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TITLE

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Specifying the relationship between globalization and democracy is not easy. One can identify a whole series of reasons to think that globalization is good for democracy, especially in the world political context at the end of the Cold War. At the same time, it is quite easy to come up with factors that tend to weaken democracy: the globalization of capital, with its tendency to scant or ignore national public spaces; the growing imbalance between economics and politics to the advantage of the former; and the rise of such disturbing phenomena as organized crime, money-laundering, and trafficking in organs, children, or drugs. One thinks also of all those jobs that are wiped out on the basis of global economic considerations, without the persons affected ever being consulted.

Of course, one could argue that these various dislocations really have nothing to do with democracy, since they occur in nondemocratic countries as well. It is difficult, for example, to attribute economic “downsizing” to a democratic deficit, except by assimilating democracy to the idea of justice. Yet this aspect of globalization does foster a sense of dispossession among individuals, who may directly or indirectly lose confidence in democracy as a meaningful forum for the expression of choices and preferences. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War, the wealthier countries have often argued in favor of a link between democracy and the market: This is the famous “market democracy.” In this light, it becomes tempting for others to mix together factors traceable to the market with those that are imputable to democracy.

We propose to examine the relationship between democracy and glo-

balization by introducing an essential distinction between two dimensions of democracy: *democracy as procedure*, that is, as a mechanism capable of securing a change in governments through free elections; and *democracy as culture*, that is, as a collection of formal and informal rules, ensuring over time the free expression of opinions and interests and their interplay under equitable conditions. To simplify, one might say that democracy as procedure entails respect for certain *rules of the game*, while democracy as culture corresponds to internalized *rules of life* that reflect a reasonable confidence in democracy's ability to guarantee pluralism and fairness.

The hypothesis that we wish to advance is the following: While globalization undoubtedly boosts the legitimacy and at times the efficacy of democracy as procedure, it in no way guarantees the development of democracy as culture. One can even go further and say that globalization reinforces democracy as procedure to the detriment of democracy as culture. One of the main reasons for this differentiation results from the relationship that each of these two dimensions of democracy has with time. Democracy as procedure fits perfectly with the dynamic of global time, which values the present, the immediate, and the readily visible. Democracy as culture, on the other hand, is not synchronous with global time, for it needs a longer period to develop. Moreover, it is not immediately or clearly identifiable. It is always relative and as such even contestable. The international community's assumption of responsibility for matters relating to democracy reinforces this differentiation. One can more or less tell whether elections in a particular country have been free—and, if they have not been, stigmatize the offenders. It is rather more difficult, however, to evaluate the reality of a democratic culture. It is not hard to imagine a delegation of the U.S. Congress admonishing a foreign leader for not respecting democratic procedures. It is less easy to imagine it evaluating the democratic culture of that same country.

The Contours of Globalization

Before exploring more deeply the relationship of democracy both as procedure and as culture with globalization, it might be useful to offer a succinct definition of the latter term. Globalization may be defined as a process of intensifying social relations on a worldwide scale that results in an increasing disjunction between space and time. What does this mean? It means that the places where events occur are further and further away from the places where their consequences are felt. In a traditional society, individuals live and die within a fairly circumscribed radius. All that they see and do takes place within the framework of the village where they were born. Their sense of space and time is thus very limited. In a modern society, people's spatial horizon expands for all sorts of reasons, the most important of which is the growing specializa-

tion of roles and functions. The moment one ceases doing everything oneself, one is obliged to rely on others for certain goods and services. Globalization thus can be viewed as a process that enlarges the space in which social actors dwell. In the span of ten years, for instance, the horizon of French enterprises has broadened from Europe to the world. But the best illustration of the disjunction between space and time is the famous example of pension funds. Through their intermediation, retirees in California can influence employment levels in the French town of Argenton. Yet the factors that cause pension funds to be withdrawn from an enterprise will only very seldom be related to the particular context of the factory at Argenton.

