CENTER FOR SYSTEMIC PEACE PRESENTS . . .

The New Democratic Order

Complex Societal-Systems and the "Invisible Hand"

MONTY G. MARSHALL

The history of humankind can be viewed as a narrative flow with myriad tributaries and estuaries that meander and converge into rivers and streams, and whose courses are punctuated periodically by monumental events. Monumental events occur as the result of the interplay between the dynamic stream and its structured landscape, and are driven by a "gravitational force." They are perceived as monumental because they unexpectedly alter the course of the narrative flow in ways that appear disruptive and seem disturbing at the moment of realization. Monumental events have an overwhelming, sensory impact that can only be understood when placed in the proper perspective. They challenge our thinking in fundamental ways by presenting us with a new piece to a complex puzzle. When faced with monumental events, the impulse to panic can be difficult to restrain; our lives are too vulnerable and our worlds too fragile. The key to progress in the face of such foundational challenges was succinctly stated by Kurt Vonnegut in *The Sirens of Titan* as an epiphany: "It's an intelligence test!"

With the advent of the industrial revolution, human history entered a period of acceleration characterized by our rapidly expanding ability to "do" tending to outpace our ability to understand, and hence to effectively manage our efforts and our effects. What we generally refer to as globalization is a complex, dynamic process by which the new technologies of doing, understanding, and managing converge and cover the structured landscape of our planet Earth. In other words, globalization involves changes in the qualities of development, conflict, and governance in a global societal-system. The 20th century brought with it a number of monumental changes of which the full effects can only be understood from a global, systemic perspective. Systems are more than simply the sum of their parts and, I contend, it is the systemic effects that both create and define monumental events. On the other hand, it is the innovative potential of humankind triggered by monumental events that decides and, ultimately, designs the future course of history. Innovation is the collective result of an active and informed public. It is with this understanding that the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) was created in 1997—to monitor key global systemic trends in conflict, governance, and development, and report these trends publicly through the Internet to provide a global perspective for public policy. The Center's work is informed through its association with the US government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF).

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Monitoring Trends in the Information Age

The end of the Cold War is generally considered a monumental event, although the nature of the process leading to this event may not be fully understood. One of its most important outcomes of this event has been the lifting of the veil of state secrecy and the dawning of the information age. When Ted Gurr and I were collecting information to compile the original Minorities at Risk (MAR) database covering all countries of the world in the late 1980s, we had to contend with severe, state-imposed limits on public information regarding their internal dynamics in general, and the real and imagined security risks posed by non-state actors more specifically. This relative dearth of information gave way to a veritable flood of information with the ending of the Cold War. Data collection tactics regarding both the internal and external attributes of states in the world system suddenly shifted from a forensic science of divining from carefully gathered clues to an organic science of filtering and distilling from a plethora of confounding evidence. Working with too much detail is as daunting a task as working with too little. In addition, the sudden expanse of the immediate global information base largely lacks historical referents and has, at least temporarily, outpaced our ability to understand the embedded "kernels of truth."

For example, in his overview essay for the most recent edition of Freedom House's annual survey, "Freedom in the World 2011," Arch Puddington proclaimed that global conditions in 2010 worsened for the fifth consecutive year with the number of electoral democracies dropping from 123 in 2005 to 115 in 2010 (nearly a seven percent decline).

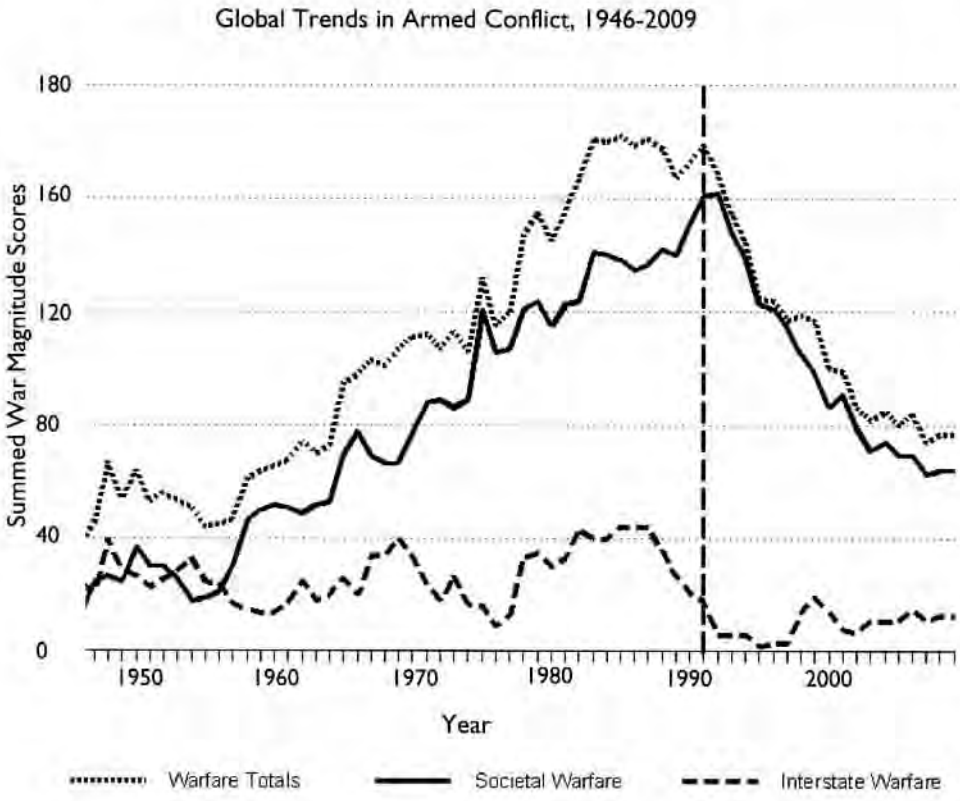
Egyptians rally for democracy at Tahrir Square on February 25, 2011. Waving national flags and shouting slogans, thousands of protesters came to Cairo to encourage Egypt's new military rulers to purge the cabinet of ministers appointed by Hosni Mubarak. Social media and contemporary technology served a notable role in spreading updates internationally.

