple, ongoing channels for expression and representation of their interests and values, including diverse, independent associations and movements, which they have the freedom to form and join.[44]

• There are alternative sources of information (including independent media) to which citizens have (politically) unfettered access.

• Individuals also have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration, and petition.

• Citizens are politically equal under the law (even though they are invariably unequal in their political resources).

• Individual and group liberties are effectively protected by an independent, nondiscriminatory judiciary, whose decisions are enforced and respected by other centers of power.

• The rule of law protects citizens from unjustified detention, exile, terror, torture, and undue interference in their personal lives not only by

accountability," see Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (1994): 60–62, and "Horizontal Accountability and New Polyarchies," in Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, forthcoming).

43. For an important explication of the rule of law and its related concepts, see Guillermo O'Donnell, "The (Un)Rule of Law in Latin America," in *The Rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America*, edited by Juan Méndez, Guillermo O'Donnell, and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming).

44. This is a particular emphasis of Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is," 78–80, but it has long figured prominently in the work and thought of democratic pluralists such as Robert A. Dahl. In addition to his *Polyarchy*, see Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy versus Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

the state but also by organized nonstate or antistate forces.

These ten conditions imply an eleventh: if political authority is to be constrained and balanced, individual and minority rights protected, and a rule of law assured, democracy requires a constitution that is supreme. Liberal democracies in particular "are and have to be constitutional democracies. The lack of a constitutional spirit, of an understanding of the centrality of constitutional stability, is one of the weaknesses" of many illiberal third-wave democracies in the postcommunist world, as well as in the Third World.[45] . . .

Midrange Conceptions

Conceptual approaches are no longer easily dichotomized into electoral and liberal approaches. Some conceptions of democracy fall somewhere in between, explicitly incorporating basic freedoms of expression and association yet still allowing for constrictions in citizenship rights and a porous, insecure rule of law. The crucial distinction turns on whether freedoms are relevant mainly to the extent that they ensure meaningful electoral competition and participation or whether they are, instead, viewed as necessary for a wider range of democratic functions. . . .

The question of how extensive liberty must be before a political system can be termed a liberal democracy is a normative and philosophical one. The key distinction is whether the political process centers on elections or whether it encompasses a much broader and more continuous play of interest articulation, representation, and contestation. If we view the latter as an essential component of democracy, then there must be adequate freedoms surrounding that broader process as well, and to use O'Donnell's language, individuals must be able to exercise their rights of citizenship not only in elections but also in obtaining "fair access to public agencies and courts," which is often denied in "informally institutionalized" polyarchies.

The distinction between political and civil freedom, on the one hand, and cultural freedom (or license), on the other, is often confused in the debate over whether democracy is inappropriate for Asia (or East Asia, or Confucian Asia, or simply Singapore) because of incompatible values. Liberal democracy does not require the comprehensively exalted status of individual rights that obtains in Western Europe and especially the United States. Thus, one may accept many of the cultural objections of advocates of the "Asian values" perspective (that Western democracies have shifted the balance too much in favor of individual rights and social entitlements over the rights of the community and the social obligations of the individual to the community) and still embrace the political and civic fundamentals of liberal democracy as articulated above.[55]

Pseudodemocracies and Nondemocracies

An appreciation of the dynamics of regime change and the evolution of democracy must allow for a third class of regimes, which are less than minimally democratic but still distinct from purely authoritarian regimes. This requires a second cutting point, between electoral democracies and electoral regimes that have multiple

45. Juan J. Linz, "Democracy Today: An Agenda for Students of Democracy," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 20, no. 2 (1997): 120–121.

