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The Political Sociology of Democracy

From Measurement to Rights

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What is the political sociology of democratization? Political scientists and sociologists alike have long theorized about democratic transitions, though their focus has changed significantly over time. Although early models of democracy and democratization were largely based upon the experiences of today's advanced industrialized nations, more recent frameworks offer an updated paradigm to account for the circumstances late democratizers face. Factors that were once considered irrelevant to democratization are now deemed part and parcel of the literature, including issues of power, inequality, history, state capacity, and globalization. A political sociology of democratization, then, is the study of the inherently *political* process of regime change that employs a *sociological* analysis of the circumstances and actors that surround and shape transitions, such as those mentioned above.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the literature that addresses issues key to the political sociology of democratization. We first ground our discussion in the ever-changing international and historical circumstances that work to mold the contextual backdrop for defining democratization. We then move to examine recent discussions within the literature that further provide nuances to measuring democratic citizenship. We conclude by discussing how local and transnational actors work together through social movements and global norm cascades to promote democratization.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY

Traditional Explanations of Democracy and their Limitations

In order to understand how democratization occurs, it is necessary to first define democracy. Political thinkers as far back as Plato and Aristotle[1] have long theorized

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[1] While Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle considered democracies to be weak and lawless, operating through the "mob rule" of poor selfish masses (Browne 1889; Deutsch and Fornieri 2009),

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about democracy, attempted to define it, pinpointed its causes, and examined its outcomes. In the early to middle decades of the twentieth century, scholars bearing witness to early iterations of modern democracy primarily conceptualized democracy using one of two models: elitism or pluralism. The former positions elites who "acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1942: 269) as a nation's true deliberators, and dismisses the broader population as unsophisticated and "incapable of action other than a stampede" (Schumpeter 1942: 283; see also Walker 1966 for a summary of democratic elitism). Alternatively, pluralism emphasizes the equal opportunity for citizens to actively form, express, and debate opinions, participate in government, and engage in compromise. In this view, social inequality and privilege undermine democracy by producing differential access to political skills and resources (Dahl 1982).

It is from these perspectives that scholars have generated operational definitions of democracy. Although in practice, scholars often include components from each to varying degrees of parsimony or robustness, an elitist definition of democracy primarily emphasizes contested elections (Przeworski et al. 2000), where a pluralist definition stresses the right to due process, an independent judiciary, and a vibrant civil society (Diamond 2008), or, in the case of Dahl's polyarchy, (1) elected officials, (2) free and fair elections, (3) inclusive suffrage, (4) freedom to run for election, (5) freedom of speech, (6) freedom of information and alternate information, and (7) freedom of association (Dahl 1982).[2]

Using these definitions to create an "ideal type" of democracy, traditional explanations for democratization typically rely on relatively simplistic "precondition" models and use Western democracy as the archetype that nascent democracies should try to replicate. Drawing upon both modernization and cultural frameworks, these explanations assume an evolutionary approach to democracy, positing that a nation will democratize if and only if it reaches some necessary economic "threshold" (Brunk, Calderia, and Lewis-Beck 1987; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Jackman 1973) and possesses the requisite cultural components (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001; Almond and Verba 1963; Lipset 1959). This type of framework emphasizes the centrality of economic development to democratization (industrialization, wealth, urbanization, education), where "the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy" (Lipset 1959: 75; also Dahl 1971; Rostow 1971; Russett 1965). Moreover, nations that are

Enlightenment thinkers later introduced ideas such as the consent of the governed and pursuit of the "general will" via direct democracy (Rousseau), as well as popular sovereignty and a representative system characterized by a division of power (Locke) (Held 2006).

[2] In operationalizing democracy, the Vanhanen dataset uses Dahl's polyarchy to create a democracy index to measure competition and participation (Vanhanen 2000). Others employ similar but distinct indexing techniques, such as Freedom House's index of civil liberties and political rights, or V-Dem's seven Principles of Democracy.

characterized by their Protestant religion,[3] civic attitudes,[4] an egalitarian income distribution (Acemoglu and Robinson 2001), a consensually unified elite (Higley and Burton 1989; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986), and a bourgeoisie middle class (Barro 1999; Moore Jr. 1966) should be successful in achieving consolidated democracy, according to this view.

Although economic and cultural explanations are not irrelevant today, they have come under scrutiny for being deterministic and Eurocentric. A country must simply possess the necessary qualifications; nations "not ready for democracy" can do little to generate these conditions (Carothers 2002: 8). And as non-Western and developing nations are increasingly experiencing political liberalization, we find that early models do not adequately explain on the ground realities. Nations that do not possess predemocracy characteristics are democratizing anyway.[5] Contrary to economic threshold arguments, democratization can be initiated at any state of development, and while a country's likelihood of remaining democratic increases with wealth, even poor countries that succeed in generating economic development can remain democratic (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). In addition, since 1990, approximately one-third of nations classified by the United Nations Development Program as having "low human development"[6] have embraced and maintained democratic government (Diamond 2003). On the other hand, economic development does not necessarily lead to democracy, particularly for developing nations (Arat 1988; Gonick and Rosh 1988).