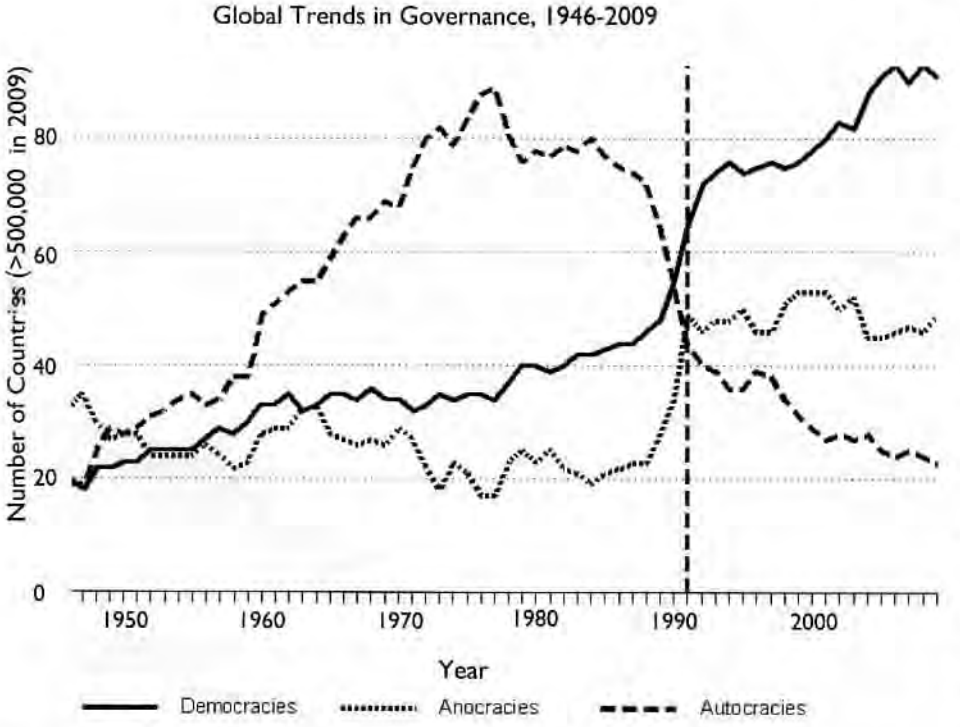
The Economist has similarly touted "Democracy's Decline." In statistical terms, we cannot know whether such a small and short-term decline is evidence of a trend, or simply an error in or artifact of the data collection and measurement technique. Accounting for Freedom House's "multiyear spate of backsliding" in the number of electoral democracies are a handful of countries straddling the conceptual border separating electoral democracy from all other forms of governance; what distinguishes an electoral democracy is not entirely clear. The Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace also monitors qualities of governance in the world's independent states, and our data shows evidence of a leveling off in the number of democracies since 2005, following a doubling of those numbers at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Recent events in the Middle East may challenge and eventually reverse these recent trends, although the future outcomes of historic processes are difficult to predict, particularly in the details.

In any case, it is not reasonable to expect aggregated numbers of states summed on a relatively imprecise array of indicators, and arbitrarily categorized according to a somewhat contested conceptualization to provide a level of precision that would allow us to make confident claims regarding minor changes in major societal attributes. As responsible analysts, we have to be sensitive to the level of error in our measurement schemes; minor changes are well within the expected error, and even inherent aberration, of any but the most precise measurements of the most clearly defined and observed attributes. While social scientists may emulate the precision and crisp, causal logic of the physical sciences and envy the monetary schematics used by the economists, their current penchant for encoding information on complex, social phenomena in cardinal numbers must be kept in proper perspective. Encoding certainly simplifies the use and so broadens the application of information technologies, but also lends social science data a seductive veil of false precision. That is, encoding provides computational utility to comparative analysis but it does not, by itself, impart numerical precision to the object or quality that has been encoded. What it does is allow us to search for patterns and commonalities of behavior across diverse societies; it also systematizes and disciplines our inquiry so we can better manage information overload.

Overanalysis based on cavalier approaches to the false precision issue in the social sciences runs high risks of misinterpretation and the consequent confusion undermines public, and particularly policy, confidence in quantitative analysis more generally. This, in part, helps to explain

Gauging Global Trends





Courtesy of the Author

the recognized disconnect between academic research and policy analysis: academic research must attain a level of convergence before it can provide actionable insight. In order to gain this convergence, social scientists must verify and confirm their sources and seek independent, corroborating evidence to gain and maintain the public's trust in applied research. That is, they must collaborate and deliberate in order to promote a public synthesis of their private perspectives. In general terms, in order to gain confidence in evidence of minor changes in social science data, the change should be corroborated by evidence of consistency over time in the same data source and across independent data sources. In addition, the findings gained from data analysis should be consistent with, or at least not directly contradict, more general, experiential observations of context and events (that is, it must pass the "giggle test"). They must make narrative sense when re-contextualized to explain real or expected changes in structural attributes or behavioral dynamics (that is, it must provide useful insight). More importantly, overattention to detail can confound comprehension and lead us to overlook or discount truly substantive, and even profound, continuities or discontinuities in societal-system dynamics.