55. For a perspective that does just this, see Joseph Chan, "Hong Kong, Singapore, and Asian Values: An Alternative View," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 2 (1997): 35–48. One can have a political system that meets the ten criteria of liberal democracy I outline but that is culturally conservative or restrictive in some policies. The key test is whether those who disagree with these policies have full civic and political freedom to mobilize to change them.

parties and many other constitutional features of electoral democracy but that lack at least one key requirement: an arena of contestation sufficiently fair that the ruling party can be turned out of power. Juan Linz, Seymour Martin Lipset, and I term these regimes *pseudodemocracies*, "because the existence of formally democratic political institutions, such as multiparty electoral competition, masks (often in part to legitimate) the reality of authoritarian domination."[56]

There is wide variation among pseudodemocracies. They include semidemocracies, which more nearly approach electoral democracies in their pluralism and competitiveness, as well as what Giovanni Sartori terms "hegemonic party systems," in which a relatively institutionalized ruling party makes extensive use of coercion, patronage, media control, and other features to deny formally legal opposition parties a fair and authentic chance to compete for power.[57] . . .

What distinguishes pseudodemocracies from other nondemocracies is that they tolerate legal alternative parties, which constitute at least somewhat real and independent opposition to the ruling party. Typically, this toleration is accompanied by more space for organizational pluralism and dissident activity in civil society than is the case in the most repressive authoritarian regimes. Invariably, pseudodemocracies are illiberal, but they vary in their repressiveness and in their proximity to the threshold of electoral democracy (which Mexico could well cross in its next presidential election, in the year 2000). Thus, pseudodemocracies tend to have somewhat higher levels of freedom than other authoritarian regimes.[58] . . .

This framework leaves a fourth, residual category, of authoritarian regimes. They vary in their level of freedom . . . , and they may even hold somewhat competitive elections (as in Uganda and other previously one-party African regimes). They may afford civil society and the judiciary some modest autonomy. Or they may be extremely closed and repressive, even totalitarian. But they all lack a crucial building block of democracy: legal, independent opposition parties. All the most repressive regimes in the world fall into this category.

This four-fold typology neatly classifies national political regimes, but political reality is always messier. Level of democracy may vary significantly across sectors and institutional arenas (as would be expected if democracy emerges in parts). It may also vary considerably across territories within the national state. . . .

With large countries, in particular, it is necessary to disaggregate to form a more sensitive picture of the quality and extent of democracy. . . .

56. Diamond et al., "What Makes for Democracy?" 8.

57. Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 230–238.

58. . . . Taking seriously Collier and Levitsky's appeal to reduce the conceptual clutter in comparative democratic studies, we relate our categories here to similar concepts in other studies, particularly the "diminished subtypes" of democracy. Those subtypes that are missing the attribute of free elections or relatively fair multiparty contestation are pseudodemocracies. Those that have real and fair multiparty competition but with limited suffrage constitute exclusionary, or oligarchic, democracy, which is not relevant to the contemporary era of universal suffrage. Those regimes without adequate civil liberties or civilian control of the military may nevertheless be electoral democracies. Care is needed to empirically apply concepts, however. For example, Donald K. Emmerson's category of "illiberal democracy" would seem to be coincident with "electoral democracy" in my framework. However, as Emmerson applies the concept to what he calls "one-party democracy" in Singapore and Malaysia, the coincidence breaks down. Civil and political freedoms are so constrained in these two countries that the minimum criterion of electoral democracy (a sufficiently level electoral playing field to give opposition parties a chance at victory) is not met. See Emmerson, "Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia," *Pacific Review* 8, no. 2 (1995): 223–248.

Democracy in Developmental Perspective

Even liberal democracies fall short of democratic ideals. At the less liberal end of the group, they may have serious flaws in their guarantees of personal and associational freedom. And certainly ongoing practices in Italy, Japan, Belgium, France, the United States, and most other industrialized democracies underscore that even long-established and well-institutionalized democracies with the most liberal average freedom scores of 1 or 1.5 are afflicted with corruption, favoritism, and unequal access to political power, not to mention voter apathy, cynicism, and disengagement.