Contradictions such as these became especially apparent during the "third wave" of democracy in the post–Cold War era (Huntington 1991).[7] As US tolerance for authoritarianism in the name of containing communism was fading, Western governments called for political liberalization and improved governance in exchange for membership in international institutions and aid (Levitsky and Way 2005). Using tactics of leverage (sanctions, interventions, aid) and linkages (alliances, investment, communication, migration) to raise the cost of authoritarian rule and encourage change, democratization efforts

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[3] Stepan (2000) points to the "twin tolerations" of church and state that foster democratic preconditions such as civil society and independent associational life, mass education, printing, economic development, and low corruption (Woodberry and Shah 2004).

[4] These include tolerance, procedural consensus, and compromise (Almond and Verba 1963). See also Barker's (1942) "agreement to differ."

[5] India is the quintessential example of a poor country that was able to establish and maintain a functional democracy (Kohli 2001).

[6] The Human Development Index is a combination of measures capturing educational attainment, health and longevity, and standard of living.

[7] Huntington (1991) describes the wave-like characteristic of transitions over time, where democratization occurs periodically via mass global consolidation followed by subsequent reversions to autocracy. The three waves are: (1) 1828–1926, (2) 1945–1962, and (3) 1974–present, with the reverse waves occurring from 1922–1942 and 1960–1975. Diamond (2015) argues that the close of the twentieth century marked the start of a third democratic recession, while Levitsky and Way (2015) disagree. See Plattner (2015) for an overview of the opposing camps.

abroad increased dramatically (Carothers 2002). Yet practitioners found that targeted nations could rarely replicate the expected trajectory,[8] particularly in light of unaccounted for structural and historical factors that undermine the foundations for a functional state upon which practitioners can build (Carothers 2002).

Democratization Today: Building on Traditional Explanations

The acknowledged pitfalls of traditional explanations and the failure of democracy aid and assistance rendered vast improvements to the democratization literature. In moving forward, researchers began to situate local actors within their own unique global and historical contexts to take into consideration the role of external forces in democratic transitions (Huntington 1991; Li and Reuveny 2003; Torfason and Ingram 2010; Whitehead 2001). These factors include international aid, conflict, colonialism, as well as global civil society and social movements. At the same time, the updated paradigm became useful for understanding how local actors work within their existing circumstances (regardless of whether they are "ideal" or not) to either undermine or encourage democratization, thus rendering local actors far more agency than traditional models. As Tilly (2000) suggests, "prevailing circumstances under which democratization occurs vary significantly from era to era and region to region as a function of the international environment, available models of political organization, and predominant patterns of social relations" (2000: 2).

    At the most basic level, current attempts at defining and identifying regime types have become much more complex. As opposed to dichotomizing regimes as decidedly or decidedly not democratic, scholars now instead consider both democratic and authoritarian characteristics of a nation when evaluating its level of democracy. This strategy has become particularly popular as scholars recognize the difference between nations that merely apply democracy in form, as opposed to those that also do so in function (Diamond 2002). Countries of this sort, known as hybrid regimes or quasi-democracies, exist in a political "grey zone" and operate neither as fully consolidated democracies nor as outright autocracies (Carothers 2002), and constitute "an unprecedented proportion of the world's countries" (Diamond 2002: 22–24). For instance, as is the case in presidential regimes (van de Walle 2003) or delegative democracies (O'Donnell 1994), regimes will achieve constitutional standards for democracy while operating at the behest of a strong, central, and paternal

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[8] This emphasized a linear progression from authoritarianism to democracy via distinct and predictable stages. These stages are: *opening* – the first democratic breaks in a dictatorial regime, *liberalization* – the collapse of the previous regime and establishment of new democratic rules and institutions, and *consolidation* – solidification and strengthening of democratic substance (Carothers 2002).

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executive who holds near complete control over the government with little accountability to alternative branches or parties. Other variations of the hybrid regime include competitive authoritarianism,[9] illiberal democracy,[10] electoral democracy,[11] and the hegemonic regime,[12] among others.[13]

We must also not assume when assessing levels of democracy within a nation that a regime extends identical levels of legitimacy and power across all portions of its territory (O'Donnell 1993). In other words, a state's monopoly over the use of legitimate force (Weber 1965) can vary widely from place to place within its own borders. As O'Donnell (1993) suggests, democratic regulations may abruptly end outside of national urban centers, leaving peripheral areas subject to local enclaves of power and ineffective state regulations. Thus, democratizing states with low capacity are not *uniformly* democratic in that they are at best subject to low monitoring capabilities and penetration of illegal activities within politics (low capacity democracy, e.g., Jamaica and Belgium), and, at worst, warlords and ethnic blocs engaging in violence and in some cases, all-out civil war (low capacity nondemocracy, e.g., Somalia) (Tilly 2007).

