BABEL IN DEMOCRATIZATION STUDIES

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With democracy becoming the global norm, the field of democratization studies has boomed in the last quarter of a century. While early research focused on transitions, over time scholars have begun to pay closer attention to the performance of emerging democracies. Arguably, the major empirical finding of this latter research has been that, while the majority of these new regimes exhibit democratic features such as free and fair elections, a significant number of them deviate from standards and practices that are inherent in the very idea of democratic rule.

In various new democracies, in fact, bypassing parliament and ruling by presidential decree appear customary. Packing the courts often paves the way for a heightened concentration of discretionary power in the executive. In some cases, drafting a new constitution and rigging an electoral contest has allowed the incumbent to prolong his stay in office. All too often, the violation of civil rights is common, devaluing the rule of law and eroding the foundations of democratic citizenship.

Accordingly, students of democratization have coined a variety of terms to capture what they view as a novel form of political order: "delegative," "imperfect," "illiberal," and "immature" democracy, among many more.[1] Different terminology notwithstanding, such qualifiers all indicate that these polities not only differ from the benchmark democracies of the West, but also represent a diminished version of democracy, a "half-baked" regime. More recently, the study of "hybrid" systems has inspired another taxonomical effort based on qualifying adjectives, though this time applied to authoritarianism. To depict a range of cases allegedly stuck in a gray zone of political evolution, this

new typological exercise labels them not as diminished forms of democracy, but instead as "electoral," "competitive," or "contested" authoritarianism. Reproducing the logic of qualified democracies, the new classification now highlights "enhanced authoritarianism."[2]

We call this intellectual endeavor into question, for it presents some critical shortcomings. First, this effort is carried out on the basis of inconsistent definitions of the various types and subtypes, producing a taxonomical system with blurred boundaries. The outcome has often been conceptual ambiguity and empirical confusion, for the resulting palette of qualified, yet improperly specified, regimes not only hinders differentiation among the cases but also clouds the basic distinction between democracy and autocracy. In addition, this terminological Babel has served to conceal fundamental traits of all democracies, old and new, Western and non-Western. While everyday democracy in most third-wave regimes may be considerably less effective than in long-established democracies, the kinds of problems both face tend to be the same: inequalities in the distribution of rights, failures of checks and balances, disenfranchisement of minorities, and low governmental accountability, to name a few. Old and new democracies alike are thus susceptible to delegation, illiberalism, and other suboptimal outcomes.

To a great extent, the shared problems of democracy stem from its distinctive institutional design (where the different branches of government cooperate but also compete for power) and from the character of democratic citizenship (which evolved historically in such a way that civil, political, and social rights were in contradiction with one another). The literature on qualified regimes, in contrast, assumes that old and new democracies belong to different empirical and conceptual universes, a view ingrained in the compartmentalization of knowledge within political science. This disconnect narrows the bounds of comparative research, just as the idea of American exceptionalism has virtually shielded the field of American politics from the world outside.

To study actual democracies today, we need a more level playing field for comparative analysis, where conceptual innovations, theoretical insights, and empirical lessons travel from old to new democracies and vice versa. We need broader comparative avenues to improve our understanding of democracy and to enrich a variety of research agendas.

Qualified Democracy Revisited

The current proliferation of concepts based on adjectives might appear necessary for the development of scientific discourse. While most of the new terms used to qualify regimes are now forgotten, a few have found a more lasting place in the study of gray-zone regimes and inspired further research. The most prominent are Guillermo O'Donnell's *delegative* democracy and Fareed Zakaria's *illiberal* democracy.

Clearly, both these adjectives are complementary, as they address some interconnected liabilities of new democracies. Since these polities lack deep-seated constitutional traditions, the principle of the rule of law is often weak, and the notion of judicial independence is largely fictitious; illiberal democracy results. As in much of Latin America, the former Soviet Union, and Africa, in contexts where checks and balances fall short, executives find opportunities to centralize power and abuse their authority, typically disregarding other institutional domains. The outcome is delegative democracy.

Intellectually, however, these analyses are based on the assumption that only new democracies warrant adjectives. Such polities are often seen as a new species, a deviant and almost pathological manifestation of democracy, the normal expression of which is to be found in the benchmark democracies of the advanced industrial world. The classification becomes less convincing, though, to the extent that the liabilities which define these suboptimal types of democracy are also found in the well-established democracies of the West, even if there may be an observable difference in intensity.