We emphasize this notion of a disjunction between space and time precisely because it creates a feeling of dispossession—on the part of factory workers who find themselves laid off through no fault of their own, and on the part of political actors who can hardly prohibit such investment strategies. Even if this issue seemingly has nothing to do with democracy, the correlation is in fact much greater than it appears. Dispossession, or the feeling of dispossession, in the face of economic change alters people's confidence in the democratic systems that function on their national territories. If citizens begin to feel that their electoral "bargaining" or "buying" power is dropping because the way in which "real" decisions are made has nothing to do with the way they cast their votes, this will surely weaken their faith in democracy.

If we limit the analysis of globalization to the history of capitalism, we can easily see that globalization was a process already well under way in the nineteenth century. One may even say that the nineteenth century was the first golden age of globalization and that, in certain respects, globalization was even more advanced back then than it is today. There was in effect a world currency—the gold standard—and a mobility of labor far greater than today's. Nation-states did not have nearly the weight that they would later acquire. The phenomenon of colonization, moreover, was fully in line with this historical process, though of course nobody at the time spoke of it yet as "globalization." Even the idea of vulnerability to external shocks—today so closely associated with globalization—is not totally unprecedented. In his superb book *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi shows that at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe the world price of raw materials played a central role in human life. "Only a madman would have doubted that the international economic system was the axis of the material existence of the race."¹

Why is it, then, that globalization, which is not new, is nonetheless so widely experienced and resented as a kind of novel phenomenon?

To grasp the answer, we must understand that globalization does not necessarily follow a linear logic. Beginning with the First World War and running through 1945, what we saw in Europe and North America

was a dynamic of national retrenchment, precisely because the opening of unregulated markets had led to grave social and economic dislocations, such as the crisis of 1929.

Another essential phenomenon—especially beginning in the 1960s—was the rise of state power in matters of economic and social regulation. For a variety of reasons that need not detain us here, the years from 1960 to 1980 were decades of strong belief in the power of the state to build a social order relatively well protected from global fluctuations. During this period, average public expenditures in the developed countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) rose from 28 to 42 percent of GNP. This confidence in the regulatory power of the state was naturally passed on to the countries of the global “South,” many of which gained their independence during these two decades. Belief in the state’s role therefore served two essential functions, helping to articulate how both political integration and social integration should proceed within the framework of the nation-state. We might call this phase “the globalization of nation-states.”

In this particular historical period, two elements came into play. The first derived from the idea that nation-states had at their disposal a certain domestic “free zone” in which each could cobble together its own relatively autonomous social bargain. It is worth noting in passing that among the keys to the popularity of Keynesian macroeconomics during these years was the perception that it would permit the preservation of this kind of national autonomy.

The second, which formed the corollary of the first, was based upon the sacralization of national sovereignty. Naturally, neither the economic nor political autonomy of nation-states really existed. What is more, the development theories of the time were dominated by the issues of dependency and unequal exchanges. But the fight against dependency was always waged in the name of the quest for national political autonomy. To a greater or lesser degree, all global debates then revolved around nation-states. The logic resembled a game of billiards, where nation-states bounced off one another while each scrupulously sought to guarantee the enclosed character of its own respective space.

What held true for economic exchanges also held true in matters of politics and ideology. There were indeed many ideologies in the air at that time; yet rightly or wrongly, there was a confidence about being able to choose among several different models or paths, and a further conviction that it was the state’s responsibility to make these choices. The filter of the nation-state remained decisive in the appropriation of the economic and political resources available at the global level.

Thus, if one had to define globalization today, one could say that it is a dynamic of change that acts in the economic, political, cultural, and social spheres on the basis of the reduced role of the nation-state as a mediator. This point is essential, so let us explore its precise meaning.

On the level of economics and finance, the shrinking degree to which nation-states act as mediators is striking. Over the course of these last ten years, most of the countries of the global South have been led to open their borders to foreign trade, with economic and social effects that have varied widely from one country to another. In some cases, trade liberalization destroyed certain local rents and by the same token accentuated competition among national actors. But in other cases, certain social groups with preexisting ties to the state benefited not so much from liberalization as from the privatization of state-owned assets—Russia is the classic example.

