Expert Interventions for Democracy: The Historical and Epistemological Foundations of International Democracy Assistance

Michael Christensen

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Abstract

The subject of this dissertation research is the field of professional organizations in North America that promote and assist democratization movements around the world. These organizations use a form of specialized expert knowledge to help activists, politicians and civil society organizations build democratic institutions. Specifically, this research investigates how historical academic debates shape the everyday practices of professionals in this field, and how these practices in turn shape contemporary debates. The study adopts a mixed methods approach by combining an intellectual history of democracy research and qualitative interview research with professionals working in the field. By examining the everyday practice of expertise, this dissertation contributes to emerging scholarly debates spanning the intersections of the sociology of knowledge, political sociology and international development studies by asking an ancient question. How can democracy be a collection of popular political ideals, yet also the object of specialized, technical or social scientific knowledge? According to the findings of this research, the contemporary practice of democracy assistance emerged out of debates about this paradox and, more importantly, organizations within this field rely on the insoluble nature of democratic theory and practice to justify expert interventions in countries struggling for democracy.

Dedication

For my parents

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In Plato's *Protagoras*, an exchange between Socrates and the title character begins when Socrates poses a question about the nature of politics and democracy. Whereas Protagoras claims to teach his pupils the art of politics and good citizenship, Socrates points out that Athenian democracy does not, in fact, require its citizens to be learned in the art of politics. While the assembly might consult builders or ship-wrights as skilled advisors when commissioning a building or a ship, when the question is an affair of state, people from all trades (carpenters, tinkers, cobblers or sailors) are welcome to give advice.[1] Since none of these citizens is expected to obtain training in political virtues before he is allowed to speak, Socrates wonders whether it is possible to teach such virtues at all. Thus, Protagoras is asked to explain his ability to teach political virtues when the Athenian system assumes that they are innate.

In the context of Plato's dialogue, the problem Socrates poses is simply a catalyst for a broader discussion about the relationship between knowledge and virtue, which in turn unfolds as a demonstration of the superiority of Socratic dialectics over Sophistry. At the same time, the problem of whether democratic citizenship requires a form of knowledge that can or should be taught is one that continues to engender lively political debate today. In what follows, I engage this ancient problem by turning to a contemporary case that echoes Socrates' provocation. Specifically, I examine the processes by which specialized forms of social scientific 'knowledge' about democracy became translated and operationalized by Western democracy assistance organizations into programs meant to teach or “assist” members of fledgling democratic governments

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[1] I am using the version of *Protagoras* edited by Nicholas Denyer (Plato 2008).

and movements outside of the democratic West. In other words, this research project asks how Western 'experts' can claim to teach the virtues of democratic politics.

This research problem has two main components based on the following empirical questions: (1) what historical processes have contributed to the development of professional democracy expertise utilized by these organizations and (2) how does expert knowledge of democracy operate in practice? These questions require an integrated theoretical and methodological approach that investigates expertise as something constituted over time and enacted within public discourses of democracy. My research therefore combines insights from the sociology of expertise, as well as developments in cultural and political sociology, in order to advance the currently limited research on expertise and democratic institutions.

One resource for such an approach is the emerging research on the sociology of expertise, which has recently focused on the public interventions produced by and through expert knowledge or technologies (Eyal & Buccholz 2011; Callon et al. 2009; Rosental 2013; Stark & Paravel 2008), as well as the social institutions and networks that produce 'experts' (Collins & Evens 2002; 2007; Eyal 2013). While this research is crucial for understanding the ways in which expertise gains public currency, it has paid little attention to the ways in which expert knowledge can constitute democratic publics in practice. Expert knowledge, in this latter sense, operates as a culturally and historically bounded normative discourse. Many studies within the Science and Technology Studies (STS) literature have applied such an approach to scientific discourses (e.g. Lynch 1985; Bijker et al. 1987; Latour 1987; Pickering 1992; Knorr-Cetina 1999), which in turn inspired research examining the constitutive effects of historically and culturally

contingent social science knowledge-making processes (e.g. Mirowski 2002; Mitchell 2002; Somers 2005; Camic et al. 2011; Steinmetz 2013). While these studies provide critical accounts of historical or contemporary knowledge-making, they do not analyze the place of expert knowledge in the everyday practices that define democratic institutions.[2] This project resolves such a limitation by mobilizing the insights of these literatures to examine the intellectual, historical and cultural foundations of the expert knowledge that constitutes Western democracy assistance, but also by investigating the everyday decisions, justifications and strategies that experts within assistance organizations use to make sense of democracy.

Questions about how social actors make sense of democracy through everyday practice have also been important in recent sociological scholarship about the intersection of culture and politics. Despite a lack of studies dealing directly with expert knowledge, two growing literatures have started to examine the everyday experience of democracy as a form of cultural knowledge or meaning. The first emerged out of the so-called the "new sociology of knowledge" (Swidler & Arditi 1994; McCarthy 1996), which moved beyond a focus on the location of knowledge within social structures - the primary concern of the field's founders (i.e. Mannheim 1936 and Scheler 1980[1926]) - in order to understand how social organizations, cultures, worldviews, conventions or narratives order and code knowledge. Researchers using this explicitly cultural approach, which now often includes many working in the field of cultural sociology, began to examine different formulations and experiences of democracy in terms of the codes of civil discourse (Alexander 2006; Reed & Alexander 2007), the particular idioms of associations or groups (Eliasoph 1998; Baiocchi 2005; Lichterman 2005; Perrin 2006), and the cultural boundaries, repertoires

[2] Important exceptions include Callon et al. (2009) and Latour & Weibel (2005).

and conceptions of citizenship produced by national political discourses (Lamont & Thévenot 2000; Somers 2008). This research – recently labelled a "cultural sociology of democracy" (Polletta 2012) – overlaps with a second literature on the everyday experience of democracy. This second set of studies started as research in political sociology that investigated the strategies and repertoires of social movement actors (e.g. Gamson 1975; Tilly 1978; Klandermans et al. 1988), and has more recently expanded the study of contentious politics to include social actors' use of narratives (Polletta 2002), networks or informal ties (Mische 2008; Wood 2012), and emotional or affective resources (Gould 2009). My research thus draws on insights from these literatures in order to examine the relationship between expert knowledge and the variety of cultural meanings attached to democracy.

The present chapter introduces this research project in three sections. The first section briefly describes my point of entry into the sprawling field of democracy studies. The second section introduces the field of democracy assistance and outlines four social scientific narratives that ground the research. Finally, the third section outlines the theoretical and methodological positions I adopt throughout the dissertation, and in each chapter, to produce an analysis of democratization expertise as a historically and culturally situated set of practices.

How to Study Democracy

The first step towards understanding how representations of democracy came to be the subject of expert knowledge is to navigate the proliferation of literatures, case studies, and theories of contemporary democracy. While there has never been one ‘true’ form of democracy, the pro-democracy discourse of the now infamous “Freedom

Agenda" asserted by former U.S. President George W. Bush made it clear that the term itself had become something of a 'master signifier.' Used in this way, democracy could refer to any political project that legitimated itself simply by opposing those positions that it defined as anti-democratic. How, then, does one research something like democracy if it is empty of any consistent normative or empirical content? My answer, in this project, is to examine the social science of democracy as itself a contested political terrain.

As numerous scholars of democracy have pointed out, the supposedly foundational concept of "rule by the people" can be, and has been, interpreted to mean vastly different things. From ancient Greece to contemporary political societies, the various "models of democracy" (Held 1987) put into practice have expressed a range of sometimes irreconcilable political viewpoints. Despite this difficulty, scholars and policy analysts have designed indices to measure comparative 'levels' of democracy in every country. A prominent example is Freedom House, which publishes *Freedom in the World*, an annual review of democracy in every country in the world. To compile these scores, an in-house regional "expert" performs a country assessment by referring to qualitative and quantitative data to complete a checklist of indicators in both 'political rights' and 'civil liberties' categories. The average of indicators such as 'socio-economic equality' and 'freedom from war' along with traditional rights and liberties associated with democracy thus produce a score for the specific category (see for example, Gastil 1991).

While the metrology of democracy has produced interesting debates on how particular indicators should be weighed (e.g. Munck & Verkuilen 2002; Marshal et al.,

2002), or whether the 'checklist model' should be replaced by assessments of social and political processes (Tilly 2007; Dahl 1998), my interests in this project are not related to measurement *per se*. Instead, I am interested in how social scientific knowledge of democracy is *made* in practice. The field of professional democracy expertise, and specifically the group of international aid organizations I will later describe as part of a "field of democracy assistance," is a particularly useful lens because professionals within this field have worked hard to demonstrate the legitimacy of their work by mobilizing a type of social scientific "meta-expertise" (Collins & Evans 2007) that includes both an interpretive understanding of regional or national politics and a prescriptive understanding of democratization processes. Expert knowledge of democratization therefore often operates in an interstitial zone between policy-making and academic knowledge production.

This form of expert knowledge reflects a broader trend described by recent developments in the sociology of expertise mentioned above. Scholars in this field have described how the blurring of traditional categories of experts, for example academics or policy experts, requires a new way of thinking about expert knowledge and the institutions that support this knowledge (e.g. Callon et al. 2009; Eyal & Bucholz 2010; Camic et al. 2011; Eyal 2013). Specifically, such approaches have de-emphasized research on static typologies of expertise and emphasized the ways expert knowledge can serve as "a legitimate basis for intervention in public affairs" (Eyal & Bucholz 2010: 128). By foregrounding the process of "public intervention," this approach addresses important questions about how expertise is made and performed by actors in public.

In this project, I adopt such an emphasis on "intervention" to examine the expertise consolidated in organizations that make up the field of democracy assistance. Professionals in this field have multiple forms of expertise, including an ability to interpret 'scientific' data on democracy and an ability to navigate the organizational mandates and infrastructure of the Western governments that primarily fund the interventions designed as international democratization projects. At the same time, the knowledge produced in this interstitial space has a unique epistemological, cultural and institutional history that must also play an important part in this research project. In fact, the scientific weight attached to this form of expertise is partly a product of an ongoing struggle over the symbolic uses of democracy in efforts to both challenge and consolidate asymmetric configurations of power in the broader field of international politics.

Four Narratives of the Democracy Expert's Ascent

At the symbolic center of the international field known by the interchangeable terms "democracy assistance" and "democracy promotion"[3] is an organization founded in 1984 by the administration of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).[4] In the decades since its formation, the Endowment has held a unique position in the foreign policy apparatus of the United States government. While it is a semi-autonomous agency funded through a congressional endowment, it is also free

[3] I will predominantly use the term "democracy assistance" because it denotes a form of technical expertise that I wish to emphasize in my analysis. I occasionally use the term "democracy promotion," however, when referring to the early period of the field (i.e., the 1980s) because it reflects the ideological nature of the field, which at the time was primarily engaged in "information campaigns" rather than development.
[4] Although the NED exists today as a relatively autonomous organization, Congress founded it as a bipartisan umbrella organization that channels funds to four affiliate organizations. These affiliate organizations explicitly represented four main "interest groups" in American politics, the Republican and Democratic parties, as well as the business community and organized labour. Professionals in the field therefore refer to these five organizations as part of the NED "family." Unless otherwise specified, any references below to the NED will refer to this group of organizations.

to determine its own programming beyond the direct control of the State Department. This freedom has allowed the endowment and its subsidiary organizations to employ a mix of academic and policy experts to fund and even design democratization projects around the world. In addition to the NED, various other organizations have expanded their mandates to 'assisting' or 'promoting' international democratization in the past few decades. These organizations include a range of independent NGOs, government agencies such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank. Although some of these organizations, especially USAID and the World Bank, dwarf the NED in terms of size and budget (Carothers 1994), most scholarly treatments of democracy assistance assert the symbolic importance of the NED within the field (e.g. Robinson 1996; Guilhot 2005; Carothers 2004).

Previous scholars have mobilized various historical narratives to describe the emergence and consolidation of 'modern' democratic systems. Especially in postwar academic social science, scholars have often constituted these narratives according to either nomothetic or idiographic epistemological conventions (Wallerstein 2004: 19; see also 1991: 2). The nomothetic view of democratization adopts the posture of Newtonian science and assumes that there are universal laws that govern this process for any, and all, political systems. The idiographic view, on the other hand, assumes each case of democracy is unique and subject to immanent principles and causes. Within elite Western academic and foreign policy institutions, the distribution of these views is often based on a bifurcation of "developed" and "developing" countries. An example of this distribution would suggest that so-called developing countries of the Global South face structural

challenges (e.g. industrialization, market integration, institutional capacity) that frustrate the natural, law-like processes of democratization, whereas the causes of Western democratization are located in the 'enlightened' ideals of Rousseau, Locke, Montesquieu and the rest of the liberal philosophical canon. The NED and other similar development aid organizations have tended to embrace a nomothetic epistemology, especially since the NED came of age just as the Cold War was ending and Western liberals were celebrating the "end of history" and the triumph of liberal democracy.[5] Arguments for and against this dominant liberal narrative of democracy are well known at this point, but the critical narratives of democracy assistance are interesting because they often focus on the contingent cultural histories of organizations, such as the NED, in order to reject the nomothetic elements of the field's approach to democratization. The three most prominent critical narratives that have rejected this approach have, in turn, emphasized materialist, ideological, or institutional elements that denaturalize dominant conceptions of democratization.

My goal in this research is to draw on elements of these materialist, ideological and institutional narratives in order to delineate a fourth critical narrative that seeks to integrate elements of each while emphasizing the practical processes of knowledge production. This fourth type, best labelled as a "knowledge-in-the-making" narrative, follows from recent debates in the sociology of expertise and science studies, which foreground the practical foundations of expertise, as it is performed in situations that are also materially, symbolically and institutionally defined.

[5] Francis Fukuyama, who asserted the "end of history" thesis in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), is listed among the "Democracy Experts" on the Research Council of the International Forum for Democracy Studies at the NED (Guilhot 2005: 225).

Materialist Narratives of Development and Modernization

The most common critical narrative of contemporary democracy assistance is that it plays an important role in spreading Western and, specifically, American hegemony. One of the key texts of this genre, William Robinson's *Promoting Polyarchy* (1996), was part of a wave of international relations research that turned to Gramscian notions of hegemony to explain post-Cold War processes of economic and political globalization (e.g. Cox 1983; Gill 1991; Gill 1993; McNally & Schwarzmantel 2009). While these interpretations of the global system were not exclusively materialist, they built on a critical tradition that identified the concentration of wealth and power as a primary starting point for the study of global relations. This critical tradition is rooted in narratives that draw on Marxian historical materialism to trace the expansion of global class-based inequality and exploitation. For example, critical theories such as "dependency theory" (e.g. Frank 1967; 1975) and "world-systems analysis" (Wallerstein 1976) used historical data to trace the production and reproduction of global inequalities of capital accumulation and reject progressive narratives adopted by proponents of liberal capitalism.

Especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the prime target of this critical academic tradition was "modernization theory." There are, of course, very good reasons for emphasizing the role of modernization theory in contemporary forms of development and democratization. By most accounts, this "theory" simultaneously represented the apogee of post-War social scientific influence on policy making in the United States and the height of post-War social scientific hubris. As Abbott and Sparrow (2007) state:

> Presenting the abstracted and decontextualized model of "modernity" as the end state of an ahistorical "process" of development, influential scholars such as

> Gabriel Almond, Lucien Pye and Walt Rostow finally achieved the Washington influence that social scientists had sought since the earliest year of Progressivism. Calling for massive social surveys to enable the technocratic management of personal and social adjustment required by the bureaucratic rationality of modern society, large-scale plans such as Project Camelot aimed to remake the "third world" in the idealized image of the United States, placing it on the fast track to "modernity." Only modern social science could so elegantly reduce the complexities of nonindustrialized societies to a manageable matrix of key factors in need of strategic manipulation before unleashing the full potential of the "free world." (312-313).

This mix of influence and hubris led social scientists down some morally fraught paths, including key roles in the military infrastructure during the Vietnam War, but the main legacy of modernization theory now appears as a founding moment in the United States' efforts to promote "international development." As critical development studies and postcolonial studies have recently proliferated, the story of modernization theory has rightly become an important historical touch point for many critical investigations of late twentieth century interventions in the Global South initiated by the United States and other Western governments.

While modernization theory was originally formulated as a "macro" theory that encompassed economic, social and political elements, early attempts to disprove or criticize the effects of modernization theory often pointed to the material realities of colonial and post-colonial countries, which many scholars working in the Global South witnessed first-hand.[6] Recent critical appraisals linking contemporary forms of democratization to American hegemony clearly build on this materialist tradition by viewing democracy assistance as simply another face of capitalist expansion. Although many policy professionals had already rejected the assumptions of modernization theory by the 1980s, including the founders of the NED (Guilhot 2005), such materialist

[6] Andre Gunder Frank, for example, lived in Chile during the 1960s and participated in local debates on the process of development (Gilman 2003: 237).

narratives continue to point out the similarities between "political development" through democratization and more traditional forms of international development predicated on economic modernization (e.g. Gills, Rocamora & Wilson 1993; Robinson 1996; Cammack 1997). At the same time, scholars using a neo-Gramscian approach to analyzing international relations did so largely because the concept of hegemony was better able to account for other discursive or symbolic elements of global capitalism than narrowly materialist analyses of economic exploitation. Throughout the 1990s, the Marxian materialist narrative expanded to include 'post-Marxist' critiques of Western development focused on the power of discourse, following Michel Foucault's work, as a mechanism for justifying or rationalizing domination, as well as economic exploitation (e.g. Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995). For these critics and for this project, materialist narratives still hold an important place in the analysis of democracy expertise because they provide useful historical accounts of power asymmetries in the global system.

Ideology Narratives of Political Positioning

A second important critical narrative used to explain the rise of international democracy expertise has been one that pays close attention to the ideological commitments of key actors who worked to constitute this field. Both popular and scholarly perceptions of the NED are absolutely coloured by the fact that the administration of US President Ronald Reagan established the organization as a vehicle for international anti-communist evangelism. To explain the tenuous ideological position of the field, Nicolas Guilhot's (2005) historical narrative identifies some of the main ideological shifts in the second half of the twentieth century that allowed for the emergence of professional democracy assistance. In his analysis, Guilhot explains:

"political and ideological struggles[…]are the ground on which and against which processes of professionalization take place" (2005:72). For example, Guilhot traces the career of NED founder Carl Gershman from his early activities with the Young People Socialist League, to his early articles in left publications such as the *New Leader* and *Commentary* opposing the rise of the New Left, and finally to his involvement with the pro-Vietnam War wing of the Democratic Party (2005: 88-89). Here, Guilhot uses Gershman's personal history to represent an ideological movement in the United States that saw a form of anti-communist socialism in the 1950s and 1960s evolve into a new brand of neoconservative ideology that emerged during the Reagan administration. This narrative explains the precarious bipartisan support given to the NED, as well as the central place of early versions of democracy "promotion" in Reagan's anti-communist foreign policy.

While Guilhot's narrative builds toward the eventual professionalization of what he calls the "field of human rights and democracy," other versions of this type of narrative also trace the rise of an interventionalist or imperialist strain of anti-communist ideology that took hold during the 1980s. This includes narratives tracing 1980s neoconservatism to the early decades of the Cold War. Frances Stoner Saunders (1999),[7] for example, describes the influence of scholars, writers and artists on the anti-communist

[7] Saunders' book, titled *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (1999), is an overview of the CIA's behind-the-scenes funding that centered around the Congress for Cultural Freedom. This 'congress' and other front foundations often recruited figures from among the group retrospectively labelled the 'New York Intellectuals' to write articles for left publications backed by CIA funding, such as the *Partisan Review*, and to attend overseas events sponsored by the congress. This group includes a number of intellectuals in powerful positions within the academy, including Edward Shils, Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Bell, Sydney Hook and Irving Kristol. In Edward Said's laudatory review of Saunders' book, he only disagrees with the relative lack of attention she pays to these types of activities in the "third world." Based on his own experiences at Columbia University, for example during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Said suggests that ideological struggles over the future of post-colonial countries also played an important role in pushing the anti-communist left in a rightward direction (Said 1999).

left who tried, with the help of the CIA, to form a "democratic international" in the 1960s to counter the influence of the communist international. Likewise, scholars studying American interventions in Latin America, especially during the 1980s, have also advanced this critical narrative. Some examples in this field trace the ideological foundations of U.S. political interventions aimed at 'democratizing' Latin and South American governments back to diffusion of neoliberal economics through the international influence of the "Chicago School" (Stokes 2001; Dezalay & Garth 2002). Other examples analyzed the way ideological debates produced specific technocratic forms of legal and political institutions that resulted from these interventions (e.g. Carothers 1991; Centeno & Silva 1998).

In each of these studies, ideological struggles and political positioning appear as primary factors in the rise of a professionalized field of democratization experts. This type of narrative is useful, especially for organizations such as the NED, because it emerged during a period in the 1980s of escalated ideological rhetoric concerning the nature of democracy. Ideology narratives were also useful for scholars advocating the mission of democracy assistance as a natural product of liberal democracy's "victory." For example, scholars such as Larry Diamond framed the fight for democracy as a world-historical competition of ideals, thereby implying that the victory of liberal democracy required a type of ideological reconstruction, in the form of democracy assistance (see Diamond 1995 for an analysis that captures the mood of democratization advocates in the mid-1990s). While not all ideology-based narratives are necessarily critical, narratives emphasizing the rightward drift of the anti-communist left provide an important point of

reference for the history and political positioning of democratization organizations such as the NED.

Institutional Narratives of Professional Democratization Organizations

The most prominent scholarly work detailing the institutional history of contemporary democracy assistance is likely the numerous articles and books by Thomas Carothers (e.g. Carothers 1991; 1999; 2004; 2006). Although Carothers' work maintains a sturdy support for the mandate of democracy assistance – he is a senior researcher and administrator at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – it also rejects much of the triumphal or moralizing language of other advocates within the field. Most importantly for this project, however, Carothers' work often details the institutional manoeuvring within and among democracy assistance organizations, government agencies and other actors in the field. As a type of 'insider' view, this narrative offers useful insight into democracy assistance as a field of competition over material and symbolic resources. For example, in one of his many historical overviews of the field, Carothers (1999) discusses the so-called ideological 'consensus' of the mid-1990s in terms of a broader institutional restructuring among government organizations initiated by the Clinton Administration. Questioning the thesis that the support for democracy had unified U.S. foreign policy interests in the 1990s, Carothers states:

> In reality, democracy promotion increased in importance in U.S. policy in the 1990s only unevenly across the map. In more than a dozen countries, particularly in the Middle East, Asia, and the former Soviet Union, U.S. interests from oil to air-force bases have led the United States to support less than democratic regimes, proving that interest and ideals still collide (1999: 45).

Carothers goes on to present data on democracy programs funded by USAID over the course of the 1990s and points out that commitment to democracy was inconsistent and

often taken up in different ways by different agencies. In other words, the State Department, USAID and the NED all had very different views about the nature of democracy assistance. An important aspect of the "uneven" expansion of democracy assistance during this period was that it largely followed from turf wars that played out as non-governmental and quasi-governmental organizations garnered a larger share of democracy aid funding (see also Carothers 2004). During a period when aid programs began to focus support on building 'civil society,' organizations that could demonstrate autonomy from the U.S. government had an institutional advantage within the organizational ecology of the field.[8]

While Carothers' work primarily focuses on democracy assistance organizations, other scholars have produced critical historical narratives describing the expanding role of NGOs in international human rights, democracy and other forms of development advocacy. An important part of this research is the institutional overlap created between social science and policy circles. Early modernization theorists, for example, blazed some of these trails by parlaying their academic work into advisory positions in the State Department in the 1960s (Gilman 2003). In the following decades, as the field of international development organizations diversified, newly professionalized NGOs often employed or drew on the expertise of academics working in anthropology or area studies, creating a type of aid "industry" that produced both funding and knowledge (Cooper & Packard 1997, Haan 2009). On the policy side of the equation as well, sociologists such

[8] The institutional landscape of democratization programs in Washington DC is ever changing, and although Carothers (1999) points out that the State Department continued to support anti-democratic regimes in the 1990s, by the mid 2000s the 'ideals' of democracy took a more prominent place in the Bush Administration's so-called "Freedom Agenda." The Bush Administration's embrace of democracy infused a massive amount of money into the field of democracy assistance, but it also worked against democratization efforts by NGOs and quasi-autonomous organizations like the NED because the war in Iraq created such a backlash against anything vaguely connected to U.S. foreign policy (Carothers 2006).

as Thomas Medvetz (2012) have traced shifts in the institutional landscape of policy-making in Washington caused by the rise of think tanks. The professionalization of policy expertise in Medvetz' research is also pertinent to a narrative explaining the rise of democratization experts because organizations like the NED situate themselves in similar positions by sometimes referring to themselves as "do tanks."

Taken together, the materialist, ideological and institutional narratives mentioned above provide useful insights about the political context in which Western and specifically U.S. democracy assistance organizations developed. What these narratives lack, however, is an analytical framework to interpret how this evolving political context has, over time, influenced, and been influenced by, the production of expert knowledge about democracy. In the following sections, I therefore describe a framework that incorporates elements of these narratives into a broader knowledge-in-the-making narrative that identifies expert knowledge making as, itself, a historical process that reproduces material, ideological and institutional structures. This framework has the benefit of drawing on a wide range of historical research while foregrounding the processes and products of knowledge production about democracy.

A Knowledge-in-the-Making Narrative

The phrase "knowledge-in-the-making," as I am using it, comes from the field of science studies and is adapted from an approach Bruno Latour (1987) described as "science in the making." The basic premise of Latour's approach is that scientific knowledge is always "under-determined" insofar as no one factor or principle is ever enough to create certainty among a community of scientists (1987: 13). Certainty, truth and knowledge are instead all products of social processes that lead scientific

communities to embrace some facts while disregarding others. This is a common theme in the broader STS literature, which built on Thomas Kuhn's (1970) foundational work on scientific revolutions. Scholars in this field were able to demonstrate that innovations and controversies that produced accepted scientific 'facts,' in laboratory science for example, were products of tenuous decisions, social relationships and timing (Latour & Woolgar 1986; Knorr-Cetina 1999). One of the particularly useful themes of such research, for this project, is the claim that scientific knowledge-making requires an assemblage of concepts, facts or principles that are accepted at face value or as 'settled questions' by the epistemic community (Knorr-Cetina 1999; 2005). Latour (1987: 131) refers to such concepts or facts as "black boxes" because of their uncontested status within a scientific community. The process of opening these black boxes has become a useful tool for historical research on social scientific knowledge-making (e.g. Mitchell 2002; Steinmetz 2013), and it is also a useful tool for this project because the academic and policy knowledge created by the field of democracy assistance draws heavily on a range of uncontested assumptions about how democracy works. Opening the black boxes of democracy expertise therefore represents a crucial task for this project, but it is only one part of the knowledge-in-the-making narrative.

A second major part of the knowledge-in-the-making narrative focuses on how social actors assemble concepts, facts and principles together in efforts to develop democracy assistance programs that work, and continue to work, in practice. While historically constituted concepts and facts produce practical effects, they are only able to do so if social actors are able to make sense of them and justify actions based on them. In an edited collection on *Social Knowledge in the Making* (Camic et al. 2011), the

contributors present a range of empirical studies describing *practices* in which academics and non-academics engage to produce, evaluate and apply knowledge of the social world. The argument presented here takes a similar approach by investigating the process of producing, evaluating and applying knowledge of democracy in the context of assistance programs.

Using this approach to study democracy, however, presents some challenges. Actors make and remake the meaning of democracy in many sites, and the boundaries between social scientific, normative and instrumental representations of the term are often unclear. Even a focus on the relatively few Western organizations that enact democracy expertise in the form of assistance programs requires an extra level of analytic clarification. In order to examine the everyday practices experts in this field use to produce, evaluate and apply knowledge of democracy, I develop below a methodological framework that captures the contingent and situational nature of knowledge making, while still contextualizing these practices within structuring historical and cultural processes.

A Methodological Framework for Studying Knowledge-Making

The framework I adopt to present a knowledge-in-the-making narrative in this research project has two main parts. The first part, outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, traces a historical epistemology of the basic assumptions about democracy held by contemporary democracy assistance organizations in North America. The second part examines a case study of North American democracy assistance organizations. This case study begins, in Chapter 4, by examining the brief history of the field, which first emerged in North

America during the mid-1980s. Chapter 4 builds on the previous two chapters by locating the historical production of concepts and facts about democracy within the parallel process of the field's institutionalization. The case study continues, in Chapter 5, by presenting the results of a series of interviews with program coordinators working for democracy assistance organizations (in the United States and Canada). This interview data grounds an analysis these experts' day-to-day work of developing, evaluating and reporting on democracy assistance programs in the Global South. The final chapter (Chapter 6) then discusses these practices in the context of contemporary democracy research and the broader field of international aid. The following sections detail the framework's two main parts.

Before outlining the theoretical approaches that these chapters take, it is first important to clarify the methodological structure of the following research project. Methodologically, the two main parts of the knowledge-making framework demand an integrated or ‘mixed methods’ approach that unifies the project. The two main features of this mixed methods approach include an intellectual history to present the historical epistemology in Chapters 2 and 3, followed by an analysis of semi-structured interviews to present the case study of North American democracy assistance. This section therefore provides an explanation of the intellectual history, including my rationale for selecting the authors and texts presented in the chapters below. This explanation is followed by a description of the interview research, along with a rationale for the scope and focus of the case study. Finally, this methodology section concludes with a discussion of the advantages this approach entails, especially as a contribution to the sociology of knowledge literature and the broader study of democracy

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present an intellectual history that focuses on a group of scholars and texts that were particularly influential in the constitution of contemporary social scientific debates about democracy. As with many intellectual histories, I construct this study based on a view from the present that takes a genealogical approach to tracing the influence of historical debates to the range of possibilities that exist in contemporary discourses about democracy (e.g. Somers 2005; Foucault 2012). This 'history of the present' does not seek to uncover a direct chain of personal influence, for example the tracking of ideas through interaction, but instead looks to intellectual discourses to trace changes in the boundaries of prominent debates about a particular subject. In this case, the subject is democracy, and I start my investigation with a period in the late 19th century that saw the rise of popular debates about democracy, including the expansion of workers' parties and suffrage movements (see Hobsbawm 1987), as well as the rise of newly professionalized forms of social science (Hughes 1958). This period is particularly important for the discussion of democracy assistance as a form of knowledge located between academic and policy communities because, as the boundaries between social scientific disciplines started to emerge, there was an equal pressure to blur the boundaries between the academy and government (Abbott 1988; Medvetz 2012). During this time, there were a few prominent figures at the intersection of both of these movements and three of the most famous were Gaentano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels. These three European scholars were particularly influential in the study of democracy, despite the fact that they were largely critical of democratic movements (Burnham 1943; Bottomore 1964; Bobbio 1972; Lenski 1980; Linz 2006).

Chapter 2 therefore traces how these three figures shaped academic debates by mobilizing discourses of science to give legitimacy to normative positions that were suspicious of social democracy. Among later scholars who would build on the work of Mosca, Pareto and Michels, one of the most famous was Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter adapted the critiques of Mosca, Pareto and Michels to formulate a new procedural theory of democracy, which came to dominate mainstream discourse of democracy in postwar American social science (Held 1987; Plattner & Diamond 1993; Medearis 2001). The texts I chose to outline these debates in Chapter 2 are generally their best-known and most influential works.[9]

Chapter 3 adopts a similar approach, except that the debates I examine in this section were selected based on their location in debates that emerged in postwar academic research on democracy, primarily in the field of political science, concerning the methods and measurement of democracy (see Ricci 1984; Gunnell 2004; Mihic et al. 2005; Abbott & Sparrow 2008). While the narratives discussed above often gravitated toward discourses that described and *advocated* international modernization and development during this period (e.g. Rostow 1960; Almond & Colman 1960; Almond & Verba 1963), Chapter 3 focuses on the metrology of democracy during the postwar period in order to trace the definitional boundaries that shaped the field of democracy assistance when it emerged in the 1980s and expanded in the 1990s (see especially Dahl 1961, 1971). A Key aspect of this metrological history is the conceptual narrowing of democracy by means of removing its social elements and proposing methodological innovations to study its political elements. This conceptual process, which worked in a

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[9] While the relative influence of texts can be subjective, there is a substantial secondary literature that has located the influence of Mosca (Burham 1943; Meisel 1965; Bobbio 1972; Lenski 1980), Pareto (Parsons 1965; Lopreato 1973; Sica 1988) and Michels (Beetham 1977; Scaff 1981; Linz 2006).

Schumpeterian tradition, included examples such as the voter studies conducted at Columbia University and the University of Michigan (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1954, 1960), the 'end of ideology debate' (Aron 1957; Shils 1958; Bell 1960), the discourse around the so-called "crisis of democracy" in the 1970s (Huntington 1975), and the emergence of 'civil society' as a solution to this crisis in the 1980s and 1990s (Bell 1989; Shils 1991; Putnam 1993). These debates are particularly important to the narrative presented in this research because, unlike highly technical debates over particular methodologies in political science (e.g. Riker & Ordeshook 1968; Cyr 1975) these debates are generally considered relics in contemporary political science, but the combination of their normative dismissal of socialist or economic democracy as a viable 'social scientific' option, mirrors the conceptual boundaries presented by democracy assistance experts in my preliminary research. This intellectual history therefore links directly with the second part of my mixed methods approach.

The second feature of my methodological approach was a series of semi-structured interviews (Wengraf 2001; Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Gubrium & Holstein 2002), conducted with professionals in the field of democracy assistance. I chose a semi-structured qualitative interview method so that I could open a dialogue with the respondents that would allow them to reflect on their own expertise. To identify the forms of knowledge constituting the institution of international democracy assistance, I interviewed experts from democracy assistance organizations at the centre of the institution's core knowledge-making process. In the structure of most organizations of this type, these experts generally worked as program coordinators, who made decisions about the development and management of bilateral assistance programs. The main

criterion for selecting these organizations was the goal of producing an evenly distributed sample based on the size and the scope of activities. For example, I interviewed respondents at large organizations that worked on many different types of democracy programs, as well as smaller organizations that had a more limited range of programming. The pool of organizations from which I selected my interview respondents included the National Endowment for Democracy (US), the International Republican Institute (US), the National Democratic Institute (US), the Solidarity Center (US), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (US), Freedom House (US), the United States Agency for International Development, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (US), the Carter Center (US), Rights and Democracy (Canada), the Parliamentary Centre (Canada), the Canadian International Development Agency, and Elections Canada. Collectively, these are the main organizations that constitute the field of democracy assistance in North America and I was able to interview respondents from all but three of these organizations. I included the Canadian organizations in this study primarily because they were close enough in structure and substantive focus to justify expanding the pool of organizations. This also allowed me to control for findings that might have been particular to the organizational landscape of Washington, DC. Overall, the differences between organizations in the two countries were negligible in terms of their internal dynamics and structures, although the (relatively) high levels of funding available for organizations in the US did create some structural differences in the types of projects that Canadian and American organizations could develop.

I interviewed seventeen professionals working in nine different democracy assistance organizations or governmental organizations with substantial democracy

programs.[10] Twelve of the respondents worked for U.S. organizations based in Washington, DC, while the other five respondents worked for Canadian organizations based in either Ottawa or Montreal. Respondents were identified based on a selection model meant to ensure a diversity of regional expertise. The rationale for this model was an attempt to avoid overrepresentation of professionals who specialized in one of the main “areas” that often subdivide development work, primarily to maintain an even distribution of interview subjects within organizations. Thus, among the seventeen respondents, I interviewed at least one “expert” working on each of the main regional areas, including Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. I also interviewed no more than three respondents in any one “area,” and five of the respondents were generalists who worked in more than one area.[11]

In these semi-structured interviews, I explicitly asked questions meant to establish the range of practical possibilities that such experts confront. Since this empirical research adds to a knowledge-in-the-making narrative, I also asked specific questions about how these experts design and evaluate democratization projects. Parsing the relevant aspects of the interview data, however, required a theoretical and methodological approach that took the respondents accounts of their own *practices* seriously and as accurate representations of the field in general. In the section below describing the

[10] I conducted the interviews between November 2008 and April 2009. To help clarify my desired range of interview subjects, I conducted three exploratory interviews with democracy professionals, one in person and two via telephone. I also participated in a series of on-line public discussions on the topic of democracy assistance work hosted by the Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa and held over a three-week period between November 3, 2008 and November 24, 2008. The title of the series was the “Governance Village E-Dialogue.” The exploratory interviews and the e-dialogues were useful resources for the identification of respondents and the construction of my questionnaire.

[11] Although these experts worked on many different types of projects in many different countries, the interviews revealed a surprising degree of homogeneity within the field, and thus I achieved saturation after only a few interviews. Although I set a provisional goal of speaking with twenty respondents (and then assess my data), this early saturation point combined with the difficulty of scheduling interviews with people who conduct much of their work abroad, and are therefore often traveling, limited the number of respondents to 17.

theoretical foundations of the case study, I describe the framework I used to analyze this data. In Chapter 5, then, I present a substantive discussion of how I structured the interview questions in order to facilitate this analysis.

The mixed methods approach I adopt for this research has two primary advantages over the other narratives that scholars have used to study democracy assistance (described above). Firstly, by combining a textual analysis of intellectual debates about democracy with the accounts of practitioners working to develop and administer assistance projects, this research is able to provide insight into recurring debates about the "theory and practice of democracy" through the lens of a specific case study. As the discussion in Chapter 5 indicates, the semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to comment on their interpretation of academic debates and explain how these debates affect their work in an everyday sense. One of the main findings of this research was, in fact, that respondents were largely impatient with academic debates, despite making explicit reference to theoretical principles to justify their decision. The second advantage of this integrated approach is that the everyday practices of the respondents indicate that the conceptual boundaries and conventions that the field inherited from academic debates about democracy are in the process of changing. Specifically, with the expansion of neoliberal management strategies that are reshaping large organizations of all kinds, these interviews offer a window onto a new range of debates about democracy. To draw out these advantages further, the following two sections introduce the theoretical foundation of the chapters below.

A Historical Epistemology of Democracy Assistance

The first component of my analytical approach focuses on how theories and facts gain acceptance in social scientific communities over time through the various changing circumstances of knowledge production. This version of historical analysis sets aside the truth of any particular facts or theories and examines the historical processes of knowledge production from which they emerged. Such an approach is similar to the analytical program attributed to the French tradition of 'historical epistemology' that aimed to uncover the historical processes by which scientific facts were "conquered, constructed, and confirmed" (see Bourdieu 1992: 42).[12] However, the approach I adopt here is closer to the historical epistemology that Margaret Somers (1998) attributes to Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970). Building on Kuhn's critique of positivist science, Somers defines historical epistemology as:

> [A] term I use to capture the idea that the history and development of a thing (and not just the logic of its construction) can tell you something fundamental about its nature. The term is purposefully oxymoronic: It intentionally challenges the assumed antihistorical quality of epistemology and instead proposes that all of our knowledge, our logics, our presuppositions, indeed our very reasoning practices, are indelibly (even if obscurely) marked with the signature of time (Somers 1998:731).[13]

This type of historical epistemology suggests that contemporary democracy, as a scientific or measurable "thing," is a product of historical presuppositions, research problems unique to particular times and locations, and "pragmatic articulations" of

[12] Bourdieu is referring here to the 'French tradition' that includes Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, and extends to Michel Foucault. His interpretation of this tradition is slightly different than the more critical assessment of Bruno Latour (1993). While Bourdieu focuses on the practical elements of the tradition, Latour suggests that the type of epistemology offered by this tradition should be rejected for its insistence on distinguishing "scientific ideologies from true sciences" (1993: 92). However, others have pointed out that Latour's critique overemphasizes the "epistemological break" both Bachelard and Canguilhem saw between everyday thought and scientific thought, and ignores the conceptual tools the tradition offers that allow for the examination of the practical elements of the 'scientific world' (see Reinberger 2005).
[13] See also Somers 1996 for a more general discussion of historical epistemology.

existing theories of democracy. In this sense, contemporary evaluations and applications of democracy are simply a continuation of the historical process by which the concept is defined and redefined.

In a more recent essay on the concept of "political culture," Somers narrows the scope of historical epistemology to formulate was she calls a "historical sociology of concept formation" (2008: 171-174). This approach aims to "explain how concepts do the work they do…by reconstructing the histories of their construction, resonance, and contestedness over time" (2008: 173). For Somers, historical constructions of "political culture" have been at the center of debates that have themselves shaped the contemporary social sciences. Histories of such contentious concepts therefore offer a view of the contingent and situational nature of social science by pointing out that particular theories or innovations follow from, but also enact, professional, scientific and political norms or conventions. Democracy, as a similarly contentious concept, therefore offers a view of knowledge-making as a set of practices that articulate the complex relationship between social science and government policy. Chapters 2 and 3 therefore examine the contested concept of democracy, using a historical epistemology to chart out the normative and culturally contingent concepts that came to be widely accepted in academic and policy discourses.

As Thomas Carothers reiterates throughout his various institutional studies of democracy assistance, organizations and experts in the field often orient assistance programs to academic trends or fads that emerge out of specific national contexts or international events (see Carothers 1991, 1999, 2004)[14]. In North America, articulations

[14] Specific trends include the rise of programs centred on establishing the "rule of law" in democratizing countries (Carothers 1991, 2006), the promotion of civil society as a foundation of democracy (Carothers

of these academic trends occur within particular conceptual boundaries that formed along with the expansion of American social science in the postwar era. For example, Chapter 2 discusses the foundations of the widely acknowledged distinction between North American democracy assistance, which focuses primarily on civil and economic liberties, and European approaches to democracy assistance that more often focus on social or economic rights (e.g. Carothers 2004; Burnell 2010). An important part of this foundation, ironically, was the translation of early social scientific critiques of social democracy, formulated by European scholars Robert Michels, Gaetano Mosca, and Vilfredo Pareto, into a procedural definition of democracy. As suggested above, this definition was famously outlined by Joseph Schumpeter (2008[1942]), and came to dominate the American academic field. For many social scientists in North America, especially during the second half of the 20th century, this procedural definition was popular because it excluded any socialist principles that were perceived to threaten what were deemed to be economic liberties. This definition of democracy eventually became a cornerstone of the Reagan Administration's vision for a field of organizations that could 'promote' democracy abroad.

In a similar way, Chapter 3 continues this narrative by examining the postwar emergence of a narrowly political definition of democracy built on Schumpeter's procedural formulation. This vision of political democracy benefited from advances in survey research methodology (e.g. Lazarsfeld et al. 1968[1948]; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1954, 1960), which became the de facto methodology for studying electoral democracy. These methodological advances in democracy studies led to a

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and Ottaway 2000) and the predominance of 'governance' as a unifying concept in the broader field of international aid (Guilhot 2005).

conceptual distinction between the 'political' and 'social' elements of democracy, whereby political democracy represented formal freedoms and liberties, and social democracy represented obligations of the welfare state. These scholarly developments, in turn, contributed to an evolving academic field of study that took the economic and political development of the so-called "Third World" as its object of study. Here, scholars worked alongside professionals in government agencies to build a hybrid field of international development policy. As suggested above, the most famous theoretical innovation produced by this field was modernization theory, but even after this theory fell out of favour among scholars and policy experts, other important concepts continued to facilitate a close relationship between development scholars and development aid organizations. This relationship had a profound impact on a new field of democracy focused aid organizations.

The Culture and Practice of Professional Democracy Assistance: A Case Study

The case of professional democracy assistance in North America represents the second major component of my analytical framework. While the analysis of this case culminates with a discussion of how experts in this field produce and use a specialized form of knowledge about democracy on a daily basis (presented in Chapters 5 and 6), Chapter 4 introduces the case by outlining the brief history of how organizations in the field institutionalized democracy assistance. This history, however, takes a different approach than the three existing narratives of democracy assistance discussed above. By building on the historical epistemology of democracy from Chapters 2 and 3, I examine the professionalization of democracy assistance as a process whereby actors within the field worked to distinguish their own expertise from foreign policy expertise, academic

social science, or even other forms of development aid. As the sociological literature on professionalization suggests, the processes of establishing and maintaining professional boundaries are always embedded in a system of cultural relations (e.g. Abbott 1988; Brint 1994; Larson 2005). Most important among these relations is the competition over jurisdiction, which Andrew Abbott calls "the defining relation in professional life" (1988: 3). In the case of democracy assistance, however, the field claims a jurisdiction that covers the function and effectiveness of democratic institutions in any country in the world (outside of the West). The question, which grounds the analysis in Chapter 4, is how such a huge range of culturally relative experiences could form the basis for an expert knowledge of democracy. The answer to this question involves a process of institutional formation, expansion and consolidation that saw a small group of organizations, initially formed to support the United States' "strategic" foreign policy interests (Samuels & Douglas 1981), carve out a substantial niche within the broader field of international development aid.

To describe this process in a way that emphasizes the impact of historically constituted conceptual boundaries, the theoretical approach that Chapter 4 adopts works to blend an analysis of the structural elements that supported institutionalization with an analysis of the cultural or symbolic context that equally shaped the process. The advantage of my approach to this history is that I incorporate a discussion of how the conceptual, cultural and definitional elements of democracy - what I call *symbolic* elements or boundaries - interacted with the structural (material, ideological and institutional) processes that shaped this professional field. This interaction between the symbolic and the structural requires further clarification, however, because two of the

most influential theorists of culture and symbolic systems (Pierre Bourdieu and Jeffrey Alexander) both emphasize the structuring effects of culture rather than maintaining an analytic distinction between the two categories. The following introduction to Chapter 4 therefore frames my analysis of the field's professionalization by providing a theoretical overview of how and why I make this analytic distinction.

Theoretical debates about the relationship between structural and symbolic elements of social processes have been prominent throughout the social sciences since the so-called "cultural turn." This turn embraced an interpretive or phenomenological approach to studying culture by moving beyond traditional notions of narrowly defined cultural 'values' that were used to define social groups or even nations (e.g. Bonnell & Hunt 1999; Steinmetz 1999; Chaney 2002). It was also an explicit move away from approaches such as structural Marxism (e.g. Althusser 2005[1965]) that treated beliefs and ideas as ideology, as well as structural functionalism's classification of culture values in terms of either modern or traditional "pattern variables" (see Parsons & Shils 1951; Almond & Verba 1963; c.f. Alexander 1995: 14). Instead, these scholars began to see beliefs, worldviews, narratives and ideas as, alternately, a "tool kit" which informs actors' "strategies of action" (Swidler 1986: 273), a symbolic mechanism for distinction in a field of social relations (Bourdieu 1993, 1984), or a supra-individual resource that actors may draw on to make meaning and do things (DiMaggio 1997: 263). What defined this "new" sociology of culture, according to DiMaggio (1997), was that it rejected previous decades of sociology that identified culture as merely a latent or dependent variable describing the "values" of a social group, and instead re-framed it as a resource for social action (i.e. Bourdieu 1990, Sewell 1992, Swidler 1986).

