

Democratization

Christian W. Haerpfer

Patrick Bernhagen

Ronald F. Inglehart

Christian Welzel

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

<www.asianbarometer.org> The website of the Asian Barometer (ABS), an applied research programme on public opinion on political values, democracy, and governance in the region.

NOTES

- * The authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments and suggestions from Aurel Croissant, Yun-han Chu, Larry Diamond, Edward Friedman, Baogang He, Choong Nam Kim, Andrew Nathan, Chong-Min Park, Benjamin Reilly, Conrad Rutkowski, Doris Solinger, and Jack Van Der Slik.

Conclusions and Outlook: The Future of Democratization

Christian W. Haerpfer, Patrick Bernhagen, Ronald F. Inglehart, and Christian Welzel

WHAT have we learned from the foregoing chapters about how societies attain and sustain democracy? The first part of the book taught us how to tell a democratic regime when we see one, and gave an overview of how societies struggle to become and remain democratic. We learned that democracy is not complete without the rule of law (Ch. 2) but also that democracy does not include every political, social or economic condition that people consider desirable (Ch. 3). Chapter 4 demonstrated that democracy has expanded to dominate the global political landscape in major waves and conjunctures, but that it is inaccurate to think of all of the democratic transitions since the early 1970s as forming one continuous 'third wave'. We speak of a 'global wave of democracy' instead, emphasizing the diverse causes and discontinuities of different clusters of democratization since 1970. Chapter 5 outlined the contours of this wave in broad strokes, anticipating some of the problems subsequently addressed in greater detail in the regional chapters in Part Four of the book. Reviewing the major theoretical perspectives from which democratization has been analysed, Chapter 6 proposed that human empowerment constitutes the underlying theme of democratization. The two middle sections of the book demonstrated how a variety of causal and contextual factors affect the process of democratization and the **consolidation** of new democracies. The international environment, the economy,

business elites, mass beliefs, gender, social capital, social movements and transnational advocacy networks, voter behaviour, political parties, electoral systems, party systems, forms of government, and the media all condition and help shape whether countries democratize and how successful they are in doing so. Chapter 18 explored the factors responsible for less successful democratization.

How easily these insights can be turned into practical recommendations for democratizers depends on whether one focuses simply on the adoption of democratic institutions or whether one widens one's view as to how democratic institutions become anchored in a society: it involves the difference between *shallow democratization* and *deep democratization*. Shallow democratization is a tactical matter that is relatively easy for elites to shape, something political scientists like to focus on. For this task, one can give precise advice and identify successful actor strategies. By contrast, deep democratization is a developmental task that requires broadly coordinated, long-term strategies to initiate a far-ranging process of human empowerment through which ordinary people acquire the means and the will to struggle to attain and sustain democratic freedoms. This process is less easily amenable to human intervention aimed at immediate success.

The remainder of this chapter identifies and discusses a series of facilitating and impeding factors of democratization, moving from *tactical* to *strategic* to

developmental factors. As we move along this path, we also move from factors shaping shallow democratization to factors shaping deep democratization, and from short-term to long-term processes. Our analysis assumes that, as power maximizing actors,

authoritarian elites are unlikely to surrender their power unless they are pressured to do so. Thus, a crucial question is how to mount and sustain democratizing pressures on elites.

Tactical and Strategic Factors

One of the conditions that helps initiate a transition to democracy in an authoritarian regime, is if the ruling regime elite splits into factions with opposing interests. This is more likely to happen in developed societies whose complexity creates multi-faceted regime coalitions that are not as easily held together. Rifts within the ruling elite are also more likely when there is a mounting legitimacy crisis, due to economic setbacks, unfulfilled policy promises, and failures in crisis management.

In heterogeneous regime coalitions, legitimacy crises encourage elite splits because they create an opportunity for some elite groups to try to strengthen their position in the regime coalition by pursuing a reform strategy that they hope will bring them popular support—thus regaining legitimacy. Accordingly, many transitions to democracy have been instigated by the emergence of a reform camp within the regime elite. Typically, the reformers initiate a liberalization programme that opens a space for criticism and alternative voices. As a result, opposition groups surface from the underground and in many cases advance further claims for democratization. If the opposition groups remain moderate in their methods (avoiding violence), demonstrate their readiness for compromise but at the same time muster widespread public support, a negotiated transition to democracy becomes possible.

