Perspectives

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The Looking-Glass for the Mind; or Intellectual Mirror (1792)
(*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 1989)

In the last decade or so democratization has been the focus of a burgeoning political science literature. Democratization is multifaceted and multidimensional. As both an idea and a practical phenomenon it belongs exclusively to no single discipline or branch of academic learning, and to no one geographical area. The purpose of this book is to show how our knowledge and understanding of democratization are enriched by studying through the lens of multidisciplinary (Part I) and from a broadly-based comparative analysis – one that is deeply informed by area studies that are themselves comparative at the regional level (Part II). The volume takes the form of authentic accounts by specialists of what their own subject brings to the study of democratization. They pose some distinctive questions, with the potential to uncover unique insights. Of course, some areas of interest are bound to overlap, and there will be points of convergence too: their identity will become clear also.

The book is addressed especially *but not only* to the political science community, being an invitation to each one of us to ‘think outside the box’ of the usual parameters that shape our study of democratization. It aims to demonstrate that by being receptive to multidisciplinary and equipped with a broadly-based geopolitical knowledge we should be better placed to:

- address some of the gaps that political scientists recognize are present in the political science literature on democratization;

- pursue a more comprehensive understanding of democratization as a process that takes a variety of forms and is not solely a political phenomenon;
- provide explanations of democratization that will more easily satisfy the criteria of coherence, consistency, and plausibility while making sense of the variety of experiences undergone by different societies at different times;
- anticipate the wider compass of democratization's consequences for the human condition at all levels;
- critically assess strategies for extending and 'deepening' democracy that have as their goal improvement in democracy's quality and its chances of being sustained;
- move in the direction of foretelling the future of democracy and democratization with greater accuracy.

While the underlying claims about the value of multi-disciplinarity and broadly-based area studies might seem far from heretical, they do face resistance – as is borne out by the literature. For example, on the spread of democracy Remmer's (1995: 105) view is that disciplinary traditions 'have created major barriers to the development of theory capable of comprehending new international realities', that is, theories fit for the purpose of 'integrating data drawn from both national and systemic levels of analysis'. The situation Remmer described then has not changed greatly, notwithstanding a welcome increase of attention to the international dimensions of democratization. Mair (1996: 317) noted the 'now virtual absence of comparative analyses with a global, or even cross-regional ambition'. More recently still it has been said 'democratisation studies would greatly profit from expanding its disciplinary and geographical constraints' (Kopecý and Mudde 2000: 517). This chapter, 'Perspectives', amplifies such sentiments, presenting reasons why students of politics should reject parochialism in their attempts to understand democratization.

Political studies as an open discipline

The proposition that comparative analysis will have most to offer when informed by a broadly-based knowledge of different regions hardly needs elaboration. For one thing

there is Remmer's (1995: 107) reminder that the 'theoretical pay-off of research conceived within a traditional case study format has been limited'. For another, comparability 'is a quality that is not inherent in any given set of objects; rather it is a quality imparted to them by the observer's perspective' (Rustow 1968: 47). By limiting comparative analysis to areas of close proximity we risk creating an appearance of inter-regional differences that owes too much to the way regions are defined and to regionally-specific research agendas – 'an areal version of an old problem, that is, case selection determining the conclusions drawn' (Bunce 2000a: 721). By comparison the case for multidisciplinary, though not idiosyncratic,¹ might seem less obvious, and so receives greater elaboration here.

Disciplines can be differentiated in terms of *what* they study – their substantive concerns – and *how* they study it – their methodologies, as well as in some cases by special purpose and the development of a distinctive 'jargon' or technical vocabulary. There is a long-established view that although politics may be defined in terms of the activity studied, it is not definable in terms of a singular method of study, let alone a unique method that it can call its own. Instead, politics is what might be called an 'open' discipline: it relies, uniquely so, on the methods and the modes of explanation of other branches of knowledge, and what is more without obvious sense of embarrassment or the urge to pretend otherwise. Thus, in the words of a Professor of Political Theory and Government, 'the suggestion that the student of politics is an eclectic is very well observed, for he draws on so many ways of analysis as seem to suit his purpose' (Greenleaf 1968: 1–2). Political science 'has always borrowed much more than it has lent' (Dogan 1996: 102),² perhaps lending support to the view that politics should not be called an autonomous discipline, for that very reason (Wiseman 1969: 96).

