such information is at the root of the formation of responsiveness perceptions.

Empirical research on the varieties of ways the dimensions or qualities can be subverted can also make it possible to detect the democracies *with lesser or without qualities* and even to understand from a different perspective how and why problems of delegitimation and eventually related problems of consolidation can emerge in the scrutinized country.

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See also Accountability, Electoral; Accountability, Interinstitutional; Competition, Political; Democracy, Theories of; Democratization; Equality; Equality, Political; Human Rights, Comparative Perspectives; Hybrid Regimes; Participation; Responsiveness; Rights; Rule of Law; Transition

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Democracy, Theories of

Theories of democracy consist of definitions and generalizations used to describe, explain, and evaluate existing or past political orders. Their purpose is thus twofold: (1) to get a better understanding of the preconditions and performance of democratic systems and (2) to try to judge this reality according to certain democratic core values.

Democracy means collective self-determination. Its purpose is to form political decisions according to the will of the citizens. Apart from this rather abstract meaning, there is a great difference between ancient and modern democracy. The first section of this entry recapitulates the mainly negative use of democracy in ancient thought and the development from the ancient to the modern understanding of democracy, outlining three semantic transformations from the ancient to the modern understanding. The second section focuses on contemporary theories of democracy, distinguishing three types: empirical, positive, and normative. Finally, two different answers to the postnational challenge of democracy are outlined: the concepts of global democracy and postdemocracy.

Ancient and Modern Theories of Democracy

Ancient Critics of Democracy

In ancient political theory, "democracy" was a polemic and negative concept. In the late 5th century BCE, Pseudo-Xenophon, the first Athenian critic of democracy we know of, calls it a regime in which the many rule in a selfish and destructive manner. Democratic men strive for their personal gain, and to this end, they not only suppress the aristocratic best and the population of the naval colonies but also rule without regard to the common weal. According to Pseudo-Xenophon, this leads to an unjust political and moral order. However, he does not deny a certain rationality of the democratic regime insofar as the many live better in a democracy. Thus, he ends with the paradox that from an aristocratic perspective the democratic regime is clearly unjust, whereas the same order seems at least internally rational from a democratic point of view.

It is in Plato's work that this paradox is resolved inasmuch as he develops a metaphysical foundation of the political order. In concurrence with

Pseudo-Xenophon, he describes the supposed shortcomings of the democratic regime, such as rhetorical betrayal and demagoguery. Because the many cannot know the political areté, they are merely a pawn for the sophists who are interested only in their personal gain. To counter these democratic practices, Plato formulates his model of the philosopher-king, which is founded in an epistemic understanding of politics. For Plato, good politics is based on higher knowledge, which only the few with special philosophical talent and training can attain.

There are at least two problems with this fusion of politics and philosophy. The first is its metaphysical character. Plato bases his political philosophy in an idealistic framework dubious even to his contemporaries. The second problem is the utopian character of the philosopher-king, as Plato himself mentioned in the *Politeia*. Democratic practices and norms are very widespread in the Athenian demos, so his model is simply not realizable. Therefore, Plato argues in the *Laws* for a second-best regime. It is no longer the philosopher-king who is to guarantee the good order but a system of laws that regulate even the smallest details. To integrate the many into the regime, he considers democratic modes of decision making, such as the participation of the many in elections and even drawing lots. However, these concessions to democratic practices do not mean that Plato has abandoned his aristocratic ideals. Democratic institutions are subordinated to exclusive ones, thereby thwarting the rule of the many.

Aristotle's reflections on democracy differ from Plato's in at least two ways. First, he develops his insights by examining the empirical world. Second, he transcends Plato's dichotomies of philosophy and democracy, the few and the many, and formulates a more integrated and therefore realistic understanding of the political world. Aristotle even concedes that the democratic order displays some rationality insofar as the many, if they deliberate together, can obtain more information than an oligarchic assembly can. Nevertheless, he is no friend of democracy. In *Politics*, he criticizes the democratic order of Athens, which he regards as "extreme," and as Pseudo-Xenophon does, he criticizes demagoguery and the tendency of the demos to neglect the common weal. Therefore, Aristotle argues for a more moderate constitution, the "polity," which he sometimes also calls the "best" democracy. This constitution is characterized by the rule of law, and oligarchic and democratic institutions are mixed. In this regime, a strong separation exists between the political experts—that is, the educated few, who are chosen mainly by elections and not by lot, and the orderly demos. With this conception, Aristotle abandons the Athenian praxis of direct democracy and moves in the direction of a modern, representative understanding of democracy.

