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# Problems in paradise? Challenges to future democratization in democratic states

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## Abstract

What are the challenges to future democratization in states regarded as democratic? This study shows that some states that are traditionally regarded as democratic consist of political institutions in need of further democratization. On average, states that are classified as democratic have one or two institutional dimensions in need of further democratization. The main institutional dimensions in need of democratization are functions of government, rule of law, personal autonomy and individual rights. In order to investigate challenges to future democratization, the study presents a methodology that uses Freedom House Index and Polity Index in a new innovative way.

## Keywords

comparative method, democratization, Freedom House, political regimes, Polity

## Introduction

Traditional research on democratization has almost exclusively focused on conditions within non-democracies. Studies of democratic transition, which dominate the field, explore how and to what extent political institutions in non-democratic states have been democratized. These studies review the implementation of free and fair elections in non-democracies and examine how those elections help democratize political systems in different states (Munck, 2007; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Another emerging line of research focuses on so called hybrid regimes, which are prevalent in states that have developed political regimes with various combinations of democratic and non-democratic institutions (Diamond, 2002; McFaul, 2002; Morlino, 2008a, 2009). Several of these states have democratized, but not sufficiently enough to be considered democracies. Some studies explore how differently those states combine free and fair elections, compared with institutions

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that strongly curtail political participation and civil rights (Ekman, 2009; Furman, 2007; Kuzio, 2005; Levitsky and Way, 2002; Morlino, 2008b; White, 2003). Studies of hybrid regimes and transitions illustrate how non-democratic states remain the focus of research on democratization.

There is a strong argument that studies on democratization should focus on current conditions and pressing problems within non-democratic states. The assumption is that challenges to future democratization exist within non-democracies, since those states are the arenas where extensive democratization and its many challenges have played out. The traditional argument mentioned has rendered the study of democratic states superfluous, which in turn has left unanswered the question of whether certain institutions within states regarded as democracies may be in need of democratizing. This article will therefore focus on problems that exist within states considered democracies. The overall question to be explored is: *What are the challenges to future democratization in states regarded as democratic?*

It may seem tautological to apply criteria of democratic institutions when analyzing challenges to future democratization in democratic states. However, this study will show that some states that are traditionally regarded as democratic consist of political institutions in need of further democratization. The main institutional dimensions in dire need of democratization are functions of government, rule of law, personal autonomy and individual rights. A significant number of states are 'partly free' rather than 'free' when measured along these dimensions. The results raise questions as to how comparative indexes of democracy (e.g. Freedom House Index and Polity Index) are constructed and how a democratic (free) state is identified.

The purpose of this article is to make an empirical contribution to the discussion on the challenges to future democratization. The article will first present an overview on how challenges to future democratization can be identified from different approaches. The article then presents a method by which to measure democratic challenges. This method will be applied to a number of empirical analyses to identify challenges to future democratization of states classified as democracies. When applied, this methodology may alter our understanding of the challenges to future democratization, as well as the accepted idea of the global victory of democracy. While some democracies are not subject to challenges, the article will show that a significant number of them face challenges that are both complex and profound. Lastly, the article analyzes the results and relates them to contemporary discussions of future democratization.

## Challenges to future democratization

Gerardo Munck (2007) identifies three main themes within research on democratization. The first centers on the concept of democratic transition. As stated in the introduction, this theme has been dominant in the literature. Studies on democratic transition analyze how political institutions transform through democratization (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). The second theme focuses on democratic consolidation, which presumes that democratic institutions become 'the only game in town' when neither institutions nor behavior or attitudes challenge the democratic way of governing (Di Palma, 1990; Linz and Stepan, 1996). The third theme, which according to Munck is significant within the field of democratization, is based on the vague and ambiguous concept of 'quality of government.' Studies applying this theme recognize 'aspects of democracy that extend beyond the constitution of government and the question whether rulers gain access to office through free and fair elections' (Munck, 2007: 66). Examples of this include studies on how corruption and the effectiveness of the judiciary influence democratization.

What emerge from this overview of democratization research are the different perspectives on showing challenges to future democratization. Challenges in relation to democratic transition are

posed by those institutions that are not democratized. These include, first and foremost, institutions that influence elections. Institutions are also the focal point when applying democratic consolidation, but this approach also emphasizes behavior and attitudes that pose challenges to democratic governance and future democratization. Similarly, studies within the third theme identify conditions that weaken the quality of democratic systems. Challenges have thereby identified non-democratic elements in conflict with democratic institutions, as well as conditions that undermine the ability to democratize political institutions. Although these approaches are relevant when analyzing conditions within democratic states, the studies have primarily targeted problems in non-democratic states and states that currently undergo, or recently underwent, democratization.