For example, according to the logic of diminished democracy, Italian democracy would need a qualifier to capture Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's ability to maneuver through parliament an immunity law tailored just to shield him from a judicial investigation. By the same logic, the French Fifth Republic, whose 1958 constitution established reserved domains for the president and substantially strengthened executive authority at the expense of the legislature, would also belong to some diminished subtype of democracy. President De Gaulle's latitude to rule by executive decree, to exercise power over judicial appointments, and to declare unilaterally a state of emergency would demand a qualifier—delegative, perhaps—to account for these superpresidential attributes. In a similar vein, would not the disenfranchisement and violations of rights in the political system that characterized the Southern states of the United States lead us to depict American democracy prior to the 1960s as an illiberal type?

These examples indicate that the argument about qualified democracies has fallen into a taxonomical trap. Weak accountability, strong majoritarianism, and failures of checks and balances, among other serious liabilities in the democratic world, are not exclusive features of new democracies. It is thus more fruitful, both theoretically and empirically, to see such liabilities as the manifestation of tensions embedded in the peculiar institutional design of democratic rule.

Democracy, as we know it and debate it, is *liberal* democracy, a system based on a series of institutional arrangements conducive to the creation and preservation of representative government. Prominent among those arrangements is the notion of separation of powers, along with the constitutional mechanisms that specify, regulate, and repro-

duce that principle. The uniqueness of democracy lies in the idea that the rights of citizens are best protected by a constitutional state whose power is limited—that is, legally circumscribed and divided.

The separation of powers, however, has hardly been an unproblematic issue, either in democratic theory or in the historical record of democracy. For those who championed the idea, restraining state power was seldom taken for granted. From Locke through Montesquieu and Madison, the effective operation of checks and balances is by no means presented as the automatic, inevitable outcome of representative democracy. Madison in particular was concerned with the inevitability of factions, and especially with the most dangerous form of factionalism: the "tyranny of the majority."

The literature on democratization has been prompt to identify the unfolding of new democracies' tendencies toward concentrations of executive power, yet has been less keen to acknowledge similar phenomena in benchmark democracies.

On paper, one branch makes the laws, another interprets their constitutionality, and a third executes them, but in practice things are not so simple. To the extent that each branch prefers more influence to less, competition among them will alter the balance of power. At times, judiciaries seek influence through heightened activism, producing law and not just interpreting it; legislatures may engage in parliamentary boycotts, a powerful bargaining tool in contexts of divided government. To put it differently, the very concept of checks and balances suggests the existence, or at least the real possibility, of an imbalance.

In the most typical of these imbalances, executive branches strive for greater autonomy and for the centralization of political authority, seeking to circumvent congressional and judicial oversight. Through the practice of majority rule, representative democracy is susceptible to deviating from, repudiating, and ultimately thwarting the principle of separation of powers. All democracies, in this sense, have the potential risk of heightened concentration of executive power. The literature on democratization has been prompt to identify the unfolding of these tendencies in new democracies—for instance, when Boris Yeltsin abused his executive decree authority, Alberto Fujimori disbanded Congress, and Carlos Menem packed the Supreme Court. Yet it has been less keen to acknowledge that the same type of phenomena may be at play in benchmark democracies as well. A case in point is Margaret Thatcher's Britain, where historical institutional prerogatives were stripped from the civil service, local government, and cabinet, and a relentless concentration of authority in the office of the prime minister restructured established power arenas and decision-making routines.

Similarly, the current executive-centeredness in the United States exhibits several of the defining characteristics contained in the notion of delegative democracy. Evidence of a delegative impulse ranges from the decision of Congress to grant President Bush the power to independently launch the war in Iraq to the activism of the attorney-general's office in matters that have traditionally been defined by local federal prosecutors and state laws. But the trend toward heightened executive autonomy is not a new phenomenon in the United States, nor is it specific to one political party. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's proposal to pack a Supreme Court hostile to his New Deal agenda, for example, involved a direct threat to the independence of the judiciary, while his extended stay in office (which later prompted the Twenty-second Amendment) amounted to a decisive attempt to define the head of state as the personification of the national interest—both central features of a delegative style of rule.

