

# **SPACES OF DEMOCRACY**

Geographical Perspectives on Citizenship,  
Participation and Representation

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## **2 Global Democratization: Measuring and Explaining the Diffusion of Democracy**

John O'Loughlin

Since Francis Fukuyama (1992: xi) declared that the 'End of History' had been reached because liberal democracy constitutes the 'endpoint of mankind's ideological motivation' and is 'the final form of human government', a parallel debate has raged about whether liberal democracy, as practiced in the West, will diffuse and be accepted throughout the rest of the world. By the turn of the twenty-first century, few political leaders – even in authoritarian states – were willing to argue aloud against democracy since its virtues are now almost universally accepted. Global norms are fast coalescing around some key human and political freedoms, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948) and extending to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (Diamond, 1999: 4). Democracy is essential to freedom and other inalienable rights because (a) free and fair elections require certain political rights of expression and these will co-exist with other liberties; (b) democracy maximises the opportunity for self-determination; and (c) democracy facilitates moral autonomy, the ability to make normative choices and to be self-governing (Diamond, 1999).

Nobody disputes that the number of democratic states rose dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. What remains in question is whether the new democracies are (a) stable; (b) truly democratic or only veneer expressions of democracy while real power still rests with autocrats; and (c) whether there is a general global process or whether recent developments are the independent results of separate and unpredictable domestic circumstances. After the end of the Cold War, a paradigm shift is recognisable in the study of democratisation. Rather than seeing political developments as separate events, researchers turned to seeing them as connected within a cascading pattern and thus part of a 'Third Wave' of democratisation (Huntington, 1991). The structural model of predictability implicit

in a cascading wave, in turn presupposing a structural trend, is now viewed skeptically by students of comparative politics who focus on national differences (Schwartzman, 1998). In political science, an argument has erupted about whether one can compare polities across regions (Inglehart and Carballo, 1997).

Geographers and some political scientists (Most and Starr, 1989; Siverson and Starr, 1991) reject the binary choice of a particularist versus a structuralist perspective on global political change. Instead, a 'domain-specific model' is preferred in which both general global trends and local circumstances are examined in an interactive manner. In statistical terms, it means the fitting of a predictive regression model that uses the characteristics of the states to anticipate political changes and it specifically identifies those countries that do not conform to the general trends to highlight what makes them different. O'Loughlin et al. (1998) used a diffusion model to track the democratic and autocratic changes after 1946 but they were highly cognisant of both regional peculiarities and states that did not conform to the regional trends. In this chapter, I extend this perspective. Further evidence for the efficacy of the diffusion model of democracy suggests that it offers a vibrant option that can incorporate the special contexts of individual countries and the predictability inherent in the general model of global change (O'Loughlin, 2001). The 'context-specific' approach of geographers has been widely applauded within the discipline (Agnew, 1996; Dorling, 2001) but viewed skeptically by some political scientists (King, 1996) who think that it represents a missing variables problem. Some key explanatory variables for the patterns are not considered by the geographers who, like their comparative politics counterparts, are intent on promoting a place-specific approach (O'Loughlin, 2000).

In this chapter, I take stock of the democratisation trends since the mid-1990s. While it appeared for about half a decade after the collapse of the Communist regimes that the world was firmly ensconced in the 'Third Wave' of democratisation (the first two were in the nineteenth century and after World War I, followed by reversals to authoritarianism in both cases), recent evidence is more contradictory. The reversal to authoritarianism that was anticipated by Huntington's account of the 'Third Wave' of democratisation of the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s has not yet happened in a dramatic manner, but neither has the 'wave' continued its upward trajectory. Instead, the beginning of the twenty-first century marks a period of stability in the democratic trend. As noted by Norris (1999: 265), the percentage of independent states that were democratic (according to the Freedom House data on political and civil rights) was 34% in 1983 and rose to 41% in 1997, where it has remained. What is especially noticeable about the trend in the 1990s is the strong macro-regional character of the democratic transitions – it is clear regional location matters.

The specific purpose of this chapter is to probe the causes of the turn to 'democratisation', without prejudging whether the wave is real or imaginary. There are five issues that need to be considered. First, is there a new international norm consequent on globalisation? Is there a political parallel to economic

globalisation that is making countries politically similar? (Held et al., 1999)? Second, is there a clear correlation between democracy and aid: no democracy, no foreign aid? There is little doubt that democracy has been strongly promoted by the United States and its allies, and that economic development strategies by international and national agencies are intimately linked to grassroots democracy initiatives and transparent governance. Third, is the diffusion effect identified at the time of the end of the Cold War still evident, or has the asymptote<sup>1</sup> been reached? Exceptions, both in regional and local terms, to general diffusion trends can be especially instructive in suggesting future trends. Fourth, with the collapse of the Communist alternative about 1989–91 and the sweep of the democratic idea worldwide, can we accept the 'Zeitgeist' model from Linz and Stepan (1996: 74): 'When a country is part of an international ideological community where democracy is only one of many strongly contested ideologies, the chances of transitioning to and consolidating democracy are substantially less than if the spirit of the times is one where democratic ideologies have no powerful contenders.' If the 'Zeitgeist' exerts such a strong control, then we would not expect a Third Wave of reversals as happened after the two earlier waves of democratisation. Finally, the end-game of 'Zeitgeist' democracy management is the development of a cosmopolitan political culture worldwide, one that is not only promoted, but whose causes are multiple and indefinite. Archibughu et al. (1998), Held (1993) and Risse et al. (1999) have developed the concept of a 'cosmopolitan political culture'. Lynch (2001) considers the tension between, on the one hand, state domestic political cultures and, on the other hand, the international governance advocated by Richard Falk (2000), who wants to strengthen and develop global political institutions. The cosmopolitans want to go further than simply promote democracy, though that is clearly a first step in their project. They believe that the state system is manifestly inefficient and that a global political arena can replace the conditions and the dynamics of both domestic and international politics without the corresponding emergence of an international state. In the extreme version, the development of an 'international domestic politics' of democratically legitimated decisions consequent on the emergence of a globalised political arena is envisaged (Lynch, 2001: 93).