At the same time, scholars within this field have disagreed about how, and to what extent, beliefs, ideas or worldviews have structural effects. For example, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of culture focused on a "sociology of symbolic forms" which identified symbolic systems such as art, religion or language as "structuring structures" and means of communication accessible to given social actors as "structured structures" (Bourdieu 1991: 164-5). These symbolic systems could then also be structured by social or economic systems. A key question that Bourdieu investigated throughout his career, therefore, was how these symbolic systems could be used to produce or reproduce social relations of domination (e.g. Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1993). In this way, access to certain types of "cultural capital" (along with social or economic capital) could bestow the symbolic power to construct reality in a way that makes domination appear natural or given (1991: 170). Scholars such as Jeffrey Alexander, conversely, have been critical of Bourdieu's approach because it so often led to analyses of "fields" that included symbolic or cultural systems, but were primarily structured by economic systems. For Alexander, the vertical integration of all fields in Bourdieu's system left virtually no room for the analysis of a political sphere that was open to collective or horizontal decision-making, and thus offered no way to distinguish "an authoritarian from a democratic order" (Alexander 1995: 187). Alexander's "strong programme of cultural sociology" (2003), on the other hand, identified culture as an autonomous and structuring element of social life insofar as it codes the discourses that give meaning to all social relations.[15] With regard to discourses of democracy, then, the enduring codes that distinguish those within the

[15] Of course, as Kurasawa (2004) points out, Alexander's effort to break with Bourdieu's economic determinism pushed him towards a type of cultural or symbolic determinism.

community from those on the ‘outside’ can be traced to a distinction between the “civil” and the “anticivil” (Alexander 2006: 57-59).

Chapter 4, however, does not adopt either of these approaches to analyze the institutionalization of democracy assistance. This is not to say that either approach is faulty or misguided. A Bourdieusian field analysis of assistance organizations and individual experts could offer a useful account of how certain practices or forms of knowledge translate into positional advantages or disadvantages for particular actors or groups of actors. Similarly, a study employing Alexander's "strong programme of cultural sociology" (e.g. Alexander et al. 2006) could examine the public performance of experts in order to locate the important cultural codes that structure the discourse of democracy. Instead, the history outlined in Chapter 4 embraces the inherent tension between culture and structure, and incorporates them both into the analytic framework. I view this tension as productive in this case study because the variability of symbolic representations of democracy often challenges the stability of structural forms. For example, in the history of organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), this slippage between what democracy "is" and what type of political change a Western aid organizations can possibly promote has regularly opened the NED to criticisms that threaten its viability, and the viability of the broader institution of democracy assistance. At the same time, these organizations’ ability to draw on minimalist or procedural definitions of democracy, which claim to accommodate even contradictory cultural expressions of democracy, has allowed them to not only weather this type of structural destabilization, but to expand the scope of their activities.

The knowledge-in-the-making narrative that guides this case study thus looks at the tension between the highly variable symbolic meanings and possibilities of democracy, as well as the symbolic structures that define the broader field[16] of international aid organizations. In this way, the field of professional democracy assistance is an interesting case because it is open to an overlapping array of symbolic systems and it consists of a community of knowledge producers that have their own conventions for dealing with these structural and symbolic elements. These conventions are unique within the larger field of international aid because they relate to such a large group of stakeholders ranging from local democratic reformers to international activists to high-ranking officials in the US State Department. Chapter 4 therefore presents the history of democracy assistance as a process by which a field of organizations constructed professional boundaries around a form of knowledge about democracy that ensured both symbolic flexibility and a secure structural position within the broader field of international aid organizations.

In Chapter 5, I put this history to use by examining the ways that experts in the field of democracy enact this knowledge in practice. The following therefore includes a theoretical discussion of how I analyzed this data. In the background of this analysis is a conception of practice that remains open to the possibility of horizontal, collective or democratic decision-making between experts and stakeholders, but also looks to identify mechanisms and conventions that reproduce social relations based on power or domination. One key convention that has become pervasive throughout democracy

[16] While I do not engage in a Bourdieusian field analysis, I still use the term "field" to represent a group of organizations that do, in fact, compete over economic capital (i.e. government funding), social capital (positions in high-level diplomacy networks) and symbolic/cultural capital (reputation based on achievement and status within pro-democracy activist networks)

assistance is the reliance on institutional evaluation practices. In the foreground of this analysis, therefore, I utilize Margaret Archer's (2010) framework of morphogenesis to unpack the relationship between evaluation practices and democracy assistance programs. Using a morphogenetic framework elevates the everyday practices of democracy experts into the discussion of how the field is structured and for this reason an emphasis on practice and structural morphogenesis represents the theoretical core of Chapter 5.

As part of the “practice turn” in the social sciences, scholarly debates over the definition and utility of “practice” alternatively characterize it as the primary source of meaning in social life (Rawls 2004), a vague and marginally useful term for describing tacit knowledge (Turner 1994), or a conceptual mechanism for resolving persistent dualisms in social theory such as debates over 'micro' or 'macro' level research (Schatzki 2001; Bourdieu 1977, 1990). By characterizing the work done by professional democracy assistance organizations as a set of knowledge-making practices, my framework follows the latter approach by opening up analytical space to interpret the everyday practices of professionals in terms of both the historical construction of democracy as an object of expertise and the cultural codes or performances that establish the boundaries of the field. In this sense, I argue that history and culture constrain the range of possible professional practices, but that these practices also reproduce existing possibilities *and* constitute new possibilities.

One group of scholars that has worked to expand the scope of practice-based research in this direction is the branch of French sociology that has grown around the work of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, and especially their theoretical model

outlined in *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (2006[1991]).[17] The model Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) formulated in this text investigates practical situations to understand the general forms of justification engaged by social actors to facilitate associational agreement, compromise or other forms of collective action (2006: 32). While I do not wish to "apply" their model to the research outlined below, this starting point offers some important advantages. This model, which has been labelled "pragmatic sociology" (Bénatouïl 1999) as well as a "sociology of critical capacity" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999), has the main advantage of extending reflexivity to the actors actually engaged in practice. While Bourdieu, for example, implied that reflexivity is a tool primarily used by sociologists (Bourdieu and Wacqant 1992), Boltanski and Thévenot argue that social actors generally, although not always, have the capacity to judge, make sense of and even justify their own actions and the actions of others. Their analytic model therefore starts with the simple assertion that any form of public agreement or critique must be justified by principles general enough to be judged legitimate according to some form of public or common good. As Boltanski's empirical research using this model demonstrates, public denunciations or commentaries that only refer to personal interests are easily dismissed (see Boltanski 2013, 2012, 1999). In this model, collective action requires a general register of moral equivalence that grounds public engagement. Such an argument would be similar to the Habermasian argument for the common basis of communicative action

[17] As is common practice in recent writing in English on this book, it is necessary to point out that the original publication of the text in 1991 under the title, *De la justification: Les économies de la grandeur*, inspired important debates in French sociology over the past two decades. These debates influenced the subsequent work of Boltanski and Thévenot and some of these later reformulations actually appeared in English before *On Justification*. While I am not interested in recreating the historical epistemology of pragmatist sociology as it occurred in France, I believe it is important to draw attention to the various recent articles and books in English that contextualize these earlier debates and frame some of the useful innovations that their work offers (see for example Wagner 1999; Boltanski 2011; Blokker & Brighenti 2011).

except that Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) suggest that there are multiple orders of moral equivalence (or "orders of worth") that are situational and irreducible to a common form of rationality. In addition, Thévenot (2006, 2001) also suggests that public engagement is just one register of action, and that not all public disputes are equally open to engagement – or, in other words, not everyone can enter the public sphere.

The important break that this model makes with previous generations of sociological research[18] is that in order to take seriously the principles of equivalence that actors use to justify their actions, pragmatic sociology must abandon the search for underlying forces that shape the social world. This project of unmasking social reality has a long history in sociology, often tracing back to Marxian historical materialism, but also to early interpretations of society as constituted by underlying dynamics or forces (e.g. Pareto). In post-War American sociology, Peter Berger expressed this sentiment in his famous *Invitation to Sociology* (1963): "the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem" (1963: 23). This does not mean that the 'pragmatic sociology' approach flattens the social world into isolated practical situations, which is a criticism of some "micro" forms of pragmatism (e.g. ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, symbolic interactionism or even some versions of Actor Network Theory). For example, Boltanski and Ciapello's (2005) study of the moral foundations of modern management practices trace a clear line between the calls for autonomy and freedom in the 1960s and the contemporary neoliberal desire for flexibility and creativity in business. Likewise, Thévenot and others in France and the United States have worked to show that public justifications often vary across different cultural boundaries (see Lamont & Thévenot

[18] Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) are primarily responding to Bourdieu's theoretical model, which they generalize using the term 'critical sociology' (Bénatouïl 1999; Boltanski 2012).

2000). In this sense, orders of worth may refer to general principles of equivalence that obtain in problem situations, but they are also only meaningful in the context of historically and culturally contingent repertoires, grammars, narratives, and practices.

Overall, this branch of pragmatist sociology is useful to my research because it represents a novel approach to studying democracy assistance, in that it takes seriously the modes of agreement and justification that define the field, but it also contextualizes these modes historically and is sensitive to the multiple cultural boundaries that democratization programs must traverse. Previous critical treatments of the field (especially Robinson 1996) have convincingly made the case that democracy promotion has, in recent history, played a role in the legitimization of global capitalism. By turning to questions of how specific interpretations of democracy are justified, agreed upon, or institutionalized in practice, the problem of legitimacy appears instead as an active process, engaged by actors.[19] The question for this research then becomes, how do program coordinators in this field establish and maintain the legitimacy of their programs? One of the key mechanisms for establishing legitimacy that became immediately apparent at the start of this research project was the predominance of evaluation practices.

As Michèle Lamont (2012) has recently argued, the necessity of evaluation practices has only increased with the rise of neoliberalism, market fundamentalism (see Somers & Block 2005) and the drive to translate all aspects of social life into the terms of market calculus. In this way, the project of Boltanski and Thévenot as well as other branches of French pragmatism overlaps with the work of the cultural sociologists mentioned above. As Lamont suggests:

[19] For a discussion of "legitimacy" vs. "legitimization" see Boltanski & Thévenot (2000: 214-5).

> What makes (e)valuation a social and cultural process is that establishing value generally requires (*a*) intersubjective agreement/disagreement on a matrix or a set of referents against which the entity (a good, a reputation, an artistic achievement, etc.) is compared, (*b*) negotiation about proper criteria and about who is a legitimate judge [often involving conflicts and power struggle (Bourdieu 1993)], and (*c*) establishing value in a relational (or indexical) process involving distinguishing and comparing entities (2012: 205).[20]

By examining the cultural processes of valuation and evaluation performed as part of the particular form of "social knowledge making" (Camic et al. 2011) engaged by democracy assistance experts, my research therefore describes the world constituted by these practices. At the same time, it also places this work in broader moral, political, organizational or social scientific fields where knowledge of democracy and democratization ground other forms of valuation.[21] By starting with situations that give rise to evaluative practices in the field of democracy assistance, my analysis is able to describe how basic tensions among various approaches to democracy are resolved in practice. However, in order to contextualize these practices within the symbolic structures that modify, and are modified by these practices, I organize the discussion in Chapter 5 around evaluation as a morphogenetic process.

The most prominent advocate of the morphogenetic approach has been Margaret Archer (1995; 2010; 2012), whose adaptation of the term 'morphogenesis' stands as an alternative to both Anthony Giddens' (1979) and Pierre Bourdieu's (1977; 1990) attempts to resolve the structure-agency dualism in social theory. For Archer, the important difference between these attempts and the morphogenetic approach is that the latter does not "resolve" the dualism but instead embraces both structure and agency as distinct

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[20] See also Cefai's (2009) brief review of the similarities between the French School and American cultural sociology.

[21] For example, see Stark (2009) on the application of value pluralism in economic sociology.

analytical categories. As Douglas Porpora (2013) suggests, Archer's approach also avoids conflating the categories culture and structure, which is increasingly common in contemporary sociology (2013: 27). Following the history outlined in Chapter 4, which emphasizes the interaction between the variable symbolic or cultural meanings of democracy and the structural formation of democracy assistance, the morphogenetic approach provides a framework that incorporates agent-centred practices while maintaining a consistent separation between analytic categories.

It also provides a model for examining evaluation practices that operate within existing structural constraints, but can, in turn, elaborate and change these structures. While recent democracy assistance literature (e.g. Burnell 2007, 2010; Carothers 2004, 2006; Kumar 2012) often contextualizes the problem of evaluation in terms of producing better results, other processes are also apparent in reflexive debates about practices in the field. My preliminary interviews made it clear that discussions based on these important “backstage” processes are common within the field, to the extent that I was able to group these processes into three main categories that define democracy assistance programs. These processes, which I label as *assessment, monitoring and evaluation*, are all separate aspects of a general process that the literature refers to as "evaluation" (Burnell 2007; Kumar 2012). By adopting a morphogenetic approach, which breaks down social processes into a sequence of interactions between structures and agents, my analysis is able to unpack this process by investigating these three sub-processes. While the three terms I use for these sub-processes appear to be synonyms, they each represent a unique set of practices. Assessment, in the context of democracy assistance, refers to the *a priori* practices engaged by program coordinators to collect preliminary information about a

possible program. Monitoring refers to the collection or production of information and data about the performance of an ongoing program. Finally, evaluation refers to *ex post facto* practices of attaching value to the 'results' of programs. Following Archer's (1995; 76; 2010: 228) framework, each of these sub-processes represent a morphogenetic sequence that starts with given structural conditions and, through social interaction (practice), produces a structural elaboration. Thus, the general process that most scholars and experts in the field call "evaluation" is actually a series of practices and structural elaborations. The advantage of my approach in this project is that my interviews directly address "backstage" difficulties that shape this process by asking about the practical problems confronted by coordinators in their everyday work.

The analysis presented in Chapter 5 contributes to the sociological literature on evaluation (Lamont 2012), as well as the sociology of expertise because it provides a concrete example of a knowledge-making process that is structured by a range of conditions (including conceptual and institutional boundaries), but that also produces structural elaborations over time. By foregrounding a knowledge-in-the-making narrative as a diachronic analytical model, this project is able to describe the process by which knowledge of democracy frames situations for people, organizations or governments in need of some sort of expert intervention. I take the approach, increasingly common in the sociology of expertise literature (see Callon et al. 2009; Eyal and Buchholz 2010), that expertise exists as a form of public intervention, where expertise is not something that one actor “uses” to intervene in the world, but is instead a relationally defined network or assemblage that makes an intervention both possible and sensible. For this reason, the concluding chapter (Chapter 6) offers a further discussion of how the contemporary

practices that define democracy assistance produce a set of structural effects that place new symbolic boundaries around the process of democratization. For example, since most democracy assistance programs rely on relatively short funding cycles, the need for evaluation of 'results' creates a time pressure on the complex processes of public negotiation. Chapter 6 therefore addresses the question of how contemporary assistance programs change the nature of democracy for an organization's stakeholders. This discussion turns around the question posed by Socrates above about how one can teach democratic virtue, and instead questions the effects of an expert knowledge of democracy.

Conclusion

In the following chapters, I outline a knowledge-in-the-making narrative to examine the rise of a professional field of organizations that assist activists and politicians in countries undergoing various democratization, or de-democratization processes. An important foundation for understanding this expert knowledge is the history of social scientific debates about democracy. In Chapters 2 and 3, this narrative describes a particular process of social scientific knowledge-making that required an assemblage of concepts, facts or principles about democracy that were accepted at face value or as 'settled questions' in the academic and policy communities from which the field of democracy assistance grew. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then go on to describe a case study of North American democracy assistance. By drawing on the intellectual history outlined in the previous chapters, these chapters describe the expert knowledge of democracy assistance as a set of everyday practices that are structured by symbolic cultural systems, as well as economic and social institutions. At the same time, these

practices produce new structural elaborations and, as the interview data in Chapters 5 and 6 suggest, these everyday processes of structural elaboration are crucial aspects of the expert knowledge of democracy.

Chapter 2: The Social Facts of Democracy

At the close of 19th-century Europe, the rise of democracy and the push for universal suffrage appeared as both the natural products of the 'age of reason' and as a looming threat to the established social order. Inspired by the 'ideals of 1789,' the working classes started to organize political parties to challenge traditional arrangements of authority and bring forward serious questions about the existing foundations of social and economic life. This "era of democratization" coincided with what historian Eric Hobsbawm called "the golden age of a new political sociology" (1987: 88), and in most cases the leading figures of this new discipline were either ambivalent towards or outright critical of democratic movements.

This chapter presents a historical epistemology of democracy as a social scientific concept by returning to some of the early critiques that explicitly attempted to counter the popular ideals of democracy with 'facts' about the reality of society and politics. Throughout the century, these 'facts' cast doubt on popular or 'social' democracy and came to form the foundation of the postwar definition of democracy that would eventually be put into practice by the Reagan Administrations push for a Congressionally funded democracy promotion agency. Three key figures stand out as the most systematic critics of democracy in this period: Robert Michels, Gaetano Mosca, and Vilfredo Pareto. Contemporary scholarship on democracy has mostly forgotten these critics but, as I argue, these critics were influential for many North American scholars in the years prior to World War II, and they profoundly influenced the theories of democracy produced in the postwar period. Often referred to as either 'elite theorists' (Bottomore, 1964; Bachrach, 1965; Nye, 1977) or 'Machiavellians' (Burnham 1943), Michels, Mosca and

Pareto each based their assessments of democracy on the study of fundamental empirical 'facts' that could be generalized to any political society. While their pessimistic conclusions about democracy may not resonate today, the fundamental 'problem' that shaped their critiques still continues to dominate the contemporary study of democracy. This basic 'problem' was the tension between democratic ideals and the practical 'realities' of politics.

In the following, I argue that an explicit appeal to 'science' helped the early critics of democracy to produce theoretical systems that effectively separated 'social facts' from what was then seen as the unrealistic or ideological foundations of social democracy. This separation between the facts and ideals of democracy became a cornerstone of later theories, but over time, associations with the critical conclusions of Michels, Mosca and Pareto were obscured or "black boxed" (Latour 1987). Unlike its more specific usage in the Durkheimian sense, here the term 'social fact' refers to a more general category of supposedly universal laws that are, on one hand, produced by the empirical study of historical cases and, on the other hand, proven by ordinary experience and practical observation (Mosca 1939). While none of these critics explicitly used the term 'social facts,' the evidence that they produced against democracy allowed them to argue that democratic ideals misunderstood universal laws – or "the facts" – of social organization and leadership.

For many post-war social scientists as well, similar empirical observations continued to represent a large gap between the classical doctrine of democracy and the 'reality' of democratic political systems. The economist Joseph A. Schumpeter famously outlined this incongruity in his explicit rejection of the classical doctrine by favouring an

'alternative' doctrine based on the formal competition for leadership (Schumpeter 2008). While this apparent focus on leadership has led some to categorize Schumpeter's work on democracy as an extension of 'elite theory' (Bottomore, 1964; Held, 1987; Medearis, 2001), this chapter makes clear that both Schumpeter and the elite theorists were less concerned with leadership as such, and more concerned with social democracy and the rise of workers parties as *the* central political problems of the day. More than simply identifying the connections between early critiques of democracy and post-War social science, I argue that this representation of democracy as a 'problem' was an important innovation in the marriage of modern science and politics. After a brief introduction to the intellectual and social context in which Mosca, Pareto, and Michels developed their theoretical systems, the discussion turns to an analysis of each theorist's application of scientific methodology to the 'problem' of democracy. Following this analysis, I present an account of how Schumpeter incorporated the central themes and conclusions posed by these critics into his own prominent and influential reappraisal of the theory and practice of democracy.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is not to propose normative content to 'fill' or 'unify' the concept of democracy, but to reconstruct and examine a particular tradition in the social sciences that aimed to thin out or empty the concept of democracy of 'undesirable' or 'impractical' normative elements. This tradition helped to reinvent the concept of democracy as a series of institutional mechanisms narrowly designed to produce a stable government through formal representation. Such a reinvention was crucial to the eventual rise of professional democracy assistance organizations, described in Chapter 4, and it facilitated these organizations' ability to promote a formal democratic

institutions, as a primary goal of democracy, while remaining neutral with regard to 'local' political struggles. Thus, as a contribution to the 'knowledge in the making' narrative introduced in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on a process of 'fact making' that would eventually shape academic discourses of democracy in the postwar period.

Fusing Science and Politics

In the second half of the 19th century, the rise of workers' parties and the demand for an expanded political franchise threatened to shake up established European political orders. Where the scale of industrial production was expanding most rapidly, the dynamics of social and political relations were also quickly shifting, and it is in this context that mass-based parties and associations built on workers' interests became important political actors (Hobsbawm, 1987). To this degree, democratic politics were largely coterminous with socialist politics. It is not surprising, then, that much of the intellectual debate about democracy focused on an unambiguously socialist version of democratic politics. Mosca, Pareto, and Michels, for their part each had some first-hand experience with social democratic politics and their critiques were important contributions to the anti-socialist side of this debate, which would eventually succeed in excluding socialist principles of economic democracy from mainstream North American debates.

While the political positions of the "Machiavellians" come through clearly in their major works, the reason that these works merit attention today is because they represent some of the first attempts to apply newly developing methods of social science to debates that had previously been characterized by arguments for or against political ideals. Of

course, a number of socialist intellectuals during this period worked to demonstrate the proper role of democracy in socialist politics by appealing to historical evidence,[22] but the aforementioned critics are unique in that they attempted to use scientific methodologies to develop what they claimed were explicitly apolitical theories of politics. This approach was taken up by later defenders of 'elite theory' who distinguished between analytic and normative 'elitism' (see for example Bennett, 1978; Lenski, 1980; Femia 2001) in order to retain the 'scientific' insights of the former without supporting the anti-democratic sentiment of the latter. The following discussion, however, differs from the standard critique of elite theory that anti-democratic normative implications are inescapable (Bachrach, 1965; Pateman, 1970). The present argument instead critically analyzes the 'social facts' produced by elite theorists as a productive conceptual formation that served as a foundation for later theoretical innovations. To unpack the methodological and theoretical content of Mosca, Pareto and Michels' respective critiques of democracy, it is therefore important to begin by outlining the intellectual context in which they worked. The social psychological theory of Gustave Le Bon best illustrates this context.

Especially popular among intellectuals that saw the rise of socialist parties as a potential threat, Le Bon's argument in his famous *Psychologies des foules* (1895) is emblematic of the role of mass psychology in pre-war critiques of democracy. In the introduction to the 1960 English translation (published as *The Crowd*), Robert K. Merton suggests that Le Bon was as profoundly influenced by the upheavals of French plebiscites in the latter half of the 19th century as he was by the 'Great Revolution' (1960: xxvii). What makes *The Crowd* so interesting for the study of democracy is that Le Bon was

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[22] Both Eduard Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg appealed to a 'scientific' interpretation of history in the debate over 'revisionism' in the German Social Democratic Party.

centrally concerned with (1) groups of people – or crowds – as a unit of analysis and (2) the relationship crowds have with their leaders.

Le Bon's primary and foundational assumption, found in the book's opening comments, regards the 'mental unity' of crowds. Here the author establishes that there is an identifiable mental state that can be attributed to 'crowds' and that this mental state is different from and often overtakes the mental state of the individual. Moreover, he suggests that, "the crowd is always intellectually inferior to the isolated individual" (1960: 33). For Le Bon, crowds are incapable of reasoning and they come to hold opinions not through a logical chain of ideas, but through a culmination of simplified ideas that act on the imagination of the crowd. Therefore, "to know the art of impressing the imagination of crowds is to know at the same time the art of governing them" (1960: 71).

This statement reflected the more broadly held political concern that rhetoric, as opposed to reason, was becoming an indispensable tool in the world of mass parties and popular elections. In fact, even though Le Bon's explicit project was to create a typology of 'crowds,' throughout the work it is clear that an implicit fear of the newly powerful mass parties shaped many of his conclusions. Ernesto Laclau (2005), who uses *The Crowd* as a starting point in his study of populism[23], places this concern in the context of a general approach to mass psychology at the time by suggesting that the irrationality associated with crowds embeds a more specific association between mass phenomena and pathology (Laclau, 2005: 29). This, in part, explains why Le Bon proceeds from a set

[23] Laclau's *On Populist Reason* (2005) both highlights Le Bon's bias against any mass phenomenon, and draws out some of the important themes on which Freud would later work. Such theories of mass psychology were widely influential in attempts to rework theories of social and political behaviour.

of general propositions on the nature of crowds to a more specific investigation of how crowds operate on a basis of pathological irrationality.

Where Le Bon discusses the specific problem of democracy, he presents it as an ideal or concept that resonates with crowds precisely because it resists rational or scientific thought. As he suggests:

> Words whose sense is the most ill-defined are sometimes those that possess the most influence. Such, for example, are the terms democracy, socialism, equality, liberty, etc., whose meaning is so vague that bulky volumes do not suffice to fix it precisely (1960: 102).

While this general statement still holds a certain amount of truth today, Le Bon's point was that the manipulation of "ill-defined" ideals such as democracy allowed leaders to exploit the irrationality of crowds. As with the invocation of 'democracy' in the plebiscite of Louis Bonaparte, political ideals are characterized by Le Bon as mere tools that vary only according to how effectively leaders can employ them in the manipulation of different 'types' of crowds.[24]

The distilled proposition implied in Le Bon's study, that crowds are irrational and always subject to the manipulation of leaders, became a prototype for later scientific 'facts' that were generated to demonstrate the impossibility and undesirability of social democracy. The study's assertion of universal principles about crowd psychology, and its accessible empirical foundations – any rational person could go out and witness the irrationality of crowd behaviour – became accepted implicitly in later attempts to

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[24]To further explain the imprecision and flexibility of political ideals, Le Bon draws a comparison between "Latin" and "Anglo-Saxon" ideas and images associated with "democracy." For Latin peoples, he suggests, democracy means the subordination of the individual will to the "will and the initiative of the community represented by the State" (1960: 108). For Anglo-Saxons, and more specifically Americans, democracy signifies "the excessive development of the will and the initiative of the individual and the complete subordination of the State" (1960: 108). If one follows a logic that equates the individual with the rational and the group with the irrational, then the individualism that he saw in American democracy almost appears as an answer to the 'problem of the crowd' and a counter example to socialist theories based on a Rousseau's concept of the general will.

confront social democratic ideals with scientific analysis. In this way, the irrationality of crowds took on the properties of what Bruno Latour (1987: 2, 131) has called a scientific "black box." The metaphor of the black box – a well established fact that resists 'opening' because of ongoing elements that maintain its acceptance in a scientific community – is particularly useful in describing Le Bon's conclusions because they gave scientific weight to a concern that already existed among some political commentators and scholars of the period. The irrationality of crowds, once it became an established fact, resisted scientific challenge because a broader interest in refuting the ideals of workers' parties encouraged further work that characterized democracy as a problem. The three critics to whom I now turn were prominent scholars who attempted to work on this 'problem' by demonstrating the effects of the political irrationality of groups. Their work, then, would later influence scholars such as Joseph Schumpeter, who adopted the "black box" of group irrationality as a foundational assumption of a minimalist and procedural definition of democracy.

Three Critics of Democracy

The following discussion turns to the key works of Mosca, Pareto, and Michels and focuses on the political conclusions they reached based on their conceptual and methodological approaches. Although each of these critics wrote on a wide variety of topics, they all used empirical evidence to generate social scientific theories that had the effect of refuting particular elements of social democracy. Three theoretical motifs played a prominent role in this fusion of political or normative sentiment with scientific fact and these motifs organize the following discussion. Much like a narrative motif, the theoretical motifs attributed here to Mosca, Pareto and Michels represent recurring

themes that organize or structure each theoretical system.[25] The motifs invoke some of the normative elements of intellectual currents that were particularly influential at the time and therefore contributed to the self-evident nature of each critic's conclusions. These motifs are important in the context of this dissertation because the normative and social scientific debates that they represent were later translated into conventions[26] that formed the conceptual boundaries of 'legitimate' discourses of democracy in the postwar period.

The three theoretical motifs, which appear in the work of each but are emphasized differently among the three, are: (1) *the theory of elites*, which is outlined in Mosca's *The Ruling Class* (1939); (2) *anti-positivism*, which grounds Pareto's sociological treatise; and (3) *anti-idealism*, which characterizes Michels famous work on the German Social Democratic Party. The first motif reflects some of the concerns that inspired Le Bon's study, especially the threat posed by the rapid expansion of workers' parties in industrial Europe. The second and third motifs reflect a more specific dissatisfaction with positivist and idealist theories of social action at the end of the nineteenth century. These two intellectual (counter) currents, which Parsons (1968[1937]) took to indicate a revolution in the theory of social action, were particularly useful to both Pareto and Michels because

[25] The concept of 'motif' is used here as a secularized version of the term that Peter Berger (1954) adopted from the 'Lund School' of Swedish theology. Berger's definition of 'religious motif' – "a specific pattern or gestalt of religious experience that can be traced in a historical development" (1954: 478) – is flexible enough, according to Smith (1978), to be a useful conceptual device that would have the status "of mental constructs, descriptions of constructed configurations designed to be of heuristic value, rather than accounts of historical reality as such" (1978: 212). The design of the theoretical motifs described here therefore draw out specific patterns that refer to the types of political problems that social scientists of the time attempted to address. Like the religious motif, the theoretical motif is an answer to a fundamental question that organizes the action of a social group.

[26] The term "convention" in this sense, refers to a type of reason that is based on a recognizable formula, follows rules of appropriateness and marks the boundaries between insiders and outsiders (Tilly 2006: 34, 40). In my interviews and discussions with professionals working in the field of democracy assistance (detailed in Chapter 5), one obvious convention was that socialism or the social redistribution of economic resources was considered to be outside of the scope of democracy. The motifs outlined in this chapter were important sources for the development of this convention.

they broadly aligned their ‘scientific’ arguments against calls for democracy built on ‘outdated’ theories of social action.

These three common motifs of theory and fact production exemplify the core of a tradition built on ‘social facts of democracy.’ However, in addition to tracing the generation of facts and theories in the texts themselves, the following will also include at least some intellectual history in order to provide a critical hermeneutics for the texts that present these critiques of democracy. This discussion is therefore partly an intellectual history and partly a theoretical analysis, presented with the recognition that author, text, and intellectual tradition are all, to some degree, co-constituted.

The Theory of Elites (Mosca)

Where Le Bon focused primarily on crowds, Mosca was centrally concerned with developing a political science to explain the relationship between rulers and ruled. In basic terms, Mosca’s famous ‘theory of the ruling class’ suggests that there has always, in every society, been a class of people who rule and a class of people who are ruled. This distinction is a product of some “real or apparent” attribute that makes members of the ruling minority “more esteemed and influential” in their own societies (Mosca 1939: 53)[27]. In addition to this fundamental relationship of esteem, he also asserted that organized minorities would always have more power than disorganized masses of

[27] Although Mosca’s *Elementi di Scienza Politica* was first published in 1896, he released an expanded edition in 1923 that included a longer discussion of democracy and representative systems. This revised edition, which was published in English in 1939 as *The Ruling Class*, was notable because Mosca essentially softened his critique of democracy as a whole and suggested that a representative system might be a good alternative to ‘social democracy’ as a model for balancing political forces. Hughes (1958) suggests that this ‘clarification’ was partially due to the spectre of Italian fascism, which offended Mosca’s liberal sensibilities.

individuals.[28] As soon as members of a majority organize themselves around a particular idea or purpose, they cease to be part of the majority and become a minority group qualified to compete for leadership. Moreover, although there are many possible ways for a minority group to garner influence vis-à-vis the majority, the important point for Mosca is that this type of relationship universally defines societies. If social change occurs, it is the product of a change in how a group becomes influential and constitutes itself as a ruling minority (1939: 53-54).

In the opening chapters of the *Elementi di Scienza Politica*, Mosca suggests that in order to gain legitimacy, rulers had to apply some sort of political formulation – an ideology, myth or 'superstition' – that justified the ruler-ruled relationship on grounds other than naked material or intellectual force (1939: 71). Such a formulation, for him, must necessarily be based on the moral principles that unify a social group, and it is according to the variation of these justifying moral principles in a *social system* that a typology (or science) of political forms can be constructed (Meisel, 1965: 169).

In political formulations, the moral principles that supported the ruler-ruled relationship were, for Mosca, best understood as social forces that curbed the 'naturally' selfish impulses common to all people, including rulers.[29] To him, the democratic call for unmediated popular sovereignty therefore represented a serious threat to the existing social order. If this Rousseauian ideal of popular sovereignty were to express itself in full, the unleashed impulses of the masses and their leaders could undermine the important

[28] This is a bit of a departure from Le Bon's concern with crowd psychology, but the role of reason in this formulation operates in a similar way. Mosca, however, was less interested in the irrationality of the disaggregated masses, and more in the organization of ruling minorities.
[29] In a 1939 review of the English edition of Mosca's text for *The Nation*, Sidney Hook points out that Mosca's "dire prophecies" (Hook 1965[1939]: 137) flow from this pessimistic assessment of human nature. That Mosca's 'laws' of political power are at their roots determined by non-rational social impulses is one of the factors that links Mosca's thesis to the general theories of society and social organization offered by Pareto and Michels.

moderating forces that formalized moral restraint (1939: 126).[30] According to Mosca's theoretical framework, societies differentiated themselves based on the force of their moderating institutions rather than the content of their ideals. The balancing function of moral social forces presented itself either in complex institutions that relied on more 'civilized' forms of restraint, or in simple institutions that relied more on repressive forms. 'Civilized' institutions such as modern juridical institutions were thus desirable because they were a sophisticated method for controlling the 'wicked instincts' of the population *and* its leaders (Mosca, 1939: 127). The distinction between complex and simple institutions of moral restraint grounded Mosca's assertion that:

> [t]he absolute preponderance of a single political force, the predominance of any over-simplified concept in the organization of the state, the strictly logical application of any single principle in all public law are the essential elements in any type of despotism, whether it be a despotism based upon divine right or a despotism based ostensibly on popular sovereignty (1939: 134).

Mosca's critique of social democracy or 'collectivism' could thus be understood in terms of its tendency toward 'over-simplification,' and at the root of this tendency was, for him, Rousseau's argument that the accumulation of wealth was the first and most important inequality (1939: 273). In particular, he found that Rousseau's conclusion – that modern social institutions built on this fundamental inequality corrupted the 'natural' morality of humanity – was central to the rise and continued success of social democracy in the nineteenth century. What was unique about social democracy as political formulation during this period was its effective use of the everyday experience of class inequality to transform the ideal of popular sovereignty into a divine or sacred 'truth.' This truth then classified all other political formulations as systems operating in the

[30] Mosca refers to the social mechanisms that regulate and discipline human instincts as the "juridical defence," which is defined as a "respect for law [and] government by law" (1939: 126).

interests of the bourgeoisie. For Mosca, social democracy therefore became a doctrine that aimed at a single, simplified principle of 'absolute justice' (1939: 287).

As a response to the danger posed by this 'over-simplified,' singular, and meta-physical principle of justice, given expression through the demand for democratic equality, Mosca offered a social science of politics that was built on his recurring nomothetic proclamation of the universality of the ruling class:

> Political power never has been, and never will be, founded upon the explicit consent of majorities. It always has been, and it always will be, exercised by organized minorities, which have had, and will have, the means, varying as the times vary, to impose their supremacy on the multitudes (1939: 326).

In many ways, Mosca's concern with political power places him in the more narrowly political tradition of Machiavelli, but it is his attention to the role of social forces in the development of his theoretical system that makes his work a foundation of the 'social facts' tradition in the study of democracy. [31] His 'ruling class' thesis enjoyed a long run of popularity, especially in American social science until at least the early 1970s (Nye 1977). Although the various formulations of 'elite theory' often left aside Mosca's critique of social democracy, it is the combination of this critique, which grew out of a broader distrust of the masses, with the proposal of a 'scientific' theory of society that forged his foundational assumption into a 'fact' of democracy. Like Le Bon, Mosca saw the unthinking, disorganized masses as a threat to the social order, but unlike Le Bon he turned to historical empiricism to build a typology of political formulations in order to better understand this threat. Consequently the 'social facts' associated with Mosca's

[31] Such a position appears, on the surface, to be inconsistent with the positions of the democracy assistance organizations covered by this study. At the same time, the emphasis such organizations often place on working with 'elites' suggests an implicit bias towards democratic change "from above." The idea of elite driven democratization was also a key tenet of postwar theories of modernization (e.g. Rostow 1960).

contribution to the motif of elite theory challenged the role of popular sovereignty in social democracy as both impossible and undesirable.

The second and third motifs of the 'social facts' tradition, *anti-positivism* and *anti-idealism*, focus even more specifically on the role of social action in the relationship between rulers and the masses. They also reflect a response to two nineteenth century intellectual currents that Parsons identified in *The Structure of Social Action* (1968 [1937]). According to Parsons, the 'positivistic' theory of social action[32] and the 'idealistic' theory of social action[33] refer to the foundational elements that characterize a social act.[34] Although Parsons saw positivism as a much more dominant current, with utilitarianism being its leading exemplar, the rationalism of positivistic theory was paired with idealism in a way that placed both in contrast to innovations in social theory which emphasized the non-rational and conditional (or structural) factors that make social action

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[32] Positivistic theory refers to a particular 19th century approach to social action and should not be confused with 'methodological positivism' or 'epistemological positivism.' These latter forms of positivism, which characterize both Pareto's and Parsons' sociology, claim that social meaning can be systematically identified and verified as true through inductive methods of empirical observation (see Albert 2004). The positivistic theory of action, which both Parsons and Pareto reject, refers to the rationality of the social actor herself. In this theory a unit act can be understood to be determined by either (1) the scientific reasoning of the actor – i.e. knowledge of verifiable facts plus logical deductions from these facts in any or each of the constituent elements; (2) scientific error – knowledge based on 'erroneous' statements purporting to be fact, logical fallacies, or ignorance in any or each of the constituent elements; or (3) random factors in any or each of the constituent elements (79). In other words, the 'positivistic' theory of action is concerned with the quality of the subjective reasoning of the actor and is based, according to Parsons on "the view that positive science constitutes man's sole possible significant cognitive relation to external (nonego) reality" (Parsons, 1968: 61). *Anti-positivism,* therefore rejects this reason-error dichotomy by identifying non-rational elements as important factors in understanding the meaning of social action.

[33] In the 'idealistic' theory of social action, on the other hand, the role of conditional aspects – the possible knowledge or structural resources available to the actor – of the elements in an action disappear altogether and a given action is thought to be an "emanation" or "self-expression" of ideal or normative factors. In this case the normative, or 'end-oriented,' factors in any or each of the three elements of a unit act are of primary importance, while the use of scientific reason is relatively unimportant. *Anti-idealism* therefore rejects the analysis of social action exclusively in terms of normative factors and the symbolic expression of normative factors

[34] As part of his discussion, Parsons implies that 'positivistic' and 'idealistic' currents can generally be thought to come from the intellectual contexts of England and Germany respectively, the former being best expressed by the English utilitarians and the latter expressed by German philosophers of metaphysics such as Hegel.

meaningful. The study of social action according to the possible configurations of elements that made an abstracted 'unit act' meaningful was, for Parsons, key to the contemporary developments in the systematic study of society. Especially in Pareto's sociological theory, but also in Michels work, social action was understood to be dominated by the non-rational, affective, or impulsive elements of that act. Therefore, to these critics any argument for social democracy that relied on reasoned decision making (positivistic theory) or the power of its highest ideals (idealistic theory) relied on an inferior theory of social action.[35] When combined and applied to problem of politics, the motifs of *anti-positivism* and *anti-idealism* constitute a framework that defines political questions in terms of the non-rational and structural elements of social action. Such a framework led both Pareto and Michels to particularly dire conclusions about the prospects for social democracy.

Anti-Positivism (Pareto)

Vilfredo Pareto's critique of democracy incorporates elements of the 'theory of elites' motif, but unlike Mosca's formulation, Pareto's famous conclusion about the "circulation of elites" is not central to his larger theoretical approach. Moreover, any contemporary discussion of Pareto's views on democracy must necessarily work through two related and difficult issues, the first being the complexity of his 'scientific' project as a whole and the second the contemporary filter(s) that colour how his work is read (or, more often, not read). Regarding the latter, three particular characterizations of Pareto stand out: Pareto the economist, Pareto the fascist, and Pareto the mildly interesting relic.

[35] These approaches still resonate in the context of contemporary democracy assistance, which is often directed toward a sort of 'moral education' that encourages local stakeholders in developing countries to get a "feel" for democratic principles (see Chapter 5).

The overwhelming majority of contemporary citations of Pareto's work focus on his early application of a concept of dynamic equilibrium to the field of economics. Published in 1896 his *Cours d'économie politique*[36] attempted to make sense of historical data on wealth distribution using mathematical equations to demonstrate that an unequal distribution of wealth was a constant feature of economic systems. Today these equations refer to concepts such as 'Pareto efficiency' or 'Pareto optimality', which, in their highly technical uses, seem to have little to do with democracy except in specific policy application. However, the proposition that wealth inequality was a universal feature of economic systems – intentionally presented as a 'scientific' counter to Marx's critique of political economy – led Pareto to focus on some of the political problems of socialist economics in his later book *Les systèmes socialistes* (1902). As such, the concept of dynamic equilibrium recurred in his later sociological work as well as in his conclusions about political systems. While the political implications of Pareto's work serve as a link between his economic and sociological ideas, they have also led to a more damning characterization.

The combination of Pareto's critique of democracy and his appointment to the Italian Senate by Mussolini less than a year before his death raised enough of a question about the proto-fascist politics inherent to his work that numerous scholars have been careful to debunk his connection to fascism (Hughes 1958; Lopreato 1973; Levy 1973; Sica 1988; Femia 2006).[37] While Italian fascists, as well as left political movements such as syndicalism echoed his pessimism about parliamentary democracy, Pareto's

[36] A summary of the work can be found in Pareto (1897).
[37] For example, Hughes (1958: 271) suggests that Pareto never actually took his seat, and that he demonstrated his ambivalence toward Mussolini's politics in his last written work, which offered pleas for the preservation of essentially liberal values in education and the press.

'scientific' method of historical empiricism explicitly resisted any type of political advocacy. In fact, the emphasis he placed on developing a rigorously 'scientific' method for the study of society is probably an even larger barrier to the casual reader. This is especially the case in his massive *Trattato di sociologia generale* (1916) – published in English as *Mind and Society: A Treatise on the General Principles of Sociology* (1935)[38] – which proposes terms and concepts that, because of their contemporary obscurity, appear as historical relics rather than useful social scientific tools. Indeed, Pareto does not do his readers any favours by making his arguments using such complex terms, but his near obsession with the application of 'scientific' values and techniques was an important example of a broader intellectual atmosphere that questioned the scientific validity of evolutionary theories of human progress through reason, or what Parsons called "positivistic theories." To understand Pareto's anti-positivist critique of democracy, it is therefore necessary to outline some of the key elements of his theoretical system.

Pareto's purpose in the *Trattato* was to understand how non-rational, or what he called the "non-logical," elements of society determine much of what was previously assumed to be the 'logical' bases of social action. Pareto used the terms 'logical behaviour' and 'non-logical behaviour' to describe actions in which the subjective end of an act is the same as the objective end (logical behaviour), or actions in which the subjective end is different from the objective end (non-logical behaviour). In a non-logical behaviour, the reasoning of the actor may not be faulty (illogical) but at least one element of the means-end relationship is not objectively observable (Finer in Pareto 1966: 34; Pareto 1963: §151: 78). Political action based on ideals such as equality, and

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[38] This work appeared rather late in Pareto's long career. His earlier works in economics and political economy brought him a certain amount of recognition from his contemporaries, but the *Trattato* was relatively misunderstood and received a generally cool reception (Powers in Pareto: 1984).

directed towards ends such as a socialist utopia, was non-logical because the end was unobservable. For Pareto the influence of such ideals on a society was not a product of the rational content of the ideals themselves but the foundational impulses, sentiments, and instincts that draw people to such ideals. It is because he considered these foundational impulses and sentiments to be the most important elements of the 'social equilibrium' – what Parsons narrowly took to mean the social system (Levy, 1973) – that his work is taken to represent the motif of *anti-positivism*.

Pareto's methodological approach started with the observation of social action through historical examples and worked inductively towards the classification of logical and non-logical behaviour. After elaborating the principles of this classificatory taxonomy in Volume I of the *Trattato*, Pareto deductively identified the non-logical elements of the social equilibrium that remain constant over time. The two elements Pareto considered most important were residues and derivations. The system of classification that he developed for these two concepts is highly complex, but for the purposes of the present argument, it is more useful to consider briefly how these two elements contributed to a 'scientific' critique of democracy.

To understand the role non-logical elements in Pareto's theory of society, one must return to the concept of equilibrium that appeared in his earlier work on economic systems. As Femia (2006) points out, Pareto's background as a mechanical engineer "encouraged him to see society as a system in equilibrium involving the simultaneous variations of mutually dependent variables" (2006: 49). Such a definition of equilibrium is dynamic rather than static because the mutually dependent variables are constantly changing over time. In Pareto's system, non-logical social sentiments are akin to the

concept of “force” in mechanics (Lopreato, 1973: 458), and the opposition of these underlying forces act, in society, as the primary dependent variables that continuously push (or pull) toward equilibrium. Although individual behaviour is subject to a person’s psychic state and is difficult to generalize to society, underlying sentiments can be observed in the forms of collective behaviour that express or manifest these social forces. These observable collective manifestations of sentiments are what Pareto calls residues, and these residues make up the important elements “that stand in a relation of reciprocal determination with the social equilibrium” (Pareto 1963: §1690: 1126).

Producing an explanation that approximates Pareto’s meaning for ‘residue’ is famously difficult, not least because his use of the term was somewhat inconsistent (Femia, 2006: 58). One might think of residues as ‘regular observable patterns of social behaviour’ that have the abstracted quality of Weber’s ideal types, are generated through a method of everyday observation similar to Simmel’s social types, and reflect a Durkheimian reality *sui generis* (Parsons 1965: 83) structured by underlying social forces. In a given society, groups of people may try to make sense of residues, or patterns of behaviour, by constructing theories, traditions, ideals, or justifications that explain their meaning. These constructs, which are also non-logical, are what Pareto calls “derivations.” An analogy for the two concepts could go as follows: residues are to derivations as universal taboos around killing are to specific laws against murder.

With regard to political systems, Pareto concludes that historical fluctuations in types of government (authoritarian or democratic) are structured by underlying sentiments (residues), that generally tend toward equilibrium. Based on his analysis of a nearly endless stream of historical examples, he concludes that opposing residues are

always in a state of ebb and flow, creating a cyclical model of political change that has been constant throughout history.[39] Political change in this framework has less to do with the content of a ruling group's ideals and more to do with the ability of elite groups of leaders to react to changes in prevailing non-logical social sentiment (residues).

Most importantly for the present argument about Pareto's contribution to theories that narrowed the definition of democracy in postwar social science, was the conservative proposition that social or political sentiments always tended toward equilibrium. This theory was attractive to postwar social scientists who, as I discuss in the next chapter, viewed American democracy as an ideal model because it not only accommodated a range of irrational political ideologies, but actually functioned well because these ideologies balanced each other out (see Berelson et al. 1954). While Pareto's theory of political equilibrium rejected positivist approaches that assumed the possibility of reason-based political progress, he pointed out that skilled leaders could be successful in politics by being aware of and managing popular sentiments. This ideal is foundational to contemporary democracy assistance, which relies on building the capacity of democratic institutions to achieve just this sort of managed democratic balance. This motif is also found in the work of Michels, but as will become clear, his case study of German social democracy was much more concerned with the gap between democracy's ideals and the 'facts' of political parties, rather than a general theory of social and political change.

