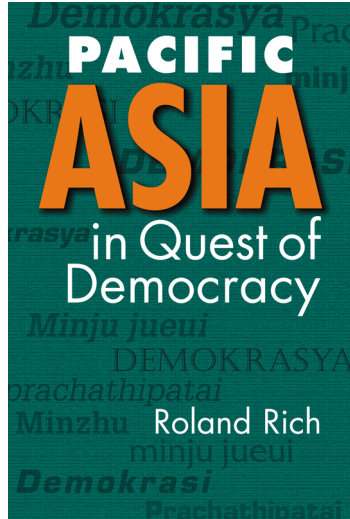


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Roland Rich



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1

Seeking Universality

“As an old fighter against dictatorship, I belong to a generation that learned from experience the value of democracy and the importance of liberty, a generation that knows what it means to be subject to dictatorship and deprived of basic human rights.”

—Mário Soares, “The Democratic Invention”¹

The year 1975 was a good one for me but a bad one for democracy. I had finished my university studies and completed serving my time as an articled clerk, a quaint remnant of feudalism whereby new lawyers learn the tricks of the trade from their master solicitors. I liked the law, but I was not ready to be shackled to it. When the letter came accepting me for a position in the Australian foreign service, I had no hesitation in packing my bags for Canberra. I left behind my loving family, my old law firm Clayton Utz, my favorite city of Sydney, and my hippy communal household, and reinvented myself as an Australian diplomat. Awaiting me was my new family, the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was small enough in those days for everybody to know everybody else and for the old hands to take an interest in the fresh blood, but big enough to shelter a host of eccentric characters and to provide a world of interesting experiences.

Democracy was not faring as well in 1975. At home, Gough Whitlam’s Labor government was in its last year in power. Having won the 1972 elections after decades of conservative rule, Labor set off on an ambitious march to change the nation. It succeeded, but not without stumbling repeatedly, thus emboldening its political enemies. When I arrived in Canberra, the government was already in crisis mode and would remain so for the entire year, during which time the Opposition tightened the screws by refusing to pass the government’s budget through the Senate, in which the government did not have a majority. Australia was entering uncharted political waters in which the written rules were unclear and the unwritten parliamentary conventions were unenforceable. On 11 November 1975, the unelected governor-general, who represents the distant monarch and has the powers of

a nonexecutive president in a republic, surprised the nation by dismissing the Whitlam government and appointing the leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Fraser, as interim prime minister to prepare for a December election, which Fraser easily won. Was this democracy? Should the populace rise up and revolt? Well, yes and no. After all, the West Indies were touring over the southern summer and they always provided cracking good cricket matches. Australians reserve their passions for sports, not politics.

Our neighbors to the north did not have the luxury of finding solace in sport in 1975, for it seemed the whole of Asia was at war. It was a self-imposed impression because the term that had entered Australia's international relations vocabulary during this period, courtesy of the Pentagon, was "domino theory."² The Cold War was at its apogee and our side was not winning. Dealing with each domino was monopolizing virtually all the attention of the foreign ministry, and we spent the year in the unhappy situation of being both breathlessly busy and pathetically powerless. The year had begun with the final push of the North Vietnamese army to reunite their country, and as it progressed, I scrambled to the atlas to learn where each town had fallen. First it was Phouc Binh, not far from Saigon, then Quang Tri on the central coast, then Hue, the old royal capital near the border with North Vietnam. The dominoes were falling. When Danang fell at the end of March, the war was effectively over. This was the biggest US naval base in the country and it fell with hardly a shot fired. Xuan Loc, next door to Saigon, fell some weeks later and Saigon only had a few days left. The Australian Embassy staff had already left Vietnam by then, and the staff in Phnom Penh had to be evacuated as well as the next domino, Cambodia, fell, followed soon after by Laos. It looked like the "theory" we had lampooned as students had been proven.

I was reading Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, which had just appeared in paperback, and my Cold War blues darkened. The Soviet system looked strong to the outside observer, and the best result we could dare hope for was international parity. The challenge was to hold on to your dominoes as best you could. From the perspective of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, it meant having to take sides. The establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement was testimony to these nations' discomfiture with that process. It was a time to count allies, not democracies. Democracy looked like a vulnerable system of government, practiced in only a few parts of the world. The word itself was highly contested because of its appropriation by the "People's Democracies." There seemed no alternative but to view the world as a battle between capitalism and communism, with democracy as a side issue of limited academic interest.

A survey of the practice of democracy in Asia at the time would have returned glum results. Indochina had "fallen." Mao's China was still reeling under the Cultural Revolution. Taiwan was in the iron grip of Generalissimo

Chiang Kai-shek. The Philippines was under martial law. Malaysia and Singapore had embarked on their road to soft authoritarianism. A student uprising was brewing in Thailand and would be brutally repressed by the dominant military the following year. Indonesia was run by General Suharto. Burma was in the hands of General Ne Win. South Korea was ruled by another military figure in Park Chung Hee, while North Korea was marching along its totalitarian path. Indira Gandhi declared her emergency in June 1975, ending twenty-five years of parliamentary democracy in India. Japan was run by the party of big business with no viable opposition to contest its domestic hegemony. So when I first started studying Asia, I was struck with the somber realization that democracy was practiced nowhere on the entire continent. Others reached a similar pessimistic conclusion.³ To round off a bad year, Indonesia invaded East Timor.