In all three themes within research on democratization, the concept of polyarchy has been central to identifying and analyzing the challenges to democratization (Bollen, 1990; Coppedge and Reinicke, 1991; Dahl, 1971; Vanhanen, 2003). Robert Dahl's concept of polyarchy refers to a 'modern type of large-scale democratic government' (1998: 90). Together with Charles Lindblom, Dahl introduced this concept to maintain the distinction between democracy as an ideal system and the institutional arrangements that are regarded as an imperfect approximation of an ideal (Dahl, 1971; Dahl and Lindblom, 1953). As a set of political institutions necessary for large-scale democracy, polyarchy is, according to Dahl (1998), characterized by six institutions: (a) elected officials, (b) free, fair, and frequent elections, (c) freedom of expression, (d) alternative information, (e) associational autonomy, and (f) inclusive citizenship. The absence of one or more of these institutions has been interpreted as a challenge to democratization, while the establishment of the above institutions has been regarded as democratization. As polyarchy may be regarded as a historical outcome of political developments in Western Europe, using the concept of polyarchy in a global analysis can produce a bias that favors states in Western Europe. Nevertheless, the concept of polyarchy illustrates the institutional criteria that have been used to identify challenges to democratization.

Notwithstanding the different approaches in studying democratization, there is an underlying presumption that democratic systems satisfy the institutional criteria for democracy. Yet, states that are regarded as democratic have rarely been analyzed by applying institutional criteria. The democratization of political institutions has up to now been considered an irrelevant issue for these states. This study challenges this presumption. The study will apply an institutional approach in analyzing challenges to democratization in states now classified as democratic. By doing so, the study will identify possible institutional discrepancies, while relating these discrepancies to the basic concept of democratization – defined as a transformation of political institutions that leads to the establishment and expansion of democratic institutions in a political system (cf. Dahl, 1971). The study will then identify challenges to future democratization.

## The measurement of democratic challenges

Several indexes have been developed to compare the democratic status or degree of democratization in states (Bollen, 1980, 1990; Hadenius, 1992; Vanhanen, 1997). Indexes used most frequently in comparative studies include Polity and the Freedom House Index (FHI) (Freedom House, 2008; Jagers and Gurr, 1996). Even though those two indexes are constructed differently, they are usually preferred compared with the alternatives (Hadenius and Teorell, 2005; Munck, 2009; Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). They are also relevant when examining how political institutions relate to those that, according to Dahl, typify democratic systems. One significant difference between Polity and FHI is that the latter includes a larger number of states. Though Polity lacks data on states with less than 500,000 inhabitants, so called micro states represent a significant percentage of the world's

democracies (Anckar, 2008). For this reason, we elect to use FHI instead of Polity. Furthermore, FHI provides higher levels of generalization among states than Polity does. Another reason to use FHI is that Polity mainly focuses on electoral institutions and recruitment, thus excluding important aspects of democratic systems. As mentioned before, Robert Dahl (1998) identifies six institutions that are recognized as comprising democratic systems in modern society: (a) elected officials, (b) free, fair, and frequent elections, (c) freedom of expression, (d) alternative information, (e) associational autonomy, and (f) inclusive citizenship. Polity measures only some of these institutions, which leaves several essential institutions unmeasured. When using Polity, there is, according to its critics, a risk of overestimating the degree of democratization, incorrectly categorizing non-democratic systems as democratic systems, and of underestimating the differences between systems (Munck, 2009). However, Polity will be used to cross-check the results from our analysis FHI, thereby providing a validity test of the analyses of FHI, which may strengthen the empirical results of the study.

Although FHI is established and is frequently utilized to indicate the presence of democracy or processes of democratization, the index has also been the subject of criticism. Critics question the very basis of FHI by pointing to vague criteria for coding, a lack of transparency, the failure of weighting criteria in accordance with their relative importance, the assumption that all aspects have the same meaning without considering the context, and the lack of a theoretical foundation (Hadenius and Teorell, 2005; Munck, 2009; Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). Even so, the index provides the opportunity to compare all recognized states. It also provides collective measurements of complex conditions and relationships that are relevant for research on democratization. Though aware of alternative indexes and FHI's limitations, this study utilizes FHI based on the index's comparative advantage when studying future challenges to democratization in democratic states.