In addition to complicating the definition of what is truly considered a consolidated democracy, sociologists in particular are beginning to reject the existence of some objective or standard definition of democracy. Instead, they understand democracy as a social construct that is subject to change over time. "True" democracy is in fact a multidimensional "moving target" complicated by issues of inequality, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and conceptualization and operationalization choices (Bollen and Paxton 2000; Markoff 2011). For instance, though universal suffrage is considered a basic component of democracy, democratic participation has long been restricted according to criteria such as citizenship, gender, race, ethnicity, landownership, and literacy. Each time a group enters the franchise, the definition of "true" democracy evolves.[14] To this day, suffrage remains an exclusionary

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[9] Defined broadly as authoritarian regimes with multiparty elections, either competitive or non-competitive (Levitsky and Way 2010: 17).

[10] Defined as "democratically elected regimes [that] have been reelected or reaffirmed from referenda, [which] are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms" (Zakaria 1997: 22).

[11] Defined as a system that contains relatively free and fair elections coexisting with serious constraints on civil liberties, political freedoms, government transparency, as well as a weak rule of law (Diamond 2002: 23).

[12] A system where democratic institutions exist, but, practically, high levels of repression by a heavily embedded ruling party crush any real opportunity for opposition to the extent that outcomes are not uncertain (Schedler 2002).

[13] The Polity vi dataset operationalizes this shift by indexing combined measures of both democracy and autocracy.

[14] Such was true in the United States, which originally excluded slaves, women, free blacks, and Native Americans (Markoff 2011), but would later extend suffrage to women in 1919 (US Constitution, Amendment 19), and in 1965, pass the Voting Rights Act to eliminate poll taxes, literacy tests, and other Jim Crow laws that disenfranchised and intimidated blacks (US

entitlement.[15] As Markoff (2011: 248) notes, "there has never yet been a democratic state that has not excluded at least one [category] from voting rights."

In fact, there is little definitional consensus across the literature. As Paxton (2000) notes, not only do scholars' operational and conceptual definitions of democracy not match one other, but they also repeatedly fail to include women. This is true for both across and within studies. Across studies, operational suffrage thresholds establishing democratic governance range from at least 10 percent of adults (Singer and Small 1976), to 30 percent of all males (Doyle 1983), to 50 percent of adult males (Huntington 1991). Within studies, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens conceptualize democracy as requiring "universal and equal suffrage" (1992: 43), yet they operationalize democracy to only require male suffrage. Evidently, not only is democracy constantly on the move, but determining democratic achievement is far more subjective than previously realized. The hybrid regime further complicates this picture, suggesting that even nations that may theoretically attain the highest levels of democratic inclusivity may still fall short in achieving democracy in practice.

Global Forces Meet Local Actors

Currently democratizing regimes face other barriers to meaningful democracy, often due to their position in the global system and outstanding colonial legacies. Sociologists such as Frank (1966) and Wallerstein (2004) recognize that the global system is structured to disproportionately benefit the industrial core. For instance, major post–Second World War global financial and governance institutions[16] are largely run by, and pass policies to benefit, the major powers of the world while simultaneously promoting democratization.[17] As a result, developing nations are left at a sizable disadvantage in development and governance (Arrighi 1994; Bollen 1983; Frank 1966). These nations are also historically distinct from earlier democratizers. Unlike post–Second World War nations who had economic support from the Marshall Plan, had moderate

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Congress, *Voting Rights Act of 1965*. Public Law 89–110. 89th Congress, 1st Session, 1965. Accessed October 29, 2017. www.ourdocuments.gov/).

[15] For instance, in America, felon disenfranchisement (Behrens, Uggen, and Manza 2003; Alexander 2012) and voter identification laws (Alvarez et al. 2008; Combs 2016) remain major impediments to full democratic participation.

[16] These include the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations, and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank [WB]). While the Bretton Woods institutions were originally created to rebuild postwar Europe, today they operate primarily to provide loans to and promote development and democratization.

[17] For instance, IMF votes are quota-based with quotas determined by a country's relative economic wealth, the US holds veto power over all IMF decisions, and the WB and IMF are always headed by an American and a European, respectively. Moreover, though the WTO promotes free trade, it offers disparate exceptions for Western nations through agricultural subsidies and intellectual property rights (Stiglitz 2002).