[39] For Pareto, this had obvious implications for the 'problems of democracy' that plagued European countries in the pre-war period. Few of his contemporaries, however, followed through on the logical conclusions of his formula, and Pareto was thus compelled to write a series of essays that were published as an addendum to his Treatise. *The Transformation of Democracy* (1984) is thus an attempt to clarify his position on contemporary political issues. Here he warns against focusing on "superficial forces" that take the form of political programs because they will always fail if they do not acknowledge "underlying dynamics" (1984: 73).

Anti-Idealism (Michels)

In Burnham's (1943) study of the Machiavellians, his chapter on Michels opens with the following statement:

> When someone writes a book on democracy, we are accustomed to share with him the assumption, as a rule not even mentioned, that democracy is both desirable and possible. The book will sing the praises of democracy. Its ostensible problem will often be "how to make democracy work"—because even the most ardent democrats, when they get down to the concrete, discover that it has not been and is not working quite as well as democratic theory would lead us to expect. A similar approach is made to such goals as peace, employment, justice, and so on. It is assumed that these are desirable and possible. A writer then devotes his energy to stating his personal scheme for securing them, and thus saving mankind from the ills that somehow in the past have always beset it (1943: 97).

Michels' book on democracy, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (1962[1915]), does not fall into such 'idealism,' says Burnham. Rather, it favours the study of 'real existing' political forms over abstract political principles. As Burnham rightly suggests, Michels' *Political Parties* aimed to criticize idealist theories of democracy by examining the 'practical realities' of a case that demonstrated the limitations of both the theory and the practice of democracy: the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). The choice of this case was a direct product of central place that SPD politics played in Michels' life during the first decade of the 20th century, and it reflected many of the frustrations that he had about socialist politics. At the same time, the book (first published in 1911) marked the end of a transition in his life away from political activism towards more scholarly work. This turn towards 'scientific' analysis started with two significant changes in Michels' academic career. The first was his invitation to contribute to the journal *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpoliti* starting in 1906, which eventually led to a regular correspondence with Max Weber

(Scaff 1981), and the second was his appointment in 1907 to a teaching post in Turin, which brought him in to contact with Mosca.[40]

There are a number of consistent themes that bridge Michels' early radical work with his later conservative or fascist ideas (Michels, 1949; Beetham, 1977a, 1977b), and there are some important works by Michels that are underappreciated (for example, Michels' work on patriotism; Kelly, 2003), but the overwhelming majority of contemporary treatments of Michels focus on *Political Parties*. This focus is somewhat justified considering that the popularity and influence of *Political Parties*, and his "iron law of oligarchy," was almost immediate (Linz, 2006: 26) and Michels' subsequent work was often influential only to the degree that it built on the core themes presented in this text (2006: 63). However, within the text itself, there is an uneasy mixture of themes and as a consequence, Michels has been read as either a critic of bureaucracy, along with Weber, or an 'elite theorist' similar to Le Bon, Mosca and Pareto (Scaff 1981: 1280-1).[41] The following focuses primarily on the latter reading because of its influence on postwar theories of democracy.

In the opening chapters of *Political Parties*, Michels deals first with the 'intellectual' definitions of democracy and aristocracy, followed by a discussion of 'direct' democracy, or the rule by the masses. For this discussion Michels invokes the two motifs discussed above. On the one hand, for him, rule by the masses without designated representatives is impossible because the complex tasks of government

[40] In 1907, after being denied habilitation at the University of Marburg on the grounds of his participation in socialist politics, Michels moved to an Italian intellectual milieu that was quite hostile to Marxism. His adoption of elite theory, however, could be read as more of a 'scientific self-critique' that followed through with his earlier experiences of disappointment with German social democracy, rather than a clean break with it (Beetham 1977a).

[41] As Lawrence Scaff suggests, Weber himself disapproved of the mass psychology element of Michels' work and saw it as a misunderstanding of the concept of political domination (1981: 1281).

require delegating responsibility to leaders. On the other hand, such an ideal is impractical because crowds and masses always act irrationally.[42] These ‘facts’ are then codified by Michels in the form of a “sociological law” that is both universal and objective: “the law that is an essential characteristic of all human aggregates to constitute cliques and sub-classes is, like every other sociological law, beyond good and evil” (1962: 6). From this starting proposition, Michels sets out to analyze the role of leaders and masses in social organizations.

In Michels’ view, the relationship between groups or organizations and their leaders is often mutually beneficial. One advantage is that the existence of a leader allows members of the organization or group to be interested in other things, namely their everyday lives. A particular worker or party member can therefore support representative democracy because delegation to an elected official allows for the separation of politics from one’s day-to-day life. For Michels, this delegation of responsibility is not a rational choice, but following Pareto, is a non-rational impulse – produced by any number of sentiments – which can later take on a rational character in its justification. As Michels suggests: “not only do the masses need leaders but they want and love [them]” (1962: 93). The customary ‘rights’ given to offices held by representatives and the array of ‘skills’ that become synonymous with leadership, are thus ancillary to the initial non-rational support for a given leader. For Michels, an important part of this relationship is that leaders themselves tend to have qualities, such as the ‘prestige of celebrity’ or a

[42] Like Le Bon’s use of the French term ‘foule’ (crowd), Michels use of the German ‘masse’ evolves from a description of the psychological characteristics of a specific, physically existing group of people (a crowd or organization) to a more general term to describe “the lower orders in general” (Beetham 1977b: 175).

strong force of will that helps to produce the non-rational veneration and honour awarded by the masses (1962: 100).[43]

It is partially on this point that Michels generates an explicit critique of democracy as an *idealist* political system. When leaders acquire specialized knowledge and are subsequently seen to be better able to express the will of the people, then democracy ceases to be a means for the expression of 'the people's' interests. Especially common in socialist formulations of democracy, Michels points out that such an arrangement could more accurately be described as "democracy *for* the people, and not democracy *by* the people" (1962: 113). At this stage, the shift from autocratic tendencies to outright oligarchy is not far off. The problem with idealism in this situation is that once a democratic leadership has access to all claims of democratic legitimacy, it can suppress the interests of the people for 'democratic' purposes. An important historical analogy for Michels is the 'democratic' plebiscite of Napoleon III. 'Bonapartist ideology' is, for him, the most dangerous product of democratic idealism because it essentially gives tyranny a democratic cover.

> In democratic crowds, Bonapartism finds an eminently favourable soil, for it gives the masses the illusion of being master of their masters; moreover, by introducing the practice of delegation it gives this illusion a legal color which is pleasing to those who are struggling for their "rights" (1962: 215).

A critique of "illusion" or idealism is therefore the basis of Michels' general critique of democracy, as well as his specific pessimistic assessment of the prospects for socialist democracy.

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[43] The influence of Weber's concept of charisma is clear in this case. Although unlike Weber's theory of bureaucratic rationalization, Michels seems to suggest that charismatic leaders *produce* the rules and privileges of office as after-the-fact rationalizations to obscure the non-rational veneration of the masses.

This pessimism – or what Burnham (1943) identified as ‘realism’ – was then applied to a structural analysis of SPD leadership, the section of the text in which Weber’s influence is most apparent. One example of the idealism that such an analysis countered was the claim, prevalent at the time, that German socialism had been overtaken by bourgeois party members and thereby led astray. Against the rhetoric of German social democracy at the time, Michels pointed out that party functionaries recruited from the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie, were themselves a strong conservative force within the party. To demonstrate this assertion, Michels produced an inventory of SPD members in the Parliament from 1903-06 according to their class origin and profession (1962: 257). Based on his figures, the percentage of intellectuals and members of the bourgeoisie who were leaders in the Party was relatively small. Michels also suggested that members from these “elite” groups were more likely to hold radical or doctrinaire views, while members of the working classes who were elevated socially through promotion within the party were much more likely to abandon working-class values (1962: 263). This analysis, to him, confirmed the unfortunate fact that the high ideals of social democracy could not bridge the gap between the interests of the masses and the interests of leaders. Instead, such a gap was the ‘real’ product of the organizational relationships, typified by a process of “embourgeoisement” of proletarian party leaders, which characterized the German Social Democratic Party as an anti-democratic organization (1962: 263-264).

The motif of anti-idealism is less apparent in his Weberian or social scientific discussion of social processes such as embourgeoisement,[44] but it comes through clearly

[44] According to Scaff (1981), Weber actually introduced the term 'embourgeoisement' in his correspondence with Michels.

in the way that Michels positions his empirical case study. The figures he reproduces regarding the “origin” and “profession” of socialist parliamentarians represent a reality that he saw as obscured by party ideology. At the root of the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ is the simple observation that the masses are always susceptible to leaders who may suppress the interests of ‘the people’ while using high-minded *ideals* to suggest that they are, in fact, protecting these same interests. Although he laments the tragic nature of democratic movements – “[t]he democratic currents of history resemble successive waves. They break ever on the same shoal. They are ever renewed. This enduring spectacle is simultaneously encouraging and depressing” (1962: 371) – what makes Michels’ analysis of democracy an important foundation for contemporary efforts to assist democratic movements is that his analysis of the ‘real’ relationships that define social organizations excluded the possibility of a socialist, workers’ or any type of grassroots party producing anything other than oligarchy. This vision of how democracy “really” works fits nicely within the atmosphere of anti-communism in which democracy assistance organizations first emerged in the United States.

In this way, Michels builds on the elite theory of Mosca, and on the political application of Pareto’s anti-positivist theory of social action. Although Pareto was the only one of the three that built a comprehensive theoretical system to understand social action in general, the work of each represented a general trend in social theory that rejected positivistic and idealistic formulations of action. Each also attempted a sober and scientific response to the populist energy and the perceived threat of social democrats. In a review of Michels’ *Political Parties*, Mosca characterised this response as an emerging “scientific school:”

> In Italy[…]a scientific school has consolidated itself that does not fight democracy with the usual argument in favour of aristocracy or monarchy, but purely and simply denies the possibility of a true and sincere democratic government. This is a school which, if I may be allowed a neologism, is not anti-democratic but a-democratic[...] (cited in Linz 2006: 22).

The combination and recurrence of anti-positivism, anti-idealism and the theory of elites as theoretical motifs represent a critique of democracy that aimed at separating the 'reality' of social relations from the realm of 'ideal' ends. As Mosca's label "a-democratic" implied, the analysis of any system of politics, including democracy, should not attach moral or ethical content to the system itself. To identify one system as more moral or better able to deal with a specific set of ethical concerns is to obscure the actual functioning of political systems. This premise, which would eventually be called "analytical elitism" (Lenski, 1980; Bennett, 1978), appeared neutral on political 'ought' questions, but it was founded on 'facts' that were a sedimentary mixture of fear-based mass psychology and selective historical experience. The normative bases of these 'facts' are easier to identify now but the events of the Second World War only further entrenched, or black boxed, these 'social facts' in the social scientific study of democracy.

Democracy as a Method of Control

Reading the scientific studies of democracy outlined above leaves little ambiguity as to whether these critics found the rise of social democracy to be a serious contemporary problem. As a response to this problem, the three motifs identified above represented a set of fundamental propositions that could ground a 'realistic' theory of democracy. These propositions asserted that: (1) political systems remain stable or are subject to change primarily on the basis of 'non-rational' factors; (2) these non-rational

factors should be studied as 'real existing' social relations and not as idealized notions of how social relations 'ought' to be; (3) in all political systems, real existing social relations are defined by the constitution of an elite ruling class that will always tend to consolidate its power in the absence of effective checks on that power.

These three foundational propositions alone do not make a coherent theory of democracy, but they do form an important conceptual groundwork for postwar approaches that appealed to 'scientific' methodologies in study democracy. However, since social scientists in this period had experienced the violence of authoritarian political movements, many were less apt to adopt, wholesale, theories that were largely anti-democratic. To make the transition from theoretical motifs to established scientific 'facts,' the foundational propositions above had to be extracted from critiques of democracy and applied to theories that posited democracy as a desirable, or least bad, political system. The economist Joseph A. Schumpeter offered one prominent example of a theory that accepted these basic propositions but avoided the normative dissonance of anti-democratic conclusions.

Democracy Reinvented or Democracy Without the 'Social'

The importance of Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (2008[1942]) is widely recognized, but the particular innovations attributed to this work vary along disciplinary lines. As a political economist, Schumpeter was concerned with the economic mechanisms and institutions of capitalism that drove economic change. From this perspective, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* was an attempt to understand the rapid economic and social changes that followed the First World War in a way that built on his just completed historical-theoretical treatise, *Business Cycles*

(Swedberg, 1991; Shionoya, 1997). Like the 'elite theorists,' Schumpeter primarily worked as a historical empiricist[45] and produced conclusions by inductively tracing trends of observed historical dynamics. Thus, also like the 'elite theorists,' Schumpeter's methodological approach produced 'facts' by identifying historical processes that were so regular that their naturalism was irrefutable. The elucidation of such facts unites Schumpeter's entire oeuvre.

At the same time, one section of *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* – on "Socialism and Democracy" (Part IV, 2008) – bears special consideration because it offered a definition of democracy that remains one of the most widely accepted definitions of the term in U.S. social science (Lipset, 1960; Diamond & Plattner, 1993; Schmitter & Karl, 1996; Medearis, 2001). For the most part, Schumpeter's political philosophy, which he outlines in this section, is treated as separate from the other sections of *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*,[46] or even his other major works.[47] Although his definition of democracy proved to be influential, understanding this definition in the context of his broader methodological and theoretical approach to social life brings his conclusions much closer to the work of the 'elite theorists' discussed above. Schumpeter accepted many of the foundational assumptions of the 'elite theorists,' but his argument in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* went a step further in reformulating, or

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[45] Yuichi Shionoya (2005) places Schumpeter and Weber in the youngest generation of the German Historical School.

[46] In a preface to the 3rd edition of *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1950), Schumpeter admits that each of the sections of the book have some overarching unity, but also function as "self-contained pieces of analysis" (cited in Swedberg, 1991: 152).

[47] A good demonstration of how Schumpeter's definition of democracy became influential independently from his other work is an edited volume prepared by the *Journal of Democracy* entitled *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy Revisited* (Diamond & Plattner, 1993). In the introduction, the editors describe Schumpeter's classic text as a "study of the relationship between political democracy and alternative economic systems" (1993: ix), a description that clearly privileges a concept – "political democracy" – that was ancillary to Schumpeter's larger project, but that has became very important to subsequent studies of democracy.

reinventing, a critical analysis of democratic 'ideals' as a positive theory of formal democracy.[48]

Schumpeter (2008) begins his discussion of democracy by outlining the contemporary relevance of the classical theory of democracy. The theory, for him, invokes an "arrangement" that realizes the "common good" and reflects the will of the people (2008: 250). This theory resonates for many as an ideal, but difficulties appear for Schumpeter once he begins to examine the 'real existing' circumstances of politics. For example, he questions whether there is such a thing as the 'common good,' and whether this common good is necessarily a product of a "common will." The classical doctrine of democracy, according to Schumpeter, attempts to assert the existence of these questionable ideals in two variations – the Rousseauian and the utilitarian – of the doctrine (2008: 250). In addition to claiming that both variations of the classical doctrine produce an idealist theory, Schumpeter goes on to argue that this theory also assumes an unrealistic distribution of reasoning among participating citizens. This principle of equality with regard to rationality in political matters is crucial to the ideal of a government *by* the people that is able to produce satisfactory political results *for* the people (2008[1942]: 256). According to his appraisal of the voting public's behaviour in most existing democracies, such a theory is clearly inaccurate.

By identifying the classical doctrine's idealist 'ends' as well as its requirements for rationalist or 'positivistic' action on the part of common citizens, Schumpeter calls for a theory of democracy that recognizes that 'the people' are often "fooled, step by step

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[48] To be sure, advocates of liberal or 'bourgeois' democracy had always favoured a capitalist economy, but I refer to the arguments of Schumpeter as a "reinvention" of democracy because he explicitly framed his argument as a 'new' approach that improved upon the classical definition of democracy. With the rise of suffrage campaigns and the expansion of workers' parties, democratic movements in Europe as well as the United States were to varying degrees anti-capitalist, a trend that Schumpeter aimed to analyze critically.

into something they do not really want" (2008: 264). To build such a theory, he reflects on the social psychology of human behaviour in politics and it is on this point that he explicitly linked his argument to both the popularity of Pareto's *Mind and Society* in the social sciences[49] and the "uncomfortable truths" behind Le Bon's otherwise overstated study of crowds (2008: 256-7). Echoing Le Bon's remarks, he argues that political action is not only defined by non-rational impulses but, even in the most advanced democracies, "the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field" (2008: 262). For Schumpeter, then, the inability of citizens to act rationally with respect to political issues undermines the possibility of achieving a "common good" through politics. While the classical doctrine had managed to persist based on the attractiveness of its ideals to the masses, the gulf between this doctrine and the 'facts' that determine the actual practice of democracy required an alternative theory.

The alternative theory of democracy proposed by Schumpeter begins with the assertion that the factual limitations of the classical doctrine were already widely accepted at the time (2008: 269). In this way, he frames the 'problem' of democracy as a technical incoherence between theory and reality, and his solution is thus a simple technical alteration to the theory. Schumpeter concludes that the fundamental role of the people in a democracy is not to express a collective will, but to produce a government through free and fair elections (2008: 269). In this definition, democracy is a methodological or procedural question rather than the achievement of a fictional 'common good.' Such a simplified and 'realistic' theory had, for him, a number of

[49] Schumpeter himself was loosely associated with the 'Harvard Pareto Circle,' a group of Harvard scholars and students, including Parsons, who attended a series of seminars on Pareto organized by Prof. L.J. Henderson in the mid-1930s (Heyl 1968). Schumpeter comments on Pareto's work in economics and sociology in an essay published as part of his *Ten Great Economists: From Marx to Keynes* (1951).

explanatory advantages over the classical doctrine. These include an ‘efficient criterion’ for distinguishing democracies; a recognition of the difference between an ‘ideal’ will of the people and the functional will of a simple majority; and an emphasis on the relationship between democracy and individual freedom through the basic principle that any person is theoretically eligible for election (2008: 269-272).

Another advantage of a theory of democracy narrowed to the principle of competitive elections, however, is that it recognizes the “vital fact of leadership.” In a formulation similar to Mosca's theory of elites, Schumpeter states that “collectives act almost exclusively by accepting leadership—this is the dominant mechanism of practically any collective action which is more than a reflex” (2008: 270). There will always be leaders in society, so the simplest way to mitigate the tendency for leaders to consolidate their power is to give the people control over the mechanism that grants them power. This is accomplished through opening leadership positions to competition, and giving voters the right to remove a particular leader through their electoral power.

Schumpeter’s ‘alternative’ theory of democracy clearly invokes the earlier motifs of anti-positivism, anti-idealism and the theory of elites to first strip down the classical doctrine to its most basic formal elements and then to rebuild democracy as a method that can work in the ‘real world’ of politics. However, the propositions distilled from these motifs take on the weight of facts only in the context of the larger historical project in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (CSD)* and his other works. The larger project of *CSD* is essentially an evolutionary argument about the fate of existing capitalist economies (Shionoya 1997), but in keeping with his historical empiricism, Schumpeter also frames his analysis of democracy in evolutionary terms. To do this he compares the

past formulations of bourgeois democracy with the ‘likely’ future problems of a socialist democracy. By reinventing democracy as a method, Schumpeter also effectively bypassed any ‘ideal’ ends in his analysis of whether ‘democratic’ mechanisms were more or less compatible with socialism. Of course, for him such a judgement relied on the historical ‘evidence’ of democracy in previous economic (capitalist) systems. It was from this perspective that he identified a set of baseline conditions for the functioning of a democracy. In brief, these conditions were: (1) a sufficient number of high quality members of a political class; (2) a clear limit to the effective range of political decisions (3) a well trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition; and (4) a sufficient amount of what he calls ‘democratic self-control’ (2008: 290-294). Historically, these conditions first appeared with “Gladstonian” liberalism, or what he calls “individualist democracy” (2008: 126).

In the theoretical foundations of 18th century bourgeois democracy and 19th century social democracy, Schumpeter found a common acceptance of the rationalist principles outlined by the classical doctrine. However, the bourgeoisie of the late eighteenth century were the first to introduce democratic practices that met each of the above conditions to a sufficient degree, partially because their interests demanded a degree of separation between government and the sphere of economic affairs (2008: 297). Moreover, Schumpeter argues that this separation of government and the capitalist economy did not just open the door for democracy, it actually helped to encourage the flourishing of reason associated with the enlightenment. As he suggests:

> The capitalist process rationalizes behaviour and ideas and by so doing chases from our minds, along with metaphysical belief, mystic and romantic ideas of all sorts. Thus it reshapes not only our methods of attaining our ends but also these ultimate ends themselves (2008: 127).

According to this argument, the rationalist thought demanded by capitalist processes had the effect of encouraging the "free thinking" necessary for the development of democracy. At the same time, the claim that capitalism reshapes our ultimate ends is also consistent with the broader theory of social and economic change that unites *CSD* with his earlier works. In his second book on economic theory, *The Theory of Economic Development* (1934[1911]), Schumpeter proposed a theory of change in capitalist economies in which entrepreneurs were singled out as the innovative engines that drive progress.[50] According to this argument, factors that were external to the economic system, such as the development of bourgeois democracy, appear as by-products of social changes produced by mechanisms internal to the capitalist economy. Similarly, in his treatise on *Business Cycles* (1939), Schumpeter expands this argument to present a massive historical analysis of innovative 'boom' periods as well as corresponding and necessary crisis periods. Schumpeter's larger concern – in his application of his business cycle theory to the events of the interwar period, as well as his prediction in *CSD* that the existing capitalist system probably cannot survive (2008: 61) – is that crises such as the Depression of the 1930s might induce governments to interfere with the natural processes of capitalism. This interference could then restrict the entrepreneurial innovation that, history shows, would eventually pull the economy out of crisis. From this perspective, *CSD* is a somewhat pessimistic analysis of the possible future of a post-capitalist order brought about by the 'free thinking' that was itself a product of capitalism's successful innovations. In this way, Schumpeter shared a number of the same concerns as the earlier

[50] Swedberg (2002) points out that Schumpeter's discussion of entrepreneurs in the 1934 English version of the text differs slightly from the original 1911 version. In the original, entrepreneurial innovation is presented as a more creative or even spiritual activity, similar to Weber's understanding of the spirit of capitalism (Swedberg, 2002: 235).

elite theorists, but this pessimism also implicitly set the conceptual bounds of what constituted 'realistic' expectations for a democratic system. Socialism was merely an ideological by-product of capitalist processes, and democracy functioned best when it embraced these processes.

These concerns become even clearer when Schumpeter compares the moderate success of 18th century democracy to the possible future of a socialist democracy. Schumpeter assumed that a socialist society could be 'advanced' enough to maintain some of the conditions for democracy, such as a qualified political class and a solid bureaucracy, but his crucial question was whether such a society could possibly exercise 'democratic self-control' (2008: 298-299) once a government started down the path of centralized economic management.

Schumpeter's assertion that a socialist government would have difficulty meeting the necessary condition of 'democratic self-control' represented both an implicit rejection of socialism on grounds of 'historical experience' and a subtle assertion of the 'social facts' of democracy. For him, socialist societies required well intentioned and skilful bureaucrats to somehow manage the economy, the basis for social life, without restricting the population's democratic freedom to make any number of irrational demands – a tall order for any governing bureaucracy, no matter how skilful. While the "automatic restrictions imposed upon the political sphere" developed by the 18th century bourgeoisies acted as a buffer between economic life and the "inefficiencies of political procedure" (2008: 299), socialist democracy could easily get bogged down with the irrationalities of political participation.

Schumpeter's Moral Philosophy

Although Schumpeter drew conclusions from empirical studies of economic history, his opposition to the classical doctrine of democracy had a strong undertone of liberal moral philosophy and was apparent in the way he identified individual freedom with market capitalism. This 'negative freedom' (Berlin 1969) was actually much closer to the concept of freedom formulated by English utilitarianism than Schumpeter implied in his rejection of classical democracy's utilitarian foundation. Like the social democratic inheritors of Rousseau, however, the theorists of utilitarian democracy (Bentham and Mill) based their politics on a moral philosophy of social life. To propose his alternative theory of democracy, Schumpeter therefore had to separate this liberal moral philosophy of social life – outlined in his discussion of "the civilization of capitalism" (2008: 121-130) – from any set notion of the political. This essentially amounted to reversing the means and ends of the classical doctrine of democracy. In the classical doctrine, self-government by the people was an end made possible by the means of a collective will or the aggregation of individual wills. Freedom, collective or individual, was therefore the means to the end goal of self-government. Schumpeter's alternative theory of democracy stripped down each of the elements of the classical doctrine by labelling the 'collective will' as idealist, the utilitarian theory of aggregate individual action in politics as overly rationalist (positivistic), and the ideal of self-government as a historical impossibility. He then reversed the formula by asserting simple negative freedom as the only possible end and produced a theory of government that was most likely to ensure this end. What made this theory of democracy a reinvention, therefore, was that it altered the role of democracy from that of a tool for the peoples' self-expression and a driver of social change, to a conservative force that most appropriately resists social changes, other than

negative freedom. Schumpeter, in this sense, conceived democratization as a process of political stabilization aimed at controlling the irrational excesses of the masses.

Critics have pointed out that Schumpeter's portrait of the classical doctrine is essentially a straw-man (e.g. Pateman, 1970) and reduces a variety of classical 'models' (Held, 1987) to a single doctrine. However, as stated above, the doctrine of competitive leadership became a widely accepted definition of democracy and inspired a revival of the 'elite theory' in what Bachrach (1965) called "the theory of democratic elitism." Work that built on the popularity of Schumpeter's definition of democracy as method reiterated that democracy itself had "no overriding purpose to promote" and that it had the important function of letting elites "exercise their rightful power effectively" (Bachrach, 1965: 21)[51]. An important reason for this popularity was that it gave a pro-democracy veneer to a set of social scientific propositions developed in theoretical systems critical of Marxist or socialist politics. This hollowed-out or 'empty' definition of democracy – which proposed the formal separation of government from the public sphere – opened a number of research avenues in political science and sociology that could focus on the functioning of a democracy, ostensibly without having to indicate an explicit commitment to any one 'type' of democracy (capitalist or socialist).[52] This apparent neutrality differentiated Schumpeter's work from other similar arguments that more explicitly set democracy against socialism (see for example Hayek, 1944).

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[51] For examples of such arguments, see Mayo (1960), Sartori (1962) and Kornhauser (1959).

[52] Classical examples of research that implicitly assumed this separation were the various 'voter studies' that were developed during the first decades after the War. Two of the most prominent of these studies were Lazarsfeld et al. (1968[1948]), and Campbell et al. (1960).

Mechanisms of Control

Schumpeter's theory of democracy has been categorized as a technocratic or 'elite' theory of democracy (Bachrach, 1965, Held 1987, Medearis 2001), and indeed when it is compared with critiques of central planning (Hayek, 1944) or 'managerialism' (Burnham, 1941) written during the same period, his 'alternative' theory seems like a logical answer to the tyranny of unchecked government bureaucracy. However, when understood as part of a tradition concerned with looking past democratic ideals to uncover the 'social facts' observable in democratic societies, the focus on elites becomes secondary. This is primarily because Schumpeter's reinvented doctrine of democracy, like the conclusions of the earlier critics, first and foremost aimed at restraining the supposedly non-rational impulses of the masses.

A related concern for the 'elite theorists' mentioned above, as well as for Schumpeter, was to formulate an empirically – or 'scientifically' – grounded opposition to Marxian theories that made class a determinant of societal change (Bottomore, 1964: 18). In the Marxian system, the early critics rightly saw a politicization of the everyday experiences of the working classes. However, by constructing theoretical systems that produced 'facts' demonstrating the impossibility of social democracy, they were able to separate 'political' questions concerning configurations of elite leadership from 'social' question concerning the irrational masses. What Schumpeter's new doctrine added to the 'social facts' tradition was a technical solution that purports to strip away the idealism, or the 'ends,' of democracy once and for all by reducing it to a mechanism that actively ensures the separation of the social and the political. This separation – which is based on the threat (or promise) of the removal of a leader from office through elections – is

functional because ‘the people’ are protected from their leaders, and the leadership is insulated from the excessive and irrational desires of ‘the people.’ Moreover, with regard to his more general theory of economic change, the irrational desires of ‘the people’ clearly conflict with the rational processes of capitalism embodied by the figure of the entrepreneur.

Dismissing this doctrine as just another form of liberal idealism that symbolises capitalist forms of democracy advocated by Western governments would be an easy conclusion, but such a conclusion would miss the important effects that Schumpeter’s work had on processes that opened the political realm to social scientific analyses based on a nomothetic, rather than idiographic epistemology. By disregarding the classical ideals of democracy and replacing them with updated versions of the ‘laws’ discovered by the elite theorists, Schumpeter smoothed the road for a vision of democracy based primarily on market principles. In fact, he compared voter behaviour to the behaviour of consumers by pointing out that both citizens and consumers often fail to act according to their best interests (2008: 257). In politics, as well as in the market, individuals can themselves become “experts” about things that matter to their daily lives, but as a political issue or a product gets further from immediate experience, the responsibility for comprehensive understanding dissipates. The larger processes of the market or national affairs that do not have the same import to an individual’s daily life are thus very difficult for the average person to comprehend in a rational way. Schumpeter frames this disconnect as a lost “sense of reality” (2008: 261) that defines most political discourse on the important issues of the day. More than just separating the masses from particular political issues, their non-rational impulses therefore separate them from a larger reality

of political and economic systems. Such an assumption implied that there needed to be some mechanism that shielded the government from the irrational masses and, for him, this was the function of a minimal or procedural conception of democracy.

Conclusion

In the introduction to Walter Lippman's *Public Opinion* (1965[1922]), the author poses the problem of democracy as a gap between the reality of the "the world outside" with "the pictures in our heads." Because the latter is often so far from the reality of the former, Lippmann argued that:

> [R]epresentative government, either in what is ordinarily called politics, or in industry, cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of election, unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions (1965: 19).

What the motifs of elite theory, anti-positivism, and anti-idealism offered was a way to integrate the complexity of "the world outside" into universal social theories that posited regular patterns of change in political systems. The early critics of democracy called for a scientific intervention that could "make intelligible" the "unseen fact" that society was governed by non-rational excesses that were only predictable in their unpredictability. With the fact of elite rule and the unreality of the ideal of popular sovereignty, Schumpeter was able to translate this unpredictability into a new technocratic approach to democracy that could be workable as a mechanism to control these excesses rather than a vehicle to express them.

The early critics' public distrust of democracy – or eventual support of fascism as in the case of Michels (Beetham, 1977b) – may betray a clear normative position in each of their scholarly works, but simply identifying these normative positions is not the purpose of this chapter. Guided by motifs that translated a more general current of

mistrust regarding workers' movements into the language of ‘science,’ these three critics produced conceptual innovations that advanced their politically oriented normative critiques. As a product of these innovations, the ‘social facts’ of democracy represented black boxes upon which theoretical systems critical of social democracy were built. Schumpeter further naturalized these black boxes by reinventing democracy as a set of formal-procedural mechanisms that removed the classical ideals of democracy. This innovation was significant in the context of this project’s study of expert knowledge of democracy, because it drove a wedge between nomothetic approaches that described what democracy “is” and idiographic approaches that considered what democracy could or should be for a given country.

While critics of elite theory have always argued that democracy must have a normative content, such challenges have been, and continue to be, deflected by appeals to science or an empirically observed historical ‘reality.’ This chapter outlined a particular conceptual history that traces the emergence of certain ‘facts’ about the reality of democracy but a conceptual alignment of political and scientific interests was only one element that helped cement this nomothetic approach as a convention in mainstream American social science. As the social sciences began to flourish in the post-War era, two other important elements contributed to the fusion of politics and science in the mainstream representations of liberal democracy. These two elements, which I outline in the following two chapters, respectively, trace the related processes of ‘method making’ and ‘institution making’ in the nexus between academic research on democracy and government or NGO sponsored policy on international democratization. These two processes built on the concepts and ‘facts’ of democracy introduced by the elite theorists

and reinvented by scholars, such as Schumpeter, working to formulate the ‘reality’ of a particular version of liberal democracy.

Chapter 3: The Politics of Methodology: Taking the 'Social' out of Democracy Research

The previous chapter told a story of how social scientists in the early 20th century used theoretical motifs adapted from the natural sciences to uncover the 'factual' limitations imposed on democracy by the reality of the social world. In the period during and immediately after the Second World War, social scientists such as Joseph Schumpeter used these facts, instead of the normative elements associated with the 'classical ideal,' to develop a theory of democracy that emphasized competitive elections. This reinvented theory of democracy, characterized as a "method" rather than an ideal, provides a backdrop for the present chapter's focus on the institutionalization of this procedural or technocratic vision of democracy in both academic and, importantly, international development discourses.

In the context of this project's broader 'knowledge-in-the-making' narrative tracing the foundations of expert knowledge about democracy, postwar American social science is a particularly important site in which processes of 'method making' started to produce a form of knowledge that both described democracy and conceptualized democratization as a process open to (expert) intervention. Following recent debates in the sociology of expertise about the practice of methodology (Mirowski 2002; Mitchell 2002; Somers 2005; Camic et al. 2011), and especially the extent to which methodologies intervene upon and recreate their objects (e.g. Mol 2002; Law 2004), this chapter examines the relationship between methodological debates in democracy research and the production of democracy as an object of social science knowledge. An important part of this 'method making' process is the failure of certain types of intervention and the

institutionalization of other, more successful interventions as accepted methodological practices in the study of democracy.

A number of factors during the postwar period contributed to the institutionalization of methods that complemented liberal theories of democracy. These included the availability of government funding and the ambitious expansion of university research centers (Bernstein 2001; Mihic et al. 2005), and the overall desire for consensus expressed in the various scholarly treatments of (liberal) democracy (see Ricci 1984; Gunnell 2004). In addition, as I suggest in the introduction above, social scientists' participation in the political sphere reached an apogee during this period with the rise of modernization theory. However, while modernization theory is important, because it both "provided a telos for postwar society" (Alexander 1995: 13) and left an indelible mark on American foreign policy and international development activities, it did not significantly contribute to theories of democracy that were emerging at the time. In fact, many modernization theorists maintained only a minimalist concept of democracy, which quickly withered in the early 1960s as the U.S. State Department began to more often embrace "militaristic forms of modernization" for the postcolonial 'third world' (Gilman 2003: 50).

While I do not place modernization theory in the foreground of this analysis,[53] this chapter identifies the institutional effects of this and other postwar developments in the social sciences that translated elite theories of democracy into a series of methodological principles. That this process coincided with the rise of modernization theory instead speaks to the broader configuration of funding sources that fuelled a rapid expansion of social science research aimed at consolidating U.S. interests abroad and

[53] For a history of modernization theory see Gilman (2003).

redefining a liberal democratic ideal domestically. In addition to government entities such as the Special Operations Research Office, which represented a larger "military-academic-industrial complex" (Rhode 2013), private foundations also became heavily involved in funding social science research. For example, the Carnegie Foundation funded the expansion of "area studies" departments in multiple universities, the Rockefeller Foundation supported the Social Science Research Council, and the Ford Foundation started an expansive social science research program in the 1950s (Geiger 1988). At the same time, funding for the social sciences often paled in comparison to the levels enjoyed by the natural sciences. For this reason, social science departments and research centers saw an increase in funding during this period for large scale, national, or "big N" projects that tried to replicate the scope and esteem of the natural sciences (Mirowski 2005, Mihic et al. 2005; Abbott & Sparrow 2007: 297). In this atmosphere, research projects modelled on the natural sciences and aligned with principles of liberal democracy had an institutional advantage over projects that were critical of either methodological positivism or liberal democracy. The following examination of this 'method making' process, therefore, emphasizes the contingent nature of 'successful' measurement technologies and theories.

Following Schumpeter (2008[1942]), other theorists of liberal democracy in the early postwar years, such as Gabriel Almond (1950) and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (1949),[54] also pointed out the importance of democratic mechanisms that moderated the irrational tendencies of the masses. Research in this tradition focused on mechanisms such as party formation and electoral processes to describe the core elements of American democracy.

[54] Although Schumpeter published *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* in 1942, the definition of democracy he offered was not widely embraced until the early 1950s, when Cold War anti-communist sentiments began to spread to university departments (Gilman 2003: 47-48).

These procedural mechanisms, as distinguished from classical elements of democracy, such as equality and solidarity, helped to standardize the study of political systems and to insulate this field politically from radical or 'ideological' social philosophies during the tense years leading up to the height of McCarthyism (Ricci 1984). Empirical data on the formal operations of political institutions therefore became instrumental to the production of autonomous 'political facts' that were both narrowly focused on political systems and 'anti-political' or 'anti-ideological' in their scientific neutrality. If the social facts discussed in the previous chapter represent a theoretical tradition that was able to produce a new definition of democracy, the political facts outlined in this chapter represent a methodological tradition that had the effect of consolidating and professionalizing this knowledge.

Similar to the discussion in the previous chapter, this chapter traces the development of social scientific knowledge about democracy in order to present a historical epistemological analysis of how increasingly narrow 'political' research on democracy provided conceptual boundaries for professionalized knowledge in the field of democracy assistance. To do this, I examine the postwar era of methodological institutionalization, but also a more recent historical period that saw a similar level of excitement about the prospects of liberal democracy at the end of the Cold War. Methodological and theoretical innovations in research on democracy marked both of these periods, but while postwar scholars sought to remove the social elements of democracy in favour of a more procedural political concept, post-Cold War scholars reintroduced 'social' elements in a way that still managed to affirm the basic principles of the elite theory of democracy. An examination of these two periods therefore divides this

chapter into two sections. The first section outlines the specific case of post-War voter studies, which represents an important and understudied crossroads in the methodological history of democracy studies. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the widely discussed, and accepted, insights produced by voter studies provided important empirical evidence that contributed to processes of methodological institutionalization in the study of democracy.

The second section discusses the so-called 'crisis of democracy' that followed the unrest of the 1960s and early 1970s and the eventual 'rediscovery' of civil society as an essential element of democracy that solved this crisis in the 1980s. As the Cold War wound down, civil society became a rallying cry for democratic activists, U.S. government officials and professional aid organizations alike. In this way, the methodological and theoretical principles that came with such a concept of democracy grounded a new process of institutionalization in both the international aid community and in academia. Although the emphasis on civil society appeared to be new, the key social and political 'facts' underlying the dominant procedural definition of democracy remained. In fact, the enduring scientific discourse of democracy, coupled with the explosion of pro-democracy organizations that emerged following the fall of the Soviet Union and the "third wave" of democracy, opened exactly the type of "interstitial space" that Eyal and Buchholz (2010) identify as a crucial factor for the production of expert knowledge.

Discovering Democracy's Political Essence in the Behaviour of Voters

The luxury of hindsight makes the job of disentangling specific lines of methodological or theoretical debate much easier, and this is certainly true for the following analysis of post-War discourses of democracy. While many adherents to

modernization theory began to question the premises of the theory by the late 1960s, the scientific study of democracy developed during its rise proved much more durable. In fact, I argue that the key development during this period regarding theories of democracy had less to do with the semiotic split between 'modern' and 'traditional' "pattern variables" that, as Jeffrey Alexander (1995: 12-13) suggests, "dominated the thinking of an entire intellectual stratum" during the two decades following the Second World War. Instead, the primary developments in democracy research, and especially in the field of voter studies, represented a disciplinary divide based on social versus political explanations of American democracy that widened just as interdisciplinary research centers embracing modernization theory worked to consolidate the broader social scientific enterprise.[55] The leading research centers working on voter studies during this period certainly conformed to the model of institutionalized interdisciplinary research that attracted government and foundation funding, but the legacy of this research entrenched a divide between sociology and political science based on the institutional success of a methodological approach that characterized democracy as product of political behaviour.

The specialized field of voter studies organized itself around a handful of landmark studies conducted by scholars at two research centers notably separated from the main centers of modernization theory, the Bureau for Applied Social Science

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[55] Three of the most prominent centers adopting this grand vision for social science research were the Department of Social Relations at Harvard, the Center for International Studies at MIT, and the Committee for Comparative Politics at the Social Sciences Research Council. While the latter two centers were predominantly influential in the field of political science, each also embraced the systematic social theory produced by Talcott Parsons and his colleagues in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard. In fact, the scholarly affinities and personal relationships of key figures associated with these centers (including Parsons, Edward Shils, Gabriel Almond, Lucien Pye, David Apter, Harold Lasswell, Alex Inkles, Marion Levy, Neil Smelser, Schmul Eisenstadt, Cyril Black, Max Millikan and Walt Rostow) created a complex institutional network in which this grand vision for the social sciences became intertwined with the core principles of modernization theory (Gilman 2003).

Research at Columbia University and the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. Innovations in survey research techniques were developed and tested at each center and the key figures associated with these studies, Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia and Angus Campbell at Michigan, are generally regarded as pioneers of survey methodology in sociology and political science. The study of voting clearly represents an important episode in the history of American social science, but more importantly for the argument I outline in this chapter, it also represents a foundational break between sociological and political approaches to research on democracy. This break was particularly important to professionalization processes in the field of American political science, but it also set the terms of debate about democracy as a political and social scientific concept.

To outline the lasting features of the differing approaches taken by these two research centers, the following will focus on two studies from each center, *The People's Choice* (1968[1948]) and *Voting* (1954) published by the Columbia researchers as well as *The Voter Decides* (1954) and *The American Voter* (1960) published by the Michigan researchers. A close examination of these prominent studies, combined with a discussion of the legacy of these two institutions, explains the how a narrowly 'political' definition came to dominate methodological debates in academic and policy centers engaged in democracy research.

Sociological Voter Studies at Columbia

In their own way, the Columbia and Michigan voter studies both developed important techniques or 'technologies' that would shape the field of survey research. In the earliest text by the Columbia group, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet (1968[1948]), the

authors presented an analysis of survey data collected in the months before and just after the 1940 presidential campaign. The researchers designed the project as a “panel study” of voters in Erie County, Ohio, with a sample of voters participated in seven interviews from May until November of 1940. Respondents were asked about their intentions and activities regarding the upcoming election, about their exposure to “campaign propaganda” (1968: 5), and about their group affiliations. In addition to the answers provided, interviewers catalogued respondents’ social economic status (SES) based on the appearance of their homes (1968: 17). Interviewers thereby created a picture of the voters’ social context, and the flow of political communication within this context. Although the research group originally hoped to produce findings about the role of political propaganda in the election, the more significant finding turned out to be the important role played by social group affiliations and the “opinion leaders” that represented social groups.

Social group affiliation may not have started as the focus of the Erie County project,[56] but *The People’s Choice* certainly gave the impression that such affiliations made election outcomes predictable on demographic grounds. However, for the relatively small percentage of “undecided” respondents, the experience of “conflicting group affiliations” acted as an important barrier to decision-making, and introduced an element of uncertainty into otherwise predictable election outcomes (1968: 67). For example, the authors note that Protestants of lower SES levels and Catholics of higher SES levels

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[56] Visser (1994) argues that the initial finding of the Erie County study frustrated Lazarsfeld’s desire to focus on the psychological aspects of political action, and that the apparent sociological emphasis of *The People’s Choice* was actually more of a minor concern for the researchers. While Lazarsfeld certainly continued to have a keen interest in social psychological processes of decision-making and research on ‘action,’ this later work does not suggest that the conclusions of the Erie County study were disappointing to the research team because of their sociological content.

tended to face equal and opposite pressure to vote according to either class or religious affiliation.[57] This tension of group affiliations, or "cross-pressure," had the effect of complicating political allegiance in a way that was ongoing and subject to continuous negotiation (1968: 56). Accordingly, a general conclusion drawn by the Columbia researchers in *The People's Choice* was that social group affiliation could also play a decisive role in the decision to participate in political life at all. If a person held political views that were reinforced regularly through his or her daily social interaction, maintaining those views or acting on them could reproduce a feeling of collective affirmation (1968: xxxiii). Alternatively, exposure to conflicting political views in one's daily interactions might lead to political apathy simply because a resolution would prove too difficult. As the researchers found, "many voters subject to cross-pressures tended to belittle the whole affair, [t]hey escaped from any real conflict by losing interest in the election" (1968: 62).

Although the researchers discovered that most people voted habitually the same way that they had in the past, and often in the way that their parents and grandparents had for years, this was not an indication of "stubbornness" or "inertia" for Lazarsfeld and his colleagues. Instead, they concluded that this continuity was a source of satisfaction among such voters because it strengthened affinities with their existing social groups (1968: xxxii). In the end, the researchers found that voters' affiliations with social groups contributed to a process that placed political decision-making within a larger context of social affiliation and affirmation.

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[57] The fact that the categories of SES levels and religious affiliation were understood to be relatively stable in their political dispositions was a feature built into the study from the beginning. Erie County was chosen partly because it lacked a larger urban center or other "sectional particularities" that added complexity to standard notions of class, religion and politics (1968: 3).

The analysis presented in *The People's Choice*, however, only introduced the implications of this 'process approach.' The follow-up study of the 1948 election, published as *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee 1954), was framed explicitly as a 'process analysis.' In adapting methods similar to the panel survey methods used in the 1940 Erie County study, the Columbia researchers hoped to build on the explanatory power of this approach by more explicitly working through the relationship between social and political processes.

One of the key observations in *Voting* was that the relationship between social group identification and political choice was subject to typical or recurrent cycles characterized as "pulsating" waves of intensity in political life (1954: 146). While the main sources of social cleavage persisted over time,[58] the Columbia group proposed that the routine social interaction stimulated by a national election increased the intensity of these cleavages:

> The theory is, then, that unusually high rates of interaction, permitting rapid cumulation of successive influences or simultaneous multiple-person influence on an individual, rebuild majorities in social groups beyond the specific political reasons involved. Alternation of high with low rates of such influence must produce a "pulsating" system of greater and lesser social differentiation in politics, accompanying greater and lesser social discussion of politics over recurrent phases of the (in this case, four-year) cycle (1954: 147).

In other words, there appeared to be a reciprocal relationship between social interaction and political activity, such that increased face-to-face interaction regarding politics would tend to strengthen existing social group identification. For this reason, the

[58] The authors identified the three main cleavages as "(1) occupational, income, and status cleavages; (2) religious, racial, and ethnic cleavages; and (3) regional and urban-rural cleavages" (1954: 54).

authors suggested that social cleavages, or differentiations, rose during elections and dissipated during periods when political activity decreased.[59]

The apparent regularity of social differentiation cycles allowed the researchers to then set aside predictable "social processes" of the election period, such as class or religious affiliation, and focus more on variable "political processes" associated with party affiliation and the relative perceptive weight that voters gave to particular political issues. According to the data presented in *Voting*, voters' "frames of reference" (1954: 270-1) changed significantly in the period leading up to the 1948 election, which delivered the famous surprise victory for President Truman over Dewey. Combined with the relative stability of social group differentiation in the same period, the analysis in *Voting* appeared to highlight the relative importance of "external campaign events" (1954: 271) as the variable causal factors of voter choice.[60] For the Columbia group, although research on voting implied a number of interesting sociological problems not easily divorced from those narrowly characterized as 'political,' the findings presented in *Voting* were explicitly open to the possibility that the 'political' elements of elections might also have an important place in analyses of elections. The conclusions outlined in *Voting* contextualized this 'openness' as part of a larger approach that included both social and political factors in voter decision-making. However, on solely methodological grounds, the separation of "social" and "political" processes provided a clear connection with the approach adopted in later voter studies published by the University of Michigan

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[59] One could apply this logic to today's partisan climate in the United States by asserting that the growing divide between politically oriented social groups partly follows from the perceived need for both major parties to continuously campaign.

