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Chapter 9

Building Democracy: National and International Factors

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Abstract

Based on the promising democratic changes around the world during the late twentieth century, what are the favorable factors for building democracy? In the 1990s, research on democratization mushroomed, exploring how to explain reasons for democracy around the world. The global spread of democracy resulted in numerous conclusions about national and international favorable factors for democracy. More recently, the global democratic upsurge seems to have halted with worrying tendencies toward new forms of authoritarianism, hybrid regimes of both democratic and authoritarian institutions and fragile democracies. Recent studies have argued how authoritarianism has gone global and challenge the previous global spread of democracy. Based on a literature review of the bulk of studies on democracy building, this chapter identifies the main national and international favorable factors for democracy. It is argued that research has had a domestic focus up until the 1990s, but how international factors have come to play an important role in explaining democracy. Today, research must focus on the interplay between national and international factors to democracy building embedding both an actor and a structural dimension.

Keywords: building democracy, authoritarianism, transition, national factors, international factors

1. Introduction

There is an agreement in research about democracy building (democratization) that the previous century consisted of major ideological battles. Scholars on democracy building have argued that the last decades of the twentieth century consisted of a spirit of democracy with a growing number of democratic states around the world. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, a global spread of new democracies occurred in most regions of the world—except the Middle East—and challenged post-totalitarian and authoritarian states, military regimes and

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despotic leaders in Southern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. These political changes made scholars portray the global changes in terms of "the triumph of democracy," [1] "the end of history," [2] "the democratic revolution" [3] and how democracy had become "globalized" [4] as a third "universal language" aside from money and the Internet [5].

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, authoritarianism has gone global and is challenging democratic regimes and the notions of political rights and civil liberties around the world. Recent studies from the early 2000s and forward have pointed at a potentially worrisome trend in new types of authoritarianism and hybrid regimes [6] comprising both authoritarian and democratic institutions. This trend may have left the world community at a crossroads of democracy and authoritarianism. The global spread of democracies during the late twentieth century and the rise of authoritarianism in the early twenty-first century have raised an interest in understanding and explaining how to build democratic states around the world [7]. This study chapter sets out to understand how to build a democracy by identifying national and international favorable factors for democracy building. Section 2 after this introduction illustrates the global patterns of democracy building over time and is followed by Section 3 on the theoretical foundation of democracy. Sections 4 and 5 explain the favorable national and international factors for building democracy. Section 6 concludes this study.

2. Trends of democracy building

In the early 1990s, studies on democracy building mushroomed, identifying how the number of democracies worldwide had become greater than ever before in modern history. About 25 years ago, Huntington [8] identified major democratic waves in political changes, going from dictatorships to electoral and liberal democracies. The transition processes to electoral democracies centered on the establishment of popular votes and an election as the main competition for office. The numerous transitions into electoral democracies around the world embedded the right to vote for competitive parties in free and fair elections where the electoral outcome was respected and assured based on checks and balances between a country's judiciary, executive and legislative powers.

In the early 1990s, Huntington argued that the historical global spread of democratic transitions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries could be described as waves of democracy building. A historical wave constituted numerous states around the world, all going through democratic changes within a specific period of time. In particular, a wave of democratic change included a larger group of transitions from nondemocratic (authoritarian) to democratic (electoral) regimes within a specified period of time, and this change outnumbered the reverse transitions into authoritarianism. The wave metaphor of global democratization had a great impact on the scholarly interests in the patterns of democratic change around the world. However, many scholars in the field of democratization raised concerns about how democratic regimes were defined, focusing only on free and fair elections (electoral fallacy), thereby disregarding other important democratic qualities, and the overlapping time periods

of these waves of democratization [9]. Most scholars who focused on democracy building agreed, however, that Huntington shed light on important historical transformations [10] in a suggested "two steps forward and one step back" pattern. Huntington summarized the historical changes until the early 1990s in three waves of democratization and two reverse waves.

The first wave of democratization was the longest in terms of years covered (1828–1926). It was argued that the first wave began with the American and French revolutions and transplanted ideas of what democracy was all about and how democracy could be established. This wave of democratization included the spread of the political right to vote to new previously marginalized groups of society and to newly established states around the world, such as in the West, Australia and South America. The historical record showed how the first wave included democracy building in about 30 states after World War I. The wave of democratization did, however, halt and was reversed with the authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies developed in Germany, Italy and Japan during the 1930s and 1940s, which resulted in reverse democratic setbacks and authoritarian regimes in Eastern and Southern Europe, as well as in South America.

