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DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS: FROM THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY TO SELF-GOVERNANCE?

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Alexis de Tocqueville offered the conjecture in his introduction to *Democracy in America* that a quest for democracy exists in the form of an "irresistible revolution which has advanced for centuries in spite of every obstacle and which is still advancing in the midst of the ruins it has caused" ([1835–1840] 1990, 1:6-7). This image left him "under the influence of a kind of religious awe" (ibid., 6) in which he, as a mortal human being, could discover the signs of God's will by "the habitual course of nature and the constant tendency of events" (ibid., 7). From this point of view, "To attempt to check democracy would be in that case to resist the will of God; and the nations would then be constrained to make the best of the social lot awarded to them by Providence" (ibid.).

In recent years, many countries have established or reestablished institutions of representative democracy. Meanwhile, the international community of research scholars studying international relations has rediscovered the importance of democracy by demonstrating that democratic governments have rarely, if ever, fought wars with other democracies (Russett 1993; Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller 1996). This research has resurrected Immanuel Kant's belief in the eventual establishment of a situation of "perpetual peace" (Doyle 1983, 1986, 1997). Kant foresaw that expansion of the number of "republican states" should eventually lead to the formation of an informal federation and general acceptance of cosmopolitan norms. All these factors would combine to provide the foundation for perpetual peace (Kant [1795] 1991b).

Kant expected dramatic reversals along the way, but he asserted a belief that each seeming reversal would, ultimately, contribute towards the successful establishment of perpetual peace.

> Nature has thus again employed the unsociableness of men, and even of the large societies and state which human beings construct, as a means of arriving at a condition of calm and security through their inevitable *antagonism*. Wars, tense and unremitting military preparations, and the resultant distress which every state must eventually feel within itself, even in the midst of peace—these are the means by which nature drives nations to make initially imperfect attempts, but finally, after many devastations, upheavals and even complete inner exhaustion of their powers, to take the step which reason could have suggested to them even without so many sad experiences—that of

> abandoning a lawless state of savagery and entering a federation of peoples in which every state, even the smallest, could expect to derive its security and rights not from its own power or its own legal judgement, but solely from this great federation . . ., from a united power and the law-governed decisions of a united will. However wild and fanciful this idea may appear . . . it is nonetheless the inevitable outcome of the distress in which men involve one another (Kant [1784] 1991a, 47-8).

Few international relations scholars would be comfortable in supporting Kant's teleological assertion unequivocally, but much attention has been focused on the sources of recent expansion of a "democratic zone of peace." Unlike Tocqueville's analysis of democracy, Kant did not address the potential sources of instability that may remain in effect even when all the conditions for a peaceful world order have been accomplished. In this paper, we argue that the same concerns Tocqueville expressed about the instability of democratic societies are directly applicable to analyses of the conditions for a peaceful world order.

Although much research on alternative explanations of democratic peace continues to be produced, a widespread scholarly consensus on its empirical reality has been used to justify practical efforts to expand this "democratic zone of peace." National and international aid agencies have come to insist on the establishment of democratic institutions as a precondition for continued support. Governments in all regions of the world have been challenged to respect human rights, which are to be accorded to all of their citizens, by a growing global consensus on the virtues of democracy.

As we reflect on the character of the irresistible revolution toward democracy and peace that has continued to march through the twentieth century, we have seen radical revolutions sweep through Russia and China and exercise significant influence on much of the rest of the world. Those revolutions were advanced in the name of "the people" by partisans who presumed that revolutionaries could seize control over the organs of imperial state power, transform the systems of property rights, create a new socialist human being with a benevolent personality, achieve the liberation of humanity, realize communal democracy and the withering away of the state, as well as eliminate the class antagonisms said to be responsible for war. In this century, two world wars have engaged those who sought to advance imperialism and those who sought to resist imperial aspirations. Afterward, the aspirations of ethnic groups

for control over their own governance has lead to nationalist revolutions and to prolonged struggles over control of the levers of state power. Every people on every continent has become involved in some form of struggle for democracy.

Those who sought the Liberation of Humanity constituted one power bloc in a bipolar world that opposed a power bloc composed of those who identified themselves with the Free World. The struggle for democracy continued amid polarized factions that raised the intellectual wretchedness of the peoples of the world to new levels of madness. The ruins left behind were of more destructive proportion than the two world wars. The collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union and the Great Leap Forward as well as the Cultural Revolution in the People's Republic of China evoked greater waves of terror than had been previously experienced by humanity. The Holocaust during the Second World War has sobering echos in the "ethnic cleansing" that has occurred in several parts of the contemporary world.

How are we to reconcile Tocqueville's and Kant's optimistic assertions about progress towards democracy and peace with the unprecedented levels of destruction that have occurred in the twentieth century? Such conjectures about the habitual course of nature and the constant tendency of events would have substantial implications for the cultural and social sciences and humanities and the social professions grounded in those bodies of knowledge. The great difficulty is that this constant tendency of events is marked by highly irregular trajectories among human societies. Also, the characteristics that emerge from these processes depend on such human qualities as knowledge, morality, and faith as these contribute to increasing human enlightenment.

The revolutionary character of such an "irresistible revolution" has the further confounding characteristic of reversing the prior patterns of order in human societies. "The result has been," Tocqueville asserted, "that the democratic revolution has taken place in the body of society without the concomitant change in the laws, ideas, customs, and morals which was necessary to render such a revolution beneficial" ([1835, 1840] 1990, 1:8). If left to its "wild instincts" (ibid., 7), democracy will advance amidst the ruins that it has created.

In this paper, we update Tocqueville's concerns by examining them in light of an analytical framework developed by scholars associated with the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University (see Kiser and Ostrom 1982; E. Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994; McGinnis 1999a). This Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework places decisional situations in the context of two factors: physical conditions and the attributes of the community. Action situations are categorized as falling into one of three arenas of choice: operational choice, collective choice, and constitutional choice. Different aspects of Tocqueville's work can be related to each of these contextual factors and arenas of choice (sometimes referred to as levels of analysis in previous works), as will be shown below. This exercise also uncovers related concerns that were not directly expressed by Tocqueville (particularly related to the potentially detrimental consequences of democratic governance on the physical environment).

Our analysis is based on a conceptualization of democracy as a process of self-governance within the context of polycentric orders. In recent policy debates and scholarly analyses, the term "democracy" has been equated with a limited range of electoral, legislative, bureaucratic, and judicial institutions found in the advanced industrial areas of North America and Western Europe. As a consequence, discussion has been in terms of furthering the process of "transition" whereby formerly autocratic regimes are replaced by a set of recognizably democratic institutions.

We argue that "transition" is too weak a term to convey the fundamental changes that are required if a stable foundation for sustainable self-governance is to be built. We prefer instead to think of democracy as a series on ongoing "transformations" in the fundamental attitudes of people towards themselves and the physical world around them.

To sort out the conditions that lead to ruin in contrast to those that might yield beneficial effects through the struggle for democracy remains the primary challenge among those concerned with a science of politics as the twentieth century of the Christian era comes to a close. As Tocqueville emphasized, democratic societies are vulnerable to decay because of the tendency of an originally self-reliant people to come to rely heavily on governments to resolve their collective problems. The advantages of multiple

authorities serving overlapping jurisdictions can be undermined by pressures towards consolidation and centralization of power. As scholars, we need to be sensitive to the extent to which our own conceptualizations and analyses enhance or undermine the essential components of viable and sustainable democracies.

