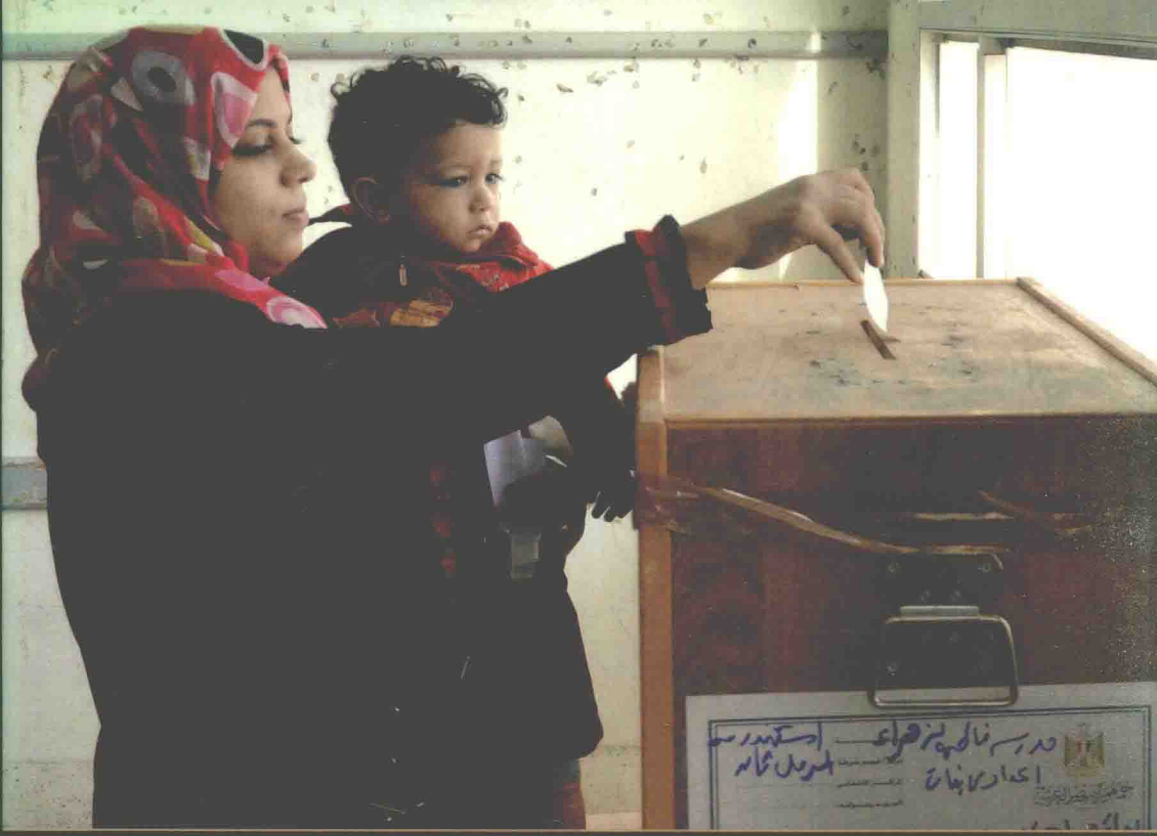

Pippa Norris

MAKING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE WORK

How Regimes Shape Prosperity, Welfare, and Peace

CAMBRIDGE

Making Democratic Governance Work

How Regimes Shape Prosperity, Welfare, and Peace

PIPPA NORRIS
Harvard University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107602694

First published 2012

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Norris, Pippa.
Making democratic governance work : how regimes shape prosperity,
welfare, and peace / Pippa Norris.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-107-01699-6 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-60269-4 (paperback)
1. Democracy – Economic aspects. 2. Economic development – Political aspects.
3. Political science – Economic aspects. I. Title.
JC423.N675 2012
321.8–dc23 2012004308

ISBN 978-1-107-01699-6 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-60269-4 Paperback

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book has followed a lengthy period of gestation. The original stimulus for writing this volume was my experience five years ago directing the work of the democratic governance practice within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where I was frequently confronted by the practical challenges of development. On many occasions, colleagues from related agencies and bureaus asked how the United Nations' commitment to strengthen the institutions and processes of democratic governance contributed toward other urgent priorities facing the organization, from achieving the Millennium Development Goals to overcoming the challenge of enduring poverty, mitigating the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, peace building and reducing the grievances leading to armed conflict, and combating HIV-AIDS. We were engaged in writing the UNDP's strategic plan, which sought to express a coherent vision demonstrating how the work of all parts of the organization tied together. At the time, I, like many colleagues in the organization, remained frustrated that we struggled to provide a plausible response to these requests. Of course, we offered anecdotal stories and illustrations from common practices, but little that could be regarded as conclusive evidence. How did improving electoral administration in Liberia, strengthening parliaments in Burundi, expanding the capacity of public sector management in Ukraine, or advising on anticorruption strategies in Guatemala actually help deliver clean water, reduce hunger, expand growth, or prevent humanitarian crises?