Would these episodes of delegation, and the resulting erosion of accountability, constitute evidence that a diminished subtype of democracy prevails in the United States? We suggest that these tendencies should instead be viewed as an expression of the perpetual tension between the procedural arrangements of democracy—which are expected to guarantee that no institution can evade the control and oversight of other state agencies—and the periodic impulses toward the concentration of power in the executive. While these impulses are generally justified with appeals to the necessity of swift and efficient decision making, they are typically bolstered by electoral mandates and other forms of majoritarianism.

The tensions and trade-offs between accountability and performance described above have increasingly been addressed by expanding the scope of *bureaucratic* delegation, especially in the more industrialized democracies. From monetary policy to defense, and from the administration of justice to utility regulation, these polities extensively rely on the technical expertise of autonomous, depoliticized agencies shielded from the electorate, and grant them far-reaching decision-making power. To a great extent, democratic politics entails a "chain of delegation," from voters to representatives, and from representatives to experts. Some degree of bureaucratic delegation is inevitable in complex modern societies, but it entails risks regarding the quality and transparency of democracy. Unelected officials often make decisions that are at odds with the interests of the government, the electorate, or both. Due to the discrepancy of preferences and to the ingrained tendencies of complex organizations, public bureaucracies are likely to pursue their own interests, deviating from the agendas democratically set by citizens and their representative institutions.

In supranational bodies such as the European Union, another problematic link is added to the chain of delegation. Citizen control, already

difficult to exercise because of the collective-action obstacles faced by large groups, becomes even more unlikely when the decision makers are physically removed from the arenas of deliberation.[3] In a nutshell, it may no longer make sense for French truckers and farmers to protest by blocking the access routes to Paris. They should now go instead to Brussels or Frankfurt, where EU economic policy is designed.

By removing the decision-making process from the input and oversight of the average citizen, supranational delegation exacerbates the tensions and magnifies the challenges of democratic governance. The ensuing accountability gap undermines the legitimacy of the European political arrangement. Recent referenda rejecting the European constitution in France and the Netherlands are cases in point. Voters generally do not know to whom they have delegated their authority or who is making decisions for them. In this context, it is not an accident that the public tends to perceive the EU as an anonymous Brussels machine powered by the collusion of bureaucrats and lobbyists. This "democratic deficit" has inspired wide debate on the need for, and the multiple difficulties involved in, improving decision making while at the same time upholding accountability and democratic legitimacy.[4]

All in all, transparency appears to be the main casualty of delegation, bureaucratic or otherwise. Accordingly, it is worth asking whether the accumulation of accountability losses in each of the links of the chain of delegation may produce suboptimal outcomes, to an extent similar to those included in the notion of delegative democracy. It is plausible to imagine a scenario in which insufficient citizen oversight and weak judicial and legislative control debilitate both vertical and horizontal accountability—not to the advantage of an unconstrained chief executive, as in O'Donnell's notion of delegative democracy, but to the benefit of an autonomous, extraterritorial, and yet increasingly dominant bureaucracy.

Recurrent impulses toward delegation are inherent in the institutional design of democratic rule. It is thus essential that we seek to understand under what conditions and by what kinds of mechanisms these impulses are activated, comparing the different types of delegation and their overlapping outcomes, while at the same time expanding the sample of cases so we can compare new democracies with old ones.

The Contradictions of Democratic Citizenship

The limitations of the work on qualified regimes are also evident in the analysis of spheres of rights, their interaction, and their role in the definition and scope of democratic citizenship. Much of the literature on democratization draws on T. H. Marshall's account of citizenship as a sequential process of the expansion of rights: from civil rights (liberalism) to political rights (democracy) to social rights (the welfare state).[5]

Marshall's view of the progression of citizenship over time suggests a rather harmonious and natural, if not irreversible, development of citizen rights. The civil, political, and social components of citizenship thus appear to be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

When applied to new democracies, however, Marshall's conceptualization of rights as a cumulative process is often employed to highlight a few sore spots of the non-Western experience. In the absence of a deep liberal-constitutional tradition, and thus with a structurally weak legal system, the enactment of political freedoms may open the door for a distorted type of democratic polity. That is to say, when the introduction of political rights cannot build upon and be embedded within a structure of previously existing and well-established civil rights, the resultant political and social order necessarily deviates from the basic tenets of liberal democracy. As in O'Donnell's "brown areas," Larry Diamond's multiple types of ambiguous regimes, and Zakaria's illiberal democracy, these polities both fail to protect individuals' basic rights and encourage a rampant centralization of power, a lack of executive accountability, and other forms of unfettered majoritarianism.