In the first section, we briefly summarize Tocqueville's conclusion about the foundations of democracy and about its potential vulnerabilities. Subsequent discussions detail alternate paths to the dissolution of democracy. Some of these paths are associated with a potential for devastating levels of conflict.

Revisiting Tocqueville's Concerns

The central thesis of *Democracy in America* is that the Anglo-Americans were engaged in "the great experiment of the attempt to construct society upon a new basis . . .; and it was there, for the first time, that theories hitherto unknown, or deemed impracticable, were to exhibit a spectacle for which the world had not been prepared by the history of the past" (Tocqueville [1835, 1840] 1990, 1:25). In discussing the factors that contribute to the stability of American democracy, Tocqueville placed first emphasis on "the manners and customs of the people"; second, on "the laws"; and third, on the peculiar circumstance of the physical features on the North American continent. He identified religion as the first of their political institutions for its effects on the manners and customs of the people even though religion "takes no direct part in the government of society" (ibid., 305). Among "the laws" that contribute most to the maintenance of democracy in the United States were (1) the federal form of government, (2) the township institutions, and (3) the judiciary. The physical features of the North American continent, which reduce the threat of European military struggles and provide an abundance of land and resources, rank in the third order of importance.

The conditions that pose threats to the viability of American democracy were those associated with majority tyranny, the existence of slavery and the prejudices held against those who have the racial characteristics of people of African descent, and the likely failure of Anglo-Americans to reproduce the

manners and customs of the people and maintain those governmental institutions most conducive to the viability of democracy across successive generations indefinitely into the future. The dangers identified with *tyranny of the majority* occur when those who serve as officials are able to use their authority to act in the name of "the People" to gain dominance over the relevant decision structures and to pursue their own advantage as a ruling elite. Tocqueville used the term *democratic despotism* to identify the failure of citizens over the course of successive generations to maintain a consciousness of their constitutive prerogatives, to neglect the art and science of politics, and to turn to "the government," having jurisdiction over the most extensive domain, to solve all of their problems.

A combination of circumstances associated with tyranny of the majority and democratic despotism places the long-term viability of democracies at risk. Accidents and force rather than reflection and choice are likely to be the driving feature as the "irresistible revolution" works its way through different times and places. Pretensions to the establishment of general principles by way of the enforcement of uniform laws deny the physical and cultural reality of time and place contingencies.

Perhaps it is time to consider what can be learned from the struggles for democracy. Can the lessons learned from those struggles contribute to the development of a new science of politics for a new era in human civilization? On critical reflection, can these efforts provide the foundations for the development of the arts and sciences of association that range from the exigencies of everyday life in local communities of relationships to those of global concern?

In partial response to these questions, Tocqueville asserted, ". . . in the democratic ages which are opening upon us, individual independence and local liberties will ever be the products of art; that centralization will be the natural government" (ibid., 296). If people act naturally without drawing on the science that puts self-interest to beneficial use, people will become confused by the intellectual wretchedness evoked by partisan politics. Promises will be made that cannot be realized. Sparing people the cares of thinking and troubles of living will inevitably lead to bewilderment, cynicism, and hostilities as people find themselves being entrapped as dependents subject to the control of others. At the end of the

twentieth century and the beginning of the third millennium, as measured by intellectual conventions derived from Christendom, we have available to us nearly 17 decades of experience that extend beyond Tocqueville's journey to America. What do we make of the struggle for democracy? How are individual independence and local liberties to be reestablished with the increasing globalizations of human societies? Are the evolutionary patterns of human development bound up with an irresistible transformation of life achieved by the practice of the arts and sciences of association among self-governing peoples?

A Framework for the Analysis of the Vulnerabilities of Democracies

In addressing the transformations of societies required to achieve viable, long-lasting democracies, we need to give explicit attention to a framework that provides a general conceptual schema encompassing the factors that are most relevant to alternative theories of choice and to particular models of specific empirical situations. Such a framework is implicit in method of analysis used in *Democracy in America* and has been a critical feature of the efforts at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis to develop a method of empirical inquiry that can be applied to both practical field experiments and laboratory experiments (Kiser and E. Ostrom 1982; E. Ostrom 1986; E. Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker 1994; McGinnis 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). We identify this framework as the Institutional Analysis and Development [IAD] Framework.

In crafting this framework of analysis, emphasis has been placed on an understanding of the overall *action situation* confronting individuals and groups engaged in processes of operational choice, collective choice, and constitutional choice. In the operational arena, concrete actions are undertaken by those individuals most directly affected, including public officials. The outcomes of these actions directly impact the world in some demonstrable manner. The rules that define and constrain the activities of individual citizens and officials in operational arenas have been established by processes occurring in the collective choice arena, and the rules by which these rules themselves are subject to modification are determined in the arena of constitutional choice. In some circumstances, constitutional choice results in preparation of a written constitution, but more generally communities develop informal shared understandings about the

ways in which that community organizes itself to make collective decisions. These shared understandings are an essential component of the decisional context for collective choice and operational activities. Such informal understandings may be constitutive of indigenous societies that rely on their own informal enforcers apart from the Government and the organs of State power. The latter may have international standing and maintain a quiescent "peace" short of open internal warfare. Democratic forms do not necessarily create democratic societies.

The IAD framework provides a shared language for a wide array of institutional analyses, thus facilitating comparisons among more specific theories and models of particular phenomena. However, one aspect of this language can be potentially confusing. Earlier works have used the term "levels of analysis" to refer to processes of operational, collective, and constitutional choice. This same term has long been used in the international relations literature to distinguish among explanatory factors operating at the individual, small-group, organizational, governmental, societal, and systemic levels of analysis (see Waltz 1959, 1979; Russett and Starr 1996). For international relations theory, levels directly correspond to scales of aggregation: international systems are composed of sovereign states, which are in turn presumed to be composed of large numbers of organizations, each of which is inhabited by individuals. Personality or perceptual factors at the individual level of analysis can be kept distinct from the general characteristics of organizational behavior. The contrasting tendencies of democratic and autocratic governments, and other factors operating at the systemic level, tend to maintain a balance of power among contending Great Powers. Even though, as suggested in the emerging literature on two-level or nested games (Putnam 1988; Tsebelis 1990, see also McGinnis 1999a), it may be essential that any complete explanation incorporates factors at different levels of analysis, the basis of their separation into distinct levels seems solid.

The levels of analysis of concern in the IAD framework cannot be so directly connected to observable levels of aggregation. The point of this demarcation of arenas of choice is to highlight fundamental differences among political processes, but all of these processes can occur at different levels of aggregation or among the same group of individuals at different points in time. For example, constitutional

choice typically involves a wider range of participants than routine operational choices. But even if all members of some community are equally involved in all three levels of interaction, their efforts to decide how they will make future decisions can be analytically distinguished from times when they are simply debating the application of commonly-held principles or rules to the current situations. Reform eras can be usefully distinguished from periods of routine interaction on the basis of generally acceptable rules. The crucial point is not the number of people involved but rather the nature of the activity occurring in different settings or time periods. For this reason, the term "arena of choice" is much more appropriate than levels of analysis.