After a long period of reflection, this book seeks to provide at least a partial answer to these puzzling questions. I learned a tremendous amount from these discussions with UNDP colleagues, especially Pauline Tamasis, and also from collaborating with many other international development agencies over the years, including the World Bank; the National Democratic Institute (NDI); the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA); the Council of Europe; the European Union (EU); and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The intellectual foundations for this book also build upon my previous research. Earlier books have compared democratic institutions, culture, and processes, including studies about value change and societal modernization, public support for democratic principles and practices, patterns of political engagement and activism, the distribution of religious and secular values, women's representation and gender equality, the impact of political communications and new digital technologies, and the design of power-sharing constitutions. As the next step, it seems timely and important to turn from analyzing the multiple causes of democratization to understanding some of the potential consequences.

I was also encouraged to do so by many Harvard students who have taken my classes on democracy and democratization over the years, as well as by colleagues from economics and other disciplines, who frequently urged me to address the consequences of political reform for achieving many other development objectives. In my classes, students learned about theories of democratization and measures of the quality of democratic governance, the principles of electoral design, the options for power-sharing constitutions, the ways that countries reduce corruption and expand access to justice, and so on. They were curious to learn about these issues, but, they often asked, would democratic governance actually help confront the challenges they faced back home – in Nigeria and Ghana, Burma and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, Mexico and Brazil? Would elections help overcome endemic problems of poverty and inequality? Would power-sharing reduce violence and instability? Would inclusive parliaments prove more responsive to social needs? Would good governance help development aid reach clinics and food banks rather than enriching the bank accounts of elites? They were natural skeptics. In many ways, based on my reading of the research literature, so was I.

Well, maybe, I usually responded. Possibly. Under certain conditions. But instead of puzzling about the instrumental consequences, I answered more confidently, democratic governance can and should be valued as intrinsically good, in and for itself. Citizens should be able to choose their own representative governments, exercising the basic right to determine their own fates, irrespective of any impact on other dimensions of development. After all, as specified in Article 21(3) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." Students often wanted to be convinced, but this answer was only partially persuasive. Many continued to express the hope that, in addition to its intrinsic value, democratic governance would also deliver concrete instrumental benefits to improve people's lives in the world's poorest societies. Whether these connections can be demonstrated to skeptics is challenging, however, and irrespective of our personal values and beliefs, the empirical evidence deserves to be thoroughly and systematically examined, with an open mind about the final conclusions. I was still reluctant to go down this road, realizing how

far this would force me to travel ill equipped into disciplinary territories well beyond the familiar and comfortable tribal boundaries of comparative political science. Given my initial skepticism, and my commitment to democracy, I was also concerned that the evidence might run counter to my own values, providing fodder to support democracy's critics and to prop up illiberal regimes. In many ways, the journey has proved difficult but worthwhile, and this book reflects my long-delayed response to my students, colleagues, and UNDP practitioners.

Contemporary headlines around the world also reinforced the importance of understanding the issues considered in this book, not least the unfolding developments in the "Arab uprisings." The Tunisian regime transition proved relatively peaceful, after ousted leader, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, fled in January 2011. Morocco introduced reforms to the monarchy and held elections in late 2011 in which the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) won the most seats. By contrast, elsewhere in the region, the events toppling the regime of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt were characterized by sporadic outbreaks of violence and street protests before the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi Nour won the first post-transition elections. Libyans experienced an outright civil war, Yemen saw prolonged instability, and unrest has simmered in Jordan, while brutal suppression of protest movements occurred in Syria and Bahrain. The uprisings, like the transformation of postcommunist Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, have been carried out in the name of promoting democracy, although survey evidence suggests that a democratic regime may be desired for its assumed instrumental consequences, and thus the potential benefits for growth and peace, as much as for its intrinsic value.

The final catalyst for this project arose from participating in the American Political Science Association Taskforce on Indicators of Democracy and Governance, under the leadership of Henry Brady and Michael Coppedge. Meetings at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Annenberg Public Policy Center in Philadelphia, and continuing our debates in floods of emails, forced us all to think harder about the core concepts and measures in this subfield. A broad consensus was quickly established about concepts and standard indices of liberal democracy, but our search to identify equally coherent ideas and measures of good governance proved more challenging and frustrating.