Everyone necessarily looks at the world through their personal lenses, and in my eyes 1975 was not a good year for democracy. That may be why when Samuel Huntington published *The Third Wave*⁴ telling us that 1974 was the triumphal year in which began the third wave of global democratization, it struck me intuitively as odd.

The Third Wave Versus the Clash of Civilizations?

Most great thinkers would be satisfied at having given the world one big idea, an idea that grips the imagination and is widely, if simply, understood and discussed by the common citizen, often without the benefit of having read the book. But Huntington has given us two big ideas, each powerfully encapsulated in a few well-chosen words and each attempting to answer fundamental questions about modern global society. *The Third Wave*, published in 1991, explained the global progress of democracy by looking at broad historical phases. *The Clash of Civilizations*,⁵ published in 1996, argued that the civilizational divides mark the friction points of future conflicts. As others have already noted,⁶ these may be big ideas, but are they consistent with each other? *The Third Wave* treats the waves of democratization as global phenomena not bounded by civilizational contexts, while *The Clash of Civilizations* casts global politics under the thrall of civilizational divides. Huntington indirectly acknowledged the problem by an attempt at reconciliation of the two ideas in 1997.⁷ My initial purpose in this introductory chapter is not to reconcile but to review some of Huntington's findings by using his tools—waves of democratization, historical phases, and civilizational perspectives.

The First and Second Waves

Huntington notes the difficulty of explaining broad global political developments because the causes may vary, may be multiple, and may be different

for various countries. He also makes clear that history is messy and never unilinear. Nevertheless, he convincingly identifies the broad sweeps of history that brought the first two modern waves of democratization. The first wave of democratization was a long process that drew on British political thought and was triggered by the American and French revolutions. It progressed haltingly in the nineteenth century as milestones such as universal suffrage, constitutionalism, and responsible parliamentary government were reached. Different countries reached the key milestones at different times, culminating after World War I in some thirty-two countries adopting some or most of the key aspects of democratic governance.⁸ Drawing on Huntington's civilizational divides, a subject to which this chapter will return, and backpedaling to the first phase, thirty-one of the thirty-two first wave democracies were Western countries: twenty-three in Europe; four British settler societies; and four countries in Latin America. Interestingly, the thirty-second country on Huntington's list is Japan, thus referring to the brief period of "Taishō democracy" in the 1910s and 1920s when Western-inspired ideals of constitutional monarchy and people's rights were beginning to be practiced.⁹

The between-wars period brought what Huntington describes as a "reverse wave" in which twenty-one of the first wave democracies would abandon democratic practice.¹⁰ This left eleven democracies in the world, all Western nations: six in Europe (Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom); four British settler societies (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States); and Chile, which would later abandon democracy under General Augusto Pinochet's military rule. The reason for the reverse first wave and the reason for the second wave are tied together in a single historical phase, the struggle against fascism. Fascism arose out of the rubble of war and was given impetus by the Great Depression. It brought hope of orderliness and discipline when democracy seemed to offer little of either. Fascism placed the people's faith in strong leadership, where alternation of power could only be achieved through the hand of the assassin. Based on a facile social Darwinism, it practiced the most brutal form of majoritarianism by excluding, and even eliminating, minorities. Large swathes of Europe and Latin America, as well as Japan, fell under its spell. The struggle against fascism culminated in World War II, and the Allied victory marked the beginning of both the second wave of democratization as well as the process of decolonization. According to Huntington, fifteen reverse first wavers, including Japan, returned to the democracy fold,¹¹ and twenty-six new countries joined them.¹² Among the twenty-six were ten from Western civilization, including nine from Latin America, eight from Asia, four from Africa, three from the Middle East, and one from the Pacific. These figures bring a more global flavor to the second wave.

At this point, however, it is necessary to look behind the numbers at

some of the countries comprising them to gain a better appreciation of the quality of this global diversity of democratization. The first qualification in understanding the second wave is to subtract Huntington's figure of sixteen countries in the subsequent reverse wave,¹³ therefore leaving only ten new second wavers that hold the course. When the four Latin Americans and Malta are taken off, there are then only five non-Western countries remaining in the second wave to join Japan. This is a sufficiently small group to warrant some individual analysis. Africa's flag is flown by Botswana and the Gambia, countries each with a population of less than two million people. Admirable in many ways though it may be, the reality of Botswana is that it has been ruled by the same party since independence. The Gambia endured a coup soon after Huntington wrote *The Third Wave* and the coup leader remains in power, though later partially legitimized by an election victory. In any case, one could not conclude on the basis of these examples that the second wave had washed over Africa. The Middle Eastern country on the list is Israel, which should be seen as having largely been established with Western ideals and institutions. This, according to Huntington, leaves two Asian countries to fly the flag of cross-civilizational acceptance of democracy. Sri Lanka has regularly held elections and has seen the alternation of power pass consensually as a result. Sadly, it has been caught in the grip of civil war for over two decades, in which time Freedom House has only been able to classify it as "Partly Free." The final country on Huntington's list is Malaysia, a highly debatable choice to be listed under a heading of democracies.

