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1000 *democracy*

investing new objects. Deleuze and Guattari discuss capitalism's success in denying desire its creative and affirmative quality through its incorporation into flows and chains of production governed by abstract systems (money), divorced entirely from the contexts and bodies in which they are generated. Against these limitations the book prescribes different flows of desire and production whose pattern escapes the Oedipalizing effects of capital through non-linear and schizoid lines of flight: heading off in multiple directions, refusing to remain the same, escaping capture by slipping between dominant categories which threaten to consign desire to specific territories and purposes. *Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) continues this interrogation, adding the phrase that has become the most widely associated with Deleuze's contribution: the *rhizome*, a root or branch that twists, knots, splits, and grows in unpredictable, non-linear directions (like a ginger root, as opposed to the linear structure of a carrot), serving as a metaphor for paths of desire, for modes of production, and movements of populations.

While his turgid and eccentric philosophic prose has drawn criticism from many sociological readers, Deleuzian thought has been influential in several areas, including postmodern social theory, where non-linear, non-teleological processes are considered as alternatives to modernization narratives of progress, social differentiation, and change (Delanda 1997). They have also been significant in theories of globalization, virtuality and the Internet, and in alternative conceptions of resistance to those provided by traditional Marxism (Hardt & Negri 2000).

SEE ALSO: Guattari, Félix; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism

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## democracy

*Stephen K. Sanderson*

It is only within the past two centuries – and mostly within the past century – that genuinely democratic governments have flourished. What is democracy? Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) identify four main characteristics of the most fully developed democracies:

- Parliamentary or congressional bodies with a power base independent of presidents or prime ministers.
- The regular, free, and fair election of government officials, with the entire adult population having the right to vote.
- Responsibility of other divisions of government to the parliament or legislature.
- Individual rights and freedoms pertaining to the entire population and their general honoring.

It is important to distinguish between *formal* democracies, in which the formal apparatus of democracy exists but democratic principles are usually not upheld in practice, and *substantive* democracies, which have not only the formal machinery of democratic government, but generally consistently implement this machinery. Another important distinction is that between *restricted* democracies, or those in which the right to vote is limited to certain segments of the adult population (such as men, property owners, or whites), and *unrestricted* democracies, or those in which the entire adult population has the right to vote.

Democracy is not an all-or-none process, but rather a matter of degree. The modern democracies of North America and Western Europe are today unrestricted and substantive democracies, but all started out as restricted and,

to some extent, formal democracies. The earliest modern democracies developed in the most developed societies of Western Europe and the settler colonies that hived off from Great Britain. The US was the first democracy, established in 1776. It was followed in order by Norway (1815), France (1815), Belgium (1831), the UK (1832), Germany (1848), Switzerland (1848), the Netherlands (1849), Denmark (1849), Italy (1861), Sweden (1866), and Japan (1889) (Flora 1983). Democracy has taken much longer to come to the less-developed world, much of which is still today under the control of highly autocratic and often brutally repressive regimes. However, a major new wave of democratization swept through many third world countries beginning in the 1980s (Markoff 1996; Schaeffer 1997; Kurzman 1998; Green 1999; Doorenspleet 2000). Most third world democracies, however, are still not full substantive democracies, and it may be several more decades before that is achieved.

It has long been noted that democratic government and economic development are closely linked. In an early study, Lipset (1959) used a small sample of countries and found a strong relationship between a country's level of democratization and its levels of wealth, industrialization, education, and urbanization. Later, Cutright (1963), studying 77 countries, found high positive correlations between an index of democracy and indexes of levels of communication, urbanization, and education, and a high negative correlation between democracy and the percentage of the labor force working in agriculture.

Bollen and Jackman (1985), using a sample of 100 countries, looked at the effects of the level of economic development along with several other independent variables: the degree of ethnolinguistic pluralism, percentage of the population that was Protestant, British colonial experience, and a New Nation effect (independence obtained between 1958 and 1962). Regression results showed that all five independent variables explained 58 percent of the variance in the level of democracy, but that economic development alone explained 46 percent.

Lipset et al. (1993), using a large cross-national sample, looked at the effects of several independent variables on the level of

democratization: per capita GNP, British versus French colonization, political mobilization (the annual sum of protests, riots, and strikes), regime coerciveness (the ratio of military expenditure to GNP), and trade dependence (the ratio of total trade to GNP). Results showed that economic development was clearly the best predictor.