As always, this book also owes immense debts to many friends and colleagues. Research for the project was generously supported by the award of the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate from the Australian Research Council, for which I am immensely grateful. The project also draws heavily on the work of the Quality of Governance (QoG) Institute at the University of Gothenburg, including their shared datasets and ideas generated at an early workshop at the Institute. The theme of the book started to be developed following conversations over the years with colleagues at Harvard's Kennedy School (HKS) of Government and the Department of Government at Harvard University. I also greatly appreciate the academic hospitality offered by the

Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney, and I am deeply indebted to Michael Spence, Duncan Ivison, and Simon Tormey for facilitating the arrangement of my visit, as well as to all colleagues in the department. Sydney provided a welcoming home for completing the book manuscript.

I am also most grateful to all colleagues and friends who provided encouraging comments on this project during its gestation, including Michael Coppedge, Ivor Crewe, Larry Diamond, David Ellwood, Francis Fukuyama, Graeme Gill, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Ben Goldsmith, Simon Hug, Elaine Kamarck, Danny Kaufmann, John Keane, William Keech, Phil Keefer, Alex Keysaar, Stephen Krasner, David Laitin, Margaret Levy, Jane Mansbridge, Lant Pritchett, Robert Putnam, Richard Rose, Bo Rothstein, and Jan Teorell. I also always appreciate the invaluable help and assistance from Camiliakumari Wankaner at HKS. I received invaluable feedback from presentations of draft chapters at various professional meetings, including the Western Political Science Association meeting in San Francisco in 2010; faculty seminars at HKS; the European Consortium Joint Workshops in St. Gallen in April 2011; seminars in the Department of Politics at the University of Brisbane and the University of Queensland in May 2011; the conference on "Democracy in East Asia and Taiwan in Global Perspective" held in Taipei, Taiwan, in August 2011; and annual meetings of the American Political Science Association held in Washington, D.C., in September 2010 and in Seattle in September 2011. Finally, as always, the support of Cambridge University Press has proved invaluable, particularly the patience, efficient assistance, and continuous enthusiasm of my editor, Lew Bateman, as well as the helpful comments of the reviewers.

Contents

Tables and Figures

TABLES

FIGURES

PART I

INTRODUCTION

I

Does Democratic Governance Determine Human Security?

This book focuses on three core questions. Is democratic governance good for economic prosperity? Has this type of regime accelerated progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, social welfare, and human development? Does it generate a peace dividend and reduce conflict at home? Prosperity, welfare, and peace are core components of human security, reflecting critical risks and interrelated threats facing an increasingly complex and globalized world.[1] Despite the importance of understanding these questions, and despite the vast research literature generated on each of these topics, remarkably little consensus has emerged about any of these issues. Within the international community, democracy and good governance are widely advocated as intrinsically desirable and important goals. Nevertheless, several alternative schools of thought continue to dispute the consequences of democratic governance, each presenting contrasting visions about the most effective strategy for expanding human security. This book seeks to develop a more unified theory and to examine systematic empirical evidence throwing fresh light on this debate.

During recent decades, the *democracy-promotion* perspective has become increasingly popular, championed by commentators such as Thomas Carothers, Larry Diamond, Morton Halperin, Michael McFaul, Joseph Siegle, and Michael Weinstein, among others. This perspective emphasizes that deepening and consolidating the principles and procedures of liberal democracy will have intrinsic benefits, reinforcing human rights around the globe, as well as instrumental payoffs, by improving human security.[2] Through constraining predatory leaders, expanding voice and participation, and empowering citizens to rid themselves of incompetent rulers, democracy-promoters hope that this type of regime will make elected officials more accountable to ordinary people and thus more responsive to social needs and political grievances. In places undergoing transitions from autocracy – exemplified by developments in Egypt, Myanmar/Burma, and Tunisia – democracy-promoters argue that it is essential to strengthen human rights and fundamental freedoms for their own sake. In addition, however, commentators such as Halperin, Siegle, and

Weinstein argue that this process also delivers concrete benefits by reducing poverty, expanding educational opportunities and building the conditions for lasting peace in developing societies. Carothers identifies a standard template that the international community seeks to foster in transitions from autocracy and the consolidation of democracy. The early stages of this process include developing constitutional frameworks respecting human rights, strengthening competitive political parties, and holding competitive elections that meet international standards. The process moves on with a series of initiatives designed to strengthen the capacity of effective and inclusive legislatures, professionalizing independent judicial bodies and the courts, decentralizing decision making for local government, and also expanding participation in civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the independent media.[3] Yet it is striking that the standard democracy template that Carothers recognizes as practiced by most democracy aid programs is not also directed toward state-building, with relatively little attention devoted toward activities such as strengthening public sector management in the civil service and central government ministries, establishing civilian control of militia, and training security forces. The power of the core executive is commonly regarded by democracy-promoters as part of the problem, not part of the solution to achieving developmental goals for meeting social needs.