It is accordingly a most modest conclusion to argue that the first two waves of democratization were Western phenomena. Japan edges its way onto the list of nations that adopted democracy in its first two waves, and it did so as a nation that had unconditionally surrendered and had "embraced" a democratic system imposed on it by the United States. An argument could be made for including Botswana and Sri Lanka only by adopting a rather minimalist conception of democracy.

When Did the Third Wave Begin?

Huntington would probably have few problems with the civilizational analysis thus far. It is on his interpretation of the next historical phase in global democratization that this analysis adopts a different course. Huntington argues that the third wave of democratization begins in 1974 with the collapse of the Portuguese empire in a military coup that toppled the dictatorship of Marcello Caetano, inheritor of António Salazar's fascist ideology. It was followed by the defeat of the authoritarian military regime in Greece and the holding of elections, thus returning democracy to the country that invented the word. Then in 1975, Europe's last fascist dictator, General Francisco Franco, died, allowing Spain to negotiate its way to

democracy. Does this sound like a new wave? It sounds more like the final death throes of fascism, the final victory over an ideology that democratic Europe had struggled with for half a century. The fall of the Iberian dictators and the Greek colonels marked the concluding phase of the second wave of democratization. Iberian fascism had been tolerated though marginalized in Europe for a generation after the war. It had never been accepted as part of the European mainstream or of the European integration community. Europe had simply awaited the passing of the generals and colonels, and when it occurred in the mid-1970s, Europe could finally file away that ugly chapter of its history.

Huntington then sees the new wave of democratization move to Latin America. In the late 1970s Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia saw the military replaced by civilian leadership in a positive version of the domino theory. Argentina's 1982 defeat in the Falklands War marked the end of the military's legitimacy and of its dictatorship. Following in Portugal's footsteps, Brazil had begun the process of reopening its political system in 1974, leading ten years later to a civilian president. Several Central American countries, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, also saw the military withdraw from government in the early 1980s. Latin America provides a more promising candidate for the commencement of the third wave. It takes place on a new continent and it has considerable momentum, involving some eight countries including the continent's two largest nations. The problem is that commencing the third wave in the 1970s flies in the face of historical reality. The 1970s marked the darkest days of the Cold War. International relations were virtually frozen into two political camps. There may have been some moments of thaw, such as Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes and Jimmy Carter's championing of human rights, but these were the exceptions to the rule of stasis. It is difficult to accept that such a significant international event could begin in this frozen political period. A better explanation for this period of Latin America's democratization is to see it as part of the struggle against fascism. Iberian fascism had indirectly legitimized Latin American military dictatorship, but Iberian democratization subtly delegitimized it. In a study of the Latin American transition to democracy, Stephen Schwartz opines that the application of the lessons of the Spanish transition to the Western Hemisphere is "easily demonstrated."¹⁴

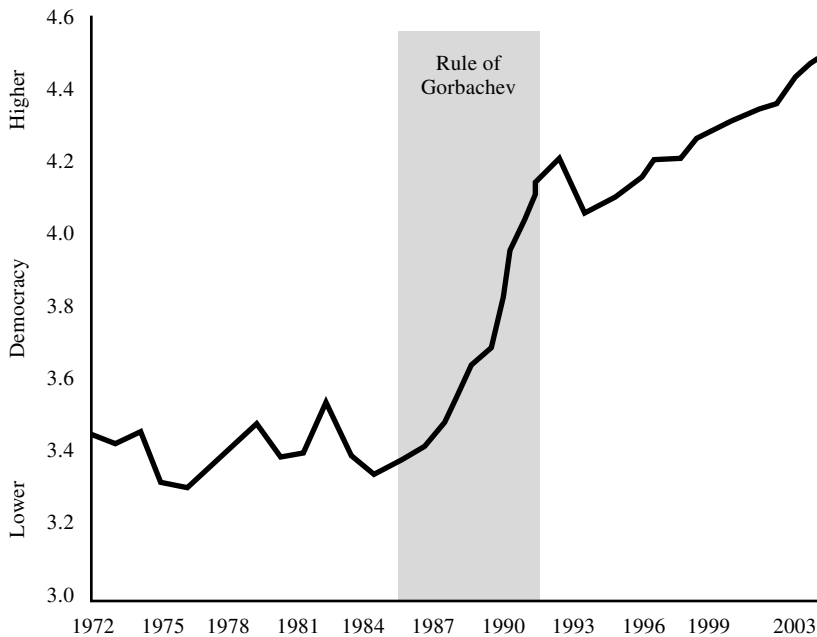
So far, the story of democratization has been predominantly a story of Western civilization, but Huntington now switches continents and travels to Asia. India returns to its parliamentary path in 1977, having been one of the second wave democracies that did not stay the course. But the dominoes now start falling in Asia in a more felicitous manner: Philippine People Power in 1986; the commencement of South Korea's transition in 1987; and Taiwan's acceptance of political contestability the following year. This is a far more propitious point to mark the beginning of the third wave. But to do

so, it has to be linked with a historical event of global significance analogous to the American and French revolutions and to democracy's victory over fascism. That historical event, the eclipse of Soviet communism, can be summarized in one name—Mikhail Gorbachev. If the first wave of democratization can be described as Jeffersonian and the second wave as Churchillian, then the third wave must carry the name of the then general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Gorbachev's great gift to the world was inaction. Unlike his predecessors who were prepared to use force to punish deviation, Gorbachev understood the futility of maintaining an untenable system and holding together an impossible empire by force. The world could come out of the freezer. The next democratic moment had arrived. The third wave had begun.