Diamond (1992) found that economic development was closely related to democracy, whether measured by per capita GNP or by the World Bank's Human Development Index (an unweighted average of literacy, life expectancy, and per capita GNP). The HDI was a somewhat better predictor. Of 17 countries at the highest level of the HDI, all 17 had governments that Diamond classified as liberal democracies. Of 11 countries at the lowest level of the HDI, all 11 had what Diamond called closed state hegemonic regimes. Diamond also reported the results of earlier regression analyses conducted with Lipset and Seong. These showed that the most powerful predictive variable was the Physical Quality of Life Index, a composite of infant mortality, life expectancy at age 1, and adult literacy.

Why should greater economic development be closely associated with democracy? At least three lines of thinking can be discerned. Marxian scholars (e.g., Szymanski 1978) have argued that democracy has been promoted by rising capitalist classes because it is the form of government most suited to their economic interests. Capitalists want, above all else, freedom of economic action, and democracy is an ideal system for promoting such freedom. The problem with this argument, however, is that the historical evidence shows that capitalists have actually been quite hostile to democracy in the form of mass suffrage because they have feared the consequences of giving the working class the vote (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). Capitalists have generally favored *parliamentary* government, especially because they or their representatives have constituted the most prominent members of parliaments. But parliamentary government alone is a far cry from true democracy.

A second line of thinking, endorsed by such thinkers as Lipset and Diamond, is a type of modernization theory. Education and literacy promote beliefs in the importance of

democratic norms. An ideology of "secular reformist gradualism," highly favorable to the development of democracy, emerges, largely as the result of higher living standards. As lower social strata become better off and better educated, they are less likely to be receptive to extremist ideologies. Economic development leads to the formation of a sizable middle class, much of which tends to work to moderate political conflict.

A third strand of thought emphasizes the resource balance between political elites and the rest of the population. Bollen (1983) notes that economic development creates a more educated and literate population that can gain access to the mass media of communication, thus allowing for increasing understanding of the political processes of their society. This increased understanding tends to generate greater demands for political representation. By the same token, a workforce that is better educated can become better organized and mobilized. In Bollen's mind the key issue is the general population's acquisition of resources that can be used to pressure political elites to accede to their demands for democracy. Tilly (2000, 2004) has taken a similar view.

In an exceptionally detailed cross-national study of democracy using 172 countries and covering the entire period from 1850 to the early 1990s, Vanhanen (1997) based his analysis on the kind of balance of resources argument discussed above. Vanhanen argues that democracy emerges when the large mass of the population acquires resources it can use to force autocratic states to open themselves up to mass suffrage and political rights. Vanhanen identifies six types of resources that contribute to democratization: size of the nonagricultural population, size of the urban population, the degree to which farms are owned by independent families, the literacy rate, the enrollment rate in higher education, and the deconcentration of nonagricultural economic resources. Vanhanen measured all of these variables for most decades between 1850 and the early 1990s, combined them into a comprehensive supervariable called the Index of Power Resources, and then correlated this index with an index of democracy. The average correlation of the Index of Power Resources

with the level of democracy for three different years (1991, 1992, and 1993) was  $r = .786$ . Correlations for earlier years were not as strong, but were still very high. Vanhanen assumed that the correlation is causal in the sense that the acquisition of power resources preceded and brought about changes in the level of democracy.

Vanhanen stopped with simple correlations, failing to control for any other variables. He also assumed that all of the six subvariables within his Index of Power Resources were of equal significance in producing democracy. Sanderson (2004) reanalyzed Vanhanen's data by looking at his six subcomponents separately. He consistently found that the best predictor of the level of democratization was the literacy rate, with the deconcentration of nonagricultural resources an important secondary predictor. Size of the nonagricultural population and size of the urban population turned out to be essentially unproductive.

These last findings seem to contradict the conclusions of the best comparative-historical (nonquantitative) study of democracy ever undertaken, that of Rueschemeyer et al. (1992). They found that the factor most critical to democracy was the level of industrialization and thus the size of the working class, which became an organized political force that struggled to establish democratic institutions, especially the right to vote. Democracy developed earliest and most fully in those societies with the largest working classes and latest and least in those societies with the smallest working classes. In these latter societies the landlord class was still powerful and the peasantry politically weak. Landlords were vehemently opposed to democracy because the key to their economic success was labor-repressive agriculture, which democracy would obviously undermine. However, with industrialization, the role of the landlord class in society declined and the role of industrialists and workers increased, thus removing a major barrier to democratization. In the third world today, landlords still play a major economic role in many societies, which is perhaps the main reason that democracy has advanced only little in many of these societies.