A New Democratic Order

What has not received proper attention in regard to global changes in qualities of governance, and what may prove to be the most profound change in the world politics since the advent of the sovereign state system

Photos Courtesy Reuters

with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, is the emergence of a global system predominated by democratic states, or popular sovereignty. The evidence of the predominance of democratic states is clear and consensual among the extant, global databases: the total annual sum of democratic authority points in the Polity IV database passed the number of autocratic authority points in 1990 (566 to 479); Tatu Vanhanen's Polyarchy database shows the number of democratic states passing the 50 percent threshold in 1991 (94 of 182); the Freedom House list of electoral democracies crossed the 50 percent threshold in 1992 (99 of 186); and the number of institutional democracies identified in the Polity IV database (regimes with a Polity score of +6 or greater) reached, and then surpassed, half the countries listed in 2001 (80 of 160). Of course, the influence of democratic states within the global system is more than a simple function of their numbers; states vary dramatically in the size of their influence. Democratic countries have comprised more than half the world's population since the mid-1990s. The full weight of their political influence, however, may be measured by the extent of their control of global wealth and economic production: democratic states account for about 90 percent of global GDP since 1993. In 2009, the Polity data show that democracies accounted for about 56 percent of governing regimes in the global system (91 of 163 states). From a global perspective, then, the end of the Cold War may be thought of as the beginning of a democratic transition, and the 21st century as the start of a New Democratic Order in world politics.

Because of its collaborative association with both academia (the Polity data series was created by Ted Gurr in the early 1970s and has since become one of academia's most ubiquitous data resources) and the US policy community (Polity supports and has been supported by the Political Instability Task Force since 1994), the Polity IV data series represents a new generation of living global data resources. The Polity IV data series is continually updated, scrutinized, reexamined, revised, and refined in response to it uses by public, academic, and policy consumers. It has also been integrated with a much broader data collection effort that includes related, state-level, governance, conflict, and development performance indicators under the coordinating structure of the Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR) at the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP). In addition, it is incorporated into the PITF global merge database, which allows it to be analyzed along with every other available global data resource. The Polity scheme is a unique measure of qualities of governance in that it measures institutionalized democratic and autocratic patterns of authority separately for each state (with more than 500,000 population in 2009). It was designed specifically for the study of regime persistence and change in key qualities of governance; it is now being refined to better study the consolidation of democratic authority.

Although individual democratic regimes are susceptible to autocratic "backsliding"—particularly young democracies that have not yet consolidated and entrenched the democratic process—democracies have, overall, proven to be very durable. It is autocracies that are becoming obsolete. Tracking the quality of regimes since 1800, the Polity IV data shows that there has been only one period when the number of democratic regimes has decreased substantially: from 1932 to 1940 during the Great Depression when the number fell from 21 to nine. The annual number of democracies increased steadily from 1848 to 1916 (from one to 13) and then can be seen to respond to a sequence of monumental events: jumping up with the end of the First World War (from 13 to 23), falling during the Great Depression, recovering with the end of the Second World War, and increasing steadily once again until 1989 (a threefold increase from 16 in 1945 to 49 in 1989). Of course, the number of independent states increased dramatically in the late 1950s with the end of the European colonial world system, another monumental event. The number of democracies jumped up once again with the end of the Cold War, increasing from 49 in 1989 to 78 in 1994, as more states gained independence, and rising to 93 in 2006. Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific Rim are preponderantly democratic, with the exceptions of autocratic Cuba and Belarus. On the other hand, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have transitioned, by and large, from the personalistic autocracies that seized control of most of the newly independent states to one-party dominant electoral systems (personalistic autocracies are based on the compelling personality of and personal loyalties to a single "leader"; between personalistic autocracies and one-party systems we might find oligarchic or corporatist regimes that are based on a limited number of core political elites). A shrinking band of autocracies stretches from North Korea in the east through south Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. Asia sports both the world's

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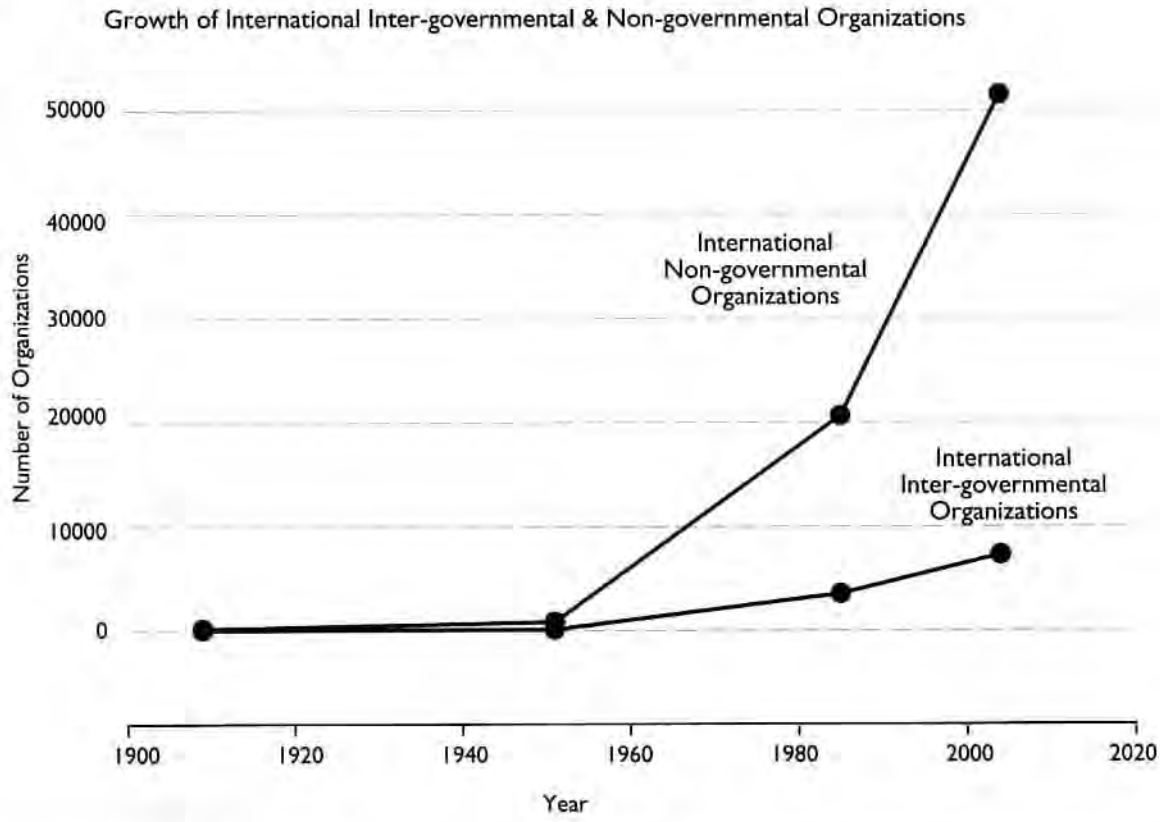
Organizing Overload