### **Democracy: Transitions and Measurement**

Contemporary research on the distribution of democracy was kicked off by Lipset's (1959) paper on the social requisites of democracy. This focused attention on the structural characteristics of countries, typically the size of the middle class, private entrepreneurial groups, widespread literacy, and sustaining civic values. Recent updates of this approach have typically been able to replicate the original conclusions of the 'social requisites' school (Lipset et al., 1993), though attention now has been diverted somewhat to issues of democratic reversal,

democratic consolidation, and democratic transitions. In a paper responding to Lipset, Rustow (1970) argued that the structural national conditions that keep a democracy functioning might not be the same factors that brought democracy to the country in the first place. Focusing on 'contingent conditions' and dynamic circumstances, he deviated from the Lipset position since he believed it too narrow and limiting. Rustow offered an alternative of 'a more varied mix of economic and cultural dispositions with contingent developments and individual choices' (Anderson, 1999: 2).

Democratic transitions typically occur in stages and are the by-products of debate, struggle, compromise, and agreement. It has been shown empirically that a state that has a chance of becoming democratic will have a sense of community, a conscious adoption of democratic rules, and operation of the rules in a step-by-step adoption of democracy (Rustow, 1970). Political elites are the key actors, whether in government or opposition, and elite-bargaining is an element of all transitions (Bermeo, 1999; Haggard and Kaufman, 1999). Democratic transitions are especially tenuous in times of economic uncertainty since economic decline can reverse democratic trends by giving rise to social unrest and class strife. In low-income countries, democracy has a 12% chance of breakdown in any given year (sampled between 1950 and 1990) and the expected life of a democracy increases with per capita income. Further, democracy is more likely to endure when income inequality is lower (Przeworski, 1991).

Globalisation is seen as a 'global catalyst' of democracy by Schwartzman (1998) from her survey of the democratisation literature. Global industrialisation and development filter through to democracy in four ways: (1) they privilege the role of technology and communication, making the import of ideas easier and therefore more difficult for an authoritarian regime to control; (2) they promote the growth of the middle class in individual countries, a key factor in the pressure for democratisation; (3) they increase the power of the working class, a key pressure group according to Rueschemeyer et al. (1992); and (4) they exaggerate the interplay between globalised capitalism and state-class relations, thus producing domestic pressures for political change. But globalisation involves more than economic linkages. Additional external influences are transmitted by new technologies, including the Internet, satellite dishes, international TV networks, and instant news dissemination:

Communications technology has reshaped the opportunity structure of contemporary politics, making almost every political issue one of international rather than purely domestic interest. Many of the political manifestations of globalization such as the rise of intrusive human rights norms and the proliferation of international and transnational organisations, can plausibly be accounted for within the context of communications technology. (Lynch, 2001: 95)

While it is common to assume that the positive relationship between globalisation and democracy is becoming stronger, Moon (1996: 10) cautions that 'democracy

and globalisation have not been necessarily complementary. They have often produced ambiguous and conflicting implications.'

But what is democracy? How should it be measured? More than 550 subtypes of democracy are identified in Collier and Levitsky's (1997) review of 150 studies. Minimalist definitions of democracy derive from Joseph Schumpeter (1947: 269), who defined democracy as a system 'for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples' vote'. This minimalist approach was adhered to by Huntington (1991). Dahl's (1971) concept of polyarchy has two overt dimensions: *opposition* (organised contestation through regular, free and fair elections); and *participation* (the right of virtually every adult to vote and contest for office). Embedded in these two notions is a third concept: civil liberty (Diamond, 1999: 8).

The minimalist definition of democracy corresponds to *formal democracy* with four common features: regular fair and free elections; universal suffrage; accountability of the state's apparatus to the people; and effective guarantees of expression and association (Beetham, 1994). Adding another condition, high levels of democratic participation without systematic differences across social categories makes for *participatory democracy*. A key difference between those who study formal democracy and those who equate democracy to popular democracy is that the latter want social and economic equality as well (Bobbio, 1989). Yet another condition, increasing equality in social and economic outcomes, produces *social democracy* (Huber et al., 1999). In Huber et al.'s model, formal democracy opens the door for the other democratic forms and a virtuous cycle of egalitarian policies and norms allow more citizens to participate in the political process. However, this pattern of development is far from automatic. In Latin America, for example, formal democracy developed only partially. External pressures, especially from the United States, favour a deepening of formal democracy but typically block implementation of principles and practices that promote participatory and social democracy (Huber et al., 1999; see also, Boeninger, 1997; Bollen, 1993; Rueschemeyer et al., 1992).

Formal democracy should also be distinguished from *liberal democracy* – formal democracy that encompasses extensive protections for individual and group freedoms, inclusive pluralism in civil society and party politics, and civilian control over the military. Using the Freedom House scores (see below for more details on these measures), only 41.4% of countries were 'free' (liberal democratic in character) in 1996, though the percentage of formal democracies was just over 60% of the world's states. This sizeable difference led Diamond (1997: xv) to conclude that the 'Third Wave' of democratisation has had much greater breadth than depth, and that outside the wealthy industrialised countries, liberal democracy tends to be shallow, illiberal and poorly institutionalised (Zakaria, 1997). Three features distinguish liberal democracies from electoral democracies: (1) an absence of domains of power for the military and others not accountable to the electorate; (2) the requirement of horizontal accountability that office holders

owe to each other; and (3) extensive provisions for political and civic pluralism as well as personal and group freedoms (Diamond, 1999: 8). For example, Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, Zambia and Russia are not (yet) liberal democracies, since political violence, lawlessness and corruption are still a significant feature in these states. While traditionally associated with Latin America in democratisation research, hollow, illiberal, poorly institutionalised democracy is by no means unique to that region and is now characteristic of many Third Wave democracies. These 'pseudo-democracies' have regular elections and political parties. Electoral outcomes are uncertain because the competition is real between the cadres of the elites. However, mass parties and grassroots democratic movements are noticeably absent from the political scene.

Data from 1946–94, using a measure for democracy based on authority characteristics, show that democratisation has proceeded in regular spatial and temporal diffusion patterns, but with distinct observable regional trends (O'Loughlin et al., 1998). Unlike the trend suggested by Huntington's Third Wave model, this suggests a more complex process. Regional-level explanations, rather than macro-structural ones are necessary to account for the political changes of the past half-century. The geographic disparities in the global trends in democratisation had barely been mentioned in previous global-level analyses. This raises the question of whether the geographic factor was simply an artifact of an approach that emphasised the 'spatial and temporal diffusion of democracy'? Or was it a result of the special combination of place characteristics that mold a certain style of politics, and that cannot easily be isolated from socio-demographic explanations to which other social scientists resort?