In short, for these "intellectual critics of popular role" (Josiah Ober, 1998), the democratic praxis of the ancient world with the direct involvement of the demos was unjust and highly pathological. This assessment did not change after the decline of the Grecian city-states at the end of the 4th century BCE. On the contrary, this change further supported the antidemocratic bias of political thought. The reference point was no longer the political praxis of the city-states but the antidemocratic writings of Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. In the Roman discussion and the political theory of the Middle Ages, democracy was not only regarded as a regime of the past but also as an illegitimate order. In the early-modern age, this critical or even negative assessment of democracy changes only slightly. Until the end of the 18th century, the pejorative connotation of "democracy" dominated political thought. However, after the "democratic" revolutions of the late 18th century, there was a new beginning in democratic theory. It was a beginning that fundamentally changed the semantics of democracy from the direct involvement of the masses to a system in which elected representatives rule.

This shift in meaning from the antique to the modern concept of democracy was carried out in a multistage process of transformation. The basic semantic changes concern the evaluation, temporalization, and institutionalization of the concept of democracy and can be described with the terms *positivation*, *futurization*, and *completion*.

Three Semantic Transformations of "Democracy"

Positivation

In the ancient theories of Plato and Aristotle as well as Cicero and Polybios, "democracy" was a negative concept. All major primary sources from which the ancient concept of democracy is handed

down to us are by critics, if not enemies, of democracy. Their critique was vehement, and their list of democracy's shortcomings contained, as shown, very different points: It permits unqualified citizens to participate in politics, it complicates political decision-making processes, it produces bad decisions, it debauches the political culture, or it is simply an amoral order—just to mention the most important points of criticism. This negative usage of the concept continued uninterrupted from the Middle Ages to modern times, and only in the writings of Spinoza and in the political speeches of some Dutch Republican thinkers in the 1780s can one find attempts to give democracy a positive designation. This positive connotation of democracy gradually became accepted after the French Revolution and then in the course of the extension of suffrage in the United States, Western Europe, New Zealand, and Australia in the 19th century. This process was accompanied by ideological disputes that ended in the mid-20th century. Today, the transformation to a positive concept is complete at least in Western society; the concept has developed into a category of self-description in global political disputes. While democracy in modern democracies has many critics, it no longer has any fundamental enemies, at least in the Western world.

Futurization

Even the political thinkers of Hellenism and later Roman authors such as Cicero regarded democracy as a form of government of a bygone era. They considered it a thing of the past and associated it with the existence of small city-states of the lost world of ancient Greece. If only for that reason, and regardless of its negative aspects, authors such as Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, or the writers of the Federalist Papers did not think it a serious option as a concept for the political future. Admittedly, Montesquieu arrives at a positive understanding of democracy in his *Spirits of the Laws*, but he binds the idea of democracy so tightly to the prerequisites of equality and rurality that there is no room for a democratic order in his age with its advancing economical and social differentiation. For him, democratic practices could only be a subordinate element in a mixed regime. Montesquieu's understanding is typical for the equation of democracy with the praxis of the ancient city-states. For him, democracy was a regime of the past and not a realistic option for the future. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel had a more positive view of the contemporary meaning of ancient democracy, but since the liberation of the subjective mind, he too was unsure of its future. Even authors such as Johannes Althusius and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose theories ventured to take big steps toward positivation, were rather cautious concerning a realistic future for democracy.

It was only with Alexis de Tocqueville's book on America that a political rhetoric prevailed that turned around the structure of time dominating in most contemporaries' minds and enabled them to see democracy as a project of the future. In Tocqueville's view, North America was already mostly a democracy, and Europe would soon be predominantly a democracy as well, as problematic as he felt this tendency to be. This futurization made the concept of democracy a key term for the political battles of the 19th and 20th centuries. This perspective electrified enemies as well as proponents of democracy, the former because they now faced a challenge that laid claim to the future, the latter because they had a feasible political project with the name "democracy" before them. Today, the futuristic character of democracy is undisputed. Democracy is a project on perfecting in which we all cooperate, in the hope of one day accomplishing it completely.

Completion

Third, the concept of democracy underwent a fundamental change in its institutional inventory. While there was a primacy of political participation in antiquity, slowly a constitutional usage prevailed that systematically restricted the moment of direct participation. It is the transition, so welcomed by Benjamin Constant, from the freedom of the old to the freedom of the new at the beginning of the 19th century that makes this paradigmatic rupture apparent. The change from a negative to a positive evaluation of the concept of democracy coincides historically with the transition to a primacy of liberal defensive rights and the installation of a representative system. Democracy is now regarded as an institutional

order that must be complemented by a system of "checks and balances" so that negative freedom—the protection of the individual from decisions by the democratic majority—is secured. Accordingly, the list of proposals of how the institutions of democracy should be complemented is long and bears witness to a high level of institutional creativity on the part of contemporary authors. The most important ones are constitutionalism (e.g., independence of the judiciary, a coherent legal system), different models for the separation of powers, federalism, and multistage representative systems.