The emergence of a regime opposition does not always result from an elite-initiated opening process. Sometimes, policy failures lead to spontaneous manifestations of widespread mass opposition, launching a legitimacy crisis that impels an intra-elite reform camp to surface and engage in negotiations with the opposition. Again, this configuration of events often leads to 'pacted transitions'.

The institutional basis of a given authoritarian regime is an important factor in this context because

different types of authoritarian regimes show different vulnerabilities to democratizing pressures. For instance, the weakness of military regimes is that they lack an ideological mission that legitimates them on a long-term basis. Usually, they take power as crisis managers, so their justification is—often explicitly—only temporary. The legitimacy of military regimes is relatively easily questioned, either because the junta fails to manage the crisis, in which case its justification lacks credibility, or because things run smoothly, in which case the need for crisis management becomes obsolete. One obvious advantage of military regimes is that they control the means of coercion, so they can silence emerging opposition by brute force. But confronted with widespread mass opposition that proves resilient even in the face of oppression, the loyalty of the troops may erode if they are ordered to turn on peaceful protestors. On the other hand, even though military regimes sometimes exit quickly from power, they also easily return, as the repeated oscillations between military and civilian rule in such countries as Turkey, Pakistan, or Thailand demonstrate.

Personalistic regimes put all their eggs into the basket of the central ruler's charisma. Accordingly, when the ruler dies, there is an opportunity for political change, as Chapter 18 demonstrated in the Spanish case. Whether or not this opportunity is used for a transition to democracy then depends on the power balance between pro-democratic and anti-democratic forces and their relative support among the population.

One-party regimes, whether leftist or rightist, profit from a more strongly institutionalized power basis. These regimes usually have an ideological mission that inspires their existence and provides legitimation. It generally takes longer, and is a bigger challenge, for a potential regime opposition to erode the

ideological basis of one-party regimes. One strategy that proved successful in the former communist bloc is to demonstrate that the regime betrays its very own ideals. When communist countries signed the human rights declaration in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), while refusing to respect these rights in practice, civil rights movements like the Charta 77 effectively publicized this contradiction—and in doing so helped to erode the regimes' legitimacy. Eventually, the legitimacy crisis went so deep that even within the communist parties no one believed any longer in the regime's ideals. The only remaining reason to support the party was given individuals' desire for power. In this situation, reform camps surfaced in a number of communist parties (most notably in the Soviet Union and Hungary) together with regime opposition organizations outside the party, once Gorbachev's nullification of the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1988 eliminated the threat of intervention in Central and Eastern Europe.

Rightist one-party regimes, most notably in Taiwan, moved through a similar process of intra-party reform camp formation after their ideological credibility had been exhausted. Renewing the credibility of its ideological ideals is the major challenge for a one-party system, and it becomes difficult to handle when after decades in power the leadership turns corrupt. The future will show how communist China manages to cope with this challenge.

Splits in the ruling elite are important because they give leverage to domestic as well as international actors, enhancing their bargaining options to push a democratization agenda through. The leverage that international actors have in pushing for democracy increases in so far as a country depends on international aid. In some cases, dependence on international assistance can be so strong that external powers can trigger democratization, even in the absence of a pro-democratic regime opposition within the country. In the extreme case, democratic powers can enforce democratic institutions by military intervention, as was attempted in Afghanistan and Iraq. But externally triggered processes of democratization are unlikely to penetrate very deep unless there are strong domestic forces inside a country. Internationally isolated countries, such as Iran, North Korea, or Myanmar, are less susceptible to international democracy promotion, while China

may simply be too powerful to be forced to respond to international pressures. In these countries, the question of whether and when they democratize depends mainly on domestic developments.