It would not be going too far to claim that democracy's meaning is to some extent place-specific and that, global trends notwithstanding, sharp differences between places are evident even within the set of stable democratic countries. Any world map of the distribution of democratic scores indicates clear regional clusters and temporal framing: the past 50 years also indicates the regional ebb and flow of democracy in a distinctly time-space autocorrelation (O'Loughlin et al., 1998). What is less evident is the combination of forces generating these clusters in time and space. Some sort of regional neighborhood-effect is plausible, especially in sub-Saharan African and Latin American countries in the early 1990s. Of course, the best-known regional trend was in Eastern Europe after 1980 but that trend did not reach all of the former Communist states; Central Asia, to name one region, remains markedly different than Central Europe in its democratic qualities today. As Kopstein and Reilly (2000) conclude, geography seems to be more important than democratic policies, as the contrasting examples of Kyrgyzstan (many policy reforms but less democratic) and Slovakia (fewer democratic policies but more democracy) demonstrate.

The diffusion-promotion effects of a neo-liberal world order put in place since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and the specific regional interests of the powerful Western countries, especially the United States, are instrumental in establishing the external push factors, giving the world a peculiar



dynamic at the present time (Joseph, 1997). Contemporary democratisation requires concessions from those who were formerly excluded from participation. Having tolerated many years of material inequities while at the same time agreeing to work through elections and democratic procedures, these dissenters must now wait longer. However, they generally have the pressures of international agencies and benefactors on their side. Regardless of the academic debate about the democratic trend, it is clear that democracy and international politics are now intertwined for Western countries. Former US Under-Secretary of State Strobe Talbott (1996: 63) put it starkly: 'Only in an increasingly democratic world will the American people feel themselves truly secure.'

### **Analyzing Democratic Diffusion: The Freedom House Measures**

As noted above, the choice of democratic measure is not as evident as it might seem at first glance. Of the myriad of indicators that are now readily available, the preferred one should be able to summarise more than one element of the global democratic profile. Because electoral democratic measures, such as the Polity III<sup>2</sup> measures used by O'Loughlin et al. (1998), are limited to formal democratic institutions, a fuller picture of democracy needs to consider other, less institutionalised measures. Here, I use the Freedom House<sup>3</sup> scores that incorporate the concepts of liberal democracy for my analysis. Both Freedom House and Human Rights Watch,<sup>4</sup> though different in ideological orientation, worry about the growing gap between formal and liberal democracies. Though accused in the United Nations by authoritarian states such as Cuba, China and Sudan of being biased, the Freedom House measures of political and civil rights have been used widely in academic work, not least because they have been available for 30 years.

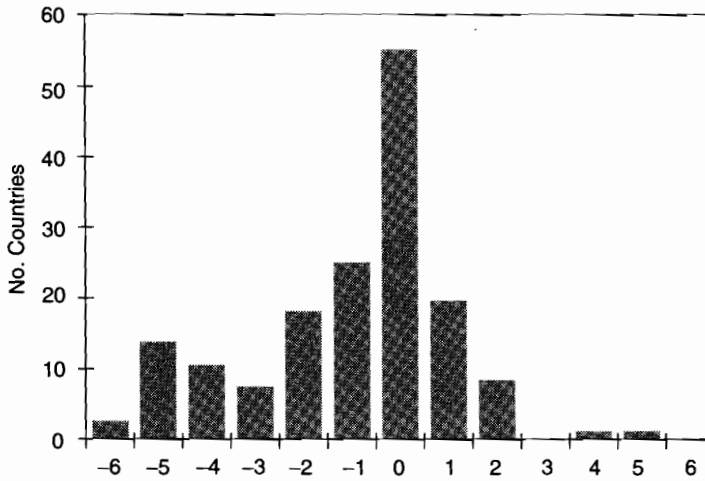
Freedom House carries out a yearly survey of all countries. The survey rates countries and territories by focusing on the rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals in each country or territory: 'To reach its conclusions, the survey team employs a broad range of international sources of information, including both foreign and domestic news reports, NGO publications, think tank and academic analyses, and individual professional contacts. The survey's understanding of freedom encompasses two general sets of characteristics grouped under political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, which is the system by which the polity chooses authoritative policy makers and attempts to make binding decisions affecting the national, regional, or local community. In a free society, this represents the right of all adults to vote and compete for public office, and for elected representatives to have a decisive vote on public policies. Civil liberties include the freedoms to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state. The survey employs two series of checklists, one for questions regarding political rights and one for civil liberties, and assigns each country or territory considered a numerical rating for each category (Freedom House, 2000). In the Freedom

House scores, 1 indicates the highest ranking (freedom on the political rights dimension) of democracy, with 7 indicating the most authoritarian regimes. Similarly, 1 to 7 on the civil liberties scale ranks freedom of beliefs and expression. The 'state of freedom' is gauged by Freedom House by assigning each country the status of 'free', 'partly free', or 'not free' through averaging their political rights and civil liberties ratings. Those whose ratings average 1–2.5 are generally considered 'free', 3–5.5 'partly free', and 5.5–7 'not free'. The dividing line between 'partly free' and 'not free' usually falls within the group whose ratings numbers average 5.5.<sup>5</sup>

In order to examine the global democratisation trends, I investigated the distributions of political rights and civil liberties in 1979 and 2001 and the changes between these two years. Though the Freedom House scores reach back to 1972 for many countries, many states and territories are missing data for the early years of the survey. The 22-year gap from 1979 to 2001 allows an adequate picture of the developments over the past quarter-century since the beginning of Huntington's Third Wave of democracy. The dramatic growth of two elements of liberal democracy, political rights and civil liberties, over the past two decades is evident in Figure 2.1. On the two graphs, a negative value indicates an improvement in these indices (low values reflect more democracy). It is evident that the overwhelming change between 1979 and 2001 is towards more democracy globally, with over twice as many countries becoming more democratic than have become less democratic – on both indices. There is, of course, a strong correlation between political rights and civil liberties across all countries, though a nuanced analysis of the two graphs indicates that slightly more countries have increased their political rights scores. A couple of outliers on the political rights graph (changes of +4 and +5) are markedly at odds with the global trends, while such dramatic developments are not as visible on the civil rights chart. About one-third of all countries did not change their scores across the two decades as stable democracies were more evident and many countries classified as 'partly free' by Freedom House retained their respective status.

