

# **Requisites of Democracy**

Conceptualization, measurement,  
and explanation

**Jørgen Møller and  
Svend-Erik Skaaning**



Democratization Studies

# Requisites of Democracy

Conceptualization, measurement,  
and explanation

**Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning**



This edition published 2011  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2011 Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning

The right of Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Møller, Jørgen, 1979–

Requisites of democracy: conceptualization, measurement, and explanation/Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning.

p. cm. – (Democratization studies; 19)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

I. Democracy. I. Skaaning, Svend-Erik. II. Title.

JC423.M653 2011

321.8–dc22

2011002793

ISBN: 978-0-415-59681-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-80803-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Times

by Wearset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear



Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
TJL Digital, Padstow, Cornwall

# Requisites of Democracy

This book brings together the conceptual and theoretical writings of Joseph Schumpeter, Robert A. Dahl, Guillermo O'Donnell, and T. H. Marshall. It demonstrates that most of the different conceptions of democracy in the democratization literature can be ordered in one systematic regime typology that distinguishes between 'thinner' and 'thicker' definitions of democracy.

The authors argue that the empirical pattern revealed by this typology is explained by the combination of internal structural constraints and international factors facilitating democracy. The result of such contending forces is that most of the democratizations in recent decades have only produced competitive elections, rather than 'more demanding' attributes of democracy such as political liberties, the rule of law, and social rights.

Examining theoretical and empirical approaches to measuring, defining, and understanding democracy, the book will be of interest to scholars of political theory and comparative politics in general and democratization studies in particular.

**Jørgen Møller** and **Svend-Erik Skaaning** are both Associate Professors at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, Denmark.

## **Democratization studies** **(formerly Democratization studies, Frank Cass)**

Democratization studies combines theoretical and comparative studies with detailed analyses of issues central to democratic progress and its performance, all over the world.

The books in this series aim to encourage debate on the many aspects of democratization that are of interest to policy-makers, administrators and journalists, aid and development personnel, as well as to all those involved in education.

### **1 Democratization and the Media**

*Edited by Vicky Randall*

### **2 The Resilience of Democracy**

Persistent practice, durable idea

*Edited by Peter Burnell and Peter Calvert*

### **3 The Internet, Democracy and Democratization**

*Edited by Peter Ferdinand*

### **4 Party Development and Democratic Change in Post-communist Europe**

*Edited by Paul Lewis*

### **5 Democracy Assistance**

International co-operation for democratization

*Edited by Peter Burnell*

### **6 Opposition and Democracy in South Africa**

*Edited by Roger Southall*

### **7 The European Union and Democracy Promotion**

The case of North Africa

*Edited by Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs*

### **8 Democratization and the Judiciary**

*Edited by Siri Gloppen, Roberto Gargarella and Elin Skaar*

- 9 Civil Society in Democratization**  
*Edited by Peter Burnell and Peter Calvert*
- 10 The Internet and Politics**  
Citizens, voters and activists  
*Edited by Sarah Oates, Diana Owen and Rachel Gibson*
- 11 Democratization in the Muslim World**  
Changing patterns of authority and power  
*Edited by Frederic Volpi and Francesco Cavatorta*
- 12 Global Democracy: For and Against**  
Ethical theory, institutional design and social struggles  
*Raffaele Marchetti*
- 13 Constructing Democracy in Southern Europe**  
A comparative analysis of Italy, Spain and Turkey  
*Lauren M. McLaren*
- 14 The Consolidation of Democracy**  
Comparing Europe and Latin America  
*Carsten Q. Schneider*
- 15 New Challenges to Democratization**  
*Edited by Peter Burnell and Richard Youngs*
- 16 Multiple Democracies in Europe**  
Political culture in New Member States  
*Paul Blokker*
- 17 Globality, Democracy and Civil Society**  
*Edited by Terrell Carver and Jens Bartelson*
- 18 Democracy Promotion and Conflict-based Reconstruction**  
The United States and democratic consolidation in Bosnia and Afghanistan  
*Matthew Alan Hill*
- 19 Requisites of Democracy**  
Conceptualization, measurement, and explanation  
*Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning*

**To Erik and Oskar**



# Preface

In this short preface, we set the stage for the book. We do so, first, by documenting the historical absence of a clear consensus about the meaning of the term democracy, and second, by pointing out that we nevertheless set out to identify some ordered patterns in the literature. The more general objective is to show that this often quite technical book writes into an age-old and extremely interesting debate about the definition of democracy.