Since 1972, Freedom House has collected various data on democratization. Based on that data, this study will categorize states as 'free', 'partly free', or 'not free'. These divisions are based on the average values registered for the states in two indexes. One index concerns political rights and freedoms, while the other focuses on civil rights and freedoms. Based on the levels of rights and freedoms states are allotted a score between one and seven. When a state's average value for both indexes falls between 5.5 and 7.0, the state is considered non-democratic (not free). A state receiving the value of 1.0 to 2.5 is considered democratic (free). States falling within the range of 3.0 to 5.0 are categorized as partly free. While states that are considered not free or partly free are typically the focal points of studies in democratization, this study will focus on democratic (free) states.

The two indexes rely on seven underlying sub-indexes (dimensions), which can be used to study democratization based on different institutional dimensions. The seven dimensions are: electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, functionality of politics, freedom of speech, freedom to organize, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. Table A1 in the Appendix shows the specific components of each sub-index, while Table 1 presents how FHI relates the seven components to civil and political rights and freedoms (Freedom House, 2008).

The sub-indexes used to measure civil rights and freedoms are constructed differently. Each component within those indexes is evaluated based on five levels of freedom, which are enumerated from 0 to 4. Those sub-indexes, however, consist of several components, which cause variance between different numbers. Three of the sub-indexes (electoral processes, political functionality, and the freedom to organize) consist of three components, causing them to range between 0 and 12, while four sub-indexes (political pluralism and participation, freedom of speech, law and order, and personal autonomy and individual rights) vary from 0 to 16 as they contain four components. To properly compare the values for the different indexes, the sub-indexes have been standardized so as to vary between the numbers 0 and 100. A value of 0 signifies a complete lack of

**Table 1.** Dimensions in Freedom House Index

Dimension	Index	
	Political rights	Civil liberties
Electoral process (A)	X	
Political pluralism and participation (B)	X	
Functioning of government (C)	X	
Freedom of expression and belief (D)		X
Associational and organizational rights (E)		X
Rule of law (F)		X
Personal autonomy and individual rights (G)		X

**Table 2.** Critical values for dimensions based on type of political regime

Type of political regime	Critical values		Corresponding FHI values
Free states	100.00	78.57	2.5 – 1.0
Partly free states	78.56	42.85	5.0 – 3.0
Not free states	42.84	0.00	7.0 – 5.5

freedoms and rights, while the number 100 suggests completely developed freedoms, civil liberties, and rights. Standardization is achieved by first, dividing each state's index value for each index with those indexes' maximal values, and secondly, by multiplying those values by 100 (see also Table A2 in the Appendix, column 2 to 8).

By using standardized indexes, each dimension of democratization is presented as a degree of freedom, varying from 0 to 100. We may then ask the question of what values are needed to categorize states as not free, partly free, and free. If the criteria used by FHI when dividing states into those three categories are transferred to the standardized criteria, critical values can be identified, as illustrated in Table 2. If the values do not exceed the lower value, the dimension is considered less democratized (an under-democratized dimension) than what would be expected based on the regime type. Conversely, an index value exceeding the higher value indicates that the dimension is more democratized than expected (an over-democratized dimension). This means that democratic states falling below the number 78.57 are actually under-democratized, thus triggering a need for further democratization.

However, the critical values for the dimensions do not exactly diverge from the values applied by FHI. The upper limits for partly free states and not free states differ by approximately plus or minus seven units compared with the expected values if the critical values from FHI were transferred to the index. Discrepancy is caused by FHI's use of divisions that cause gaps between the internal categories – an ability the standardized indexes lack, as such divisions would result in states falling between the three categories. The lower values for free states *vis-à-vis* partly free states have therefore been used to determine critical values within this study. By doing so, the critical limit will be about seven units higher than when using the higher limit for partly free and not free states. This is critical as states with a value of 75 are considered partly free rather than free. By using the selected limits, our analysis will not overestimate the degrees of democratization.