A clearer picture of global democratisation can be obtained from Figures 2.2 and 2.3. For ease of interpretation, the maps have been simplified somewhat so that the map categories can be considered as 'more democratic', 'slight change towards democracy' (– 1), 'no change', and 'less democratic' (positive scores). Most of the stable scores are for democratic states in Western Europe, North America, etc., though a few authoritarian countries hung on to that status in the face of a global trend. Algeria, Mauritania, Syria, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Afghanistan are emblematic of the hold-outs from the global democratic wave. Other countries that were 'partly democratic' in 1979, such as Peru, Guatemala, Oman, Zambia and Pakistan, held on to that categorisation. By contrast, the clearest expression of global democratisation lies in the previously Communist countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The changes in these areas were not uniform, however. While countries such as Mongolia, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Baltic Republics showed dramatic

## Political Rights 1979–2001



## Civil Liberties 1979–2001

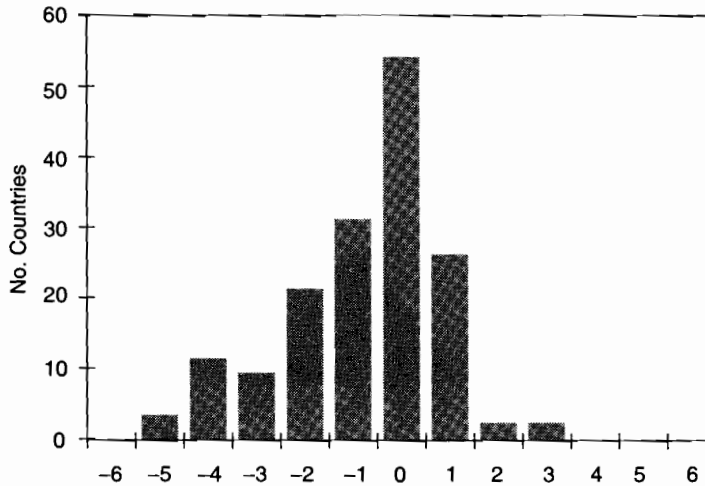


Figure 2.1 Changes in political and civil rights 1979–2001

gains, other former Soviet republics such as Belarus, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan replaced one kind of political authoritarianism for another. Worse yet, some former Soviet republics are scored as more repressive than in the last decade of the Soviet Union. Three of the five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) as well as other Islamic states of the neighboring Middle East (Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya,