Witness the following quote from George Orwell (1962 [1946]: 2237):

The words *democracy*, *socialism*, *freedom*, *patriotic*, *realistic*, *justice*, have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like *democracy*, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of régime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different.

These words were first published in April 1946. That is to say that they were penned down in the context of the great public and academic debate on democracy during and in the immediate aftermath of World War II (e.g., Schumpeter, (1974 [1942]; Hayek, 1944; Popper, 1945; Tingsten, 1945; Ross, 1952 [1946]). At this point in time, democracy was defined in very different ways by different people. Some, such as Schumpeter, maintained a purely procedural definition, solely stressing the ‘competitive struggle for people’s vote’ (1974 [1942]: 269).<sup>1</sup> Others, most prominently socialists, construed it as social equality or, even, in the case of the Leninists, as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yet others maintained what Schumpeter called the ‘classical doctrine of democracy’, thereby equating it with an institutional arrangement for realizing the common good.

This academic disagreement was mirrored in the empirical world as a wide variety of regimes proclaimed themselves ‘democratic’ in the decades following



World War II. Some of these were clearly not so according to the Schumpeterian procedural formula. One need only mention the 'people's democracies' of Central and Eastern Europe, Nasser's 'presidential democracy' in Egypt, Sukarno's 'guided democracy' in Indonesia, Franco's 'organic democracy' in Spain, Stroessner's 'selective democracy' in Paraguay, and Trujillo's 'neo-democracy' in the Dominican Republic (Finer, 1962: 242). It is not too difficult to show that we are here dealing with what Giovanni Sartori (1970) termed 'conceptual stretching', that is, a vague and implausible broadening of the meaning of democracy, the semantic correlates of which are to be found in the non-democratic connotations of the employed adjectives (except, perhaps, in the case of 'people's democracies'). But the very proliferation of such regimes goes to show that Orwell was spot on in the observation quoted above.

More than 60 years have passed since this great debate. Has the disagreement abated over this period? Does a broad consensus exist on how to define democracy? To some extent, the answer is a timid 'yes'. After all, few would hold forth the Leninist definition of democracy these days. But, on a more technical level, the answer is clearly 'no'. The scholar who has arguably done most to produce such a consensus, Robert A. Dahl, thus recently noted that it is 'appalling that at this late date we are still struggling with how to conceptualize and measure democracy' (Munck and Snyder, 2007: 145). This diagnosis is of the same ilk as the one he made in *Democracy and Its Critics* two decades ago, observing that 'a term that means anything means nothing. And so it has become with "democracy", which nowadays is not so much a term of restricted and specific meaning as a vague endorsement of a popular idea' (Dahl, 1989: 2). It is striking that this quotation virtually echoes that of Orwell in 1946. And it is equally striking that rampant disagreement about the meaning of democracy resonates throughout the history of the term in general.

Naess *et al.* (1956) and, more recently, Dunn (2005) have documented how the meaning of democracy has undergone significant changes over the millennia. During the heyday of Athenian democracy, statesmen such as Aeschines, Demosthenes, Themistocles, and, particularly, Pericles sang the praises of democracy, which they equaled with the direct rule of the citizens. Nevertheless, virtually all surviving tracts were written by critics of democracy. Most tellingly, the famous 'Funeral Oration' of Pericles is reported by Thucydides, who was antagonistic to the radical form of democracy favored by the former. More importantly, two of the most prominent thinkers of all times ascribed to a highly skeptical view of democracy. Plato considered it to be the penultimate form of misrule, only just better than outright tyranny. And Aristotle equated *demokratia* with the rule of the poor, reserving the word *politeia* for law-abiding, middle-class rule, which he preferred.

Partly due to these writings, 'democracy' received a derogatory meaning within political theory after the fall of the democracies of antiquity (Dunn, 2005). As Naess *et al.* show, democracy was ubiquitously treated as a derogatory term throughout the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, described it as an *iniquum regimen*, an 'unjust government' (Naess *et al.*, 1956: 92). Nor do we,

with a few New Englanders as exceptions that prove the rule, find self-professed democrats in the period from the Renaissance to the American War of Independence (ibid.: 95). The reason was exactly that democracy – listening to Plato – was construed as majority tyranny. Clearly Hobbes entertained this view of democracy, which we also meet much later with Edmund Burke (ibid.: 99–113). At the same time, democracy was, by definition, equaled with direct rule of the citizens rather than with the election of representatives, the actual western European regime form which came to be conceived in the context of the medieval *Ständestaat* (Myers, 1975: 34–35).