[60] At the same time, Abbott (2005) points out that in hindsight, the data presented in *Voting* appears to predict a victory for Truman based on the an unsustainable gap between group affiliation and voter intention. Essentially, the 1948 election saw traditionally democratic voters report their intention to vote for Dewey (a Republican), before eventually reverting to their previous voting patterns and choosing Truman.

group. The Michigan researchers, however, would push this separation even further in order to de-emphasize the importance of social processes.

Berelson's Paradox

In *Voting,* the second major text on electoral choice produced by Columbia's Bureau for Applied Social Research, the authors included two concluding chapters that interpreted their findings in the context of further research questions broadly categorized by 'micro' and 'macro' level concerns, respectively.[61] While the text itself claims collective authorship for each of the book's chapters, the style and content of the two conclusions suggests that Lazarsfeld and Berelson had significant influence over the differing content of each chapter. Based on their previous and subsequent work, it appears likely that Lazarsfeld contributed to the central arguments presented in the 'micro' chapter (13) and Berelson contributed heavily to the 'macro' chapter (14).[62] The evidence for Berelson's contribution to the final chapter is straightforward[63] because the conclusions offered in this chapter are nearly identical to conclusions Berelson made in a Presidential Address to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) given two years *before* the publication of *Voting* (see Berelson 1952). The evidence for

[61] The titles of the two concluding chapters suggest these differing concerns with the first (Chapter 13) outlining "The Social Psychology of the Voting Decision" and the second (Chapter 14) dealing with "Democratic Practice and Democratic Theory."

[62] It is also important to acknowledge the influence of the "junior" author of *Voting*, William McPhee, who wrote separately on the subject covered in the concluding chapters, such as "voting systems" (McPhee & Smith 1962) as well as "informal social influence" in political decision-making (McPhee 1963). McPhee was clearly very much a part of the 'making of' voter studies at Columbia (see Smith 2001). At the same time, the two concluding chapters of *Voting* present ideas that clearly link to other writing by Berelson and Lazarsfeld. This raises a number of interesting questions about the nature of authorship and the contemporary convention of attributing ideas or knowledge innovation to persons when the process of knowledge production almost always requires some network of collaborators, colleagues and other forms of institutional or material support. The goal of this exercise, however, is not to recreate the knowledge-making process but to use available *published* material to trace the interplay of two opposing theoretical positions in the study of democracy; one that emphasized social action as a foundation for political life, and another that tried to examine the 'purely political' elements of democracy.

[63] In fact, Sills (1981: 307) asserts that Berelson compiled the "inventory of findings" that made up the appendix in addition to writing the concluding chapter (Chapter 14).

Lazarsfeld's contribution to the other concluding chapter is more complex, but becomes clear in the various commentaries he wrote about the legacy of voter research in subsequent years.[64]

The important point about these two chapters is that they offered two different visions for the future of research on democracy. Of these two visions, the proposals outlined in Chapter 14 dealing with the 'macro' implications of the study's findings most influenced the legacy of the Columbia voter studies. This chapter, which echoed Berelson's earlier comments, resonated with political scientists as well as the researchers at Michigan because it anticipated and helped to facilitate the conceptual move away from 'social' explanations of political action.

In Chapter 14 of *Voting*, Berelson and his co-authors interpreted the findings of the Elmira study from the perspective of then recent 'developments' in the theory of democracy. One of the important 'developments' to which they referred was Schumpeter's revised theory presented in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. As outlined in the previous chapter, Schumpeter presented a line of argument suggesting that the traditional theory of democracy seemed misaligned with the empirical 'reality' elucidated by contemporary social science. While the traditional theory required citizens to be rational, informed and interested in political affairs, Schumpeter cited the work of social scientists who had established that citizens rarely met these standards (specifically Gustave Le Bon and Vilfredo Pareto). For Schumpeter, the non-rational approach to politics taken by the majority of citizens suggested that democratic theory should aim to

[64] Lazarsfeld's papers also suggest that the ideas outlined in Chapter 13 were ideas that he had been discussing and working through for some time before the publication of *Voting* (see Lazarsfeld's personal correspondence with Berelson and McPhee, Paul F. Lazarsfeld papers, boxes 1 & 3, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library).

describe a more realistic set of political outcomes. To him these outcomes followed from a vision of democracy defined as simply a "method" for choosing political leaders. Democracy, in this sense, was therefore a purely procedural process that could only hope to achieve a fair system of elections, rather than the 'social' outcomes (e.g., social equality or solidarity) for which previous generations of 'social democrats' had worked.

Berelson understood this call for a 'realistic' approach to democracy as an opening for empirical social scientists to mobilize recently developed techniques of survey research in order to find out how democracy "really" works. In his 1952 AAPOR Presidential Address, and again in the final chapter of *Voting,* Berelson combined Schumpeter's insights with the evidence produced by the Elmira study to paint a picture of (American) democracy as a system that functioned well despite the irrationality and inconsistency of its citizens. Specifically, Berelson interpreted political indecision based on social cross-pressures – a phenomenon previously taken as a sign of individual incompetence in politics – as a necessary source of flexibility built into the American political system. In this sense, political "cleavages" found balance because social cross-pressures prevented coherent voting blocs based on rational attachment to social group interests or, especially, class interests (Berelson 1952: 328; Berelson et al. 1954: 318). The stability of the democratic system therefore depended on an array of political allegiances that aligned with social group identification in a way that was neither too weak nor too strong. To Berelson, having a political outlet for group interests was important, but it was equally important to allow for "cross-group" and "cross-party" identification, as well as non-voting (1954: 320). The overall effect of democracy's

'balancing' or 'stabilizing' features therefore supported a near divine definition of democracy:

> when one considers the data in a broader perspective—how huge segments of the society adapt to political conditions affecting them or how the political system adjusts itself to changing conditions over long periods of time—he cannot fail to be impressed with the total result. Where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless angels seem to tread (1954: 311).

The picture of democracy produced by this analysis, as a system of competitive elections for leadership that can flourish despite an unengaged or irrational citizenry, became known as "Berelson's Paradox" (e.g. Granberg & Holmberg 1990). Berelson's broad conclusions reflected Schumpeter's rejection of the traditional theory of democracy and fit nicely within a social scientific community interested in affirming American exceptionalism during an era of escalating Cold War fears. By concluding that elections effectively 'balanced' the *social* forces of cleavage and consensus, Berelson made two moves that resonated with scholars working to institutionalize modernization theory. Firstly, by suggesting that elections themselves "balanced out" social forces, he gave analytical privilege to the political processes that determine elections and effectively moved social causes to the background.[65] Secondly, by being "impressed" with democracy's "total result," he implicitly praised the functioning of the American democratic system while simultaneously claiming to represent its empirical reality. It is for these reasons that the final chapter of *Voting* was the most often cited aspect of the Columbia voter studies. In a recent history of political science's treatment of democracy, John Gunnell (2004) suggests that Berelson's conclusion fit squarely within an American

[65] In the early years of democracy promotion, this assumption was put into practice by a number of organizations that focused exclusively on monitoring and assisting with elections (see Chapter 4).

tradition that supposed “democratic theory should be revised to conform to democratic practice, that is, the practice of politics in the United States” (2004: 230).[66]

For sociologists at the time, and especially those in the Harvard Department of Social Relations, Berelson’s discussion of the “total result” of democratic elections also fit nicely with structural functionalist interpretations of the political system in society. Responding to the popularity of voter studies at the end of the 1950s, Parsons wrote an essay entitled “‘Voting’ and the Equilibrium of the American Political System” (Parsons 1959). In this essay, Parsons detailed how the findings in *Voting* supported his own theoretical framework concerning the functioning of the polity within the social system. To do this, he first suggested four conditions “necessary to the successful operation of a democratic two-party system” that functions on its own and contributes to the broader social system.[67] He then verified these conditions by aligning them with the findings presented in *Voting*, especially through the lens of the last chapter (Chapter 14) of the book.

> The reader will note that, with some differences, these four conditions bear a close relation to the balances on which the functioning of the system depends, as formulated by the authors of *Voting* in their final chapter. The authors speak of the balances between “involvement and indifference” and between “stability and flexibility.” Both of these balances are related to each of my first two statements about conditions of the function of the system. The relations between involvement and indifference are highly pertinent to the nature of the nonrational mechanisms on which the stability of the system depends and to the anchorage of the voter in the solidarity groupings of the society. But the same nonrational mechanisms

[66] In an earlier versions of this critique, Carol Patemen (1970) as well as Graeme Duncan & Steven Lukes (1963) attributed authorship of Chapter 14 of *Voting* to Berelson and included him in a group of democratic “theorists” who actively worked to confront “traditional democratic theory” with evidence from American voter studies.

[67] For Parsons, these four conditions keep the system functioning properly and include: (1) the traditionalistic operation of nonrational mechanisms that encourage solidarity, (2) a mechanism that allows shifts in political allegiance, (3) a mechanism for a suprapolitical consensus that ensures the integration of the system, and (4) a mechanism that ensures neither of the two parties will overwhelm the other (Parsons 1959: 91-92).

> operate in maintaining the type of flexibility which is most important in what may be called “normal” functioning (Parsons, 1959: 93).

The ease with which Parsons incorporated the evidence from *Voting* suggests that one of the lasting impacts of Berelson’s paradox was that it framed the Columbia voter studies as a key contribution to macro-structural studies of democracy. As part of this framing process, Berelson interpreted the social elements of democratic decisions as underlying social forces driving political cleavage and consensus (Berelson et al. 1954: 318; Berelson 1952: 328). However, since these underlying forces regularly produced a desirable or balanced “total result” in American democracy, this approach provided some of the conceptual justifications for postwar scholars to assume that the American system functioned in a “normal” way.[68] This language also reflected a broader trend that saw many sociologists shift their attention to unseen structural forces (see Lipset 1960 Chapter 1, for a review of political sociology based exclusively on the problems of “cleavage and consensus”). As such, Berelson largely ignored the content of everyday social interactions and processes that made up political life, a concern that was central to the vision outlined in the other concluding chapter (Chapter 13) of *Voting*.

The clear advances that the Columbia voter studies made in survey research might suggest that the more methodologically oriented Chapter 13 of *Voting* should have had an equal or greater influence on subsequent voter studies than Berelson’s Chapter 14. There are some important reasons, however, that this was not the case. First, the conclusions

[68] Questions about how and why countries in Latin America deviated from the ‘normal’ or structural processes of democratic change were at the heart of the so-called “transitions literature” (e.g. O’Donnell & Schmitter 1986) which became very influential in debates engaged by scholars connected to the field of democracy assistance. This literature was, in some ways rejected the macro-structural approach, but it also affirmed the American model by adopting ‘political democracy’ as a goal that would naturally balance out social and economic inequalities (Guihot 2005: 145).

from Chapter 13 clashed with the grand approach to social theory that dominated sociology at the time. The panel surveys developed by Lazarsfeld and used in both the Erie County study (*The People's Choice*) and the Elmira, New York study (*Voting*) were an undoubtedly important innovation, but Lazarsfeld himself appeared far more interested in using these types of surveys to understand how people made choices, including consumer choices and political choices, in everyday life. For example, an emphasis on people's social ties in the process of choosing consumer products was clear in research he and Elihu Katz published the same year as *Voting* (see Katz & Lazarsfeld 1954). In Chapter 13 of *Voting* as well, the authors made clear that their research model was a step towards understanding how voters *implement* their choices based on their everyday interactions (Berelson et al. 1954: 277). Such a focus on implementation explicitly moved beyond a psychological concern with underlying attitudes or values and therefore clashed with Parsons' characterization of 'political culture' as an intervening variable in the functioning of a social system.[69] Lazarsfeld's general aversion to the totalizing social theory embraced by both Berelson and Parsons may have also been partly due to the emphasis the Bureau for Applied Social Research placed on middle range theories, encouraged no doubt by Robert Merton's presence. Either way, the authors of *Voting* appeared to reject the Parsonian approach[70] in Chapter 13, while tacitly supporting this approach in the following chapter.

The second reason the theoretical conclusions outlined by Berelson were more influential at the time than the methodological innovations attributed to Lazarsfeld was

[69] On the Parsonian concept of political culture, see Somers (2008: 178-180).
[70] Interestingly, in Chapter 13, the authors claim that a system-based approach is inadequate because it cannot account for the everyday social context of voters, but they do not mention Parsons by name. Instead, they attribute this approach to one of Parsons' mentors at Havard (L.J. Henderson), who developed it based on the work of Vilfredo Pareto (Berelson et al. 1954: 298).

that the former had institutional advantages over the latter. While Lazarsfeld's position as founder of Columbia's Bureau for Applied Social Research provided an institutional venue for pursuing his own interests, the Bureau's mandate of applied research (see Barton 1979) differed significantly from the type of grand visions espoused by the centers associated with modernization theory. In addition, Lazarsfeld's expansive interests and accomplishments placed him within circles of elite social scientists, but his status as an immigrant meant that he was rarely at the center of these circles. These factors meant that Lazarsfeld himself often had to chase funding from a range of sources during the early years of the Bureau (Barton 1979: 15). On the other hand, in the early 1950s his collaborator Berelson found himself in an important institutional position within the social science funding complex. After working on various projects at the Bureau for Applied Social Research starting in 1944, Berelson became director of the newly formed Program in the Behavioral Sciences at the Ford Foundation in 1951. In his capacity as director, from 1951 until 1957, Berelson pushed an agenda that attempted to consolidate the emerging trends in the social science under the banner of "behavioral science," which he believed to constitute as a more rigorously empirical future for the social sciences. This program included founding the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and more broadly supporting the type of large scale, supra-disciplinary research centers that were emerging at elite universities at the time. Viewed through this lens, Berelson's conclusions outlined in Chapter 14 of *Voting* appear as an attempt to connect the empirical findings of the Columbia voter studies to key theoretical trends in social science research, such as the Schumpeterian vision of democracy and modernization theory. In the end, these conclusions proved more

successful as an opening to research models in political science, as well as early formulations of democracy assistance, that situated American democracy as an ideal and interpreted the impressive "total result" of democracy as a solution to social or economic inequality (Ricci 1984). This theoretical aspect of the Columbia voter studies, which broke from the micro-level focus of the panel surveys, instead aligned itself with the type of research conducted at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center.

The Michigan Voter Studies

Scholars at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center collected their first round of voter data on the 1948 election, and the first widely published analysis of their approach came out a few months after *Voting* in 1954. In this book, *The Voter Decides* (Campbell, Gurin & Miller 1954), the authors presented an analysis of the 1948 and 1952 elections, which paid particular attention to changes in the *political* characteristics of the American electorate. The Michigan group then expanded and elaborated this approach in the more influential study of the 1956 election, published as *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, 1960).

In *The Voter Decides* (1954), the authors identified the main problem of the approach taken in the Columbia studies by offering a quote from Lazarsfeld et al's *The People's Choice*, "A person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference" (in Campbell et al. 1954: 85). What Campbell and his co-authors argued was that it was not possible to predict the wave of support favouring President Eisenhower and the Republican Party in 1952 by simply identifying voting tendencies of the recent past for particular social groups. In other words, between 1948

and 1952, the political winds in the United States electorate appeared to change much faster than corresponding changes within or between any influential social groups. This ‘fact’ countered what they referred to as the “social determinism” of the Columbia studies and, instead, required an approach that focused on the unique “psychological forces” that cause “political behavior” (1954, p. 90). Three forces in particular – personal attachment to a political party, issue orientation, and candidate orientation – were therefore the crucial factors in determining any election (see also Key and Munger, 1959).

In their analysis of the 1952 election, the Michigan researchers posed the problem of how these three “motivational” forces interacted to produce a political choice. Their data showed that when *political perceptions* were in conflict – for example if a person had a favourable attitude or attachment to the Democratic Party, but also liked the Republican candidate – individual participation in political life became less likely. In this analysis, the attitudes a voter held toward political parties, the issues, and the candidates operated as the intervening variables that influenced voter choice and political participation (Campbell et al. 1954, pp. 158-160). Likewise, in their next major study, published as *The American Voter* (1960), Angus Campbell and his fellow researchers expanded their explanation of these intervening variables as the most important autonomous political factors for voting behaviour.

For the Michigan researchers, the causal factors they were able to tease out of their survey data followed from the methodological techniques they used to collect the data. Unlike the panel surveys developed by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues, the Michigan Center conducted nation-wide individual interviews just before and just after every

presidential election (starting in 1948). These ‘snapshot’ surveys produced results that reflected an individual respondent’s “cognitive and affective map of politics” (Campbell et al., 1960, p. 42) at discrete points in time.[71] Data gathered using this technique therefore produced statistical correlations between specific attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about the political elements in play during the election, and the eventual political act of voting.

In *The American Voter*, the authors described this type of analysis as a “funnel of causality” (1960, p. 24). The metaphor of the funnel suggested a model in which the relevant factors or causes that determine political acts of voting progressively narrow over time until the election occurs. As Abbott (2005) describes this model: “The Michigan group’s vision of causality[…]arrays causes by the proximity of their impact on [the] outcome, explicitly separating the immediate from the distant both in social time and social space” (2005, p. 398). Whether a person votes, and for whom they vote, was linked in a causal chain to factors that the individual perceived and reported as important factors in their decision. The model thereby relegated social group affiliations to underlying “controls” that merely shape the individual’s immediate perception of the election. The goal of such a research model was to identify which political factors voters perceived and evaluated, and to analyze how these factors interacted with each other at the national level. For Campbell and his colleagues, the relevant factors that eventually determined voter choice were both personal, insofar as the individual was consciously aware of them, and political insofar as the voter perceived them to have political meaning or significance (1960, pp. 29-30). While these factors took on political meaning on

[71] This was a clear departure from the successive interviews gathered by the Columbia researchers, which were concerned with how a person accounted for changes in their own political intentions over time.

Election Day (or, the narrow end of the funnel), they started as factors with non-political significance for the individual in question. For example, the authors cited Eisenhower's rise in the popular consciousness as a military figure, prior to him becoming a purely "political figure." Eisenhower's popularity was therefore an example of a causal factor being personal before it was political (1960, p. 31). His popularity during the War clearly influenced his eventual election as President in 1952 but, for the Michigan researchers, Eisenhower's public persona only became a significant variable once it had gone through a process of *political translation* – or once he became a likely political candidate.[72]

The analytical choice to focus on factors made 'political' through a process of 'translation' is crucial to understanding the difference in the way the Columbia researchers and their counterparts at Michigan analyzed democratic elections. This distinction was especially important to the Michigan group because it explicitly moved the determinants of political acts away from 'social pressures' and towards individual attitudes about politics. To clarify this position, the authors compared the model developed in *The American Voter* to a model focused on social group association:

> Learning what cognitions and evaluations of politics are implied by identification with party or by membership in one or another social grouping is a task of genuine importance, and if it can clarify or "interpret" the ambiguous statistical associations between social characteristics and voting behaviour it will be worth all the attention that can be given it.
>
> Yet it is *not* true that attitudes toward the several elements of politics are only reflections of party loyalty or group membership or of other factors that may

[72] The Michigan researchers formulated the concept of political translation explicitly as a way to move past social explanations for voter decisions. In 1956, Angus Campbell co-published a book with Homer C. Cooper that worked out the problem of "group influence" in a way that directly responded to the conclusions of the Columbia research and clearly outlined the theoretical steps that formed the baseline for the approach taken in *The American Voter*. In this text, Campbell and Cooper essentially concluded that group identity was only important to political behaviour as a reference point for individuals. Along these lines, Catholic voters were only notable as such if they thought of themselves as Catholic in a political sense. Here, religious group affiliation only became an important variable if made explicit in some political form, such as a party platform or an event in the campaign designed to explicitly appeal to Catholics.

> lead to perceptual distortion. To suppose that they are is to understate the importance of changes in the properties of what the individual sees in his environment. Changes in the external realities of politics can have effects on popular feeling within every partisan or social grouping in the electorate. (1960, p. 65).

Implied by this clarification was the argument that, not only were properties of the (external) political environment real, but party loyalty or social group membership could actually distort, rather than explain, the individual's perception of these properties. The Michigan group therefore effectively de-emphasized the role that non-political or 'social' factors played in an election and, more generally, in a democracy. As the following section suggests, this research provided an important foundation for contemporary conventions that exclude issues of social and economic inequality from debates over 'political democracy,' by assuming that such inequalities could only move beyond an individual's 'personal' interests once they went through a process of *political translation*. The process of political translation, according to this approach, was dependent on formal democratic institutions (e.g. social discrimination could only become a political issue once a party or candidate made it relevant to an election), which was a position that both affirmed the Schumpeterian procedural definition of democracy and inspired a generation of political science research that took this narrow definition of the political as its object of inquiry. This narrow definition of what constitutes 'political issues' also appears in contemporary approaches to democracy assistance that focus on building the capacity of formal democratic institutions, rather than directly addressing issues of social or economic inequality (see Chapters 4 & 5).

The Legacy of Voter Studies: Removing the 'social' from political behaviour

The Michigan researchers' approach, which isolated the political factors that determined the outcome of elections, had the effect of simultaneously marginalizing 'social' variables and producing a very narrowly defined concept of "political behaviour". Political attitudes were characterized as the 'moving parts' of elections and distinguished from all other 'exogenous' social factors, which allowed the Michigan researchers to create a model that isolated changes in such attitudes *ceteris paribus*, making the model 'universal' in its scope (Chandler 1988, p. 29). In the field of political science, this move away from the "social logic of politics" (Zuckerman, 2005) and towards a formulation of political decision making as a product of individual behaviour would shape disciplinary debates for decades to come. In this way, rejecting a vision of political decision-making based on social group affiliation enabled researchers to claim new theoretical and methodological innovations and simultaneously to engage in important disciplinary boundary work (see Dahl, 1961, for a statement on the promise this approach offered for political science).[73] In addition to the Michigan researchers, other important figures in political science challenged the "social determinism" of the Columbia studies in order to frame their own projects. This included work by key figures in the discipline such as V.O. Key (1966), Heinz Eulau (1962), and Anthony Downs (1957) (see Zuckerman, 2005, p. 3).

The Michigan voter studies continue today under the title of the American National Election Studies and include many of the same questions asked by the Michigan researchers in the original 1948 survey (see Lewis-Beck, 2008). By way of contrast, voter

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[73] Disciplinary boundary work, however, was less important for the Michigan researchers since the Survey Research Center had an interdisciplinary mandate and both Angus Campbell and Philip Converse had cross-appointments in the sociology department.

research at Columbia wound down in the mid-1950s.[74] The continued application of the Michigan model in election research around the world speaks to its theoretical and methodological effectiveness at producing nationally 'useful' analyses from data collected in this type of voter survey. Although some later competing models analyzed data on voting differently, many still took the Michigan studies as their point of departure. These included rational choice models which attempted to predict political decision making according to a 'calculus' of voting (e.g. Riker & Ordeshook, 1968). Such models explicitly opposed the social psychological "generalizations" made by the Michigan model and suggested that it was possible to predict voter choice according to axioms deduced from general propositions (see also Cyr, 1975). Other approaches took issue with the Michigan model's isolation of political attitudes from 'exogenous' factors. Marking the increased popularity of macro-historical studies of politics in the 1970s and 1980s, political scientists such as Walter Dean Burnham (1974, 1988), suggested that political attitudes were actually of secondary importance to long-term institutional or socio-economic changes when explaining voter outcomes.[75] In any case, the Michigan model stood as an important reference point for social scientific research on democratic elections.

Another principal reason for the Michigan model's success was that the researchers involved were equally successful at institutionalizing their voter surveys as a primary data set for students and colleagues at universities across the country. In an

[74] By the mid-1950s Lazarsfeld's interests, as well as others at the 'Bureau,' had shifted to issues of professional socialization, which produced a number of works including Lazarsfeld & Thielens' *The Academic Mind* (1958). This, combined with the departure of political sociologists Seymor Martin Lipset and William McPhee, meant that the Bureau's participation all but ceased in the increasingly specialized and developed field of voter studies (see Barton, 1979).

[75] For a comparison of the Michigan model and the "Burnham model," see Chandler (1988).

institutional history of the National Election Survey (NES), Philip Converse and Donald Kinder (2004) wrote that two particular innovations helped to establish the NES as a path-breaking example of a nationally coordinated project in the social sciences and a crucial resource for research on American democracy. The first innovation was establishing the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research in 1962 (which now exists as the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research) as a way to expand access to the growing series of Michigan voter surveys. The ICPR allowed researchers from around the country, and eventually around the world, to access data collected by the Survey Research Center.[76] This project was eagerly embraced by the "young Turks" in the field who pushed for the use of quantitative data in political science research (Converse & Kinder, 2004, p. 77). The second innovation, which became justifiable after the expansion of the ICPR, was securing an indefinite grant from the National Science Foundation to support the coordination and dissemination of the NES. This grant, which was the first of its kind in the social sciences, elevated the status of the NES to a "national resource" and gave it the credibility of other nationally coordinated "big science" programs (2004, pp. 81-2).

These institutional and disciplinary factors also influenced the fact that the Michigan research on voting positioned itself well in the political landscape of the academy at the time. By constituting their approach as a rejection of the more "socially determinist" analysis of the Columbia group, the Michigan researchers' focus on individual political behaviour as the foundation of 'macro' level studies of democratic

[76] Countries around the world have developed their own 'national election surveys' based on this model, which has also informed the development of election infrastructure through programs run by democracy assistance organizations such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

elections aligned well with a broader intellectual context in which research based on 'social' classes, groups or affiliations faced the lingering scrutiny of McCarthyism.

As suggested above, American university departments and research centers in this period saw an increase in funding for programs that mirrored the perceived 'neutrality' of the natural sciences (Mihic et al. 2005). As a result, the specific methodological debates occurring during this period of expanded funding also had an implicit political content. Even among scholars who were personally committed to left politics, these methodological debates often favoured empirical, rather than theoretical or "ideological" (i.e., Marxist) approaches to social scientific research (Turner, 2012). Many scholars thus actively reinforced the discursive weight of "science" as a counter to "ideology," including Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbia. At the same time, even in an atmosphere that supported their 'objective' approach, the empirical science outlined by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues on the complex social foundations of political choice had some disadvantages compared to research on the behaviour of voters, which offered an individualist and seemingly apolitical approach to the study of democracy. The effects of this broader context are apparent in the inordinate influence garnered by the last chapter of Berelson et al.'s *Voting*. In the broader historical epistemology outlined in this chapter, and in Chapter 2, the distinction between the Columbia and Michigan voters studies stands as an important, but largely forgotten, episode in the production of contemporary democracy's disciplinary and conceptual boundaries. In particular, the methodological innovations of macro-level survey research cemented a split between the political and social elements of democracy that is a core feature of the expert knowledge discussed throughout this dissertation. Based on this split, scholars developed other important

features of this knowledge over the course of the postwar decades, until professional democracy assistance organizations operationalized these methodological and theoretical configurations in the form of international aid programs. The next sections detail these other important developments.

The Crisis of Democracy and the Rediscovery of Civil Society

The End of Ideology and the Seeds of Crisis

One particular factor that Campbell and his colleagues identified as a challenge to studying the causal relationship between the political elements of an election and political behaviour was the problem of ideology. Campbell et al. (1960) defined ideology as an "attitude structure" that functionally and coherently "connects various facets of social, political, and economic experience" (1960: 192). With regard to partisan choice, an ideology provided a "table of equivalences" that allowed for the automatic political translation of social and economic events or issues (1960: 193). Ideology therefore presented a problem for the independence of political variables because such a definition suggested that partisan choice varied according to extra-political forces.

To solve this problem, the Michigan researchers turned to their data from both the 1952 and 1956 elections. If ideology were a causal factor in voter choice, changes in attitudes relating to social and economic issues typical of one ideological position would likely accompany shifts in *political* choices. Using the example of conservatism as an example of an ideological position (1960: 214), the researchers showed that an increase in votes for the Republican Party did not come with a corresponding increase in traditionally conservative ideological positions on other issues. Accordingly, they

concluded that Republican victories in 1952 and 1956 did not follow from a general ideological shift in the population. In line with the emphasis that they placed on political elements, the Michigan researchers instead concluded that the outcomes of these elections were determined by the attitudes that voters had toward particular political issues such as Eisenhower's popularity or the perceived corruption associated with the Democratic Party. This conclusion resonated with, and offered supporting evidence for the emerging "end of ideology" thesis in political theory. This thesis would eventually produce another important distinction for contemporary democracy research, except instead of a conceptual split between political and social elements, this thesis produced a split between 'modern' and 'traditional' forms of political participation.

One of the popular conclusions that social scientists drew from the apparent success of Western democracy was that the major ideologies of the 'right and left' had lost their ability to energize radical political action, at least within these democracies. This conclusion was widely discussed as the so-called "end of ideology" thesis (Aron 1957; Shils 1958; Bell 1960; Lipset 1960), which asserted that the major social cleavages between left and right were resolved in the practical application of modern democracy. For many of its proponents, including social conservatives Raymond Aron and Edward Shils and cultural conservatives such as Daniel Bell, "the end of ideology" primarily signified the erosion of Marxism as a revolutionary doctrine in the West. The widespread acceptance of this thesis followed from a more generally behaviourist "scientific outlook" that, especially in the field of political science, rejected the revolutionary or ideological foundations of democracy and instead identified voting behaviour as "the most distinctive action for a citizen of democracy" (Dahl 1961: 769).

In his famous essay “ideology and civility,” Shils asserted that “ideological politics” represent a coherent and comprehensive set of beliefs that hold a particular group, nation, or class, to be virtuous and identify other groups to be the source of all evil (Shils, 1958: 450). The clear identification of ideology as an organizing force behind the then recent examples of violently oppressive political movements (German National Socialism and Stalinist communism) had the effect of narrowing the definition of ideology to only the most extreme political positions. Similar to the voter studies that found stability and moderation to be the key products of political democracy, Shils supposed that the material achievements of capitalist democracies had moderated the structural factors that tend to ferment radical identifications of virtue or evil among social groups (1958: 455-456).

Another assumption central to the ‘end of ideology’ thesis was that, by definition, there had been or was soon to be the end of a definable historical period. For Aron (1957) and Shils (1958) this period started with the French Revolution, the lofty ideals of democracy, and the destruction of the traditional values of the *Ancien Régime*. With the end of this historical period in the post-War reconstruction, Shils, for example, suggested that, because the “sound” elements of these modern ideals had been achieved, the revolutionary energy that was originally necessary could no longer be mustered. Politics in the West had become “settled and mature” (1958: 456), and the ideological politics that defined much of the newly decolonized world would surely fall away as these states eventually “matured.”[77] Although more paternalistic than most, Shils’ argument simply

[77] Rhetorically, Shils implied that his analysis was already a foregone conclusion to most Western intellectuals by sweeping aside all alternatives to liberal democracy: “Of course, ideological politics, Marxist, Islamic, Arabic, Hindu, Pan-African, and other, still exist in the new states outside the West in a vehement, irreconcilable form and often with great influence. But many in the West who sympathize with

reflected the widely held view that the democracies of the West had achieved a political equilibrium that seemed to be the logical destination of modernity.

According to the end of ideology thesis, then, the consolidation of democratic institutions and the material prosperity of market economies were the causal factors that made 'ideological politics' unnecessary and impractical. Within the social sciences, this 'reality' was a useful device for liberal opponents of Marxian theories of the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. Daniel Bell (1960), for example, suggested in a series of essays that political warnings about the culturally alienating, and authoritarian aspects of mass society (Adorno 1950) or the consolidation of the power elite (Mills 1956) were essentially resolved by the cultural and economic 'openness' of liberal democracy.[78] If, as Bell asserted, "ideology is the conversion of ideas into social levers" (Bell 1960: 400), a society that has institutionalized democratic ideas is less exposed to the leverage of radical politics. The question for the future of postcolonial politics was therefore "whether new societies can grow by building democratic institutions and allowing people to make choices—and sacrifices—voluntarily, or whether the new elites, heady with power, will impose totalitarian means to transform their countries" (1960: 403). The pressing political questions of the day therefore related to those "new societies" unprotected from ideology-wielding elites.

In retrospect, it is clear that the 'end of ideology' thesis was a product of its particular political context. However, it was also a central part of a debate around the role

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the desires and deplore the excesses are inclined to believe that they too will pass when the new states in which they flourish become more settled and mature. Looking back from the standpoint of a newly-achieved moderation, Western intellectuals view the ideological politics of Asia and Africa, and particularly nationalism and tribalism, as a sort of measles which afflicts a people in its childhood, but to which adults are practically immune" (1958: 456).

[78] Robert Dahl's book *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (1961) made a similar point by following the apparent open and inclusive process of political succession in New Haven, Connecticut.

of social science in the study of democratic politics. On one hand, it affirmed the scientific outlook because it validated ideologically 'neutral' research methods. For example, Philip Converse (1964) argued that social science could measure and analyze mass opinions independently of 'ideological' or normative interpretations, as if attributing a set of opinions to 'the masses' was not itself a normative move. On the other hand, the end of ideology thesis also seemed to emphasize the importance of comparative research on the new states that had not institutionalized democratic ideas and were often thought to be dominated by "mass ideologies" that were "parochial, instrumental, and created by political leaders" (Bell 1960: 403).

In a metaphorical way, the end of ideology thesis was a signpost where two roads of liberal social science crossed. The first road led Western, and notably American social scientists, to turn inward and focus on the ever-narrowing specificity of democracy's political elements. In fact, since electoral competitions and not revolutionary action appeared to define the stakes of Western politics, such scholars took the functionality of domestic democratic politics as a given. As Lipset (1960) suggested in his pronouncement of the end of ideology, this meant a turn towards problems that were social, rather than political, in nature (1960: 446). For him, popular studies such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956) best reflected the contemporary problems for democracy in American society. In this way, investigations of the domestic problems of democracy fell to either sociologists focused on issues of national character (i.e. macro-level problems) or political scientists interested in individual political behaviour. Without the possibility of revolutionary

upheaval, democratic politics in the West had thus become, politically, "boring" to the leading scholars of democracy (Lipset, 1960: 442).

The second road, which was more relevant to the eventual development of democracy assistance, led outside of the settled and boring West and to the exciting politics of "developing areas" (Almond & Coleman 1960; Almond & Verba 1963) or, in other words, to modernization theory. The explosion of funding for research centers and university departments for this type of research had already started to shape the sub-disciplines of comparative politics, development studies, area studies, and international relations. Methodologically, however, this research differed from work on Western democracies primarily because it was explicitly 'political' in terms of its analysis of government institutions, which scholars judged normatively against the 'successful' or 'stable' institutions of the West.

Within the discursive matrix of liberal social science, democracy had become something that was a political concern for those outside of 'the West' and a social concern for those in the West (Ricci 1984). Social science research in this tradition relied on different facts of democracy to construct research problems out of these concerns. While sociological problems of domestic democracy implicitly assumed the stability of democratic institutions, the political problems of democracy in 'developing areas' were largely constructed around the types of social facts that imagined the rational limitations of mass political behaviour and assumed the necessity of elite rule, as described in the previous chapter. In this way, the end of ideology thesis reinforced an "us" versus "them" dualism that followed from the Parsonian pattern variables distinguishing "modern" from "traditional" values (Parsons & Shils 1951; Alexander 1995). Western democracies were,

if anything, too rational, whereas these scholars characterized "new societies" as plagued by irrationality, radical politics and closed political systems that, with luck, could develop into mature and open democracies.

Unfortunately, for the hopes of those emboldened by the end of ideology thesis, this vision of political modernity carried the seeds of its own rapid demise. The stark dualism of immaturity and maturity embedded in the paternalistic assumptions about international modernization (e.g. Shils 1958), and the apolitical assumptions about democratic harmony in the West, drew immediate challenges on both political and social scientific grounds. Within academia in the United States, but also in academic circles around the world, liberal social science and particularly modernization theory became a target of an emerging cohort of scholars who embraced the radical politics of the 1960s (e.g. Frank 1967, 1975; Pateman 1970; Tipps 1973; Wallerstein 1976). The civil rights movement and the Vietnam War certainly made the pronouncements of the end of ideology thesis seem suspect in both the West and in postcolonial areas. An increasing number of scholars also questioned some of the key analytical and methodological positions of the thesis.

In one example of the latter form of questioning, Parsons' former student Clifford Geertz (1964) started his own immanent critique by pointing out that "the conception of ideology now regnant in the social sciences is a thoroughly evaluative (that is, pejorative) one[…]" (1964: 49). For him, using the concept of ideology as an analytic tool to simultaneously identify and discredit "ideological politics" in postcolonial countries actually worked to undermine the scientific neutrality that many of the end of ideology scholars held dear. Instead, Geertz argued that ideology could be studied as a cultural

system that functioned to "render otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful" (1964: 64). The clear political axe that the 'end of ideology' theorists were inclined to grind tended to obscure this possibility:

> If the critical power of the social sciences stems from their disinterestedness, is not this power compromised when the analysis of political thought is governed by such a concept, much as the analysis of religious thought would be (and, on occasion, has been) compromised when cast in terms of the study of "superstition?" (1964: 51).

Geertz's cultural perspectivism therefore suggested all societies are ideological insofar as they have orienting religious, moral or other cultural ideologies. While he acknowledged that ideology and science were "different enterprises" (1964: 72), Geertz also asserted that they both made sense of the social world and were therefore subject to political interpretation. By making such a claim, Geertz challenged the implicit distinction, within the end of ideology debate, that characterized 'developing' societies as political and Western democracies as post-political. This principle continued to face similar challenges as the weight of the social and economic crises of the 1970s called into question the settled, balanced or functional operation of American democracy.

The 'end of ideology' debate is an important marker for the methodological institutionalization of a narrowly 'political' concept of democracy for two reasons. Firstly, it symbolized a high water mark of liberal confidence in the American political system as a feature of academic research on democracy in the United States (Ricci 1984; Gunnelll 2004). From this perspective, democracy in the United States, and in the West, was so successful that politics within these systems was 'boring' (Lipset 1960). Secondly, it also represented a conceptual split between politics in the West and politics in so-called "new societies" (Shils 1958; Bell 1960). Such a conceptual differentiation laid the

groundwork for the emergence of the field of development studies that, especially in its critical form, formulated complex theoretical systems to re-integrate Western and 'non-Western' politics with a global framework (e.g. Frank 1967, 1975; Wallerstein 1976). In other words, the end of ideology thesis laid bare the terms of the broader debate about how democracy functioned in the West and could function in the newly decolonized countries in the Global South. The following section traces some of the particular innovations within this broader debate that directly influenced the formation of democracy assistance as a form of expert knowledge. In this discussion, like the previous discussion about democracy research that split social and political 'variables,' I outline another attempt to resolve the 'ideals' and 'reality' of democracy using durable underlying assumptions about the inherent irrationality of collectivist or socialist political principles. Specifically, this discussion focuses on the emergence of the 'new right' discourse concerning the 'crisis of democracy' and the neoliberal appropriation of civil society as an answer to this crisis.

Defining the Crisis: The Problem of Capacity

In his presidential address to the American Political Science Association in 1969, David Easton acknowledged that a "post-behavioural revolution" in political science was gaining momentum by challenging the idea that politics could or should be studied scientifically and free of any explicit value constraint (Easton 1969). The energy behind this revolution drew on dissatisfaction within political science, and social science in general, related to behaviouralism's inability to deal with the social and political crises of the late 1960s. At the time, according to Easton, an increasing number of his colleagues claimed that "behavioural science conceals an ideology of empirical conservativism" that

"lend[s] its support to the maintenance of the very factual conditions it explores" (1969: 1052). While Easton clearly took the challenges of the "post-behavioural revolution" seriously, his address attempted to reconcile the democratic ideals of contemporary social struggles with the disciplinary project of developing an empirically grounded science in a democracy. Through this attempt, Easton both reiterated and re-imagined the importance of the 'scientific outlook' by bracketing immediate or 'short term' calls for justice – however important they may be – and advocating incremental and detached research that measures the future in terms of "centuries rather than decades" (1969: 1055). As such, the implicit message of Easton's address was that empirical studies of politics could no longer assume that 1950s-style American democracy was a universal goal. This message, therefore, was not a warning that political science should rethink the positivist methodologies that emerged with behaviourism, but a call to expand the scope of empirical research beyond the simple relationship between individual behaviour and the political system.

Two years after Easton's APSA address, the pre-eminent theorist of democracy in U.S. political science, Robert Dahl (1971), offered a framework for measuring collective engagement in politics by replacing the term democracy with the more encompassing term "polyarchy." In *Polyarchy*, Dahl (1971) incorporated the most damning critiques of the behaviourist theory of democracy, which claimed that it was essentially elitist and completely overlooked the necessary element of public or collective participation.[79] For Dahl, opportunities for public opposition and participation were indeed crucial to any comparative measure of democracy, so crucial in fact, that simply describing the structure of a national regime seemed insufficient for the study of democratization (Dahl 1971:12-

[79] See especially Patemen (1970) for an example of the 'participation critique.'

13). What Dahl suggested was a theoretical framework that included the “subnational units” or “social organizations” that provide opportunity for public participation and opposition. This framework suggested that a regime could be nominally democratic, but function as an oligarchy. For this reason, Dahl suggested a model for studying political regimes historically on a continuum of democratization. Here, one-party dictatorships would be less democratic than competitive oligarchies, which are in turn less democratic than polyarchies defined by open avenues for participation via multiple political parties and other influential political groups. The caveats Dahl included in his description of the model offer insight into his argument for empirical research at the time and the urgency of the critiques mentioned by Easton in his address. Specifically, Dahl made two claims that separated his model from modernization theory. After describing his model, he states: “I do no assume that a shift from hegemony toward polyarchy is invariably desirable,” and later, “I want to make clear that I make no assumption that a shift from hegemony toward polyarchy is historically inevitable” (1971: 31-32).

By rejecting assumptions about liberal democracy’s desirability and inevitability, Dahl’s polyarchy model reflected a more general shift in the study of democracy that replaced these assumptions with ‘objective’ comparative measures. It is for this reason that *Polyarchy* was a foundational text for the political science subfield concerned with the metrology of democratic rights and freedoms.[80] Throughout the 1970s, an expansion of measurement criteria for democracy, in conjunction with a series of economic crises, led scholars to differentiate and re-categorize models of democracy among ‘developing’ countries, but also among Western states. For example, in the field of political economy, fierce debates emerged about the level and efficacy of corporatism in industrialized

[80] For reviews of this literature see Bollen (1990), Munck & Verkuilen (2002); Bowman et al. (2005)

democracies (see Panitch 1980; Siaroff 1999).[81] However, one discursive framework that emerged from this shift toward measurement became an especially important symbol for research on democracy. This framework posited the limitations of democracy as a problem of *capacity*, and interpreted the economic crises of the 1970s as partly produced by an international "crisis" of democratic capacity.

In response to the structural changes of this period, more explicitly political theories of democracy's crisis also emerged from both ends of the traditional right-left spectrum, with each side framing the crisis as a problem of the state overreaching its capacity. The vacuum created by the collapse of the pluralist vision of democracy's inherent stability fuelled these debates and facilitated the emergence of both a "New Left" and a "New Right" (Held 1987: 223). According to Stuart Hall (2010: 177), the "first" New Left was born in 1956 in an attempt to find a third way between the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution and the Western imperialism exercised in the invasion of the Suez Canal. From this perspective, the language of democracy's crisis was already implicit in the Left's attempts to reconcile the contradictions of liberal capitalist democracy. In the 1970s, the language of crisis became more explicit in debates about the liberal "state" and the possibility of a "legitimation crisis" (see especially Habermas 1975; Offe 1984). According to David Held's influential interpretation of these debates, the main critique from the left suggested that Western states were moving towards crisis because they faced an ever-diminishing capacity to meet the demands of

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[81] Although, as Panitch (1980) points out, there were a number of definitions of corporatism promoted during the 1970s, the term generally referred to a process whereby industrialized states incorporated leaders of business and labour organizations into the policy-making processes. Under this framework, European countries with strong labour organizations that worked with the state, such as Austria or the Scandinavian countries, were deemed to be more corporatist, while France, Canada and the United States were less corporatist because they lacked state friendly or strong labour institutions. These differences were, in part, magnified within these debates because 'corporatistism' seemed to correlate positively with a nation's ability to weather economic downturns.

social welfare as global capitalism gradually increased the state's reliance on resources generated by private accumulation (Held, 1987: 233). The theoretical complexities implied by "legitimation crisis" thesis, especially as Habermas (1975) outlined it, had less of a lasting effect on democracy research, partly because it posited a rather grim future for Western democracies headed toward either authoritarianism or the eventual breakdown of the capitalist welfare state. In addition, Habermas' critical concept of legitimation in a democracy was difficult to operationalize in a way that could be measured and studied from a comparative perspective and thus went against the grain of the metrological approaches, following Dahl (1971), that were gaining momentum in academic and policy research.[82]

During the same period, the New Right made a more dramatic move away from the confident liberalism of the 1950s. Scholars who had previously embraced the end of ideology thesis argued that democracy faced a crisis because the social welfare obligations introduced in the 1960s tended to "overload" the state and undermine its ability to function. Like a crisis of 'legitimation,' the "overloaded state" thesis asserted that democracies had finite amounts structural capacity to respond to the demands of their populations. This naturalized concept of capacity therefore became foundational to policy formation in the 1980s as Western governments, especially the UK and the US, addressed the problems of democracy using the framework of neoliberal economics.

At the core of the overloaded state argument was the pluralist assumption that a multitude of groups in society place competing demands on the government. This form of pluralism evolved from Berelson's (1954) and Dahl's (1956) models of balanced

[82] This lack of influence is somewhat unfortunate given the similarity the stages of this model have with recent attacks on public services in the current financial crisis (see the flow chart of "legitimation crisis" in Held 1987: 234).

cleavage and consensus, but took a much different form than the type of pluralism that political theorists would later associate with multiculturalism – what John Rawls called "a pluralism of incompatible reasonable comprehensive doctrines" (Rawls 2005: xvi). Instead, this type of pluralism emphasized the limited resources of the state to meet society's various demands. The plurality of group demands was therefore a type of universal pressure on the state, and if these demands outpaced a state's resources, they could push the state towards crisis (Britton 1975). This formulation was especially attractive to centrist liberals who disapproved of the demands made by women's groups, unions, environmentalists, and others. To them, these 'less essential' demands added strain on a state system that was already stretched and inherently limited.

One important voice within this debate was Samuel Huntington, who identified two mutually reinforcing factors that overburdened the state in a report entitled "The Crisis of Democracy" produced for the Trilateral Commission (Huntington 1975).[83] Huntington's contribution to the Trilateral Commission was important because he and other members of the Commission held various influential positions within the U.S. foreign policy apparatus, especially under the Carter Administration. As a prominent professor of government at Harvard, Huntington also emerged as an important figure after the fall of modernization theory because he was one of the few liberals who rejected the universalizing allure of modernization theory. For example, in his book *Political*

[83] The Trilateral Commision was a private council that brought together scholars, high-ranking government officials and other members of the liberal elite to strategize internationalist policy positions. According to Stephen Gill (1990: 132-133), it was established as a reaction to the increasingly isolationist foreign policy agenda that reflected the "Nixon-Kissinger world-view" prevalent during the early 1970s. Generally, the Commission espoused the view that the expanding economic hegemony of the United States and the West required a coordinated political agenda among Western economic powers as well as Japan.