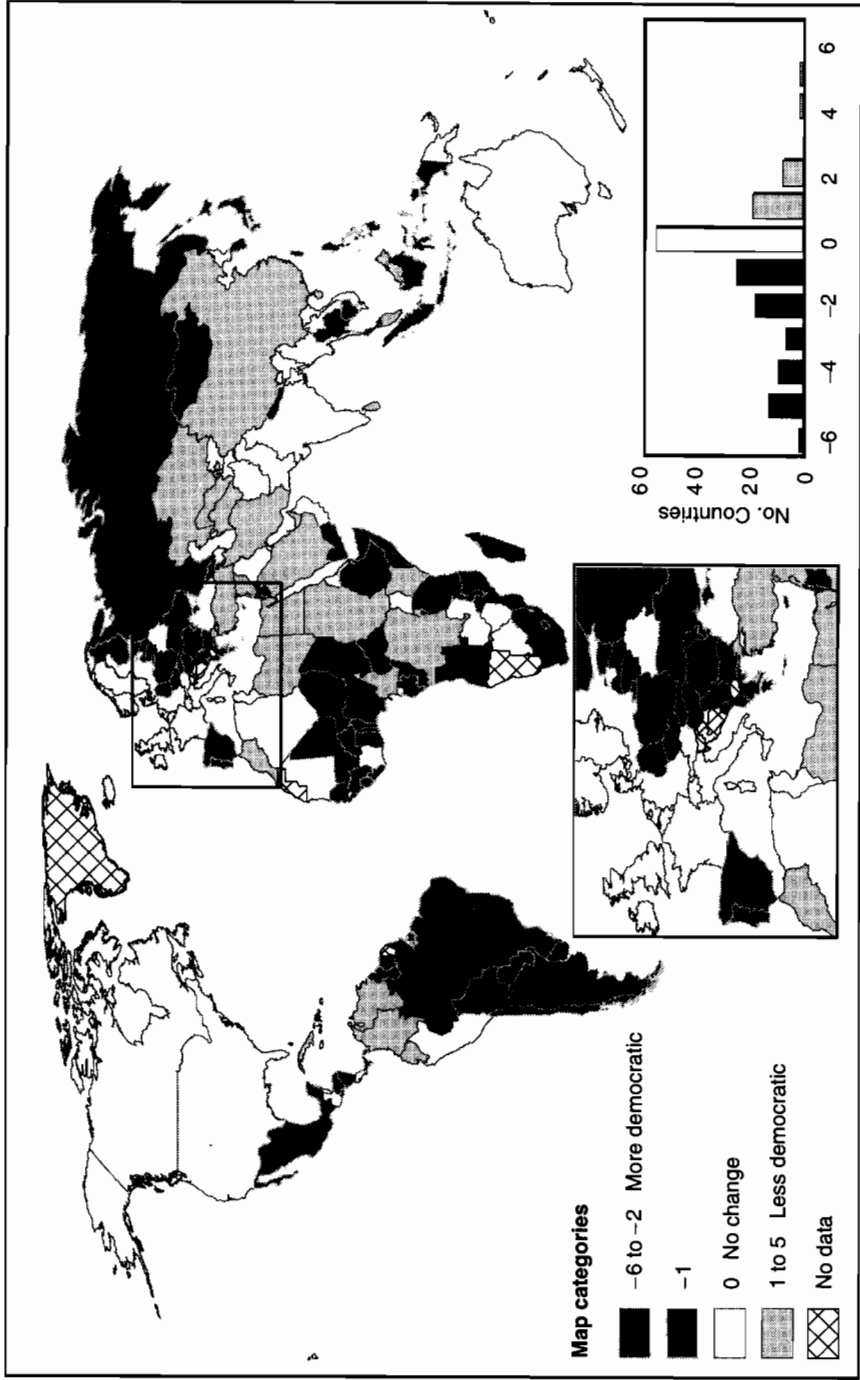


Figure 2.2 Changes in political rights 1979–2001

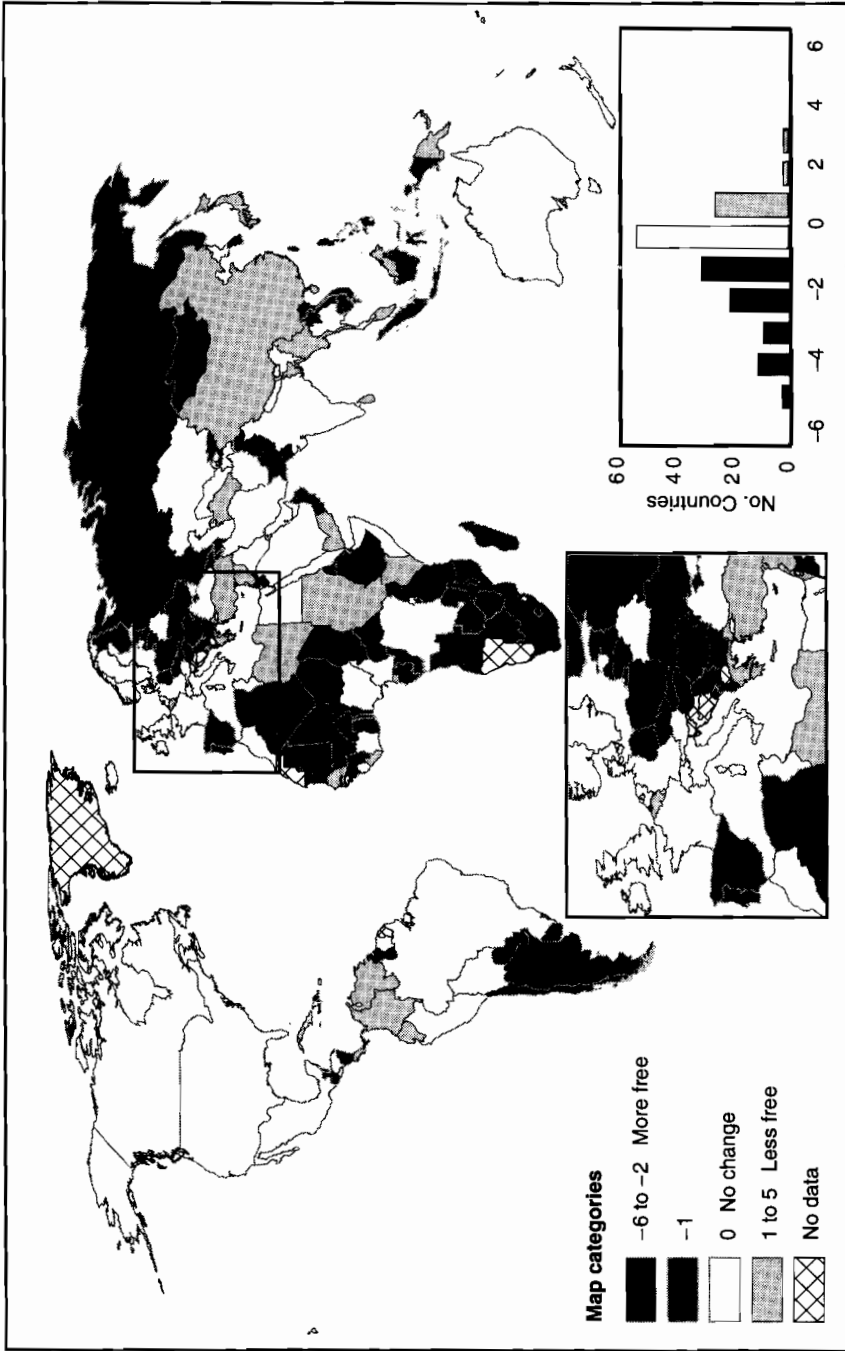


Figure 2.3 Changes in civil rights 1979–2001

Morocco, Turkey) and China all saw a decline between 1979 and 2001 in political rights. While most of Latin America became more democratic, the northern Andean countries (Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador) saw a reverse trend. Africa showed the greatest diversity in political rights; while most African states became more democratic, exemplified best by South Africa, three notable exceptions were the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and Gabon.

Since countries that value the political elements of liberal democracy tend to promote civil liberties as well, the close correlation between these two dimensions is visible in a comparison of Figures 2.2 and 2.3. Countries with a negative trend in their political rights score are also characterised by no improvement in their civil liberties index. Most Islamic states of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia have seen either no change or even reversal of civil liberty gains in recent years. By contrast, big improvements can be noted in the former Communist countries, in most of Africa, and in the southern cone of South America. While political and civil rights generally march in tandem, it is often the case that political developments, especially in the formation of new parties, precede the improvement in civil liberties. But the fact that the past two decades have seen more improvements in civil liberties than reversals should not generate a sense of inevitability. Reversals are common in democratising countries whose institutions are not stabilised and where grassroots support for democratic values is not yet widespread. The example of Turkey is instructive: after the military intervention in 1980, there was a sharp reversal in the treatment of the secular government's political opponents (especially Islamicists) and its largest minority group, the Kurds. More than any other indicator of liberal democracy, civil rights offers a deeper and more meaningful measure of democracy than the more accessible electoral measures of parliamentary competition. For that reason, more researchers use civil rights indicators: available sources include the annual reviews of every country from Amnesty International and the US Department of State, and documents from the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Freedom House measures used here.

The state of play of contemporary democracy can be seen in the two maps (comprising Figures 2.4 and 2.5). The map categories follow the Freedom House nomenclature. On the political rights map, 50 countries are mapped as 'democratic' while another 39 are classed as 'mostly democratic'. Together, the other countries (partly and non-democratic) constitute about half of the world's polities and almost one-third are in the most repressive categories (non-democratic). Despite the gains of the Third Wave of democratisation, large regions of the globe are still relatively unaffected. A large swath from Central Africa through the Islamic world of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia to China and Indochina accounts for almost all non-democratic states in 2001. Previously non-democratic regions like South America, Southern Africa, Eastern Europe and the western half of the former Soviet Union are now at least partly democratic. Though reversals can be expected in some of these countries, the longer they remain in the democratic camp, the greater the likelihood of the establishment of an array of parliamentary elections and electoral turnover.