It is only because of these three semantic transformations that a concept of democracy, which stands in such conspicuous discrepancy to its original usage in antiquity, could survive. In view of the great shifts in meaning, it is hard to answer the obvious question of why the concept of "democracy" was not simply given up, instead of being intricately filled with new meanings. Its astounding ability to survive can probably be explained best by the attraction of associations inspired by the parts of the Greek compound—"demos" and "kratein." The rhetorical reference to "the people" and their "rule" constitutes a—however weakened—reference to participatory components in political systems and provides them with mass legitimacy.

Modern Theories of Democracy

Empirical, Positive, and Normative Theories of Democracy

There are different ways to comprehend the extensive and confusing debates of modern theories of democracy. Basically, the discussions can be grouped in two approaches: diachronic and synchronic ones. The first approach traces the historical development of democratic thought. The purpose of this method is to detect the crucial steps and the striking changes of democratic thought. The "advancements" of modern theories of democracy are shown, for example, the history of the concept of representative democracy from John Locke to Robert A. Dahl. In the second approach, theories of democracy are condensed to models or paradigms, for example, liberal or republican theories. The purpose of this method is to compare the different models and to rank them. This ranking can take place according to their degree of accordance with the institutions of liberal democracy or the requirements of global governance. However, there is another distinction underlying these differences. It concerns the scientific modality of the theories, the way they look at democracy. Therefore, one can distinguish between three "logical" modes of democratic theory: the empirical, the positive, and the normative type.

Empirical Theories of Democracy

Empirical theories of democracy try to rank political systems according to a scale of democratic values and institutions or to determine the necessary functional preconditions of democratic systems and measure how such systems perform.

The goal of the first group is to construct reliable and standardized scales in order to obtain a yardstick for comparing different political systems that can then be ranked according to their degree of democracy. Dahl wrote the classical study in 1971. Dahl formulates seven indicators of a "polyarchy," which in his view is the modern form of democracy: (1) the freedom to form and join organizations, (2) freedom of expression, (3) the right to vote, (4) the right of political leaders to compete for support, (5) alternative sources of information, (6) free and fair elections, and (7) institutions for making government policies responsive. The points of reference for these democratic standards are, on the one hand, the norms and institutions of Western democracies and, on the other, normative theories of democracy, which try to justify these norms and institutions. In the next step, Dahl measures political systems according to these indicators and then orders them, applying a scale ranging from full polyarchies to near-polyarchies to nonpolyarchical systems. Dahl's empirical finding is that the Western democracies are not the only full polyarchies but also countries such as India and Costa Rica.

Dahl's work inspired many empirical studies based on different theoretical foundations. Especially in recent years, measuring democracy has become a burgeoning academic pursuit. The discussion is this field is focused on adequate indicators of democracy and their application in empirical research. At this point, a fundamental problem of measuring democracy arises: The selected indicators as well as

their operationalization rest on more or less carefully considered normative assumptions about the nature of democracy (see below).

A second group of empirical theories tries to analyze the functional preconditions and the performance of democratic systems. Their starting point is the sociological theory of modernization, which in the 1950s asserted that the connection between economic development and the political system of societies was narrow. In 1960, Seymour Martin Lipset wrote one of the first studies in this field. He investigated the connection between the degree of democratization and social-economic variables such as average income or level of education. His main result confirmed the theory of modernization: The higher the level of economic development, the more democratic a society will be. Many scholars have followed Lipset and, with some variations in research design, have come to similar conclusions. Compared with autocratic systems, democratic ones perform much better in most policy areas (e.g., health care, education, or environmental resource management). Such research can be carried out contrasting democracies with other political orders such as monarchies or one-party systems. Another way is to estimate the performance of different subtypes of democratic systems, for example, parliamentarian or presidential systems.

Positive Theories of Democracy

Positive theories of democracy construct formal models of the democratic process, for example, voting behavior. They do not involve empirical study of the workings of real democracies but rather are deductive theories of political processes under constructed conditions, such as the rationality of agents or the closed logic of functional systems. Their starting points are certain axioms that are used as a basis for developing the main characteristics of democratic systems. In contrast to empirical theories, neither the basic assumptions nor the causal or functional explanations of positive theories claim to be normative. Rather, the authors of positive theories explicitly do not want to formulate normative statements; they seek only to characterize the democratic process and to explain typical political sequences in modern democracies.