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expectations in the context of postwar devastation, and democratized alongside an expanding global economy, nations democratizing in later decades were susceptible to global economic crises and inherited colonial political legacies and apparatuses (O'Donnell 1994; Thomson 2010).

In postcolonial nations, histories of monocultivation and resource extraction created vulnerable economies and systems unequal exchange, rendering an insufficient base upon which to build a functional (let alone democratic) state (Emmanuel 1972). Additionally, colonial borders were often arbitrary or drawn according to colonizers' interests (e.g., the Scramble for Africa), thus dividing existing political and ethnic boundaries and leaving nations unable to engage in critical state-building processes to lay the foundations for democracy (Griffiths 1986). Furthermore, the use of "divide and rule" tactics created and exploited differences between natives to generate a loyal native colonial elite accustomed to high levels of local autonomy and delivery of government resources through patronage networks (Christopher 1988; Morrock 1973; Young 1994). It is these ideas and practices that elites implemented in their own governments immediately following decolonization and independence, which to this day continue to plague these nations (Ajayi 1982; Thomson 2010).

Given these conditions, previously colonial states are more likely to struggle with ethnic fractionalization and conflict (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1995), have a political apparatus that is unprepared for democracy and favors the traditional ruling class (Chirot 1996), and rely heavily on foreign capital (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). In both Africa and Latin America, scholars note the persistent role of patrimonialism and patronage networks (Menocala, Fritzb, and Lise Rakne 2008; O'Donnell 1994). It is these issues unique to newly democratizing states that ultimately make democratic transitions and their success far less likely (Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock 2001).

Another issue that modern democracies face is the role of international aid. Despite heavy emphasis on democracy aid and conditionality promoted by aid practitioners, evidence of its effectiveness in generating democracy is mixed at best. Where some find positive correlations between aid and democracy (Dunning 2004; Goldsmith 2001; Savun and Tirone 2011), others find a negative association (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2009; Djankov, Montalvo, and Reynal-Querol 2008), and still others find no effect (Knack 2004). Of those studies documenting negative effects, they find that internal conditions and politics often subvert good intentions. By providing the existing regime and political elites with increased funding, aid may actually solidify their entrenchment (Brautigam and Knack 2004), boost their capacity to exclude actors, reduce representation (Djankov et al. 2008), insulate the state from reliance on tax revenues (Moore 1998), and shift government accountability away from its citizens (Brautigam 1992). Moreover, authoritarian regimes may co-opt aid by implementing the minimum necessary changes required to continue aid flows while largely retaining a monopoly on state power (Joseph 1997; Turner 1997). This becomes especially feasible for recipient governments

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who pursue economic liberalization, which pacifies donor demands for political openness (Brown 2005). As demonstrated by these findings, while aid does impact democratization, how it manifests is extremely conditional upon local conditions, power structures, and actors.

Although issues such as colonialism, international democracy aid, increasingly stringent classifications of democracy, and a changing global context serve to complicate the process of democratization for nations in the modern era, we must not underestimate the role of local actors in pushing for social change. Despite – and perhaps sometimes even as a result of – these complications, civil society has proven a competent and sizable force in lobbying governments for democratic rights and representation. Whether through the activities of local actors as examined by social movements scholars, or the top-down channels of global norm diffusion as discussed by world polity scholars, nonstate actors are a key component of democratization in the modern era. Yet this does not come without its complications: the local contexts within which social movements and norm diffusion occur largely determine the success or failure of democratization efforts of nonstate actors.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY: ACHIEVING REPRESENTATION, ACCESS, AND RIGHTS

Local actors operating within social movements and civil society are paramount to outcomes of democratization. A large body of work examines how actors rally for rights, representation, and access to the political apparatus throughout the democratization process. Dependent upon existing social and political circumstances, social movements actors achieve varied levels of success in achieving meaningful democratic outcomes. As opposed to less sociological accounts of democratization that only consider the actions of those who can claim legitimate and formal relations with (and hence acknowledgement by) the state, a political sociology of democratization must also examine advocacy strategies employed by oppressed groups that lack access to formal institutions of the state and thus act primarily through the channels of civil society and social movements. Instead of asking, "How do states achieve democracy?" scholars within this camp tend to ask, "What role do democracy and democratization play in obtaining rights?"