Not until the French Revolution did salient political actors start to use the term to signify something positive (Naess *et al.*, 1956; Dunn, 2005). Yet the immediate effect of this usurpation of the term was to reinforce its derogatory meaning outside of revolutionary France. Such was the case because democracy became equaled with the terror rule of Robespierre and the Jacobins.

Nevertheless, the genie was now out of the bottle. Though we meet few ‘honorific applications of the term’ (Naess *et al.*, 1956) in the first half of the nineteenth century, some significant exceptions signal that things were about to change. Naess *et al.* (1956: 123–128) point to the fact that particularly Bentham seemed to apply a positive connotation to the words in this period. Also, they neatly demonstrate the way in which Tocqueville’s use of the term changed from connoting social equality (in *Democracy in America*) to connoting a political method (in his speeches in 1848) (120).

Tocqueville was not alone in undergoing this transition at this particular point in time. With the advent of the great liberal revolutions of the nineteenth century, ‘democracy’ once again became an honorific term. This happened because liberals came to recognize that even a relatively broad (male) franchise did not necessarily imperil property. From the critical juncture in 1848 onwards, we thus increasingly encounter a ‘liberal connotation’ of democracy (Naess *et al.*, 1956: 124).

Dunn (2005) basically retells the story of Naess *et al.* using different terms. His version is that a pitched battle over the meaning of the term was fought out between those who construed it as an ‘order of egoism’ and those construing it as an ‘order of equality’. The former camp, drawing on the classical and medieval doctrine of the ‘mixed constitution’, were initially among those who rallied against democracy for the simple reason that they, like Aristotle, understood it as the rule of the poor. James Madison is particularly instructive here. In *The Federalist*, he used the term ‘republic’ for the constitutional system which he advocated, meanwhile issuing a dire warning against democracy. To render the famous quotation:

Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.

(Hamilton *et al.*, 1974: 133)

In contrast, the latter camp, first associated with the French Revolution, was drawn to the word exactly because of this meaning, that is, due to the ideal about absolute equal access to the exercise of power.

According to Dunn, the two principles subsequently fused as the liberals (and, in time, the conservatives) came to accept democracy as a mixture of the sovereignty of the people<sup>2</sup> and constitutionalism in the nineteenth century.

There seems to be something to this notion of a mid-nineteenth century grand fusion. However, this point should not disguise the fact that democracy again quickly came to mean different things to different people (cf. Christophersen, 1966). One reason was that Dunn's pure order of equality still won praise after the dust of the great liberal revolutions had settled. Witness Karl Marx's use of the concept of democracy before and after these events. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, the word was used as synonymous with the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Democracy was thus equaled with the ascendancy to power of the masses and the concomitant economic transformation. Yet, during and in the immediate aftermath of the great revolutions, Marx began employing the word in a very different meaning, namely as denoting the broad, anti-feudal movement represented by the liberal revolutionaries (Sørensen, 1979).

Soon, however, Marx backed away from this ideal, claiming that genuine political equality could only rest on economic equality. He thus regarded the liberal construction of democracy as a constitutional system as a mirage – or, even more insidiously, as a means of the possessive classes to retain the exploitive, capitalist system.

Finally, according to Schumpeter the classical conception also loomed large in the nineteenth century, adding a third facet to the dispute. Even after the great fusion described by Naess *et al.* and Dunn, the disagreement about the meaning of democracy was thus reproduced.

That democracy was placed on a pedestal did hence not entail that people agreed exactly what was worshipped. Some scholars have in fact gone so far as to argue that producing the agreement on how to define democracy, which Dahl advertises for, and which Orwell regretted the lack of, is intrinsically impossible to obtain. Arend Lijphart (1977: 4), one of the most influential contemporary democratic theorists, accordingly holds that democracy 'is a concept which virtually defies definition'.

Even more famously, the British philosopher Walter Bryce Gallie highlighted democracy as the example *par excellence* of what he termed 'essentially contested concepts' (1956: 184). Gallie's basic point is that, because concepts such as democracy are multi-dimensional, internally complex, abstract, qualitative, and, critically, value-laden (aka evaluative), people will never be able (or, for that matter, willing) to subscribe to one and the same meaning of the term. More technically, people will value different dimensions of the concept to different degrees, making it impossible to aggregate the subcomponents in a uniformly accepted way (Schedler, 2011).