There are two versions of positive democratic theories, and they focus on the opposite ends of the democratic process: One is based on the findings of rational choice theories; the other is Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. Rational choice theories focus on the microlevel of society and start with the assumption that individual actors are mainly motivated to maximize their personal gains. With the same theoretical grounding, they try to explain the political actions of collective actors such as political parties, interest groups, and even states. In contrast, systems theory begins on the macrolevel of society. Luhmann regards the different realms of society, for example, the economy, the political sphere, or the scientific community, as distinct and self-contained systems and analyzes their structures as well as their functions for the whole of society. Individual actions are outside of the theory's focus, they are simply irrelevant. In Luhmann's view, systems function according to their own logic, which is independent of the actions of individual persons.

Even though rational choice theory and systems theory try to avoid normative claims, they nevertheless possess enormous critical potential because they demonstrate two shortcomings of democracy: the irrationality of democratic decision making and the constrained range of political actions. One of the most important normative arguments for democratic modes of decision making is the assumption that one can determine the correct will of the majority in this way. However, according to the findings of Moisei Ostrogorski, one of the forerunners of rational choice theory, this is a myth. The Ostrogorski paradox shows that even the smallest changes in voting behavior can lead to big differences in voting results. This finding is explosive from a normative point of view because it casts doubt on the legitimacy of majority decisions. Besides that, rational choice theory does not regard irrational decision as deviations from democratic norms but as the inevitable result of the aggregation of individual votes or of the merging of different forms of rationality in the political process.

Similar statements can be made about the findings of systems theory. Although Luhmann regards democratic political systems as the appropriate form of modern, functionally differentiated societies, he criticizes the normative bias of democratic

practices. In his view, the political system in modern societies is no longer at the top of a pyramid but is just one system among others, with a code of its own. In addition, this code of government and opposition cannot be transferred into other functional systems, for example, the economic or the juridical system, without harm. Therefore, the effects of democratic politics are limited. According to Luhmann, democratic imperatives simply cannot govern the other functional spheres, the code of government and opposition can only irritate, at worst destroy, the reproduction of the other systems. The function of the political system and its democratic form is thus only to reproduce the necessary illusion that a society can be governed by collective decisions.

In contrast to empirical and positive theories, normative approaches try to formulate convincing justifications of democratic orders. The goal of normative approaches is to deliver criteria for praising or criticizing normative and institutional orders. In this way, empirical theories can use their findings to evaluate existing political systems. Normative theories explicitly do not strive for ethical neutrality or freedom from value judgment. Far from it, these value-based justifications are seen as an essentially scientific endeavor. Some scholars cast doubts on the scientific character of normative approaches due to this ethical grounding. However, as seen, even positive and empirical theories are not value-free, and it can be said that normative justifications elucidate the inescapable nature of any type of democratic theory.

The Three Normative Axes of Theories of Democracy

Normative theories of democracy differ from each other, too, in regard to the way they are reasoned as well as in their institutional consequences. In the past 20 years, we have witnessed a tremendous differentiation and refinement of the traditional models. In addition to the classical approaches of liberal, elitist, conservative, socialist, and participatory theories of democracy, deliberative, neorepublican, neoliberal, communitarian, cosmopolitan, associative, feminist, ecological, experimental, multiculturalist, and postmodern theories have come along, to mention only the most important ones. The subjects of the normative theories are by now all imaginable aspects of democracy: its traditions, goals, institutional settings, and procedures. Normative theories have been and still are largely influenced by political fashions whose themes are at the center of scientific debates. Therefore, a listing and sorting of these debates offers only little orientation in the jungle of the numerous normative theories.

Rather than simply listing them, it is more helpful to ask how normative theories proceed in assessing real or hypothetical political arrangements as "democratic." In other words, how do they construct the criteria that are to generate normative statements about political systems and procedures? Obviously, the development of theses criteria does not take place in a vacuum but is incorporated in certain political experiences and assumptions about the central problems of democracy. Thus, they have historical underpinnings. The forms of those experiences and assumptions that have structured the debates in the past 3 decades can be named the "three normative axes of theories of democracy."