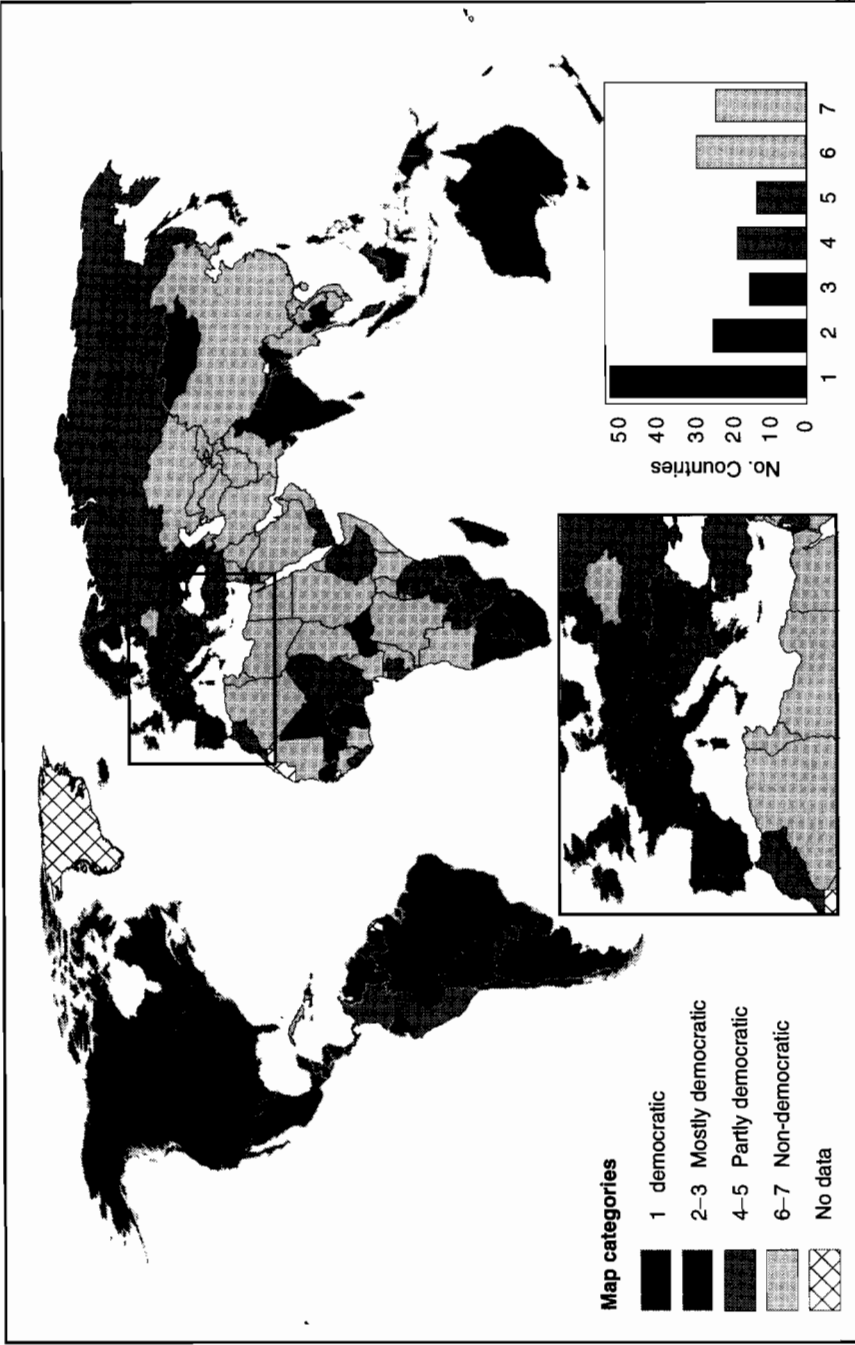


Figure 2.4 Political rights in 2001

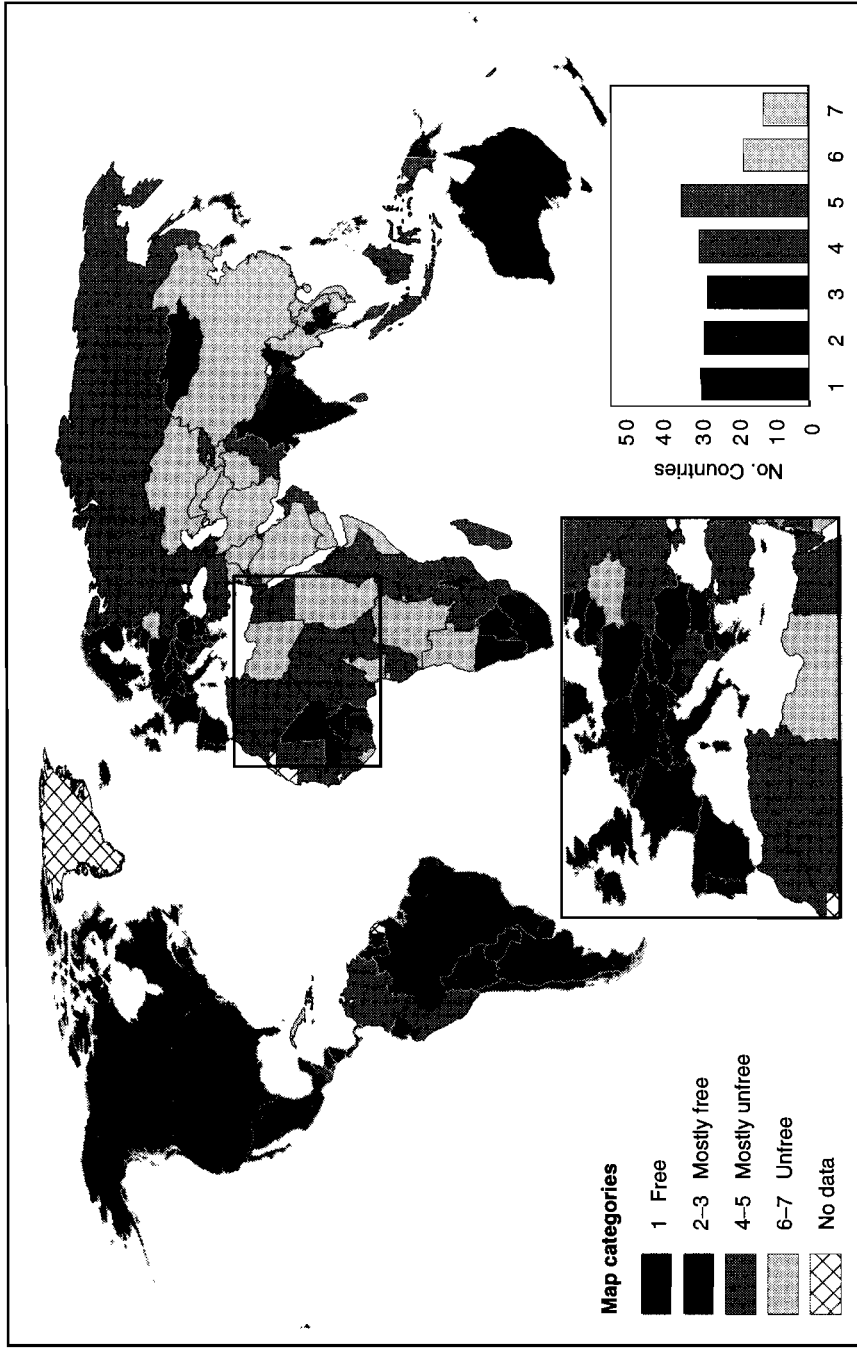


Figure 2.5 Civil rights in 2001



A comparison of the map of political rights to the final figure of civil liberties shows some clear, key differences that emerge in the expression of liberal democracy. Though countries that are 'partly democratic' are usually also 'mostly unfree', some differences emerge. Thus, although Pakistan, Egypt and Algeria are rated as 'non-democratic' for their lack of parliamentary democracy, they nonetheless have a modicum of civil rights ('mostly unfree'). The reverse, countries with lower ratings on civil liberties than political rights, include Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Spain, and the Baltic Republics, all newly-democratic in the past quarter-century. Though there is little question of their democratic stability, their electoral and political procedures are more established than their implementation of other elements of liberal democracy in the form of civil liberties. Fair protection and treatment of minority groups (national, ethnic, religious, etc.) and political opponents is still the *sine qua non* of modern liberal democracy.

To explain the distributions on the maps, we must turn to the factors that are encouraging and promoting democratic diffusion. Some of these elements are necessarily idiosyncratic (internal factors in countries are most important) but others are more structural and connect to the notion of a democratic globalisation that has taken hold since the end of the Cold War. In particular, the key factors of contagious diffusion from neighboring states and promotion of democracy from the major Western countries must be examined to see how influential they have been in changing the world's political map.

### **Democracy: Diffusion and Promotion**

Over the past 30 years, research on democracy has ebbed and flowed in its attention to the regional nature of political changes and regime characteristics. Lipset's (1959) paper on the social requisites of democracy focused attention on the structural characteristics of countries. Unlike the earlier version of the 'social requisites model', in a later paper Lipset (1994: 16) stated that 'a diffusion, a contagion or demonstration effect seems operative, as many have noted, one that encourages democracies to press for change and authoritarian rulers to give in' (see also Lipset et al., 1994). In his survey of the democratisation literature, Shin (1994: 153) concluded 'as vividly demonstrated in Eastern Europe and Latin America, earlier transitions to democracy have served as models for later transitions in other countries in the same region'. Huntington attributed the 'Third Wave' partly to a diffusion process starting in the Iberian peninsula in the mid-1970s:

Successful democratisation occurs in one country, and this encourages democratisation in other countries, either because they seem to face similar problems, or because successful democratisation elsewhere suggests that democratisation might be a cure for their problems whatever their problems are, or because the country that has democratised is powerful and/or is viewed as a political and cultural model. (Huntington, 1991: 100)