From this perspective, the new democracies appear as a historical and theoretical anomaly. The expansion of political rights in the absence of civil rights reveals the diminished character of the former, resulting in a formally democratic polity in which the basic prerequisites of democratic citizenship are missing. The problem with this reasoning, however, is not only that this approach to citizenship is predicated on the Western experience (which, as postmodernization theory has profusely demonstrated, poses analytical limitations in assessing other experiences) but that it is based on a questionable interpretation of the history of the West. It is not just that rights are discontinuous and unevenly distributed, as recent research has suggested.[6] Far more critical is the fact that in historical processes of social change—and that is what democracy, first and foremost, is—rights are fundamentally contradictory, competing, conflicting, and sometimes mutually exclusive, within spheres as much as across them.

Early experiences of democratization in the West, which took place in the context of major social upheavals and transformations, offer insight into this issue. In most bourgeois-democratic revolutions, the expansion of political rights, through different combinations of revolt, the ballot, and the increasing role of parliament, dramatically altered existing civil rights and institutions. In some cases, this entailed curtailing the prerogatives of the church, in others abolishing titles and privileges of nobility, and in most eliminating the entitlements that came with landownership. In France, as Barrington Moore explained, the Revolution wiped out the political power of the landed aristocracy by removing its privileged position in the army and bureaucracy and by destroying the seigneurial system. As a result, as the lands of the church

and nobility were expropriated—and their property rights were thereby "violated"—access to ownership by the peasantry and the bourgeoisie accelerated the commercialization of agriculture and consolidated a multiclass democratic base.

Comparable contradictions and conflicts among rights can be seen later in the redistributive politics of European social democracy. In the face of progressive tax policy, the realization of social citizenship associated with the welfare state entailed the shrinking of the civil rights sphere—for example, by imposing strict limits on individuals' decisions on the use of their profits. Similarly, in the postcommunist transformations, when civil and political rights are reinstated, the social component of citizenship narrows as the state ceases to guarantee the unrestricted provision of welfare benefits.

Thus the belief in a "normal" sequence of political development, in which preexisting civil rights are consistent with subsequent political and social rights and supportive of democratic development, is at odds with the historical record of old democracies and impractical for the analysis of new ones. Moreover, it is also theoretically counterintuitive, as the central and most crucial civil right—equality before the law—is unthinkable divorced from (and prior to) the democratic process. It would be more useful to think about this causal arrow as going in the reverse direction. It is the democratic idea of egalitarianism that informs liberal-constitutionalism, and it is democratic politics, despite its multiple delays and unpredictable detours, that shapes a legal system capable of translating civil rights into enforceable laws.[7]

The United States offers a fine illustration. Consider the eighty-eight years separating the Bill of Rights from the Fourteenth Amendment—a period seemingly necessary to turn the principle of equality before the law into a tangible social and political outcome. Consider also the additional eighty-seven years, from the end of Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which elapsed before that principle finally included all citizens across the entire territory of the United States. Yet in spite of this inclusion, limitations on the most basic of democratic rights—the right to vote—still persist today. The disenfranchisement of felons, which disproportionately affects African-Americans, remains an undemocratic enclave in American citizenship. Tellingly, as other restrictions on suffrage declined and African-Americans began their process of political incorporation, states with larger proportions of incarcerated nonwhites began to strengthen their felon-disenfranchisement laws, as well as to turn a large number of misdemeanors into felonies.

Since the 1970s, the dramatic surge in prison population has resulted in new restrictions on voting rights for African-Americans and other minorities, a significant reversal of previous gains in enfranchisement. In 2000, more states imposed limits on felons' right to vote than in any previous election in U.S. history. In fact, the magnitude of this change

has prompted two experts to place the United States closer to "pre-modern political regimes" than to any contemporary democracy.[8]

The problematic nature of citizenship is also evident in the uneven distribution of rights subnationally that is observable in new and old democracies alike. To illustrate the point, think of the existing same-sex civil-union laws in the city of Buenos Aires, which support a depth and density of civil rights one would expect in Amsterdam or Toronto; yet these civil rights seem to vanish altogether when one crosses the street from the city to the province of Buenos Aires, where trigger-happy police violate them on a regular basis, mostly targeting the poor. But also consider the African-American residents of the state of Maryland in the early 1960s, who enjoyed civil and political rights that their counterparts in the neighboring state of Virginia did not, even after democracy had been around for more than 180 years.