As discussed above, outcomes in one arena define the nature of the games being played at the next "lower" level (or arena). That is, constitutional decisions define the processes by which organizations are expected to interact. Similarly, collective choices specify the operational rights and responsibilities of specific actors. Finally, individual (or corporate actors) select specific actions from those available to them and the outcomes of their interactions affect some events in the world. Constitutional and collective choice outcomes thus affect what individuals must, must not, or may do at an operational level.

Important analytical similarities apply to all three arenas of choice. In each arena, individual and collective choice is constrained to some range of strategic options. Actors confront an *action situation* with strategic options and role expectations as defined during periods of more encompassing interactions (analogous to "higher" levels of analysis). In each arena, the choices of actors jointly produce patterns of interactions and outcomes that shape the nature of their interactions in the other arenas (especially in those corresponding to "lower" arenas). Influences move back and forth across arenas in complex but understandable patterns.

In short, institutions matter because they link arenas of choice by defining the roles that individual or collective actors fulfill. If one looks at political situations in this manner, it is clear that all three arenas (or centers) of choice are involved in any one particular application. The term "polycentric" (originally

coined by V. Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1961) nicely conveys an image of a network of overlapping and inter-linked arenas of choice.

Caution is advised because different arenas imply different modes of analysis that are appropriate to the decisions taken in different arenas. The deliberation occurring in a constitutional arena is much more strongly oriented to what Buchanan and Tullock (1962) called *conceptual unanimity*. The mode of analysis is more likely to be concerned with basic conceptualizations drawn from analytical and theoretical jurisprudence. Concepts that are foundational in character are addressed analytically when the effort is to achieve general agreement about the rules to establish the rules of collective action and response of people in the operational contingencies of life. If constitutional rules are to have meaning in limiting the prerogatives of officials, then individuals would in an operational circumstance bear in mind the constitutional significance of what they do rather than being exclusively preoccupied with their own immediate short-term advantage.

Another important aspect of the IAD framework is that analysts of any of these arenas of choice should take full account of relevant physical conditions as well as the attributes of the community. In effect, analysis of operational, collective, or constitutional choice processes will reveal the *rules-in-use* by participants in these interactions, which may or may not correspond to formal laws or written rules. If the formal rules that are the product of the constitutional arena are ignored by both governors and the governed, the constitutional rules-in-use have been altered. For these patterns of interaction to persist, these rules-in-use must bear some congruence to both the conditions of the physical world and to the attributes of the community within which these individuals live. E. Ostrom (1990) includes congruence with the physical nature of the good as one criterion (or design principle) for the long-term viability of a community's effort to manage common-pool resources. The rules in operation must also comport with the general norms and expectations of the people involved.

The basic point of this paper is that the same can be said of self-governance in general. Democratic self-governance can be stable only if the people involved can avoid or ameliorate the effects of the

self-destructive tendencies inherent in democracy (as identified by Tocqueville) and if these procedures do not conflict with physical conditions or with generally accepted norms and principles. Each of the arenas of choice must be characterized by processes that reinforce community capabilities for self-governance. Furthermore, the rules-in-use in each arena must remain consistent with the physical conditions and cultural context within which this community exists. In the remainder of this paper, we draw more explicit connections between Tocqueville's concerns and each of the major components of the IAD framework.

Self-Governance as a Process

For purposes of discussion, let us presume that a community has established a set of norms, rules, and institutions that have enabled them to resolve at least some of their collective problems. The question at hand concerns whether these institutions can be sustained despite consequent or exogenous changes in the underlying community, institutional, and physical attributes of the relevant action situations.

The process by which collective problems are addressed in self-governing communities can be summarized briefly. First, an individual or group brings a potential problem to the attention of the affected community. Discussions cover alternative paths to resolution, including handling the problem within the confines of the group, entering into contracts or other relationships with outside actors (including privately owned corporations), and taking the matter to the relevant political authorities (at various levels of government). That is, in a polycentric order, provision of public goods remains analytically separate from their actual production. A wide array of options exist for the production of desired goods and services, and it is the responsibility of the community itself, or of agents acting in its behalf, to make arrangements (i.e., provide) for the production or delivery of these goods and services to the relevant consumption unit. The provision process includes arranging for financing. Full consideration should be given to those community members whose interests are going to be most adversely affected by potential resolutions, and some way should be found to avoid imposing burdens on them. Any agreement must include provision for monitoring and sanctioning. After agreement has been reached, the community should also establish some procedure for the evaluation of the outcomes of these changes, and for the resolution of any future conflicts that may

arise as conditions change. Each agreement is constitutive of working relationships and to that extent is conditional in character.

What is required for this process to work smoothly? The people must share an attitude of self-reliance. When confronted with a collective problem, their first response should be to find some resolution themselves, rather than presuming some "government" can solve it for them. Also, people must have sympathy and respect for the interests of others. They must have available to them a variety of choices of institutional settings. Public officials must be respectful of the responsibilities of other officials. All must pay attention to the physical consequences of their actions. In short, members of the community must maintain an attitude of self-reliance and public officials must remain content to operate within a polycentric system of multiple authorities and overlapping jurisdictions.

Four General Threats to the Sustainability of Democratic Processes

There are several ways in which these crucial components can be undermined. In this paper, we focus on four dangers, two specifically addressed to the conduct of citizens and the other two concerning the behavior of public officials and entrepreneurs. First, citizen attitudes of self-reliance can be replaced by a tendency to defer to government for the provision and production of public goods. Second, individuals who primarily define themselves as members of one group, whether defined in terms of ethnicity, religious belief, or political identity, may come to lose respect for the opinions of those who do not belong to their in-group. Third, public officials face a natural tendency to increase the scope of their own authority or their control over various resources. Fourth, candidates for elective offices are tempted to use abstractions to appeal to voters and to artificially enhance the perception of differences between themselves and alternative leaders. By doing so, elections and other forms of competition among political agents become symbolic battles that bear little if any connection to the practical resolution of the actual problems facing that community.

These dangers can be summarized as follows. Citizens may lose their attitudes of (1) self-reliance and (2) tolerance of or sympathy for others; public officials face incentives to engage in (3) centralization and (4) excessive partisanship. The basic reasons why citizens and rulers fall into these traps are quite simple and often compelling. As agents, rulers naturally face incentives for opportunism. By centralizing authority or by diverting the public's attention to symbolic matters, rulers increase their ability to extract resources or enact policies that serve their own interests. The unfortunate tendencies of the members of a democratic society to lose their attitude of self-reliance and sympathy for others are driven by the many competing pressures on their time. Self-governance takes time and effort. Thus, it is only natural that certain shortcuts will be adopted to facilitate the resolution of routine problems in order to free up people's time for their other pursuits. In effect, reliance on government and use of ideological slogans are ways in which people can simplify the complex social situations they confront.