History is messy and dividing lines can often look blurred, but beginning the third wave in the Gorbachev period thus has the advantage of tying a major global development to a major global event between which there is strong evidence of causality. It also establishes the third wave as a true global wave of democracy transcending the Western ancestry of the first two waves. Finally, it accords much more closely with the facts of the democratic transitions and the intensity achieved as the Cold War was coming to an end. This is nicely illustrated in a study of democratic transitions by Vani Borooah and Martin Paldam in which they use the Gastil Index, on which the Freedom House measures are based, to plot the transitions to democracy in the period from 1972 to 2003, thus encompassing both Huntington's suggested 1974 start of the third wave and the Gorbachev incumbency.¹⁵ (See Figure 1.1.)

The intensity of the third wave in the Gorbachev period cannot be denied. Those analysts who retain the Huntington periodicity have had to shoehorn the facts to fit in with the erroneous 1974 start of the third wave. Michael McFaul argues that the postcommunist transitions were of such a different character from transitions in the 1970s and 1980s that they should be considered as a fourth wave.¹⁶ Renske Doorenspleet contents herself with mathematics and chronology, and on this score also proposes that it would be more accurate to describe the post-Cold War democratization process as the fourth wave.¹⁷ McFaul accepts Huntington's commencement date for the third wave without discussion, and Doorenspleet simply took off where Huntington left off and did not attempt to fit his waves into a deeper historical perspective. Yet Huntington himself recognizes that there is something amiss with his wave periodicity, and he attempts to correct it by arguing, rather clumsily, that in 1989 the "the third wave entered a second phase."¹⁸ In the preface to *The Third Wave*, Huntington explains that the book was written in 1989 and 1990. This was a momentous period, full of excitement and bewilderment, and Huntington, while witnessing the

Figure 1.1 The Average Path of Democracy in 171 Countries, 1972–2003



Source: Vani Borooah and Martin Paldam, "Why Is the World Short of Democracy? A Cross-Country Analysis of Barriers to Representative Government," paper presented at the European Public Choice Society Annual Conference, University of Durham, 31 March–3 April 2005.

early Gorbachev years, could not have been expected to divine the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. Had he written his book a couple of years later, Huntington would have given the end of the Cold War its proper place in the sweep of history and would have acknowledged it as the harbinger of a new wave of democratization.

The First Global Wave of Democratization

Choosing Democracy

The Gorbachevian wave and the end of the Cold War had a global impact. As previously argued, the first two waves settled European ideological debates and found their reflection in the practices of Western civilization. The thawing of the Cold War had an early impact in Asia where the US allies, South Korea and Taiwan, though still facing fraternal communist

threats, could no longer rely on the unquestioned domestic military practices sanctioned by the Cold War to bring legitimacy to their authoritarian governance systems. Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos could only rely on the Americans to provide a helicopter to fly him out of the besieged Malacañang presidential palace. Thereafter, the next region that would benefit from the end of the Cold War would be the constituent parts of the former Soviet empire.

I was fortunate to be in a privileged position to witness this event as head of the East Europe section of the Australian Foreign Ministry. I remember one frantic day when I had to write two speeches in the morning: one for Prime Minister Bob Hawke to deliver that afternoon in the House of Representatives, and one for Foreign Minister Gareth Evans to make in the Senate later the same day. Everything was happening in a rush as the fall of the Berlin Wall was coming over the morning news. The guidance I had was that the speeches had to be “important.” Evans was my minister, but Hawke was the prime minister. They needed to say different things but nevertheless speak to the main issue. In the event, to respect the requirements of hierarchy, Hawke spoke about the global implications and Evans about the regional implications. I heard later that the prime minister had appreciated the comparison I had written into the speech about great walls in history. The Walls of Jericho, the Great Wall of China, and Hadrian’s Wall had all been built to keep the enemy out, but the Berlin Wall was unique in being built to keep the people in.

One of the reasons I enjoyed this assignment was that it allowed me to practice both politics and law. As an international lawyer, I had shared the view of the mainstream of the fraternity that the legal issues concerning the recognition of states were pretty much settled with the closing of the decolonization era. We were wrong, as all of a sudden the international community was faced with a series of difficult recognition decisions as the constituent republics of two federated nations, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, clamored for independence and demanded recognition from the international community. Some twenty new states emerged from the rubble. Having been involved in so many complex new recognition decisions in such a short time, I felt I had an obligation to write it all down, and so, after the dust had settled, I published an article on the subject that I was later pleasantly surprised to learn is widely used in law schools to demonstrate the impact of political realities on the development of international law.¹⁹

In terms of democratization, the end of the Cold War allowed newly established countries to choose their form of governance, and it was democracy they chose. For many of the Central European states, this was a return to parliaments and political parties from previous times. In Hungary, for example, the institutions of democracy and almost the identical political parties sprang back into existence as if half a century of Soviet domination had hard-

ly occurred. It is testimony to the enduring resilience of the national memory of democracy that its practice can be taken up so readily after two generations of desuetude. Many of the other parts of the Soviet empire had no memory of democracy and began the difficult task of building its foundations and governance structures while requiring those very structures to perform their tasks in a difficult new world. Some fifteen European countries emerged from the period with newly minted democratic forms of government.