> *The belief in a "normal" sequence of political development, in which preexisting civil rights are consistent with subsequent political and social rights and supportive of democratic development, is impractical and at odds with the historical record.*

If we employ the analytical tools of diminished democracy, both old and new democracies should be portrayed as suboptimal types, where centralization of power, bureaucratic delegation, and inequalities in the distribution of rights have crippled accountability, deliberation, and democratic rule of law. But of course we would confront two insurmountable problems: One is empirical—by all accounts, the North American and West European cases are the most democratic of all the democracies in the world. The other is methodological—if these cases belong to the subtype, then no case can be left outside. To the extent that delegation and illiberalism are inherent components of *all* democracies, they cannot be considered pathologies.

This note of caution is not meant to discourage the building of new typologies aimed at capturing the unevenness of democracy. But classifications of diminished subtypes built on the basis of aggregate scores, such as those of the Freedom House index of rights, miss the contradictory nature of citizenship.[9] A reliance on national averages masks wide deviations in rights across region, race, ethnicity, gender, and class. These divergences are expressions of different types of regimes—for example, Jim Crow in the United States, patriarchy in Saudi Arabia, and monoethnic nationalism in Japan—that cannot be arranged in neat linear fashion along a liberal-illiberal continuum that shows differences in intensity but not in kind. Efforts to identify a cutting point on this continuum on the basis of "whole-nation" approaches overlook the frequent

coexistence of authoritarian institutions and practices at the local level within nationally democratic polities. A rich body of studies—ranging from V. O. Key's landmark volume on the U.S. South to recent work on subnational authoritarianism in third-wave democracies—suggests that taxonomies should try to capture the multiple regimes which exist within the nation-state.[10]

From Diminished Democracy to Enhanced Authoritarianism

As noted above, the most recent taxonomical effort to grasp the specificity of polities in the gray zone seeks to apply qualifiers to authoritarianism. The most prominent example is the work by Larry Diamond and his colleagues. This effort seeks to depict a group of countries that fail to reach the standards of democracy, even in its diminished delegative or illiberal versions. After drawing the boundary between "electoral democracy" and "electoral authoritarianism" on the basis of free and fair elections, Diamond defines a "competitive authoritarian" subtype, characterized by a certain degree of contestation with respect to elections and of independence in the judiciary and mass media. Typically, in competitive authoritarian regimes opposition groups may challenge and even defeat autocratic rulers. In the contrasting subtype, "hegemonic authoritarianism," elections are a mere façade and opposition is tightly controlled, allowing the dominant party to maintain its firm grip on power.

As the number of polities in or near transition has skyrocketed over the last two decades, the rationale for pursuing a more precise differentiation of regimes is compelling. Yet this new classification of authoritarian regimes is not as helpful as one would wish. First of all, as a wealth of research following Juan Linz's seminal work on regime type has documented, there is nothing unusual about the holding of elections in authoritarian regimes—multiparty, single-party, and even military ones.[11] Rarely, however, have those elections been competitive enough to warrant the definition of a new subtype. To the extent that they are neither free nor fair, elections in authoritarian regimes are no more than instruments used to mimic the competitive model. Examples abound. The military government that took power in Brazil in 1964 held elections throughout two decades, even allowing opposition parties to win key governorships. The Salazar regime in Portugal had regular elections. In Franco's Spain, the members of the Cortes (parliament) were elected, albeit indirectly, as were municipal-council members. Egypt has held elections since the military coup of 1952, and Morocco has carried out national elections since the 1960s. Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen have all held elections in the last decade or so. Suharto's New Order in Indonesia actually had a three-party system, with routine, and presumably competitive, elections between 1966 and 1998.

Another tension arises from the fact that the differentiation between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism is grounded on procedural characteristics (whether or not elections are free and fair), whereas the subtypes of competitive authoritarianism and hegemonic authoritarianism are largely characterized by electoral results. Thus outcomes such as the degree of opposition presence in the legislature might indicate the existence of either a competitive authoritarian or a hegemonic electoral authoritarian system.