This does not make it impossible for outside forces to try to influence developments in a positive way. But it is important to identify the appropriate strategy for dealing with countries that cannot be forced to respond to democratizing pressures from outside. The surest way to keep an authoritarian regime in power that is not vulnerable to outside pressures is to isolate and sanction it. Such a strategy is likely to help authoritarian rulers present themselves as stalwart fighters for their people's well-being in a hostile world. It also helps to foment threat perceptions, rally the people around the flag and create loyalty pressures that make it very difficult for a regime opposition to criticize government. This prevents the opening up of a legitimacy gap that a potential regime opposition could credibly fill. Iran is a current example of inappropriate strategy. Even though democratic powers should not hesitate to criticize human rights violations and other malpractices in authoritarian regimes, staying on moral high ground alone is not very helpful. Along with criticism, pro-democratic powers should attempt to integrate authoritarian regimes into international exchange, exposing these regimes to the transnational flow of information, ideas, and people. Inspired by awareness of alternative possibilities through inflows from outside, it is possible that pro-democratic forces within these countries will gain ground and that an incumbent regime's legitimacy gaps will become apparent.

When regime elites are unified to sustain an authoritarian system, a transition to democracy is less easily achieved, particularly if the regime is able to isolate itself from international democratizing pressures. In such cases, the chances to democratize depend very strongly on whether a pro-democratic regime opposition emerges, how massive it grows, and how skilfully it uses its repertoire of elite-challenging actions. If the regime opposition can mobilize support from all layers of the population, if it is able to demonstrate this support, and if it remains resilient even in the face of oppression, loyalty to the regime elite erodes, thereby undermining the regime's repressive capacities. Thus, massive, determined, and well organized regime opposition can overcome elite resistance to democratize. If, however, the regime opposition remains limited

to isolated sectors of society, is unable to demonstrate popular support across the country, and cannot stay resilient in the face of repression, its chances of success will be limited.

To a considerable extent, then, democratization is a matter of the skills and virtues of mass opposition leaders. It matters how willing and able they are to advance claims that resonate with many people, to mobilize resources for popular campaigns, and to make use of the full set of elite-challenging actions

Developmental Factors

Mounting and sustaining pro-democratic regime opposition against authoritarian rulers requires that societies embark on a process of human empowerment that gives people the resources that make them capable and the ambitions that make them willing to struggle for democratic freedoms. Ordinary people's readiness to struggle for democratic freedoms is necessary for deep democratization to be attained, for authoritarian leaders are unlikely to surrender their powers unless they are pressured to do so.

The processes that contribute to making wider parts of a population capable and motivated to struggle for democratic freedoms have been discussed in the various chapters of this book. But

External Threats and Group Hostilities as Impediments to Democracy

Various factors can hinder developmental factors in actualizing their pro-democratic tendencies. Perceptions of external threats and internal group hostilities are such factors because they diminish tolerance of opposition—a basic principle of democratic organization. External threats help leaders' to conduct 'rally around the flag' strategies that silence inner

even in the face of repression. Tactical and strategic factors, such as the presence of skilful political dissidents, benevolent reform elites, and international assistance, are important but when it comes to deep democratization these factors can hardly compensate for deficiencies in the development of ordinary people's capabilities and motivation to struggle for democracy. Here we leave the realm of tactical political action and enter the world of developmental factors.

paramount among them is a type of economic development that is knowledge-driven and distributes action resources widely throughout society rather than concentrating them in small minorities of the population. The rise of the knowledge society equips growing segments of the population with the material means, intellectual skills, and social opportunities needed to mount effective pressures on elites. As a consequence, ordinary people's action repertoires expand in ways that make the value of democratic freedoms intuitively obvious, giving rise to emancipative worldviews that value freedoms highly. These long-term developmental factors enhance a society's ability and willingness to struggle for democracy.

opposition. Group hostilities do the same within groups, closing ranks around leaders and silencing opposing views.

Involvement of a country in an enduring international conflict can undermine democratic institutions because conflicts provide a sense of being threatened that allows skilful leaders to present suppression of

the opposition as crucial to the nation's survival. Chapter 21 provided ample evidence of this pattern. But even among democracies the operation of this pattern is manifest, as is illustrated by the excesses of the McCarthy era in the 1950s and more recently the Homeland Security Act of 2002 in the USA. External threats, whether attributed to a communist world conspiracy or to Islamic terrorism, can legitimate authoritarian rule and undermine civil liberties.