On the financial level, the change has also been marked. External financing consists less and less of public flows, and more and more of private ones. This means that the mediation of nation-states is becoming less important in the securing of external resources. Naturally, states have a decisive role to play in encouraging the supply of these external resources. But this role can no longer be played out in the key of diplomatic clientelism, as was the case when external resources were in essence public resources. In other words, it no longer suffices to be on good terms with a great power in order to receive financial resources from it. Things have become more complex than that, as can be seen from the case of China.

Globalization fosters in this way a privatization of international relations, which means that, generally speaking, individuals and social groups find themselves dealing directly with the rest of the world. Thus they have less need for the state in order to act upon the world scene. The growth of new information technologies also contributes to this process of national opening.

Globalization and Procedural Democracy

How are we to conceive of the interaction between globalization and the procedural dimension of democracy? Democracy as procedure corresponds to what Adam Przeworski calls the minimalist definition of the democracy. By this he means the possibility of choosing one's leaders through free elections. This definition more or less corresponds to that offered by Joseph Schumpeter. It is also the definition advanced by Karl Popper, who sees democracy as the only system that lets people depose their leaders without violence. This minimalist definition leads to the view that democracy is the most legitimate form of social organization, and that the mark of this legitimacy is conferred through elections.

Globalization has a number of effects on democracy so understood. If we first consider globalization in relation to the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have no difficulty in seeing that it undoubtedly boosted the legitimacy of representative democracy because political regimes that had claimed to be following a different path had failed at virtually all

levels. For democracy, it was a victory by default, but this “default” had important consequences. The Marxist distinction between “formal democracy” and “real democracy” totally collapsed, discredited by the fact that the proponents of this distinction had not succeeded in achieving democracy in either of these dimensions. To the best of our knowledge, even the parties of the extreme left that still embrace communism today no longer insist on this distinction. They may not place much or any faith in “representative democracy,” but neither do they reject it and demand its abolition. Moreover, even among Islamist movements that are openly anti-Western, their stance in relation to democracy is more subtle. Except when they have recourse to violence, Islamist movements do not reject elections for a very practical reason: They generally profit from them.

The second consequence of globalization is to have considerably reduced the legitimacy of what might be called “particularist democracies.” The conjunction of Third World nationalist ideologies with Marxism earlier had led to certain “national” forms of democracy being championed in contradistinction to “Western-style” democracy. Even in more recent years, we have seen the emergence of particularist democratic claims in opposition to what is viewed as Western hegemony. This is the case both with some conservative regimes in Southeast Asia and with the Islamist movement. The former speak of “Asian values” and the latter of “Islamic democracy.” In both cases, however, it is interesting to note that it is the culture and not the nation that is opposed to Western democracy, suggesting that globalization has made it harder to mount a tenable national resistance against a global norm.

Of course, no two democracies are alike. But one hears less and less today about “national” types of democracy—of “Moroccan” or “Malaysian” or “Ecuadorian” democracy. Still less do we hear the idea that democracy should be seen as a luxury or a secondary accompaniment to other and more pressing priorities, such as “nation-building.” The notion that democracy is somehow an exclusively “Western” value is rarely put forward by anyone. To repeat, this is not a matter of saying that democracy has no problems, or that everybody understands it in just the same way. It is simply to say that globalization has considerably increased the legitimacy of the democratic idea, with all the misunderstandings and ambiguities that are likely to accompany such general approbation.

One might even go further and affirm that the whole practice of putting this or that adjective in front of the word democracy now seems tainted with a certain illegitimacy. Even the political parties or nongovernmental organizations that push for “respect for democracy” in their own countries insist upon its universal character. They are not denying that different nations may take different specific paths, but they refuse to see this specificity as a sort of cultural explanation that would justify

certain delays in the enactment of democratic procedures. In other words, opposition to democracy as a value seems to be growing ever less legitimate. Even in poor countries, where democracy might appear to be a luxury, the legitimacy of antidemocratic discourse is clearly in retreat. Moreover, Amartya Sen has shown in his many works that the existence of democratic procedures cannot be identified solely with purely formal structures: As he notes, "There is, in fact, much evidence that the sharp decline in fertility rates that has taken place in the more literate states in India has been much influenced by public discussion of the bad effects of high fertility rates especially on the lives of young women, and also on the community at large."²

The new worldwide legitimacy of democracy should turn our attention to two complementary aspects of globalization. The first relates to the declining belief in the nation-state's mediating role as a filter between a given society and the rest of the world. Once more, this does not mean that the national context has lost all significance, but simply that it is no longer deemed pertinent or legitimate if it is understood or presented as an obstacle to the penetration of global norms.