The Social Object of Democracy

On the first axis, the discussions concern the social spheres in which democratic norms should and could apply. The recent debates about the appropriate social object of democracy focus on four issues. Common to them is an inclusive perspective—that is, the integration of additional social spheres under democratic rule. An initial focus in the 1970s was the call to democratize further realms of society, especially the economy, the workplace, and educational organizations. These demands found a certain resonance in theories of "strong" or "radical" democracy. In the 1980s and 1990s, feminist theories of democracy were a second focal point. Starting from the empirically based assumption of a "gender gap" in modern democracies, their goal is to include females and female perspectives in the political process. In most feminist approaches, the fulfillment of this demand is connected with a qualitative advancement of politics and policies. These positive expectations are related to a new, more communicative style of politics and a political agenda directed to making family life and the working environment more compatible in modern societies. In a third debate

about inclusion, and in parallel to the feminist theories of democracy, various concepts of multicultural democracy have been developed. Based on the observation that minorities in liberal democracies are discriminated in many ways and that they are not adequately represented, the purpose of multiculturalist approaches is to integrate the different collective identities in the political sphere. The proposals for reform are centered on the opening of existing institutional arrangements. Some authors propose special mechanisms of group representation or quotas that have to be balanced with the liberal-democratic demand for equality.

In a fourth and more recent discussion, some authors argue for an inclusion of children, future generations, and even apes in the democratic process. At the very least, the demand to consider the interests of apes in political decision making, which seems odd at first glance, highlights the difficulties of obtaining adequate criteria for limiting the social object of democracy. In the semantics of "democratization," democracy is in principle a never-ending process during which its boundaries and goals must be discussed again and again.

Degree and Ways of Participation

On the second axis, normative theories of democracy formulate statements about the optimal degree of participation and the ideal relationship between the entire demos and the political elites. The focus of all relevant controversies about democracy during the 20th century was the degree and the forms of citizens' involvement in the political process: the debates between the advocates of government by council democracy and those of parliamentarism in the 1920s and again in the1970s, the political disputes between the champions of a Fascist leader and their Liberal and Leftist adversaries in the 1930s, the controversy between the advocates of a representative and those of a plebiscitary democracy in the 1960s and in the 1980s, or the dispute between the theorists of an elite democracy and those of a grassroots democracy in the late 1960s and early 1970s and again in the 1990s. In all those debates, it was and still is contested how the demos is to be included in the process of political decision making. Authoritarian concepts consider the process of acclamation to the charismatic leader to be the genuine democratic way of declaring consent; liberal and elitist conceptions link their versions of democracy with the principle of representation and elections; and theorists of a grassroots democracy or of a government by council democracy support the idea of an intensely participating citizen.

While the controversy about the pros and cons of a higher degree of citizen participation in the 1970s and 1980s were hot-tempered and ideologically based, it has cooled down since then. One of the main reasons for this development is the findings of empirical research on direct democracy. Neither the hopes of the advocates nor the fears of the adversaries have been fulfilled. The empirical results show instead that procedures of direct democracy can lead to a higher degree of citizen satisfaction and rational problem solving in certain cultural and institutional contexts, but they can also be used as an instrument of populism. Because of these complex and contradictory findings of empirical research, the question about the forms of citizen involvement is no longer at the center of normative theories of democracy. By now, the mainstream literature focuses on the institutions of democracy and the question of their performance. This leads us to the third axis.

Degree of Rationality

On a third normative axis, theories of democracy finally contain certain assumptions about the degree of rationality of democratic decision making. They make statements about the technical and factual reasonableness of democratic decisions and even about their moral quality. Thus, conservative and liberal critics have frequently accused democracy of leading to irrational decisions. Leftist advocates of democracy, on the other hand, have considered the democratic character to be the ultimate condition that makes correct and therefore rational decisions possible. Only in recent discussions have these factional struggles faded away.

The rise of the theory of deliberative democracy in the past 2 decades has demonstrated that the question of rationality has gained relevance significantly. Deliberation is the exhaustive and reflective debate about political questions. The deliberative give-and-take of arguments aims to elucidate individual and collective interests. More ambitious forms of deliberative democracy do not

stop at this point and demand of the participants that they transcend their own wishes in view of new moral insights. This change of the guiding interests is attributed to the public nature of deliberative processes and is characterized as a clarification and moral bettering of preferences. Although the goal is not to discover an unchangeable moral truth, the expectation is that in the deliberative process all arguments that serve only private goals can be eliminated. For this reason, advocates of deliberative democracy claim that its results have a higher degree of legitimacy than elections and voting.

Theories of deliberative democracy stand against two alternative theories. On the one hand, they criticize rational choice conceptions of the aggregation of preferences and insist that preferences can change in communicative processes. On the other hand, deliberative approaches fault models of democracy that demand a higher degree of participation without showing how the citizen can gain the moral resources required for this ambitious endeavor.