Order and Changing Societies (1968), Huntington outlined the perils associated with the complex processes of institution building in developing societies.

Writing in the Trilateral Commission's report about the United States, Huntington suggested that first among the factors overburdening the state was the "expansion of governmental activity" (1975: 65). According to him, during the relative economic prosperity of the previous decade, expenditures on public welfare programs had rapidly expanded the size of government bureaucracies tasked with managing 'social' programs. This expansion had in turn altered the public's expectations about what the government could provide and therefore made scaling back such programs politically impossible. The cycle of program expansion thereby stretched the capacity of the government to manage its affairs and subsequently contributed to the second factor in the approaching crisis: "the decline of governmental authority" (1975: 74).

Along with the rise in social movement activity in the 1960s, Huntington saw a corresponding deterioration of traditional authority structures. This included challenges to outmoded racial and gender hierarchies, but also to authority based on "organizational position, economic wealth, specialized expertise, legal competence, or electoral representativeness" (Huntington 1975: 75).[84] The 'democratic' challenge to these forms of authority had the effect of undermining the public trust in the government as more people expanded their participation in protests and other forms of political action, the most important example being public opposition to the Vietnam War. Furthermore, with the erosion of trust in the government, its ability to moderate competing demands and govern effectively eroded. Expanded participation, driven by the mistrust of authority,

[84] Huntington seemed especially irritated by the challenge to faculty expertise in a university context. The idea that students should sit on hiring committees was, for him, unacceptable (1975: 75).

therefore stretched the capacity of the state even further. Because of this incapacity, competition for state resources increased and demands became ever more polarized. In this argument, democratic participation and the demands of equality therefore placed an inordinate strain on the capacity of the democratic state and, in turn, threatened its viability. For Huntington, essentially, too much democracy was bad for democracy.

The language of capacity, however, was not simply a political formulation of the right or left. It was also an increasingly important feature of policy debates that were rapidly evolving to accommodate advances in economics stimulated by the widespread application of computational technologies in the analysis of economic data. One prominent scholar who made this connection, but adopted neither the perspective of the new left nor the new right, was Daniel Bell (2008[1973]). Bell adopted the language of 'capacity' in the mid-1970s to discuss the changes produced by a new form of intellectual technology that aimed at "ordering mass society" (Bell 2008[1973]: 33). In an essay on the topic, Bell proposed that the strain on the "public household" was the product of the historically unprecedented development in the late 1960s that saw the welfare state take on "normative societal commitments" to redress "the impact of all economic and social inequalities" (Bell 1974: 33). These 'normative societal commitments' of the 1960s upset the tentative balance and stability of democracy by overreaching its (natural) capacity. By equating 'national' capacity with the capacity of a 'household budget,' Bell defined the 'ideals' of social and economic equality as 'luxuries' the state could not afford, and thanks to the progression of social logics emphasizing economic efficiency, would not likely pursue in the future. The idea of an "ordered public household" for Bell was not a goal to achieve; as much as a logic that he argued would become more important to post-

industrial society. Although Bell himself was a socialist on economic issues,[85] and a harsh critic of the 'new right,' his analysis of societal versus economic commitments predicted the type of framework, identified decades earlier by Karl Polanyi (1944), which "embedded" societal concerns within the economic system. Advocates of the 'new right' would eventually extend this language of capacity to reflect the principles of an elitist theory of democracy, along with a theory of the state espoused by classical (i.e. anti-Keynesian) economists.

The Solution of Civil Society

Toward the end of the 1970s, the state in Western democracies increasingly became the subject of political criticism. For liberal centrists and the political right in the United States, social welfare policies infringed upon individual freedom in general and market freedom in particular. On the left, the centralized bureaucracy of the welfare state was a source of alienation, from a humanist perspective, and a facilitator of continued capitalist expansion from a structural-Marxist perspective. Coincidentally, the solution that presented itself as equally desirable for both political and 'scientific' purposes was a revival of the concept of civil society.

Civil society first appeared as an important concept in political theory with Aristotle's *politike koinonia,* which translated into Latin as *societas civilis* (Cohen & Arato, 1992: 84). The concept was central to Hegel's argument in *Philosophy of Right*, and later played an important role in Gramsci's political writings. However, the revival of civil society as both a scientific and political characteristic of democracy was made possible by a convergence of social movements in Eastern Europe and Latin America that

[85] In his obituary published in *The Economist* (Feb. 3, 2011), Bell was quoted as describing himself as "a socialist in economics, a liberal in politics and a conservative in culture."

challenged the authority of repressive states by expanding the sphere of non-state political activity. What movements such as Poland’s Solidarity provided was an empirical example of pro-democracy movements that seemed to emerge as an alternative to the bureaucratic socialist state. For researchers measuring the various elements of democratization, these developments were interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the Solidarity movement adopted the socialist language of workers' rights by centring their activities on Polish unions. This focus was a strategic move by Solidarity to avoid the appearance of a direct threat to the Soviet-backed state. Secondly, by avoiding direct confrontation with the Soviet-controlled state, and in some cases insisting that the movement should be explicitly anti-political (Cohen & Arato 1992: 17), the collection of semi-formal social institutions mobilized by the movement appeared to place a separate, non-political sphere of civil society at the centre of the democratization process.

For scholars in the West working in the tradition of the New Left, such as John Keane (1988), civil society represented the possible expansion of social democracy beyond the utopian goal of state socialism. What critical theories of democracy found in this separate sphere, according to Cohen & Arato (1992), was a way to promote the solidarity that was generated and protected by “the interlocking institutions of civil society, associations and publics, which in turn presuppose rights of association and communication” (1992: 472). The best hope for this form of solidarity therefore appeared to be a civil society populated by critical social movements that resisted bureaucratic organizational forms and the lure of power (1992: 473). Since such movements challenged the logics of money and power, they could thereby undermine liberal democracy’s “built-in tendency to contribute to the economic colonization of the world”

(1992: 471). Moreover, informal or non-institutionalized social movements were inherently difficult to incorporate into corporatist models of democracy that narrowly focused on participation in formal political institutions. Thus, for scholars on the Left, the democratization of civil society, rather than simply its revival, was a prominent theme (1992: 17).[86]

While social movements represented a possible expansion of social democracy to critical social scientists, the concept of civil society also appeared as an attractive new concept for those opposing the rise of the New Left, including the former members of the anti-communist left that formed the basis of the New Right (Held 1987; Guilhot 2005). In the political discourses generated by the newly elected Reagan and Thatcher administrations, civil society and the promise of movements such as Solidarity in Poland provided evidence for existing narratives about the inherent limitations of the state, especially when such concepts of civil society included the free market as a crucial part (Shils 1991). This pan-spectrum political interest in civil society had an important influence on the nexus between academic research on democracy and government policy for many reasons, but two conceptual innovations stand out. The first conceptual innovation was the communitarian discourse that framed the emergence of civil society during the 1980s as a "revival" of a lost foundation of American society. Edward Shils' essay on "The Virtues of Civil Society" represented this innovation in a way that used communitarian language to rediscover his earlier (1958) argument about modernization, concluding that - surprise! - American democracy is and should be a model for the rest of

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[86] This is, of course, a necessarily simplified overview of the importance of civil society in critical social and political theory. As Cohen & Arato's book *Civil Society and Political Theory* (1992) suggests, themes that emerged in the 1980s debate over the revival of civil society had long histories. Part of their project in this text is to sort out some of the more important critiques of civil society in order to "reconstruct" the concept for political theory.

the world. The second conceptual innovation was a neoliberal discourse in which the social elements of democracy, which social scientists had tried to measure in terms of participation, rights or freedoms for the previous decade, became codified in the more econometric-friendly and apolitical terms of civil associations and social capital (e.g. Putnam 1993). Despite the deep rift between communitarian and neoliberal approaches, these two interpretations of civil society set the stage for a rapid expansion of civil society NGOs that emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution and the supposed 'victory' of liberal democracy. For the newly established field of democracy assistance as well, this emphasis on civil society as a driver of rights and freedoms presented opportunities in terms of access to funding and as a conceptual foundation for institutionalizing a range of assistance programs that targeted activists, media outlets and other non-governmental entities (Carothers & Ottaway 2000; see also Chapter 4).

Civil Society as an American Tradition

Unlike the positions offered by communitarians in moral philosophy (MacIntyre 1981) or the sociology of morality (Bellah et al. 1985), the norms and values attached to civil society by the liberal heirs of modernization theory and the end of ideology tended to encourage social cohesion and obligation through traditional structures of authority. Such a position therefore addressed one of the key features of the 'crisis of democracy' outlined by Huntington (1975). In a lecture on the revival of civil society, Edward Shils (1991) explained that "civility" was, in fact, the normative basis of both civil society and democracy more generally:

> Civility is an attitude and a pattern of conduct. It is approximately the same as what Montesquieu called virtue. Montesquieu said, 'Virtue, in a republic, is a very

> simple thing: it is love of the republic'. It is 'love of one's country'. 'Love of the republic in a democracy is love of democracy…'
>
> Civility is an appreciation of or attachment to the institutions which constitute civil society. It is an attitude of attachment to the whole society, to all its strata and sections. It is an attitude of concern for the good of the entire society (1991: 11).

In addition, Shils argued that civil society represented the institutions of a society that were both separate from, and limited by the state. These institutions constituted the moral identity of a society and embodied its cohesive elements. In this way, social problems were not the responsibility of the state, but instead that of various elements of a society bound together in a "concern for the good of the entire society." In fact, were the state to seek to address social problems, it would likely infringe upon the proper functioning of civil society. Thus, as Shils suggests, an unregulated civil society and market actually protects members of a society from the state:

> Civil society does not include the state but it presupposes its existence. It presupposes a particular kind of state, namely, a state of limited powers. Among these powers are the powers to enact laws which protect the market. A civil society must provide for private contracts which assert binding obligations and the judicial enforcement of such arrangements; it should provide for collective bargaining and wage-contracts. Civil society requires that the state (or government) be limited in the scope of its activities and that it be bound by law but that it be effective in executing the laws which protect the pluralism of civil society and its necessary liberties (1991: 9)

From this perspective, such a definition of civil society translated social obligations into a set of rules, negotiated outside the limits of the state, which governed and constrained the extent of state power. The basic principles of political pluralism, guaranteed previously by formal democratic institutions, found a new form in this notion of civil society as a grand market of ideas and capital that promoted balance through the values of civility.

This 'solved' the problem of capacity by simply shifting the obligation to care for the wellbeing of citizens away from the state and back to its 'proper' or 'natural' place in civil society. Likewise, the expression of democratic ideals also depended on civil society. While the formal institutions of democracy guaranteed formal participation and legal equality, the actual practice of participation and equality required people to meet the social obligations enacted by the rules or laws of a society (i.e., no disruptive protests allowed). Challenging or refusing obligations to society, in this understanding, would thereby undermine a person's or a group's chances at increased participation or equal treatment. This was a conceptual foundation for early democracy assistance programs, especially those focused on civil society institutions that promoted the 'rule of law' (Carothers 1991).

A key aspect of how professional democracy assistance translated this formulation of civil society into expert knowledge about democracy was that it appeared as a "natural" foundation of American democracy, and therefore gave Americans unique "natural" insight. As with the end of ideology thesis of the 1960s, the adoption of civil society in the late 1980s reaffirmed the American model as the ideal. Daniel Bell explicitly outlined this position in an account of the concept's revival (Bell 1989). Civil society, Bell claimed, was actually an enduring product of American exceptionalism and its revival was more an evocation of the American political tradition than a rediscovery of a philosophical concept. According to his argument, the American Revolution produced the only true civil society (defined in Hegelian terms) in political history. This is because there was no state in America that ruled over the social order – as Hegel suggested was case with Europe's ruling social hierarchies – but there was instead a "government" (Bell

1989: 50). This government was built as a "political marketplace" that was primarily local but arbitrated in the last instance by a national Supreme Court. The Court, and by extension the Constitution, was therefore the "bedrock of civil society" (1989: 50). In the 1930s, the New Deal and other precipitating factors facilitated the "rise of the state" in the US and changed the scale of social and economic life to the level of the nation. Over time, this expansion produced the well-known problems of the welfare state, for Bell. The call for civil society, then, represented a desire to return to the uniquely American political relations that defined democracy before the rise of the state:

> The demand for a return to 'civil society' is the demand for a return to a manageable scale of social life… It emphasizes voluntary associations, churches, and communities, arguing that decisions should be made locally and should not be controlled by the state and its bureaucracies (1989: 56).

Civil society, according to Bell's argument, appeared as a natural fact of American democracy that was temporarily hidden by the welfare state. As with Shils' account, Bell saw the revival of civil society as an opportunity to reverse the trends of the late 1960s that challenged traditional authority and demanded state intervention in alleviating society's ills. In keeping with their positions in the 'end of ideology' debate, both also saw Marxism and similar political movements aimed at state intervention as a threat to civil society. Of course, this naturalization of civil society was not, in itself, a new development. Beginning with Tocqueville's conclusions about the role of civic associations in America's unique democratic experiment, social scientists in the United States have regularly debated the threat to democracy posed by a degradation of the American civic character. Bellah et al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (1985) fits into this broader tradition, as well as Robert Putnam's later iteration of this idea in *Bowling Alone* (2000).

The theoretical connection between civil society and the narrative of societal decline and renewal was central to both communitarian and neoliberal approaches at this time. For example, one advocate of neoliberal 'renewal,' Jeffrey Sachs (1993), argued that once Poland removed the centralized planning of its Soviet-style bureaucracy, free markets and democracy immediately took off. The naturalization of a form of civil society that included the free market was a key link between these, otherwise, opposing views. In fact, another book by Putnam – *Making Democracy Work* (1993) – appropriated this naturalized concept of civil society for an empirical study that was widely praised for its general conclusions on the study of democracy by translating an essentially communitarian thesis into language that became useful for neoliberal economists (Somers 2005). By applying the concept of social capital to his study of civic associations, he provided a methodological modification to the concept of civil society that enabled him to transform the concept itself into a fact of democracy.

Civil Society as a Fact of Democracy

For democracy assistance organizations that, in the 1990s, were trying to shake off their association with the Reagan administration's pro-democracy and anti-communist foreign policy narratives (Carothers 1994), Putnam's book *Making Democracy Work* (1993) was important because it repackaged civil society as a foundational fact of democracy in terms that seemed to be politically neutral, based on its empirical representation. Of course, this repackaging had an implicit normative element and was part of an evolving political discourse that conflated the term 'civil society' with free market capitalism. As Somers (2005) argues:

> Conservatives, strategically, after first capturing the civil society concept, then tamed it, reframed it, and renamed it. In a truly Pygmailion-like achievement,

> civil society—the once unruly and unpredictable nurturing ground for the goals, practices, and normative ideals of democratic citizenship—reappeared throughout the 1990s in public and academic discourse as social capital. Quickly appropriating it as social, political, and economic knowledge, neoliberals and neoconservatives alike were able to fully exploit its epistemological powers (2005: 261).

Aside from these implicit normative undertones, however, Putnam's explicit aim was to have a strong impact on the science of democracy. The study produced a statistical model in which the independent variable of social capital – a concept that quantified and aggregated civic associations[87] – produced drastically different outcomes for democracy. This simple correlation had the effect of translating civil society into a useful quantity for statistical models that evaluated democracy and democratization.[88] Much like the political facts of democracy in the early 1960s, this simple and empirically supported correlation – acting as a 'fact' – had significant "epistemological powers" in both political and academic discourses.[89]

The subject and starting point of *Making Democracy Work* (1993) was an effort in 1970 to reorganize the Italian government by moving some authority from the centralized state to regional governing bodies. For Putnam and his fellow researchers, this sudden transition offered an opportunity to look at how governing bodies were developed and how they performed in comparison to other governing bodies that were also effectively starting from the same point. To measure the performance of these governing bodies, Putnam and his colleagues identified twelve indicators intended to reflect the

[87] Putnam borrowed his definition of social capital from James Coleman's *Foundations of Social Theory* (1988), which was itself an attempt to reconcile social theory with rational choice models common to economics. In Putnam's study, social capital retains its foundation in rational choice theory, but is also located within long historical traditions. When focused on the problem of political institutions, this approach therefore seems to draw on at least four different social science disciplines: sociology, economics, history, and political science.

[88] This translation was especially useful to studies of democracy in the field of economics (Somers 2005).

[89] In the course of my interview research, respondents used the term 'social capital,' or a similar variation, in this way.

effectiveness of each region's governing institutions. As Putnam suggests, the study was oriented toward measuring "ouputs" rather than "outcomes," or in other words, "health care rather than mortality rates; environmental policy rather than air quality; economic developments rather than business profits" (1993: 65-66). The twelve indicators included policy processes (such as the ability of governing bodies to deliver budgets promptly), characterizations of policy decisions based on their effectiveness or creativity, and indicators of implementation capacity such as actual numbers of day care centers or family clinics. Taken together, these indicators produced comparable values for each region's overall 'performance.' In this case, democracy was an amalgamation of institutional outputs that, crucially, were separated from social processes and outcomes thought to be beyond government control (1993: 65). Such an analysis implicitly posited two types of institutions - social (or civic) institutions and governing institutions - where the quality of the former determined the performance of the latter.

While modernization scholars assumed the government's ability to be responsive to society's needs depended on liberal vision of socioeconomic modernity, Putnam and his colleagues asserted that the quality of civic institutions better explained this relationship. Social scientists working in the metrological tradition following Dahl (1971) characterized these problems in terms of opportunities to participate in formal institutions such as political parties, and Putnam's slightly modified version suggested that participation and equality found expression in the civic community. According to this argument, "[c]itizenship in a civic community is marked, first of all, by active participation in public affairs," and "[t]he more that politics approximates the ideal of political equality among citizens following norms of reciprocity and engaged self-

government, the more civic that community may be said to be" (Putnam 1993: 87-88). In other words, for democracy to function properly, citizens needed to engage in civic institutions.

With regard to the development of a community's civic institutions, social capital played an especially important role: "like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence" (Coleman, quoted in Putnam 1993: 167). Social capital, according to this definition, has a presence or an ontology that allowed civic associations to grow and influence the performance of governing institutions. Moreover, according to Putnam's historical study of Italy's civic traditions, the presence of this social capital was independent of economic development or other external factors. Individuals within a community therefore developed social capital and manifested it in the rational decisions they made about whether or not to work together toward common goals. If people in a given community worked together and invested trust into their community, governing institutions tended to perform better. While the term 'social capital' gained currency in policy and academic circles, these specific conclusions were only indirectly applicable to professional democracy assistance because they implied that democratic traditions were, partly, products of in-grown trust networks and not something that could be easily promoted from outside of the community.

At the same time, Putnam's work confirmed the conceptual framework Berelson extrapolated from the Columbia voter research that the existence of democratic institutions could moderate and stabilize political conflict. For Putnam, however, social cleavages would only affect the output of governing institutions if the required civic

institutions were absent. As Foley & Edwards (1996) state in their review of Putnam's theory of civil society:

> Putnam's preoccupation here is a familiar one. In order to foster a genuine spirit of "wider cooperation," his argument suggests such associations must not be "polarized" or "politicized." They must "bridge" social and political divisions and thus, presumably, be autonomous from political forces. These caveats echo a long tradition of "pluralist" analysis. Yet how can such associations shape political participation and "civic engagement" without engaging in specifically political issues and without representing compelling social interests? (1996: 41)

From the perspective of Putnam's study, the answer to this question – which Foley & Edwards point out later in their article – is that political issues and social interests are necessarily of secondary importance to the quality of a community's civic associations. In this way, Putnam essentially reduces political problems to a narrower question of *civic* capacity. This question of civic capacity had little to do with the state's capacity to address political problems and everything to do with the capacity of civil society to do so. The concept of social capital therefore stands as an indicator of social 'capacity.'

For the study of democracy, Putnam's concept of social capital presented a foundation for the interactive relationship between civil society and government, which made government more responsive and encouraged further participation and equality. It also simplified the complex relationships that make up a political "community" by distilling the relationship between governing bodies and political subjects into inputs measured by their degree of "civic-ness," and outputs measured as institutional performance. The "epistemological power" of this simplification, as Somers (2005) states above, implicitly subordinates the "goals, practices, and normative ideals" of democracy in favour of a model that reduced democracy to measurable social inputs and institutional outputs. Such a model opened the door to forms of expert knowledge that could intervene

upon these inputs and outputs by assisting community members working to build local associations on one hand and assisting elites working to build democratic institutions on the other, which is why this model of civil society still resonates in contemporary democracy assistance.

Unlike approaches that equated civil society with the open and transformative solidarities produced by social movements, Putnam's model translated civil society into civic qualities that, along with political and economic facts, constituted independent variables that shape the scientific study of democracy. In doing so, Putnam managed to create common ground between communitarian narratives of civic renewal and neoliberal calculations of economic efficiency. Such an approach, because of its supposed empirical neutrality, its pluralist assumptions about civil society's moderating influence and, most importantly, its openness to translation by metrological approaches suggests that the study is a useful representation of important debates in academic and policy circles at the time. While it certainly influenced the discourse of democracy, it also symbolized a number of trends that emerged in the field of international development at the time. Throughout the 1990s, ever more governmental and non-governmental organizations shifted their focus to improving civil society institutions, and as the following chapter suggests, democracy assistance organizations turned this focus into a form of professional knowledge that helped to solidify their place within the broader field of international aid.

Conclusion

Putnam's translation of civil society into a (variable) fact of democracy is emblematic of a broader trend in the postwar study of democracy. Like the earlier voter studies, it represented an approach to the problems of democracy that valued empirical

observation and broke democracy down into its social, economic and political elements. For scholars studying voters and other isolated political elements, this conceptual reduction facilitated the application of new methodological techniques that appeared to make their research more scientifically grounded. The process by which scholars institutionalized and accepted these methodological approaches had the dual effects of constituting new disciplinary subfields and creating new 'realities' of democracy. For example, the international election surveys captured by the National Election Studies at Michigan present a different 'reality' than the scores calculated by Freedom House in their annual survey of *Freedom in the World*. What unites these methodologies is a particular scientific outlook that consistently attempted to measure and analyze verifiable 'realities' against the impossible or impractical ideals of democracy. This outlook built conventions out of the motifs discussed in the previous chapter by turning the normative arguments against social democracy's irrationality and idealism into unspoken boundaries of legitimate discourse.

Of course, the rules and boundaries that defined these approaches were fluid and many critical approaches challenged these positions throughout the period discussed above. What has been consistent is that the salience of this approach within established academic disciplines in the United States has maintained a level of legitimacy that resists critical attempts to expand the facts of democracy beyond existing mainstream (liberal) conventions. In this way, the political facts of democracy have performed well in American post-war social science. The key question going forward is how well this performance translates to international and domestic policy formation, as well as the practice or lived experience of democracy.

While this chapter has highlighted some of the prominent methodological innovations and technologies that supported this outlook, the purpose of this study is not simply to catalogue the multiple exigencies that ground social scientific research on democracy. What is important about the 'method making' processes that institutionalized particular approaches to democracy research is that in the context of postwar academic debates, especially in the West, these methods often also implied some form of intervention. While social scientists no longer enjoy the level of access to policy making granted to modernization theorists in the 1960s, the overlapping spheres of academia, governmental aid agencies and the field of non-governmental aid organizations have opened up a space for a particular form of democracy expertise to emerge in the past few decades. This form of expertise draws on the 'facts' and 'methodologies' of previous generations of democracy research, but it is also defined by a history of symbolic and structural processes that, as the following chapter describes, made democracy assistance what it is today.

Chapter 4: The Structured Field of Democracy Assistance

In the previous two chapters, a historical epistemology linked the development of scientific 'facts' and 'methods' of democracy research to historically situated presuppositions, normative commitments, and practical contexts. The development of these knowledge-making processes was foundational to the production of professional academic fields of research. The metaphor of the "foundation" is particularly apt because, as the knowledge described in these chapters helped scholars to find success within professional fields, it began to 'settle' into accepted discourse. In his famous text on the "third wave" of democratization, Samuel P. Huntington summarized this 'settling' as if describing a natural process:

> For some while after World War II a debate went on between those determined, in the classical vein, to define democracy by source or purpose, and the growing number of theorists adhering to a procedural concept of democracy in the Schumpeterian mode. By the 1970s the debate was over, and Schumpeter had won. Theorists increasingly drew distinctions between rationalistic, utopian, idealistic definitions of democracy, on the one hand, and empirical, descriptive, institutional, and procedural definitions, on the other, and concluded that only the latter type of definition provided the analytical precision and empirical referents that make the concept a useful one[…]The prevailing effort was to make democracy less of a "hurrah" word and more of a commonsense word. (Huntington 1991: 6-7).

While Huntington's version here seems like whiggish history since it ignores the strong critical tradition that opposed this view, the 'facts' and 'methods' associated with this effort to make democracy a "commonsense" word did appeal to many advocates of capitalist liberal democracy in the last decades of the 20th Century. The apex of this view was, of course, the perceived triumph of liberal democracy that came with the fall of the Soviet empire.

During this period, democracy became a fashionable topic for political commentators excited by the world-historical implications of democracy's "victory," with Francis Fukuyama's (1992) proclamation of "the end of history" standing as the avatar for the general confidence of liberal democrats. Those working at the boundaries of the academic and policy fields in the 1990s, as well, found that the dismantling of the massive foreign policy infrastructure built to combat the spread of communism made resources available for a new "mission." In many ways, democracy became this 'mission' (Smith 1994).[90] Despite being a longstanding symbolic priority in the United States and other Western countries, an influx of government interest and resources in the 1980s stimulated the creation of a new type of organization designed to 'promote' democracy abroad. As such, international aid projects during this time, and especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, attempted to install the seemingly victorious model of capitalist liberal democracy as if it were a self-evidently desirable 'outcome.'

From the perspective of a knowledge-in-the-making narrative, this period is important because the expansion of international aid for 'democracy' related projects in both governmental and non-governmental spheres required the translation of policy positions (ideals) into programs that actually did something. In the United States, this meant a shift from a situation in which democracy promotion was primarily a rhetorical device that gave moral justification for Cold War policies of containment to one in which democracy itself became a practical goal. Into this void stepped a cohort of experts who were able to implement democratization programs in a way that was not possible (materially) before. This chapter traces the emergence of these experts by examining the

[90] Although what was "new" about this mission were the resources applied to it, rather than the ideals that have been central to US foreign policy, for example (Smith 1994).

rise and consolidation of the field of professional democracy assistance. Central to this examination is a process of 'institution making' in which the facts and methods discussed above were mobilized in the form of practical or applied research that married the norms of scientific research to the political agendas of Western governments.

One consequence of the methodological innovation of the postwar decades was that the term democracy itself came to represent a variety of projects that had radically different goals. For some, such as Jeffrey Sachs (1993) and other prominent intellectuals, as discussed in the previous chapter, democracy and civil society became a mechanism to enforce market capitalism in the post-Soviet world, making it simply a vehicle for neoliberal economic policy.[91] For others, the victory of liberal democracy represented a transition toward perpetual peace, so its promotion was an important part of national security.[92] However, democracy assistance as an organized and organizational practice is an ideal frame through which to understand contemporary democracy as a field of expert knowledge because it professionalized a form of expertise that included a wide variety of cultural approaches to democracy. As discussed in the introduction, this diverse symbolic terrain became the object of institutionalized processes that explicitly framed democracy in terms of practical 'results.' In other words, the field of democracy assistance was able to develop a symbolic monopoly of expertise regarding how democracy 'really' works, and more importantly, how to intervene upon situations to assist democratization.

The following thus examines how organizations in this field engaged in a process of 'institution making' in order to consolidate and professionalize democracy expertise.

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[91] Especially in Russia, this process is now widely seen as a debacle (Sakwa 2000; Rutland 2000).
[92] Framing democracy promotion as a vehicle for international peace was partly an extension of the so-called "democratic peace thesis" (Doyle 1983) which reinterpreted Kant's 'perpetual peace thesis' in the context of international relations to suggest, essentially, that since democratic countries tend not to go to war with each other, more democratic countries would mean more peaceful international relations.

In order to do so, this chapter outlines the organizational relations within the field as well as the moral and political grammars that structured the "epistemic culture" (Knorr Cetina, 2005) shaped by this process of 'institution making.' At the center of this process is a set of conventions that form the conceptual boundaries of democracy. These boundaries emerged out of the academic debates about the social and political elements of democracy, as outlined in Chapters 2 & 3. However, as I argue in this chapter, ongoing symbolic and structural processes that are unique to the history of democracy assistance also played an important role in shaping the field.

The professionalization process itself unfolded in three distinct stages: (1) the 'formation stage,' (2) the 'expansion stage,' and (3) the 'consolidation stage.'[93] The formation stage began with the process that established the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983, and continued through the collapse of the Soviet Union. The expansion stage roughly corresponds with the Clinton Administration, a period that saw an exponential growth in funding for democracy projects that focused on building up 'civil society,' based on the methodological 'innovations' described at the end of Chapter 3, especially the increasingly dominant metrological approaches to democracy and language of 'institutional capacity.' A field-wide reaction to challenges posed by the fallout from the Bush Administration's so-called 'Freedom Agenda' defines the third, or the 'consolidation stage.' While the foreign policy agendas of the United States were distinct from the work of democracy assistance, these policies shaped the structure of the field, through the distribution of aid funding, and influenced the work of NGOs as well as governmental organizations outside of the United States. Part of the reason for this

[93] I use the term "stage" to represent the broad changes that defined the rise of democracy assistance, but I do not argue that these stages were by any means inevitable, natural or teleological in the sense of the supposed 'stages' of modernization proposed by 'modernization theory' (Rostow 1960).

influence was that positions within the field were determined relationally, and these relations changed based on shifts in funding priorities.

The Formation Stage of Democracy Assistance

In June of 1982, U.S. President Ronald Reagan made a speech before the British Parliament entitled "Promoting Democracy and Peace." Widely remembered as one of the first statements of Reagan's pro-democracy (and anti-communist) foreign policy, it is also remembered as the symbolic start of contemporary democracy promotion in the United States. The speech called for the establishment of assistance organizations similar to the German foundations (or Stiftungen) associated with their political parties and funded by the West German State. These foundations, which Reagan contrasted with the Soviet Union's efforts to expand "Marxist-Leninist" ideals through "covert political training" as well as "violence and subversion," represented a renewed effort to assist the development of political parties in new or aspiring democracies. In his speech, the President suggested that the 'time was right' for the US, and by implication Britain, to initiate similar projects (Rowland & Jones 2010).

The speech itself built on a growing consensus in Washington and in academic circles that the promotion of democracy abroad was central to US strategic interests. A year prior, an article published in *The Washington Quarterly* (Samuels & Douglas 1981)[94] proposed many of the ideas used in Reagan's speech and articulated the need for this type of foreign engagement. In the article, the authors made a case for democracy

[94] The article was written by Michael A. Samuels, a vice-president of the 'conservative' Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and William A. Douglas, an academic and former director of the 'liberal' American Institute for Free Labour Development.

promotion based on the supposed "non-ideological" foundation of the American party system:

> Neither party seeks to change the basic social structure or the nature of the system of economic ownership. Republicans and Democrats simply offer various practical proposals for improving the existing social and economic structures. Being nonideological, our parties are also parochial. They do not believe themselves to be part of any international political brotherhood. They feel no commonality with Christian Democrat, Democratic Socialist, or Liberal parties abroad. This unique U.S. political structure means that certain functions in political aid overseas are feasible for the United States, while others would be quite impractical (Samuels & Douglas 1981: 57-58).

For the authors, the feasible function of political aid was to promote a pluralist form of democracy by helping all parties committed to such a system. The political 'fact' that neither of the major American parties were considered 'ideological' clearly drew on the 'pluralist' theory of democracy (e.g. Berelson et al. 1954; Dahl 1956) that, especially after the 'end of ideology' debate mentioned in Chapter 3, had settled into a narrative opposing anti-capitalist 'ideology.'

Two years after the President's speech, the American Political Foundation brought a plan to Congress to create a National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The Endowment would fund democracy promotion organizations affiliated with both major parties, as well as an organization affiliated with US business interests and one affiliated with a national labour organization, the AFL-CIO. Congress eventually established the Endowment along with the four affiliate organizations, which included the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the AFL-CIO affiliated group now called the "Solidarity Center," and the Center for International Private Enterprise. While the NED received public funding from Congress, the intention of the plan was that its affiliate organizations would operate as quasi-autonomous non-governmental

organizations. This organizational distinction was important for practical political reasons related to the historical role of American intervention abroad.

According to the plan produced by the American Political Foundation (APF),[95] the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting America's pro-democracy agenda dated back to the late 1960s. At the time, covert CIA funding of "American private voluntary organizations" had been uncovered and the Johnson Administration called for a more open and transparent mechanism to support such organizations as well as other "worthwhile international programs."[96] The principle of the quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization thus aimed at supporting political activities abroad aligned with "American interests" in a way that was less politically inflammatory. The 'arms-length' positions of the field's foundational organizations therefore initially insulated them from both domestic partisan attacks and from international questions about their strategic relationship to the US government.

At the same time, this 'anti-ideological' approach paradoxically played into the ongoing 'culture war' engaged by the US government to win the 'war of ideals' against the Soviet Union. The core of this approach was an assumption that winning hearts and minds over to the side of democracy was a matter of education and training, rather than a question of competing values. Such an assumption framed a second proposal, written by policy analysts within the Administration, called "Project Democracy." The submission of this 'complementary' plan for democracy promotion to Congress occurred in the same year as the plan for the NED, but called for democracy promotion activities to go through the State Department, the US Information Agency and the US Agency for International

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[95] The American Political Foundation submitted this document, entitled "The Democracy Program," in July 1983 (retrieved from http://www.ned.org/about/history on April 25, 2011).
[96] "The Democracy Program" (1983: 2).

Development. In a summary report on "Project Democracy," Secretary of State George Schultz outlined this policy as activities in five interrelated 'areas:'[97]

> **Leadership Training:** This includes making available to current and future leaders education and training in the theory and practice of democracy and the skills necessary both to build the basic institutions of democracy and to counter the action of nondemocratic forces. Programs would be conducted both in the United States and foreign countries. Nongovernmental institutions such as political parties, labor, universities, business, state and local government associations, legal and community action organizations, and other will play a key role.
>
> **Education:** We should strive to encourage exposure to the principles and practice of democracy and to the character and values of the United States in the educational systems of other nations. We, therefore, intend to strengthen book programs, American studies institutions, English teaching, scholarships and fellowships, and related programs.
>
> **Strengthening the Institutions of Democracy:** A number of our programs will strengthen the basic institutions of a democratic society—unions, parties, media, universities, business, legal/judicial systems, religious and community action groups, and others. Here again we will rely on American nongovernmental organizations to carry most of the load.
>
> **Conveying Ideas and Information:** Through conferences; meetings; dissemination of books and journals; and special programs in universities, other institutions, and the media, we hope to promote an intellectual and political interest in democracy and a reinvigorated sense of the shared values of democratic societies.
>
> **Development of Personal and Institutional Ties:** Perhaps the most important result of all our programs will be the development of lasting ties and working relationships between American individuals and organizations and their foreign counterparts. The proponents of democracy need an international network which will provide them with moral support, intellectual stimulation, practical and technical assistance, and protection against their adversaries (Schultz 1983: 2-3).

[97] These five areas of activities are important because, firstly, they provide insight into the role that 'information' played in democracy promotion, at least from the perspective of the Administration. Secondly, they also place knowledge production and communication about democracy at the centre of what would later be called 'soft power' initiatives (Nye 2004). Finally, the model for democracy promotion suggested here represented a consensus about the of nature democracy as something that could be produced using a 'top-down' approach. This model has been challenged by those within the field in recent years, but it dominated the discourse for much of the 1980s and 1990s.

The five 'areas' outlined by Schultz provides a particularly informative look into how the structure of democracy promotion built on conceptions of democracy outlined in the previous chapters. The first area, focused on "leadership" is a consistent theme in the democracy assistance literature and while this general approach did not explicitly pertain to economic or social elites, it certainly worked on the premise, formulated by the elite theorists, that political change is dependent on the presence of organized elite leadership. The other four areas, however, expressed the discourses of civil society that were emerging at the time. For example, the priority of education and networking that brings "American values" to these countries implied that the 'natural' civic virtues of the United States were an important resource. Most importantly, however, were the provisions that outlined the institutional knowledge that American experts could contribute, which evoked the type of technical capacity proposed by metrological approaches at the time.

While "Project Democracy" was less popular with the Administration's opponents in Congress because many interpreted it through the lens of other foreign policy programs that favoured militant anti-communism over democratic ideals,[98] it proposed essentially the same range of activities as "The Democracy Program," which was written by the non-governmental and non-partisan American Political Foundation (APF). The APF plan for a non-governmental endowment eventually prevailed, but only after it became clear that Congress would not accept "Project Democracy." Since the arms-length structure of the NED ensured that it remained independent of the anti-communist projects in Reagan's agenda, there were often challenges to funding for the NED in the first few years after it was established. Instead, the State Department and

[98] "Project Democracy" was also the code name of the later operation led by Oliver North to arm the Nicaraguan Contras by secretly flying supplies into Honduras, although it was unclear whether this was directly linked to the plan proposed to Congress (Carothers 1991: 205).

USAID developed their own 'democracy projects,' such as supporting the right-wing regime in El Salvador and opposing the democratically elected Marxist regime in Nicaragua. These projects, built on a foreign policy that mistrusted citizen movements unless they explicitly opposed communist politics, therefore overshadowed the earliest attempts at democracy promotion (Carothers 1991). In the end, the NED and its affiliate organizations pursued many of the education and training activities outlined in "Project Democracy" (Shultz 1983).

The fact that two separate proposals emerged at this time reflected a broader shift within U.S. foreign policy, as members of the Reagan Administration's policy team started to disassemble the human rights policy framework built up by the Carter Administration. Part of this shift stemmed from a new urgency with regard to democracy embraced by anti-communist hard-liners such as U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, who advocated a more militarily engaged and "crisis-oriented" vision of the Cold War, especially in the early 1980s (Carothers 1991: 16-17). These hard-liners were more interested in democracy promotion as a unifying message that framed anti-communist interventions. They also embraced the language of democracy's "crisis" in the sense outlined by French scholar Jean-François Revel in his book *How Democracies Perish* (1983).[99] According to Revel, weak-willed democrats in the West only invite ruin when they fail to support countries working toward democracy because the primary purpose of communism, he suggested, was to "destroy not just existing democracy but every possibility of democracy" (1983: 345). In the view of Reagan's hard-line cold warriors,

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[99] According to Reagan speech-writer Peggy Noonan, nearly everyone in Reagan's White House was reading this book at one point (see "The Trouble with Democracy," *The Guardian*, 8 November 2013: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/08/trouble-with-democracy-david-runciman).

the crisis of democracy resulted from a failure to assert a sufficient opposition to communism (e.g. Kirkpatrick 1988).

On the other hand, there were those within the administration, as well as elite policy makers outside of it who took a more internationalist approach, partially built on the human rights agenda of the Carter Administration, but also influenced by transnational elites that saw economic opportunities in greater global coordination[100] (Gill 1990; Robinson 1996). Many political figures holding this view also disagreed with the hard-line approach and consciously worked to distinguish international democratic aid from Administration policies, a sentiment that partially accounts for the NED's initial attempts to remain at arms length.

Over the course of the 1980s, however, the rabid anti-communism of the early Reagan Administration eventually gave way to neoliberal economic internationalism, and 'democracy promotion' became a useful theme for the symbolic bridge from military to economic interventions, especially after the Iran-contra affair. This move pushed support for anti-democratic projects (such as funding the "Contras" in Nicaragua) into the background and allowed moderate voices to come into the fold of policy-making. For the NED, this meant that support from the Administration came more readily, and the leadership of the NED movement reciprocated by vocally supporting the Administration. As a special report in 1986 by the *New York Times* revealed, the leadership within the NED affiliates demonstrated less concern with the non-governmental symbolism of their mandate by comparing democracy promotion favourably to "missionary work" and to

[100] For example, in the 1984 report to the Trilateral Commission called *Democracy Must Work*, global coordination on social, economic and political issues is the central theme (see Owen et al. 1984).

"the work of the CIA in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s."[101] Thus, as democracy promotion organizations aligned themselves with late Reagan Administration policies, such a move seemed to confirm the suspicions of critics who saw such activities as simply an extension of narrow US interests.[102]

This suspicion had both structural and symbolic effects on the eventual development of the field of democracy assistance. The close associations with anti-communist military and economic interventions in the 1980s meant that the field's formation stage was somewhat stunted compared to other more explicitly non-governmental sectors focused on human rights or humanitarian assistance.[103] Since the NED and its affiliates were still primarily dependent on government funding, organizational budgets were relatively small and the range of activities was limited. As a process of institution making, however, the major accomplishment of the NED and its affiliate organizations was that it carved out a unique, albeit precarious, niche within the foreign policy community. While integrating portions of the academic, policy and aid

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[101] "Missionaries for Democracy: U.S. Aid for Global Pluralism" *New York Times,* June 1, 1986.

[102] A famous example of the durability of this type of critique was an article titled "Better Dead than N.E.D." which was published in *The Nation* on July 12, 1993, and connected the Clinton administration's efforts at expanding democracy promotion to Reagan's foreign policy.

[103] According to Guilhot (2005: 180-181), this slow start relative to human rights organizations was not due to the fact that the discourse of human rights was adopted by both the left and the right. In a critique of the social constructivist perspective in International Relations theory (e.g. Sikkink 1993), Guilhot argues that human rights policy was not simply a progressive idea that was frustrated by cold warriors until it was embraced by the Carter Administration, and then again subverted by the Reagan Administration. Instead, he claims that human rights policy was championed by many in the anti-communist left (often associated with the AFL-CIO), who would eventually became conservatives in the Reagan Administration. Thus, human rights stood as a contested concept in the 1980s that had currency on the left as a legacy of the civil rights movement, and embraced by conservatives who envisioned it as a cornerstone of Cold War policy. One lasting effect of this contest, which does indicate a *type* of subversion from the right was that "the successful amputation of social and economic rights from the generic conception of human rights can be safely attributed to the Reagan administration" (Guilhot 2005: 180). Democracy did not have the same currency, especially in the early 1980s, as both the right and the left had decried the 'crisis' of democracy throughout the previous decade.

communities was important, taking on an air of bipartisanship in the hyper-partisan world of Washington politics was a crucial step of this process.

This precarious position stabilized to some degree with the end of the Cold War. During the 1990s, and especially under the changed priorities of the Clinton Administration, the mandate for democracy assistance expanded into other areas of international aid. This expansion pushed the field toward a more explicit mandated for international aid through assistance program, although not so much that the original association between democracy promotion and American hegemony disappeared.

The Expansion Stage of Democracy Assistance

The distribution of democracy aid by organizations and agencies in the United States expanded rapidly in the 1990s, but this expansion occurred as overall expenditures in the development aid industry declined. For example, total spending on USAID administered programs declined from $7.7 billion in 1991 to $6.2 billion in 1996 (see Hook 1998: 161). At the same time, USAID spent over $93 million through its Office for Democratic Initiatives in 1990 but when the program formally reorganized as the Center for Democracy and Governance in 1993,[104] the budget for democracy promotion activities at USAID was $296 million (Robinson 1996: 98-100). Then, in 1995 when USAID adopted a new budgeting practice that allocated funds to thematic areas rather than aggregating bilateral aid programs, the "building democracy" allocation was increased to $436 million (Hook 1998: 162).

Despite the proportional increase of democracy funding during this period, this change in governmental priorities did not immediately translate to the non-governmental

[104] This Center oversaw the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) program stream at USAID.

sphere. At the end of the 1980s, the number of organizations devoted solely to democracy promotion was relatively small, and they generally existed in a grey area that was distinct from both the broader development community and the growing field of non-governmental humanitarian, environmental, and human rights organizations. By 1990, the annual budget for the NED was still only $19 million (USD), a small fraction of the budget for democracy related programs funded through USAID. In the first few years after the Berlin Wall fell, democracy promotion became an established rhetorical element of US foreign policy, and many new democracy NGOs joined the field but structurally these organizations remained peripheral.

The reason for this slow start for NGOs was twofold. On one hand, organizations associated with the 'democracy promotion' mandate of the 1980s saw only modest growth in the early 1990s, partly because this work suffered from both political opposition and public scepticism. In fact, in 1993 the US House of Representatives nearly cut off funding for the NED (Carothers 1994). This challenge to the NED came from both sides of the aisle as well as a range of media outlets.[105] Symbolically, democracy promotion represented either an unsavoury legacy of Cold War propaganda to critics on the left or an expensive and increasingly redundant project to critics on the right. This lack of support may have also reflected a more general atmosphere of isolationism in the United States, as democracy promotion and the defence of human rights abroad was a

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[105] In a review of the NED's first ten years, Thomas Carothers outlined the wide range of opposition that had nearly ended funding for the organization: "Opponents of the endowment, led in Congress by Representative Paul Kanjorski (D-Pennsylvania), Senator Dale Bumpers (D- Arkansas), and Senator Hank Brown (R-Colorado) and backed by such diverse organizations and journalists as *The Nation*, the Cato Institute, the Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, and columnist Mary McGrory, pilloried the Endowment as a dangerous "loose cannon" meddling in the internal affairs of other countries and a "Cold War relic" that wastes U.S. taxpayers' money on pork-barrel projects and political junkets abroad" (Carothers 1994: 123).

low priority for most respondents of foreign policy opinion polls (see Holsti 2000: 159-163).

On the other hand, the aid for countries 'transitioning' to democracy was increasingly weighted towards an overall push to implement 'free market' policies in emerging democracies (e.g. Hardt & Kaufman 1993), rather than a sustained effort to build democratic institutions.[106] Governmental organizations such as USAID generally initiated aid programs aimed at consolidating new democracies by targeting specific institutions. For example, aid programs in Latin America focused primarily on judicial reform and technical legal assistance (McEldowney 2000). However, the relative explosion of 'democracy aid' during this period initially focused on spreading a particular form of what President Clinton later called "market democracy."

The main (strategic) targets of this market democracy funding were the countries of the former Soviet Bloc. Unlike non-governmental democracy promotion programs aimed at gradual processes of democratization, aid programs in the former Soviet countries attempted to facilitate aggressive 'democratic' transitions within these countries. The Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act signed by President Bush in 1989 "provided an average of $360 million to the region annually between 1989 and 1994. And after the Soviet Union's collapse in December 1991, the United States committed nearly $1 billion each year to support economic and political reforms in Russia, Ukraine, and other new independent states" (Hook, 1998: 160). Initially, such programmes focused on opening up these countries to the free market, and often worked

[106] Aside from the literature on the singular focus on neoliberal "shock therapy" during the post-Soviet transition, including Sachs (1994) as well as more recent critical appraisals by Naomi Klein (2009), the respondents I interviewed also spoke about this period as a "missed opportunity" for real democracy promotion. To them, attempts at stimulating a capitalist market should have followed from, or at least accompanied a push to build legitimate democratic institutions.

on developing democratic institutions as a secondary goal using the mechanism of "aid conditionalities" to enforce institutional changes in the countries' political systems.