The second wave of democratization (1943–1962) lasted for a far shorter time compared to the first wave and was an outcome of the major international political changes of the balance of power that came with the end of World War II and the defeat and collapse of Nazism and fascism. The collapse of antidemocratic systems resulted in the expansion of new democracies in, for instance, West Germany, Austria, Japan, Turkey, Greece, Uruguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. The aftermath of the war became a window of opportunity for the new spread of democratic regimes, political rights and civil liberties in greater number of states, though primarily with the deviant cases in the communist states in foremost Eastern Europe and East Asia (China). It was the powerful role of the Soviet Union in a post-World War II context that eventually founded the reverse wave of authoritarianism and resulted in the consolidation of communism in the Eastern European states and in limited democracy in Latin American states and some East Asian states.

The third wave of democratization (1974–1991) was argued to have begun with transitions in Southern Europe in the early 1970s and ended with major democratic transformations in Eastern Europe as a result of a weakened and finally collapsed Soviet Union. Democratization began in Spain, Portugal and Greece and peaked with the transitions in communist ruled Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania and the independence of 15 new states. The third wave of democratic transitions was, however, global in a geographical scope, with numerous new democracies established in Latin America and Asia, outnumbering the previous authoritarian traditions of regimes around the world. The third wave had great global impact on the democratic political landscape. As stated, "the birth of more than ninety democracies in this period represents the greatest transformation of the way states are governed in the history of the world" [11], and as a consequence, many scholars perceived the twentieth century as the century of progress [12].

Though the academic community had spent decades of research on how to explain and foresee democratization, the third wave of democratization came as a surprise [13] and sparked

greater interest in the geographical scope of transitions, the driving engines behind such democratic change and the possibilities of further democracy building within newly democratized states. Scholars agreed that the third wave was global in scope and how the numerous transitions actually led to the number of democratic regimes now outnumbering authoritarian regimes for the first time in human history. Both scholars and international politicians argued how democracy was a symbol of good governance and how the wave of democratic transitions had shown "the unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" in the world [14]. The global victory of political liberalism was argued to consist of the democratic transitions that established government by the people based on popular free and fair elections in multi-party systems. For almost half a century, the scholarly world had argued that democracy was based on free and fair elections. In his famous study, Schumpeter [15] presented a minimal definition on democracy and became the founding father of a procedural definition of democracy. Schumpeter's definition of an electoral democracy focused on competing political elites for power. From this perspective, democracy was perceived as a political tool for selecting politicians and how popular elections, as a core political procedure, were essential for the spread and consolidation of other crucial political rights and civil liberties often tied to democratic systems and societies.

In the early 2000s, however, a growing number of individual academic studies, think-tanks and statistical assessments on democratic freedoms identified new challenges to the previous global transitions embedded in the third wave of democratization. Though this has not yet been argued to be the signs of a third reverse wave of global authoritarianism, scholars have pointed out worrying signs of democratic challenges across the world. First, it has been argued that many transitional states have turned up as vague electoral democracies with authoritarian characteristics. They have had free and fair elections, but have continued to face political, economic and social obstacles that have had negative impacts on the democratization process. These obstacles have created political societies of democratic fuzziness where democratic patterns have been mixed with undemocratic ones. Such obstacles may be found in electoral democracies with patterns of restricted participation and liberties, electoral democracies influenced by the existence of personal rule and patron-client relationships, electoral democracies with the existence of human rights abuses, electoral democracies in which there is a massive and perhaps uncontrolled popular mobilization that challenges order and stability and/or electoral democracies where undemocratic actors, such as the military, continue to influence politics. All these democracies may have elections and may tolerate legal alternative parties in opposition to the ruling party, but they are challenged by other major problems that influence the democratization process and democratic stability [16]. Second, it has also been argued that we have seen an authoritarian surge in international affairs with greater activities among major authoritarian powers to contain democracy around the world. Aside from limiting democratic rights and liberties at home, authoritarian states have actively coordinated foreign policy actions to halt the global spread of democracy. Such authoritarian measures have included media initiatives to limit the impact of Western news around the world, political actions against pro-democracy and human rights' organizations, such as in global and regional intergovernmental organizations, and in civil society. Altogether, "The extent of the authoritarian challenges forces us to confront the disconcerting prospect that the

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most influential antidemocratic regimes are no longer content simply to contain democracy. Instead, they want to roll it back by reversing advances dating from the time of the democratic surge" [17]. The increasing bulk of studies have presented different concepts to describe these challenged electoral democracies [18].

3. The foundation of democracy

There has been a long and on-going scholarly discussion on how to define and measure democratic and nondemocratic regimes [19]. Democracy is a fuzzy and multifaceted concept. In the literature on building democracy, two conceptions of democracy are relevant; a minimalist and maximalist perspective. First, the minimalist perspective has defined democracy as an electoral democracy, focusing on the procedural system of institutions and the institutional mechanism of free and fair elections. An electoral democracy has embedded the procedure of free and fair elections in which political elites compete for political power and where the population uses the election to check the political power from wrong-doings. The scholarly studies on electoral democracy has stressed the importance of political procedure to ensure political rights and civil liberties, although the main focus from a minimalist perspective has been on the implementation of elections as a guarantee for the idea of government by the people. Such definition of democracy has been argued to provide scholars with the ability to make comparative studies on democracy-building in different states by analyzing if there are free and fair elections or not [20].