As Huntington sees it, diffusion offers a proven course of action that can presumably be adopted and applied. It also works as a source of social learning by highlighting successes and failures. In his 'Third Wave', state leaders were able to observe clearly the processes as they unfolded, and could draw the obvious conclusion for their own domestic circumstances. But the diffusion effects were the strongest where proximity was the greatest and diffusion increased in effects over time. As O'Loughlin et al. (1998) show for sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, the pattern of regime change over time shows a strong element of neighbor-to-neighbor linkages and also of cross-regional snowballing.

The 'peculiar dynamic' of the present time (Joseph, 1997) that is encouraging democratisation is having evident impacts. In sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, 'ruler conversions' to democratic forms and behavior took place quickly as leaders began to advise each other how to avoid being pressured into an unwelcome form of government (Joseph, 1997). What most worried these leaders was the potential loss of foreign aid; by the mid-1990s, Western governments were making it clear that they would withhold monies and assistance from authoritarian regimes. The United States Agency for International Development states the relationship between foreign aid and political objectives bluntly: 'US foreign assistance has always had the twofold purpose of furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of the citizens of the developing world.'<sup>6</sup> The pressure applied to poor countries to democratise is part of a US-led strategy to build a more secure world order. As President Bill Clinton saw it in his second State of the Union message in 1995: 'Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere [...]. The world's greatest democracy will lead a whole world of democracies.' According to the democratic peace hypothesis, democracies generally do not fight each other (Russett, 1993), and behave better towards their own citizens than less democratic states.

US policy, though voicing support for global democracy since the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson's commitment during World War I to 'save the world for democracy', has not always been consistent in tone, in strategy, in economic and political support, nor even in ideals. President Ronald Reagan devised the democracy crusade as an anti-Soviet policy but Presidents George Bush (Sr.) and Bill Clinton asserted that democracy promotion was a key organising principle of US foreign policy after the Cold War. What was a heightened moral dimension in the Cold War for Reagan was a strategy for peace in the post-Cold War world for his successors. A collection of articles published in the waning years of the Cold War advocated an even more 'evangelistic' mission for American democracy as a counterweight to the attractions of the Soviet model (Goldman and Douglas, 1988). But US policy has not been consistent, ignoring human rights and democracy in Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, Indonesia before 1998, Armenia and Azerbaijan but forceful on democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America (especially Haiti), Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Carothers, 1999).