Despite the popularity of democracy promotion, these initiatives have come under growing challenge from alternative viewpoints. Where basic human security is lacking, diverse commentators such as Simon Chesterman, James Fearon, Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, Stephen Krasner, David Laitin, and Roland Paris have all advocated *state-building* in postconflict societies.[4] From the state-building perspective, the poorest developing societies – places such as Somalia, Chad, Timor-Leste, and Southern Sudan – can be understood as "weak" or "failed" states emerging from a long legacy of conflict and anarchy where the central authorities have limited capacity to maintain order and manage the delivery of many basic public goods and services.[5] Governments struggle to guarantee conditions of public safety (such as in Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo), to protect against the worst effects of humanitarian and natural crisis (such as following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, floods in Benin, and famine in Niger), and to provide universal access to schooling and healthcare for their citizens (such as in Liberia). There is no single understanding of the concept of state-building, but it is commonly thought to include public sector reforms designed to strengthen the core functions of executive agencies, government ministries, the civil service, the courts, security services, local government agencies, and public sector management. The core functions of the state restored through this process including the capacity to maintain security and rule of law; to provide basic services, such as emergency relief, schools, and healthcare; to formulate and administer budget plans; and to collect taxation revenues.[6] Cases such as Timor-Leste, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Southern Sudan exemplify the complex dilemmas raised by attempts by the international community to rebuild government

capacity.[7] The state-building school of thought generally acknowledges the normative value of democracy as an abstract ideal, but recognizes the pragmatic benefits of strengthening governance institutions as the overarching priority. In the strongest version of this argument, state-builders contend that in "weak" or "fragile" states, democracy-promotion should be deferred, with the postponement of multiparty elections or attempts to strengthen civil society organizations. This idea has also been increasingly reinforced by several agencies in the international community, led by the World Bank, which emphasize the developmental benefits thought to accrue from strengthening the institutions of "good governance," reflecting the principles of transparency, accountability, and rule of law.

Lastly, the claimed beneficial consequences of both democracy-promotion and state-building for development are questioned by the *structural* view, emphasizing the role of deep drivers of human security reflecting fixed and enduring conditions, irrespective of the type of regime in power.[8] From this perspective, countries are poor because, like Liberia, they are land-locked and stranded at the periphery of international trade markets. Or, like Somalia, they lack investment in human capital, new technologies, and physical infrastructure (transportation, communications, factories, clinics, and schools). Or, like Bangladesh, they are located in an area vulnerable to tropical diseases and susceptible to natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Or, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, they are plagued by the scourge of violent conflict, deep-seated social inequality, and ethnic divisions. Or perhaps states confront "all of the above." For all these reasons, no matter the most heroic attempts by the international community and national leaders to strengthen and transform democratic governance, it is thought Panglossian to dream that through the process of regime change, a Niger could thereby rise up the ladder of development to become a Nigeria or a Nicaragua, much less a Norway. Structuralists emphasize that the type of regime has minimal impact on human security, in part because political institutions are themselves the *product* of deep-seated socioeconomic and geographic conditions (the classic "Lipset thesis") rather than functioning as an independent cause of development.[9] From this viewpoint, it is naïve and foolish at best, and dangerous at worst, to hope that complex political processes of regime transition and democratization can generate immediate economic payoffs, reductions in poverty, or peace processes that improve the lives of ordinary people and thereby transform societies. In the words of a saying popularized by Jacob Zuma, "You can't eat democracy."[10]

Arguments about these rival claims are commonly heard in contemporary foreign policy circles in Washington, Paris, Berlin, and London when debating the most effective interventions for the world's trouble spots. In some cases, one side or the other wins the argument; after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it seemed to many self-evident that democratic elections, multiparty competition, and initiatives strengthening human rights, civil society, and the independent media were the most urgent priorities facing the reconstruction of postcommunist societies in Central and Eastern Europe. In other cases, such

as newly independent postconflict Timor-Leste and Kosovo, it seemed equally self-evident to many observers that the basic structure of the new government had to be created, including security services and justice, central ministries, and public sector management.