Each of these tendencies creates its own unique problems, but the most severe dangers to the continued viability of self-governance occur when multiple dangers are expressed simultaneously. Each of Tocqueville's major concerns about the long-term viability of democracy corresponds to a unique combination of changes in the conduct of citizens and public officials. Briefly, democratic despotism, as defined by Tocqueville, results when citizen attitudes of dependence are reinforced by the existence of centralized administration. When the citizenry loses a sense of sympathy for the views of other groups, centralized rulers have a strong incentive to cater to the wishes of the majority, thus creating the conditions for majority tyranny. When candidates for elective offices focus their efforts on promulgating symbols of alternative worldviews to groups who lack tolerance for the views of other groups, then the stage has been set for orgies of excessive partisanship that may result in ethnic conflict and internal warfare. If a generally docile public is distracted by the abstractions of contending ideologies, then politics degenerates to a struggle over the levers of power among leaders who deliver benefits to particular groups. This situation can be described as a "rent-providing state," in the sense that the activities of government officials become reduced to the provision of special privilege to narrow groups. This provision of rents often takes place

under the guise of the application of general principles and ideological competition. One example of this combination of factors might be Lowi's (1979) conceptualization of the American political system as one of "interest-group liberalism" in which the supposedly deep-seated antagonisms between liberals and conservatives, or between the Republican and Democratic parties, are merely a surface veneer beneath which the real process of gaining special advantages continues unabated.

If democracy is defined as a combination of a public attitude of self-reliance and a polycentric order, then democratic societies face several vulnerabilities (see V. Ostrom 1997). Once movement in any of these directions has begun, even more devastating consequences may follow. Democratic despotism can easily degenerate into a purer form of despotism, in which the rulers become unabashedly predatory upon their subjects (all the while supposedly acting in the name of the people; see V. Ostrom 1993). The interests that provide the basis for support of a rent-providing state need not be domestic. For example, the governments of many countries in the developing world are closely dependent on the continued provision of foreign aid from national governments or multilateral aid institutions (see Bates 1981, 1983). Such governments provide little in the way of services to their own population, beyond that inherent in the programs sponsored by their patrons.

The attitudes of citizens and public officials are also key elements in most explanations of the democratic peace. Although each war has its origin in some particular dispute between peoples or their leaders, the conduct of war requires that participants consider this issue sufficiently important for them to risk their own life and to take the lives of others. In short, combatants on both sides must develop an intolerance for positions advocated by the other side.

Analysts of the democratic peace argue that since democratic peoples will consider the policies enacted by other democratic governments to be legitimate, it will be very, very difficult for leaders to mobilize sufficient public support for any war against another democratic government (see Russett 1993; Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller 1996). But this conclusion follows only if several conditions remain in place. First, the peoples in both countries must have access to reliable information about the nature of the

governing processes in the other country. That is, non-governmental news sources must play important roles in educating the public, and in exposing the misleading policies of government officials. Second, public approval of democratic forms of governance must overcome any ethnic, racial, religious, or ideological differences that may separate the peoples of these two countries. Third, the publics must have available to them effective political institutions that ensure that the policies enacted by officials have strong public support. Some analysts add a fourth condition, namely that the public officials themselves must have internalized a norm of consensual decision-making and compromise that is most effective as a means to gain power in liberal democracies. However, as long as institutional restraints remain in place, there is no reason to require that the leaders themselves must lack more selfish motives. (To paraphrase Madison, democratic peace does not require all leaders to be angels.)

Tocqueville's analysis shows that all of these steps are vulnerable to being undermined by drives toward equality, centralization, majority tyranny, and democratic despotism. A leader seeking power may engage in a campaign of willful misrepresentation of the policies of other countries. Or an ambitious leader may pander to the prejudices of the public and thus set the stage for violent confrontations. Weart (1998) argues that the democratic peace proposition works only for those governments who have not defined some domestic group as their mortal enemy. If, instead, some ethnic or political group is defined as an "enemy of the state" then any foreign governments that have any connection to or sympathy for that group themselves become enemies. A situation of democratic despotism may be especially susceptible to a "crusading zeal" in which war is used to force other countries to respect the human rights of their citizens (Doyle 1997).

This is where the connection between Tocqueville's analysis of democracy and the prospects for a peaceful world order lies. If the conditions of democratic self-governance are by their very nature vulnerable to decay, then any democratic zone of peace is potentially at risk. We argue that a crucial step in the democratic peace argument has been overlooked by international relations scholars: community capabilities for self-governance are much more important to the establishment and perpetuation of a peaceful world order than are any particular institutional forms (such as competitive elections). Only if the

attitude and institutions of self-governance can be sustained will the conditions for stable peace be laid. In the remainder of this paper we examine Tocqueville's concerns about the long-term viability of democracy (and thus of a peaceful world order) in more detail.

The Great Experiment of a Society That Governs Itself for Itself

Tocqueville presumed "that liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith" ([1835, 1840] 1990, 1:12). Ontology, epistemology, morality, science, and faith have their place in human knowledge and artisanship. To begin to appreciate how the democratic revolution can be rendered beneficial imposes a duty "upon those who direct our affairs . . . to educate democracy, to reawaken, if possible, its religious beliefs; to purify its morals; to mold its actions; to substitute a knowledge of statecraft for its inexperience, and an awareness of its true interest for its blind instincts, to adapt its government to time and place, and to modify it according to men and to conditions." It is in these circumstances that "a new science of politics is needed for a new world" (ibid., 7). Humans cannot act on the basis of self-interest "without understanding the science that puts it to [beneficial] use" (ibid., 11).

The core ideas came from the covenantal theology of the Puritan settlers of New England who committed themselves to "enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience" (ibid., 35). The application of binding covenants to civil affairs as well as religious congregations was the basis for the principle of the sovereignty of the people. The application of principles of covenantal theology to constitutional choice in the governance of civil affairs Acame out of the townships . . ., took possession of the state," and "became the law of laws" (ibid., 56). Instead of a sovereign body exercising authority over society, "there society governs itself for itself" (ibid., 57).

Citizens in democratic self-governing societies might be viewed as the source of the laws rather than mere objects of command and control, i.e., subjects who submit to the commands of an overarching Sovereign. The reality is that citizens who are the source of law are also the subjects of that law. The issue

is the point of emphasis: Are citizens the source of the laws to which they are also subject? Unless citizens have a self-conscious awareness of their place as the source of the laws, they are likely to find themselves to be subjects in a system of command and control in which sovereignty resides in a fiction called *the State* rather than the citizenry.

Tocqueville's mode of analysis of the system of authority relationships began with the township as the first in order, then the county and the state, before turning to the federal constitution of the Union. He argued that villages and townships, or their equivalents, are to be found among all peoples where patterns of interdependency require mutual understandings and patterns of collective action that reach beyond the family. "Municipal freedom . . . is, as it were, secretly self-produced in the midst of a semi-barbarous state of society" (ibid., 60). "Custom and usage," in the midst of semi-barbarous societies, Aestablished certain limits to oppression and founded a sort of law in the very midst of violence" (ibid., 8).

The constitution of the New England township received detailed attention. A board of selectmen and numerous town officers were elected by citizens at an annual town meeting. Administrative responsibilities were discharged by some nineteen officials who were required to perform functions prescribed by state law. Each person was not only presumed to be his or her own governor responsible for the choices that one makes, but also responsible to take account of the interests of others in their associated activities that affect the common welfare. Those who were elected as officials were obliged to serve and to discharge their responsibilities according to requirements of law.