Second, the maximalist perspective has, in comparison to the minimalist perspective on electoral democracy, focused on a more substantive democracy embedding political rights and civil liberties beyond the procedure of free and fair elections. Such conceptualization of a liberal democracy has developed out of the notion of the "fallacy of electoralism" [21], meaning paying too much attention to the election and missing out on other important political rights and civil liberties in a democracy. It has been argued that the fallacy of electoralism may lead to the definition of states as democracies, although such states consist of nondemocratic traits. Although free and fair elections are important in democracies, focus on electoralism only is a too narrow perspective on what democracy is all about. The maximalist perspective has therefore introduced the definition of a liberal democracy, based on the procedural ingredients in an electoral democracy, but also including additional rights and liberties in, for example, minority rights, politically equality, freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication and assembly, the rule of law and securing human rights, etc. [22]. It has been argued that three fundamental dimensions exist in a liberal democracy; high level of competition, participation and liberties. As summarized by Georg Sørensen,

> *"Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force.*
>
> *A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded.*

> *A level of civil and political liberties—freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations—sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation" [23].*

The minimalist perspective and the maximalist perspective on democracy have provided scholars on democratization with important theoretical notions of foundations of democracy. Overall, there has been a scholarly tradition to implement the minimalist definition of democracy when analyzing democracy-building, by focusing on free and fair election as an important mechanism to promote other political rights and civil liberties. This has resulted in the conclusion that building democracy is very much about institutionalizing free and fair elections. However, the scholarly studies on building liberal democracy have stressed the possibility and importance of further developing electoral democracies, beyond the free and fair elections, including political rights and civil liberties. Robert Dahl has presented a well-known conceptualization of a democracy (polyarchy). His definition of democracy may be seen as a midrange definition between a minimal and maximal definition of democracy. Dahl has presented two dimensions of a democracy in contestation and participation. First, contestation refers to structured political competition through free and fair elections and second, participation refers to the popular right to participate as voters and/or politicians. In his definition of democracy, eight important institutions are mentioned. These are freedom to form and join organizations, freedom of expression, right to vote, eligibility for public office, right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, alternative sources of information, free and fair elections and institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference. Although Dahl's definition focuses on electoral procedures, contestation and participation also embed other political rights and civil liberties. To ensure the implementation of democracy in contestation and participation, it is argued that civil liberties are crucial. Such liberties are, for example, freedom to think, believe, worship, speak and publish one's views as well as the freedom to form and join organizations among other things [24].

The scholarly discussion on definitions of democracy has come with studies on nondemocratic states. The process of democracy building starts in a nondemocratic environment which may be of different natures such as one-party-states, military regimes, dynastic rule, theocratic rule, tyranny, oligarchy, absolutism, despotism and monarchy, etc. The research on nondemocratic regimes has set out different types. At first, democracies stood in sharp contrast to the totalitarian type. The totalitarian regime was characterized as a regime-type enforcing state objectives and goals on society and citizens, by concentrating all power to the elite and by subordinating societal activities and people to the control of the regime. In sharp contrast to a democracy, the totalitarian society was defined as an atomized society with very limited independent political, economic, social and judicial institutions due to the total control by the regime through the use of propaganda and terror [25]. To uphold total control, research has come to stress the importance of the implementation of an official ideology, single mass party, secret police, full control of communication, monopoly of coercive methods and a central control of the economy [26]. Another and more common nondemocratic regime has been the authoritarian regime. The authoritarian regime, compared to the totalitarian, has said to have a limited official ideology that dictates societal sectors and with a less powerful, violent and controlling police. The authoritarian regime is also open for socioeconomic pluralism

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and to some degree political pluralism, although such pluralism is never allowed to become political influential and challenge the ruling political elites. It should, however, be stated that democracy-building is far easier to achieve in an authoritarian setting compared to a totalitarian one. This is due to the existing political institutions in an authoritarian society, the allowance of pluralism and political opposition and to the more limited use of state violence and terror compared to totalitarian systems.