There is not now and has never been in the modern world of nation-states a perfect democracy, one in which all citizens have roughly equal political resources and in which government is completely or almost completely responsive to all citizens. This is why Robert Dahl uses the term *polyarchy* to characterize the more limited form of democracy that has been attained to date. Important currents in democracy's third wave are the increased valorization of such limited political democracy as an end in itself and the growing tendency of intellectuals (even many who had once been on the Marxist left) to recognize the need for realism in what can be expected of democracy. Certainly, democracy does not produce all good things. As Linz observes, "political democracy does not necessarily assure even a reasonable approximation of what we would call a democratic *society*, a society with considerable equality of opportunity in all spheres."[64] As Schmitter and Karl argue, democracies are not necessarily more economically or administratively efficient, or more orderly and governable, than autocratic regimes.[65] But by permitting widespread liberty and the real possibility of selecting alternative governments and policies, and by permitting disadvantaged groups to organize and mobilize politically, democracies (particularly liberal democracies) provide the best long-run prospects for reducing social injustices and correcting mistaken policies and corrupt practices.

It is important, then, not to take the existence of democracy, even liberal democracy, as cause for self-congratulation. Democracy should be viewed as a developmental phenomenon. Even when a country is above the threshold of electoral (or even liberal) democracy, democratic institutions can be improved and deepened or may need to be consolidated; political competition can be made fairer and more open; participation can become more inclusive and vigorous; citizens' knowledge, resources, and competence can grow; elected (and appointed) officials can be made more responsive and accountable; civil liberties can be better protected; and the rule of law can become more efficient and secure.[66] Viewed in this way, continued democratic development is a challenge for all countries, including the United States; all democracies, new and established, can become more democratic.

Obviously, the improvement and invigoration of democracy will not solve all social and economic problems that societies face. But widening the scope of public deliberation, empowering historically marginalized and alienated groups, and increasing citizen competence and government responsiveness—reforms that deepen and extend democracy—may increase the sophistication of mass publics and the legitimacy (and hence the governing capacity) of elected offi-

64. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 97. Emphasis is mine.

65. Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is," 85–87.

66. On civic competence and the challenges to improving it in contemporary, large-scale, complex, media-intensive, and information-saturated societies, see Robert A. Dahl, "The Problem of Civic Competence," *Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 4 (1992): 45–59.

cials.[67] Beyond this, increasing citizen competence and participation in the political process will spill over into other arenas of social life. Civic engagement, such as participation in voluntary associations and community networks, generates trust, reciprocity, and cooperation, which reduce cynicism, encourage political participation, and facilitate economic development, democratic stability, and the resolution of social problems. Increasingly, social scientists view such social capital as a critical resource for dealing with the seemingly intractable problems of poverty, alienation, and crime in the United States and other industrialized democracies. Otherwise, "mutual distrust and defection, vertical dependence and exploitation, isolation and disorder, criminality and backwardness [reinforce] one another in ... interminable vicious circles."[68]

Viewed from a developmental perspective, the fate of democracy is open-ended. The elements of liberal democracy emerge in various sequences and degrees, at varying paces in the different countries.[69] Democratic change can also move in differing directions. Just as electoral democracies can become more democratic—more liberal, constitutional, competitive, accountable, inclusive, and participatory—so they can also become less democratic—more illiberal, abusive, corrupt, exclusive, narrow, unresponsive, and unaccountable. And liberal democracies, too, can either improve or decline in their levels of political accountability, accessibility, competitiveness, and responsiveness. There is no guarantee that democratic development moves in only one direction, and there is much to suggest that all political systems (including democracies, liberal or otherwise) become rigid, corrupt, and unresponsive in the absence of periodic reform and renewal.[70] Democracy not only may lose its quality, it may even effectively disappear, not merely through the breakdown of formal institutions but also through the more insidious processes of decay....

67. In their comparative study of the restructuring of property relations in postsocialist Eastern Europe, *Postsocialist Pathways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Laszlo Bruszt and David Stark argue that policy coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability are fostered when executives are constrained and reform policies are negotiated between governments and "deliberative associations."

68. Robert D. Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 181; see also Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65–78. See also chapter 6, this volume.

69. Sklar, "Developmental Democracy."

70. Such a developmental perspective may help to inoculate democratic theory against the tendency toward teleological thinking that Guillermo O'Donnell discerns in the literature on democratic consolidation: that is, the underlying assumption that there is a particular natural path and end state of democratic development.