The institutional implications of deliberative approaches go in three directions. The first is directed toward the individual citizen. According to Robert E. Goodin, each member of the political community should reflect on the moral implications of his or her preferences ("deliberation within"). The practical consequence of this approach is the demand that all citizens receive a better education, which is to lead to higher sensibility for the moral interests of the other citizens. A second strain argues in connection with Jürgen Habermas for the deliberative character of political institutions as representative assemblies and channels of the public sphere. These approaches do not strive for a basic change of the political institutions but for a widening of the deliberative character of liberal democracies, for example, in strengthening the discursive character of parliaments, or for enhancing the rationality of public debates. Other authors argue for institutional innovations within liberal democracy. One prominent suggestion is the deliberative opinion poll by James Fishkin, where randomly selected citizens discuss political questions in a deliberative setting. The results of these deliberations can inform the elected authorities or even lead directly to political decisions.

A third and more radical version is not satisfied with such a deliberative interpretation of existing societies but argues for changes in the basic structures of liberal democracies to achieve the moral goals of deliberative democracy. They criticize the different forms of exclusion in modern societies that are still relevant in deliberative settings. Therefore, they demand a democratization of all of society as a prerequisite for deliberative procedures. These radical approaches have some obvious connections with theories of participation and grassroots theories of democracy, and they support a politicization of civil society.

Interplay of Empirical and Normative Theories and the Rationalization of Democracy

Empirical and normative theories of democracy are of course not entirely separated. As seen, empirical theories draw their criteria for assessing the democratic nature of political systems from theories about the essential norms and institutions of democracy, such as Dahl's. Empirical democracy research is assisted by systems theory and rational choice theory, each of which in its own way theoretically deduces why political participation in modern mass democracies is nearly without effect and ultimately makes no sense at all. Nevertheless, this is only one side of their influencing one another; contemporary normative theories in turn are oriented to the findings of empirical research on theories of democracy.

All normative approaches that can currently claim scientific relevance follow the findings of empirical democratic theory. In the academic debate about democracy, no idea is taken seriously if it does not demonstrate its ability to be connected to empiricism and thus its proximity to reality. Thus, the findings of empirical research on democracy, for example, on the degree of political interests or on the irrationality of most citizens' political preferences, produce subliminal but nonetheless powerful pressure on the making of normative theories. In this perspective, democracy becomes a regime type that produces a certain amount of legal certainty, cultural and educational goods, welfare, and other collective goods (recently, above all, security from terrorism) but that has lost the active political participation of its citizens.

With this result, normative democracy theory again provides the justification for empirical democracy research in which rule of law and the

production of welfare and stability constitute the most important parameters, more important than the participation of all citizens: At best, participation is used as a dependent variable. The indices of empirical democracy measurement stubbornly test for certain institutionalizations, for example, the existence of individual rights or of the basic building blocks of a parliamentary democracy with separation of powers. The participatory component has become a ballast of the concept of democracy, standing in the way of its continued success. When reviewing the most important approaches in current political theory, one notices—despite all the differences—a common terminological shift with which the path to a fourth and new semantic transformation in democratic theory was paved. Most current theories use a concept of democracy that discerns deep chasms between political participation and "rational" results and, when in doubt, argues against political participation.

This transformation can be described as the "rationalization" of democratic theory. It means that the focus of modern theories of democracy has shifted to the evaluation of the quality of the results of politics. Democratic theory is becoming more and more output oriented, and its normative efforts' main goal is to increase the degree of rationality of this output. Larger differences within this paradigm occur only where the following criteria of rationality are concerned: effectiveness, feasibility, representation of interests, justice, or the public weal. Political participation is no longer regarded as the goal but as one of several possible ways to enhance the degree of rationality of collectively binding decisions.

The Future of Democratic Theory: Global Democracy or Postdemocracy?

One of the most important motivations to "rationalize" democracy is the decline of the nation-state in the era of globalization. In the past 2 decades, we have witnessed a displacement of political decisions from the national to the international or supranational level. This is of course a reaction to the growing need for global coordination of economic and political processes. The answer to this postnational constellation is the development and strengthening of regimes and organizations as means for "global governance." The most impressive of these supranational organizations is the European Union (EU) with a huge amount of political competencies. However, even at the global level, there is a large variety of regimes and organizations for coordinating international politics. One only has to think about the World Bank, the International Monetary Fond, and the World Trade Organization to comprehend the relevance of international organizations for the well-being of nearly every person on the planet. However, these global economic multilaterals are only the best known organizations of global governance. It seems that the era of the nation-state has gone; at least the political power of the states to determine the lives of their citizens has been weakened drastically in the past 20 years. This raises the question as to whether postnational forms of democracy are imaginable.

Theories of Global Democracy

The process of globalization is a major challenge for democratic theory because most of the conceptions discussed above—with the exception of deliberative democracy, see below—have taken the national base of democracy for granted. In addition, the all-important institutions of modern democracy such as elections, parliaments, political parties, and the public sphere are embedded in the nation-state. Nevertheless, the era of the democratic nation-state seems to be coming to an end. Accordingly, there is a growing literature on the question of the democratization of global governance. One of the issues discussed most is how to transform the democratic institutions and procedures to the supranational and even the global level. At least three strains of the debate about democracy in the global order can be discerned.