Tocqueville viewed the general corpus of the law as being specified by state legislative authority subject to a system of decentralized administration under the control of the people of the townships and their officials. A system of legal accountability was maintained by the judiciary that ruled on the competence and limitation of the authority of local officials. Any person was entitled to seek redress through the courts and judicial authority prevailed as against the dominant factions formed among the electorate. The judiciary, in turn, conceptualized the role of each magistrate in reaching a determination in light of the law as a general system of nested relationships established by the constitutional authority vested

in persons and citizens and in the diverse associations that had standing in the system of authority relationships.

"Town meetings," Tocqueville alleged, "are to liberty what primary schools are to science" (ibid., 61). Juries are where people learn to judge as they would themselves be judged. Lawyers, as those learned in law, served both as judges presiding in judicial proceedings and as counsel to parties before the court, contributing to the enlightenment that informed the proceedings in civil, criminal, and equity jurisprudence. It is in the context of voluntary associations where persons and citizens learned the art and science of association that is constitutive of civil life. "In democratic countries the science of association," Tocqueville asserted, "is the mother of science; the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made" ([1835, 1840] 1990, 2:110). Tocqueville then offered the following as a generalization about the art of association: "If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased" (ibid.).

As mentioned earlier, Tocqueville used the term *democratic despotism* to identify the failure of citizens over the course of successive generations to maintain a consciousness of their ability to govern themselves. In conjecturing about the novel features of this form of *democratic despotism*, Tocqueville presented this vision:

> The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he does not see them; he touches them, but he does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.
>
> Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living? (ibid., 318).

The longer-enduring democracies avoid the terror and destruction of self-proclaimed revolutionaries who are concerned with liquidating those who are designated as oppressors or eliminating potential sources of opposition, including those who come from the ranks of radical revolutionaries. Yet partisanship in the longer-enduring democracies runs the risk of converting public discourse into wars of words in which slogans of an ideological character offer the promise of serving some disparate sets of disassociated interests. Aggregated statistics grounded in disparate sets are used as diagnostic and analytical tools that neglect the multifaceted bonds of everyday life. Societies are themselves torn asunder as the transformation of rule-ruler-ruled relationships works itself out devoid of the bonds of community.

Partisanship, Conflict, and Collective Choice

In much of the world during the recent past, democracy is associated with universal suffrage, political parties, the election of representative legislators, and the constitution of ruling coalitions based on majoritarian arrangements. Such principles do not withstand critical scrutiny for achieving the long-term viability of democratic societies. The legislative assemblies of parliamentary republics in many instances pretend to be sovereign, implying that such bodies exercise supreme authority without being bound by constitutional processes in which the people by popular referenda have a place in establishing the terms and conditions of governance. The true parliamentary systems of government have more the characteristics of aristocratic republics than democratic republics.

Parliamentary governments of the Westminster style vest ruling authority with majority coalitions in parliament. The leaders of those majority coalitions also serve as an executive committee – a cabinet, the members of which become privy councillors in control of the ministries that preside over the executive instrumentalities of government. The deliberation of those privy councillors, who exercise leadership in Parliament and control the executive instrumentalities of government, are bound by oaths of secrecy, often reinforced by Official Secrets Acts that create significant barriers to public scrutiny and to public accountability. The term *Privy Council* in the English constitution implies significant constraints on public

accountability. Orders-in-Council have standing as enforceable regulations. Parliamentary Government becomes a facade for a centralized administrative apparatus.

Similar patterns exist in nonparliamentary democracies. Statutory enactments are conceptualized as the core of the law and the extension of rule-making prerogatives to executive agencies again creates executive dominance with regard to operational levels of government. In the United States, the *Federal Register* becomes the more important formulation of law as administrative agencies issue regulations, interpreting and transforming the enactments of Congress into rules intended to be binding on citizens. Jurisprudence in democratic societies runs the risk of justifying principles of command and control by those presumed to exercise supreme authority rather than recognizing that law has its origins in the self-governing capabilities exercised by people.

Statutory enactments and administrative regulations by those who presume to represent "the People" in a society as a whole conceptualize the essential features of democracy to be equality among the individuals who comprise such a society and a uniform application of law to all members of such a society as the basic principle of justice. Uniform rules of law pose a fundamental obstacle to human adaptive potentials wherever the ecological conditions of life are subject to significant variations. One way of resolving such incongruities is to allow officials in the executive instrumentalities to waive the rule of law whenever such waivers contribute to the smooth running of public affairs. Corruption comes to prevail and laws, as recognized by Thomas Hobbes ([1651] 1962), become "traps for money." When officials adhere to the letter of such uniform rules and regulations, people come to view them as being unreasonable and as Tocqueville in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* observed, "One often hears the people lamenting . . . [an] outspoken contempt for the laws of his country. . . ." ([1856] 1955, 67). Centralization of authority is likely to yield "rigid rules, but flexibility, not to say laxity, in their application" (ibid.).

The ancient empires, limited by the absence of literacy among their subjects, allowed for local autonomy and variable customs and mores among diverse communities of people. National legislation and

administrative regulations in the modern world easily imposed uniformity that overrides municipal autonomy with a system of administrative jurisprudence and bureaucratic administration.

The irresistible march of democracy through the recent past leaves considerable doubt about its impending future. The appeal for the liberation of mankind by radical revolutionary struggles has not yielded communal self-government and the withering away of the state. The centralization of authority with universal suffrage and the election of partisans capable of forming dominant coalitions under conditions of majority rule get mixed in a witches brew of partisan ideologies, privy councils, bureaucratic executive instrumentalities, the implementation of uniform rules with lax enforcement while failing to enlighten citizens about the art and science of association so necessary to relearning how to act on Tocqueville's principle of self-interest rightly understood and maintain self-governing arrangements.

Robert Michels offered us a prognosis of the oligarchical tendencies in modern democratic societies. An iron law of oligarchy came to prevail. Under those circumstances, Michels anticipates a cycle of republics analogous to the cycle of dynasties among the empires of the ancient world:

> The democratic currents of history resemble successive waves. They break ever on the same shoal. They are ever renewed. The enduring spectacle is simultaneously encouraging and depressing. When democracies have gained a certain stage of development they undergo a gradual transformation, adopting the aristocratic spirit, and in many cases also the aristocratic forms, against which at the outset they struggled so fiercely. Now new accusers arise to denounce the traitors; after an era of glorious combats and of inglorious power, they end by fusing with the old dominant class; whereupon once more they are in their turn attacked by fresh opponents who appeal to the name of democracy. It is probable that this cruel game will continue without end ([1911] 1966, 371).

The multifaceted character of life in which people work, think, talk, eat, drink, play, and relate in all of these multifaceted ways with one another and live in familiar settings with their own variants gradually undergo transformations in which facets are fractured into constellations of interest groups that reach from local exigencies to aggregated centers of authority relationships. People in their local circumstances choose representatives who meet in chambers and turn their affairs over to permanently employed agents who become associated in circles of spokespersons at the most distant centers of authority relationships. The fabric of centralization emerges from the fractured strands of specialized relationships. These

transformations have variously been referred to as "the iron triangle," Athe iron cage," subject to Athe iron law oligarchy." What were the multifaceted patterns of life in the context of family, neighborhood, and community are gradually transformed into distinguishable strands breaking the complementarities of genders, generations, and origins until everyone loses themselves in matrices of rules that defy human understanding. Each seeks recourse to informalities as a way to escape from the formalities imposed upon us. We are reminded of Rousseau's paradox: "Man is born [to be] free; and everywhere he is in chains" ([1762] 1978, 46).