However, if it is in respect of its principal choice of subject matter that the study of politics most clearly stands out, then the precise identity of that subject or its core has itself been much debated. For Duverger 'the essence of politics, its real nature and true significance, is to be found in the fact that it is always and at all times ambivalent' (Duverger 1966: xiii). For political analysts who find the institutions

of government to be far too narrow a focus – and that now means the great majority – bounded disciplinary perspectives are considered unhelpful to the investigation of the problems they want to focus on. Some go further than others: for instance Leftwich (1984: 159) travels beyond multidisciplinary to say ‘there is no contradiction (except in semantic terms) to say that the discipline of Politics must be interdisciplinary in its focus and its frameworks’.

Moreover, it is not just that the boundaries of the ‘political’ appear both porous and fuzzy once we have taken into account all the different views of what politics is; but that the different views each incline towards their own view of how politics should be studied. They generate different ideas about the relationships between politics and ‘sister disciplines’, and about which disciplines have the nearest blood ties and which ones have the most to offer the study of politics. For example there is Oakeshott’s (1991) conviction that politics is a ‘conversation with tradition’. This invites a particular kind of historical approach. Then there is the view that politics is essentially about reconciling interests, which leads towards rational choice theory and the statistical modelling of individual and group behaviour. In fact, although one implication shared by all the main ideas of what politics comprises is that democratic values and practices lie more or less close to the heart, they do this for different reasons. In consequence they give rise to their own questions and sense of priorities relevant to the range of issues that democratization is likely to provoke; and moreover they imply different ways of going about finding answers.

Among disciplines offering approaches that can be employed to advantage in the study of politics generally, and democratization specifically, the disagreements over method extend to arguments about what constitutes a satisfactory explanation. Thus in one corner lies the historians’ search for qualitative information to supply context and identify the reasons and intentions, to get at the meaning and significance of ideas and events for the actors themselves both individually and as rooted in specific social contexts. This is a world where human agency is potentially very significant. And there may be a place for historical accident or chance

too. In a different corner social scientists sift quantitative information, looking for 'forces' that in the view of some are analogous to causes; they hope to subsume the *explanandum* under a covering law or law-like generalization. Disciplines impose their own canons of acceptable forms of evidence and offer different frameworks of analysis, in addition to their own choice of starting-points, lead questions and principal concerns. How did something happen? Why did it happen? What brought it about? What are the consequences and why do they matter? How will it end? What is it, anyway? Are these questions interdependent or can they be answered separately? And all the time politics in the real world is moving on, and with it the study of politics develops as well. To dismiss the contributions that some other specialisms might make to understanding something like democratization simply on the grounds that they do not happen to coincide with *today's* fashions in political science would be short-sighted indeed.

Of course, the fruitfulness of applying several disciplines to the analysis of politics will vary across different kinds of political phenomena. But we should rule out any a priori assumption that mutually exclusive choices must be made. It is far more helpful to recognize that there can be different levels of explanation, some more immediate, some more 'fundamental'. And that variations in the degree of completeness can be quite legitimate; they can all be judged in relation both to the specific point of the inquiry and the existing knowledge and understanding of the inquirer.

Looking-glass – a 'mirror for looking at oneself'

The construction of democratization as a unit of study will reflect the intellectual standpoint of the inquirer. Put simply, the understanding we are likely to gain will be affected by where we are coming from and what we bring to the table. This will be just as true for area and country specialists as for analysts whose main intellectual training and vocabulary of discourse are in some field other than politics. We would not expect, say, Europeanists writing about eastern

Europe and Africanists writing about southern Africa to make identical approaches to studying democratization; and regions differ in terms of which particular aspects of democratization they illuminate most sharply. Equally we would not expect the accounts by economists to duplicate those of, say, anthropologists – if not because of basic epistemological differences then because of variations in the conceptual lens and methodological apparatus they bring to bear. In principle, the contributors to this volume ask different questions, address different problems, will strike different emphases and offer their own concerns; but in practice there is also much to be gained from establishing where they touch at certain points and share similar observations and reflections.