That leaves us to ponder why Orwell and Dahl have objected to this lack of consensus. Disregarding the political abuse of the word by wolves in sheep's

clothing – such as the self-proclaimed democrats listed further up in this preface – the very precondition for assessing causes and correlates of democracy is that an agreement exists about the definition of the concept in the first place. As Giovanni Sartori (1970: 1038) pointed out four decades ago, ‘*concept formation stands prior to quantification*’. Insofar as the broad patterns of the definition are not settled, research on democracy cannot become cumulative as different scholars using different definitions will keep arriving at different results. To quote O’Donnell, who will be our main guide through the morass of democratic theory in this book:

The literature on new democracies shares two basic assumptions: the existence of a sufficiently clear and consistent corpus of democratic theory, and the possibility of using this corpus, with only marginal modifications, as an adequate conceptual tool for the study of emerging democracies. Unfortunately, the first assumption – that there is a clear and consistent corpus of democratic theory – is wrong. By implication, the second, that existing democratic theory ‘travels’ well, is impracticable.

(2001: 7)

All of this may seem to make for a very disheartening conclusion about democratic theory and, *a fortiori*, about research on democratization. What this book sets out to demonstrate, however, is that, though no final consensus has emerged on how to define democracy, some systematic patterns exist, both conceptually and with regard to the situation on the ground. Indeed, to some extent, this is even the case with respect to the causes of democracy.

Addressing these issues, the book brings together the conceptual and theoretical writings of, *inter alia*, Joseph A. Schumpeter, Robert A. Dahl, Guillermo O’Donnell, and T. H. Marshall, based on the methodological guidelines of authors such as Paul Lazarsfeld, Kenneth D. Bailey, Giovanni Sartori, Gary Goertz, David Collier, and Charles Ragin.

The very title of the book reflects this integrative enterprise. The pivotal word here is *Requisites*, which conveys two distinct meanings. First, the word connotes those defining attributes – discussed and analyzed in Parts I and II – which are individually necessary (and jointly sufficient) for democracy. Second, the word also covers those conditions – necessary and causes – of democracy, which we discuss and analyze in Part III.

More particularly, the book reports two general findings. First, we show that it is possible to scale thinner and thicker definitions of democracy conceptually and empirically. These analytical operations produce an ordinal scale of democracy which should prove valuable to research on the causes and correlates of democratization. Second, we demonstrate that the empirical existence of this scale is no coincidence. Suffice here to say that it reflects the fact that, in the context of a liberal hegemony which forces the elites of most countries to at least pay lip-service to democratization, structural conditions still constrain the ability to move into thicker types of democracy. To some extent, this is thus a classic

*plus ça change (plus c'est la même chose)* conclusion as it implies that – due to the structural inhibitions encountered in most developing countries – the democratization processes of the latest decades have not really had salient consequences outside of the electoral realm.

We elaborate on all of this in the Introduction. At this point, it is pertinent to thank a number of people who have assisted us in traversing the territories covered by the book. Several of the chapters have already been published in various journals, and we are much indebted to the many insightful reports from anonymous reviewers that we have received (and had to tackle), as well as the comments received when presenting these papers at international conferences. We are likewise indebted to our editors at Routledge for accepting the book for publication and for encouraging us along the way. Furthermore, we gratefully acknowledge the valuable comments and suggestions on earlier versions of chapters we have received from Mogens Herman Hansen, participants at presentations at Aarhus University in general and from Professors George Sørensen, Jørgen Elklit, and Palle Svensson in particular. Also, we wish to thank graduate student Lasse Lykke Rørbæk, who in the latest stages of the work took on the responsibility to prepare the manuscript according to Routledge's guidelines and to comment on each of the chapters.