One of the "chains" forged by electoral democracy is a tendency towards overly heated partisanship:

> [E]ach partisan is hurried beyond the natural limits of his opinions by the doctrines and the excesses of his opponents, until he loses sight of the end of his exertions, and holds forth in a way which does not correspond to his real sentiments or secret instincts. Hence arises the strange confusion that we are compelled to witness (Tocqueville ([1835, 1840] 1990, 1:11).

Partisans strive for "what is expedient without heeding what is just, to acquire knowledge without faith, and prosperity apart from virtue; claiming to be the champions of modern civilization" (ibid., 13). Such partisanship generates strange patterns of confusion:

> The religionists are the enemies of liberty, and the friends of liberty attack religion; the high-minded and the noble advocate bondage, and the meanest and most servile preach independence; honest and enlightened citizens are opposed to all progress, while men without patriotism and without principle put themselves forward as the apostles of civilization and intelligence.
>
> Has such been the fate of the centuries which have preceded our own? and has man always inhabited a world like the present, where all things are not in their proper relationships, where virtue is without genius, and genius without honor; where the love of order is confused with a taste for oppression, and the holy cult of freedom with a contempt of law; where the light thrown by conscience on human actions is dim, and where nothing seems to be any longer forbidden or allowed, honorable or shameful, false or true?
>
> I cannot believe that the Creator made man to leave him in an endless struggle with the intellectual wretchedness that surrounds us (ibid.).

This strange confusion, this intellectual wretchedness, transforms ideas into ideologies that are no longer related to deeds. Human enlightenment and human rationality are placed at risk.

What is the place of parties and factions in the constitution of democratic societies? How do the peoples of democratic societies cope with the intellectual wretchedness evoked by partisans who manipulate ideas to serve as slogans for mobilizing votes and building coalitions to gain dominance over political processes? Presumably, all peoples everywhere will themselves endure the irresistible revolution that continues to advance in the course of human history. Amid the ruins that might be wrought are the possibilities of self-destruction among the peoples of mankind. Are there features that must be achieved as the conditions for realizing beneficial, adaptive potentials among human societies? Can human beings learn from each other's experiences?

These are questions worthy of critical reflection. Presumably we can address ourselves to the democratic transformations that are a part of the historical experience of any and all peoples in the contemporary world. Through such efforts, we might learn from the experience of diverse peoples and reach some preliminary conclusion about those features that mark the successful achievement of democratic civilizations. In undertaking his own inquiry about democracy in America, Tocqueville was quite explicit that he was not prepared to judge whether the democratic revolution that he believed to be irresistible "is advantageous or prejudicial to mankind" (ibid., 14). After more than a century and a half, we might be prepared to render some tentative judgments about the course of this democratic revolution.

If the struggle for democracy is to yield civilizations that place first priority on the achievement of self-governing capabilities, we need to explore questions about the science of politics that is appropriate to the exercise of such self-governing capabilities.

Effects on Physical Conditions

To return to the categories of the IAD framework outlined above, erosion of citizens' attitudes of self-reliance and tolerance undermine the very attributes of the community that makes self-governance possible. Institutional changes can occur in the rules-in-use in each of the three arenas of choice. Centralization of political authority is a process of consolidation that can be associated most closely with the constitutional arena of choice. When political discourse becomes dominated by partisan invocation of

ideologically tinged symbols, then processes of collective choice degenerate into struggles for domination. It is at the operational level that all of these tendencies have the most direct consequences on actual conditions of the social and physical world.

Tocqueville concluded that the least influential cause of the initial success of democracy in the United States concerned the favorable physical conditions that Anglo-Americans enjoyed. In retrospect, we can identify two separate aspects of these conditions. First, when he wrote, North Americans were relatively isolated from the rest of the world's conflict areas. Second, they were blessed with what must have seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of natural resources. Although Tocqueville did foresee a time when America's influence would be felt throughout the world, he did not discuss whether democracy might have detrimental consequences on the physical environment. In today's world, it is no longer so easy to neglect interactions between physical conditions and the rules-in-use and the cultural context of self-governance. In this section, we extend Tocqueville's mode of analysis to these interactions.

The Anglo-Americans of a European heritage brought with them an agriculture, commerce, and manufacture quite different than that practiced by the aboriginal peoples in the more northern latitudes of North America. Settlers undertaking settlements radically transformed the countryside into places of sedentary occupation in contrast to the more nomadic patterns of livelihood adhered to by peoples still living by hunting and gathering ways of life. The transformation of the countryside was of radical proportions unlike anything in much of Europe over the last millennium.

What is problematical is the democratic impulse toward a mechanical expression of the equality of persons and a consequent push for uniformity of legislation. If that impulse were to prevail, democratic societies are of doubtful viability. We are required to explore the potentials for customary law grounded in Tocqueville’s effort to deal with the proclivities of human communities to address patterns of interdependency in the context of familial and communal patterns of organization. This requires serious analytical consideration. When and where people live their lives in the context of time and place variabilities becomes important to the viability of democratic civilizations. The language of human

discourse is required to cross the threshold from mere words to represent the physical and social realities in which people live their lives. Uniformity of legislation is required to accommodate to Abylaws" as the laws of place. The significance of local ordinances and bylaws turns critically on local knowledge as an essential complement to general formulations characteristic of scientific, philosophical, and ontological generalizations.

If the basic validity and reliability of statutory enactments, general legislation, and administrative regulations are subject to challenge and contestability, then we have questions about the relationship of juridical formulations to ways of life. There are qualities about statutory enactments and administrative regulations that create pretenses of being law but which have not withstood processes of contestation that would justify their being considered as effective rules of law. We face a crisis in the meaning of jurisprudence appropriate to democratic societies that are consistent with the long-term viability of human civilization that reaches across the millennia.

As a way of addressing this very difficult puzzle, we may need to reconsider the place of customary law in contrast to statutory enactments and administrative proclamations. Customary law represents the efforts to achieve workable rules-in-use that gain expression in habituated responses that people achieve in light of the contestability that is afforded in a polycentric system of order. Processes of collective action are important but dominating decisions by recourse to winning coalitions is not adequate to shape the way that people *participate* in the affairs of everyday life. It is what each and everyone does in relating to others, acting in place, and living a life that is important. Who we vote for, who are elected, and what deliberative bodies do are only small proportions of what people do as they participate in the social, economic, ecological, cultural, and political contingencies of life. What we agree to, how those agreements are conceptualized and given meaning as we act in relation to others is the key to patterns of political order in human societies. As people engage in the artisanship and the entrepreneurial activities of everyday life, meeting the criteria of moral, economic, financial, legal, and political considerations is what democratic societies are all about. Customary law, more than statutory enactments, we might conjecture, is the lawful

foundation of democratic societies. Jurisprudential concepts from the laws of Moses and the Israelites, the jurisconsults of the Roman Republic, the common law of England and of many other peoples, and other religious and philosophical traditions provide the rudiments with which we can work in achieving democratic transformations in the contemporary world. Democracy implies that people govern. The twentieth century has demonstrated the failure of both empires and nation-states.