The second aspect results from the rise of individualism, which makes democracy felt as a value addressed to each individual in particular. Democracy is evaluated with regard to the spaces or resources it opens up for the individual. Of course, this development will be felt differently depending on whether one is a jobless illiterate or a cosmopolitan business executive. But even in the countries of the South, one can no longer say that democratic concerns are merely the purview of a tiny elite.

The Primacy of the Here and Now

Globalization, therefore, has positive consequences for the political legitimacy of democracy. But it exerts another influence too, for it helps to determine the rhythm and tempo of democracy in ways that are not always wholly positive. A distinctive feature of globalization is the way it favors the legitimacy of real time. Everything happens here and now. And under these conditions, democracy becomes an immediate imperative. This immediacy is reinforced by Western countries, who increasingly condition their economic and political assistance programs on respect for democratic rules. This "political conditionality" assumes the form of a democratic injunction, in which "*démocratisez-vous*" takes the place of "*enrichissez-vous*." But, because the label is more important than the effective result, this democratic injunction tends to lead to an overvaluation of procedural democracy. And since free elections are seen as central to procedural democracy, what is demanded is the holding of more or less free elections. Even if the elections are not totally free, the very fact that they are held is regarded as progress in itself.

Those to whom this injunction is addressed naturally try to turn it to their own purposes. The consequence has been the generalization of elections over nearly the whole surface of the earth. This is particularly striking in Africa, where few competitive elections were held before 1989. It is also the case in the Arab world, where (except in Saudi Arabia) elections now are generally held.

Yet in none of the Arab countries have these elections produced genuine political change. This contradiction is explained by the fact that they are only very imperfectly free. In some cases, this is because the regime in power leaves little room for competitors. In others, it is because the alternation of governments does not signify a change in the political order. In very many countries, especially in the Arab world, most alternations are a sham, since the real powerholders are not necessarily those who take part in electoral competition. This is notably the case in monarchies that are constitutional in name only, even if competitive parliamentary elections have indeed taken place there (for example, in Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait).

Even in sub-Saharan Africa, where rulers are far more likely than their counterparts in the Arab world to lose elections, the relatively greater respect for procedures has not truly led to profound changes in personnel or practices. Of course, one could argue that even in developed countries where democracy has been established for decades or centuries, free elections change nothing. But in societies afflicted by authoritarianism, economic decline, and social inequality, democracy is necessarily perceived as offering the opportunity for a decisive rupture with the past.

In reality, it is not sufficient to define minimalist democracy as the procedure by which citizens can nominally change one set of rulers for another; it is necessary to add that such a change must be perceived by the rulers (even before the elections are held) as a major risk that threatens them with loss of access to power and of all the resources that power makes available. Democracy would therefore become the procedure through which the hope of a change in the political order through the ballot box is accompanied by a real fear on the part of the rulers that they could actually lose power. Democracy emerges within a given society when the rulers' fear of losing power through elections comes to outweigh their fear of being toppled by a military putsch.

Of course, such a definition seems rather subjective and "psychologized." But this does not mean that it is devoid of interest or worth. If we look at the Arab world, we see that the combination of hope among the ruled and inquietude among the rulers is nowhere to be found. On the rare occasions when it has looked as if this configuration might appear, the political process has not been allowed to play itself out. Certainly, the pairing of hope on the one side and inquietude on the other is fundamental for countries in transition. Moreover, it is quite evident that the terms of this relationship can change. The hope of the

ruled can turn into despair, while the rulers' inquietude can turn out to be something totally exaggerated. This, for example, is what has been happening in Indonesia. Suharto's old guard was chased from power but has gradually been returning to prominence amid general instability and divisions among the former oppositionists. In Africa, we have seen numerous rulers return to power after some years in purgatory.