Union of International Associations, Brussels; 2004

most populous autocracy (China) and democracy (India).

Democracy and War: Myths of Transition

There is a common myth in the older Western democracies, and especially in the United States, that the global spread of democracy is evidence of the "triumph" of the West and the global appeal of Western consumer values. The lighter side of this myth sees freedom as a universal craving, elections as a panacea, and free market economics as the fuel of the public fare. The dark side of this myth views large expanses of the developing world as a global ghetto: little more than raw materials and cheap labor; under the control of predatory leaders; run by incompetent and corrupt officials, backed by armed thugs; driven by intractable conflicts; and rife with poverty, humanitarian crises, and recurring cycles of warfare. Under these conditions, autocratic regimes can be viewed as a blessing, and respected for their capacity to enforce a workable social order in otherwise failed or merely flawed or incompetent states. A touch of hubris might be expected when 20 percent of the world's population holds stake in the control of nearly 85 percent of its income (1992 figures).

The myth of triumph of liberal democracies sows cynicism when we contemplate the increasing attention to environmental crises. Environmental issues accentuate broader claims that current levels of global consumption present a serious challenge to the carrying capacity of the global ecosystem and thus to the status quo. As such, levels of welfare enjoyed by the older democracies are likely not expandable to allow comparable consumption by the developing countries, nor even sustainable at their current level. What is lost through claims of triumph, then, is the crucial support that could be provided by the middle tier of aspiring global economies, such as Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey. These countries should play a vital intermediary role in the global system rather than remaining on the sidelines, ambivalent to or suspicious of the intent of the liberal democracies and the future course of the global system.

As mentioned, income distribution in the global system at present is highly skewed; plotted on a Lorenz curve, the distribution is close to perfect inequality. Global income remains highly concentrated in the West; overall, distribution among states has changed only slightly since the end of the Cold War with most of the change accounted by the rapidly expanding economies of the world's

most populous states: China and India. In contrast, income distributions among states in the world's three regional, democratic state systems (North America, Europe, and South America) indicate that long-term systemic peace is associated with both democratic governance and systemic income distributions that converge on parity among constituent states. This income convergence appears to happen as the result of an "invisible hand" process—independently of, or in the absence of, income redistribution policies or even central administration. On the other hand, regional systems with high levels of political violence have highly unequal income distributions among constituent states with little or no (or even contrary) evidence of movement toward equilibration of "systemic stakes" among constituent units. Such systemic equilibration should not be construed as leading to egalitarian societies, but rather toward non-discriminatory systems. Societal-systems gain resilience and thus durability when constituent units hold valued stakes in maintaining the system, and they gain optimal benefits from compliance with system rules and norms.

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War, Revolution, and Democratic Peace

Cynicism and relative deprivation can work together to concoct a powerful potion of resentment in aspiring entrepreneurs who cannot envision themselves as future stakeholders in the status quo without abandoning, denying, or betraying their peers in the rational pursuit of equal opportunities. War and revolution are monumental events and occur as the final, emotive arbiters of political dispute resolution: war between societies and revolution within a society. They are, by far, the most costly methods of dispute resolution. As such, armed conflict cannot be considered a rational or legitimate action in dispute arbitration, especially given current, advanced weapons technologies and general weapons proliferation; only the neutralization of violence can be considered a legitimate and rational public policy (i.e., the principle of proportionality). The Weberian ideal of the sovereign state as holding a "monopoly on the legitimate use of force" is countered by the Lockean principle that popular sovereignty must defend itself from the state's "monopoly on tyranny." The Machiavellian dictum that the state's use of force is legitimized by raison d'etat has been neutralized by Gandhi's claims to a "raison d'societié." Each of these principles leads logically to a negotiated pact of nonviolence among societal-system actors and the establishment of a democratic peace.

The use of force is a form of tyranny and violence is an extreme behavior. Both war and revolution aspire to conquer a state and displace its agents through the use of instrumental force and violence. The rationality of both warfare and revolution is generally explained in terms of the "lesser of two evils," only one of which ever actually occurs. The emotive content of violence distinguishes it from all other forms of collective action. This is the basis of Hannah Arendt's distinction between power and violence. The denial of the emotive content of violence leads first to the rationalization of its utility and, ultimately, its glorification. This is the prescient insight in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* as he condemned Napoleon, not as an ill-fated leader, but for his passionate disregard for humanity and the enormity of his crimes. That perspec-

Anti-North Korea activists gather in central Seoul on February 25, 2011, protesting against the current leadership of Kim Jong-il and demanding democratic reform.

tive was finally accepted in public discourse during the Nuremburg Tribunals nearly 80 years later. Autocracy, war, and revolution can be seen to have defined human history through the 20th century.