Important aspects of any people's cultural tradition are, by definition, reflected in the behaviors encapsulated in customary law. Our assertion that customary law may be the lawful foundation of democratic society implies a fundamental transformation in the conceptualization of the process of democratization. Most scholars and policy advocates seem to think democratization requires the imposition of the particular set of electoral and legislative institutions that have been developed in the advanced industrial democracies of the Western world. In effect, these institutions are to be grafted onto the body politic and expected to operate just as they have in Western Europe or North America. But these institutions were not grafted onto the West. Instead, these very institutions emerged out of the cultural dynamics of that region, and their success in these areas must be attributed, to a great extent, to the congruence of those institutions with the traditional practices found in Western civilization. Success and longevity derive not from the institutions alone but from the positive reinforcement between institutions and culture.

Efforts to graft these same institutions directly onto other bodies politic should be expected to fail. What is needed instead is an effort to design institutions that build on the tendencies toward self-governance that exist within the cultural repertoire of each particular civilization. We argue that each of the many cultures developed by humanity encompasses some principles that can be used to strengthen self-governing capabilities of communities, as well as principles that can be used to weaken or undermine these capabilities.

Over time the relative importance of these contrasting tendencies can be expected to change, often in dramatic fashions. The essential task of institutional analysts is to craft sustainable institutions of self-governance that are consistent with prevailing beliefs and cultural traditions.

Unless democratic societies respect the cultural and physical principles enshrined in customary law, there is reason to expect that the dynamics of partisan competition may result in a deterioration of the physical conditions of life. E. Ostrom (1990) and many other researchers have demonstrated the ability of self-governing groups to manage their own resources in an effective manner, if they are given the opportunity to conduct their affairs according to their own version of customary law. Great experiments in consolidated government by imposition of uniform law have resulted not only in massively destructive wars, both external and internal, but they have also led to significant depletion of natural resources and severe damage to the physical environment.

Conflict and resources are related in several ways. For example, resource degradation can be a potent source of conflict, as peoples struggle to maintain control over a changing resource base (Homer-Dixon 1994). Conflict, in turn, can greatly exacerbate resource problems unless pursued as a process to enhance enlightenment. Since resources like food are needed to fight wars, combatants in many conflicts have taken to denying access to food as a part of their strategy (Macrae and Zwi 1992). Combatants also routinely expropriate a significant proportion of any emergency food aid provided to peoples displaced by war, and they use this food aid to help finance their military operations. Both strategies serve to greatly augment the number of deaths that occur in contemporary conflicts. In short, the relationship between resources and violent conflict can be very close indeed (see McGinnis 1998).

In conclusion, it is clear that all of the components of action situations are closely interrelated. Operational decisions have direct impact on the physical conditions that set the context within which communities must live. Choices in the constitutional arena are shaped by the attributes of that community, and these choices, in turn, determine which cultural attributes will be sustained by subsequent generations. Collective choice processes are closely intertwined with operational and constitutional choice. It is

important that collective choices are made in ways that further self-governance capabilities as people face the exigencies of life.

The Challenge of Learning How to Be Self-Governing

The cruel game of glorious combats and inglorious exercises of power associated with tyrannies of the majority and democratic despotisms that seek to spare people the cares of living and the troubles of thinking have the possibility of enduring forever. Perhaps we need to return to the people, be prepared to address the human condition, and come to appreciate what it would mean to be self-governing. We still confront this problem some 17 decades following Tocqueville's journey to America, and 20 decades after Alexander Hamilton posed the question, "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force" ([1788] 1961, 3). Michels's cruel game is played out in rondos of accident and force. What does it mean to proceed by reflection and choice?

Perhaps it is in the context of human universals experienced in the context of family, neighborhood, village, and community that human beings might hope to resolve the basic dilemmas of language built on classificatory schema organized in sets and subsets. What binds sets and subsets and the multifaceted character of life together turns on the experiences of everyday life lived in the artisanship-artifact relationship by which human beings constitute their habitations amid the ecological niches in which they live. Knowledge, culture, society, economy, and polity are configured together in multifaceted social realities. Those realities can best be understood in the fullness of relationships that human beings have in the experiences of living and working with one another.

As the use of language becomes more detached from the multifaceted character of everyday life, words like *private* and *public* come to be viewed as categorical distinctions rather than essential complements. Extended into the realms of categorical discourse, concepts like "private" and "public" easily become more general categorical distinctions like "capitalism" and "socialism." Whole systems of ideas get spun off from such distinctions engendering not only partisanship in electoral contests and

legislative assemblies but revolutionary struggles that take on the characteristics of elements within societies warring on one another.

The existence of private property among numerous smallholders inevitably creates necessities for establishing common thoroughfares in order for neighbors to gain access to one another and to gain access to the opportunities for exchange with those in the larger world. Similarly, smallhold farmers in arid climates or dry growing seasons are required to gain access to flowing water through jointly constructed, maintained, and used channels. Public facilities become the necessary complement to private property. The private households of the nuclear family are closely related to public facilities of neighborhoods, villages, and communities. The autonomy of the individual yeoman is accompanied by the collegiality of local citizens who have recourse to language and communication to address their common problems that necessitate diverse forms of collective action. In some languages the term *household* is used to apply not only to the place of habitation of the family but to other realms of collectivization. Thus, it is that Tocqueville could appropriately assert that "Custom and usage, . . . had established certain limits to oppression and founded a sort of law in the very midst of violence" ([1835– 1840] 1990, 1:8). People who communicate and address common problems in working with one another, by those circumstances, build patterns of common knowledge, mutual understanding, shared rules, and reciprocity rooted in the lives of ordinary people. The roots of democracy are grounded in the human condition and the way that communication enables neighbors to address and resolve common problems through cooperative joint efforts.

The paradox of language distinctions is necessary to speech but the meaning and place of those distinctions get embedded in the tacit understanding of those who have common knowledge and shared communities of understanding. The more that language becomes an instrument of partisan discourse, the more that tacit understandings are rift apart. Heated partisanship can transform languages in ways that communities of people lose touch with realities, and social realities lose the bonds of common knowledge,

shared communities of understanding, and reciprocity that give meaning to life in human communities as calculated strategies are pursued by some to gain advantage over others.

In a review of the work of Victor Klemperer, Gordon Craig summarizes the transformation that the National Socialists made in the German language:

> by a deliberate militarization and mechanization of common speech, by the use of superlatives and adjectives of enhancement, by giving positive value to terms that in the past had been used pejoratively (*fanaticism*, *blind obedience*), by expressed preference for feelings rather than reason, by the use of euphemisms to cloak reality, and by repetitive stereotyping of opponents, the Nazis had deliberately subverted the language in order to change the way in which the German people thought about politics and life (1998, 4).

Partisanship not only rifts societies apart to a point where elements of societies engage in latent if not overt wars on one another but reach beyond language communities to provoke larger wars fought in the name of Liberation as Socialists and Capitalists denounce one another.