Yet this reversibility changes nothing. For the essential element from the democratic point of view is and remains uncertainty. A country truly enters the ambit of democracy when in each election its rulers fear that they will lose power, and concede when and if they do in fact lose. Mexico entered a democratic era when its ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), having been in office for more than 70 years, yielded to the victorious opposition. From this point of view, Vicente Fox's election to the presidency in 2000 completed a process of transition that had begun in 1989, when an opposition party succeeded for the first time in winning some local elections.

In this procedural dimension of democracy, globalization can be very helpful precisely because there exists an available set of technological and political resources that can assist transitional countries in holding elections and guaranteeing their transparency. All around the world there are institutions and organizations that specialize in providing technical assistance to democracy. Moreover, the "democratic label" is also a political resource that can open the way for access to global resources.

Globalization and Democratic Culture

So far we have spoken of democracy as procedure, that is to say, as a technique capable of promoting political change. We must now turn to a second dimension of the problem, that of democracy as culture. Here we encounter a singular complexity. What is meant by democracy as culture? Essentially, the fact that democracy is not only a technique guaranteeing a potential alternation in power through elections, but a whole series of institutional and noninstitutional practices capable of ensuring that interests can also be equitably represented and expressed outside of election campaigns. Just as procedural democracy must rest on *uncertainty* about whether the contestants in an election will gain or lose power, so cultural democracy must guarantee the *predictability* and *fairness* of the setting in which electoral competition takes place.

To be sure, the difference between democracy as culture and democracy as procedure is not always clear. The construction of a state based on the rule of law has as much to do with the one as the other. Democracy as culture thus can be viewed as a social, cultural, and ethical context in which citizens feel that their expectations and interests can find an outlet not only on election day, but in the intervals between elections as well. Democracy as culture goes well beyond respect for human rights.

It emerges through the putting in place of a law-governed state and a public space capable of supporting it. To use a somewhat paradoxical formulation, a democratic culture is one that has no need to wait for election results in order to flourish democratically. We can say, for example, that the Netherlands is a country with a democratic culture—that is to say, a place where respect for interests and rights is guaranteed in ways that go beyond the safeguarding of fair electoral procedures.

What we notice in many countries of the global South, however, is a gap between democracy as procedure and democracy as culture. This gap is temporal in nature. *Democracy as procedure can be installed quickly, but democracy as culture takes time to develop.* In countries with no democratic tradition, where habits of submission or armed revolt are widespread, the democratic game of concessions, compromises, and negotiated arrangements cannot impose itself in a single day. This is why we see so many political parties that claim to be democratic operating in a perfectly antidemocratic manner. What is more, the stress that is placed at the global level on respect for human rights tends sometimes to obscure the problems that must be overcome if a democratic public space is to be constructed. The creation of a public space implies going beyond simple claims to individual rights. It involves consideration of the collective dimension of rights as well as the duties that attach to those rights. This calls for some hard thinking and reflection, especially given the widespread and continuing confusion between democracy and human rights.

Thus democracy as culture can emerge only in the long term. By speaking of the long term, we mean not only that it takes time for democracy to grow but also that, as Juan Linz has amply demonstrated, *the exercise of democracy takes time.* It takes time to consult the various actors, to aggregate their preferences, and to think through the consequences of decisions that must be made without knowing whether they will lead to success or failure. Democratic culture implies not a relativism of values but acceptance of the uncertain character of the choices that must be made. One of the ways of reducing this uncertainty is to make these choices in a consensual manner. In northern European societies or in Switzerland, for instance, consensus is achieved by means of painstaking deliberation, and deliberation takes time.

As have seen, the primacy of the “here and now” in global time hampers this process of internalizing and valuing the idea of doing things over the long haul. Because it sets up implicit or explicit standards of legitimacy, global time tends to reduce democracy not only to the status of something to be demanded immediately but also to a political technique that is supposed to produce instant results. While authoritarianism is identified with corruption, inequality, and inefficiency, democracy is perceived as the magic recipe that will allow all these evils to be overcome. Globalized time undermines the idea that democracy should be

seen as the outcome of a long, slow, complex historical process, as it was in the history of the West. The powerful sense of planetary simultaneity conveyed by the media reinforces the appeal of “democracy for all” and strongly delegitimizes the idea that democracy can be adopted only under certain conditions.