Some commentators castigate the United States for its democracy bandwagon. According to Robinson (1996: 6): 'All over the world, the United States is now promoting its version of "democracy" as a way to relieve pressure from substantive groups for more fundamental political, social, and economic change.' Further, the democratic ideal is hardly evident in the Western countries, with their well-documented flaws, including corruption, favoritism, unequal access to political power, not to mention voter apathy, cynicism and political disengagement (Diamond, 1999; Kaplan, 1997).

Over \$700 million is now spent by the United States in promoting democracy, by governmental agencies that are directly involved in the global project. Prominent among these are USAID (US Agency for International Development) and the US Information Agency, while others are government-funded but privately run (Eurasia Foundation, Asia Foundation, and the National Endowment for Democracy). In turn, these private foundations fund other groups like IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems), the Carter Center, universities, research institutes, and policy institutes (Carothers, 1999). The breakdown of the funding allocates \$147 million for development of legal institutions and law, \$203 millions for governance, \$230 for civil society, and \$60 million for elections and political processes. By geographic region, \$87 million was spent in Latin America, \$288 million in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, \$123 million for sub-Saharan Africa, and \$112 million for Asia and the Middle East, with \$27 million for unspecified global activities. Altogether, the United States is promoting democracy in over 100 countries (Carothers, 1997). Though in the past, especially during the Cold War, most money was spent on a 'top-down' approach by attempting to boost government institutions, now the strategy is more balanced with a renewed emphasis on 'bottom-up' grassroots democracy and civic organisation.

Despite these impressive numbers, it is unclear how effective democracy promotion is. Whether from the perspective of the recipient or the giver, both of whom have a stake in trying to show the effectiveness of the programs, there is little questioning of the enterprise. A report to the US Congress in 1996 concluded that the US-funded democracy projects in the 1991-96 period in Russia had

mixed results in meeting their stated developmental objectives [...]. Our analysis indicated that the most important factors determining project impact were Russian economic and political conditions [...]. State (Department) and USAID officials acknowledged that democratic reforms in Russia may take longer to achieve than they initially anticipated. (US General Accounting Office, 1996: 2-3)

Carothers (1999: 59ff) reviews the cavils of the skeptics of the promotion exercise under five headings: (1) rhetoric is more important than substance as the United States supports dictators when it wants; (2) democracy assistance is only a small fraction of US foreign aid; (3) democracy aid is just a pretty way of packaging illegitimate US intervention in the internal affairs of the other

countries; (4) democracy cannot be exported and it must be grown from within; and (5) where does the United States get off telling other countries how to run their political systems. Contemporary democratisation requires concessions from those who were formerly excluded from participation, even if the ideals are promoted from outside and are hardly resisted openly from the governing regimes. The main hope is to establish the 'virtuous circle' where stable democratic institutions build civic engagement and trust between individuals and the state.

## Conclusion

In the early post-Cold War years, many commentators produced reckless speculations about the benign effects of the spread of democratisation to the majority of the world's countries and, at least, to parts of all the world's regions. But more level-headed analysis took careful note that the number of liberal democracies was not increasing as predicted and had leveled off by the mid-1990s. Like previous waves, the 'Third Wave' could be reversed. What might distinguish this epoch from previous ones is the global hegemonic Zeitgeist of the benefits of liberal democracy and the lack of attraction of any alternative form of government. It is increasingly difficult for a country to remain immune to globalisation influences, including those of a political nature such as the latest wave of democratisation.

Global democratisation after September 11, 2001 has taken on a new energy, at least from the perspective of the United States. After the terrorist attacks, a consistent theme of the Bush Administration is that the installation of democratic regimes in countries from which terror emanates will reduce the chances of a September 11 recurrence. But there is little empirical evidence for this belief. While the causes of terror are complex, it is certainly the case that some groups turn to violence when the outlet for political expression is blocked. Though radical political groups might turn to the ballot box to try to implement their ideologies, the history of such attempts is not one that augurs well for the electoral route to power. In 1992, the Islamicist party, FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) in Algeria was on the verge of an electoral victory when a military coup, supported by France and the United States, pre-empted FIS coming to power via the democratic route. Similar events in Africa, Asia and Latin America have further radicalised ethnic, national and religious movements. In 'illiberal democracies', the unfairness of electoral contests, including restrictions on political mobilisation, party formation, campaigning and access to mass media, have convinced many groups that the odds of having a fair hearing are stacked against them. Consequently, they adopt alternative strategies, including guerrilla tactics. In Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, Islamicists have been forced out of the formal democratic political arena by authoritarian tactics from the post-Soviet leaderships. In the frontline of the current 'war on terrorism', these countries are under no serious pressure by the

West to reform. Though the Western pressure for democratisation is packaged well in rhetoric about fairness, civil rights and respect for minority views, the reality is far more complex and numerous instances of continued human rights abuses by Western allies should disabuse anyone of a simple global democratisation trend that is transforming societies everywhere.

In many respects, globalisation in the form of political democratisation is similar to globalisation in the form of economic liberalisation. While the principles behind both trends can be welcomed, the reality is far messier. Economic globalisation is now increasingly challenged by its supposed beneficiaries, as attention turns to the institutions and powerful actors that guide the process to their own benefits and to its unequal impacts. Democratisation is also looked at more skeptically. This chapter has attempted to point out the differences between the various forms of democracy, their distributions, and some of the key reasons why the world political map is changing. The debate about the process is not yet over, and growing skepticism about the nature of democracy as applied in heretofore non-democratic states, despite the gloss and aura of this form of political structure, can be expected to heat up the discussion. The match of ideal and reality will be continually under scrutiny. The questions that remain are: What kind of democratisation and for whom? And who is promoting it and for what purposes?

## Notes

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- 1 The point at which the curve of adopters of the diffusion flattens.
- 2 See <<http://weber.ucsd.edu/~kgledits/Polity.html>>.
- 3 See <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/freedomhouse>>.
- 4 See <<http://www.hrw.org/>>.
- 5 The scores for each dimension for each country since 1972 are available from <[www.freedomhouse.org/ratings/index.htm](http://www.freedomhouse.org/ratings/index.htm)>.
- 6 See <[www.usaid.gov/about/](http://www.usaid.gov/about/)>.

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