**Table 3.** Degree of democratization within the seven dimensions (2008)

Dimension	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value	Number of cases
Electoral process	95.41	8.00	67	100	90
Political pluralism and participation	92.16	8.12	69	100	90
Functioning of government	82.78	14.37	50	100	90
Freedom of expression and belief	95.08	5.69	75	100	90
Associational and organizational rights	93.02	9.36	58	100	90
Rule of law	80.28	15.78	44	100	90
Personal autonomy and individual rights	82.56	13.00	56	100	90
<i>All dimensions</i>	<i>88.68</i>	<i>8.73</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>90</i>

**Table 4.** Values on seven dimensions of regimes

Category	Dimension (%)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Free	92.2	91.1	62.2	98.9	90.0	58.9	66.7
Partly free	7.8	8.9	37.8	1.1	10.0	41.1	33.3
Not free	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

## Existing challenges: a global analysis

What are the challenges to future democratization in states regarded as democratic? In Table 3, we present averages and standard deviations for the aforementioned seven dimensions (see also Table A2 in the Appendix, column 9). Predictably, the states that are classified as democracies register high values within all dimensions. The averages for electoral process, political pluralism and participation, freedom of expression and belief, respective associational and organizational rights exceed 90 index units. The standard deviation of these dimensions is relatively low (under ten index units). Higher deviations are found in the dimensions of function of government and rule of law, but also in personal autonomy and individual rights. This difference suggests that states that are viewed as democracies face challenges to democratization including corruption, accountability, and due process. The fact that the minimum value for all dimensions is lower than expected (below the critical value) is indicative of challenges within these states.

Table 4 gives additional empirical support to the suggestion that states classified as democratic face challenges to future democratization. As shown below, Table 4 specifies what percentages of these states have numerical values corresponding with the three categories of free, partly free, and not free. Some states are partly free when it comes to electoral process (Lesotho, Mali, Mongolia, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, and Vanuatu), political pluralism and participation (Antigua & Barbuda, Botswana, Lesotho, Mali, Monaco, Namibia, and Trinidad & Tobago), associational and organizational rights (Antigua & Barbuda, El Salvador, Grenada, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, and Peru), and freedom of expression and belief (Indonesia). A significant number of states are partly free when measured by function of government, rule of law, respective for personal autonomy and individual rights. About 40 percent of states considered democratic have

**Table 5.** Number of dimensions that need democratization

Dimensions	Percentages
0	47.8
1	14.4
2	6.7
3	18.9
4	7.8
5	2.2
6	2.2
7	0.0
<i>Average number of dimensions</i>	<i>1.37</i>
<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>1.67</i>

challenges in the areas of political functionality and law and order. Furthermore, approximately 33 percent face challenges as to personal autonomy and individual rights.

Challenges to future democratization are divided differently between those states that are classified as democratic. This is illustrated in Table 5, which presents a number of dimensions that call for democratization (see also Table A2 in the Appendix, column 10). On average, each state has one or two dimensions in need of further democratization. However, there is also a group of states that registers democratic values in all dimensions. This group includes approximately 48 percent of all states that are considered to be democratic and includes, among others, Barbados, Canada, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, San Marino, and Sweden. A smaller group of states face challenges in only one dimension, such as law and order (Belize, Italy, Slovakia, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Lucia), political functionality (Kiribati, Lithuania, Taiwan, and St. Vincent & Grenadines), or personal autonomy and individual rights (Mauritius, Slovenia, and South Korea). There are also eleven states that display problems within four or more dimensions. Lesotho and Mali, for example, have partly free conditions in six out of the seven dimensions, while the corresponding number in Senegal and Indonesia is five. This group of states has profound problems in terms of democratic criteria, which translates to additional challenges to future democratization.

Another approach when analyzing to what extent states regarded as democratic have democratic problems is to account for the differences between the institutional criteria and those institutions already established in each state. If an average is calculated for the states' values in the seven dimensions, a distance can be arrived at in relation to the dimensions' maximal value (100). States void of democratic problems will thereby have values close to zero, while states with democratic problems receive higher values as they deviate from the institutional criteria (see also Table A2 in the Appendix, column 11). When this distance is calculated, it becomes apparent that 48 states have a distance of less than 10 units, while 15 states have a distance exceeding 21.43 units. This means that the states' average values within the dimensions do not reach the critical value required for a state to be considered democratic (cf. Table 2). In the first group, there are states that collectively deviate to a small extent from the institutional criteria for democratic systems, while the latter group consists of states with a significant distance to those criteria.