The end of the Cold War would also bring its democratic dividends beyond Europe. Doorenspleet lists sixteen African countries that made the transition to democracy in the decade after the end of the Cold War, including countries of the former Portuguese empire, countries from francophone West Africa, and, significantly, countries from southern Africa where apartheid finally ground to a halt.²⁰ In Latin America, a first wave democracy, Chile, returned to the fold and was joined by seven other Latin American countries.²¹ In Asia, where the third wave had begun with the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan, further transitions occurred in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, and Thailand. In total, well over fifty countries would seize the democratic moment and turn to democratic forms of governance in the Gorbachev wave.

Freedom House published a document at the close of the twentieth century entitled *Democracy's Century* in which it undertook the count of democracies after the third wave.²² It pointed out that the number of liberal and electoral democracies "expanded significantly in the Third Wave, which has brought democracy to much of the post-Communist world and to Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa. Electoral democracies now represent 121 of the 192 existing countries and constitute 62.5 percent of the world's population." Of these, 84 were placed in the liberal democracy category of countries that respect human rights and practice the rule of law, or in Freedom House terms are "free." In its 2002 Human Development Report, the UN Development Programme came to a not dissimilar conclusion, listing 140 of the then 188 countries that held multiparty elections, while its list of "fully democratic" countries was 82, leaving 106 countries not fully respecting civil and political rights though 58 of these nevertheless held multiparty elections.²³

A Civilizational Breakdown

The third wave thus had an impact well beyond the previous two waves of democratization and generated a certain triumphal commentary. The US State Department sees "the growth of democracy—from 30 countries in 1974 to 117 today—as one of the United States' greatest legacies."²⁴ While pleasure at the trend to democratization is appropriate, self-congratulation is always more dubious, and triumphalism is simply unsupported by the facts. In deconstructing the third wave in search of the enduring adoption of dem-

ocratic governance, we need to maintain the distinction between electoral and liberal democracies and divide the countries according to their civilizational categories. This breakdown demonstrates that the trend is in fact far from global and indeed is dominated by the practice of democracy in Western societies. (See Table 1.1.)

Almost 70 percent of liberal democracies are thus Western countries if one includes Latin America. But even this figure is an understatement. The Middle Eastern country is Israel, which, as stated above, was established on the basis of Western ideals. The eleven Pacific island nations have a total population of less than 8 million people, comprised largely of Papua New Guinea's 5.5 million inhabitants. These nations practice a low-quality form of democracy. It is deceptive to allow such a large number of countries, with such small populations, to skew the global figures in the table. Adding Israel to the Western column and subtracting the Pacific islands from the list, the Western countries climb to 80 percent of the seventy-three countries. Seven of Africa's fifty-three states are on the list. Of these, five have populations of fewer than 2 million people, leaving just Benin and South Africa. The seven Asian countries listed as liberal democracies are Japan, South Korea, India, Mongolia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand.

The survey highlights Western civilization's widespread acceptance of liberal or high-quality democracy. The survey also highlights that, aside from the West, the area of greatest interest in terms of the transition to the practice of liberal democracy is Asia, and Pacific Asia in particular. Thus if we are seeking evidence of the appropriateness of the practice of liberal democracy universally, the study of democracy in Asia is of critical importance.

Consolidation Is the Key Issue

The study of democracy is an enormous field. What particular aspects should we focus on? The waves of democratization concern the transition paradigm. The third wave is simply a heading for those countries that turned from some form of authoritarian rule to a form of democratic governance

Table 1.1 Civilizational Breakdown of Democracies in Freedom House's 2000 Survey

	Western ^a	African	Asian	Pacific	Middle Eastern
Electoral democracies (121 total)	75 (28)	21	12	11	2
Liberal democracies (84 total)	58 (20)	7	7	11	1

Note: a. Includes Latin American and Caribbean in parentheses.

since the Cold War began to thaw. Democratic transitions can be spectacular events attracting wide popular attention internationally, and it is understandable that they should be the focus of quantitative research. The key event is the transition election through which an incoming government gains popular legitimacy by winning a free and fair ballot. The day after the winner is declared, however, is the day the hard work of consolidating democracy begins. Ultimately, consolidation is the key issue for qualitative research because democratization depends on whether the transition holds its course.

Consolidation requires democracy to be sustainable. In this respect it is wise not to fall into what Guillermo O'Donnell describes as a teleological trap that assumes the existence of a single path from transition to democratization that some nations "complete," and on which some countries may get stuck or even fall off.²⁵ There are clearly many paths, and each nation begins on its own democratization journey not knowing exactly where that path may lead. O'Donnell's warning means that each journey will not follow the same path. There may be detours, shortcuts and, sadly, dead ends in the pathways of democratization. The absence of inevitability of completion does not, however, preclude the paths from having milestones along the way. The milestones can be given descriptive titles, and even though various paths may have these milestones in different orders and at varying distances, they may nevertheless resemble milestones on other paths. This allows for a degree of comparability between the various pathways, allowing for the adoption of generalizations and perhaps even the drawing of common lessons.