4. Building democracy: national factors

The previous trends of democratic progress around the world, followed by recent pessimistic assessments of returning authoritarianism, have led to a redeveloped interest in how to build democracies worldwide. There is a long tradition of studying how to protect and promote democracy. The main focus has been to identify the explanatory factors or driving engines that encourage countries to transition to democracy and in how to consolidate new democracies to become stabile and enduring. There has been a dominating focus on national factors for the transitions to democracy. The research on explanatory factors for building democracy grew out of an increasing number of studies on domestic actors and structures of the 1950s and onward, focusing primarily on socioeconomic factors. This approach was tied to developmental studies and was referred to as the modernization school or the modernization thesis. One of the first and most important studies on economic development and its role in modernization was Dankwart Rostow's *Politics and the Stages of Growth* [27]. In the 1960s, in the context of decolonization and new independent states, studies focused on how to establish political order and stability. The modernization perspective on political order was illustrated by the famous study by Lipset, *Political Man* [28]. Lipset argued that modernization, in terms of a high level of gross national product, was an important driving engine for building democracy. By assessing democracies around the world, it was convincingly argued how high levels of modernized socioeconomic structures were related to democratic states. In other words, states with economic modernization would become transitional democracies and, with further modernization, also become consolidated democracies. Lipset's focus on economic factors for democratization could be summarized as the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that nation will sustain democracy; this became a major insight on how to explain democratization and triggered further studies on when modernization has been an important explanatory factor to build democracies and when it has not.

Over time, new studies began to explore a more complex picture of modernization and democratization by unfolding a more detailed understanding about what economic and social indicators could trigger democracy building. These studies did not question the importance of modernization for political development, but pinpointed the economic and social structures that are needed to be developed to see democratization. It was argued that democracy building was based on economic progress embedding improved infrastructure, higher levels of education, shared societal values and improved health, etc. The main point made was that modernization embedded social issues that became explanatory factors to democracy rather than just focusing on pure economic growth. States with economic growth could

through political reforms to facilitate social structures that were beneficial for developing and consolidating democracy. In more recent decades of research done on the modernization thesis, economic progress leading to improved technology and the flow of information and knowledge has become new emphasized indicators for building democracy. The IT revolution has empowered people to engage in societal issues and provided people the tools to hold politicians and governments accountable for their decisions and actions, although research also stresses how authoritarian regimes may use new technology to haunt down political oppositions [29].

In addition, modernization was said to also impact the domestic class-structures. For instance, Moore [30], in the classical study *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy—Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, argued the importance of the result of the modernization in the changes of the class structure. He stressed that modernization was not sufficient in deciding democratization, since such socioeconomic development with higher levels of gross domestic product (GDP) could also lead to authoritarian system. Modernization embedded more specific favorable factor for democratization in industrialization, urbanization, increased power to the middle class, decreased power to rural landlords and improved infrastructure, education and health care that all contributed to improved conditions for democracy. It was further argued that industrialization also integrated the commercialized countryside with urban areas, building ties between the urban middle class and rural peasants. Many studies have stressed the importance of a growing middle class to build democracy by integrating the lower and upper classes of the society into collaboration and unity. Socioeconomic modernization provides an economic and political ambitious middle class of business people, professionals, shopkeepers, teachers, civil servants, managers, technicians and clerical and sales-workers. However, some studies have pointed out that the working class is pro-democratic, whereas the middle class is less interested in political change and more interested in protecting its economic role as an antidemocratic force, while other studies have emphasized the alliances between the working class and the middle class to build democracy [31]. The main argument has been that democracy is likely to develop based on industrialization and a growing power of the organized middle class and/or working class. Democracy is less likely to emerge in less modernized, agrarian societies and the dominating body of studies have stated a correlation between higher gross domestic product (GDP) and a growing middle class as the the main pro-democratic forces.

A second set of domestic factors to democracy aside from socioeconomic modernization includes the political culture. The perspective on political culture has referred to people's aggregated political orientations/attitudes toward the political objects of a society, such as the institutions, politicians, norms and values. Such interest in political culture has also included the analysis of the political cultural in terms of existing religious and/or civilization codes within Protestantism, Catholicism, Confucianism and Islam [32].

The perspective on political culture was developed in the 1960s and onward and focused on issues of socialization and the political orientations in cognitive orientation (referring to the knowledge of and beliefs about the political system), affective orientation (feelings about the political system) and evaluation orientation (including commitment and support for political

institutions and the values and judgements of system performances). One pivotal study for this tradition of approaches for democracy building was Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*, where political culture referred to "the specifically political orientations—attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" [33]. Their study analyzed the nature of the political culture that promoted and protected stable democracies and when political culture was defined as the aggregation of individual political attitudes. They argued that there existed three types of political cultures: the parochial, subject and participant culture. In the parochial culture, citizens were only indistinctly aware of the political system; second, in the subject culture, citizens saw themselves as subjects to political affairs rather than participants and third, in participant culture, citizens are participants of the system. The above-mentioned study stressed a connection between stable democracy and participant culture, but added that the importance of elements of parochial and subject cultures. It was argued that in the participant political culture, citizens participated in political affairs and supported political affairs, as well as how the parochial and subject political dimensions made the participating citizens loyal to the existing political decisions and implementation procedures, and thereby, they were supportive to the existing democratic institutions. It was further argued that a grave danger to democracy existed in too much of a subject culture because it could lead to an antidemocratic, authoritarian political system.