Reliance on distinctions between Markets and States runs the risk of neglecting the essential complementarity between individual action and collective action. Individuals act but always in the context of some shared community of understanding. The exercise of individual rights, so important to freedom, is always exercised in some shared community of understanding. One's rights imply that others have duties and that one, in turn, is obliged to act dutifully with respect to the rights of others. We share in a system of opportunities and constraints that provides the context in which we live our lives in patterns of multifaceted relationships that afford us with both capabilities and limitations. Abstractions like Markets and States lead us into errors as we contemplate living our lives in diverse patterns of associated relationships.

Any effort to assess the viability of democratic societies inevitably presents us with fundamental paradoxes and serious social dilemmas that must be resolved or effectively coped with. This means that democratic societies cannot drift through history without mobilizing diagnostic assessments and analytical capabilities in resolving problems that confront those societies. As Tocqueville observed, "a democracy cannot profit by past experience unless it has arrived at a certain pitch of knowledge and civilization." If the people of a democracy are "unable to discern the causes of their own wretchedness, . . . they fall a sacrifice to ills of which they are ignorant" ([1835, 1840] 1990, 1:231). This is why democratic societies depend on

the progress of the art and science of association as the social conditions of people become more equal and why the viability of democratic societies depends on the knowledge and skills of its citizens in learning how to govern themselves and construct viable institutional arrangements to maintain self-governing capabilities: "individual independence and local liberties will ever be the products of art; that centralization will be the natural government" (ibid., 2:296).

To this assertion, Tocqueville offered the additional comments in an appendix:

> Not only is a democratic people led by its own taste to centralize its government, but the passions of all the men by whom it is governed constantly urge it in the same direction. It may easily be foreseen that almost all the able and ambitious members of a democratic community will labor unceasingly to extend the powers of government, because they all hope at some time or other to wield those powers themselves. It would be a waste of time to attempt to prove to them that extreme centralization may be injurious to the state, since they are centralizing it for their own benefit. Among the public men of democracies, there are hardly any but men of great disinterestedness or extreme mediocrity who seek to oppose the centralization of government; the former are scarce, the latter powerless (ibid., 367-68).

To vote as an expression of preference based on taste is to leave the fate of democracy to the accidents of history. The exercise of reflection and choice turns on the practice of the art and science of association. The place of knowledge and the exercise of skills grounded in knowledge as knowledge in the art and science of association enters into the constitution of human societies is essential to the exercise of reflection and choice in whatever it is that citizens attempt to do in democratic societies.

What Tocqueville referred to as democratic despotism in which people turn to "the Government" to address all of their problems is as much a crisis of knowledge, skill, and moral responsibility as it is a symptom of failure among democratic societies. The place of knowledge, skill, and moral responsibility in the constitution of order in human societies indicates important aspects of the multifaceted character of human societies that can be characterized as cultures, economies, polities, as well as the reference to "societies."

Scholars, including those who refer to themselves as social scientists, are caught up in the same dilemmas as citizens when it comes to relating linguistic formulations to the exigencies of nature and of human experience. The logical coherence of scientific generalizations needs to meet the tests of empirical

warrantability and public verification in establishing the truth-value of assertions. In referring to a *polity* in a context of a *society* and its *culture*, Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan assert that the facet of power and authority relationships is being used to characterize a society as Aa body politic." They go on to assert:

> Thus in a sense all of the social sciences have an identical subject matter, but they adopt toward this subject matter varying observational standpoints (frames of reference) leading to different sets of problems. Hence, though political science as here conceived is characteristically concerned with polities, it is not limited to that concern ("science of government," "science of the state," and so on), but deals with the social process in its entirety, though always in its bearings on power (1950, 215).

The failure of democracy can, from this perspective, be viewed as the failure of the art and science of association in a democratic society. Cultural, economic, political, and social crises are also crises of knowledge and the way knowledge is put to use in human societies.

The problem of democratic transformations and how we come to understand the meaning of those transformations inevitably pose a challenge to scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. We face the burden of attempting to account for the successes and failures of peoples who have a place in the irresistible revolution that is advancing in our midst. Every attempt to advance the cause of democracy can be viewed as an experiment worthy of reflection and choice.

As scholars, we face an additional responsibility with regard to what we profess, practice, and teach. If a political science is only a perspective, frame of reference, or facet of a common social reality that is subject to analysis from the perspective of other social sciences and humanities, we face a burden of construing our own work in relation to the kindred social sciences and humanities and what this implies for those who confront the task of addressing the practical problems that arise in human relationships. We are not dealing with Markets and States as though such names apply to isolable entities, but we need to recognize that every transaction has reference to rules and rule-ordered relationships. What are the conceptions, both shared and disputed, that inform the way that people relate to one another?

We face the problem that scholars like everyone else have limited cognitive capabilities. No human being can know the truth and the whole truth. They can only testify with regard to the way that observations complement assertions and engage in reflection about the meaning of observations and

assertions. We can appreciate the essential complementarities and yet confront the task of creating isolable exigencies in order to conduct any experiment. Walter Eucken, the German economist and philosopher, engaged in a critique of neoclassical economic theory for attempting to construct a model that was assumed to have universal application. Yet he lived at a time when states in Germany and Russia were engaged in experiments to construct state-managed economies. Economic models of perfectly competitive economic systems did not address the problems of state-managed economies. How were we to understand the meaning of those experiments and engage in comparative analyses of the operation of different types of economic systems? His response was to suggest that all societies through all times confronted the tasks of engaging in the production, exchange, and use of goods and services that are necessary to human existence. Thus, a common framework could be developed for thinking about and comparing the performance of differently structured economic systems. The task faced by Lasswell and Kaplan was to formulate "A Framework for Political Inquiry." Human beings everywhere confront the task of making decisions for ordering their relationships with one another.

Reference to rules and rule-ordered relationships are characteristics of all human societies. Every society is enmeshed in complementary patterns of order that exist as social realities. The formulation, application, and use of knowledge is but another facet of what it means to be a human being relating to other human beings in whatever it is that human beings choose to do.

When Tocqueville made the assertion that "A new science of politics is needed for a new world" ([1835, 1840] 1990, 1:7), he seemed to be suggesting that a new world constituted by reference to the possibility of self-governing societies would depend on appropriate developments in the art and science of association. The question that we are required to explore is the character of this new science of politics in light of the multifaceted character of social reality.

Is there a possibility of developing a common framework that might serve the analytical purposes of all of the social sciences and humanities? Can this framework serve, at the same time, as the basis for reflection and choice as peoples in democratic societies are concerned with addressing the sources of their

difficulties and conflicts? Can it be used to resolve those conflicts and better understand the puzzles and dilemmas that are the sources of conflict in human societies? Is it possible to achieve and engage in the practice of a common-sense approach so that the different modes of analysis in the social sciences and humanities can become a part of the common heritage of mankind as different peoples in their different language communities seek out adaptive potentials among the ecological circumstances in which they live their lives? If this were possible, democratic transformations might be achieved with the concomitant changes in laws, ideas, customs, and morals that are necessary to render democratic revolution beneficial. This is our challenge at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the third millennium in the Christian era.

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