Armed with a broadened framework for examining democratization, these scholars decentralize the concept of "successful" or "complete" consolidation in their examination of democratization to instead focus on the role of democracy in achieving rights before, during, and after transitions. Political liberalization is often just one of several considerations when examining how marginalized and oppressed groups advocate for and acquire rights. During the most recent wave of transitions, civil society and social movements have played

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an integral role in this process given the unique circumstances of nations in this wave (e.g., postcolonial, low levels of development, relation to aid, and the context of democratizing in a period of unprecedented globalization). When groups of citizens are excluded from the formal political process, social movements can become a space in which the disenfranchised attempt to gain rights from national governments. The success of using these informal and unconventional strategies for engaging the state throughout democratization is premised on: (1) the ability of activists to mobilize – particularly during major political upheavals, (2) the characteristics of the state and society, and (3) ties to transnational networks.

Seizing Opportunities for Democratization

Breaks in existing political frameworks provide actors within social movements the opportunity[18] to insert themselves into the realm of formal state politics and advocate for rights and representation. *Changes to* political systems are particularly relevant here, as they not only create and expand these crucial opportunities, but also lower opportunity costs for marginalized groups. Significant political changes that create political opportunities for activists include: higher relative openness of institutions, greater instability and division among elites, increased presence of elite allies and their receptivity to social movements, and a reduced state capacity or proclivity for repression (McAdam 1982). For instance, indigenous social movements use political opportunities to expand democracy in the form of constitutional protections and recognition (Singh 2005; Yashar 2005). In Ecuador, indigenous leaders and protesters directly assisted in ousting the sitting president to enact political change and create the space and opportunity for indigenous Pachakutik candidates to run in national elections and earn formal representation (Beck and Mijeski 2001; Madrid 2012). As these changes create opportunities, groups can more easily exploit them and, by extension, gain political access (Costain 1992; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994).

The role of elites in creating opportunities is crucial for democratization: elites act as both gatekeepers and stabilizers for democratic transitions by determining if and to what extent liberalization will occur (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986), and by engaging in compromise and pact-making among one another to increase tolerance and discourage outbreaks of violence during the transitional period (Cardoso 1986; Karl 1987). When opportunities such as these are fleeting or nonexistent, social movements will find it difficult to insert

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[18] Opportunities are defined as "the perceived probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving a desired outcome," where "any changes that shift the balance of political and economic resources between a state and challengers, that weaken a state's ability to reward its followers or opponents to pursue a coherent policy, or that shift domestic or outside support away from the regime, increases opportunities" (Goldstone and Tilly 2001: 182–183).

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themselves, thus limiting opportunities for change. For instance, when democratic transitions render changes to regime type but not personnel, the continued presence of old elites provides women few opportunities to vie for political positions or enter formal politics (Fallon 2008; Geisler 1995; Tripp et al. 2009).

The *type* of opportunities presented will furthermore shape how mobilization occurs (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Moghadam and Gheytanchi 2010). Whether they are embedded in civil strife (Hughes 2009), revolutions, strike waves (Tilly 2004), systemic crises (Goldstone 1991; Skocpol 1979), political reforms (e.g., Russia's Perestroika) (Zdravomyslova 1996), or episodes of political democratization (Tilly 2004), these different opportunities help produce unique structural circumstances that promote or limit mobilization for democratization.

Civil strife is one particularly volatile circumstance for generating democratic change in that it has the potential to make astounding leaps and bounds in democratic governance, but can also fall short and render stalled or failed democratization. On the whole, war can be productive for democracy. According to some tabulations, more than half of the democracies created since 1945 that still exist today were forged within a postwar context (Bermeo 2003). Postwar democratic consolidation is particularly likely when wars both: (1) delegitimate authoritarian rulers (Huntington 1991) by replacing elites outright (Higley and Burton 1989), or allow for elite compromise (Cardoso 1986), and (2) are immediately followed by demands for representation and electoral competition from an active, nonviolent civil society (Linz and Stepan 1996; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992).

For women's movements, war has proven especially helpful in promoting democratic change, where episodes of political violence and civil strife provide the necessary opening women need to advocate for themselves. Research demonstrates that the higher the stakes and the longer the break in political routine, the more likely it is women will achieve improved representation (Hughes 2007, 2009; Tripp 2015). The major social disruption of war creates gaps in otherwise male-dominated positions that women must fill, including transporting and acquiring food, making bricks, building houses, or, in some cases, participating in warfare directly. These experiences allow women to realize their capacity to lead, find their voice, and organize to make demands for their rights and for peace (Tripp 2015; Viterna 2006, 2013). Women use this increased autonomy and new societal roles to insert themselves into the postwar transition process to advocate for rights and representation during the formulations of a new regime (Hughes 2007; Tarrow 1994; Tripp 2015; Viterna and Fallon 2008). This, however, must occur with the support of a strong and unified women's movement and women's organizations that pressure the state to enact feminist changes within the new constitution or government (Gelb and Hart 1999; Gordon 1994; Hassim 2006; Seidman 1993, 1999; Viterna and Fallon 2008).