The first group of authors doubts that the new structures of global governance are responsible for the significant decline of democracy we are witnessing today. In contrast, the second group begins by asserting a fundamental democratic deficit and tries to transfer the values and institutions of national democracy to the supranational and global sphere. In addition, a third group makes the effort to change the semantics of democracy in order to demonstrate the perspectives global governance may open up for democracy. In the context of the debate about a so-called democratic

deficit of the EU, but also in view of the institutions of world politics, authors such as Giandomenico Majone and Andrew Moravcsik argue that this accusation is misleading for two reasons. First, there exists a kind of legitimating chain from the direct or indirect election of national parliaments and governments up to the supranational institutions such as the European Commission. It is a kind of political delegation of power from the constituents in each country to their national representatives and delegates in the transnational or global settings. Therefore, even the World Trade Organization is considered democratically responsive. In a second and supporting way, Majone and Moravcsik argue that many of the supranational and transnational institutions of world politics are directed toward technical issues that should be depoliticized. Examples include the world finance institutions or the European Central Bank or institutions occupied with juridical and economic issues. In these authors' view, it is in the interest of the people that experts manage these issues, because only they have the necessary knowledge. It is a governing not by but for the people. Countering this opinion, many scholars have objected that they have overlooked the fact that juridical and economic issues of global governance are inevitably political. Moreover, without the involvement of the people, there is the risk that these bodies of experts will consider only the interests of strong actors.

Thus, in contrast to Majone and Moravcsik, a second group of authors such as David Held and Daniele Archibugi begins by claiming that there is a real democratic deficit in global governance. Their theoretical background is the norms and institutions of national democracy, and they try to ascertain how these norms and institutions can be transformed to the supranational and even the global sphere. Only if the global order can be subjected to democratic values, such as the equality of citizens, the majority principle, and the duty of governments to act in the interests of the people, can the new forms of governance be legitimate. The crucial question in the global age therefore is, "How can democracy preserve its core values and yet adapt to new circumstances and issues?" (Archibugi, 2004, p. 446). The answer to this question is the concept of cosmopolitan democracy, which is conceived as a multilevel order. There should be different degrees of democratic participation at the local, national, interstate, supranational, and global levels. In the concept of a cosmopolitan democracy, the participation of the people at the local and the national levels is to follow the traditional understanding of democratic norms, institutions, and practices, but this is also demanded regarding the supranational and the global levels. Advocates of cosmopolitan democracy argue that there is an emerging global public sphere, consisting of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International, as well as a global media system. Even if these structures do not fulfill the demands of a democratic public sphere, they are at least the necessary conditions for strengthening and increasing the transparency and accountability of global politics. However, these are only the preconditions of a cosmopolitan democracy. Both at the supranational and the global levels, parliamentary institutions are regarded as the cornerstone of a democratic order. For the advocates of a cosmopolitan democracy, a world parliament is thus the sine qua non. This parliament is to be elected by all citizens of the world (at least those of democratic states) and have the right to make legislation valid worldwide. One of the logical necessities of this model is therefore a new understanding of the role of states. They are no longer sovereign actors but only one vehicle of the democratic governance of the people. Some authors even foster the notion of a world-state, and therefore some kind of world government, to implement global justice and democratic demands. Opponents of cosmopolitan democracy fundamentally doubt the prospects of a democratic world order. They refer mainly to the structure of power in world politics and to the enormous obstacles to the participation of the people in global governance. Nearly 6 billion voters, for example, would elect a world parliament. How can one guarantee the representative nature of this parliament? In addition, what about the populations of nondemocratic systems—today nearly three quarters of the world's population? The critics of cosmopolitan democracy view even the global public sphere and INGOs critically. For others, the project of cosmopolitan democracy is just a new way to establish and strengthen the hegemonic power of the West and the values and practices of a new global class as cosmopolitanism of the few.