The Third Way

The new democratic order constitutes a profound and unprecedented change in global politics. It began with the rejection of tyranny, gained momentum with the renunciation of war as "politics by other means," and became entrenched in the promotion of human rights and human security. War and revolution are intrinsically autocratic forms of political action. Western democracies have prevailed in wars against powerful autocracies and have imposed democratic rule in autocracies vanquished by war at great cost. However, it is inappropriate to view these results as a rationale for projecting war analogies onto democratic outcomes. The neutralization of utility of force and emotional fervor in open warfare certainly works to disarm and discredit autocratic rule, making "warrior societies" receptive to the adoption of democratic principles. However, this radical method of "forced democratization" is far too costly, and may unravel once external force is reduced (recall the ill-fated Weimar Republic). War and revolution, and so autocratic rule, are inherently self-limiting social phenomena. Democracy is an endogenous process based upon the inherent futility of violence and the triumph of reason over emotion. The application of war analogies to democratic processes tends to misinform public opinion and unduly bias policy formulation.

A corollary to the misnomer of "forced democratization" following World War II and the Western "myth of triumph" in the Cold War is the myth of the "democratic revolution," whereby internal democratic actors are perceived to remove autocratic regimes by force. Evidence indicates that the violence necessary to unseat established authorities creates emotive responses and adverse conditions that preclude the democratic process. Democracy requires a foundational consensus based on deliberative and negotiated dispute resolution; it cannot manage anarchy, and is quickly overwhelmed by the dissonant cacophony of demands stimulated by survival imperatives. The origins of the "myth of democratic revolution" can be traced to the conflation of the US War of Independence against foreign rule with the establishment of the modern world's first democratic pact among political elites. In truth, the consolidation of democracy in the United States, as also in Western Europe, spanned many decades (over 150 years in the United States, culminating in the civil rights movement in the 1960s) as the democratic franchise was slowly and incrementally expanded through complex layers and across diverse sectors of those societies. Whereas the collective decision to adopt democratic practice is often momentous, the institutionalization and consolidation of democratic process requires considerable time, even under the most favorable conditions. The myth of democratic revolution creates a "revolutionary" expectation of immediate "off-the-shelf" democracy and universal welfare in lesser developed societies.

The Union for Democracy Citizens gathers in Managua to protest against corruption of Nicaraguan politicians, public institutions, and state powers on March 20, 2010.

In truth, the phrase "democratic revolution" is an oxymoron. A CSP study of the recent cascade of democratic transitions in the "second" and "third world" societies (1989-2005) found that endogenous democratic transitions took place almost exclusively in societies that had experienced little or no armed societal (internal) conflict since 1946; these transitions were independent of economic level of development (measured traditionally as GDP per capita). Even when confined to peaceful societies, democratic transitions often triggered or enabled the onset of some political violence events; however, these episodes were mostly confined to low levels of violence. Major violence led to autocratic backsliding in those cases where the compulsion to force an outcome to a contention among constituent groups could not be assuaged. A CSP student conducted a systematic study of democratic transitions since the end of World War II