Finally, we wish to thank various publishers and journals for allowing us to reproduce published articles. Parts of the Introduction can be found in © Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning: 'Mapping Contemporary Forms of Autocracy', in: *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, Jg.06 Heft 02, Göttingen 2009. Parts of Chapters 1 and 2 have previously been published in Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning (2010), 'Beyond the Radial Delusion: Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy and Non-democracy', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 261–283, reproduced with permission of Sage Publications. A prior version of Chapter 4 has been previously published as Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning (2010), 'Post-Communist Regime Types: Hierarchies across Attributes and Space', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 51–71, reproduced with permission of the editors. A prior version of Chapter 5 can be found in Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning (2010), 'Marshall Revisited: The Sequence of Citizenship Rights in the Twenty-First Century', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp. 457–483, reproduced with permission of John Wiley and Sons. A prior version of Chapter 6 has been previously published as Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning (2011), 'Stateness First?', *Democratization*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 1–24, reproduced with the permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd. Finally, a prior version of the Appendix has been published as Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning (2011), 'Concept-Measure Inconsistency in Contemporary Studies of Democracy', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, reproduced with the permission of the editors.

# Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	xi
<i>List of tables</i>	xii
<i>Preface</i>	xiv
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<i>Setting the stage</i>	2
<i>The importance of alignment</i>	11
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Conceptualizing and measuring democracy</b>	15
<b>1 Defective democracy revisited</b>	17
<i>The defective democracy research agenda</i>	17
<i>Conclusions</i>	27
<b>2 Conceptualizing and measuring democracy I: toward a classical typology</b>	28
<i>A conceptual typology</i>	29
<i>The empirical picture</i>	30
<i>Reintroducing scales</i>	36
<i>Conclusions</i>	40
<b>3 Conceptualizing and measuring democracy II: including social rights?</b>	43
<i>Procedural definitions and their boundaries</i>	43
<i>Modus Procedendi, regime, and state</i>	44
<i>Empirical analysis</i>	50
<i>Conclusions</i>	51

**PART II**

**Trends across space and time** 53

**4 Post-communist regime types: hierarchy across space** 55

*A typology of post-communist regime forms* 56

*Enter the cross-spatial hierarchy* 63

*Conclusions* 65

**5 Marshall revisited: the sequence of citizenship rights in the twenty-first century** 67

*Adapting Marshall's sequence to the twenty-first century* 68

*Empirical analysis* 72

*Conclusions* 80

**PART III**

**Explaining the hierarchy** 83

**6 Stateness first?** 85

*Stateness first?* 86

*Empirical analysis* 90

*Conclusions* 99

**7 Necessary conditions of democracy?** 101

*On the decline of structural constraints* 101

*Empirical analysis* 107

*Conclusions* 113

**Conclusions** 115

*Implications* 118

**Appendix: concept-measure inconsistency in contemporary studies of democracy** 121

*On aggregation* 122

*A typological detour* 124

*A review of selected journals* 134

*Summing up* 135

*The merits of the BTI* 136

*Notes* 140

*Bibliography* 148

*Index* 160



# Figures

2.1	Descending the ladder of abstraction to construct types of democracy	31
5.1	Number of countries by each of the four possible combinations (types) of political rights and civil rights, 1972–2004	79
6.1	Scatter (XY) plot of stateness scores and liberal democracy scores, 2009	94

# Tables

1.1	Subcategories of political participation and rule of law	21
1.2	Linking defective subtypes to BTI subcategories	22
1.3	The stringent empirical ordering of defective democracies, 2009	23
1.4	The pragmatic empirical ordering of defective democracies, 2009	24
2.1	Ordering the cases in the typology of democracy and non-democracy, 2009	33
2.2	Ordering the cases in the typology of democracy and non-democracy, 2005 and 2007	35
2.3	Ordering based on FH data, 2005, 2007, and 2009	37
2.4	Linking the cases to the democracy types, 2009 (BTI)	39
2.5	Linking the cases to the democracy types, 2009 (FH)	41
3.1	Ordering the cases in the augmented typology, 2009	49
4.1	Distribution of post-communist cases in the regime typology, 2009	60–61
5.1	Ordering the countries, 2009	73–75
6.1	Typological ordering of countries, 2009	93
6.2	Assessing the degree of necessity for democracy types by means of fuzzy-set QCA	95
6.3	Assessing the degree of necessity for attributes by means of fuzzy-set QCA	97
7.1	Consistency of subset relationships between conditions and democracy types, 2009 (BTI)	109
7.2	Consistency of subset relationships between conditions and attributes of democracy, 2009 (BTI)	110
7.3	Consistency of subset relationships between conditions and outcome (pre-1990 and post-1992)	111
7.4	Consistency of subset relationships between affluence and electoral democracy in poor countries, 1975, 1985, and 1995	113
A.1	Munck's five aggregation procedures	123
A.2	Distribution of Engberg and Ersson's countries as a function of different aggregation rules, 1972 and 1999	127