## Challenges to stable and unstable democracies

Why do states regarded as democracies face different challenges to future democratization? An initial response may be that the challenges to future democratization are primarily found in states that recently



**Table 6.** Challenges of stable and unstable democracies

Dimension	Percentage in need of democratization		Differences
	Stable democracies	Unstable democracies	
Electoral process	3.8	36.4	-32.6
Political pluralism and participation	5.1	36.4	-31.3
Functioning of government	29.1	100.0	-70.9
Freedom of expression and belief	0.0	9.1	-9.1
Associational and organizational rights	7.6	27.3	-19.7
Rule of law	32.9	100.0	-67.1
Personal autonomy and individual rights	29.1	63.6	-34.5
Average number of dimensions	1.08	3.64	-2.56
Average values of all dimensions	90.51	75.55	14.96
Average distance to maximal value (100)	9.48	24.73	-15.25

underwent democratization (cf. Morlino, 2009). Of those states that are considered democracies, 87.8 percent (or 79 states) were considered democratic from the year 2000 to 2006, while 12.2 percent (or 11 states) of the states were non-democratic to some degree for at least one year during the same time span. When analyzing the challenges to future democratization based on those two groups, the study finds that the stable states have a higher average dimensional value and fewer dimensions that are in need of democratization than unstable states (Table 6). On average, stable states have one dimension in need of further democratization, while unstable states have three or four dimensions that are not democratized. All unstable states are in need of democratization when it comes to function of government and the rule of law. A significant majority of those states also face challenges within the areas of personal autonomy and individual rights. It is notable that several of the states need to democratize institutions and processes considered fundamental for democratic systems, such as electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and associational and organizational rights. The dimension that unstable states are in least need of democratizing is freedom of speech, which is a challenge in only a few states. For the stable states, it is primarily function of government, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights that require further democratization. There are also individual instances in which stable states need to democratize associational and organizational rights, electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, and electoral processes. Conversely, there is no stable state that needs democratization when it comes to the freedom of expression and belief.

There are exceptions to the general pattern, showing that challenges to future democratization exist primarily within unstable states, while stable states will have relatively few challenges. Some stable states (El Salvador, Jamaica, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, and Peru) need significant democratization in several dimensions, while another stable state (India) needs significant democratization in only a few dimensions. There are also cases of unstable states that need minor democratization in fewer dimensions (Argentina and Trinidad & Tobago).

### Cross-checking empirical findings by using the Polity index

According to the previous analysis, a majority of states regarded as democracies (52.3%) have at least one dimension in need of further democratization. The above presented analysis was based on

**Table 7.** Challenges for further democratization according to Polity IV

Dimension	Completely democratized (%)	Incompletely democratized (%)
Competitiveness of participation	36.5	63.5
Competitiveness of executive recruitment	100.0	0.0
Openness of executive recruitment	86.5	13.5
Executive Constraints	64.6	35.4
<i>Number of incompletely democratized dimensions</i>		
0	34.4	
1	27.1	
2	30.2	
3	8.3	
4	0.0	
Total	100.0	(n = 96)
<i>Correlation with challenge according to FHI</i>		
Average values of all dimensions	Eta: 0.683	Sign: 0.000 (n = 61)
Number of dimensions in need of democratization	Eta: 0.704	Sign: 0.000 (n = 61)

FHI. The question is what, if any, result would change if material from another database was used. An alternative to FHI is *Polity*, which provides information on political institutions in states with populations over 500,000. The information from *Polity* concentrates on electoral institutions, and to some extent, on the distribution of power between institutions. More specifically, the democratic index is constructed of four dimensions (Marshall and Jaggers, 2007):

1. *Competitiveness of participation*: the extent to which alternative policy and leadership preferences can be pursued in the political arena.
2. *Competitiveness of executive recruitment*: the extent to which prevailing modes of advancement give subordinates equal opportunities to become superordinates.
3. *Openness of executive recruitment*: the extent to which the recruitment of the chief executive is open in a way that provides all of the politically active population an opportunity to attain the position through a regularized process.
4. *Executive constraints*: the extent of institutionalized constraints on the decision-making powers of chief executives, which is a question about checks and balances in decision-making processes.