Sanderson (2004) suggests that his findings are, in fact, not incompatible with those of

Rueschemeyer et al. (1992). Indeed, they are complementary; it is just that the latter authors have omitted a crucial variable. Industrialization and working-class formation were crucial to democracy, Sanderson argues, but workers have to be made politically aware and ready to engage in political action. Literacy – itself largely a product of the development of mass primary education – provided the key. Literate workers could read newspapers and political pamphlets and could communicate with each other about what they read. This seemed to be critical to the working class's struggle for political incorporation.

In the most recent cross-national study of democracy, which spanned the entire period between 1800 and 1999, Wejnert (2005) compared the relative roles of internal social and economic development and diffusionary effects coming from other societies. Regression results showed that diffusionary effects, especially the location of a country within a world region packed with democratic countries and the degree of participation of a country in economic and political networks containing largely democratic countries, were much greater than internal developmental forces. However, it is not clear what to make of these findings, since Wejnert's study is one of the first to take diffusionary effects into account and her findings have not yet been replicated. Moreover, her finding that literacy was unrelated to democracy is extremely curious in light of Sanderson's (2004) finding that it was the most important predictor of democratization.

What is clear is that democracy has historically been closely tied to economic development and that it has been steadily expanding on a global scale. Whether democracy is promoted more by a country's internal economic and social development or by its connections to other democratic countries (or some combination of the two), it seems reasonable to predict that democratization will be a continuing, if not continuous, trend.

SEE ALSO: Citizenship; Democracy and Organizations; Global Justice as a Social Movement; Globalization and Global Justice; Human Rights; Social Movements, Participatory Democracy in; Welfare Regimes

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## democracy and organizations

*David Courpasson*

Still a controversial issue, the idea that the “civilian” world might be becoming more democratic is juxtaposed with an opposite trend with respect to the organizational world. As Rousseau and Rivero, among others, put it: “Although we are increasingly likely to be governed by democratic political systems, our workplaces are seldom democratic” (2003: 116). The increasingly dominant corporate power (Bernstein 2000), the persistence and refurbishment of hierarchy and bureaucratic systems (Courpasson & Reed 2004), the endless reproduction of corporate elite (Ocasio 1994; Courpasson 2004; Davis et al. 2003) are all trends highlighting the fact that the post-bureaucratic dream of decentralized power and of people’s participation in the political decisions within organizations might be gone.

The supposedly post-September 11 shift in the global power balance does not explain by itself the apparently legitimate use of strong central powers in the political structures of most western countries. In other words, the emergence of a “culture” of threat and terror is not exclusively the product of late modern patterns of civilization or of tragic and unprecedented events. Likewise, in the business world, the concentration of power is an old phenomenon (see, for instance, in Ocasio 1994) which is not exclusively related to the threatening and hectic movements of markets and the dynamics of capitalism. The wavering balance between democratic and oligarchic

tendencies is one of the most ancient political features of societies.

Addressing the complex issue of democracy in the context of organizations requires us to go beyond these partial accounts in order to make the connection between organizational models and the functioning of contemporary democratic societies. There are important questions relating to the elective affinities between the meaning of democracy and its diverse facets, and government as a complex and intermingled set of values and mechanisms.

### THE MEANING AND MEANINGS OF DEMOCRACY

There are scores of available and relatively acceptable definitions of the concept of democracy. So numerous are they that the concept itself is in danger of becoming one of the most popular “buzzwords” of organization studies. As a means of clarifying this conceptual “hodgepodge,” we suggest adopting a twofold approach to understanding democracy: a political version and a competitive version.

Usually, democracy is defined as both a form of rule (the sovereignty of the people) and a symbolic framework within which this rule is exercised (such as individual liberty) (Mouffe 2000). This pertains to the well-known duality within studies on democracy: the *liberal tradition*, according to which what counts is the rule of law and the respect of individual freedom encompassed in democratic regimes, and the *democratic tradition*, which privileges the notion of equality and the identity between governors and the governed. These traditions, when confronted, unveil the unassailable tension between liberty and equality. Dahl reminds us that for Tocqueville, the major phenomenon threatening democracy is that equality will crush liberty, that political equality is likely to destroy liberty, “because equality facilitates majority despotism, it threatens liberty” (1985: 9).

Therefore, the *political* definition of democracy leads to envisaging democratic politics not as the search for an unreachable consensus, but as an “agonistic confrontation” (Mouffe 2000: 9), necessitating the creation of a pluralistic body of actors. According to Mouffe, the main question of democratic politics “becomes then