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On the other hand, civil wars can also produce contentious postwar environments. While wars are useful in creating political breaks, these breaks also tend to produce an extremely fragile postwar peace that can easily dissolve into renewed violence and chaos in the precarious context of democratization (Paris 2004). For instance, when old rulers find their interests threatened by calls for power sharing, peace, and democratization, they often find it in their benefit to continue or resume fighting (Joshi 2009). As Paris (2004) states, "the idea of transforming war-shattered societies into stable market democracies is sound, [but] pushing this process too quickly can have damaging and destabilizing effects" (2004: ix). With this in mind, scholars suggest emphasizing rebuilding the war-devastated state and its institutions first and democratization second, with particular emphasis on postponed and strategically timed elections (Bracanti and Snyder 2012; Diamond 2006; Flores and Nooruddin 2012) and continued assistance from external actors until the foundations for democracy are soundly in place (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Grimm and Merkel 2008). Conversely, democratization, and in particular incomplete democratization, significantly increases a nation's risk for both civil and international war. When leaders experience pressure to follow through on their democratic commitments within states lacking the capacity to do so, they often draw upon nationalist warmongering rhetoric to bolster popular support and distract from their incapacity to deliver democratic goods (Snyder 2000; Mansfield and Snyder 2005).

Social Movements as Initiators of Change

Even when opportunities, such as those offered by civil strife, provide access to the political realm, social movements' success is further dependent upon organizational density (Minkoff 1997; Tarrow 1994), the construction of a movement's goals (Gamson 1990), mobilizing structures,[19] and framing processes[20] (McAdam et al. 1996). For example, during moments of transition, women's movements are most successful in transforming government structures and/or constitutions when democratic transition is complete (and actors and parties from the previous regime are not retained); when they form strong coalitions across race, class, and partisanship; when their frames align with the broader democratic movement frame; and when they are unified around the same goal (Baldez 2003; Einhorn 1993; Noonan 1995;

[19] Mobilizing structures are defined as "collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996: 3), such as communities, associational ties, and kinship networks, that foster and maintain dialogue and discourse for action.

[20] Collective action frames are shared beliefs and meanings constructed to "mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow and Benford 1988: 198) that "inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (Benford and Snow 2000: 614).

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Ray and Korteweg 1999; Shayne 2004; Viterna and Fallon 2008). For indigenous movements advocating for rights (O'Sullivan 2007; Xanthaki 2007; Yashar 2005), the most successful techniques are those that promote images of indigenous peoples as the protectors of nature and the environment and exploit "authentic" and exotic colonial imagery to achieve the support of Western audiences (Brosius 1997; Conklin 1997).

As opposed to taking advantage of existing opportunities, social movements themselves may act as the driving force behind democratization in their quest for improved representation. Because representation systems are the "institutionalized set of organizations that claim to represent and aggregate the interest of various social interests" (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995: 5), representation acts as the key mechanism through which democratic constituents voice their concerns to the state. When actors find themselves unrepresented within national government structures or lacking conventional political resources, many turn to social movements with the hopes of gaining access. Because traditional political channels are severed, these actors often utilize unique and unconventional or noninstitutional strategies to engage the state, such as disruptive behavior (e.g., sit-ins, protests, marches) (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam et al. 1996).

In doing so, groups engaging in social movements often promote and lobby for not only their own group's rights, but also for democratic principles more broadly – such as broad and equal citizenship, binding consultation of citizens to state actions and actors, and protection of citizens, particularly minorities (Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1998). As a result, although some sociologists focus simply on what factors contribute to increased legislative representation for marginalized populations – whether in relation to women broadly (Kenworthy and Malami 1999), or specifically for minority women (Hughes 2011) – other scholars examine representation hand in hand with social movements, as social movements tend to emphasize the acquisition of representation (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995).

Indeed, social movements appear to have an influence on representation. For example, as Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) demonstrate, women's social movements incrementally increase women's access to formal political representation. Paxton, Hughes, and Green (2006) find similar results where increasing global social movements pressures for women's political inclusion generate positive outcomes for women's representation. Furthermore, they find evidence for a snowball threshold: while at first women's representation does not necessarily render improved access or increased pressures for women's representation, after an achieved threshold, the acquisition of the previous electoral milestone becomes significant, albeit with diminishing returns. Similar case studies demonstrate the influences of women's mobilization on increased women's legislative representation (Bauer and Britton 2006; Goetz and Hassim 2003).

Finally, central to the analysis of social movements from a sociological perspective is the role of transnational influence where movements build and

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learn from networks with other organizers in neighboring countries (Almeida 2014; Moghadam 2005). With the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing 1995, as well as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, there has been a significant rise in transnational global civil society that promotes norm diffusion and compliance among and within states (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith and Wiest 2012). It is perhaps the recognition of the transnational influence on states and individuals that has sparked discussion within the literature of World Polity.