The shift in emphasis from *ex ante* attributes in the depiction of the main types to electoral outcomes (by definition, contingent) in the characterization of the subtypes deviates from a basic rule of classification: to state the analytical basis of division into different types and subtypes according to logically consistent rules. This is not merely a purist consideration. Typologies are more effective when they are anchored in disciplined conceptualizations, systems in which the criteria that differentiate one type from another are rather stable, specified *ex ante,* and maintained throughout.[12] Otherwise, we run the risk of working with taxonomies that fail to articulate, explicate, and unpack the distinctiveness of each type.

We stress this point because defining authoritarian subtypes on the basis of electoral results—for example, one-party dominance—might invite ambiguity, especially if we take into account that this phenomenon has not been unusual in the world of established democracies.[13] Take the example of Sweden, where free and fair elections allowed the Social Democratic Party to spend 63 of the last 73 years in power, as well as the extended electoral control exercised by the Christian Democrats in Italy (1948–94), the Liberal Democrats in Japan (1955–93), and the Christian Democratic Union–Christian Social Union in West Germany (1949–66). As it turns out, the regime farthest away from democracy, hegemonic authoritarianism, exhibits definitional features that have also been present in liberal-democratic polities.

Furthermore, in his overall classification of regimes, Diamond does not use equivalent analytical bases. On the contrary, his analysis of democratic regimes does not look at competitiveness to separate cases of one-party dominance like those listed above from other liberal democracies. Yet if the nature of electoral competition serves to distinguish among autocracies, it should also be critical for characterizing democracies.

This matters because long tenures in office may be conducive to less than optimally democratic outcomes—patron-client networks, collusion of politicians with career bureaucrats and the judiciary, and institutional decay, among others. The rise and fall of the Japanese Liberal Democrats and the Italian Christian Democrats are cases in point. In brief, this classification reinforces a prevalent pattern in democratization studies: the division between the benchmark democracies in the industrialized world, where "good" outcomes are the norm, and the

universe of "deficient" regimes elsewhere, where diminished democracies and enhanced authoritarianisms proliferate.

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way emphasize the novel character of competitive authoritarianism, a regime that they contrast with "full-scale authoritarianism." Arguably, the larger spaces available to opposition forces in competitive authoritarian regimes allow them to mobilize, gain strength, and undermine the incumbents, increasing the likelihood of an eventual democratic breakthrough. This classification captures an important aspect of the third wave: that a number of polities, while relatively open, remain nondemocratic. The way this subtype is specified, however, misses important aspects of authoritarianism.

While elections in authoritarian regimes have generally not been truly competitive, it is possible that we are witnessing the emergence of a more plural, multiparty authoritarianism today. Indeed, in his classic *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* Linz makes only passing references to multiparty competition.[14] Yet he does make clear that pluralism, however limited, is the main defining characteristic of authoritarianism. Variations in pluralism are thus reflected in different degrees of electoral competition, and in different levels of openness in such arenas as the legislature, the judiciary, and the media. For the generations that theorized in Linz's footsteps, it is authoritarianism's inherent struggle with institutionalization that forces its leaders to play a contradictory game of opening arenas in which opponents can challenge the regime, while simultaneously manipulating the electoral rules and exercising pressure to maintain an unlevel political playing field.

The new research on competitive authoritarianism instead sees these openings as the result of a strong opposition, and this strength as one of the distinctive features of the subtype. Yet authoritarianism has structural weaknesses that are largely unrelated to the strength of the opposition. Nor does this apparent strength seem to be a reliable predictor of speedier democratization—a judgment that the existence of numerous quite competitive and yet long-lasting authoritarian regimes during the second half of the twentieth century would seem to confirm. What needs to be emphasized is that the post–Cold War context, in which democracy is the global norm and global media broadcast it around the clock, has greatly magnified authoritarianism's deficits of legitimacy and problems of institutionalization.[15] Recent changes in a democratic direction in places such as Ukraine and Lebanon could be explained less by the strength of the opposition than by the power of CNN. One can also link this phenomenon to Samuel P. Huntington's notion of "stunning elections." This term captures contests such as Turkey's elections of 1983, Pinochet's 1988 plebiscite in Chile, and the Polish parliamentary elections of 1989 that give surprising victories to challengers even though the spaces for contestation were highly controlled while opposition was tenuous and disorganized.[16]

Because of the limited capacity of authoritarianism to reproduce it-
self, Linz coined the notion of an "authoritarian situation" to depict
cases in which, as the prospects for institutionalization dwindle even
further, uncertainty dominates the political landscape.[17] These are very
fluid settings that may revert to renewed autocratic control or may lead
to a democratic transition, among other potential outcomes. The cases
that populate the so-called gray zone between authoritarianism and de-
mocracy might be better understood as *situations* rather than *regimes*.
Instead of placing emphasis on adjectives, it would be better to return to
and elaborate further on classic concepts that capture authoritarianism's
ambiguities and tensions.