Other studies [34] about the role of political culture have focused on political culture as a multidimensional phenomenon and have measured people's political support of political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions and political actors. These studies have assessed that the overall citizens' support of democracies is high around the world, but there are dissatisfied democrats in societies. Democracies embed an increasing tension between democratic values, which are highly supported, and the trust in existing democratic institutions, which is declining. It has been concluded that there is high confidence within established democracies regarding political objects in the political community and the regime principles, but less confidence and trust in regime performances, regime institutions and politicians. The reasons behind such tension may be the identified existing decline in social trust and civic engagement, failure in regime performances and constitutional design or cultural factors rooted in modernization and changing norms and values.

Important studies on modernization and shifting norms and values have added insight about potential explanatory factors and challenges for democracy. Inglehart [35] conducted the famous World Values Survey, assessing the patterns of political attitudes in states worldwide. From a comparative perspective and over a long period of time, this survey has analyzed political attitudes toward the political community, democracy as an ideal form of government and regime performance. This survey has identified a decreasing respect for political authorities—such as in, for example, the police and political parties—and such declining respects is explained in terms of shifts in cultural values among citizens promoted by globalization, cultural transformations and modernization. The modernization process has fundamentally transformed the political and cultural system from being previously based on religious beliefs to political institutions, rational behavior and post-materialist values of maximizing individual well-being. Such fundamental transformation of culture may explain the identified shifting support to important political objects of democracy.

The scholarly interest in and study of the aggregated attitudes of citizens toward political objects has been related to research focused on the role of the civil society. Research on civil society has concerned people's attitudes in a society toward political objects and the articulation of such attitudes into organizations, associations, unions and interest clubs. One famous and now classical study on civil society is De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* [36], where a nineteenth century American prosperous democracy was argued to be based on a highly developed civil society. The American democracy was dynamic, vital and stable due to the highly developed network of civil society across economic, social, cultural and religious organizations and associations. These patterns of civil society constituted a platform or arena for societal activities between the outer bounds of government and the inner bounds of family ties and provided an interesting and important function for political life in democracies. The focus on the role of civil society re-emerged in the early 1990s with Putnam's study, *Making Democracy Work—Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* [37], in which he analyzed potential ties between democratic stability, political institutions, socioeconomic factors and sociocultural factors in northern and southern Italy. Such an approach questioned existing theories on socioeconomic factors and democratization and stressed the importance of civil society for institutional functionality, efficiency and democratic legitimacy. Democratic governance, it was argued, was based on the existence of a dynamic civil society of civic engagement, trust and reciprocity between citizens, which would foster improved political and administrative performances and legitimacy.

The growing bulk of studies over time on civil society and democracy has focused on the relationship between civil society and the state and has concluded a positive versus negative definition of a civil society. First, it has been argued that civil society may be a counter force to the state and, second, an arena or platform for civic education and participation [38]. The negative definition of a civil society refers to the counter force role a civil society may play in regulating and controlling the state and its performances. A civil society may function as an arena of civil society actors who balance the power of state institutions in relation to societal forces and who make sure that state's institutions do not abuse their authority. On the other hand, the positive definition of the civil society refers to the assisting function civil society can have in relation to the state by providing an additional societal arena where citizens can meet, articulate, aggregate and associate freely and become aware of political life. A civil society may therefore contribute to ideas, expertise, norms and values and societal actions to alleviate the pressure on the state and to guide the state in new directions for policy-making. A civil society may therefore have different functions in a democracy and may be an essential part in a vital and consolidated democratic system.

A third and final set of identified domestic factors for democracy building—aside from socioeconomic factors and political culture—includes political institutions and the political role of domestic political elites and the masses. One of the first and most important studies about political institutions and democracy was written by Huntington: *Political order in changing societies*. In times of societal developments, it was argued that one of the unstable factors in a society was insufficient institutionalization: "[t]he primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change" [39]. The focus on political institutions as pivotal to democracy stressed the danger of increased political and economic demands from societal forces and delayed political institutionalization. It was

argued that societal transformation led to increased societal demands on politics and how such demands had to be met by new institutional arrangements. Lack of institutionalization would jeopardize political order, as the political system would come under severe pressure and finally overload. Such institutional overload would provide grave danger to political order and lead to political illegitimacy and system collapse. Institutionalization, to safeguard political order, referred to the development of a strong multi-party system that could attract and mobilize people's political concerns into the political system in an orderly fashion. By channeling people's political demands into a political party's system, democracy could prevail and avoid being challenged by unsatisfied revolutionary groups. Building democracy was therefore argued to be a process of institutionalization, in the establishment of functional political parties, to ensure political participation. Political parties were essential for political order in that they provided instruments for attracting and representing interests and aggregating preferences. They were also tools for recruiting future politicians and institutionalizing elections by empowering political competitive alternatives and organizing the political agenda.