The milestones may have titles such as transition election; first, second, or third alternation of power; assertion of judicial independence; or overcoming constitutional crisis. One nation may pass all these milestones in a mere decade; others may continue to glimpse them on the distant horizon. O'Donnell's challenge can be formulated in a question: Is it possible ever to name a milestone "consolidation"? I believe it is, as long as that milestone is not considered as the end of the journey, but rather as the point of no return. The journey continues with many more milestones of wide public participation, high-quality deliberation, and peace dividends, but there is no turning back to the authoritarianism of the past. Determining exactly where this milestone is located may not be possible. But a point in the journey comes where a society knows it has passed it. This way of identifying consolidation accords with the idea put forward by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan of democracy as "the only game in town."²⁶

Three Qualifications and Three Tests

Linz and Stepan elaborate the meaning of this telling phrase by setting down three qualifications and three tests.²⁷ The first qualification is that the

polity in question needs to be generally accepted by the populace as a state. They put this requirement bluntly—no state, no democracy. This might seem a rather basic point, but there are entities where popular allegiance is to a tribe, region, or island rather than to the state itself. Some African states confront this problem within their colonial borders. This is also a particular problem in Melanesia, where some nations are finding it difficult to build the national institutions of democracy. The key reason is that the road to Westminster passes through Westphalia.

The second qualification is that Robert Dahl's indispensable seven conditions for polyarchy must be met:²⁸

1. Constitutionally invested elected officials implement government policy.
2. Elected officials are chosen in free, fair, and frequent elections.
3. Elections are run on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
4. Virtually all adults have the right to run for elective office.
5. Citizens have freedom of expression.
6. Citizens have a right to seek alternative sources of information.
7. Citizens have a right to form political parties and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Third, the elected governments need to govern democratically, which in turn requires a commitment to constitutionality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. This qualification excludes pseudodemocracies in which some democratic institutions such as elected parliaments exist alongside nondemocratic institutions such as judiciaries controlled by the executive branch.

Having passed these threshold conditions, Linz and Stepan posit three tests of a consolidated democracy:

Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or by seceding from the state. *Attitudinally*, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life, and when support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more-or-less isolated from prodemocratic forces. *Constitutionally*, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the bounds of the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.²⁹

Though these may sound like relatively simple propositions to Western ears accustomed to their central principles, they are in reality difficult tests. They are difficult to achieve and difficult to measure. Huntington suggests a far more user-friendly test of consolidation: "A democracy may be viewed as consolidated if the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of transition loses a subsequent election and turns over power to those election winners, and if those election winners then peacefully turn over power to the winners of a later election."³⁰ The two-turnovers test has the advantage of being easily measurable. It also makes practical sense to require the winner of the transition election to hand over power to a subsequent election winner, thus demonstrating that the transitional change was not simply a change of regime but a change of system. While a useful measurement, the two-turnovers test does not appear sufficiently rigorous to allow a confident conclusion of consolidation to be reached. A system of swapping the bounty of office between divisions of the elite according to elections does not constitute a consolidated democracy but may simply demonstrate a domestic balance of power between oligopolistic forces of society. Thailand has held many elections, and in the mid-1970s, the brothers Kukrit and Seni Pramoj alternated in power after putting together various coalitions following elections. However, although technically meeting the two-turnovers test, nobody is suggesting Thailand was a consolidated democracy at the time. Neither would the presidential transitions in the Philippines from Corazon Aquino to Fidel Ramos to Joseph Estrada to the present elected leader, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, necessarily lead to a conclusion of consolidation in that country.

What we need to look for in consolidation is the extent to which the political arrangements are, in Philippe Schmitter's formulation, "reliably known, regularly practiced, and voluntarily accepted by . . . politicians and citizens" such that democratic processes result.³¹ This formulation boils down to the issues of knowledge, practice, and volition that are at the heart of the consolidation process. Consolidation requires a certain behavioral consensus among the elites in their acceptance of democracy's strictures and limitations. Consolidation requires a certain popular attitudinal consensus that allows the system to be maintained even when crises and downturns are experienced. Consolidation requires a national consensus for the constitutional settlement of those serious crises. In this regard, the consolidation issue dovetails with another important aspect of democracy studies that concerns itself with the quality of democracy.³² Concepts such as consolidation or liberal democracy can simply be seen as the higher-quality practice of democracy.

Democracy Is a System

It follows from the foregoing that democracy is more than an election, more than a government, and more than a set of laws. Democracy is a system of

governance. That system has many aspects to it. Some are essential for its existence, others are important to improve its quality. My aim in this book is to focus on the key aspects of democracy. Accordingly, the shape of the book is thematic, focusing on these key aspects and how strongly developed they may be in the various countries of Pacific Asia. It might be possible to have accomplished this task by adopting a country-by-country approach and devoting a chapter on each country under review, but this method would have downplayed the thematic elements and weakened the comparative analysis.

How to identify these key elements? Dahl's seven points deal with constitutions, elections, politicians, freedom of information and expression, and the right to form political parties and NGOs. Inspired by Dahl's analysis, the themes I have chosen to examine are institutional design encompassing elections and representative bodies; the rule of law guaranteed by a constitution and protecting basic rights; political parties, which translate political thought into action; politicians, as the indispensable vectors of governance; the public conversation through which information and opinion are expressed and received; and political culture in which civil society operates.