Bridging Old and New Democracies

We have argued that the flaws of typologies based upon the concept
of qualified regimes outweigh the analytical and practical benefits of-
fered by these typologies. Types and subtypes remain in a zone of
imprecision and definitional inconsistency because these classifications
are incapable of capturing characteristics of democracy that run counter
to the conventional wisdom which they try to project—for example,
one-party dominance, defective electoral administration, and failures of
checks and balances even in well-established democracies. However
valid the motivation behind this approach—the desire to step beyond
the electoral fallacy and to supersede minimalist definitions of democ-
racy—these taxonomies merely add shades of gray between democracy
and autocracy, an operation that can be carried out *ad infinitum*. As
such, they contribute to expanding the terminological Babel.

We suggest moving in a different direction. To legitimize new
typologies, it is necessary at the very least to specify how they relate to
previous ones. Research on the liabilities of democracy would thus be
more promising if carried out with reference to widely accepted sub-
types of democracy, instead of using those deficits to "discover" new
species. For example, while the merits and drawbacks of presidential
and parliamentary systems have been the focus of intense debate, we
have only scratched the surface on such questions as the respective
impact of the two systems on promoting or neutralizing delegative im-
pulses. We need more research on the impact of different power-sharing
formulas—for instance, federalism, consociationalism, and various au-
tonomy regimes—in the realm of rights. More work is necessary on the
effectiveness of different constitutional-legal configurations in prevent-
ing illiberal outcomes, fostering accountability, and strengthening
judicial independence.

In addition, the comparative study of democratization requires theo-
retical and methodological tools that will help us to correct the excessive
reliance on national averages in favor of an analysis that considers

distributional patterns of citizenship rights. New typologies can be constructed by assessing evident asymmetries in democratic performance, observed subnationally as well as on the basis of racial, ethnic, gender, and class divides. This kind of classification would cut across traditional, and increasingly inadequate, analytical boundaries—those between old and new, Western and non-Western democracies—providing a fresh look at democracy worldwide.

The shift to the qualified-authoritarianism model also has largely been dissociated from previous conceptual work on regime types. There are only superficial references in this new construction to existing typologies of nondemocratic regimes. As noted, these include Linz's original concept of authoritarianism and its related subtypes—bureaucratic authoritarianism, posttotalitarianism, sultanism—as developed by O'Donnell, Linz and Alfred Stepan, and Linz and Houchang Chehabi, respectively.[18] These typologies have structured a good part of the debate on comparative political systems for almost four decades. Accordingly, proponents of any new classification of nondemocratic regimes will need to show why theirs is superior and should replace earlier ones.

Another implication of our argument suggests the need to rethink dominant views on the sequential waves of democratization. Understandably, new democracies often look to the experience of mature democracies. Late democratizers historically have borrowed from the institutional models and constitutional blueprints of their predecessors, but unfortunately the reverse is rarely, if ever, the case. This perpetuates an ethnocentric bias, clearly seen in the area of democracy promotion, where institutional maladjustments and deficits are viewed as characteristic deviations of third-wave regimes but not of older democracies.

This bias replicates the pattern in the academic realm, where the transmission of knowledge is also a one-way street. Take the example of the growing literature on Latin American democratization. It is auspicious that some Latin Americanists have imported theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches from the field of American politics. As the experience of Latin America with democratic politics grows, the region has become an appropriate case for applying, rethinking, and eventually modifying accumulated knowledge on such typically U.S.-focused topics as presidentialism, congressional gridlock, and federalism.[19] Yet given the staunch persistence in the United States of defective voter-registration standards, anomalies in the vote-counting process, and the use of redistricting as a political strategy, it is puzzling that the field of American politics has ignored contributions generated by the study of similar problems in new democracies.[20]

This essay may be regarded as an attempt to start filling that gap. We do not suggest using adjectives for the study of democracy in the United States. We do think, however, that the redefinition of American politics as a subfield of comparative politics is a necessary step in the effort to

bridge old and new democracies. Isolating the study of U.S. democracy—that is, the failure to go beyond using the U.S. case solely as the model to imitate—has limited our understanding of democracy in general. Inevitably, the United States will continue to be a paradigm of democracy. Yet it also stands as a paradigmatic example of how, even after more than two centuries, crucial democratization tasks still remain unfinished.