Research on political factors for democracy has also focused on the specific type of institutions that best favor democratic progress and stability. Studies have explored how to design or institutionally structure democracies in the best way to promote democracy and have assessed parliamentarism versus presidentialism. Such focus has, to a high extent, been based on the scholarly contributions by Linz and his colleagues. In his study, *The Perils of Presidentalism* [40], Linz argued that presidentialism is less favorable than parliamentarism for promoting and protecting stable democracies. Such conclusion was based on four perils of presidentialism. First, he argued that the nature of presidential elections (winner-take-all) could result in a presidency based on support from a minority of the electorate and provide a legitimacy gap. Second, he further argued that the fixed presidential terms and the many hindrances to change a president faces could be problematic for democratic vitality and change, especially when considering how the parliamentary system is more adjustable to changing conditions. Third, another danger was the divided legitimacy between the elected president and the elected members of Congress. Potential different political opinions between these two branches could lead to policy gridlock, declining political vitality and functionality and, in the long term, result in increasing societal demands, political illegitimacy and political instability with opportunities for undemocratic forces to take power. Fourth and finally, presidentialism could potentially foster personality politics and become open for inexperienced leaders to become president. Overall, the focus on presidentialism as less favorable for democracy than parliamentarism led to a growing number of studies about how to design democracies with opposing views, using the pros and cons with different institutional arrangements. Dominating arguments have discussed potential weaknesses in the presidential systems, in minority presidents, rigid terms and difficulty of removal, policy gridlock and the election of inexperienced outsiders and how the parliamentary democracies have seemed to be more functional and long-lasting compared to presidential democracies. However, it should be stated that many studies have challenged these arguments or assumptions by pointing out favorable conditions within presidential democracies, but also how political instability may be caused by weak democratic structures rather than by presidentialism).

The research on political explanatory factors for democracy was developed further in the 1980s by focusing on political actors in building democracy. Such an approach was referred to

as the transitology or the transition paradigm by stressing the importance of individual political actors in the transition to democracy. Previous studies about political explanatory factors had been foremost focused on structural conditions, while these new studies shed light on political actions taken by formal political actors and societal forces beyond the political system. O'Donnell et al. provided several studies in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule—Prospects for Democracy* [41], *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule—Southern Europe* [42], *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule—Latin America* [43], *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule—Comparative Perspectives* [44] and *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule—Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* [45] and focused on political actors and their preferences in the political and societal system. These studies identified different fractions of the political elite; two of these fractions within the dictatorial regime were the hardliners and softliners. Hardliners referred to the core of politicians against democracy and who viewed such a system as something that could bring chaos and disorder by undermining the existing privileges of the elite. It was further assessed how one group of hardliners firmly believed in the prevailing dictatorial system, but how softliners within the elite were less ideologically oriented and more pragmatic, foremost concerned with selfish political motives. The dictating political elite were therefore divided into two groups: hardliners and softliners. Where the hardliners were prepared to use their authority through repression and violence to keep stability and status quo, the softliners were open to limited political change to satisfy citizen demands or to increase quality of performances and receive legitimacy, as long as such political changes did not jeopardize the political survival of the elite. Therefore, softliners may be favorable for initiating democracy, but only if they believe that popular elections would result in a legitimate re-election of the same elite. These studies concluded that democracy could be built if there was a growing division between hardliners and softliners within the dictatorial elite and if softliners were able to convince or force the hardliners to democratize the system.

The role of softliners was, to some extent, dependent on the role of societal forces beyond the political system. Studies on political actors and their preferences for building democracy also focused on two more groups of actors in the moderates and the radicals (revolutionaries) within the society outside the formal political system. It was argued that the radicals wanted to overthrow the illegitimate elite of hardliners and softliners, while the moderates were open to forging alliances with softliners within the elite to see democratic change. It was stressed in in these studies that the transition phase to democracy often began with a division between hardliners and softliners within the authoritarian regimes, but strategic linkages between elites and the societal masses were important. This combination of alliances within the political elite and the societal groups outside the political system was referred to as the game of transition. The game of transition to democracy could take different paths. Democracy may result based on a pact between the dominating elite and the opposing elite to build democracy, through a reform when the societal masses are stronger than the elites and would build democracy from the bottom up, but without using violence; through imposition when one group of the political elite mobilizes and uses violence to overthrow the regime (such elite is often the military); and finally, through revolution, when the societal masses (revolutionaries) are strong enough to overthrow the traditional ruling elite by violence. Most studies on the