The extreme example of this market-centred approach was the 'assistance' provided to Russia during this period.[107] From 1992 until the 'capitalism first' approach was revised in the late 1990s, "USAID spent over 50 per cent of its budget in Russia on US consultancy firms working on market reform, while only six per cent was allocated to US NGOs working on democracy assistance" (Sakwa 2000: 300). Unsurprisingly, the radical market policies designed for Russia failed to produce confidence in the Russian people for their new democratic institutions. A central problem of what is now widely considered a disaster of Western policy was that instead of the assumed natural development of democracy, the flood of money and privatization in Russia created a whole new series of problems for the country. As one scholar remarked, "[i]n reality, what has happened in Russia is the formal adherence to most of the principles of democracy as a convenient façade, behind which a self-serving elite has cynically looted the country of its assets" (Rutland 2000: 246-247). In another reassessment of this policy, billionaire activist George Soros[108] even went so far as to suggest that the failure in Russia indicated that the 'excessive individualism' manifested in the form of 'robber capitalism' in Russia was, at its core, anathema to the principles of democracy (Soros 1997).

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[107] For a journalistic perspective on this process at the time, see "Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, Shock Therapist" (New York Times Magazine, June 27, 1993: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/27/magazine/dr-jeffrey-sachs-shock-therapist.html)

[108] Soros founded his own private democracy assistance organization in 1993, called the Open Society Institute, which rejected the prevailing neoliberal efforts in Eastern Europe and adopted a definition of democracy that incorporated social equality and human rights.

Russian elites were not alone in taking advantage of the vast resources made available during this period. In the United States, elite advisors and consultants received a large proportion of assistance funding, with lax auditing procedures to oversee their work (Sakwa 2000). In some cases, American institutions such as the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID), along with prominent intellectuals such as Jeffrey Sachs, targeted specific groups of Russian 'reformers,' who were greatly enriched through the funnelling of aid.[109] Eventually, questions regarding the efficacy of 'market-centred' reforms, coupled with widespread corruption among Russian elites, necessitated a shift in policy. For Russia, and other former Soviet states, this shift took the form of the Partnership for Freedom program, launched by President Clinton in 1997. This program emphasized support for grass-roots civil society organizations, and distributed funds through established (non-governmental) subcontractors such as the Eurasia Foundation (Sakwa 2000: 295). This shift reflected a broader movement within the development community that came to see the expansion of civil society and its relationship to governance as a crucial element of democratization. Building on this movement, the field of democracy assistance began to take shape as an important piece of the larger development community.

It was during the early 1990s that other Western governments also embraced the apparent victory of liberal (or 'market') democracy by expanding their aid activities. This

[109] One such group of 'reformers' was the so-called "St. Petersburg clan" led by Anatolii Chubais and supported by the HIID. As Sakwa (2000) suggests: "[t]he strategy of the Chubais clan was liberalization and rapid privatization, both achieved at enormous cost. HIID itself enjoyed an unprecedented monopoly over American-funded Russian reform efforts, targeted to support privatization, develop capital markets and establish a Russian securities and exchange commission. The whole process was thoroughly political from the start, designed to support a group that was perceived to favour the best interests of the West, irrespective of what effect they had on Russia itself. There was an element of personal enrichment involved as well for many of those involved, provoking the suspension of USAID support for HIID in May 1997" (Sakwa 2000: 294).

expansion happened at both the governmental level and through their participation in intergovernmental organizations. The OECD Development Assistance Committee declared, as early as 1989, that "there is a vital connection, now more widely appreciated, between open, democratic and accountable political systems, individual rights and the effective and equitable operation of economic systems" (cited in Hook 1998: 159). Similarly, in 1990, the intergovernmental Organization of American States (OAS) embraced a democracy-centred agenda by establishing a Unit for the Promotion of Democracy. Canada, as new member of the OAS, embraced this new international project as a mechanism to expand the profile of democracy in its own foreign policy (Neufeld 1999).[110] The development of this Unit was followed by other agreements such as the Santiago Commitment to Democracy (1991), which emphasized the active role that member states of the OAS should take in promoting and protecting the 'right to democracy' (Muñoz 1998).[111]

Civil Society and Democracy Assistance

The majority of aid for transitioning democracies in the early 1990s focused on economic ends, but democracy assistance organizations during this period were also increasingly active in an international aid community that had developed norms and common practices outside of the scope of individual countries' foreign policy objectives.

[110] After an era of a 'Western' security agenda dominated by competing superpowers, Canada's embrace of 'soft power' provided a venue for expanded engagement with the international community. Democracy promotion was a part of this engagement and, according to then-Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, was an important element of 'human security' concerns, which had generally replaced cold war security concerns on the world stage (see Axworthy 1997).

[111] This 'right' has historically been framed by the OAS in the context of pro-capitalist forms of democracy. Where socialist countries such as Cuba have been expelled on grounds that they were anti-democratic, right-wing regimes that were far more repressive, but ostensibly 'open' to free trade, were allowed to remain members. For this reason, the OAS is often viewed in Latin America as an organ of American imperialism (Spagnoli 2004).

As Carothers (1994) points out, entities such as the NED successfully established fast and efficient systems for monitoring elections as well as assisting opposition parties in places where such parties had been unable to organize previously. This expertise would eventually pay off as changing foreign assistance priorities of the US and other Western governments in the mid-1990s increasingly aimed to fortify grassroots and civil society organizations, rather than relying exclusively on opening free markets. It was during this transition that the scope of democracy assistance significantly expanded and especially helpful in this process was the increasing popularity of civil society as a foundation of democracy. The subsequent rise of 'civil society aid,' as an organizing feature of democracy assistance, was central to the professionalization and institutionalization of the field.

The symbolic changes during this period revolved around the post cold war idea of a "new world order" of capitalist economies and democratic states working together. Much of the 'high level' U.S. foreign policy during the late 1990s aimed at consolidating America's place in this order by supporting trade agreements (e.g., NAFTA) and intergovernmental organizations such as the WTO. At the same time, this approach also embraced some of the logical implications of the previous administrations' work to implement neoliberal or 'free market' principles through foreign aid. Particularly relevant for democracy assistance was the neoliberal opposition to large or "bloated" governments responsible for "unsustainable" social welfare responsibilities. The buzzword that represented both of these policies was "governance." The concept of governance is particularly important in this case because it consolidated many of the conceptual innovations discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 into one term that incorporated definitional

elements of democracy based the language of civil society 'capacity' and methodological elements that oriented the definition towards measuring institutions according to their democratic outputs or results.

The concept of governance, or the qualified "good governance," emerged as an orienting concept in both the international relations of the global community as well as in the 'applied' context of the international development community. With the 'victory' of liberal democracy and the revival of neoliberal economics, prevailing assumptions about democracy and capitalism had evolved to suggest that the two naturally worked together, and that both were conditions of each other's success. This was a significant departure from the old modernization theory, which suggested that economic development was a necessary *prior* condition of democracy (see Chapter 3). Central to this shift was the idea that the government was no longer solely responsible for meeting the needs of a population, but rather functioned alongside an active and engaged civil society and a 'free' economy as a governing institution. As one commentator of the trend suggested, this idea had the advantage of accounting for increasingly interconnected elements of governing that were external to the state:

> Governance thus denotes the structures of political and, crucially, economic relationships and rules by which the productive and distributive life of a society is governed. In short, it refers to a system of political and socioeconomic relations or, more loosely, a regime. In current usage there is no doubt that good governance means a democratic capitalist regime, presided over by a minimal state which is also part of the wider governance of the New World Order (Leftwich 1993: 611).

For Western governments and NGOs working on international development, 'good governance' also explicitly implied democratic political institutions that ensured the open and accountable management of this "system of political and socioeconomic

relations." In the early 1990s, the World Bank adopted this position more completely than most others in the field of international aid did. According to a World Bank report entitled *Governance and Development* (1992), 'good governance' was emerging as a crucial aspect of development. Particularly important was the seemingly paradoxical 'fact' that in order for a government to step back and allow the free market and civil society to prosper, it needed to be strengthened to the point that it could ensure its own limitations (Williams & Young, 1994). This did not mean that the World Bank had totally reversed its neoliberal opposition to expanded state obligations,[112] but it claimed that the problems of underdevelopment could be remedied by cracking down on corrupt and unaccountable leaders (Guilhot 2005: 210). According to the World Bank, good governance was therefore: "epitomized by predictable, open, and enlightened policymaking (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law" (World Bank 1994).[113]

For democracy assistance organizations, this shift in priorities towards rule-of-law initiatives, civil society participation, and strengthened political institutions opened the door to more collaboration with a development community that had traditionally thought of building democratic institutions as a secondary goal. As a theory of democracy,

[112] The World Bank had only just changed courses in 1981 as a new regime energized by Chicago School neoclassical economists. This new approach took over from a regime lead by Robert McNamara that embraced the ideals of modernization theory and Keynesian economics by expanding the development activities of the World Bank, helping to prepare for "economic takeoff." The 1980s return to anti-statist policies constituted what Toye (1993) called a "counterrevolution" at the Bank, which would eventually lead to the structural adjustment policies that proved so damaging for borrowing countries.
[113] The turn of phrase that seems to subsume each of these items under a more general condition defined by the "rule of law" was not an accident. As Carothers (2004) points out, 'rule of law' assistance was a core concern for democracy aid in the early 1990s. This was one of a hand full of 'fads' that swept the field of democracy assistance over the years.

however, the shift towards governance was still well within the liberal framework that had dominated professional knowledge of democracy for decades (Williams & Young 1994). As I argue in Chapter 3, the 'rediscovery' of civil society, as both a form of communitarian renewal and as a definitional vehicle for prioritizing the 'market' emerged out of an academic discourse that was responding to a 'crisis' of democracy. The language of stabilization and moderation implied by this formulation was thus also central to the concept of governance. The benefit of the concept of governance for democracy assistance organizations, however, was that it emphasized civil society participation and therefore highlighted the importance of local programs, rather than the major economic institutions that had been at the center of attention for decades and only tangentially related to democracy-focused projects.

Local civil society organizations therefore became a target for development aid, a project area that organizations such as USAID called "democratic decentralization" or "democratic local governance" (see Blair 2000). For organizations that had experience working with local political parties and helping with local elections, the link between democracy and civil society thus became a useful symbolic mechanism to argue for the importance of 'political aid' for the civil society organizations from which opposition parties could emerge. This move also had the allure of allowing organizations in the field to disassociate themselves from the critique of American hegemony by aligning their activities with a counter-narrative that characterized their work as supporting grassroots or local activism, even though the focus of the main governmental and international organizations remained on major economic institutions and elites.[114]

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[114] The World Bank was at the vanguard of what, for them and other similar organizations, was simply a re-branding process. For example, they claimed in various publications its commitment to learning from past

In addition to the symbolic effects this had on democracy assistance priorities (i.e. a clearer symbolic niche within the field), the shift toward 'good governance' and 'civil society' also had an effect on how democratization projects were structured. There are also a few important institutional reasons that this assistance started to focus on non-governmental organizations and civil society in the mid-1990s. Firstly, since so many states were making transitions to some form of democracy during the so-called "third wave" of democracy (Huntington 1991), most democracy assistance in this earlier period remained focused on the practical first step of achieving democratic elections. Elections in formerly autocratic countries, however, required an infrastructure that could operate independently of the state in order to ensure fair results. Secondly, after elections, the belief was that assistance organizations needed to help reinvent or build new independent state structures to support democratic legislatures and judiciaries. The problem with these types of democracy assistance projects was that elections by themselves did not necessarily make countries democratic, and reinventing state institutions turned out to be difficult and expensive. Civil society assistance, as Carothers & Ottaway (2000) suggest, "appeared to address all the problems at the same time" and had the added virtue of being much less expensive:

> A $20,000 grant, ridiculously small if applied to judicial reform, could make all the difference for a struggling civil society organization in a poor country. Civil society assistance made a virtue out of necessity by providing a theoretical justification for the small-scale assistance dictated by many donor budgets (2000:8).

Western NGOs such as the NED and its affiliates could therefore set up and fund projects in many countries by focusing on smaller, civil society organizations. As this process

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mistakes and trumpeting the values of human rights, emancipatory democracy, and the important place of grassroots NGOs (see Caufield 1996).

unfolded, democracy assistance organizations began to support ever growing networks of local NGOs, which would then act as partners 'on the ground' for further aid projects.

In the late 1990s, civil society had an especially attractive pragmatic function for government agencies as well, especially those that were under pressure to produce results efficiently. Part of this pressure came from the failures of economic development assistance in previous decades to address the problems of global poverty. Another more significant part resulted from the general scepticism surrounding expensive government-centred development projects (Carothers & Ottaway 2000; Guihot 2005). Government development agencies, which relied on taxpayer dollars, were therefore collectively under pressure to deliver results with less waste. The Clinton Administration, for their part, attempted to allay concerns about bloated government bureaucracies by restructuring the management of government agencies towards a more "entrepreneurial" and results-driven orientation (Moe 1994).[115] For agencies funding a large proportion of democracy-related projects, this translated to a new organizational culture of performance measurement. In the context of USAID, long-term priorities were presented as "strategic objectives" and were measured according to "intermediate results" that could be demonstrated and accounted for (Blair 2000: 231).

A confluence of forces generated by the dual trends of results-driven management in funding organizations, and the solution to democracy's problems offered by the idea of civil society, demanded that recipient or 'local' organizations targeted for democracy assistance should fit a certain type of profile. This profile was most often that of the professionalized local NGO that could produce "grant proposals (usually in English),

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[115] This initiative was launched in 1993 by Vice-President Gore and the report produced was titled "Reinventing Government." A similar reorientation toward "entrepreneurial government" happened around the same time in the UK (Du Gay 2000).

budgets, accounting reports, project reports, and all the other documents donors ask of beneficiaries" (Carothers & Ottaway 2000: 13). While government agencies felt this pressure most directly, the demand for network-wide professionalization spread to international NGOs that increasingly relied on governmental funding sources. The effect this had on the distribution of democracy assistance was that funding tended to be directed at "trustee organizations" that supposedly advocated on behalf of silent populations or civil society constituencies. However, as Ottaway & Chung suggested in a 1999 debate on democracy assistance in the *Journal of Democracy*, it was questionable how representative these 'local' NGOs really were:

> Few of these organizations were formed by strong mobilized constituencies in order to pursue their goals more efficiently. Rather, they tend to be "top-down" organizations, usually formed at the initiative of just a few people, with programs and activities modeled above all by what donors are willing to fund. If these organizations have a membership, it tends to be small and assembled after the NGO has been formed. Most importantly, it is not the membership that determines the organization's policies, but the leaders, together with the funders and the NGOs from donor countries that won the contract to "strengthen civil society" in a particular country. (Ottaway & Chung 1999: 107)

Although some democracy assistance did successfully reach politically marginalized populations, the expanded funding of civil society organizations in the 1990s represented a structuring imperative that has defined democracy assistance ever since. The idea that a vibrant civil society was the key to democratization helped to create a proliferation of the number and type of democracy-related NGOs in countries that were recipients of international aid. These organizations formed a network of aid distribution structured by the flow of financial assistance, as well as the symbolic positioning of coordinating organizations such as the NED, USAID, and their counterparts in other Western countries.

The Consolidation Stage of Democracy Assistance

As the field of democracy assistance became more clearly defined as a network of aid distribution, the profile of this assistance work began to rise. This rise, however, promoted the continuing perception that democracy assistance, at its core, was still an extension of American foreign policy. In fact, two particularly visible manifestations of this perceived connection in the early 2000s – the so-called 'colour revolutions' in Eastern Europe and the US invasion of Iraq – precipitated a backlash against democracy assistance work that would later force many organizations within the field to further clarify, reiterate, and consolidate the scope of their mandates.

Although the events of September 11, 2001 radically reoriented the public focus of US foreign policy, foreign aid for 'democratic development' remained central to USAID and other governmental aid agencies. Non-governmental democracy assistance organizations also continued to expand their reach in the early 2000s as the NED affiliates and other similar organizations began to expand the scope of their assistance programs. This expansion process reached a pinnacle - or nadir according to some critics - with the so-called 'colour revolutions' in Eastern Europe. These 'electoral' revolutions included Serbia's "bulldozer revolution" in 2001, Georgia's "rose revolution" in 2003, and Ukraine's "orange revolution" in 2004.[116] In each of these cases, an autocratic leader relinquished power after non-violent popular protests successfully 'opened' the electoral process to opposition candidates. In addition, each of the new 'leaders' was favoured by Western governments and, more importantly, received support – in the form of financial

[116] Clearly the term "colour revolution" is not completely fitting in Serbia's case, but it is often included with Georgia, Ukraine, and sometimes also Kyrgyzstan as an example of what has alternatively been called the 'electoral revolutions' (see Stewart 2009).

assistance and expert political counsel – from Western democracy assistance organizations.

The similarities between the 'electoral revolutions' in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine were significant enough that a theoretical 'template' came to be ascribed to the form that each case took on. This form generally followed a "people power" approach that built on non-violent opposition tactics against authoritarian regimes.[117] These movements primarily developed around youth organizations that played up the imagery of a country's autocratic past versus a democratic future. The model was successful enough in the Serbian 'revolution' that members of Otpor (the Serbian youth movement) were brought in as consultants by Western NGOs in both Georgia and Ukraine (Beissinger 2006).

Criticisms of Western participation (or interference) in the 'colour revolutions' often questioned the substance behind the style of political messaging and branding used by Western organizations to create public relations campaigns for opposition parties that played up 'revolutionary' messaging.[118] Such criticisms particularly focused on three symbolic outcomes of these revolutions that would later become challenges for the field of democracy assistance. The first symbolic outcome was that democracy assistance in these cases appeared as an explicitly pro-Western political project (Bessinger 2006; Wilson 2006), which was a perception that was at odds with the message of political

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[117] Gene Sharp and his colleagues at the Albert Einstein Institution represented one of a number of NGOs advocating this approach. Sharp's *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (2010) was a particularly prominent source for developing non-violent resistance tactics, and is a text that also had currency in the more recent "Arab Spring" uprisings.

[118] The image of a raised fist used by Optor and many other youth movements in the region was typical of the imagery that communicated this message. Although it is doubtful that such symbols were chosen by Western consultants, the similarities they had with symbols used by US resistance movements, coupled by the willingness of opposition elites working with Western NGOs to embrace this imagery, lead many sceptics to see these 'revolutions' in terms of an American imperial project (e.g. Sussman 2006).

neutrality advocated by democracy assistance organizations. The second outcome was that the 'democracy' advocated in these cases was sometimes mischaracterized as a universal 'revolutionary force' that could topple unresponsive regimes. Finally, the third and possibly most damaging outcome was that the involvement of democracy assistance organizations in each case seemed, to many activists and governments around the world (Carothers 2006), like an extension of the foreign policy approach outlined in President Bush's "Freedom Agenda." These outcomes all contributed to a broad perception that the democracy achieved in each case was associated with narrow Western or American interests, and was therefore coded as 'anti-democratic' to critics of American imperialism. The results of this coding would later force democracy assistance organizations to reposition their work against a growing 'backlash' from regimes that opposed Western-style democratic interventions.[119]

The "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine was the most visible example of the first outcome because of the extent to which democracy assistance organizations apparently abandoned political neutrality. Western NGOs were visible in Serbia and Georgia, but in Ukraine, the massive crowds and well-organized stage performances in "Independence Square" augmented the appearance of Western 'help' (Emerson 2005). These large, choreographed demonstrations were organized quickly - critics would say too quickly - after a disputed election in which opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko, who had been leading in exit polls, was not named the winner (Wilson 2006). The fact that private NGOs such as George Soros' foundation as well as NGOs receiving funding from Western governments had, in previous years, worked to support the opposition to the

[119] This included both government policies of military-backed regime change, as in Iraq, but also liberal justifications for intervention in defence of democracy that circulated during the mid-2000s (e.g. Ignatieff 2006; Zakaria 2007).

ruling Kuchma regime helped to augment suspicions. For example, USAID backed the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative, which was administered by Freedom House, and directed money to Ukrainian NGOs associated with political opposition parties (Beissinger 2006; Wilson 2006). In addition, Freedom House, along with the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and others that were instrumental in publicizing the exit poll numbers that implied electoral fraud, monitored the 2004 election. This involvement, coupled with the assistance provided by USAID and the American Bar Association to train some of the Ukrainian Supreme Court Judges who eventually overturned the results of the election, gave the appearance of an electoral process that was heavily influenced by American organizations in favour of one particular candidate (Rieffer & Mercer 2006: 398).[120] When Yushchenko's party failed to maintain its support and had to form a coalition with his rival shortly after the election, this perception was further reinforced (Sussman 2006).

Regardless of the actual impact that Western NGOs had on the "colour revolutions" the appearance of electoral manipulation was augmented by the second problematic symbolic outcome, the framing of democracy as a revolutionary force. This conceptual alignment presented problems on at least two levels for the field democracy assistance. On a practical level, rhetoric extolling democracy as a revolutionary force was an unrealistic characterization of the possible outcomes of democracy assistance. In countries where dictatorial regimes are entrenched, the odds for a 'people power'

[120] It is important to note, however, that the impact of "Western influence" was often overestimated. As Lucan Way (2008) points out: "in 2002 Ukraine's autocratic president Leonid Kuchma had single-digit approval ratings, while ex-premier Viktor Yushchenko's opposition "Our Ukraine" Bloc had won a plurality in that year's parliamentary voting. Although no one predicted the precise course of the Orange Revolution, almost all observers of Ukraine had known long before Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution that the highly popular Yushchenko would present a serious threat to Kuchma's handpicked successor in 2004" (2008: 57).

revolution to be successful are unfavourable and there is a real possibility that such situations could result in violent crackdowns, such as in the case of Uzbekistan in 2005 (see Beissinger 2006: 21). On a more symbolic level, the fact that local NGOs in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine were coded as ‘revolutionary’ organizations elicited widespread crackdowns on similar civil society organizations in other countries, such as Russia and Belarus, whose governments were interested in heading off such Western-inspired ‘revolutions.’ Especially in Russia, the narrative of democracy assistance as part of a Western or American imperial agenda was a convenient mechanism for consolidating the power of the governing party. As Carothers (2006: 56) suggests, the Russian government’s move to force all civil society organizations to report all of their activities to the Kremlin was symptomatic of a larger trend that has led governments in Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Middle East to restrict Western aid to local NGOs (Carothers 2006).

Although the fear of ‘people power’ revolutions played a role in the backlash against democracy assistance, the most significant factor in this process was the global reaction against the “Freedom Agenda” articulated by President Bush. While some have argued that democracy promotion has always been a core element of American self-identity (Smith 1994; Monten 2005), the Bush Doctrine extended this element by taking advantage of the ideological and material resources that shaped American foreign policy after September 11, 2001. As the original justifications for invading Iraq in 2003 came into question, the Bush Administration began more forcefully to assert the ‘importance’ of spreading democracy, a policy that was formally spelled out later in the ‘Greater Middle East Initiative’ (Rieffer & Mercer 2006). For the Bush Administration, the

"colour revolutions" fit nicely within the narrative of democratization emerging as the cornerstone of official foreign policy. At the same time, global perceptions of this policy remained critical:

> Washington's use of the term "democracy promotion" has come to be seen overseas not as the expression of a principled American aspiration but as a code word for "regime change"- namely, the replacement of bothersome governments by military force or other means…The fact that the administration has also given the impression that it is interested in toppling other governments hostile to U.S. security interests, such as in Iran and Syria, has made the president's "freedom agenda" seem even more menacing and hostile. This is especially so since when Bush and his top advisers single out "outposts of tyranny," the governments they invariably list are those that also happen to be unfriendly to the United States. Meanwhile, friendly but equally repressive regimes, such as that in Saudi Arabia, escape mention (Carothers 2006: 64).

The symbolic connection between Western style democracy, the "colour revolutions" and the "freedom agenda" increased resistance to democracy assistance work, which in some cases justified what scholars in the democracy assistance community have pointed to as a 'backsliding' of democracy (e.g. Burnell 2010). In order to counter the symbolic association with military intervention and naked US security interests, organizations in the field have more recently attempted to reiterate, re-examine, and consolidate the goals and practices of democracy assistance work.

Consolidating Knowledge and the Rise of Evaluation Practices

Although the 2000s saw an overall backsliding of democracy as measured by organizations such as Freedom House, practitioners in the field can (and do) also point to studies showing that democracy assistance does, in fact, have a positive net effect on 'levels' of democracy (see especially Finkel et al., 2007). The difficulty, for organizations in the field, has been to extricate the concept of 'democracy promotion/assistance' from the symbolic association with US foreign policy in countries that may be suspicious of

Western motives, while at the same time making arguments in governmental and donor circles that this work is still strategically important to the interests of Western governments. The incongruity between the goals associated with these two messages has led to something of a crisis in the field of democracy assistance. According to one scholar, "[t]he mood among democracy practitioners now appears to be that their activity badly needs a new image" (Burnell 2010: 2).

The recurring criticism of democracy assistance from the right over the past three decades – namely the charge that this work is too 'political' and/or wasteful – has recently led professionals in this field to justify their work on grounds that it is both technically efficient and generally effective. As part of a process of institutionalizing democracy assistance practices, following through with this justification is now a primary goal, and the means to achieve this goal is the adoption of the results-based management techniques, or what is sometimes called "new public management" (Du Gay 2000).

The move towards more extensive results-based program evaluation and self-assessment gave democracy assistance organizations some important tools to combat the international backlash against Western democracy assistance and to compete in a field of scarce funding resources. Certainly, the election of Barak Obama in 2008 helped to facilitate democracy assistance work abroad, but adopting this approach gave organizations the ability to argue for the necessity of their own expertise, while also acknowledging the limits of democracy assistance work. It also helped to solidify their relationships with funding organizations that themselves emphasize results-based management techniques. Practitioners in the field can also point to performance evaluations in order to advocate on behalf of 'local' NGOs or recipient governments that

may be eligible for funding streams that reward democratic 'progress.'[121] Overall, however, the move to program reviews and impact evaluations have been largely reflexive exercises within the field, aimed at consolidating the knowledge and experiences of experts in it. In other words adopting private sector management techniques is one way that the field has recently worked to institutionalize its expertise.

At a practical level, many Western aid organizations engaged in democracy assistance have re-examined their own methods of evaluating the effectiveness of this work. In 2007, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance published a review of democracy evaluation models (Burnell 2010), which outlined how numerous agencies and organizations have undertaken steps to develop new and improved methods of evaluation and assessment. Examples include efforts by the Canadian organization Rights & Democracy (see Wodzicki 2007), as well as European agencies such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the United Nations Development Programme's Evaluation Office.[122]

One recent example was a study commissioned by USAID, and undertaken by the National Research Council (2008). In the proposal for the study, USAID's Center for Democracy and Governance asked the National Research Council (NRC) to develop or improve current methods for learning about the effectiveness and impact of democracy assistance work. The five goals outlined for the project gave an indication of how the

[121] The Bush Administration's Millennium Challenge Account, which granted aid based on a country's ability to meet "objective criteria" established by Freedom House, the World Bank Institute and the IMF would be an example of this (Rieffer & Mercer 2006).
[122] For examples of specific evaluation programs, see *Evaluating Democracy Support: Methods and Experiences* (Burnell 2007).

organization had come to rely on clear, measurable and applicable (expert) knowledge as a foundation for its work. These goals called on the NRC to produce:

1. A refined and clear overall research and analytic design that integrates the various research projects[…]into a coherent whole in order to produce valid and useful finding and recommendations for democracy program improvements.
2. An operational definition of democracy and governance that disaggregates the concept into clearly defined and measurable components.
3. Recommended methodologies to carry out retrospective analysis[…]including a plan for cross-national case study research to determine program effectiveness and inform strategic planning[…]
4. Recommended methodologies to carry out program evaluations in the future. The recommendations for future analysis will focus on more rigorous approaches to evaluation than currently used to assess the impact of democracy assistance programming[…]
5. An assessment of the feasibility of the final recommended methodologies within the current structure of USAID operations and defining policy, organizational, and operational changes in those operations that might improve the chances for successful implementation (National Research Council, 2008: 29).

The particular methodologies of knowledge evaluation and knowledge production recommended by the Committee used language that was an interesting mix of scientific empiricism and policy discourse. Specifically, following the second goal above, the study offered a “disaggregated” and measurable concept of democracy evaluation by calling for “hard empirical evidence” derived from “rigorous impact evaluation methods” based on scientific practices such as “randomized trials” and comparison with “control groups” (2008: 219-220). Such practices clearly mandated a type of social scientific expertise that blurred the boundary between policy work and academic practice. To ground these practices within the discourse of results-based management ideals, the study also mentioned the need for an implementation strategy that depended on “strong leadership” and “strategic vision” (2008: 220-221).

What the NRC report reveals is that practitioners in the field of democracy assistance occupy an interstitial position that presents practical challenges on a daily basis,[123] but also creates the need for expert knowledge. Structurally, democracy assistance experts are caught in-between the "strategic visions" of donor organizations, and the practical 'realities' of their local partners. Programs designed to help local democracy organizations thus need to produce measurable results that fall within the strategic vision, which may or may not have an effect on actual processes of democratization. Thus, one major challenge for the field is to avoid allowing these needs to engender what Ottaway & Chung (1999) call "trustee organizations" that have little accountability to their constituents. This is a particularly difficult challenge because the imperatives of 'good governance' and 'responsible management' imply strong leadership structures. Emphasizing 'leadership' may strengthen accountability to donors, but might also encourage 'local' organizations to sacrifice democratic forms of decision-making.

Conclusion

The three stages of institution making described above account for the rise and consolidation of professional democracy assistance as a field of expert knowledge and practice. Unlike the narratives outlined in the introductory chapter focusing on material, ideological and institutional factors, the knowledge-in-the-making narrative presented here examines the field of democracy assistance as a field of expertise, where expertise is defined as a form of public intervention. Based on this of analysis, the defining feature of democracy expertise is that it responds to the perceived incommensurability of

[123] The NRC report notes that practitioners in the field that were interviewed for the study tended to resist calls for more 'rigorous' evaluation methods because existing evaluation methods were already challenging enough (2008: 220).

democracy's ideals and 'realities' by offering applied knowledge of, and practical solutions to, this problem. For practitioners in the field, having experience with democratization 'on the ground' - usually in the form of interactions with networks of local NGOs - is therefore an asset, and organizations employing these practitioners can build areas of expertise around these collected experiences and networks.

One of the main challenges of this work, then, is that the field finds itself confronted with critiques that ask 'whose ideals and whose realities are represented by this expertise?' The field as a whole has constituted itself around this question, beginning with the NED's initial role as a source of pro-democracy, and anti-communist, propaganda, and extending to recent attempts by the NED, USAID and other democracy assistance organizations to respond to the backlash created by the Freedom Agenda. Building on the facts underlying procedural or elite theories of democracy, and the methods that separated the social and political elements of democracy, this new form of expertise successfully collapsed the universal ideals of liberal democracy into a measurable process of practical democratization. Professional democracy assistance could therefore claim to represent *all* 'reality-based' democratic ideals in *any* practical situation. Organizations in the field were able to cultivate this position by taking advantage of a structural opening produced by the broader expansion of civil society focused aid funding, while simultaneously establishing a symbolic jurisdiction around a procedural processes and institutions of democracy.

As the discussion above suggests, the era of new public management brought more sophisticated evaluation tools to public organizations such as NGOs and government agencies. However, to understand the effects of these tools, it is important to

look at some of the specific evaluation practices performed by professionals in this field. The following chapter therefore presents an empirical study of democracy experts and the practical work of evaluating democracy assistance.

Chapter 5: The Practice of Democracy Assistance

With the goal of examining the professionalization of the 'democracy expert,' the previous chapter's discussion of the field of democracy assistance provided an account of how a unique interstitial space emerged between the academic study of democracy, Western pro-democracy foreign policy agendas, and the field of development assistance. This emergent space made expert interventions possible, sensible, and, through a process of institution making, recurrent. At the same time, the prior discussion only really described the effects of this process, as represented in the literature on democracy assistance. In order to examine this field of expertise further, it is also important to study expert intervention as it occurs in everyday institutionalized and institutionalizing practices. The following chapter therefore analyzes a series of interviews that I conducted with practitioners in the field of democracy assistance. Specifically, this chapter asks how actors in Western aid organizations produce and use knowledge about the development of democratic institutions in 'other' countries to facilitate assistance-based interventions.

Following the methodological and theoretical framework outlined in the introductory chapter, this discussion of expert knowledge-making emphasizes social practice in a way that recognizes the historically contingent basis of the knowledge-making process. It also recognizes the cultural boundaries established by the narratives and codes that give democracy different meanings in different contexts (Lamont & Thévenot 2000). As such, I understand the practices described here to be, themselves, culturally bounded and historically contingent. From this perspective, the experts that make up this field appear to operate with a narrowly defined set of possibilities and constraints. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine these possibilities and

constraints and to understand how designing and administering assistance programs contribute to the institutionalization of expert knowledge, which either challenge or reproduce these possibilities and constraints.

Structuring the Interview Research

The introductory chapter proposed two questions that formed the foundation of the interview research. The first was a general question posed at the beginning of the dissertation, which asked, how are expert interventions for democracy performed in practice? The second question followed a theoretical discussion of how my approach takes the term "practice" to refer to forms of agreement and justification that extend beyond specific situations to produce legitimate forms of collective association (following Boltanski & Thévenot 1999; 2000; 2006). As such, the more specific question that orients this chapter is therefore, how do democracy assistance professionals establish and maintain legitimacy in the programs they develop and administer?

In the introduction, I also proposed to answer these questions by conducting a qualitative analysis of interview data. To collect this data, I approached professionals in the field and asked them a series of semi-structured interview questions. I chose a semi-structured interview format to allow respondents to explain the everyday problems or challenges that they face in a way that facilitated a dialogue. I assumed that actors in this field had an ability to reflect upon their own actions, to describe the assemblages of agents that were meaningful to their work and to justify their everyday practices in terms of larger institutional or personal goals. However, I did not equate the accounts of actors with objectively 'true' representations of the situations they described. In the case of democracy assistance, local activists "on the ground" inevitably interpret problems

differently than professionals in international organizations. Indeed, an entire subfield of anthropologists and sociologists has recently worked to incorporate "local" interpretations into research on the effects of international aid in so-called 'developing' countries (see Lewis 2007; Lewis & Mosse 2006; Edelman & Haugerud 2005). By contrast, my main interest in the interviews was to understand how program coordinators translated expert knowledge into the interventions that define democracy assistance organizations. This approach is interesting and important primarily because it speaks to the ancient question posed by Socrates in the introduction. How can anyone claim to teach democratic virtues? Thus, my focus on the explanations of these professionals did not close off or ignore other interpretations specifically because I assumed that they referred to a historically and culturally contested array of symbolic meanings. By interviewing the experts who themselves carried symbolic legitimacy as representatives of international democracy organizations, I was able to investigate the everyday conventions, justifications, narratives and belief systems by which these experts reproduced the legitimacy of the institution.

As I suggested in the introduction, however, one particular social mechanism, which the literature on democracy assistance refers to as the 'problem of evaluation,' encompassed and oriented all of these conventions, justifications narratives and belief systems (Burnell 2007; Wodzicki 2007; Kumar 2012). Sociological studies of evaluation have emphasized the increasing importance of evaluation mechanisms, especially in the context of public institutions facing pressure to translate their services into economic terms to facilitate neoliberal reforms (e.g. Camic et al. 2011; Lamont 2012). The analysis presented in this chapter similarly situates evaluation as an essential mechanism in the

field of democracy assistance, but it does so by characterizing the mechanism as a morphogenetic process that includes a number of sub-processes that form the conditions for practices to create new structural elaborations (Archer 1995; 2010). I discuss these sub-processes at length in the following section, but they include forms of *a priori* assessment, in-process monitoring and *ex post facto* evaluation.

Since the discourse of "evaluation" has a very specific meaning in the field, especially with many of the most prominent government agencies and NGOs recently conducting evaluation reviews (e.g. National Research Council 2008), I designed the interview schedule to generalize the process of evaluation by focusing on the difficulties or regular problems associated with democracy assistance work.[124] In other words, I avoided producing confirmation bias by avoiding questions that implied a specific problem with the types of evaluation discussed in the literature (Burnell 2007; Kumar 2012). The tone of the interviews instead encouraged a discussion of the practical everyday problems of democracy assistance. Thus, the subtext of the interviews asked respondents to expand on four main topics: (1) describe instances in which a program or project faced practical problems, (2) explain why these problems arose, (3) describe and justify their response to the problem, or the responses of their colleagues and (4) contextualize the problems within the broader field of democracy promotion (i.e. was this problem unique to the country/situation or was it an institutional problem?). Explicitly,

[124] Coming in as an outsider, I observed that professionals in this field often assumed an embattled posture when first dealing with questions about their work. Clearly, these experts were used to dealing with exogenous critique, but this posture also produced an almost universal sense of reflexivity about the difficulties of democracy assistance work among respondents once they decided that I was not an adversary. Presenting myself as a student helped in this regard, with the exception of one interview subject who interpreted the interview as a mentoring situation. This respondent deflected most of my substantive questions and became confused when it was clear that I did not want to discuss my methodology with him. Only after the interview had concluded did he realize what I was trying to do. He apologized and admitted that he "was not used to being a research subject."

the questions asked respondents to consider the work of their own organizations in the broader context of international democracy assistance (see Table 1 for a list of the questions organized by theme).

Table 1: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule: Conceptual Breakdown	
Definitional Baseline	1. Does your organization operate with a specific or unified definition of 'democracy'? What is this definition?
Preliminary Program Development	2. What method do you use to assess whether a democratization project will receive support from your organization?
	3. What characteristics would *disqualify* a group from receiving support from your organization?
Ongoing Program Management	4. What criteria does your organization use to assess the success or failure of a program that it has supported?
	5. To what degree does the input or participation of local stakeholders influence decisions concerning whether or not to support a particular project?
	6. How is the input or experiences of local stakeholders collected and assessed?
	7. How does your organization relay information to local stakeholders?
Positioning in the Field	8. In your experience, how important are the mechanisms of a free market to the prospects for democracy in a given country? Could you briefly describe this relationship in the context of the democratization projects supported by your organization?
	9. To what degree do the projects supported by your department or organization work toward economic equality or redistribution?
	10. To what degree do the projects supported by your department or organization work to address social inequalities based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.?
Additional Comments	11. Could you describe an example of a successful project initiated or supported by your department or organization?
	12. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge you face in meeting the mandate of your organization?

The first question was a control question that asked respondents to define democracy in terms of their organization's 'official' positions. Questions 2 and 3 asked respondents to comment as representatives of their organizations and to interpret the criteria their organizations used to initiate democracy assistance interventions. This included the implicit question about how these professionals applied their expert knowledge to develop a new assistance program. Questions 4 – 7 asked respondents to consider the practical challenges of managing democracy assistance programs. In addition, this group of questions asked respondents to chart out the relationships they have, as experts, with "local stakeholders." These four questions, more so than the first three, forced respondents to reflect on how their expertise produced legitimacy among different groups of stakeholders in the context of democracy assistance work. Essentially, respondents described interactions between three categories of actors: (1) partners on the ground or local stakeholders, (2) representatives of the democracy assistance organization – sometimes called "implementers" – including experts in the field and program coordinators (whose work often overlaps), and (3) representatives of donor organizations, including board members of their own organizations or governmental funding bodies. In this world of democracy assistance, experts in the field and program coordinators often saw themselves as mediators translating the valuations of actors on the ground into principles that matched the funding priorities of donors.

These four questions also created distance between the respondents and their organizations. This separation was a particularly useful way to stimulate conversation about the limits of democratic interventions in general. It was also a useful way to lead into the next set of questions (8, 9 and 10), which asked respondents to discuss the

broader direction of international democracy assistance and the role that their organization plays in the field.[125] As I described in the previous chapter, the field of democracy assistance had recently been subject to harsh criticisms that implicated this work in the expansion of American imperialism extending from the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and the activities of US organizations in the Eastern European “Colour Revolutions.” Respondents therefore almost universally identified these questions (8, 9 and 10) as pertaining to such critiques. Finally, although I proceeded with the interviews in a semi-structured format, and thus often asked respondents either to follow up on specific points or to give examples, questions 11 and 12 were included to allow for further reflections on the specific work of a respondent’s organization or to the broader institution of democracy assistance. For some respondents, these questions encouraged further reflection about their work in relation to the rest of the field, which produced even more examples and anecdotal evidence of the split between the ideals of democracy assistance and the complex work of applying these ideals in practice.

While respondents’ explanations or discussions were often wide-ranging and covered many topics, each interview took on an overall structure that moved from a discussion of specific organizational policies and approaches to a more general discussion of democracy assistance and the difficulties perceived by respondents. In most cases, these general comments on democracy assistance incorporated an element of

[125] Since the focus of these interviews was the everyday practices within a particular organization, and not a Bourdieusian field analysis, my questions about the field were oriented towards how respondents saw their own organizations’ contributions to the field. I settled on this approach early on, as it became clear in my preliminary interviews that professionals went out of their way to avoid referring directly to other specific organizations in any way that could be construed as negative or critical. The primary explanation for this reticence to disparage other organizations, even though there is clearly significant competition for resources among organizations, is likely due to the embattled history of the field as a whole (discussed in Chapter 4). In the end, respondents were far more likely to reveal problems within their own organizations than point out the problems of another organization.

reflexivity about the respondents' organizations and their own experiences. My analysis examines these reflexive comments as representations of evaluative practices that attempt to reconcile the multiple competing facts and values that could possibly define both specific democracy assistance projects and the general field.

An Analytical Framework for the Interview Data

The questions asked in the interviews elicited responses describing a range of evaluation practices that translated complex processes of democratization into measurable results, which in turn facilitated expert interventions. To analyze these responses, I followed the framework built into the interview questions, and thereby organized the following into four sections. The first section summarizes responses describing the definitions of democracy adopted by each organization (question 1). The second, third and fourth sections outline the evaluative practices that fit within a morphogenetic process that I describe below in terms of the assistance "program cycle." The processes associated with this cycle include preliminary program assessment (based on answers to questions 2 and 3), the process of monitoring ongoing programs (questions 4 – 7), and the process of fixing the value of programs in a larger aid community (questions 8 – 10). In each of these sections, the respondents' descriptions of the problems or difficulties inherent to each process relate to a larger process of evaluation. Before presenting the interview data on this larger process, however, it is important to establish a baseline understanding of the historical and culturally contingent context represented in the various organizational definitions of democracy.

Defining Democracy

For the architects of United States foreign policy in the mid-2000s, images of Iraqis proudly holding up their painted fingers in 2005 during the country's first "democratic" election since the 1950s should have vindicated the disastrous war launched two years prior. Instead, the form of democracy associated with the Bush Administration's so-called "Freedom Agenda" turned democracy promotion into what one respondent called a "discredited discourse" (PR).[126] To many international observers, the violence and instability of Iraq overshadowed the election and its underlying vision of democracy. The implied definition of democracy suggested in the Bush Administration's celebration of Iraq's election was, on one hand, unremarkable, since it was just one example of a long history of reductive definitions that equated elections with democracy. On the other hand, to the professionals whom I interviewed, the interesting and important legacy of the Iraq War was the symbolic equivalence that the Administration's messaging tried to establish between "freedom" and US military intervention (translated by many outside the United States as "unfreedom"). The damage done by this equivalence and the power it gave to anti-democratic autocrats, who characterized democracy as a form of imperialism, was significant, producing what recent literature on the field has described as a "backlash" against democracy (Carothers 2006). It also created a perceived need within the field to reassert or re-imagine democracy assistance itself (Burnell 2011).

For this reason, the question of democracy's definition was in some ways a foundational question for the respondents. As a result, the various definitions represented a range of theories about what elements are crucial to democracy, such as human rights, participation, civil society or empowerment. At the same time, the one common feature

[126] Throughout this analysis, I use two-letter pseudonyms when citing respondents' answers to interview questions to preserve their anonymity.

of all of the respondents' definitions was that they were practice-driven and non-reductive, insofar as they were intentionally open and responsive to the various 'realities' of different political contexts. As Chapter 4 argued, this open conceptual approach partly builds on a minimalist Schumpeterian definition that resists adopting any specific normative content. Each of the program coordinators I interviewed, including those from the same organization, therefore presented a unique (subjective) interpretation of the principles that make up democracy. Although these principles still fell within a range that one might expect from organizations that uniformly espouse one or another form of liberal democracy, these subjective definitions framed their organizations' "practical" approaches[127] in terms of scope and institutional focus. However, these subjective framings differed among respondents in the same organization and did not describe a distribution of definitions. Instead, this framing suggests a range of definitions that reflect the type of openness produced by the field's contentious history. The scope of these definitions therefore included both an emphasis on the practical or situational nature of assistance programs and an emphasis on the holistic approach adopted by these organizations. Likewise, the institutional emphasis of these definitions described different 'targets' for assistance programs that all fell within a range that, following the rise of 'governance,' reflected priorities in the broader field of development. The definitions themselves describe democracy as a complex negotiation of principles and values that guide action in different types of political problem situations. This open tension between the universal and the particular, represented by a generally liberal theoretical consensus and a commitment to practical contextualism, was present in every definition. Table 2

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[127] In other words, none of the respondents suggested that democracy included an equal distribution of the means of production or other so-called "radical" principles of social or economic democracy.

below provides a summary of each respondent's answer to the question of his or her organizational definition of democracy.[128]

Table 2: Defining Democracy

Respondent	Definition of Democracy	Subjective Framing
(LR)	Evolving and functional definition usually focused on participation, empowerment and expansion of the public sphere.	Practical, civil society
(HS)	Definition is rights based, with freedom of association being crucial (e.g., trade unions, churches, parties, clubs or business associations).	Practical, civil society
(SR)	Geared toward government institutions that actually represent the people and ensure a degree of political space.	Practical, legal-institutional
(CN)	A definition that is not too theoretical or value laden, and often as simple as choosing leaders and holding them accountable. Also, the definition is not necessarily liberal in the sense of Western values, especially in the Middle East, but civil society is important.	Practical, legal-institutional
(FI)	Operational definition building toward a free, open and competitive local system with a focus on the people who make things work.	Practical, legal-institutional
(BI)	No single definition, we generally promote recognized principles and practices of democracy. We are in 63 countries so we have 63 definitions of democracy.	Practical, legal-institutional
(MF)	We define democratic deficits in the world on which action might be taken.	Practical, legal-institutional
(MN)	Focused on opening political space for participation (e.g., through the electoral process, civil society or empowering excluded groups).	Holistic, civil society
(HF)	A liberal definition focused on political rights and civil liberties, built on institutions and political processes, but also on critical values and habits such as tolerance, pluralism and compromise.	Holistic, civil society
(AN)	We do not use a minimalist definition. Elections are a necessary but not sufficient condition of democracy (e.g. balance between executive and legislature, independent media, autonomous civil society, free political parties).	Holistic, civil society
(BD)	No standard definition, but roughly based on the declaration for human rights. Governments should be legitimate, derived from the popular will and responsive to the public interest. Not a checklist but an overall effort to change political systems in order to improve peoples' lives.	Holistic, legal-institutional
(BP)	Focused on democratic governance, specifically participation, accountability and transparency.	Holistic, legal-institutional

[128] Table 2 represents each respondent's interpretation of their own organization's working or "practical" definition of democracy. In other words, this interpretation was, for each respondent, a subjective take on how they and their colleagues put their institutional mandate into practice.