However, there are caveats, which the following chapters will illustrate. First, we should not be surprised to find evidence of contestation over the precise nature of the preferred method or mode of explanation not just in political studies but in other disciplines and sub-disciplines as well. Like the study of politics, the other disciplines too are dynamic, and their approaches can even vary according to distinct national cultural and educational or professional institutional traditions. There are differences of time, place and circumstance that impact on the way political phenomena, including democracy, are viewed – and not just by political scientists. Second, even where there are shared convictions over a discipline's main parameters and substantive concerns, the meaning and significance of democratization may still be the subject of lively dispute. Indeed, the disagreements over the meaning and significance of something like democratization could be more vigorously contested inside a single discipline such as sociology or within a distinct geopolitical region than are the divisions that appear most clearly to set the disciplines or regions apart. After all, neither Marxism and dependency theory nor social constructivism and post-modernism have any respect for national or disciplinary boundaries. Put starkly, it is feasible that political researchers interested in democratization could gain more by collaborating with colleagues from other disciplines than by engaging with specialists from certain other branches of political science (Dogan 1996: 123–4).

Studying democratization

In Britain the academic study of politics began half a century ago from foundations in constitutional law, philosophy and history. In the years since, the study of politics and law seem to have grown apart, comparatively speaking, with few notable exceptions, such as in politics the writings of Drewry, who sees (1996: 201) 'a natural affinity between law and politics, which takes many forms'. Yet constitutional engineering in new democracies, the determination of procedures for institutionalizing the rule of law, and the pros and cons of judicial activism are but three notable areas where in principle political inquiries have much to learn from legal scholarship. Thus political scientists studying democratization appear much taken with the idea of judicial autonomy as part of the institutional architecture for ensuring the horizontal accountability of the executive – a seemingly necessary counterpart to the vertical accountability that legislatures and electorates seem only imperfectly to exact. But here (Chapter 7) McEldowney's approach from the side of legal studies highlights instead a growing tension between the principle of democratic accountability and the increase of judicial power. If, as some observers believe, the world is moving inexorably towards the elaboration of a right to democratic rule in international law, then both Drewry's point and McEldowney's cautioning could both take on even greater import.

The last fifteen years or so have seen the rise of the so-called 'new institutionalism' in social sciences generally and political science specifically. This stresses the relative autonomy of institutions, and rejects earlier reductionist tendencies that made political phenomena the dependent variable of other primarily social or economic forces. The 'new institutionalism' encourages us to revisit the arrangements that embed political behaviour in rules, norms, expectations and traditions. One implication is that not only legal analysts, but possibly anthropologists too should be consulted for their insights into the complexities of 'crafting' democratic institutions appropriate to individual societies. Anthropological studies shed light on the world of *informal* practice of customs and conventions that can

profoundly affect the working of formally democratic arrangements, especially at the 'microphysical' level. Traditionally, the way the embedded neo-patrimonial and clientelistic relationships of power complicate the transfer of Western-style democracy to Africa has been paradigmatic. In Africa Chabal and Daloz (1999: 9) say politics 'is not functionally differentiated, or separated, from the socio-cultural considerations which govern everyday life . . . there is a constant and dynamic interpenetration of the different spheres of human experience, from the political to the religious'.³ But in Chapter 2, below, Gould goes further in examining the perspectives that recent anthropological thinking contributes, including fundamental reservations about democratization both as explanatory tool and (even more so) as normative ideal. On the other side, a political scientist's view of the perspectives and dimensions of democratization found in Africa is explored in Chapter 9, by Southall.

In this context political sociologists too should come into their own, especially now that the idea of political culture – a concept whose validity or usefulness political analysts have often questioned in the past – has experienced major rehabilitation in the politics literature on democratization. There is a growing tendency to root variations in the success and failure of democratic experiments as much in the values and attitudes of the people as in qualities of formal institutional design. At the same time in the 'third world' Kamrava (1995: 699) judges a democratic polity to be requisite for forging what is still clearly lacking in some societies: a 'nationally cohesive political culture'. These are perspectives that offer alternatives to those grounded in levels of economic development and the accompanying socioeconomic structure. That said, neither the contemporary standing of the 'new institutionalism' nor the rediscovery of political culture as a significant influence have diminished the amount of attention given to economic and socioeconomic factors in supporting long-term democratic trends. On the contrary, it is in regard to the interaction among all these variables and others besides that there is now the most pressing need to improve our understanding. To illustrate, from a feminist perspective Rai (Chapter 4) rightly raises the issue of the *costs* of participation, for women. Are the cultural impediments to political equality between

men and women and to greater female political participation more resistant to all-round improvements in material circumstances in some societies than in others – and if so, why? Similarly, is the persistence of neo-patrimonialism more debilitating for democratic progress when supported by large inflows of conditionality-based international economic aid, or would it be better if the underlying scarcity of domestic resources was allowed to persist?