The investigated states are categorized in each dimension. The sets of categories differ between the dimensions, but one category in each set indicates a completed democratization, while the other categories provide an indication of the need of further democratization to different degrees. For 2009, the *Polity* classifies 96 countries as democratic states. As presented in Table 7, all of these states were completely democratized in competitiveness of executive recruitment. A considerable share of the states was also completely democratized in two other dimensions: openness of executive recruitment (86.5%) and executive constraints (64.6%). However, a majority of the states classified as democracies (63.5%) needed further democratization of competitiveness of participation. This indicates there are differences between the dimensions and that there are challenges to future democratization in states that were viewed as democracies. The extension of these challenges is also different between states. A majority of the states (57.3%) is in need of

democratization in one or two dimensions, while a smaller minority (8.3%) has three dimensions that need democratization. It is only 34.4 percent of the states that have no need of future democratization in any of the four dimensions.

To compare the results from this analysis based on Polity with the previous ones based on FHI is difficult. The two indices use different indicators to measure diverse attributes. Furthermore, the aggregation of the two indices is also different. As a consequence of these differences, the category of democratic states includes different states depending on what index is used. However, a careful comparison shows that Polity indicates a smaller share of states having one dimension or more in need of future democratization. According to the analysis based on Polity, a considerable share of states that are regarded as democratic is in need of future democratization. At the same time, as presented in Table 7, there are also strong correlations between the number of dimensions that according to Polity need further democratization and the two dimensions (average values of all dimensions and number of dimensions in need of democratization) that were identified when analyzing materials from FHI. In sum, the indices indicate the same degree of extension, but identify different dimensions that are in need of democratization.

## Conclusion and discussion

*What are the challenges to future democratization in states regarded as democratic?* The analysis of this study shows that those challenges are largely limited. Collectively, states that are regarded as democracies face few challenges. However, the study points to significant differences within the group. While 43 of the states do not need further democratization in any of the examined dimensions, a group of 23 states need democratization within two or three dimensions. An additional group of 10 states need extensive democratization in several dimensions. The study also identified the different variations between several of the dimensions. Some conditions in the states are in more dire need of democratization than other conditions. In particular, the three institutional dimensions – function of government (34 states), rule of law (37 states), and personal autonomy and individual rights (30 states) – need further democratization. This means that states considered democratic face different levels of challenges to democratization.

The findings of the study also give rise to a critical discussion on how FHI is constructed. When a relatively large group of states considered democracies need to democratize in several dimensions and have an average dimensional value below the critical value, a discussion about how FHI is constructed and how free states are identified is justified. An introductory issue is the viability of an internal division that leads to a significant variation within the category. Among the free states there are stable democracies receiving high values within all dimensions, but there are also unstable states in need of significant democratization that are considered typical for a democratic system. One possibility in minimizing the variations within the categories is to create an additional division of the states. Another possibility is to modify the criteria for when states are considered democratic (free). As an example, states could be considered democratic when a majority of the dimensions (four or more) are democratized. This would lead to a division of complete democracies (with all dimensions democratized) and incomplete democracies (with a majority, but not all, of the dimensions democratized).

First and foremost, the study illustrates that there are challenges to democratization even for states generally considered democracies. Behind the global victory of democracy, there are significant obstacles to future democratization that are rarely recognized. Instead, the discussion about future democratization has focused almost exclusively on states that are non-democratic. A recently published study, for example, claims that future democratization will face three challenges

(Haerper et al., 2009). These claims have been addressed in prior studies (Diamond, 1999; Huntington, 1991; Sørensen, 1998). The first challenge concerns the establishment of democratic regimes in non-democratic states. A continued geographic expansion of democratic regimes is therefore a future challenge. The second challenge is to strengthen the democratic institutions in states that undergo democratization. Democratic consolidation will therefore remain a challenge. A third set of challenges pertains to established and stable democracies. The focus here is on how to prepare democratic institutions to apply democratic ideals based on new conditions, such as globalization and internationalization (Dahl, 2005; Held, 1995; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2007). The focus is also on how new institutions emerge in democratic systems. Graham Smith (2005, 2009) for example, has compiled an overview of attempts made to develop or complement institutions in democratic systems. Smith concludes that there have been innovations in democratic systems within the areas of elections, consultation, deliberation, co-governance, direct democracy, and the use of new information techniques. (e-democracy). Other studies have focused on how elections and referendums have developed while the ability of direct political participation has increased (Dalton et al., 2003). Additionally, some studies have also focused on the introduction of different deliberative forms, such as deliberative polls and citizens' juries (Ackerman and Fishkin, 2004; Fishkin, 1995; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Smith and Wales, 2000; Ward et al., 2003).