(PC)	Term describes a whole range of democratic governance priorities (e.g., elections, parliamentary processes, political parties and the media).	Holistic, legal-institutional
(PR)	A broad definition of democratic development plus human rights (i.e., "human rights are the nerve endings of democracy").	Holistic, legal-institutional
(CC)	A Dahlian definition based on elections and the necessary rights to make them meaningful. Plus the other important elements that make democracies work better (i.e., rule of law and civil society).	Holistic, legal-institutional
(WR)	Based on human rights which include civil, political and economic rights and focused on those rights that promote democracy.	Holistic, legal-institutional
(FD)	A holistic definition not focused on only one component (e.g., elections and legislative processes are important but they need to be legitimate).	Holistic, legal-institutional

While the mission statements and public mandates published by each organization convey a particular approach to democracy, the key insight from responses to this question was that these professionals maintained a necessary openness or flexibility when it came to thinking about the question, 'what is democracy?' As such, each respondent also qualified his or her practical or holistic definition by referring to an organizational emphasis on some admixture of civil society capacity and legal-institutional capacity. The latter component of this subjective framing, which clearly evoked the problem of capacity also discussed in the previous chapter appeared as a kind of 'theoretical consensus' based on a Dahlian definition of "polyarchy" (Dahl 1971). Based on the importance of Dahl's work in American political science, this consensus was unsurprising, but it did speak to a general approach that framed these legal-institutional mechanisms of promoting political participation and civil society pluralism in terms of a metrological definition of democracy. This Dahlian focus on participation and pluralism allowed respondents to be open to any practical approaches that might make democratic elections freer and more meaningful for all members of a political community (an idea expressed explicitly in CC's definition). Such a "big tent" approach was, of course, both

sensible and easily justified in the context of organizations working in widely diverse political situations around the world. However, while these definitions seemed expansive in scope, once the interviews turned to the specific programs developed by their organizations, the respondents narrowed this scope considerably. For example, some organizations had more experience with building political parties, while others focused on assisting governments with juridical or parliamentary reform. In general, then, I argue that the definitional baseline offered by respondents both confirmed a specific array of universal principles, best characterized as 'Dahlian liberal pluralism,' *and* emphasized the practical or holistic nature of their own "working definitions." Here, the 'practical' approach was explicit while the Dahlian principles were largely implicit, except for one explicit mention by CC. By placing their own approaches somewhere between a universal and relative definition of democracy, the respondents effectively characterized an interstitial place between academic and practitioner knowledge.

Since, as I stated in the introduction, my overall approach seeks to expand on recent themes identified in the sociology of expertise literature, the response to the first question fits well with examples of this literature that have studied the way that expert knowledge opens space for certain types of 'intervention' (e.g. Callon et al. 2009; Eyal and Buchholz 2010; Eyal 2013). A focus on intervention turns away from classical treatments of intellectuals as a class of ideal typical actors, instead framing expertise in terms of its diversified agency, truth effects, and interstitial domains (Eyal & Buchholz 2010: 128). The important questions that emerge therefore concern the performance of expert interventions as legitimate public actions. With a broad baseline of definitional democratic principles to work from, I found that expertise among democracy program

coordinators was based less on access to knowledge about the universal operation of democracy, and more oriented to how the historical and cultural possibilities, capacity, or desire for democracy in specific regions matched the "resources" of a coordinator's specific organization. This form of expert knowledge therefore required a relativist approach to a given situation, but also a working understanding of the standard practices and theoretical preferences of the field (in this case, Dahlian polyarchy). By describing their work as a process of mobilizing stocks of organizational resources, which implicitly included theoretical resources on behalf of struggling democracy advocates, program coordinators framed democratic expertise explicitly in terms of evaluating and responding to situations of need.

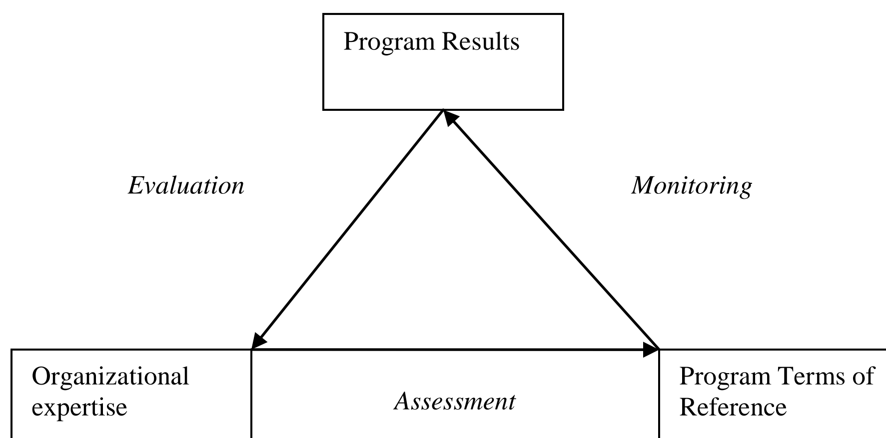
Democracy Assistance as a Morphogenetic Process

In my research on the history of democracy promotion organizations (outlined in Chapter 4), and in my preliminary interviews, the relative positions of donors, implementer organizations, and partners 'on the ground' suggested that the development and administration procedures for democracy assistance programs were fairly uniform throughout the field, insofar as they followed a common process. In the interviews, respondents described this process not as a series of distinct operations but as a *cycle* that made democracy assistance meaningful to their partners and, ideally, produced democratic results. In this cycle, three processes stood out. While respondents did not explicitly name these processes individually, they described the three sub-processes – *assessment, monitoring and evaluation* – that make up what literature on the field calls "evaluation." The first group of assessment practices referred to an *a priori* process of preliminary program development characterized by attempts to use expertise and

organizational resources to develop specific assistance programs that responded to "situations of need." Successful program proposals then required 'terms of reference' outlining the formal expectations of the donor-recipient relationship. Next, monitoring practices referred to the ongoing management of specific programs with the goal of producing the 'results' outlined in programs' terms of reference and oriented to the donor organization's current mandate. Finally, evaluation practices referred to the *ex post facto* process of attributing value to their assistance work by writing program reports and disseminating program results within the broader field. Usually these practices involved self-publishing country reports or regional issue-based reports.[129] Such practices therefore produced types of knowledge specific to democracy assistance in a cyclical process that moved from classificatory knowledge to specific program 'terms of reference,' and in turn to the production of program results. Figure 1 below represents the general parameters of the program cycle.

[129] Almost all democracy assistance organizations have websites, where and most post their publications. There are many examples of published reports accessible online ranging from specific country reports, such as the National Democratic Institute's *Honduran Electoral Census Audit 2012* (http://www.ndi.org/files/Honduras-voter-registry-2013-ENG.pdf), to regional reports such as Freedom House's *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa 2010* (http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/women039s-rights-middle-east-and-north-africa/womens-rights-middle-east-and-north-africa-2010).

Figure 1: The Democracy Assistance Program Cycle

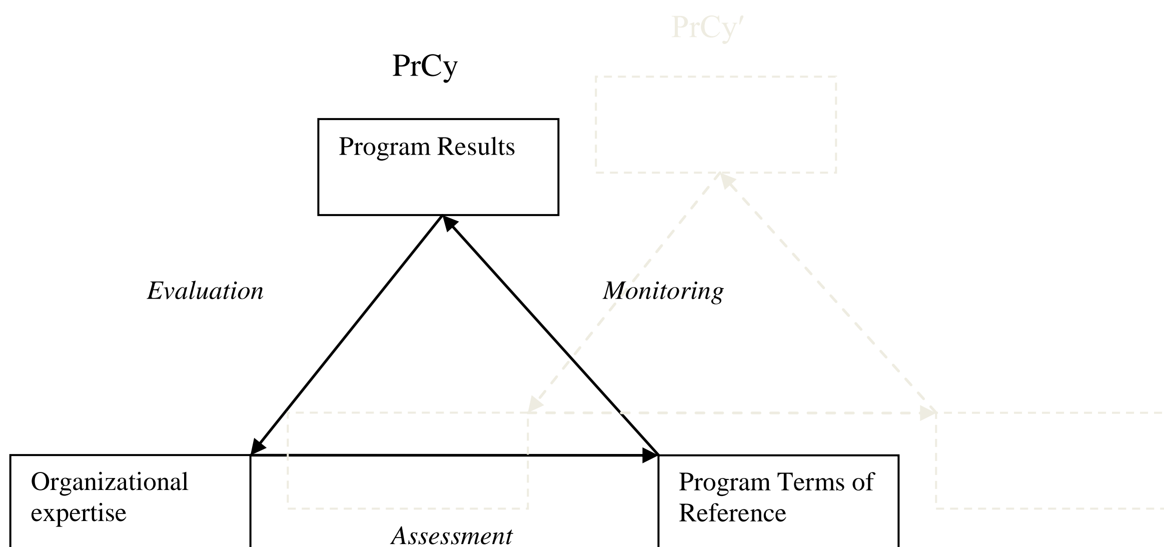


In and of itself, this cycle is an oversimplified representation of assistance work, and the literature on democracy assistance usually focuses only on specific aspects of the processes described here. Obviously, it is no coincidence that the three processes described in this cycle mirror my interview questions. Outlining the cycle in this way therefore provides an answer to the "what" question of democracy assistance since this cycle generally describes the work of democracy assistance. Such a generalization then opens up the analysis to "how" questions that qualify these processes in terms of change over time. Most important for my analysis, then, are the ways in which an ever-increasing emphasis on evaluation and evaluative practices shapes how these processes produce expertise.

At the same time, the cycle represented in Figure 1 is limited because it only provides a general framework and does not account for how each of these sub-processes interact over time. As I suggest in the introduction, however, by breaking this process

down into the three sub-processes, I am able to set up an analytical framework that looks at how knowledge-making practices interact with *structural constraints* and produce *structural elaborations* in the context of a morphogenetic process. The advantage of adopting this morphogenetic approach is that it characterizes the program cycle as synchronic and productive. The cycle thus follows a regular script, but also alters the script in each iteration (see Figure 2). While sociologists often work to overcome binaries of structure and agency that lead to extreme versions of determinism and voluntarism, many recent theoretical approaches have recognized the importance of both sides of this dualism. Luc Boltanski's (2012) attempt to work back toward the Bourdieusian framework he rejected earlier in his career is one example discussed above, but another particularly useful example is Margaret Archer's (2010) argument in favour of a morphogenetic approach. This approach is distinct from Giddens' (1979) theory of "structuration," and Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," which resolve the dualism of structure and agency by collapsing them into a co-constitutive *duality*. The morphogenetic approach instead maintains the dualism in order to open the framework to an analysis of how the particular sub-processes of *assessment, monitoring and evaluation* produce structures in an elaborated form (Archer 2010: 228). Such an approach allows for a synchronic analysis of processes such as the democracy assistance cycle, but one that also recognizes that structural elaborations such as funding mandates or program results have institutionalizing effects. In Archer's words: "[T]he morphogenetic perspective is not only dualistic but sequential, dealing in endless cycles of – structural conditioning/social interaction/structural elaboration – thus unravelling the dialectical interplay between structure and action" (Archer 2010: 228).

Figure 2: The Program Cycle (PrCy) as a Morphogenetic Process



The cycle described above is useful because, by adopting it I am able to analyze each of the three legs as a morphogenetic process that starts with structural conditioning (a box in Figure 2), shapes a set of practices described by one of the three sub-processes (the arrow) and produces a structural elaboration (the next box in the cycle), which in turn becomes the structural conditions of the next sub-process. This cycle is then replicated in new democracy assistance program or in a new iteration of an existing program. In addition, the cycle is not self-contained, as many factors influence the historically and culturally contingent structural conditions and social interactions it describes. By framing expert practices within this morphogenetic cycle, however, I am able to tease apart the elements of knowledge-making practices that push certain types of

institutionalization and resist other types. In this way, the cultural processes of evaluation appear as more than merely a by-product of the program cycle. The following three sections describe this cycle by referring to respondents' accounts of the main sub-processes of assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

Assessment: Preliminary Program Development

The process of identifying potential programs or partners is an important step in the practice of democracy assistance. This step translates organizational expertise into specifically tailored assistance programs enacted by and for local partners. According to the interview data, two main principles grounded program assessment. The first important principle was the efficient use of organizational resources. In this case, efficiency required coordinators to understand the universe of funding opportunities and cost effectiveness within their organization and in the larger aid community. It also required an ability to assemble networks of actors and informants that allowed coordinators to find acceptable "entry points" and partners with suitable capacities. The second principle, which coordinators linked to efficiency but framed in terms of the limits of engagement, was the necessity of risk management. For these coordinators, understanding and avoiding risks drove much of their own decision making, especially when it came to considering program proposals or evaluating possible partners. Thus, principles of efficiency and risk management emerged as minimum threshold requirements for funding or implementing a proposed intervention.

The Principle of Efficiency

Respondents provided a number of examples of these two principles in their answers to Questions 2 and 3, which asked what method they use to assess[130] a possible program and what might disqualify a possible program. The comments they made about efficiency made it clear that this principle was pervasive throughout the field, which aligned with most descriptions of organizational management structures in the field. However, respondents also framed efficiency as a commonsense way to conduct their work. This tone, which all of the respondents shared to some degree, had the effect of naturalizing the relationship between funding resources and the distribution of expertise throughout the field. Interview subjects therefore framed their initial responses to Questions 2 and 3 as descriptive accounts of how the respondent's organization prioritized funding for their programs as well as how the distribution of funding operated in the broader field of democracy assistance.[131] For many organizations, funding priorities followed from visions or strategies produced by boards of directors or other leadership structures that aimed to both maximize their own expertise and to respond to shifts in broader funding trends. This could take the form of prioritizing countries, regions or even specific campaigns (such as supporting women's rights, independent media outlets, or training political parties). At the same time, program coordinators had to identify pools of funding from government agencies or international NGOs that could possibly support new programming. Respondents described one of the problems related to this distribution of funding in the field in terms of the possible scale of a program.

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[130] As I suggest in the introduction, I use the term 'assessment' in this analysis in a way that is slightly different from the term 'evaluation.' Assessment refers to a process of estimating value whereas evaluation looks to set or fix the value of something. As I explain below and in the conclusion, fixing value is an important element of evaluation as a *cultural* process.

[131] By 'initial responses,' I mean the respondent's immediate reaction to the question, which generally took the form of an 'official' organizational line. These responses were almost always qualified through follow-up questions. For some later questions, these qualifications strayed farther from the 'official' line than they did for Questions 2 and 3.

For obvious reasons, possibilities for a program's scale linked to questions of where funding came from. Funding could come from "big basket" [132] funds directed by larger organizations such as the UN, which aimed at national level projects, or funds could come from smaller pots of money allocated by independent organizations. For one coordinator (PC), the virtue of so-called "big basket" projects was that they included multiple sources of funding, but they also came with complex and bureaucratic systems of oversight, and often required a degree of cooperation from the same governmental elites that were resisting democratic change. At the same time, smaller scale projects developed with groups of local activists might be transformative, but would likely have a difficult time generating continued funding. As another coordinator (HF) pointed out, however, working towards goals of national level democratization often had the practical effect of driving organizations towards larger pools of governmental funding. In his words "[i]f you are in the business, which we are, of helping to transform these societies by working with civil society activists, that's hard to do very inexpensively. [Our] programs are of a magnitude where we are really dependent on governments[…]because [they] have large funding opportunities" (HF).

Structurally, then, it was clear that Western governments could influence the development of democratization programs by allocating pools of aid funding for certain types of goals. In terms of a morphogenetic analysis, this clearly represented a structural condition imposed on the program cycle. These goals shaped lists of aid priorities drawn up by organizations that matched the goals to areas of organizational expertise. At the

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[132] Typically, "basket funds," which many respondents identified as increasingly common throughout the field, refer to projects initiated by larger intergovernmental agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme. These projects collect funding from multiple sources including governments and international NGOs (i.e. everyone puts some funding "in the basket") in order to engage larger-scale projects.

same time, the strategic visions or political priorities generated by governments changed regularly, so assistance organizations had to be careful to avoid investing too heavily in one strategic goal or another. In this way, coordinators described the distribution of international funding pools as a complex and sometimes-frustrating system of shifting priorities.

Another aspect of assessing possible program efficiency involved a judgement about the likelihood of democratic change in the 'target' country. This aspect involved project coordinators making a 'bet' on the prospects for democracy based on their knowledge of the country or the region's recent history. While this type of assessment involved collecting 'facts' about a country's political system, it also required a broader understanding of the processes by which democratization might take hold. In the words of coordinator BD, possible programs needed to be assessed based on "whether or not country X is in a place in its history, its contemporary politics and its economic [development] to transition to democracy." For other respondents, this form of subjective assessment of a country's democratic prospects also involved the possibility of "regional diffusion" as an important factor in their evaluations. As respondent LR suggested "We identify countries where certain problems, if solved, can have a positive effect on other countries in the region." Similarly, PR asserted that "regional geopolitics" was one of the primary criteria for possible program assessment.[133]

A third factor contributing to the principle of efficiency, as described in the interviews, was an assessment of the competence of local partners. Program coordinators

[133] Although only implicit, it was clear in the interviews that the theory of regional diffusion used by these coordinators referred to what Weyland (2006) uses to demonstrate the "bounded rationality" of policy makers, rather than the micro-relational theory of diffusion recently developed by political sociologists in the context of social movement networks (see Wood 2012; Tilly & Tarrow 2007).

described this factor in terms of the information they gathered about what possible partners 'on the ground' could contribute to a program, and what expectations these partners could reasonably meet. Using language common to the broader aid industry, program coordinators needed to determine the "capacities" of possible partners and respondents often considered this a crucial step toward ensuring the success of a program. In some cases, assistance organizations could bypass this "question of capacity" if they had worked with a local partner in the past. In other cases, respondents suggested that a "fact-finding mission" (PR) might be needed to identify partners and or locate "entry points" (MN) where assistance might be effectively deployed. Especially when developing programs in a country where a respondent's own organization did not already have an established network, this type of "fact-finding" amounted to meeting and talking with people in the country to "scout around and get a good sense of the politics of the country" (FD). Counter to the claim that Western democracy organizations impose their own ideas on local partners, FD framed this scouting process by explaining: "we don't design program[s] by just sitting here in Washington[…]we get input from the people in the country in which the program is going to be implemented."

Here, the expertise required was beyond the scope of an individual democracy professional. Instead, organizations acquired expertise by assembling multiple actors in a network of "reliable contacts" and gathering information from throughout the network. One coordinator's explanation of new country program assessment nicely summarized the relational basis of this process:

> [If] we don't have a current program [in a country], we usually start off by doing an assessment. So we will send a team of experts working with [our organization] and we'll try to pull people from different backgrounds, so they won't all be from one region or specialize in one thematic [area]. We will try to have two or three

> people […] go to the country and meet with a range of people – everyone from a political party representative to elected officials at the national and local levels to civil society groups, organizations and individual activists. We may also reach out to media outlets and get a sense of what is going on in the country and how that government is working. From there, we try to analyze the strengths and weaknesses based on what the people want from a government in their country (SR).

In this explanation, coordinator SR described an assessment process designed to calculate an initial estimate of what "the people" wanted by constructing a network of key actors and informants. Ideally, for the coordinators, within this network of political players were potential partners who accurately represented the wants or needs of "the people." According to respondents, identifying the right partners was a crucial step for any program because it increased the chances of producing desirable 'results.' This topic came up again when respondents discussed the process of program monitoring, but in essence, the estimated capacities of local partners were an important part of possible program assessments.

The Principle of Risk Management

Just as respondents identified three main factors that contributed to efficiency assessments (possible funding, likelihood of democratic change and local partner capacity), these same factors contributed to assessments of risk, the second main principle of this sub-process. Discussions of risk management ranged from matter-of-fact citation of organizational policy to more interpretive accounts that weighed 'common sense' baseline criteria against the complexity of democratization processes. MF offered one standard example of risk management criteria: "We make judgments about whether our partners are genuine, whether they adhere to democratic values, and whether they renounce the use of violence." These baseline criteria, or what another coordinator called

"red lines" (BD), described the limits of possible programs because failure to meet them could disrupt funding, signal a deterioration in national democratization processes or denote the unsuitability of a local partner organization.

Where respondents implied that they could work around certain types of inefficiencies if necessary, other types of risk could automatically disqualify a possible program. For example, the imperative to ensure partners were "genuine" was important because combating corruption and financial mismanagement were recent trends in the broader aid industry, which was moving to promote better "governance" in developing countries.[134] For many democracy assistance organizations, the possibility of being party to fraud or corruption was a serious threat, since much of their expertise relative to the broader development landscape involved assisting efforts for democratic transparency. International organizations like those covered in this study could survive if some of their programs performed poorly or failed to meet their goals but, as CN suggested, "what an organization like ours cannot survive is a financial scandal." Considering the contentious history of democracy assistance, which coordinators freely acknowledged, the damage caused by a financial scandal would not only tarnish the reputation of the organization but also restrict access to pools of government or international funding. At the same time, this category was less problematic for some coordinators, who pointed out that a thorough evaluation of possible partners in a country could mitigate some of these risks. Based on their expertise, multiple coordinators argued that they could get a sense of

[134] The discourse of genuineness or sincerity speaks to a common myth of neoliberal governance, whereby Western governments and organization perceive developing states as always at risk of being bogged down by corrupt or criminal elements that look to "cheat" Western aid programs. This, of course, ignores the fact that bribes or kick-backs most often go directly back to Western corporations (see Comaroff & Comaroff 2007; Mbembe 2006). A recent and public example of this form of bribery is the relationship that Montreal-based engineering firm SNC-Lavalin had with the Gadhafi regime in Libya, which became public only after the regime fell.

whether partners "were serious or not" (WR) and could therefore verify up front whether a group would be able to "absorb the funds, complete reports and meet criteria for financial accountability" (LR).

More problematic for coordinators were judgements of possible partners' ability to meet the criterion of "adherence to democratic values." Echoing attempts to keep definitions of democracy open and flexible, many coordinators emphasized the 'assistance' element of their programs and suggested that adherence to democratic values was a goal rather than a condition of their work. While they would avoid working with groups that "council hate, discrimination, or ethnic cleansing" (CN), as well as groups whose "nationalist" (BD) or "radical" (LR) politics precluded democratic engagement, most coordinators pointed out the grey areas that came with engaging political parties or civil society groups that had deep ties to the community, but might not share "Western sensibilities."[135] Here respondents cited democracy programs in the Middle East that might not exist if their organizations too strictly enforced adherence to Western democratic values. Even with this qualification, however, respondents also pointed out that they had to be careful about setting up programs in countries with deteriorating political situations. Both BP and LR made direct reference to the fact that the physical safety of their in-country colleagues is part of any assessment.

Of course, respondents also linked this difficulty to the common practice, among Western governments, of classifying organizations or parties that "espoused violence" as "terrorist groups," making them automatically ineligible for aid funding. Specifically, multiple respondents mentioned the recent electoral participation of Hamas in Palestine

[135] When discussing "Western sensibilities" coordinators were careful to explain that specific rights or liberties, such as lgbt rights were not inherently Western, but that they might be "harder to sell" in regions such as the Middle East, Eastern Europe or some African countries.

and Hezbollah in Lebanon as instances in which their organizations could not establish partnerships even though they had other democratization programs running in these countries.[136] In these cases, respondents tried to remain neutral about the politics involved, but were reflective about the effects that formalized lists of terrorist organizations had on their ability to build networks of democracy activists. In some cases, programs might work to engage parliamentary committees, but they would have to take extra steps to avoid association with committee members from parties linked to terrorism. For respondents like CC, the logics guiding Western anti-terrorism acted as "inflexible imperatives" that could serve to undermine situations ideally built on "mutual trust." Despite these qualifications, however, refusing to work with groups that crossed these "red lines" seemed to be an important basis for developing programs and constructing networks that were insulated from political challenges both in their home countries and in recipient countries. Table 3 outlines the matrix of elements that make up program assessment as a form of expert knowledge. Base on their responses, I characterize the program coordinators' assessment expertise in terms of a responsibility to know or to learn how principles of efficiency and risk management applied to the three main elements of a possible program. This constitutes a form of expertise because it facilitates an intervention (Callon et al. 2009; Eyal & Buchholz 2010) and it constitutes a range of possibilities for a social and political community (Camic et al. 2011).

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[136] One example of the political risks associated with engaging partner organizations that Western governments have linked to terrorism is the case of the Canadian quasi-governmental democracy assistance organization Rights & Democracy. In April 2012, the Canadian government formally dissolved the organization after a period of scaling back its funding. Prior to 2010, Rights & Democracy had funded small, but long-term projects in which they partnered with various organizations around the world, including some pro-Palestinian organizations in the Middle East. The Conservative government at the time disapproved of these relationships and replaced the organization's board with Conservative Party loyalists who summarily expelled the organization's former leadership, charging them with "mismanagement" and "inefficiency." Much of the senior staff eventually left with the organization's reputation for independence waning until its funding was finally cut in early 2012.

Table 3: Possible Program Assessment Matrix

Main Program Elements	Principle of Efficiency	Principle of Risk Management
Donors/Funding	Possible funding sources?	Terrorism, corruption or other funding "redlines"?
Target Country	Likelihood of success in historical context?	Deteriorating/unsafe political situation?
Local Partners	Sufficient partner capacity?	Trustworthy partners?

One interesting aspect of these assessment principles for possible democracy programs is the type of justification coordinators offer for the appropriateness and efficacy of these constraints. In most cases, program coordinators justified requirements following from these principles as necessary steps that facilitated aid relationships with pro-democracy partners in need, and thereby de-emphasized the idea that efficiency and risk management functioned merely to ensure the viability of their own organizations. For example, coordinator WR explained that preliminary assessments were crucial because coordinators had a 'responsibility to know' that the field is part of a larger network of organizations, some of which operate solely to game the system:

> The bigger issue is that democracy assistance, or development for that matter, has become an industry, which means there are many actors out there who are professionalized and who see this as a way to make money[…] So the real issue is: 'are public funds being used properly and appropriately?'

In this case, an appeal to responsibility justified interrogating local partners' capacity or propensity for corruption, despite the rhetorical emphasis most organizations place on responding to situations of need. Based on the interviews for this project, the 'need' for assistance in a particular situation factored in to program assessment, but it was not nearly as important as the principles of efficiency and risk management.

The assessment process, which relied on coordinators' calculated estimates *and* normative judgments, dictated the 'terms of reference' for assistance programs. These structural elaborations then outlined the responsibilities and expectations of partners, implementers, and donors in a way that justified expert intervention as both an efficient use of resources and an acceptable risk. The next stage in the cycle, as described by the respondents, worked from a program's terms of reference (structural conditions) to produce results that dictated the progress of an intervention (or, democracy program). This step presented coordinators with a series of practical problems, which required more engaged forms of 'valuation.'

Monitoring and Program Management

While the assessment process involved estimating the value of a possible program, the monitoring process[137] involved practices that built up and catalogued the value of existing programs. Based on the interviews, this stage of the program cycle appeared as the most important and most difficult. Answers to Questions 4 – 7 therefore contained a number of practical explanations of these problems, as well as many reflective or even critical comments about the field and the aid industry in general. Specifically, program coordinators described the monitoring process by referring to the more general "problem of evaluation"[138] and characterizing it as one of the most difficult

[137] I use the label "monitoring" to denote a process that relies on observing and recording the progress of programs. The term "administration" also characterizes many of the things program coordinators do, but democracy assistance programs are usually joint operations with local partners, and administrative changes required by one organization are often limited to those mechanisms controlled by that organization. I wish to emphasize monitoring, then, because it describes a larger institutional process that spans all participants included in a program's terms of reference. Evaluation becomes a core component later in the program cycle because it is a mechanism for fixing the value of observed progress for the purposes of communicating that value to other organizations.

[138] It was in response to these questions that respondents explicitly used the term "evaluation," and some respondents framed their answers in terms of the recent attention the subject of evaluation had received in

aspects of ensuring the success of existing democracy programs. This problem was also one way that coordinators began to describe the opposing needs of funding organizations (including their own organizations) and local partner organizations. Descriptions of the monitoring process therefore evolved into discussions about the tension inherent to these opposing needs, and the problems this tension created for the everyday work of producing and communicating the ongoing 'results' of democracy programs.

An especially important element of the monitoring process focused on the tension between "intrinsic" vs. "extrinsic" results (see Burnell 2007: 22). In the public statements, publications and promotional material generated throughout the field of democracy assistance, a common appeal to democratic principles operates as the primary foundation for the legitimacy of programs. The valuation of programs based on universalized measures of democratic change, including democracy "scores" issued by Freedom House, Transparency International and other NGOs, as well as any other form of measurement that shows the comparative effect of a program, can act as a program's extrinsic results. Intrinsic results, on the other hand, are often included as benchmark goals in a program's terms of reference meant to be most "meaningful" to participants in the program. While extrinsic results form the basis of the evaluation process in the next stage of the program cycle, most respondents talked about producing "meaningful intrinsic results" as more important to them personally. When the respondents talked about "meaningful results," they were referring to the normative ideal that their work "made a difference in peoples' lives." Such statements were almost always made in earnest, but the boundaries around what type of intrinsic results were actually

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the literature on democracy assistance. For example, FI directly referred to the study USAID commissioned on democracy aid evaluation (National Research Council 2008), which was discussed in Chapter 4.

"meaningful" remained vague because intrinsic results could also refer to things that donor organizations valued. The two types of results were intimately connected, however, and the differences between them provides a useful framework for understanding the monitoring process, which also highlights the tensions found in the opposing needs of donors and local participant organizations. Table 4 offers a description of this framework.

Table 4: Program Evaluation Matrix

Participant Needs	Intrinsic Results	Extrinsic Results
Donors/Funding Orgs.	Continued efficiency	Measurable results
Local Partners	Meaningful results	Evaluation capacity

On Meaningful Intrinsic Results

One thing that was common to all of the respondents was a desire to help people achieve more control over their lives through democracy. The moral clarity of this goal seemed pervasive throughout the field, and respondent CC even remarked that Americans working in the field often strike their colleagues from around the world as uncommonly earnest about this ideal. Thus, when discussing the results that coordinators hoped their programs could achieve, many respondents talked about the difficult work of figuring out whether a program was "really" doing any good at all. For this reason, the problem of producing "meaningful results" was a difficult one. In these discussions, coordinators reflected on what a meaningful result might look like and many suggested that democratization, in essence, depends on changes in *behaviour*, which implied that a meaningful result might not actually be meaningful to the stakeholder, or at least not immediately. In a statement that described the monitoring process well, coordinator CN theorized the 'true' nature of his work: "we are in the business of changing people's

behaviour and changing the way that they view the world. It's hard to capture that except through interviewing them, watching their behaviour or tracking their behaviour over time." Other coordinators also referred to changes in behaviours (FD), attitudes (BD) or approaches to everyday life (BI) as examples of "meaningful" results that their programs hoped to inspire.

Democracy, in this sense, was not defined as a set of institutional rights or liberties, but as a series of skills, attitudes and feelings that caused democratic behaviour. In some cases, the behaviour that a program was designed to change was that of government officials or other anti-democratic forces frustrated the aspirations of local program participants. LR, for example, described programs partially aimed at challenging the traditions of machismo in Latin America that keep women from participating in politics. Similarly, BI talked about the virtues of holding workshops or meetings with women's groups that might not have many venues for open discussions about gender equality. In these cases, program goals meant to change behaviour aimed at creating social space for democratic changes.

The main difficulty with evaluating the results of an existing program was therefore figuring out whether the program (or expert intervention) influenced any changes in behaviour. As such, many coordinators agreed with CN's assessment above that it was important to understand and track the behaviour of their partners over time. In addition, for FI, producing meaningful results required an in-depth understanding of both behaviour *and* the intentionality behind behaviour:

> When you disaggregate [the measures of democracy] people begin to see that in and of itself, it is basically meaningless. The ability or willingness to attend a local party training session may in fact be a requirement of the party. Or, in some rural areas, it's an opportunity for a big festive thing, so people tend to go there

> even though they may not be participating in a training program. So it's the qualifiers that become important.

The concern some coordinators had with "qualifying" or interpreting the behaviour of participants in order to get better and more meaningful results suggested a necessary relational element that was irreducible to simple counts of program participants. According to all the coordinators whom I interviewed, qualitative program monitoring required some degree of participation, cooperation and communication from partners and recipient groups. As with preliminary program assessments, monitoring required an assemblage or network of actors to legitimate the principles of an evaluation framework. Methodologically, respondents from different organizations did this in different ways. For some who worked on smaller projects, identifying these principles could involve regular phone contact or extended trips to the recipient country to communicate with partners, supporting NGOs, and political actors.[139] Other respondents described departments or positions within their own organizations dedicated specifically to "program evaluation" that handled what I refer to here as monitoring. These departments conducted both formal and informal interviews with recipient groups to compare formal results with what people actually felt about a program's efficacy. For MN, these interviews told her organization "[n]ot just how many more women got elected but how did our program specifically help elected women."[140] Still other respondents spoke about the type of evaluations that they would *like* to see. For example, CN suggested that the best way to evaluate would be to develop a case study model that could incorporate instructive anecdotes and narratives, but also maintain a level of "scientific rigour."

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[139] These forms of evaluation, based on personal communication, were described most explicitly by LR, CN, BD and BP. However all respondents implied that they personally communicated with partners on the ground as well as other 'in country' political actors.
[140] PR, BI, SR and LR also emphasized the process of interviewing partners.

Debates over the importance of qualitative or subjective forms of evaluation appear in the literature (e.g. Burnell 2007; Kumar 2012), but the interviews conducted for this study demonstrated that questions about the intrinsic value of DA programs was a central question for coordinators in their everyday work. At the same time, many of the respondents also balanced their concerns with the sentiments mentioned in the previous section on avoiding risk. In FI's comments above about understanding the intentions behind apparent behavioural changes, there was an implicit suggestion that coordinators should maintain an appropriate distance from their partners. Similar to norms discouraging researchers from getting too close to their subjects, or "going native," some coordinators mentioned the importance of maintaining a healthy scepticism or 'realism.' An important part of this positioning, for HF, was gathering good "baseline information" into a program's terms of reference. This allowed donor organizations to see the intrinsic value of program results by demonstrating a continued effort to ensure efficiency and risk management. However, basic measures of program performance in relation to the terms of reference were not the only types of monitoring demanded by donors. Very often, they also required extrinsic results that showed the universal value of a program.

On Measurable Extrinsic Results

Overwhelmingly, the program coordinators whom I interviewed responded to questions about program monitoring by describing the practical challenges of developing meaningful programs in tenuous political situations while having to appease boards of directors or donor agencies. These difficulties reflected, for them, a tension between the general demand for more formal or rigorous results and the practical realities of

democratization. For example, after referring to the USAID study (National Research Council 2008) as evidence of this important issue in the field, FI described a practical problem common to many democracy programs:

> The very nature of the work we do is long term, and in most cases the deliverable is also affected by factors that are completely out of our control. [In some cases] we will work with a political party and there will be an election six months down the road, and they'll get voted out of office. [But] our goal is not to get people elected. It is to strengthen the democratic process.

The point, for FI, was that according to certain types of formal measures, changing circumstances might make specific program goals unachievable, but the program might still have the net effect of "strengthening the democratic process."

Many respondents relayed similar examples of programs that had poor "measurables" but were nonetheless successful in their eyes. In one example, AN described a project in Egypt that became successful despite not producing measurable results. In this case, his organization had funded a garbage collection program in one of Cairo's "slum regions" because they figured out that it was mobilizing community participation in a way that would not be possible if they attempted to organize a formal political organization. While he and his colleagues recognized that the project was successful, and represented exactly the type of community organizing that they were trying to achieve, he also lamented that "it's difficult to evaluate a project like that because clearly, there are very few direct measurables that you can take away" (AN).

The problem of "direct measurables" brought up two themes that respondents used to describe the difficulty of monitoring programs. First, respondents alluded to the fact that, as one coordinator (HS) put it: "there is no linear progress in democracy building." If democratization were a standardized incremental process, the work of

democracy assistance, according to HS, would undoubtedly be much easier. For better or worse, when it came to processes of democratization, coordinators universally accepted that "things change daily" (SR), and a situation such as the (then) stagnant democratization process in Egypt could suddenly change. The second theme was the idea that formal measures can sometimes misrecognize the long-term value of a particular project. In AN's Egyptian example, community engagement and greater municipal accountability were by-products of what was ostensibly a garbage collection project, an outcome that would be very difficult to formalize in the terms of reference of an initial project assessment, especially in relation to the extrinsic goals of the program. Based on this perspective, it became clear that formal extrinsic measures also needed to include informal, flexible, or qualitative measures.

In many ways, these descriptions of program evaluation methodology mirrored academic debates about social science methodology.[141] The overlap was clearly apparent to FI who, in addition to mentioning the study commissioned by USAID, talked about other organizations such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, which publishes its own evaluation tools (e.g. Pruitt 2007). Here, FI suggested that publishing evaluation tools and methodologies is a competitive process, similar to professional competitions in academic fields. Where these methodologies differ from social scientific debates, however, is in the structural effects that their elaboration produces for the subjects of evaluation. Since particular organizations push to implement their own methodologies, and since these methodologies mostly involve some sort of cooperative element whereby recipients participate in the evaluation process, the

[141] Table 6 in Appendix A summarizes the different forms of evaluation methodology described by coordinators.

adoption of evaluation criteria can become a part of the desired results of a particular program. Two coordinators mentioned this phenomenon explicitly. For FD, training partners in his organization's evaluation methodology was desirable because it "empowered" local NGOs or activists to develop their own democracy programs. WR put it even more directly by suggesting that implementing an "evaluation plan" was essentially a "capacity building process for [their] partners." Here the production of extrinsic results, through an enriched capacity to self-evaluate, appeared as a necessity for local partners.

These forms of measurement, which were also cultural processes that established the value of results, extended beyond simple calculations for the efficient distribution of an organization's resources. By framing results as not only measurements of democratic change produced by an intervention, but as a *capacity* to participate in "evaluation procedures,"[142] coordinators seemed to imply that the effect of program monitoring was to build legitimacy for the intervention itself. In this case, again, monitoring practices appeared as a form of expertise that facilitated intervention and constituted the social 'reality' of an existing program. By suggesting that a goal of some programs should be to teach recipients self-regulation and the regulation of others, respondents seemed to conflate the requirements of their own organizational expertise with principles of democracy. In this case, monitoring practices did not appear to rely on common moral principles, but instead acted as extensions of minimum threshold principles that participants continually had to affirm and live up to in order to receive ongoing

[142] In this sense, the process of measuring the capacity of a democratic institution transformed into a skill that democracy assistance programs could teach. Since it became a central focus of the broader field of international development with the rise of the 'governance' discourse, demonstrating measurement capacity could certainly help a local NGO obtain funding from international donors. In this way, the governance discourse merges neoliberal logics with democratic principles.

assistance. While respondents seemed genuinely concerned about the intrinsic value of their programs, the key principles guiding the monitoring process were therefore the self-regulation and transparency *of recipient behaviour*.

As I have argued above, an important effect of the democracy program cycle is that it creates structural elaborations that become the conditions for possible action. However, monitoring practices built on principles of self-regulation and transparency were not products of equal interactions of between donors, implementers (coordinators), and recipient groups (partners). Power differentials based on access to funding or relationships with elites certainly helped to shape the structural conditions of the monitoring process. According to the reflective statements of program coordinators, these principles emerged from an unequal distribution of power that they themselves saw as both necessary and problematic. It was therefore in the monitoring stage of the evaluation cycle that finding common valuations or principles of equivalence became most difficult, from the perspective of coordinators. In all but one interview, these difficulties also lead to some form of acknowledgement of the general limitations of providing support for complex processes of democratization. However, despite the difficulties of monitoring programs and producing "meaningful" results, the coordinators whom I interviewed were much more confident and assertive about the relative virtues of the results produced through democracy assistance when compared to other forms of development aid. The next section draws on answers to interview questions about the broader field of democracy assistance in order to describe the "classification" of results in the final stage of the program cycle. In this stage, monitoring practices appear less as a hindrance to

meaningful engagement with partners, and more as a solid foundation for producing and communicating knowledge within the aid industry.

Evaluation: The Comparative Advantage of Democracy Assistance

If the advantage of a morphogenetic analysis is that it explains how evaluative practices qualify the making of democracy expertise over time, then the structural conditions produced by program results are particularly important to the knowledge-making process. As the previous section suggests, all of the program coordinators emphasized the intrinsic value of their programs. However, the structural conditions produced by program terms of reference and the shifting demands of donor organizations created a practical problem for coordinators who found themselves orienting their work toward measurable extrinsic results. By fixing the value of programs in terms that were meaningful to funding organizations rather than local partners, the monitoring process appeared to value the principles of self-regulation and transparency over all others. Of course, such principles are negative in the sense that they call for results that characterize a program as *not* a waste of money and *not* a vehicle for corruption. In order to demonstrate what coordinator PR called the “value added” element of democracy assistance, coordinators described the importance of generalizing and *evaluating* the collected experiences of their organizations’ interventions. In other words, coordinators felt they needed to communicate their own impressions of the "good" their programs accomplished, or could accomplish, especially since they did not always show up in measurable extrinsic results. I use the term “evaluation” to describe this process because it implies measurement, but also a form of fixing value that includes a normative element.

As my interviews shifted from the topic of working with local partners (Questions 4-7) to more "political" questions about economic and social justice (Questions 8-10), respondents tended to take this shift as a cue to contextualize their everyday work within the larger field of development. This also gave them an opportunity to discuss the search for intrinsic value of DA in relative terms against other less effective models of international aid. These comments referred to a process of evaluation, which in practice took the form of writing and publishing regular reports on programs, as well as the communication of "best practices" within and between DA organizations. As with the other processes of the program cycle, evaluative practices produced a structural elaboration in the form of these reports, best practices and other representations of the organization's 'expertise' that then became the structural conditions of new program assessment.

While Questions 8-10 did not refer directly to the practice of writing reports, respondents did notice the critical subtext of these questions[143] and provided answers that explicitly justified democracy assistance in terms of the value that their programs provided. In descriptions of DA programs' relative value, respondents also discussed how they demonstrate value, which referred directly to the evaluation process. Respondents mentioned a number of different principles that guided this process, ranging from mainstream liberal ideals to social democratic commitments. However, the one principle that unified all of these comments was the claim that democracy assistance had a comparative advantage over other forms of aid. By placing comparative advantage at the center of the evaluation process, the respondents gave a clear account of the basis of their

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[143] Questions 8-10 asked how the respondents felt their programs compared with models of economic development, whether their programs addressed economic inequality, and whether they addressed social inequality, respectively.

expertise. Three main sources of this expertise emerged as respondents described comparative advantages based on cultural boundaries, organizational resources, and the inherent value of democracy. The first two advantages were explicitly practical, while the third type was theoretical.

The first type of advantage that coordinators discussed was the claim that cultural boundaries of nationality often influenced the value of democracy assistance. I spoke to coordinators from organizations based in Canada and the United States, and respondents from each country discussed the advantages and disadvantages of being located in either country. Among the respondents, there was a consensus that Canada had fewer resources, but a good reputation among international human rights and democracy activists, making some relationships easier. Regarding the United States, respondents also agreed on the fact that international activists were often wary of American foreign policy, but many were still eager to work with US democracy assistance organizations. One program coordinator, CC, described the differences between Canadian and American democracy assistance by placing them on a continuum along with European DA organizations. Despite much variation and overlap, the European approach tended to focus on social and economic rights while the American approach focused on political and civil rights. The Canadian approach, in his opinion, fell somewhere in between. In addition to these main differences, coordinators mentioned smaller anecdotal advantages such as Canadian bilingualism, on one hand, and the popularity of US politics as entertainment around the world, on the other hand.

The second type of advantage, which coordinators described as more significant, was the ability to mobilize both financial resources *and* human resources. While many of

the respondents worked for organizations that were themselves able to distribute funding, these respondents still identified themselves primarily as program ‘implementers’ instead of donors. This distinction was important because part of their work involved connecting networks consisting of activists, politicians and other local partners with professionals who had direct experiences of democratization programs or democratic transitions. Often coordinators were able to do this by putting together a team of experts already working within their organization. Implicitly, this goal also aimed to situate coordinators and their organizations as ‘content providers’ that brought the experience and training necessary for these programs, but also funding brokers that could help facilitate relationships with donor organizations. In other words, coordinators described their organizations as having a unique ability to tap the experiences of actors on the front lines of democratization and to translate these experiences into fundable aid programs.

To explain this comparative advantage, coordinators often pointed out the types of communicative problems that could arise if (hypothetical) Western aid professionals lacking this experience and training assumed that their cultural experiences were applicable to all democratization contexts. As FI put it, an American could not go into the field “talking about Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln” and expect that she will make sense to people fighting dictatorship. Similarly, BD suggested that Western experiences are important but limited:

> It’s really important that we share those good attributes of US experience, a lot of which is related to grassroots political participation. In our country this is very strong; it’s kind of the backbone of our democracy. But at the same time we make room and encourage different types of exchanges among people coming from different countries and different experiences. In Bosnia for example, after the war, we had a guy from Belfast as our representative. Why? Because he knew something about conflict; he knew something about how you try to build a political framework in the wake of a deadly conflict.

By highlighting aspects of their work meant to "encourage exchanges" between people with "different experiences," coordinators at least implicitly separated the operation of democracy assistance organizations from other forms of development aid that have been criticized for implementing overtly Western agendas. Such statements referred to both the normative value of their professional expertise and to the minimalist definition that the field developed to avoid taking strong or contentious normative positions. Here coordinators constructed their own expertise as something different from the type of development aid focused primarily on economic expansion (LR) or on building government infrastructure (CN). In addition, by employing former "heads of state" (MN) or others who had first-hand knowledge of the "real, everyday" problems faced by local organizations struggling for democracy, DA organizations situated the knowledge they produced as responsive to the 'real' needs of pro-democracy activists. This "practical approach" utilized by DA organizations was therefore a comparative advantage and a source of knowledge production about the 'reality' of democracy.

The third type of advantage respondents described was the normative claim that democracy was inherently valuable. This claim had a practical effect of framing all democracy programs as valuable, especially in response to my questions about economic rights and social justice. At the same time, many respondents demonstrated this claim by referring to academic theories of democracy. In this way, the facts and methods described in Chapters 2 and 3 became structural conditions of the classification process. It was in this context that respondents used terms such as "political pluralism" to reassert a definition of democracy that was 'political,' in the sense that they characterized it as separate from a social or economic system. For example, while a few coordinators

suggested that DA complemented economic development, most coordinators described support for political pluralism as an annoyance to governments and development organizations looking to work with one stable governing party. Coordinator CC, in fact, challenged the idea that democracy assistance was part of the hegemonic expansion of global capitalism by appealing to the example of China, and stating that "capitalism likes autocracy." Furthermore, he claimed that in his experience major American business interests such as oil companies are completely comfortable with "regimes that are moderately corrupt and fairly stable." Democracy, in this description, appeared as a thorn in the side of capitalism because of its propensity to produce "weak governments." Contrary to the critiques of the neo-Gramscians (e.g. Robinson 1996), CC framed democracy assistance as a force that occasionally[144] frustrated or slowed down the forces of global capital. Here, coordinators treated political pluralism as a "fact" of democracy, as well as a common sense good.