World Polity Theory

On the whole, scholars examining transnational influences on the behaviors of states emphasize the impact of a growing and connected global community marked by shared values and cooperation (Boli and Thomas 1997; Wendt 1992), transnational norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Meyer et al. 1997), increased interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1977; Russett and Oneal 2001), and international organizations (Keohane 1998; Meyer, Frank, Hironaka, et al. 1997; Risse and Sikkink 1999). For instance, democratic peace theorists find evidence to suggest the existence of "virtuous circles" that reinforce democratic governance through state membership in international organizations and economic interdependence between states (Pevehouse 2002; Russett and Oneal 2001). Political scientists also find that decreased sovereignty and increased idea flows promote "snowballing" of democratic models, experiences, and ideas across borders (Huntington 1991) and increase the pull of regional political organizations[21] in motiving political change and reinforcing democratic norms (Diamond 2001). Sociological institutionalists make similar claims, where international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) serve as the primary conduits for spreading liberal and human rights norms through dominant world cultural scripts (Boli and Thomas 1997; Cole 2005; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). Overall, democratic governance has emerged as a global norm: public support for democracy is on the rise (Diamond 2001) and is increasingly considered a basic and universal right (Franck 1992).

Although scholars demonstrate the benefits of democratic governance[22] (Przeworski et al. 2000; Russett 1993; Simmons 2009), and the emergence of

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[21] These organizations include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), and the Organization of American States (OAS).

[22] Przeworski et al. (2000) find that democracies are less likely to experience war than dictatorships (but recover more slowly), and are able to maintain economic stability amidst head of state changes and social unrest, whereas dictatorships find such events much more costly. They also find that people living in democracies have lower mortality rates and higher life expectancies. Additionally, Simmons (2009) finds that democratic regimes comply with human rights norms better than authoritarian regimes. Finally, democratic peace theorists find that democracies do

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a global community offers promise for meaningful democratic change and provision of rights to excluded populations, weak state structures and low state capacity[23] in developing nations make the actualization of these ideals particularly difficult. Given that (1) developing nations tend to have low levels of investment and development and (2) transitions tend to be costly and render economic stagnation (Przeworski et al. 2000), both political scientists and sociologists acknowledge the difficulty low capacity states have in delivering on their democratic and normative obligations (Frank, Hardinge, and Wossick-Corea 2009; Fukuyama 2005; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Meyer et al. 1997; Sorensen 2008). This is particularly evident when examining the positionality of countries within the larger world society.

Whereas the traditional literature points to internal factors such as low institutional power and legitimacy that undermine states' ability to exert control over territory and enact policies (Sorensen 2008), increased demands for accountability by newly enfranchised citizens (Huntington 1968), and the persistence of elite-run neopatrimonial and patron–client networks (Clapham 1985), globally focused scholars tend to examine weak states' "involuntary noncompliance" from a transnational perspective (Chayes and Chayes 1993). Sociological institutionalism lays the theoretical framework for this discussion, where in the context of the world polity that promotes global human rights norms and practices cross-nationally, limited states lack the resources and political capacity to fully implement these norms, which leads to decoupling (Meyer et al. 1997). Because the blueprints for legitimate statehood are formally embedded in and promulgated by INGOs (Meyer et al. 1997), IGOs, and international treaties (Boli and Thomas 1997),[24] states attracted to the benefits of membership accede to human rights agreements, but cannot or choose not to implement them (Frank et al. 2009; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Meyer et al. 1997). In fact, this "window dressing" undertaken by weak or developing states may actually increase the likelihood of committing human rights violations (Goodman and Jinks 2003; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Smith and Wiest 2012).

However, weak states are not inherently doomed to noncompliance. International relations scholars look to the role of global civil society and

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not go to war with other democracies. There is a wealth of literature debating this topic. See Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller (2001) for a comprehensive overview.

[23] State capacity is defined as the "degree of control that state agents exercise over persons, activities, and resources within their government's territorial jurisdiction" (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 78).