Analogies are a useful explanatory device though they cannot be taken beyond their superficial comparative utility. Recurring throughout this project is the analogy of the system of democracy resembling the system of the human body. The comparison is useful because the complexity of each system can be simplified by reference to its key parts. In this analogy, the skeleton provides the structure for the system and it resembles the institutions of democracy—parliaments, executives, elections, courts, auditors, ombudsmen, and so forth. Within this structure are the organs pumping blood and oxygen into the system and they can be compared to political parties as well as politicians and perhaps other policy leaders. The flesh around the skeletal structure can be compared to the people taking the form of deliberators, civil society activists, voters, as well as consumers of the impacts of policy decisions. Accordingly, the public conversation being conducted and the political culture of the populace become key themes. Living systems grow and change. Life forms, even of the same species, are individually different from each other. The analogy between the democratic system and the human body can comfortably extend to include both change and lack of uniformity. The benefit of using this analogy is that it makes clear that various parts of the system must work together to create the whole. Looking only at elections, for instance, is like looking at only one part of the system. It might be the spine of the skeleton, but it remains only one part of the body. The body comprises far more than its skeleton, its organs, and its flesh, just as democracy comprises far more than the key aspects I have highlighted. But these key aspects nevertheless make democracy recognizable and allow for an assessment of the health of the system.

Having touched on the "what" question, it is necessary to provide a

brief comment on the “how” question—methodology. Political science allows various approaches. Each approach, whether based on psephology, veto player analysis, rational choice, elite theory, or opinion sampling, has its place in the discipline. The research has been undertaken on the basis of a fairly traditional political science approach. It examines political structure and political culture within a historical framework. It draws on the political science literature on democratic development pioneered by towering figures such as Dahl, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Maurice Duverger, further molded by writers such as Linz, Stepan, and Schmitter, and adapted for comparative purposes by analysts such as O'Donnell, Larry Diamond, and Richard Gunther. The research draws on the comparativist literature as well as the country-specific literature. While the main lines of investigation concern institutional structure, the discussion will be infused with questions of behavior and attitude. It delves into the detail of some of the key practices of democracy in Pacific Asia, attempts to place that practice in a historical process, and seeks to situate this democratic practice in a global context.

Outline of the Book

The next issue that requires introduction is the “where” question. Before coming to the thematic discussions of democracy, it is necessary to identify the geographic subject matter of this study. Chapter 2 charts the meaning of *Pacific Asia*. It is a spatial concept viewed through various lenses such as history, geography, civilizations, institutional architecture, and the imaginations of its peoples and leaders. Among the nations of Pacific Asia, I have identified Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand as the key democratizing countries that will be the principal subject matter of this project. (See Figure 1.2.) Accordingly, for those not familiar with these countries, I have provided pen sketches highlighting their political paths to democratization.

The aspect that is most apparent to any student of democratic consolidation is its institutional character. Chapter 3 looks at key governance institutions of democracy through an analysis of the power of parliaments and presidents, the coherence of the electoral systems that elect them, and the integrity of the oversight institutions that monitor them. It examines the crafting of these institutions in Pacific Asia. Two new concepts are introduced: *systematization* and the *dimensions* of electoral expression. The underlying question that haunts the crafters of these new institutions is whether such bodies can indeed be successfully crafted or whether they can only succeed if they have evolved over time and been tested under diverse conditions. In other words, can political evolution be short-cut by clever design?

Chapter 4 tackles democracy's need for law. It is a generally accepted proposition that there can be no democracy without rule of law. The chapter

Figure 2.1 Map of Asia

Shaded areas indicate the key democratizing countries discussed in this book.

also supports the converse proposition, that the effective establishment of the rule of law requires democracy, and so the two concepts are mutually supportive and interdependent. The chapter elaborates three historical and three conceptual challenges to the establishment of rule of law in Pacific Asia. The growing hold of *constitutionalism* in the region is identified and explained. The recurring question in this chapter is whether there are determinative aspects of Pacific Asian civilization that are inimical to the establishment of the rule of law.

Chapter 5 deals with the vexed issue of political parties. The practice of consolidated democracies demonstrates that political parties are an essential ingredient in their governance systems. Accordingly, it is important to reach an understanding of the nature of political parties in Pacific Asia, their longevity and *embeddedness* in society, as well as their ability to play the roles required of political parties in modern democratic states. We know that political parties in the long-established democracies played a crucial role in shaping their nations' democratic systems, but is it reasonable to turn the tables of history and expect the newly crafted political systems of the transition democracies to nurture and sustain political parties? In conclusion, the chapter explains the trend toward elections being fought by two parties or blocs of parties by reference to the growing *meaningfulness* of those elections.

In Chapter 6, I focus on the difficult issue of the region's politicians by analyzing salient characteristics of these Asian leaders and determining the extent to which the rules of the democratic game are voluntarily accepted by them. Being an individual, the politician necessarily defies any "one size fits all" description. Does that mean that politicians cannot be the subject of assessments that attempt to build broad generalizations about their conduct and worth? If such assessments are possible, what methodology is available? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by describing and analyzing politicians in Pacific Asian democracies using a method proposed by Linz, who asks a series of probing questions to test political leaders against an idealized framework. The chapter identifies a number of trends concerning the quality of politicians emerging in Pacific Asia, including the decline in influence of military figures, the growing role of women, the struggle against the gangsterization of politics, and a recent turn toward the "celebritification" of politics.