In this sense, respondents' descriptions mirrored Berelson's definition of democratic pluralism, which was both normative and empirically based. Most therefore asserted that such a fact[145] should not "take a back seat" to economic development (FD) even if it sometimes frustrated Western governmental interests in trade agreements (CN) or challenged stable non-democratic governance and growth (PR). Respondents similarly described democracy as a normative goal by suggesting that democracy assistance was itself a risky proposition. When describing a democracy program in Columbia, LR suggested that activists on the ground were often working against the interests of

[144] To be clear, the argument against the neo-Gramsian critique was not that DA was a counter-hegemonic force, but that it was irreducible to a mechanism of hegemony. None of my respondents claimed that their programs were anti-capitalist, but many emphasized the point that they sometimes frustrated the economic interests of Western governments and corporations.
[145] This is what Bruno Latour might call a "factish" (2010: 21-24).

powerful mining companies, which sometimes put the activists and her colleagues at risk. PC similarly implied that democracy required risk-taking by suggesting that her organization was far too "risk averse" in her opinion and the opinions of her coordinator colleagues. Within the broader field of international aid, democracy was therefore not only inherently valuable, but also a moral imperative.

This argument for the comparative advantage of democracy assistance in the development community is especially important for the present analysis because it mobilized pluralism as a "fact" of democracy and as a common sense good that added moral and scientific weight to the "real, everyday experiences" catalogued and classified in the formal reports produced by these organizations. The rhetorical mechanism used to communicate these codified 'results' therefore took the form of "best practices" and "lessons learned" that would eventually inform new programming and continue the program cycle.

While the primary principles guiding the assessment stage were efficiency and risk management, and the monitoring stage required self-regulation and transparency from recipients, the evaluation stage evoked a general process of valuation rather than specific principles.[146] Based on coordinators' descriptions of this stage, particular organizations or professionals promoted solidarity among pro-democracy advocates, but also packaged the collective experiences of their partners to leverage a more prominent position in the international development community. Respondents such as BP, who described the communication of best practices and lessons learned as a central function of democracy assistance, expressed the commonly held idea that professionals and academics in this field are continually building a stock of expert knowledge that is a

[146] Table 8 in Appendix A provides summaries of coordinators' descriptions of the field.

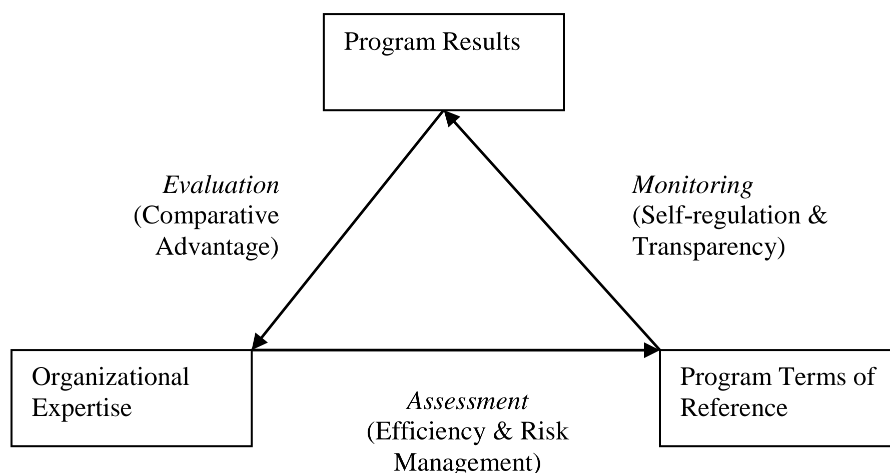
useful resource for pro-democracy actors around the world. In this way, BP, along with other respondents described a process in which they fixed the value of democracy assistance for both current stakeholders and possible future stakeholders. The fact that respondents and the DA literature refers to all three of these sub-processes collectively as the "problem of evaluation" speaks to the fact that this latter sub-process frames the other processes by explicitly attaching value to the field's stock of expert knowledge.

Conclusion: The Program Cycle as an Everyday Process

A central goal set forth at the beginning of this chapter was to examine the accounts of professionals in the field of democracy assistance to locate the everyday practices that shape the making of expert knowledge of democracy. To hone in on the most important practices, I interviewed program coordinators working for democracy assistance organizations about how they addressed the everyday problems associated with their work, and more specifically how they justified the structural elaborations they produced in a morphogenetic program cycle. By drawing on the previous chapter's discussion of democracy assistance as an institutionalized field, my analysis focused on how processes aimed at estimating, gathering and fixing value continue to shape the structural conditions of the institution. Since each political context presents a unique set of historical and cultural circumstances, democracy assistance requires processes upon which professionals can attach value to programs in order for them to be comparable to other programs. Based on my research, I found that organizations and professionals that develop or "coordinate" democracy assistance programs produce this value through specific types of valuation practices. While actors in local pro-democracy movements may have context dependent conceptions of worth or justice, the valuations produced

throughout the program cycle appeared, in the interview data, to be driven by institutional principles inherent to the broader field. Figure 3 reproduces the original program cycle (Figure 1) with the main principles guiding valuation at each stage.

Figure 3: Program Cycle With Guiding Principles



Following Lamont (2012: 205), I interpret this program cycle as a cultural process because it requires an intersubjective form of agreement that extends beyond democracy programs' terms of reference or criteria for judging the results of a program. Evaluation characterizes this cultural process because the institution itself seeks to fix the value of the processes by which it defines itself, with organizational expertise as the most prominent manifestation of this value. The morphogenetic program cycle therefore produces structural elaborations that contribute to this expertise and establish the structural conditions in which intersubjective agreements and justification occur. The assessment, monitoring and evaluation of democracy programs are all oriented to specific political interventions, but they also have currency or symbolic power as knowledge

making processes within a community of experts. Specifically, the evaluation process was explicitly oriented towards differentiating the important experiences and training of democracy practitioners from others in the aid industry. This finding is consistent with contemporary developments in the sociology of expertise that emphasize the co-constitutive relationship between expertise and social intervention, but it also adds an important analysis of everyday practices that make up larger processes such as the evaluation of democracy assistance programs. More generally, then, my analysis suggests that democracy assistance interventions themselves produce spaces for new forms of expert knowledge-making by developing programs that require assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In the previous chapters, I outlined what I call a knowledge-in-the-making narrative to examine how social scientific knowledge of democracy formed the foundation of an expert knowledge that professionals use to develop international assistance programs. In Chapters 2 and 3, this narrative described a particular process of social scientific knowledge-making that required an assemblage of concepts, facts or principles about democracy that were accepted at face value or as 'settled questions' in the academic and policy communities – what Knorr-Cetina (1999; 2005) calls "epistemic communities – from which the field of democracy assistance grew. In Chapter 2, I examined three particular motifs that produced such "black boxes" (Latour 1987: 131) by mixing normative critiques of social democracy with a scientific discourse that "proved" the universality of elite rule, the irrationality of democratic publics and the unreality of democratic ideals. The normative content of these debates and the, often anti-democratic, sentiments of the key critics of social democracy were eventually 'resolved' in the procedural definition of democracy outlined by Joseph Schumpeter (2008). Chapter 3 then goes on to trace the various methodological and theoretical innovations that built on these "black boxes" by accepting them as conventions. Key among these innovations were the isolation of democracy's 'political' elements, thought the voter studies debates, and the effects that this conceptual split between social and political democracy had on the emerging field of international development.

By outlining this conceptual history, the narrative I employed was able to contextualize the emergence of professional democracy assistance as not only a new field of quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations, but as a new form of expert

knowledge. Chapter 4 examined the process by which this new form of knowledge navigated symbolic and structural challenges to find a unique position between the academic field and the broader field of international development practitioners. The institutional history in Chapter 4 then bridged the discussion from Chapters 2 and 3 about the conceptual boundaries of democracy that emerged in postwar American social science and the second main question of the project, which asked how professionals in this field actually perform this expertise on an everyday basis. Chapter 5 thus investigated how professionals in the field of democracy assistance developed and administered programs that both constituted and justified their expert knowledge in the form of an intervention. While this study built on research in the sociology of knowledge focused on the effects of social knowledge making (e.g. Mirowski 2002; Mitchell 2002; Somers 2005; Camic et al. 2011; Steinmetz 2013) as well as recent research on the sociology of expertise (e.g. Collins & Evens 2002; 2007; Stark & Paravel 2008; Callon et al. 2009; Eyal & Buccholz 2011; Rosental 2013; Eyal 2013), is also produced a framework for analyzing expert knowledge as a set of everyday practices. By unpacking the more general "problem of evaluation" in the field of democracy assistance, and looking at sub-processes of assessment, monitoring and evaluation, this study found that evaluation was not just a product of pressures brought on by increasingly neoliberal organizational management structures (e.g. Lamont 2012), but also a cultural framework by which professionals cultivate the legitimacy that justifies their expertise.

This narrative of democracy assistance therefore suggests that the field is subject to public processes of critique that are *cultural* in the sense that questions about the legitimacy of democracy assistance emerge through situations in which actors refer to

multiple narratives, codes, repertoires or orders of worth. Examples of these cultural critiques might situate one or another DA organization as, alternatively, an avatar for American imperialism (e.g. Robinson 1996), the velvet glove of global capital's iron fist (e.g. Gills et al. 1993; Guilhot 2005) or a naïve group of Westerners selling an obviously dysfunctional governmental system.[147] In this context, evaluation emerges as a response to critique. While specific evaluative practices fix the value of a single program, the processes of the program cycle are collectively evaluative because they attempt to fix the value of institutional practices.

In this conclusion, I return to my interview data to examine how cultural processes of critique and evaluation interact to produce the social space necessary for an expert, intervention-based knowledge of democracy, as well as how this interaction has more recently threatened the autonomy of organizations in the field of democracy assistance. By adding further analysis to the narrative outlined in Chapters 2-5, I turn the questions posed in the introduction toward the future of democracy expertise. An important part of this discussion is the point that processes of evaluation and critique are, of course, not unique to democracy assistance. As Lamont (2012: 202) points out, cultural processes of valuation and evaluation have increasingly come to influence the structural conditions of social life, thanks to the rise of "neoliberalism and market fundamentalism." The primary mechanisms driving this diffusion of "structuring effects" are the techniques of new public management (Du Gay 2000) which increasingly govern organizations that use public funding, including the primary funding agencies for international aid. These techniques require evaluation in order to fix the value of public

[147] This was a hypothetical critique that was mentioned by numerous respondents, which described the views of powerful countries such as China or Russia who, from their perspective, have recently resisted the expansion of democracy.

services and programs in comparable economic terms. Evaluation has thus become a necessity for nearly all types of large modern institutions, and especially for organizations that rely on public funding.

Critique is a similarly necessary cultural process in the sense that it is "inscribed in the tensions contained in the very functioning of institutions" (Boltanski 2011: 83). Boltanski's argument for the necessity of critique is useful here because, while all institutions necessarily look to stabilize the definitions of the objects they bear upon, critique gives an institution the opportunity to justify itself semantically (2011: 92). Based on the interview data analyzed in the previous chapter, critique clearly plays an important role in the evaluation process, considering how sensitive respondents were to existing critiques of the field. Often, respondents justified the general practice of democracy assistance by repeating, and then dispatching, common critiques from the broader aid industry. For example, multiple respondents repeated the critique that "you can't eat democracy," which suggested the idea that economic development should precede democracy development. Bringing up such a statement then allowed respondents to assert the importance of democracy through this so-called "sequencing debate."[148]

As cultural processes, critique and evaluation are co-constitutive and, as such, they imply each other. Where critique questions value, evaluation attempts to fix value. What makes neoliberal forms of evaluation so pervasive is that fixing the value of things in comparable economic terms carries with it an implicit critique of any institution that

[148] These arguments, however, can become stale and even the coordinators who raised this critique acknowledged that in the new 'governance' paradigm, no one really claims that economic development must come first. Boltanski discusses this process of relying on inflexible and deeply ingrained foundational arguments as a problem for institutions that are unable to move beyond the "wooden" terminology of the past (2011: 92). Tilly (2006) characterizes such arguments in terms of conventions that are powerful because they are well known, even if they only operate to close down debate.

requires public funding. Thanks to long standing frustration with bureaucratic organizational forms which impose overly rationalist (Du Gay 2000) or conformist (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005) normative frameworks, the neoliberal critique of government welfare policies has extended to all government services as efforts to cut the “red tape” (Osborne 1992). Any public institution touched by this process is perpetually in the defensive posture of responding to the critique that it is ‘bloated,’ as well as the related critique that it is wasting money. For organizations in the field of democracy assistance, these critiques are both challenging because extrinsic democratic value is difficult to demonstrate, but also useful because civil society focused democracy programs are often less expensive than traditional development projects (Carothers & Ottaway 2000). Such critiques are therefore driving debates about evaluation practices within the field. However, based on the interview data analyzed in the previous chapter, the pervasive concern with evaluation both justifies and threatens democracy assistance. The following two sections outline specific examples of this problem for organizations in the field, and discuss the implications of this problem for democracy experts.

The Problem of Time

The first example of the problem presented by evaluation is what interview respondents called the ‘problem of time.’ Responses dealing with time provide an excellent example of a problem area that is meaningful to actors in the everyday practice of assessing and monitoring democracy aid assistance. Most respondents characterized the problem in a way similar to the following two explanations:

> Part of the problem that we are seeing, which is a bigger structural problem, is USAID grants have become shorter and shorter and especially on the State Department side even more so. For example, we get a generous amount of funding from the democracy, human rights and labour bureau at the state

> department and their grants tend to be a year. It's rare that they are more than that…It's meant to get things off the ground and running. If it is to be sustainable, you have to find [further] funding elsewhere. (HF)
>
> I think that one important thing about democracy promotion is time. I think that is one of, if not the most important thing that donors always forget. They want results and they want democracy or some democratic process to happen in a year but it has nothing to do with the work we are doing, it has really nothing to do with it. You have to look at 10 years to make the necessary steps. And that's a problem because the donors say "okay, you entered [a country] and you've been working there for 2 years, and you haven't reached democracy?" It's so far from the reality of what we do. The idea, I like to say, is that the result is the process (LR).

The statements above describe two of the main difficulties associated with contracting time horizons in democracy assistance programs. The first is the failure to recognize democracy as a process and the second is the demand for timely results. For the 'experts' interviewed here, concerns about these two institutional problems stemmed from their experiences with specific programs. However, the ways in which they resolved these difficulties revealed that the importance of specific organizational procedures tended to trump larger questions about the nature of democracy. The following two sections describe these difficulties.

On Democracy as a Process

In his book on democracy, sociologist Charles Tilly (2007) argued that, "if we want insight into causes and effects of democratization or de-democratization, we have no choice but to recognize them as continuous processes rather than simple steps across a threshold in one direction or the other (2007: 10). In this statement, Tilly identifies two approaches to the study of democracy. In one, democracy is a unitary system that exists in a certain (measurable) degree of completeness. Democracies, from this approach, can be considered 'full' or 'partial' according to identifiable thresholds, which often imply a

teleological element in the definition of democracy itself. The approach that Tilly advocates, on the other hand, finds the measurement of threshold variables to be an insufficient means of representing the complex social processes of democratization and de-democratization. Tilly argues that the mechanisms and processes of democracy have infinite (or at least very long term) time horizons and that these processes have not historically been consistent or predictable. Thus, any attempts to construe democracy as a series of finite ‘outcomes’ that develop in a linear way are, for him, not built on historical evidence and will likely lead to oversimplification.

The process approach to democracy has come to represent something of a theoretical consensus in the social sciences (Dahl 1998; Tilly 2007), but for professionals working in DA organizations, such an approach has challenged the importance of the most visible work done by these organizations: election support and monitoring. While democracy promotion activities in the 1980s largely consisted of work supporting and monitoring democratic elections, by the 1990s the field started to diversify and focus on longer-term processes. This has been gradual shift, however, because as Carothers (1999) points out: “it is hard for organizations involved in election observing to avoid the allure of high-profile short-term observer missions as opposed to the slow, often unexciting work of covering an electoral process from start to finish” (1999: 131; see also Carothers, 2004). For the professionals interviewed here as well, the struggle to move beyond event or outcome focused funding practices was an institution-wide problem:

> There is a real tendency to concentrate on democracy issues around an electoral period because you get more visibility as a donor, potentially, and because there is a sense of urgency, there is a peak, and it tends to be one of those points at which more funding is possible…So part of the work, certainly my work, is to try and persuade people to resist that push to throw money, last minute, at events that are

> going to take place [today] and [be] gone tomorrow, and to think more about the bigger picture, about democracy as a continuum (PC).

For democracy assistance organizations that have a history of being criticized for an exclusive focus on elections, building lasting political organizations has been an important, and sometimes difficult, 'lesson learned' (see Carothers 2004). Still, the impulse to "throw money" at events can often be overwhelming for organizations that want to publicly appear responsive to contemporary shifts in international democracy. Allocating resources to 'events' and 'crises' can also create a feedback loop that makes long term projects less attractive 'targets' for funding because program coordinators recognized that they would likely be wasting their time by developing and proposing viable long term projects.

In the statement on "events" above, PC portrayed the goal of her own work as, partly, a critical response to existing institutional practice. In fact, a majority of the respondents echoed this sentiment by situating their own work in opposition to donor organizations that had unrealistic expectations about the amount of time required for democratic processes to take hold. However, respondents also tempered this critical posture with some form of admission that institutional dynamics persisted because of "the nature of the business." The extent to which program coordinators I interviewed were able to instigate change was therefore minimal, but their descriptions still point to the importance of critique for the institution itself. It would be reasonable to assume that if all of these program coordinators failed to use their practical experiences to suggest better ways of doing democracy assistance, the institution would continue to pursue unrealistic projects. In this sense, then, critique was not only necessary to the institution as a mechanism for 'improving' or 'learning from' existing programs, but also as a way for

professionals to legitimate their own expertise within their organizations. At the same time, the "nature of the business" tended to create obstacles for process-oriented programs, thanks to requirements for more 'timely' results.

On Evaluation and Timely Results

In the discussion that followed HF's statement above, which introduced the 'problem of time,' he goes on to give some possible reasons that USAID limits its grants to one year. Citing the value of public accountability, he suggests that donors often see aid resources as an "investment" or as "seed money," from which they should reasonably be able to expect some type of return. The problem with this logic, for coordinators, was that it is generally difficult to demonstrate 'returns on investment' with programs designed to affect an indeterminate political process. For HF, this type of critique put the entire institution in question as he suggested that a taxpayer could rightly ask whether assisting international democratization was in fact a "quixotic crusade."

Language derived from the business world, such as 'return on investment,' is just one example of the larger aid industry "modernizing" its management principles in order to efficiently and effectively produce results. A formal articulation of this industry-wide trend recently emerged in the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (OECD 2005).[149] The *Paris Declaration* was a global initiative to encourage aid organizations and national governments to take a more integrated approach to development that avoided past mistakes stemming from an over-emphasis on aid directed at economic development.

[149] The *Paris Declaration* is often paired with the *Accra Agenda for Action* (OECD 2008), which aimed to 'deepen' and 'accelerate' aid effectiveness by adopting five principles: (1) ownership of the development agenda by the recipient government; (2) alignment of donor activities with this development agenda; (3) harmonisation of donor efforts to avoid overlap and waste; (4) managing for results; and (5) mutual accountability.

Recipient governments embraced these principles as a way towards more self-control of development strategies but, in practice, the adoption of the *Paris Declaration*'s principles has often resulted in the consolidation of decision-making power by organizations that co-ordinate 'harmonized' aid programs, such as the World Bank (Winther-Schmidt 2011). The important practical effect of the *Paris Declaration* for development organizations themselves is that it incorporated management techniques from the private sector to orient organizational goals toward collaborating with recipient governments and to produce better and more measurable "results." It is in this context that development organizations have redefined their expertise as a collectively produced resource. Particularly for democracy assistance organizations, the increased participation and input from the recipients of development aid seems like a natural step away from traditional development practices, but it is important to examine how such organizations made this step.

Managing for results, which was one of the five principles of the Paris Declaration, has meant in practice that aid funding requires very specific evaluation regimes. For those working to build or promote long-term political processes of democracy, the time pressure of short funding cycles has made evaluating the results of ongoing projects exceedingly difficult. As suggested in the previous chapter, in any democracy assistance program performance indicators are chosen based on both "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" forms of evaluation (Burnell 2007: 22).[150] The extrinsic value of a project could be evaluated base on a comparative measure of global democratic performance, whereas the intrinsic value might be evaluated according to the

[150] When USAID embraced results-based management practices, they referred to this division in terms of "strategic objectives" that expressed organizational goals, and "intermediate results" that could be measured (Blair 2000: 231).

expectations and goals of participants in the project. While democracy assistance organizations will often incorporate mechanisms for both extrinsic and intrinsic evaluation during the development or planning stage of a project, difficulties arise when the extrinsic goals favoured by donors are incommensurable with the intrinsic goals desired by parties working 'on the ground.' As the analysis in Chapter 5 suggests, this incommensurability often leads coordinators to favour results that are more easily measured.

The institutionalization of a results-driven approach has also led to the standardization of results by encouraging organizations in the field to produce indices or metrics of the various 'goods' associated with both extrinsic and intrinsic democratic values. For example, the United Nations Development Programme has published a *Governance Indicators User's Guide* (UNDP 2007) meant to introduce and summarize these indices for practitioners. While the guide covers most possible extrinsic measures that might influence democracy assistance program evaluation, the key insight of this guide is that there is no consensus on how concepts such as democracy or governance *should* be measured, except for the conventions that exclude socialist definitions of democratic rights. In practice, this has meant democracy assistance projects are often subject to changing extrinsic evaluations that reflect shifts in 'strategic objectives' imposed by changing organizational priorities.

Another way that DA organizations have worked to standardize results is by 'improving' the quality and quantity of the data they collect from the monitoring process. This has produced difficulties for program coordinators, as one respondent frustrated with calls for quantifiable results pointed out:

> I believe we should be held responsible for some sort of results, but the foreign assistance framework that was developed to try to do that failed miserably because all it did was measure numbers. We can give you numbers that mean nothing and have nothing to do with whether something good is happening. (HS)

Institutional goals such as developing an “operational definition of democracy,” which is one of the goals mentioned in the USAID study on evaluation (National Research Council 2008), create a clear problem for program coordinators adopting a process-oriented definition of democracy that is much less amenable to “disaggregation.” Based on the literature and on the interview data, meeting donor organization requirements for evaluations can certainly lead to questionable practices. According to Ottaway & Chung (1999), requirements asking recipients to be responsible to formal evaluation procedures may encourage donors to fund “trustee organizations” in recipient countries that are able to do the appropriate paperwork, but may not have a real connection to the community they are supposed to represent. Similarly, program coordinators might ‘game’ the reported results for assistance programs. This practice of selectively reporting successful outcomes became apparent almost immediately after donor agencies such as USAID began to adopt results-based management techniques (see Blair 2000).

Although none of the interview respondents suggested that these practices were common in their organizations, each suggested that the inflexibility of evaluation regimes put them and their colleagues in difficult positions. One coordinator captured this sentiment by pointing out that most evaluation regimes really have no capacity to deal with program failure:

> The challenge becomes, “*how do you communicate failure*?” In the sense that we’re a public institution, it’s hard to publicly say “well, we failed,” but in my opinion, it shouldn’t be that hard. We should be allowed to discuss these things. Because if you don’t, this just becomes a vicious circle that you only report on

> projects that are a success and therefore every project is a success…which is ridiculous if you just read the newspaper any day and know that that's not the case (WR).

The practical solution discussed here amounts to what Boltanski (2011: 87) calls a "hermeneutic contradiction," in which the semantic representations of the institution are misaligned with the practices of its members. This contradiction, then, is itself subject to either confirmation – practitioners justifying the 'creative' reporting by identifying the 'good' that renewed funding could do for a project – or a critique that calls for an end to this "vicious circle." While the ability to formulate certain types of critique allows coordinators to reproduce their own expertise, critiques that challenge the core functions of the institution are much harder to sustain, particularly because they may involve drawing public attention to problems that question the central values of the institution. As the case of democracy assistance shows, a problem like shrinking time horizons goes to the core of the institution because the increasing frequency and scope of program evaluation is now part of the *cultural* boundaries of institutional practice. Most respondents to whom I spoke suggested that democracy programs should be process-oriented long-term projects, but they all also recognized that such programs do not fit within the parameters of current funding processes. Thus, the expert knowledge that these professionals constitute through assessment, monitoring and evaluation is inextricably linked to the structural conditions and parameters of these funding processes.

Consolidating Risk and Distributing Responsibility

While the problem of shrinking time horizons constrains the scope of democracy programs, another problem associated with neoliberal forms of evaluation presents a structural program that challenges entire organizations within the field. The problem,

which concerns institutional approaches to risk and responsibility, is that despite the attention DA organizations give to minimizing risk in the program cycle, government donors still face the possibility of bad publicity for any unsuccessful or problematic program that uses public funding. In recent years, two related trends have allowed government agencies to bring democracy assistance work "in house," rather than distribute democracy related funding to NGOs or other independent organizations. These two trends, which saw governmental organization work to consolidate risk and distribute responsibility, are direct products of expanded evaluation practices.

The first trend, of risk consolidation, has played a major role in the structure of democracy assistance as a field. After 2003 and the launch of the Bush Administration's so-called 'freedom agenda,' the amount of money available for democracy related assistance programs increased dramatically.[151] Much of this funding, however, failed to reach NGOs or quasi-independent organizations such as the NED because the Department of State often redirected this funding to projects that were priorities for the Bush Administration. The formal articulation of this process, commonly referred to as the "F Process,"[152] led the State Department to take over many of the democracy aid projects overseen by USAID and related NGOs.

While on the surface, this shift certainly had the appearance of a neoconservative response to the issue of aid distribution, the fact that it continued with the Obama Administration suggests it was really just a product of an ongoing neoliberal management

[151] Many of the interview respondents discussed the ramifications of this increased funding.

[152] The so-called "F Process" was an initiative announced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2006 to better integrate the Foreign Policy Agenda of the Bush Administration with the Foreign Assistance work done by USAID. Essentially, it aimed to align development assistance with the President's "freedom agenda." An important part of this process was the creation of a centralized database for all foreign assistance planning, reporting and budget data.

strategy. For example, as many of the respondents pointed out, autonomous DA organizations have access to only a small fraction of the total amount of democracy funding in the United States and Canada. CN described his organization as a "small fish," when compared to much bigger foreign assistance contractors, which often get the bulk of State Department funding. Another respondent, PC, suggested that government contractors have gradually taken over the work traditionally done by government development agencies such as USAID and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). A growing literature has documented this trend (e.g. Stranger 2009; Berríos 2000), but an important element of it that is specific to democracy programs involves the *political* risk associated with challenging autocratic governments. Many of the respondents discussed instances in which democracy programs clashed with other governmental policy as a way of reasoning about the increasing vertical integration of the field. For governmental funding bodies like the State Department, then, moving democracy assistance into the realm of the foreign policy apparatus is one way to minimize the risk of having assistance programs undermine the official US relationship with another government. This is less of a problem for contracted work that originates within foreign policy departments and is often short-term.

In Canadian democracy assistance work, the recent history of CIDA is another example of this trend. In the case of CIDA, 'freedom and democracy' was one of four 'core priorities' until 2009, when they were replaced by another set of less politically 'risky' priorities.'[153] After this reorganization within CIDA, democracy assistance

[153] The 2007-2008 Report on Plans and Priorities lists the agency's four priorities as (1) human rights, (2) accountable public institutions, (3) Rule of Law, and (4) freedom and democracy. In the 2008-2009 Report – the first under the new Minister for International Cooperation – democracy programmes were referred to an "expert committee" that essentially looked to move these activities to the Department of Foreign Affairs

programmes running for multiple years ended abruptly. Although the funding priorities of 'donor governments' often change, especially when one political party replaces another in a leadership role, CIDA's move away from democracy assistance programming is an important case because the change in priorities was accompanied by an organizational restructuring that moved most democracy funding to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).[154] This move also affected other Canadian organizations in the field, as one CIDA-funded organization called Rights and Democracy lost all of its funding and had to close down in 2012.

While this episode also had a political subtext, one of the main mechanisms that facilitated this consolidation of 'risky' democracy assistance programs was the more general standardization of democracy expertise. In conjunction with both the "F process" in the U.S. and the restructuring of CIDA priorities, the State Department and CIDA simultaneously introduced new policies regarding standardized data collection and evaluation practices. According to a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the foundation for the "F process" was a new integrated database of foreign assistance planning, reporting and budgeting data (GAO 2008). CIDA instituted a similar policy in the 2008-2009 annual report (CIDA 2009) that shifted priorities to more "near term" projects. On one hand, these shifts were partially justified as an effort to increase 'transparency,' but for professionals working for NGOs or development agencies, on the other hand, this was a threat to the substantive expertise gained from their experience in 'the field.' Here, the subordination of intrinsic results that require subjective

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and International Trade. The new 'priority themes' turned to the more near-term (security-oriented) goals of (1) increasing food security, (2) securing the future of children and youth, as well as (3) stimulating economic growth (yearly reports can by found on CIDAs website: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca).

[154] As part of this process of bringing CIDA programming under the control of DFAIT, the new integrated department recently changed its name to Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

understanding in favour of standardized extrinsic indicators and benchmarks opened the field to contractors who marketed their services based on their ability to produce extrinsic results. This process continues to operate as both a threat to autonomous DA organizations and as an opportunity for coordinators to justify their unique, subjective expertise within the field.

A second trend related to this evaluation process is a standardization of the goals of aid projects. Where the standardization of specific indicators is field dependent (e.g. separate sets of indicators for democracy, health or education projects), the standardization of goals is a product of a narrower focus on building 'institutional capacity' and then distributing the responsibility for running institutions to the recipients of aid. Development scholars have labelled this process as "neoliberal institutionalism," which appears in the form of 'traveling rationalities' that uniformly shape otherwise diverse organizational structures (Craig & Porter 2006: 120; Mosse 2011: 4). For example, as Craig & Porter (2006) point out, most of the largest development organizations have rejected narrowly economic versions of neoliberal reform that shaped the widely criticized 'structural adjustment programme' of international financial Institutions (e.g. the World Band and the IMF) in the 1980s and 1990s. Instead, development organizations now embrace "neoliberal institutionalism," which they define as:

> Current Development's priority emphasis on getting institutional dimensions right: policy, legal frameworks, governance, market mechanisms and participatory democracy. This is often at the neglect or expense of substantive sectoral and directly productive development and investments. (Craig & Porter 2006: 14).

This new form of neoliberalism, which aims to 'fix' broken, corrupt, or otherwise dysfunctional institutions (in the Global South), has overtaken much of the aid industry in the form of revised mandates that emphasize *service delivery* to the poor, the disenfranchised, and other previously excluded populations. In this way, poverty reduction, enfranchisement and empowerment translate into problems of 'institutional capacity.' Modern public management practices then appear as the solution to these 'institutional problems,' both for the donors and for the recipients of aid. Respondents often mentioned the 'institutional' approach and some discussed the goal of helping local organizations build 'evaluation' capacity. However, as Craig & Porter (2006: 14-15) argue, this focus on institutions often comes at the expense of 'substantive' engagements. For a field increasingly focused on 'results-based' management, the practical advantage of the institutional approach is that it treats local recipient organizations as if they were contractors. Here, the responsibility for producing results falls on the local organization. In some cases, this distribution of responsibility bypasses the need for an implementer organization, again posing a threat to autonomous DA organizations.

Conclusion

The challenges presented by contracting time horizons, the consolidation of risk and the distribution of responsibility in the field of democracy assistance produce different experiences for experts in large organizations than for local activists or politicians. However, for a field in which power asymmetries have always governed the distribution of resources and decision making, the cultural processes of critique and evaluation following from neoliberal management strategies have only exacerbated this inequality. The knowledge-in-the-making narrative in this project thus adds to other

narratives that represent this inequality in material, ideological or structural terms. The historical epistemology of democracy, outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, is important in this sense because postwar social science produced facts and methods that stabilized democracy as a narrowly political method for producing governments. This definition was much more conducive to institutionalization than 'messy' versions of social democracy advocated by 19th century workers' parties. At the same time, the modern iterations of elitist, narrowly political definitions of democracy are also operationalized in the practice of neoliberal management. The rise of the democracy expert in the interstitial space between academic and policy circles may therefore have already reached a plateau, and the extension of neoliberal evaluation culture may precipitate a corresponding decline.

The chapters above point to a clear answer to the Socratic question of how Western experts can claim a unique knowledge of democracy. According to the knowledge-making narrative I present, expert knowledge of democracy in this field relies on a distinct process whereby professionals produce the structural conditions that both give their expertise legitimacy and facilitate interventions. The results of these interventions then form the basis of the field's claim to expertise. This concluding chapter proposes that this expertise, however, is constantly undergoing a process of structural elaboration and that it is increasingly turning programs aimed at assisting pro-democracy activists and politicians, into mechanisms for building democratic institutions that utilize neoliberal forms of evaluation to resist democratic critique.

Appendix A: Summary Responses for Interview Question Groups

Table 5: What Disqualifies a Program/Group/Organization

Respondent	Summary of Disqualification Criteria
(LR)	We can not be linked to armed actors. We have to verify that the partners can absorb the funds, complete reports and meet criteria for financial accountability; capacity to open dialogue with authorities, which is difficult if an org. is too radical.
(FI)	We try to work in difficult areas, but we need someone to work with who can take the first step. We look for groups that are engaged in aspects of the democratic process, so we would avoid, for example, military groups.
(SR)	For financial relationships we need to vet orgs. for criminal or terrorist activities (partially related to who's qualified for donor funds).
(CN)	Corruption and financial mismanagement are big concerns. We can survive a bad program that is inefficient, but we can not survive a financial scandal. We avoid orgs. or parties that refuse to renounce violence as a means (Hamas, Sinn Fein). We would not engage orgs. that council hate, discrimination, or ethnic cleansing.
(AN)	No project is automatically disqualified as long as there are partners we can work with. Even in autocracies there are modernizers and reformists. We vet proposals based on whether the applications are adequate or based on funding, but "this work does not lend itself to overly systematic rituals or procedures of accountability and evaluation." (e.g. we fund Burmese groups in Thailand that may not produce great results but we see them as worth while).
(HS)	Our work is more specific so we do not get involved with projects outside of our focus areas.
(WR)	Are they corrupt or not? What is their track record, reputation? Also are they on a list of terrorist orgs? This is difficult however if important political parties are classified as terrorist orgs (e.g. Hezbollah or fundamentalist Islamist parties). Will the funds be used for the public? Many orgs out there are professionalized and built to make money from the aid industry. We can work with some capacity issues - if someone has ideas and skill but no cell phone, computer or office, we can help with that.
(MN)	Talked about capacity but made clear it was not a disqualification
(FD)	Groups have to renounce violence to be potential partner, even in post-conflict areas. Capacity is important but building capacity is also one of our objectives.
(PC)	If a country has very few potential partners that can "cover all of the bases" of our complex institutional requirements and manage all the risks, it can give that country an "X" that makes it difficult to propose future projects.
(BD)	Would not work with parties that espouse violence, parliaments that are not representational or are dysfunctional, and civil society groups that too overtly carry a political agenda (especially in an election situation). These are "red lines." Also, in the Balkans we avoided groups that were overtly nationalist
(BP)	We avoid countries that have security issues and are simply not safe to do this type of work in (e.g. Somolia).
(HF)	Where we work is partially funding dependent, and we get grants from governments so we sometimes follow those priorities. In general, we look for opportunities or vulnerabilities

	in autocratic countries.
(PR)	Only work in "developing" countries (i.e. not Canada, Portugal, etc…). Otherwise programming is based on our organizational areas of expertise.
(CC)	There are criteria around terrorism and security that are field wide and build inflexibility into a lot of programs.
(BI)	We avoid corrupt individuals who could sully the reputation of US orgs. We don't work with parties that espouse violence, or are on terrorist lists
(MF)	We make judgments about our partners about whether they are genuine, whether they adhere to democratic values, whether they renounce the use of violence, etc.

Table 6: Monitoring Existing Programs

Respondent	Summary of Evaluation Methodology
(LR)	We do interviews and use an evaluation tool that looks for qualitative indicators. You can't measure human rights with a ruler. The ability to evaluate is a learning process. Its also about trust. You have to be honest with them about criteria. Too high might be unreasonable, too low might be disrespectful.
(FI)	National Academy of Sciences did a study for USAID on evaluation, made recommendations on the academic side. However, we face practical problems (e.g. we help a political party and then 6 months later they lose an election and are out of office). "The field of evaluation has become competitive in a sense because everyone is trying to find the ultimate formula."
(SR)	Evaluation of programs is a huge and complicated area. Results of programs may not be obvious or they might be long term. We have in-house experts that help us evaluate. Goals like getting political actors to better engage constituents can be very difficult. They require skills, funding, time and a venue for implementing changes. We have to be flexible because things change daily.
(CN)	We are working to develop evaluation methods based on case studies. You can get anecdotal information, but you also want a rigorous scientific design.
(AN)	Example of Cairo garbage collection program – democratic effects but not easily measurable.
(HS)	"There is no linear progression in terms of democracy building" this makes international standards and measures difficult to apply.
(WR)	Evaluation plans are tailored to our partners but draw on our principles. Often this is also a capacity building process.
(MN)	We have measurable objectives, but we also look at intermediate results and output indicators. Overall we look for the "most significant change measurements" which are qualitative and gathered through interviews. Not just how many more women got elected but how did our program specifically help elected women.
(FD)	We make assumptions and paint a picture of what's going on. Then we lay out our objectives and measure success against them. We also train partners in our methodology so they can go out and train others, with the intention that they can then design their own programs.
(PC)	Every project has evaluation criteria built in and sometime these are pretty formulaic. We

	try to balance quantitative and qualitative. For bigger projects, sometimes consultants are brought in to do the evaluation and write a report, but this often means that they know more about the project than we do. Evaluation tools are important because they can facilitate communication between different levels (e.g. local and governmental).
(BD)	Results can be very tangible when it comes to institutional capacity, political processes, or skills training. With the latter, skills might manifest as a behavioural or attitudinal change.
(BP)	I've learned that initial evaluation frameworks need to be flexible (S. Africa example – they outgrew the original framework). You have to be in constant contact with partners and communicate.
(HF)	We are responsible for producing an evaluation and monitoring plan for every project. It's difficult because this is not down to a science. There is still a lot of debate about evaluation. Evaluation has to be more than a one time customer survey; it has to be a continuous discussion. At the same time, you need some baseline information.
(PR)	We do formal and informal evaluations, and we have an evaluation officer that helps with that. These evaluations include both mundane reports about the everyday operation and a big picture assessment. Also, evaluation needs to involve participation. We talk to our partners and get them to help evaluate.
(CC)	The scope of programs also determines what types of evaluations are needed. Local projects can be tailored to specific communities, but big projects funded by multiple donors tend to need more standardized evaluations (you have to "feed the beast"). In most intermediate projects there is room to be creative, but it is a struggle.
(BI)	Recently set up an evaluation office that does interviews with current and past partners.
(MF)	It's very complicated.

Table 7: Producing Results/Evaluations

Respondent	Summary of Communicating Meaningful Results
(LR)	The point of the evaluation process is to shield partners from the requirements of donors as much as possible. In trying to promote space for communication in places like Latin America, machismo can be a very difficult problem, especially when you want to engage women.
(FI)	"We have a tremendous stake in coming up with a system that ultimately is doable out in the field. As opposed to bureaucratically or even politically attractive here in Washington." You have to understand behaviour. A training session in a rural area might just turn into a village wide festival or party – you might have lots of attendees, but they were there for the party.
(SR)	Even for "unsuccessful" programs you still look to promote skills learned along the way.
(CN)	We are in the business of political development…[which means] "we are in the business of changing people's behaviour and changing the way that they view the world and it's hard to capture that except through interviewing them, interviewing them or watching their behaviour kind of, tracking their behaviour over time."
(AN)	"This is what we do… We keep investing in democratic and civil society groups even

	though there doesn't seem to be immediate prospects of democratic transition." because sometimes, as with Ukraine, these investments turn into something. Sometimes we also help partners use the language of democratic development to write better grants.
(HS)	Programs require patience and freedom from overregulation
(WR)	To do this work and to have productive relationships you need and organizational culture of independence, honesty and transparency. You need a relationship built on trust so partners are not afraid to say the wrong thing, for fear of losing funding.
(MN)	For some capacity building programs it's just about helping people organize, helping people "speak with one voice"
(FD)	We see the work we do as very much tied into changing behaviour – but this is not easily measured quantitatively. We've done before and after questionnaires for members of parliament to see how much the learn and how much they've "grown" as a result of a program.
(PC)	You look for the intangibles that come out of projects, the stories that tell you if you are going in the right direction. Maybe it's about motivating change and seeing change happen. Whatever change happens you have to go with it…as long as you "do no harm."
(BD)	We are trying to promote a series of individual skills, behaviours and attitudes. We might work on channelling conflict into an electoral process by promoting ethics or a code of conduct. This must be realizable, not theoretical The change we want to see is not necessarily in promoting some event, but in the everyday processes, attitudes and behaviours.
(BP)	"At the end of the day the important thing is achieving results in these low-income countries."
(HF)	"The whole issue of attribution is a huge challenge" or in other words what changes can you reasonably attribute to your program? We are getting better at communicating "impact," or how we are "making a difference on the ground."
(PR)	It is also a challenge to get outside of the capital cities and to really work with poorer communities.
(CC)	If you get far enough from the "center of the empire" or you can regularly feed the "impact assessment beast" sometimes you can tailor a program to the political environment.
(BI)	It's about getting people to understand that democratic development is an approach to life…an approach to doing things in their "little communities" that is more transparent and not necessarily tied to economic development. I work on Women's programs and sometimes a result can be just creating a space where women can feel comfortable speaking with other women about politics. Women in North America can talk politics with men but that is not always the case for women elsewhere.
(MF)	We try to use a multinational team on projects so partners can talk to people from the same region who have had similar experiences (not just people from Ohio in blue blazers talking about the US constitution).

Table 8: Describing the Field

Respondent	Summary of Describing the Field

(LR) Sometimes different development logics become contradictory. We might be helping people build mechanisms to participate in decisions about natural resources, while another development actor might be advising mining companies on circumventing these mechanisms. It is important to coordinate and work organization at regional, national and international levels as well as the local level.

(FI) There is a recurring debate about sequencing in which different actors in the development community argue that economic development should come first, or human rights, or democratic development. We see these elements as interconnected but think democracy is crucially important. We often use experts from countries that have recently transitioned (e.g. South Africa and Chile). It's hard for an American to go in and talk about George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and sensibly communicate the experience of democratization. The profile of democracy assistance has expanded in the last decade, which demands that we "remain sharp, current, relevant and effective in the context of a rising demand and interest in this theme."

(SR) It is important to have implementer coordination. Organizations compete with each other, but they can also help each other. There needs to be better communication of the "realities on the ground" so that all parties have an idea of what has been accomplished and how that fits into long term goals.

(CN) We sometimes publish documents or contribute to reports that outline international standards. For this we have our own assessment methods drawing on our own network of election experts, former politicians, political scientists and regional experts, but we are also cognizant of the other evaluation tools out there. Our niche is political development, by which we mean building better democratic processes. Instead of government infrastructure we focus on pluralism, dialogue and communication. You could have a parliament out in a desert under a tent, and if there is good debate it's a good parliament. There is a difference between "democratizing development" and 'democracy development.' The former just looks to the implementation of the program, the latter looks to change political processes.

(AN) There is an appropriate division of labour in the field and we tend to work on the civil society end of things. For example, rather than working with the government of Pakistan on judicial reform, we would work with the Pakistani lawyer's movement. The jazz metaphor work here: many variations on one theme. Our work compliments economic development because it promotes pluralism and challenges the corruption that makes such projects unworkable. The Freedom Agenda has raised the profile of democracy assistance, but the colour revolutions have also revealed the playbook to Russia and China We can deal with anti-Western sentiment because many of our program officers are not American. They often know the culture and language.

(HS) Being associated with the US government can be problematic, but we are independent because we don't take contracts. Contractors are beholden to governments.

(WR) The field has become overly subdivided. People now use specialized discourses for rule of law reform or public sector reform. Since our approach is rights based, we try to make the case that a rights approach can work in all subfields (e.g. economic rights, legal rights, etc…). The whole sequencing issue is challenging, but our evaluations show that people appreciate our rights based approach. They understand it and it is real to them.

(MN) We are positioned well because we have a strong network of heads of state and former politicians that we employ (e.g. our Cote D'Ivoire program director is a former parliamentarian from Benin).

(FD) We are starting to be more assertive about promoting democratic policy and not taking a

backseat to economic reform. We often have to clarify that we are independent of US foreign policy. If we start talking about human rights, partners will ask us about Guantanamo Bay.

(PC) We rely on a network of local NGOs. Certainly, some over-promise and under-achieve, but we try to be flexible enough to see where groups are building capacity an on their way to achieving results. The field is generally moving toward bigger projects with multiple donors, but not all effective programs need to be huge or expensive. One of the main principles of the field is to "do no harm," but I think our organization and others have taken that too far and are too risk averse.

(BD) It is important that we are independent and work with civil society groups. Governments don't produce democracy, a democratic and pluralist society should produce governments. We try to build solidarity based on the US tradition of grassroots activism, but we also have a network of people with specialized experience (e.g. for our post-conflict program in Bosnia we brought in someone from Belfast).

(BP) Funds for economic development are sometimes best distributed by a central government, but we try to direct democracy funding to groups that provide checks and balances on a government. We try to "ensure that our programs are developed and implemented and in the field, led by, in the case of Africa, Africans; in the case of Asia, Asians." Building on the Paris declaration it is important to have some home-office coordination to communicate "lessons learned."

(HF) The field has become more analytically rigorous and systematic in the interpretation of qualitative data. Anecdotes are nice but good organizations are able to produce useful "best practices and lessons learned."

(PR) We try to bring a rights discourse to the broader development debate. For example we have principles on the right to food security that are built into programs for post-conflict transitions and peace building. Good governance (which is associated with the World Bank) is different that democratic governance. Dictatorships can have good governance.

(CC) There is a suspicion among recipients that Western democracy assistance secretly pushes a neoliberal agenda that tries to enrich elites, exploit their country economically, and promote capitalism. I would suggest capitalism and exploitative companies prefer autocracies like China, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria; not struggling democracies. "Capitalism likes autocracy." There is an earnest idealism among democracy assistance professionals from the West. Recipients are right to be suspicious for historical reasons, but it's generally good that practitioners and organizations have strong idealism.

(BI) Our work mostly compliments economic development work, but some governments would rather have only economic assistance and not democracy programs (e.g. Egypt).

(MF) Debates about what type of development to prioritize only exist in the West. When we talk to activists in Ethiopia, they just want to know how they can speak their opinions freely without being arrested. Democratic activists and human rights campaigners of the kind that we typically work with are anxious for international solidarity support." They are less concerned with global politics.

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