Although, internal group divisions are not necessarily threatening to democracy, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other easily discernible group divisions can be manipulated to foment support for authoritarian leaders. Extremist leaders almost always mobilize support by playing on group hostilities. Thus,

An Evolutionary Perspective

Most social scientists failed to predict the democratic trend of recent decades, especially in the communist world. By contrast, in a largely-forgotten article, Talcott Parsons (1964) predicted the democratic trend, arguing that the democratic principle is sufficiently powerful that, in the long run, non-democratic regimes, including the communist regimes, will either adopt it or they will fail. Theoretical considerations led Parsons to this view. He understood something that many political scientists do not recognize: that evolutionary dynamics exist that work beyond the horizon of elite actors' intentions and that political development, in particular the survival and diffusion of regime types, is driven by dynamics that lack a central agent.

Thus, Parsons argued that in the global system of nation states there is an uncoordinated process of regime selection going on, such that regime characteristics that bestow on states an advantage diffuse at the expense of regime characteristics lacking that advantage. Parsons called such advantageous regime characteristics 'evolutionary universals'. Along with market organization and bureaucratic organization, he claimed the democratic organization was such an evolutionary universal, especially in the age of mass politics. The advantages of the market principle and

democracy has historically been more easily established and consolidated in societies that are relatively homogenous culturally and relatively egalitarian economically.

Regardless of whether such hindering factors are present, deep democratization requires that a society's people acquire the capability and motivation to struggle for the freedoms that define democracy. This is because democracy is a socially embedded phenomenon, not just an institutional machine that operates in a vacuum. Shallow democratization involves crafting institutions but deep democratization involves the development of empowering ambitions and skills among large segments of a society.

the bureaucratic principle are obvious. They nurture economic productivity and administrative efficiency, respectively. But what are the advantages of the democratic principle? For Parsons the democratic principle bestowed on political systems a unique capacity that is of crucial value for their survival when the masses are involved in politics—which is true of all modern industrialized societies, whether democratic or not. The capacity Parsons had in mind is the capacity to generate regime legitimacy, or more precisely, to generate regime legitimacy in a reliable and credible way.

This is not to say that democratic systems are *always* legitimate, nor that authoritarian systems are *never* legitimate. Nevertheless, because democratic procedures are the only means to measure authentic popular support, how legitimate a regime is in the eyes of the population can only be known under democracy. In the age of mass politics it is the most crucial weakness of authoritarian regimes, that it is never exactly known how much genuine support they have in the population. This is responsible for what Kuran (1991) called the 'element of surprise' when authoritarian regimes that lacked any obvious sign of regime opposition for decades are suddenly confronted with mounting mass opposition.

Legitimacy is a crucial resource for regime survival because it eliminates a major source of regime failure: anti-regime mass upheaval. Regimes considered legitimate by the population can mobilize resources of support that are unavailable to illegitimate systems. Illegitimate systems can, to some extent and for some time, silence open mass resistance by repression. But they suffer passive resistance, withholding of support, and sabotage. Illegitimate regimes can only mobilize as much human support as can be controlled by external rewards and coercion. But the most creative and productive aspects of human activity are not mobilized by external sanctions and gratifications but by intrinsic motivations. These aspects of human activity are outside an illegitimate regime's reach. They can create and mobilize extrinsic motivations, not intrinsic ones.

How can we understand the fact that democratization processes in separate countries cluster into coherent and sweeping international waves, behaving as if they were centrally coordinated by a master agent when in fact neither that master agent nor central coordination of the international waves exist? The answer is that evolutionary forces are at work that go beyond the awareness and control of even the most powerful elites. These evolutionary forces bestow a systematic selective advantage on democracies over autocracies. To the extent that such selective advantages exist, it is essential to understand them in order to assess the future potential of democracy and in order to understand the limits and opportunities within which agents pursuing a democratic agenda are acting.