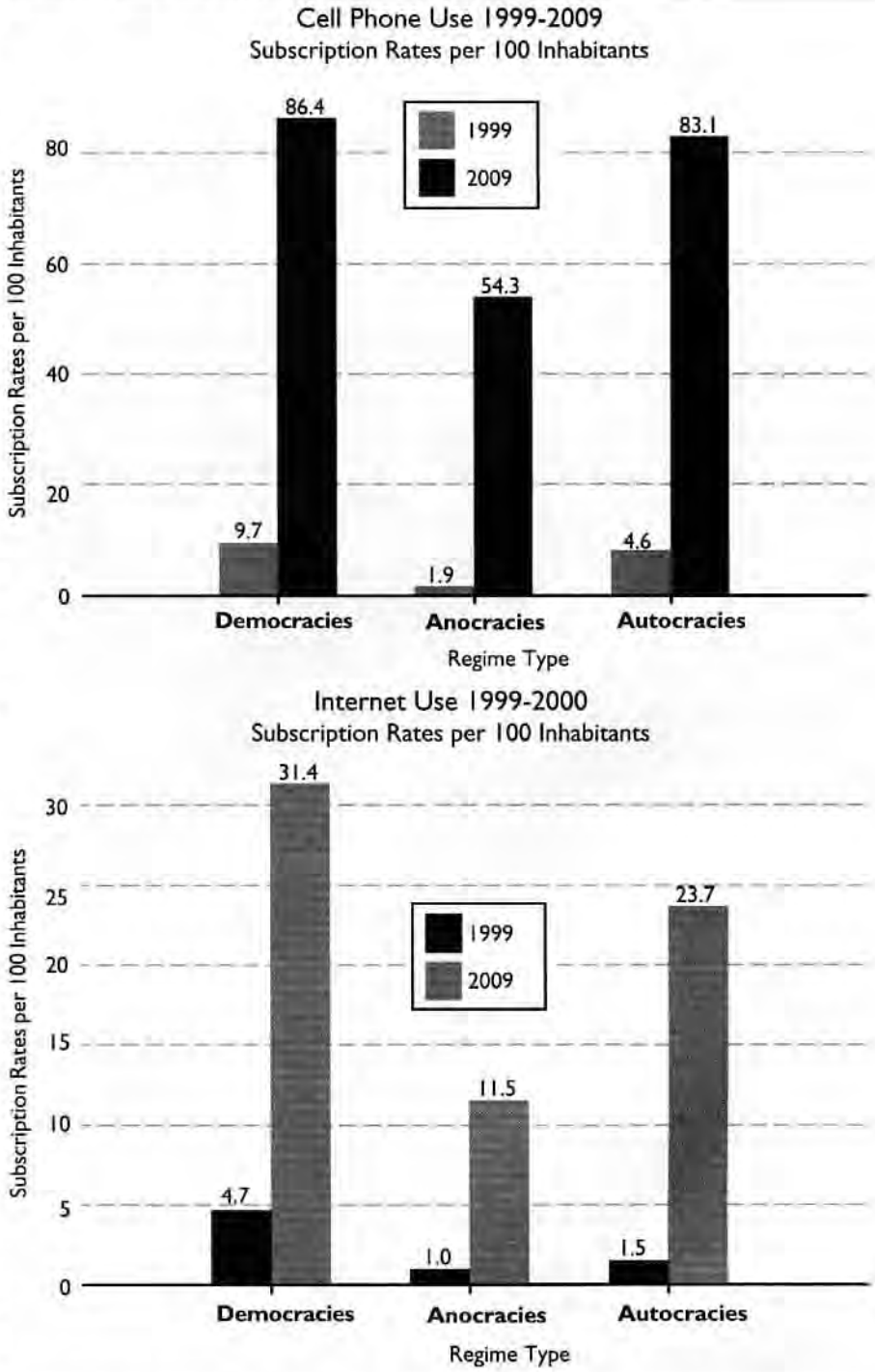
Photos Courtesy Reuters

and found that the consolidation of democracy is necessarily predicated on the voluntary cooperation of both established (state) and emerging (civil society) actors in the establishment of democratic processes—that is, a pact among constituent actors not to use force in the resolution of conflict. Another student, Benjamin R. Cole, has argued that the emergence of democratic processes in modern states is a function of the need and desire to "harness social complexity" to increase general (non-excludable) systemic welfare. The "harnessing of social complexity" involves the effective integration of constituencies and expansion of political enfranchisement to increase the ratio of stakeholders to non-stakeholders in the societal-system and increase its productive potential. These studies provide valuable insights in the relationship between democratic processes and peace. Taken together, the evidence favors a "democratic peace" tautology. Even so, democratic consolidation under favorable conditions may not necessarily be linear, but should remain continuous (i.e., democratic back-stepping should be expected rather than autocratic backsliding).

The Global Societal-System

Whereas the emergence of a new democratic order is not controversial, the notion of a global system emanating from globalization processes may be a more provocative assertion. There is little doubt that a "world system" has been established through the global extension of national power by European states which began in the late 15th century, a system dynamic termed "globalism." Globalism was fundamentally discredited by World War II and the collapse of "colonialism." We can distinguish this exclusivist "nationalistic" world system dynamic from the more inclusive globalization dynamic. Both spatial dynamics are a function of improving mobility, transport, and communication technologies and the increasing potential for power projection and global reach. However, whereas "globalism" represents the expansion or extension of the national interest beyond the boundaries of a particular

Timely Technologies



International Telecommunication Union, Geneva; 2009

societal-system and is thus inherently biased toward the use of force, the globalization dynamic stems from systemic innovation and entrepreneurial interests in connecting and integrating societal-systems on the basis of common interests and in fostering compliance in the coordination of effort in collective endeavors.

The globalization dynamic can be viewed as an integral, technological function of complex, societal-systems. Societal-systems are self-actuating, self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-correcting systems based on the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. "Subsidiarity" refers to decentralized administration and management whereby public policy is formulated and implemented at the level and location of administration most appropriate to the task; "complementarity" refers to a common and commonly understood set of social norms and laws wherein societal-system constituencies can identify rational incentives for system compliance and personal stakes in system maintenance. States, then, can be seen to be natural and integral administrative structures in the larger global system; the prior establishment of states makes the larger system possible. They are also the social foundations of popular sovereignty, where good governance can be measured as a multi-tiered and integrated performance function in the state's primary systemic responsibility for conflict management among the special interests of civil constituencies.

This perspective proposes that democratic transformation is the natural, organic expression of any societal-system; therefore, the emergence of autocratic authority structures is a circumstantial adaptation impelled by higher order (survival) imperatives, of which principal among these societal circumstances are general ignorance and limited association and interaction among constituents. Once in place, autocratic regimes are susceptible to "capture" by self-serving organizations and patronage structures; in order to ensure and justify the continuation of autocratic rule, autocratic regimes act to preserve and entrench the social imbalances, divisions, and relatively adverse conditions that gave them rise. These conditions most commonly accumulate as societal-systems emerge or are forged from anarchy and disorder. Viewed in these terms, the democratic process most clearly distinguishes itself from autocracy, as democracy enables and even promotes the intrinsic self-corrective dynamic of societal-systems, whereas the autocratic process responds to increasing social conflict through management strategies that can best be understood as hyper-regulatory.

Self-regulation encompasses the functions normally attributed to governance and "rule of law." A formal distinction must be made between the enforcement of the law and compliance with the law, as autocracy relies primarily on the former and democracy on the latter. Self-corrective social movements are not uncommon and are often described as guided by "invisible hands" and resulting in "monumental events" that change system trajectories in fundamental ways, as already mentioned. Examples include the movement to prohibit war that culminated in the UN System, the civil rights movement in the United States, and the perestroika movement that led to the dismantling of the Socialist bloc. Louis Coser has identified social conflict as a pervasive dynamic in societal-systems that motivates political action and stimulates systemic innovation; self-corrective action thus serves to reduce or manage sources of tension in the system and expand management capacity.

> "Societal-systems are self-actuating, self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-correcting systems based on the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity."

Democratization, then, is the process by which civil society asserts popular authority over the institutions of the state, and the consolidation of democracy is the process by which civil society learns to govern itself through the conflict management capacity of the state, without resort to force. A disconnect can be identified from examination of the "democratic peace proposition," which draws from considerable evidence that democratic states do not engage in war with one another. Democratic states do engage in war with non-democratic states, however, and, because they are often the more powerful of the contending states, they may initiate military action. This indicates that "democratic peace," as it is based on a particularly statist attribute, is an "excludable" peace. Extant measures of democracy (including the Polity IV measure) focus on the qualities of domestic authority; no special attention is paid in these measurement schemes to qualities of authority exercised by the state in its external relations. The lack of such a measure presents a serious limitation to global system analysis. In brief, unilateral policy is non-democratic. A "systemic peace," then, is a non-excludable peace whereby the democratic peace of constituent states manifests both internally and externally.