But in many other countries around the world lacking the institutions for both liberal democracy and for effective state capacity – in Iraq and Afghanistan, Egypt and Libya, or Southern Sudan and Yemen – the choices about strategic priorities are far from self-evident. In a situation of limited resources – and there are always limited resources – if you were determining priorities, do you choose to invest aid into parliaments – or courts? Do you train police – or journalists? Do you hold elections – or rebuild government agencies? Do you "do it all"? Or do you instead choose to bypass governments by investing directly in humanitarian aid, blue-helmet security, clean water wells, anti-malaria nets, child immunization, girls' schools, health clinics, antiretroviral drugs, rural food collectives, microfinance, demilitarization job training, and de-mining programs, where the international community works in partnership directly with local civil society organizations, on the grounds that these types of initiatives are more likely to generate an immediate, concrete payoff in people's lives than attempts to strengthen democratic governance? These are not simply abstract scholarly questions; debate about these sorts of dilemmas commonly divides donor agencies, NGOs, think-tanks, national governments, and multilateral organizations in the international development community.

The claims and counterclaims are often framed in the context of particular cases currently in the headlines, exemplified by the world's fascination with dramatic events unfolding during the Arab uprisings in Tahrir Square, the battle for Tripoli, or protests and bloody repression in Homs, Manama, and Damascus. Understanding these issues has much wider and deeper resonance beyond specific cases, however, including for the ongoing violence in Democratic Republic of Congo, the stirrings of liberalization in Myanmar/Burma, and the famine in Somalia, with debates about priorities dividing scholars among diverse disciplines within the social sciences as well as practitioners.

As reviewed in subsequent chapters, by now an extensive econometric literature in comparative politics, developmental economics, and international studies has tested the impact of democratization and governance for the attainment of multiple developmental goals, employing empirical indices of income growth, social welfare, and conflict. Some studies of the empirical evidence do indeed report detecting significant linkages, where regimes influence human security. Yet the direction of causality is usually complex to interpret due to potential interaction. Cross-national and time-series data often prove messy and untidy. Research on regime effects has been fragmented across different subfields and indices. Models often suffer from omitted variables or countries. Cherry-picked cases have limited generalizability due to selection bias. Theories about the underlying mechanisms supposedly linking regimes and development remain underdeveloped. For all these reasons, overall this rich body of research has failed to demonstrate robust and consistent confirmation

of many core claims, disappointing the hopes of proponents. The lack of consensus weakens the ability of social scientists to offer rigorous evidence-based policy advice useful for the practitioner community.

It is important to attempt to construct a unified and comprehensive theory from these claims and counterclaims, building on each of these incomplete perspectives but going beyond them to synthesize our understanding about the impact of regimes on diverse dimensions of human security. The current debate reflects an unfortunate intellectual schism and an artificial division of labor among various disciplines in the social sciences. It also arises from divergent normative values. These intellectual blinkers are reinforced by the varied mandates of development agencies within the international community, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the European Union. Each argument presents an incomplete and partial vision, often deriving plausibility from certain particular cases but limited in its broader generalizability. Like scattered pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the alternative perspectives become more coherent and comprehensive, and the supporting evidence becomes clearer and more convincing, if synthesized into an integrated theoretical framework.

THE UNIFIED THEORY OF DEMOCRACY + GOVERNANCE

Accordingly, the unified theory at the heart of this book predicts that the institutions of both liberal democracy *and* state capacity need to be strengthened in parallel for the most effective progress deepening human security, within the broader enduring fixed constraints posed by structural environments. Democracy and governance are rightly regarded as separate and distinct phenomena, both conceptually and empirically. This book contends that regimes reflecting *both* dimensions are necessary (although not sufficient) for effective development. These dimensions function separately, rather than interacting; thus, as discussed fully in later chapters, today certain types of states, exemplified by China and Singapore, are particularly strong in their capacity for governance, but they continue to fail to protect basic human rights. Others, such as Ghana, El Salvador, and Mali, have registered significant gains in democracy during recent years, but these regimes continue to be plagued by weak governance capacity to deliver public goods and services. Certain contemporary regimes are strong on both dimensions – not simply established Western democracies in affluent societies such as Canada, Germany, and Sweden, but also many diverse third wave democracies and emerging economies, including Chile, Slovenia, and Taiwan. Still other regimes around the world – exemplified by Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Azerbaijan – display an exceptionally poor performance on both democratic rights and state capacity. The book develops a new conceptual typology based on sharpening these general ideas and then focuses on identifying the impact of regimes on a series of vital developmental goals, including economic growth; social welfare, such as education and health; and reductions in interval armed conflict.