In an era of mass politics, democracies enjoy three distinct selective advantages over autocracies. First, there is a selective advantage by a tendency to win *international confrontations*. States have been involved in international conflicts and wars and often the winning states' political regimes replaced the losing states' ones. Success in international confrontations has been related to regime type. Democracies usually won the wars they were engaged in, partly because in the long run, they could mobilize their people and resources more effectively. Moreover, democracies tend not to fight each other, avoiding extinguishing their own kind. Autocracies do not have this tendency.

Second, there is a selective advantage by *economic performance*. For reasons explained in Chapters 6 and 8, democracies have emerged and persisted in technologically and economically more advanced and powerful states, which partly explains their superiority in international confrontations with autocracies. Democracies have been established in more prosperous economies from the start. In addition, democracies continued to outperform autocracies economically, greatly increasing their initial prosperity advantage over time. Equally important, autocracies repeatedly lost their more prosperous members to the democratic camp.

The third selective advantage of democracies is an advantage by *popular support*, which is a truly selective force. Because they grant power to the people and because their rulers are selected by the population, democracies tend to have more popular support than autocracies, which makes them less vulnerable to mass regime opposition. Even autocracies that seem stable on the surface, lacking obvious signs of mass opposition, are vulnerable to the 'element of surprise' that becomes apparent in democratic revolutions when massive regime-opposition suddenly emerges and persists, toppling a regime that may have lasted for decades. Democracies are less vulnerable to extinction by popular revolutions. They simply change their rulers through elections.

The most fundamental selective advantage of democracy, however, is its deep rootedness in human nature. Democracy reflects a human aspiration for freedom (Sen 1999), making it the most demanded system for all people who have acquired the means and ambition to raise their voices. To be sure, specific democratization processes always reflect the actions of specific actors in specific transition situations, which vary greatly from country to country. But in order to understand why such transitions occur in relatively developed societies far more often than in less developed ones; and why they cumulate into an international trend that goes beyond what specific actors seek, one has to see the broader selective forces that operate in favour of democracy. One must be aware of these forces in order to adequately assess democracy's future.

The Democratic Agenda of the Future

The selective advantages of democracy are of such a long term nature and so deeply rooted in basic developmental processes that there is no reason to assume that the odds will fundamentally turn against democracy in the foreseeable future. Setbacks will occur in specific countries, but the achievements of the global wave of democracy are unlikely to be reversed. But this does not mean that there are no future challenges. Instead, we see a number of challenges on the democratic agenda, which can be formulated in the following questions: (1) Will democracy continue to spread geographically? (2) Will the deficiencies of

new democracies, such as those in the former Soviet Union, be overcome? (3) Will the democratic qualities of established democracies be further deepened?

One might also question the viability of the democratic principle in an era in which the major organizational frame of democracy, the nation state, is said to lose its significance. And one might question the viability of the democratic principle in a world in which decisive ecological measures seem to be unpopular, though they may be necessary to save our planet. However, as these questions go beyond the scope of this book, we limit ourselves to the first three.

Spreading Democracy to New Regions

Three important geographical areas have, so far, proved relatively immune to the democratic trend: China and the predominantly Islamic Middle East and North Africa (see Ch. 21). Anchoring democracy in these areas would without doubt constitute a major breakthrough for the democratic principle. As far as the Middle East and North Africa are concerned, a sweeping democratic trend throughout the region does not seem likely in the near future. The terror and violence nurtured by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Islamic fundamentalism, and the predominance of patrimonial states based on oil rents all amount to powerful obstacles to democratization. In addition, we find throughout much of the Islamic world, but especially in the Middle East, a cultural self-appraisal of Islam as the West's counter-civilization—an understanding that is sometimes mirrored in Western views of Islam as its counter-civilization. On this basis, democracy is considered to be a Western product in much of the Islamic world, which might disqualify it in the eyes of many people. Evidence from the World Values Surveys indicates that even among those segments of Islamic populations that overtly

support democracy, there is often a fundamental misunderstanding of democratic principles. Evidence from the World Values Surveys also suggests that patriarchal-authoritarian values, which are incompatible with democracy, are prevalent in much of the region, particularly the Arab-speaking countries. These factors hinder the emergence of democracy, and are partly misunderstood in most historically Islamic societies.