Monitoring Global System Performance

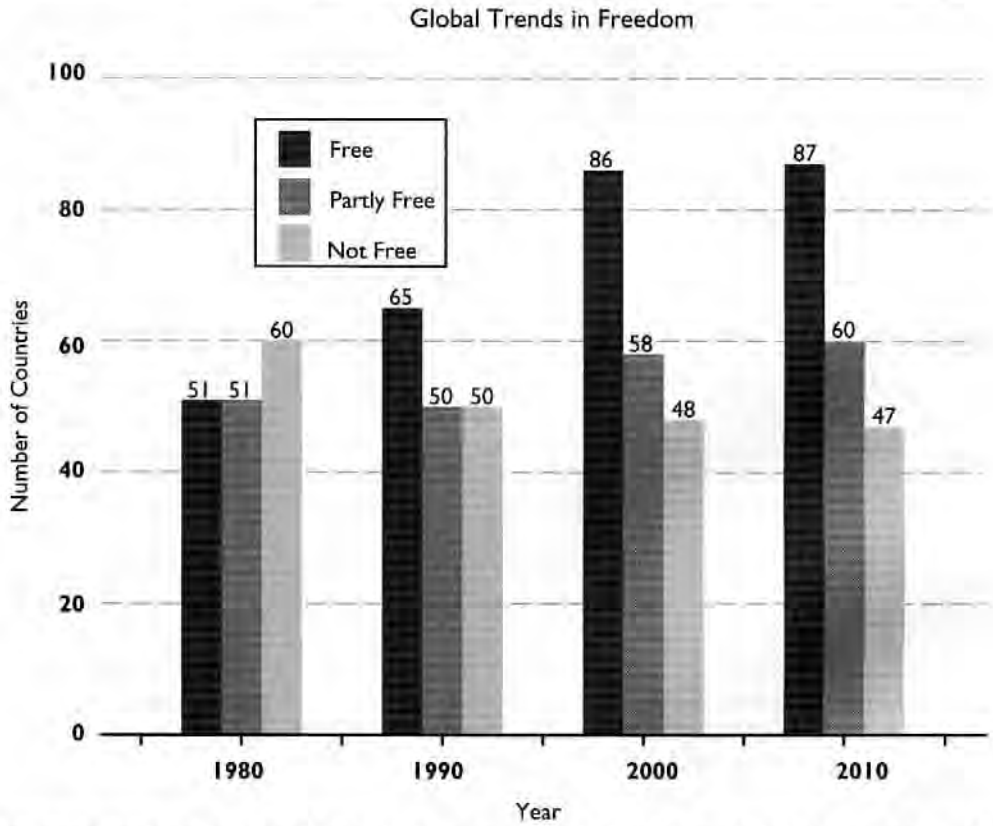
Quantitative macro-comparative analysis in the social sciences is a natural corollary to increasing societal-system

complexity and the progression of social learning technologies. If war and revolution are neither fruitful nor morally acceptable, arbiters of political disputes must inform and compel rational choice in public policy decision-making. Such advocacy of a systemic peace necessitates global monitoring, and monitoring global system performance has been the central focus of the Center for Systemic Peace. Having detailed the pervasive and protracted violence of "World War III" during the Cold War in my book published in 1999, this author conducted a follow up study to see if and how global system performance had changed since the end of the Cold War. The global magnitude of political violence, as well as the number of states experiencing violence, had fallen substantially since its peak in 1991. Notably, it had fallen by nearly 60 percent by 2007 but appears to have leveled off in recent years, as has the number of democracies. The reduction in global warfare was complemented by the increase in global democracy already noted above. More recently, a "state fragility" index was developed to monitor societal development performance in the global system. That index combines eight indicators in a 2x4 matrix, including separate effectiveness and legitimacy indicators for each of four components: security, political, economic (physical capital), and social (human capital). The State Fragility Matrix provides annual measures beginning with 1995; it has documented a 20 percent decrease in state fragility in the global system since 1995. These findings are detailed in the CSP Global Report series.

The most underappreciated implication of the findings of this global monitoring effort is that the United Nations system does work, and has worked particularly well since the end of the Cold War. The Human Security Report series has corroborated our findings and attributes the changes to increases in international activism more generally. The relationship between the United Nations and international activism can be thought of as the self-regulation and self-correction mechanisms of the global system (transnational corporations and international trade would be part of the self-organizing aspect of globalization). In fact, the administration of the United Nations itself does not seem to appreciate the importance of the evidence of the positive performance of the global system and its own role in that performance.

The documented low level of interstate warfare since its creation with the end of World War II indicates that the UN system has had a measureable, beneficial effect in terms of its primary purposes since its inception. Of course, most of the problems of the contemporary global system lie within its member states, and these impact the states' willingness and/or capabilities to integrate and engage effectively with globalization dynamics and the global system. The Charter of the United Nations states clearly that the organization is not authorized to "intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" in Article 2.7, and this restriction, while ensuring that the United Nations does not develop into a centralized authority structure, has inhibited the

Freedom in Flux



Freedom House; 2011

global system from creating a more effective incentive structure to promote or induce better performance in its member states. Where the UN system has been most effective in this regard is in the promotion of humanitarian and developmental assistance, and human development more generally.

We should not discount the proactive importance of the systematic promotion of humanitarian and developmental assistance and human development. This indirect and incremental strategy for influencing societal-system performance has had dual effects: it has served to increase the associative capacity and interactive densities of civil society sectors in less developed societal-systems, and it has helped to ameliorate some of the worse effects of social marginalization in global "ghetto" areas. Marginalization feeds alienation and the formulation of radical and revolutionary perspectives; it also stimulates anti-state mobilization among non-stakeholders and encourages extremist behaviors.