Without in any way trivializing or denying the previously mentioned challenges, this study focuses on a fourth challenge, which is found in states that are considered democracies. New information technology, internationalization, and globalization trigger the need for those democracies to develop their institutions and harmonize them with democratic ideals. However, some states regarded as democratic also need to undergo democratization in relation to fundamental criteria for democratic institutions. These observations raise two questions for future research: How do democratic challenges arise in democratic institutions? How are democratic challenges resolved in democratic states?

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## Appendix

**Table A1.** Composition of Freedom House Index

### Political rights

#### A. Electoral process

1. Is the head of state and/or head of government or other chief authority elected through free and fair elections?
2. Are the legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
3. Are there fair electoral laws, equal campaigning opportunities, fair polling, and honest tabulation of ballots?

#### B. Political pluralism and participation

1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?
2. Is there a significant opposition vote, de facto opposition power, and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?
3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?
4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups have reasonable self-determination, self-government, autonomy, or participation through informal consensus in the decision-making process?

#### C. Functioning of government

1. Do freely elected representatives determine the policies of the government?
2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?
3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

### Civil liberties

#### D. Freedom of expression and belief

1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression?
2. Are there free religious institutions, and is there free private and public religious expression?
3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?
4. Is there open and free private discussion?

#### E. Associational and organizational rights

1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?
2. Is there freedom of political or quasi-political organization?
3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

(Continued)

**Table A1.** (Continued)*F. Rule of law*

1. Is there an independent judiciary?
2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?
3. Is there protection from police terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?
4. Is the population treated equally under the law?

*G. Personal autonomy and individual rights*

1. Is there personal autonomy? Does the state control travel, choice of residence, or choice of employment? Is there freedom from indoctrination and excessive dependency on the state?
2. Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, or organized crime?
3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?
4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

**Table A2.** Data for examined states

State	Dimension							Average	Aspects	Distance
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G			
Lesotho	75	75	75	88	58	69	56	70.86	6	29.17
Mali	75	75	75	94	75	56	56	72.29	6	27.68
Indonesia	92	81	50	75	75	44	56	67.57	5	32.44
Senegal	75	75	75	88	83	63	56	73.57	5	26.49
Peru	92	88	58	94	67	50	63	73.14	4	27.08
Mexico	83	88	67	88	75	44	69	73.43	4	26.79
El Salvador	100	81	67	94	67	44	63	73.71	4	26.49
Antigua & Barbuda	92	75	58	81	75	75	81	76.71	4	23.21
Jamaica	100	88	67	94	75	50	69	77.57	4	22.62
Namibia	83	75	75	94	100	63	56	78.00	4	22.02
Vanuatu	75	94	67	100	92	63	69	80.00	4	20.24
Ukraine	83	81	50	81	83	63	69	72.86	3	27.08
Guyana	92	81	58	94	83	50	56	73.43	3	26.49
Brazil	92	88	50	94	83	50	75	76.00	3	24.11
Serbia	75	81	58	88	92	56	81	75.86	3	24.11
India	92	88	75	81	83	56	63	76.86	3	23.21
Suriname	100	81	67	94	92	56	63	79.00	3	21.13
Botswana	92	69	75	88	83	81	69	79.57	3	20.54
Sao Tome & Principe	92	88	67	94	83	75	63	80.29	3	19.94
Dominican Republic	92	81	75	94	92	63	69	80.86	3	19.35
Romania	92	88	58	88	92	75	75	81.14	3	19.05
Trinidad & Tobago	92	75	75	94	92	63	81	81.71	3	18.45
Mongolia	67	94	83	94	83	75	75	81.57	3	18.45
Benin	83	94	67	94	100	75	63	82.29	3	17.86
Panama	100	94	75	94	92	56	75	83.71	3	16.37

(Continued)

Table A2. (Continued)