The ultimate challenge for those concerned with the future of democracy is to tear down the wall that separates the model democratic regimes in the industrialized world from the residual class of emerging democracies elsewhere and to build, instead, a two-way street for the comparative analysis of old and new democracies. This challenge is not only intellectual. Expanding the comparative study of democracy will also provide a crucial tool for those engaged in promoting it around the world.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994): 55–69; and Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: Norton, 2003).

2. See the set of essays "Elections Without Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 21–80, with contributions by Larry Diamond, Andreas Schedler, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, and Nicolas van de Walle. The notion of the "gray zone" has been advanced by Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (January 2002): 5–21.

3. See Mark A. Pollack, *The Engines of European Integration: Delegation, Agency and Agenda Setting in the EU* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Kare Strom, Wolfgang C. Müller, Torbjörn Bergman, eds., *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mark Thatcher and Alec Stone Sweet, eds., *The Politics of Delegation* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

4. For example, Giandomenico Majone, "Europe's Democratic Deficit: The Question of Standards," *European Law Journal* 4 (March 1998): 5–28; and Fritz Scharpf, *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

5. T.H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950).

6. Teresa Caldeira and James Holston, "Democracy and Violence in Brazil," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41 (October 1999): 691–729.

7. These ideas are explored at greater length in Hector E. Schamis, "Rethinking Democratic Citizenship: Rights and Power in Historical Perspective," unpubl. ms., American University, 2005.

8. Jeff Manza and Christopher Uggen, "Punishment and Democracy: The Disenfranchisement of Nonincarcerated Felons in the United States," *Perspectives on*

Politics 2 (September 2004): 502; and "Democratic Contraction? The Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States," *American Sociological Review* 67 (December 2002): 777–803.

9. Ariel C. Armony, "Fields of Citizenship," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg, eds., *Citizenship in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, forthcoming).

10. V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Knopf, 1949). For the third wave, see Edward L. Gibson, "Subnational Authoritarianism: Territorial Strategies of Political Control in Democratic Regimes," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 2–5 September 2004.

11. Juan J. Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain," in Erik Allard and Yrjo Littunen, eds., *Cleavages, Ideologies, and Party Systems* (Helsinki: Transactions of the Westermarck Society, 1964).

12. While we have benefited from recent scholarship on concept analysis, a good part of it inspired and led by David Collier, our main intellectual debt remains with Giovanni Sartori, especially his "Tower of Babel" in Giovanni Sartori, Fred W. Riggs, and Henry Teune, "Tower of Babel: On the Definition and Analysis of Concepts in the Social Sciences," *Occasional Paper* 6, International Studies Association, 1975; and "Guidelines for Concept Analysis," in Sartori, ed., *Social Science Concepts: A Systematic Analysis* (London: Sage, 1984).

13. T.J. Pempel, ed., *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990).

14. Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

15. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way emphasize the role of international factors in the demise of authoritarian regimes in "International Linkage and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (July 2005): 20–34.

16. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 174–91.

17. Juan J. Linz, "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil," in Alfred C. Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

18. Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism* (Berkeley: Institute for International Studies, 1973); Juan J. Linz and Alfred C. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Juan J. Linz and Houchang E. Chehabi, eds., *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

19. For example, Barry Ames, *The Deadlock of Democracy in Brazil* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); and David Samuels, *Ambition, Federalism, and Legislative Politics in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

20. For an exception to this trend, see Robert A. Pastor, "Improving the U.S. Electoral System: Lessons from Canada and Mexico," *Election Law Journal* 3 (2004): 584–93. For democratic deficits in the U.S. case, see Thomas E. Mann, "The United States of America: Democratic Exemplar?" *National Civic Review* 92 (Fall 2003): 3–11.