A third group also begins by claiming a democratic deficit in global governance, but, in contrast to the advocates of cosmopolitan democracy, they do not want to transfer the institutions of national democracy to the global level. Instead, these authors try to reconsider the notion of democracy in order to close the legitimacy gap in world politics. There are at least two ways of redescribing democracy along these lines. The first consists in highlighting new ways of political engagement. According to authors such as Ann-Marie Slaughter, international non-INGOs are the representatives of a global demos. Together with the postulate of a growing global public sphere and a growing process of juridical constitutionalization, INGOs are seen as an essential component of a new democratic world order. Their inclusion in the processes of global governance, for example, in the hearings of the World Trade Organization, is seen as a crucial step toward the democratization of international politics. Critics have countered this scenario by arguing that a global public sphere and a vivid array of international civil actors are only the precondition but not the essence of democracy. Others criticize the oligarchic structure of most of the INGOs and that they mostly articulate the demands of the rich countries of the Western world. The question therefore is, Who has authorized these organizations? Furthermore, critics object that the influence of the INGOs in international politics should not be overestimated. According to these critics, world politics is a game played only by powerful elites and their experts. In their view, the participation of nongovernmental organizations merely functions to legitimize undemocratic ways of decision making.

A second way of adapting the meaning of democracy to the needs of global governance is taken by the advocates of a deliberative understanding of politics. Inspired in particular by the work of Habermas, some authors rely on the epistemic functions of transnational decision-making bodies. The starting point is Habermas's distinction between a substantial and a proceduralist understanding of popular sovereignty. Habermas refers to an anonymous civil society without a concrete democratic subject. This opens up the possibility of transferring the concept of democracy to the global sphere where the demos is only conceivable in form of the manifold demands articulated there. The crucial step is the integration of these demands into the global decision-making bodies. In addition, a second feature of deliberative democracy is relevant here—namely, the epistemic understanding of politics. As seen above, the goal of the deliberative process is to tease out the better argument by means of discussions between the relevant groups. But it is often difficult to include all relevant groups in international politics. However, according to the advocates of deliberative democracy, this need not lead to an undemocratic way of decision making. As far as the relevant viewpoints are included, it is sufficient that political experts discuss the relevant topics to gain "rationally acceptable results." Critics argue against this understanding of democracy, insisting on the necessity of real participation by the people. Habermas's legitimation of the epistemic gains of global governance threatens to erode the very meaning of democracy—that is, the involvement of all the people and not only the advocates of the better argument.

Postdemocracy and Beyond

Another way to capture the changing reality of democracy in the era of globalization is the strategy of Colin Crouch, who describes Western political systems as "postdemocracies." According to Crouch, genuinely democratic institutions such as parliament, regular elections, party competition, and the rule of law still exist. Therefore, these societies differ in a significant way from autocratic societies. Nevertheless, the processes of globalization and the weakening of the state's capacity to regulate the economy are progressively undermining these institutions. This leads not only to a loss of importance of central democratic ways of political decision making but also to a shift in power relations. According to Crouch, Western societies are therefore characterized by a fundamental ambivalence. On the one hand, the forms of democracy still exist, and are even expanding (e.g., due to the establishment of new forms of direct democracy), but on the other, they have lost their relevance and are getting wedged in by new intransparent forms of national and global governance, where powerful elites dictate the rule of the game. The most significant consequences of this new power structure are the decline of egalitarian

politics and the expansion of new forms of political marketing.

Thus, for Crouch the use of the term *democracy* only obfuscates the fact that in Western societies, too, the vital circumstances that influence the lives of citizens can be decided collectively only to a very small extent—a fact that was conceded in the professional discourse of political science long ago. This generates not only expectations but more or less subliminally also a deceptive appearance.

The thesis of postdemocracy is a polemical reaction resulting from the desire to draw attention to the fact that modern Western political systems have drifted away from the basic democratic impulse. However, there are few indications that this strategy can prevail beyond a tight circle of scholars. Rather, one can expect that the promise of democracy will not lose its political force, even in a world in which the national base of democratic practices is weakened.

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See also Deliberative Policy Making; Democracy, Quality; Equality, Political; Modernization Theory; Normative Political Theory; Participation; Political Philosophy; Rational Choice; Social Democracy; Systems Theory

Further Readings

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Democracy, Types of

Since the end of the Cold War, democracy has become the unrivaled form of government in the world. Acceptance of a country as a full partner in the global community of nations is considerably facilitated by its being characterized as a political democracy; international military interventions, as in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, state their goal as the building of democracy; less democratic countries are asked to improve the quality of their democracy to gain esteem; and countries that hardly possess the attributes of democratic governance claim to be democratic because such characterization is thought to bestow prestige on them.

Among democracies, there is no single mode of organizing a polity as a political democracy. Institutional arrangements of democratic governance have varied across time and countries. Furthermore, democratic systems have evolved and operated in countries that have, among others, different histories, cultures, traditions, economies, demographic compositions, and socioeconomic characteristics. These factors have all put their imprint on how democratic institutions are organized and operate in specific countries. Attempts at presenting and discussing types and typologies of democracies are several. Some types and typologies, not widely employed by students of democracy thus far, have not been included in this entry. But