game of transition have stressed the importance of the pact transition for democracy. Such a path would ensure an orderly progress toward democracy based on compromises and the growing trust between powerful elites. This path, based on a pact-strategy between elites, also limits the number of people engaged in the transition, which is favorable for further democratization, as fewer people bring involved improves the chances of reaching compromises and does not led to an overload of political wants and demands. Further related studies on elites and masses have from an economic position argued that citizens prefer democratic systems due to the economic redistribution majority rule provide. This is in opposition to the elites that rather prefer nondemocratic political systems since they protect social and economic privileges and represent a favorable system of redistribution for the people in power. Transition to democracy may, however, happen if concessions from the elites are not credible and when repression and the use of violence are perceived as too risky and too costly [46].

5. Building democracy: international factors

The above-identified domestic-oriented perspectives on socioeconomic, cultural and political factors have provided explanations for democratization. The complementary perspectives of explanatory factors for democratization shed light on important driving engines for building democracies around the world and have enlightened the public and those in academic life regarding when democracy is likely to happen. The bulk of studies have been comprehensive, but these perspectives have contained one important flaw: the neglect to focus on international factors for democracy building. Until the 1990s, most research on how to build democracy focused on domestic factors. The dominance of domestic factors was primarily due to two phenomena. One explanation for the domestic bias in research on democratization is the construction of separating academic disciplines in comparative politics and international relations where research on how to build democracy belonged to the former. The tradition of comparative politics was to focus on domestic structures and actors to explain political situations and changes. Scholars in international relations, however, were less interested in domestic politics and focused on how states and other powerful actors engage in diplomatic, economic and political relationships with others and with what motives and impact they do so. Another explanation for the domestic bias in research has concerned the fuzzy idea of what really constitutes the international factors, reaching for any structures and/or actors in the world beyond the state's territory. This has made potential international explanatory factors to democracy hard to pin down, which has left many scholars abandoning international perspectives on democracy building.

Some significant research efforts for identifying the international dimension to political change began in the 1960s. In a time of decolonization, a large number of studies focused on political and economic linkages and dependencies between developed and less-developed states. It was argued that international political and economic structures penetrated state borders and provided links between powerful and less-powerful actors. The notion of links and penetrated systems was especially explored among scholars within the dependency school,

arguing that third-world states were influenced by rich states in the West based on an unjustified and unequal world economic structure. The criticism, however, pointed out the lack of specificity of how to analyze and understand international factors and how and when domestic politics and economics were influenced by or dictated by external forces.

It was argued that states were open systems vulnerable for penetration and that developed and powerful states could have a political impact on democracy building [47]. For instance, Rosenaue identified the link politics between the international and national domains as "any recurrent sequence of behavior that originates in one system and is reacted to in another" [48] and focused on the potential impact such links could have on democracy. In the 1990s, the debate about the international dimension re-emerged in the scholarly debate on globalization. The quickly growing number of studies about globalization covered the diffusion of global characteristics within economics, technology, culture and politics and stated a growing notion of interdependence in the world. It was further argued that economic, technological, cultural and political transformations across borders of intensification of interactions, exchanges and meetings led to a de-territorialization of politics in favor of macro-regional, international and global actors and processes. Globalization and global politics were portrayed as enhanced interdependence where global changes were cutting through state borders by challenging the domestic political, economic and cultural domestic structures by decreasing geographical distances around the world [49].

Research on the international dimension on democracy building, triggered by the studies on globalization, peaked with the end of the Cold War and with the increased power within the West. It resulted in the conceptualization of the international dimension to democracy in democratic diffusion and democratic promotion. First, the diffusion of democracy was argued to happen between nearby locations and between geographical locations far away with similar political, economic and cultural structures (or historical ties). It was stated that the spread of democracy was facilitated by political, cultural and economic salience often provided by geographical proximity, but diffusion could happen as a global phenomenon in a world of decreasing geographical distances. Diffusion of democracy was one important dimension of globalization—aside from the spread of economic liberalism and technology—and embedded the growing popularity of installing democratic governance [50]. The diffusion of democracy from one state or region to another required diffusion agents to assist the spread of democratic rights and liberties. Diffusion agents acted as socialization agents within the transnational networks and domestic domain, interpreting and introducing global norms and values to domestic settings.