China is the superpower of the future, having the largest population in the world and moving toward becoming the second largest economy and second strongest military power. In coming decades, China may replace the USA as the world's most powerful nation. Given its paramount importance, China's future political order is of crucial relevance. The socioeconomic transformations China is undergoing may give rise to emancipative values, which in the long run will fuel mass pressures to democratize. At the same time, Asian cultures are distinctive and the socioeconomic transformations may not result in the same democratizing pressures as they produced in the west. Nevertheless, it is clear that Asian cultures are not immune to global trends of human development, as is obvious from the fact

that as they reached high levels of development, both Taiwan and South Korea made transitions to democracy and have emerged as consolidated democracies.

Consolidating and Improving New Democracies

Many new democracies in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe show serious deficiencies concerning the rule of law, accountability, and transparency. Not surprisingly then, there is widespread popular cynicism about the integrity of representatives, the trustworthiness of institutions, and the policy performance in these new democracies. This popular cynicism often leads to political apathy rather than mass political activism, weakening civil society and placing corrupt leaders under little popular pressure to behave more responsibly. But in those new democracies where cynical citizens become 'critical citizens' who sustain

a high level of elite-challenging mass activities, government is consistently more effective, transparent, and accountable. Civic action matters: both within new and old democracies, relatively widespread civic action helps increasing accountable governance. This insight is important. It shows that the quality of democracy is not solely a matter of elites. It is also, and very markedly so, a matter of the citizens. When they are motivated to put elites under popular pressure and actually do so, they can improve the quality and effectiveness of governance. There is no reason for civic defeatism.

Deepening Old Democracies

The most obvious aspect of the global democratic trend is the geographical spread of democracy. But the global democratic trend has a second, often forgotten aspect: the deepening of democracy. This occurs even where democracy has been in place for many decades. This trend is well documented in a book by Cain, Dalton, and Scarrow (2005), showing that over the past 25 years most post-industrial democracies have widened elements of direct democracy, have opened channels of citizen participation in policy planning, have extended the scope of civic rights and have improved accountability to the public. These institutional changes have been accompanied and driven by cultural changes that gave rise to emancipative values and high levels of sustained elite-challenging actions. In fact, a major reason why long established democracies show high levels of accountable governance is because they are constantly exposed to popular pressure by increasingly 'critical citizens'. This should affect our views of what kind of citizenry is

needed to consolidate democracies and keep them flourishing.

In *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) assumed that in order for democracy to flourish, citizen participation should be limited to the institutional channels of representative democracy, focusing on elections and the activities around them. This view was reinforced by Samuel Huntington's (1968) influential work *Political Order in Changing Societies*, contributing to deep-seated suspicions of non-institutionalized, assertive citizen action. This suspicion is so deeply ingrained in political science that, even today, prevailing concepts of social capital and civil society still focus on institutionally channelled participation, emphasizing membership and participation in formal associations. By contrast, non-institutionalized forms of assertive citizen action are rarely recognized in prevailing conceptions of civil society. As Chapter 12 suggests, the essentially fruitful role of elite-challenging mass actions in improving democratic governance is unjustifiably neglected.

The dominant view of what sort of citizenry makes and keeps countries democratic, needs to be revised. Democracy flourishes with an uncomfortable citizenry that makes life difficult for their rulers, exposing them to constant popular pressure. Democracy requires a citizenry who place a high value on democratic freedoms and are capable of struggling for them—to attain them when they are denied and to sustain them when they are challenged.

Unfortunately, such a citizenry cannot be ordered into existence by elite decree, nor can it be crafted

by institutions. Its emergence reflects a more basic process of human empowerment through which people acquire the resources and skills to demand responsive government and the ambitions that motivate them to do so. Democratic institutions can be imposed from outside, but if these conditions are absent, it is likely to be a flawed version of democracy if it survives at all. Sustainable democracy is not just about crafting institutions. It is about shaping development.