[24] Though these treaties are framed as promoting human rights, they simultaneously embody democratic norms. These include: the right to due process, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the ability to vote in genuine elections, as well as freedom from arbitrary arrests, discrimination, and torture, among others. Such norms are listed in the United Nations Human Rights Convention Against Torture, International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

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nonstate actors in promoting democratization and norm diffusion. Keck and Sikkink (1998) point to transnational advocacy networks that promote norm diffusion by mobilizing resources and information between domestic and international spheres, raising awareness, and setting agendas in order to influence states via a "boomerang pattern" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Other scholars highlight strategies such as naming and shaming (Hafner-Burton 2008), mobilization (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Moghadam 2005), and persuasion (Risse and Ropp 2013). With the help of norm entrepreneurs (NGOs, activists, etc.), global norms undergo a norm cascade where they are introduced, gain support, acquire a critical mass of adhering states, and, if deeply enough entrenched, become internalized to the point that the norm acquires a "taken for granted" status (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). These transnational network ties are crucial for empowering and legitimating claims for domestic social movements and simultaneously promoting change "from above" and "from below" (Brysk 1993; Moghadam 2005). Demonstrative of the rising salience of global civil society, independent nonstate activists often exploit the normative opening "window dressing" states unintentionally create to further promote compliance. This phenomenon is referred to as the "paradox of empty promises" (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005). This, in turn, actually renders improvements to human rights practices.

Sociologists build on this and also focus on the diffusion of policies and practices. In terms of liberal state policy, studies continually demonstrate the association between embeddedness in the world polity and the passage of policies that protect women's rights (Wotipka and Ramirez 2008), increase women's suffrage (Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997), and improve human rights (Cole 2005). Moreover, network analyses find that democracy diffuses through IGO ties, and that networks and spatial proximity dilute the relevance of traditional endogenous predictors of democracy to better predict likelihood of democratization (Torfason and Ingram 2010; Wejnert 2005). However, democratization alone does not increase the likelihood of treaty ratification (Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). In fact, Hathaway (2007) finds that democracies are less likely than autocracies to ratify treaties, given the higher symbolic importance of their commitment. However, in practice, democracy and strong civil society do increase the likelihood that states will respect the rights in the treaties to which they do adhere, rendering practical enjoyment of those rights more likely (Neumayer 2005).

CONCLUSION

As we move forward in the political sociology of democratization, we must remember that democracy and the social contexts in which it thrives are not unchanging. Even given the substantial advances scholars have made in mapping the sociological determinants of democratization, societies and the larger global and political environments in which they exist will continue to

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change over time. So too, then, must our analyses of democratization. Neither societies nor democratization scholarship can exist in a vacuum. We must continue to acknowledge that democracy is a moving target (Markoff 2011), that norms progress and evolve, and that local conditions matter. As a result, we must be open to adapting or modifying existing knowledge of democratization as social change occurs.

With this in mind, future research, and particularly work within the norm diffusion literature, would do well to further consider the role of localization – or the combination of strategies used by domestic actors to reinterpret and reconstitute global norms to fit local scenarios (Acharya 2004). In conducting future democratization research and promotion, scholars and practitioners alike must consider how local actors modify existing norms through processes of framing (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 1994), grafting (Farrell 2001), and reshaping (Zimmerman 2014), to make them locally palatable. Although Merry (2006) has begun this discussion by examining how norm entrepreneurs localize global human rights norms to better transfer abstract or unfamiliar ideas, further research is needed, particularly in the context of excluded groups attempting to gain formal access to state institutions and democracy.

Therefore, the efforts of groups still excluded from formal political institutions are perhaps the next frontier for democratization research. As additional groups continue to raise new issues and engage in democracy in a way that is meaningful to them, they continue to push the ever expanding boundaries of democracy and democratization. Research on indigenous movements provides insight here, as many groups have begun to lobby their governments for unique indigenous recognition via local autonomy, collective rights, and self-determination within the framework of the larger nation-state (O'Sullivan 2007; Yashar 2005; Xanthaki 2007). Others have experimented with modified models of democracy, including direct local participatory democracies operating within the larger sovereign state. For instance, in Bolivia, the new constitution modified typical definitions of democracy by including aspects of "communitarian democracy" where rural municipalities may create "indigenous autonomies" that give indigenous communities the liberty to practice democratic elections according to their own norms and procedures (Exeni Rodriguez 2012). In settlements in the rural Andes and in Ecuador following the transition to civilian rule and democracy, indigenous customary law (recognized by all Andean-nation constitutions) has become the law of the land, and focuses on local self-government, community reciprocity, and redistribution (van Cott 2006). Although these practices are not inherently democratic or directly replicable (van Cott 2006), they offer promising new directions for more inclusive models of democratic governance as more groups contend for rights.

Research on indigenous movements thus exemplifies potential frameworks and avenues for future research. Although some scholars have

begun to move in this direction to examine expanding notions of democracy, clearly many groups remain excluded from the political process – and democracies. Scholars must continue to consider who is excluded, who still needs access, and how democracy can be defined and redefined in relation to this. And, in the context of increasingly diverse, evolving and local democracy practice, understanding the mechanisms of localization will be invaluable for evaluating the success of new and budding democracies. We encourage political sociologists to keep this in mind as we continue to expand rights and push boundaries in studying the political sociology of democratization.

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