When the study turns to the more general behavior and attitudes of elites and electorates in relation to the public sphere, we drift away from the refuge of institutional compliance with formal rules and enter a vast space where rules may define its boundaries but are not of much assistance in understanding its substance. Chapter 7 examines the public conversation being conducted in a democracy and the role of the mass media that facilitate this conversation. The question being asked in this chapter concerns the

quality of the public conversations taking place in Pacific Asia's democracies. Has it reached the level of deliberation that is a hallmark of consolidated or high-quality democracies? And how should we assess the quality of the mass media, the instrument through which that conversation is shaped and disseminated?

Chapter 8 strays even further away from the institutional methods of analyzing democratic practice by examining the difficult question of political culture, which, in the Asian context, requires a discussion of issues such as political behavior, Confucianism, and Asian Values. The chapter rejects the traditional view of Asians as pliant observers of the public sphere and lists the various popular explosions that have occurred in Pacific Asian societies. But it also looks beyond the volcanic explosions in society to determine the extent of the bubbling lava hidden within. This entails a search for Pacific Asian civil society. The key question being addressed in this chapter is whether the political cultures of the emerging democracies of Pacific Asia lend themselves to the consolidation of democracy. And if some aspects of those cultures are antithetical to democratic practice, can they be changed?

Countries practicing democracy may have similar-looking institutions, yet the most casual of visitors will see the distinctions among them far more readily than their supposed similarity. Is the term *democracy* appropriate to compartmentalize this group of countries in contradistinction to its neighbors? Chapter 9 seeks to explain why democracies do not all look alike. It begins by measuring differences in the structures of governance, but in describing such structures there is a nagging suspicion of simply dealing with a façade. Are we appreciating the infrastructure of governance or glancing lazily at its superstructure? The means of answering this question is to look at the character and quality of the democratic practices of the individual countries of Pacific Asia.

The three waves of democratization have all been predicated on the existence of nation-states and the structures of successful democratic governance have been built on national institutions, national practices, and a broad national consensus. Yet the reality of that practice points to the success of democracy beyond individual nations. It is the Western world that has consolidated its national democracies. Is the consolidation of democracy in Western civilization simply a sum of the acceptance of democracy in its various national parts? Or is there a civilizational component contributing to democratic consolidation in the West? In posing this question in the concluding chapter, a further question suggests itself: Does consolidation of democracy require a civilizational consensus? And if so, is a civilizational consensus in favor of democracy forming in Pacific Asia?

The following chapters therefore seek to answer the what, how, and where questions. The "when" question concerns the end point of this work, and the answer is September 2006 with the Thai coup. There remains a final

nagging question—why? In dealing with Pacific Asia's quest for democracy, I hope to shed a little light beyond the individual polities' practice of democracy. By examining countries not part of Western civilization, I am searching for a part of the answer to a very large question: Is democracy, like human rights, of universal application?

Notes

1. Mário Soares, "The Democratic Invention," Marc F. Plattner and João Carlos Espada (eds.), *The Democratic Invention* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 34.

2. Patrick O'Sullivan, "Dominoes or Dice: Geography and the Diffusion of Political Violence," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 16, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 97.

3. Marc Plattner, "The Democratic Moment," Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 37.

4. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave—Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: Oklahoma University Press, 1991).

5. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

6. Carl Gershman, "The Clash Within Civilizations," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 4 (1997): 165–170.

7. Samuel P. Huntington, "After Twenty Years: The Future of the Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 4 (1997): 3–12.

8. Huntington confusingly includes East Germany in his list, but for plausibility purposes it is excluded from this count: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay.

9. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), p. 180.

10. Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay.

11. Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Uruguay.

12. Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, South Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Venezuela.

13. Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Ecuador, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Turkey.

14. Stephen Schwartz, "Introduction," Stephen Schwartz (ed.), *The Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy in the Hispanic World* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1986), p. xxi.

15. Vani Borooah and Martin Paldam, "Why Is the World Short of Democracy? A Cross-Country Analysis of Barriers to Representative Government," paper presented at the European Public Choice Society Annual Conference, University of Durham, 31 March–3 April 2005.

16. Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship—Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 54, no. 2 (2002): 212–244.

17. Renske Doorenspleet, *Democratic Transitions: Exploring the Structural Source of the Fourth Wave* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), pp. 48–52.

18. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, p. 44.

19. Roland Rich, "Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union," *European Journal of International Law* 4, no. 1 (1993): 36–65.

20. Benin, Central African Republic, Comoro Islands, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Zambia. Doorenspleet, *Democratic Transitions*, p. 51.

21. Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay. Ibid.

22. Freedom House, *Democracy's Century—A Survey of Global Political Change in the Twentieth Century*, www.freedomhouse.org/reports/century.html.

23. UN Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2002—Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002/en/>.

24. US Department of State, *Democracy*, www.state.gov/g/drl/democr/.

25. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Illusions About Consolidation," Larry Diamond et al. (eds.), *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies—Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 40–57.

26. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Toward Consolidated Democracies," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 15.

27. Ibid.

28. Robert A. Dahl, "Polyarchy," *Toward Democracy: A Journey—Reflections: 1940–1997, Volume 1* (Berkeley: Institute of Government Studies Press, 1997), pp. 94–95.

29. Linz and Stepan, "Toward Consolidated Democracies," p. 16.

30. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 266–267.

31. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Parties Are Not What They Once Were," Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 68.

32. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino, *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).