A second international dimension factor for building democracy has been democracy promotion. Research on democracy promotion has been based on traditional insights from international relations and foreign policy-making, focusing on international actors' motives and methods. The foreign policy analysis has displayed a growing interest in democracy promotion in which democracy promotion has referred to a foreign policy motivation to impact other governments and nations in a pro-democratic direction. Studies during the 1990s [51] argued that democracy promotion were essential factors for the global scope of democratization by

identifying powerful actors, such as the European Union, the Organizations of Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United States, among others, and the declining power of Soviet Union. These actors promoted democratic ideas and encouraged governments and people around the world to launch democratic reforms, which led to transitions and, in the long run, snowballing effects on a growing number of states. The links between international democracy promotion and transitions were clarified through important research, such as in Pridham's study: *Encouraging Democracy—the international context of regime transition in Southern Europe* [52] and *Building Democracy—The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe* [53]. Pridham argued that international factors played a significant role in democracy building and discussed how such factors had had an increased role in explaining the transitions to democracy in Europe from the 1970s to the 1990s.

Another impressive study on the international factors for democratization was Whitehead's study, *The International Dimensions of Democratization—Europe and the Americas* [54], which conceptualized different methods or modes of democracy promotion in contagion, control and consent from a comparative perspective across the Atlantic. Schmitter [55] added a fourth mode in conditional cooperation and illustrated different actors, motives and processes that could shed light on the international factors for democracy. Conditional cooperation referred to the international influence on domestic democracy building based on the use of carrots and sticks. Democracy promotion was often implemented by offering political, economic and/or technological assistance and support (carrots) tied to formalized democratic demands on the reforms to be taken. Control, on the other hand, implies a mode based on coercive political, economic and/or military methods to see democratization without the necessary domestic consent through deliberate, forceful acts. Such a mode of influence could include intervention and isolation to enforce the transition to democratic institutions and political culture. In sharp contrast to control, contagion implies a mode of non-coercive impact where domestic democratic reforms are a consequence of the spirit of the time, the global surge of democracy and the domino effects from other states' transitions; that is, what was previously discussed in this chapter as the diffusion of democracy as a political idea and encouragement to dare to change domestic institutions in a democratic direction. In contemporary research on democracy building, international factors are systematically considered as explanatory factors, leaving national and international factors as equally important to take into consideration when trying to explain transitions to democracy around the world. In a globalized world order, national and international factors to democracy building are interwoven leaving scholars with a wide range of potential explanatory factors to be considered.

6. Final remarks

Democracy refers to the government by the people. It ensures contestation and participation and provides citizens with political rights and civil liberties that promote popular freedom. Democratic systems have been challenged by nondemocratic systems and ideas over time. In

the early twenty-first century, we have seen more democratic states than ever, with expanded freedoms in political rights and civil liberties, although an authoritarian upsurge is identified. Such authoritarian upsurge challenges electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, freedom of expression, associational and organizational rights and the rule of law, etc. This chapter has discussed the state-of-the-art research about factors favorable for building democracy in a time of authoritarian upsurge. So where do we stand today when we try to understand the possibilities and problems for democratic transitions? The research from the 1950s forward has developed explanatory factors for democracy building by pointing out national and international factors. This study identified the most important factors from a socioeconomic, cultural and political perspective. It was further argued that the international factors for democracy building, until recently, have constituted forgotten factors for democracy. This has been due to the comparative approach of most democratization studies and to the problems of conceptualizing international factors. However, this chapter presented two important international factors in democracy diffusion and democracy promotion. These factors complement the traditional domestic-oriented understandings of explanatory factors for democratization.

Based on decades of study about democracy building, contemporary research has continued to focus on national or international explanatory factors on the one hand and how links between the two groups of factors may interact on the other. Though international factors have come to play a much more important role in explaining transitions to democracy than before, today, it is the links between international democracy diffusion and democracy promotion and domestic salience that are in focus. This has led to a re-focus on political aelites and civil society actors as domestic democracy agents and gatekeepers in relation to external pro-democratic pressure. However, in a time of a reawakening of authoritarianism in the world, international pro-democratic forces are under heavy pressure from antidemocratic regimes. This has resulted in further studies on international politics regarding democratization and the balance of power between major states and international organizations and how certain states may be under international pressure and at a crossroads between democracy and authoritarianism. This has especially been the case in contemporary Eastern Europe and East Asia with the rising international power of Russia and China. Contemporary research on democracy building has become even more complex and requires scholarly collaboration between researchers belonging to comparative and international politics. It requires a firm understanding of national and international explanatory factors, but also how such factors may interact [56]. Based on previous research, long-term structural factors are important to build democracy. Such factors are economic prosperity, civil society activities, popular mobilization and political institutions. But actor-oriented factors are also crucial to understand democracy building in the short-run. It is foremost the different domestic elites and their perceptions, behavior and strategies that may provide window of opportunities for transitions to happen. In addition, national determinants to democratization must be linked to international factors in actors, structures and processes that penetrates state borders and may be prodemocratic or antidemocratic in nature.

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