Globalization, then, insofar as it is inseparable from a sense of time based on simultaneity and instantaneousness, is inhospitable to the idea of democracy as a historical construction. Globalized time promotes a view of democracy as something purely procedural and perfectly ahistorical. Hence the lag between democratic procedure and democratic culture. As Elemer Hankiss has put it:

Democratic institutions work better and better. But the institutions are more democratic than the citizens. . . . The populations do not feel as if they are truly their own masters; they do not believe that the laws are there to protect them, or that what they have to say is truly important . . . The government itself feels pressed; it knows that it must adapt itself quickly, very quickly, and it sees itself as lacking the time that it would need to explain and talk things over with everyone.³

It would be wrong, however, to think that this compression of democracy’s time is a phenomenon limited to countries in transition. The disjunction between democracy as procedure and democracy as culture is equally at work in Western democracies due to three factors: the cultural devaluation of historical time, the rise of individualism, and the unfolding of the logic of the marketplace.

The cultural devaluation of historical time is one of the most important aspects of globalized time. It is linked to the collapse of the great teleological accounts of history and the future, and a corresponding rise in power of the logic of immediacy. If history and the long carriage of time are no longer the bearers of meaning, all expectations focus upon the present.

The rise of individualism also explains in good part this temporal foreshortening, for it exalts the rights of the individual to the detriment of collective rights. Of course, this dichotomy is not so simple. But there is scarcely room to doubt that *homo democraticus occidentalis* thinks of democracy more and more in terms of its capacity to “deliver” rights of which he will be the particular beneficiary. While this focus on individual rights is not in itself incompatible with democracy, it threatens to hollow out the idea of responsibility in the public sphere by treating the enterprise of life in common as a simple matter of aggregating particular advantages and interests.

This dynamic weakens the value of democracy as a common project, reducing it to a kind of shopping mall in which each consumer pickily weighs costs and benefits. The power of this individualist and market-oriented conditioning is so great that instrumentalist thinking has

paradoxically infiltrated even spiritual or religious “demands for meaning.” Olivier Roy, who has made a study of Islamist websites on the Internet, reports that “visitors” to these sites express no curiosity about Muslim history, literature, or culture in the broader sense. Their priority is to get rapid and concrete responses to the questions they ask, which generally are about what is licit or illicit for Muslims living in societies where most people are not Muslims.⁴ This example, of course, is not directly related to democracy, but it underlines how globalization, here by way of the Internet, reinforces the primacy of procedure to the detriment of culture. What follows from this is a purely instrumental conception of democracy and those who embody it. As a result, politics is less a matter of representation than a consumerist project of getting services. Democracy then becomes a sort of “salary for citizenship” whose value is measured by the gauge of one’s “buying power.” If one does not obtain this or that service, democracy appears to be just an abstraction. The political paradox is that we are thus seeing the resurgence of the old distinction between “formal” and “real” democracy that was thought to have been discredited by the fall of the Berlin Wall.

This growing instrumentalization of democracy is gathering force at a moment when the national framework within which it is lodged seems increasingly unable to respond to the expectations being raised. Precisely because of the globalization of trade and economic activities, the national space is losing some of its relevance. Moreover, the economic sphere sometimes tends to treat certain democratically expressed collective preferences as obstacles to the full development of markets. The pressure that this exerts on states on the fiscal level is obvious. It forces them not only to tax labor more heavily than capital but also to levy a higher proportion of taxes on those who cannot use their professional mobility to reduce their tax burden. It is quite apparent that strictly national policies can limit but not stop this evolution. Hence the necessity for global or regional institutions that can regulate the situation. To put it another way, the major consequence of globalization is the creation of a demand for democracy at the global level. Yet this is an extraordinarily difficult demand to satisfy: first, because the national framework is still far from obsolete; and second, because we do not yet know how the problem of democratic representation can be resolved on the global level.

NOTES

1. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon, 1944), 18.

2. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 153.

3. Elemer Hankiss, *Libération* (Paris), 16 and 17 June 2001.

4. Author’s conversation with Olivier Roy, Tunis, April 2001.