Our research suggests that there are fundamental differences between revolutionary and democratization processes. In the most basic terms, revolutionary processes occur when key civil society sectors side with the marginalized sectors against the policies of state; democratization processes occur when civil society pressures the state to broaden societal integration and, eventually, asserts defining influence over setting the policy agenda (deliberation and negotiation) and guiding policy implementation (accountability and responsiveness).

Societal Networking and Democratic Potential

In *Third World War: System, Process, and Conflict Dynamics*, this author argued that the perceived relationship between economic growth and societal-system development (and, by implication, democratic potential) is largely spurious; that is, they are both driven by some other dynamic—the realized systemic capacity for concerted, collective action. Societal-system development was instead an integral function of the quality of "associational ties and interaction densities" of system members (i.e., societal network dynamics) and that increases in such activity would push the political proclivities of system members away from instrumental force (autocratic) strategies of conflict management toward greater reliance on sociational compliance (democratic) strategies. Social organizations provide interaction nodes where information can be exchanged and collective strategies assessed by members; interaction densities include both within unit (organizational cohesion based on common interests) and across unit activity (organizational integration based on shared interests). These fundamental dynamics of societal-system development obtain at any and all levels of societal-system organization and are fundamentally linked across levels: increases in activity at one level will be reflected in increases at others (an internal-external system linkage).

The Union of International Associations (UIA) has monitored and documented the growth of international intergovernmental (IIGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) since 1909. In 1909, the UIA counts 37 IIGOs and 176 INGOs; by 1951, these numbers had increased to 123 IGOs and 832 INGOS. By 1985, the numbers had grown to 3,546 IIGOs and 20,634 INGOs. In the most recent year for which data is available (2004), the numbers had grown to 7,305 and 51,509 respectively. In regard to "interaction densities," we have the standard measure of economic activity, GDP per capita, as a surrogate measure; we can look to increases in urbanization as an indirect measure, as urban environments have more numerous and more frequent interactions than rural environments. We can also look at the growth of infrastructural manifestations and traces of societal dynamics in transportation, communication, and service networks. Perhaps the most pertinent measures of interaction capacity moving forward are the increases in cell phone and internet subscriptions compiled by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) based in Geneva. We can compare changes in subscription rates per 100 inhabitants from 1999 to 2009 for the three categories of governance regimes (in 2009): democracies, anocracies, and autocracies ("anocracies" are mixed, or incoherent, authority regimes; these types of regimes have historically proven to be the most unstable regimes). Democracies (not including the advanced industrial democracies) show an average increase in cell phone subscription rates from 9.7 percent in 1999 to 86.4 percent in 2009, and in internet rates from 4.7 percent to 31.4 percent; cell phone rates in

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mixed authority regimes (anocracies) change from 1.9 to 54.3 percent, and internet from 1.0 to 11.5 percent; in autocracies, the rates are closer to those of the democracies, with cell phone rates of 83.1 percent in 2009 (up from 4.6) and internet rates of 23.7 percent in 2009 (up from 1.5), with wealthy autocracies showing the largest rate changes.

Since the end of the Cold War, globalization dynamics have increased dramatically, and the observation that a global system exists should no longer be a controversial proposition. Failure to account for and address global system effects will have serious effects for both analysis and policy formulation. These dynamics present essential challenges to the precepts of autocratic rule and thus the persistence of autocratic regimes. Civil societies are increasing their capacity to act independently of the state: failures of the state to foster greater rational integration of civil society elements, and thereby increase democratization capacity, will instead contribute to increases in the revolutionary potential of the societal-system, where emotional response energizes societal networks in the common, irrational purpose of dismantling the state, with crippling societal-system capabilities as an unintended, but inescapable, consequence.

Toward a Systemic Peace

I would like to draw attention to compelling evidence of an equally profound continuity and commonality in the otherwise complex and diverse, global system. For the past twelve years, I have worked in collaboration with the US government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF); it has been the most intense learning experience imaginable. The Task Force was founded in 1994 to develop an empirically driven, global model for anticipating "state failure" events anywhere in the world; these are defined as the onset of major, societal (revolutionary or ethnic-separatist) armed conflict or an adverse regime change (i.e., a major setback in a state's progression toward democracy).

Over the course of 16 years, PITF has compiled, examined, and/or refined every available, pertinent data resource; considered every academic perspective and analytic approach; employed every statistical technique; and entertained every expert observation and criticism in the pursuit of this effort in global analysis. In this light, one finding stands out: that, despite the infinitely detailed diversity and complexity of the global system, the problem of political instability in its many and varied constituent states can be understood with reference to the most simple of models focusing on representative indicators of four key qualities: context, conflict, governance, and development. More complicated treatments have not improved analytic capabilities beyond this simple model.

The most powerful indicator in the PITF modeling effort has come to be identified as a crisis in governance which we have termed "factionalism" (after the Polity IV indicator value, PARCOMP=3 "factional," from which it is derived; this condition is similar to the concept of polarization common in sociological studies of conflict). We conducted a systematic study of the factionalism condition and found that it has commonly pitted civil society groups in direct opposition to the state. Both autocratic reforms and democratic transitions during the Cold War period were often characterized by factionalism; when they were, they almost always led to state repression, autocratic backsliding and even the onset of separatist warfare.

Presidential candidates gather for the 2nd round presidential election at the headquarters of RHPD (coalition of opposition) in Cocody, Abidjan, November 10, 2010.

Since the end of the Cold War, the occurrence of a factional crisis in governance has led in most cases toward greater democracy, as the state eschews repression and acts, instead, to accommodate civil society demands and more broadly integrate civil society groups within the societal-system. These changes can be seen as part of the global democratic transition. Despite our diversity and challenges, our common humanity binds us together and lends support to the proposition that a sustainable, systemic peace is humanly possible. ■