State	Dimension							Average	Aspects	Distance
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G			
Bulgaria	100	94	75	88	92	75	75	85.57	3	14.58
South Africa	100	88	75	94	100	75	75	86.71	3	13.39
Grenada	100	100	75	94	75	75	94	87.57	3	12.50
Argentina	92	94	50	88	92	63	81	80.00	2	20.24
Samoa	75	81	83	88	83	81	75	80.86	2	19.05
Ghana	100	94	83	88	92	75	63	85.00	2	15.18
Israel	100	94	83	88	100	63	69	85.29	2	14.88
Croatia	100	88	75	88	100	69	81	85.86	2	14.29
Latvia	100	94	67	100	100	75	81	88.14	2	11.90
South Korea	92	94	83	88	92	81	75	86.43	1	13.69
Monaco	83	69	83	94	100	94	88	87.29	1	12.80
Belize	100	88	83	94	92	75	81	87.57	1	12.50
St. Vincent & Grenadines	92	94	75	94	92	81	88	88.00	1	12.20
Taiwan (ROC)	83	94	75	100	92	94	81	88.43	1	11.61
Lithuania	100	94	75	100	92	88	81	90.00	1	10.12
Kiribati	100	100	67	94	100	94	81	90.86	1	9.23
Mauritius	100	94	92	94	100	81	75	90.86	1	9.23
Slovakia	100	94	83	100	100	75	88	91.43	1	8.63
Slovenia	100	94	92	94	100	88	75	91.86	1	8.33
St. Kitts & Nevis	100	100	92	94	100	75	88	92.71	1	7.44
St. Lucia	100	100	92	94	100	75	88	92.71	1	7.44
Italy	100	94	92	94	100	75	94	92.71	1	7.44
Japan	100	94	83	81	83	94	81	88.00	0	11.90
Greece	100	94	83	94	92	81	81	89.29	0	10.71
Cape Verde	100	94	83	94	92	88	81	90.29	0	9.82
Costa Rica	100	94	92	100	92	81	81	91.43	0	8.63
Marshall Islands	100	94	83	100	92	94	81	92.00	0	8.04
Palau	100	94	83	100	92	94	81	92.00	0	8.04
Hungary	100	94	83	100	100	81	88	92.29	0	7.74
Micronesia	100	94	83	100	92	94	88	93.00	0	7.14
Nauru	100	100	83	94	92	94	88	93.00	0	7.14
Poland	100	100	83	100	100	81	88	93.14	0	6.85
France	100	94	92	94	100	81	94	93.57	0	6.55
United States of America	92	100	92	100	92	88	94	94.00	0	6.25
Tuvalu	100	94	83	100	100	94	88	94.14	0	5.95
Estonia	100	88	100	100	100	88	88	94.86	0	5.36
Cyprus	92	100	92	94	100	94	94	95.14	0	5.06
Czech Republic	100	94	92	100	100	88	94	95.43	0	4.76
Bahamas	100	100	83	100	100	94	94	95.86	0	4.17
Andorra	100	94	100	100	92	94	94	96.29	0	3.87
New Zealand	100	94	100	100	92	94	94	96.29	0	3.87
Australia	100	94	100	100	100	88	94	96.57	0	3.57
Spain	100	94	100	100	100	88	94	96.57	0	3.57
Germany	100	94	100	94	100	94	94	96.57	0	3.57
Belgium	100	100	92	100	100	94	94	97.14	0	2.98
Dominica	100	100	92	100	100	94	94	97.14	0	2.98
Ireland	100	100	92	100	100	94	94	97.14	0	2.98
Malta	100	100	92	100	100	94	94	97.14	0	2.98

(Continued)



Table A2. (Continued)

State	Dimension							Average	Aspects	Distance
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G			
Uruguay	100	100	92	100	100	94	94	97.14	0	2.98
United Kingdom	100	100	100	100	100	88	94	97.43	0	2.68
Chile	100	94	100	100	100	94	94	97.43	0	2.68
Switzerland	100	94	100	100	100	94	94	97.43	0	2.68
Austria	100	100	100	100	100	94	94	98.29	0	1.79
Denmark	100	100	100	100	100	94	94	98.29	0	1.79
Portugal	100	100	100	100	100	94	94	98.29	0	1.79
Barbados	100	100	100	100	100	100	94	99.14	0	0.89
Canada	100	100	100	100	100	94	100	99.14	0	0.89
Netherlands	100	100	100	100	100	94	100	99.14	0	0.89
Finland	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Iceland	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Liechtenstein	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Luxembourg	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Norway	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
San Marino	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Sweden	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	0	0.00
Average	95.41	92.16	82.78	95.08	93.02	80.28	82.56	88.75	1.37	11.34

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