Economists, with their fondness for the rigorous application of statistical techniques to the measurement of aggregate data, are, like sociologists, well equipped to investigate the social and economic *consequences* of democratization – consequences that in turn will have implications for the quality and sustainability of democracy. Chapter 3 by Addison shows that economics' fundamental commitment to a priori reasoning and a deductive approach creates no blind spot to the political significance of distributive concerns, while noting that whether or not society is a democracy might matter less for economic growth than whether it is highly polarized. Yet, unsurprisingly, it is in the sociological literature reviewed by Wood (Chapter 8) that we find the most recurrent concern with the political impact of such forces as absolute and relative poverty, together with the rise of corporate financial and economic power. Here, recognition of the role played by the likes of social movements (discussed in a South Asian context by Gurharpal Singh in Chapter 14) offers a valuable corrective to the elite-level focus that has typified much of the political science literature on democratic transition to date.

But whereas the search for evidence of statistical correlations is *de rigueur* in both economics and political sociology, a somewhat contrary orientation is implied by path dependence – another fashionable theory and approach. This draws attention to the kind of legacy left by the previous political regime and its impact on the dynamics of change, with the outcomes seen to be influenced by the manner in which change comes about and the route that is taken. Here the accumulation of historical evidence portraying in detail the 'inner' connections of temporal processes looks to be most relevant. This will incline research towards case-studies of the origins and genesis of change. What is perhaps surprising, then, is that it was in economics (more accurately,

economic geography) where the idea emerged that a richer appreciation of the role of historical processes in generating variations in political life would be gained if we applied the idea of increasing returns. The idea of 'increasing returns' maintains that the *sequence* of events can have specific consequences ('democratization backwards' is a striking example).⁴ But its main value is said to lie in challenging the continuing supremacy in political science of the functionalist approach, which, in seeking to explain all institutions by referring to their performance in serving some particularly useful purpose, can offer only a partial insight (Pierson 2000: 263–4).

Finally, in an increasingly seamless world, where the boundaries between the domestic and the international are becoming broken and indistinct, it is now generally accepted that the international context and the influence of trans-boundary forces must be included when trying to comprehend 'domestic' events. The limitations of trying to make sense of national democratization trends in purely endogenous terms are becoming ever more apparent. This is especially true of democratic transformation in some of the former Soviet bloc states, explored by Lewis (Chapter 10). In that region a strong desire to be admitted to full membership of the European Union (EU) has driven the tempo of political and economic reform, even though a democratic deficit lies at the core of the EU's own arrangements. At the global level the title of an essay in international relations (IR) theory 'Why is there no international democratic theory?' (H. Smith 2000) speaks volumes, and exposes the limitations of traditional approaches based on realist assumptions.⁵

Similarly, the foreign policy of democracy-promotion by the West offers a research agenda that has yet to be fully explored through the prism of 'alternative' IR approaches that maintain that theory constructs reality.⁶ But one thing is certain: it is important to examine whether and how the institutions of regional and global governance can themselves be democratized. The European Union, an obvious test case, is explored by Warleigh (Chapter 12); more specifically, the significance of both the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights for Britain's parliamentary democracy is considered by McEldowney in

Chapter 7. Moreover Cerny explains (Chapter 6) why the consequences of globalization, broadly conceived, for democratic self-governance could hardly be less significant. The point is valid regardless of whether we view the global political economy's dissemination of capitalism as on balance dangerous to liberal democracy or instead as something that can be more constructive, for instance by lending impetus to a project of democratization more radical than that in operation in 'really existing democracy'. Of course, Cerny's presentation could be construed as taking up a position on one side of a particularly vigorous debate, namely one that could be summed up as 'hyper-globalist'. It should be read as an example of international political economy (IPE) theorizing, and is not necessarily representative of every position that IPE scholars adopt towards the topic. Nevertheless, given the enormity of the issues, arcane questions about whether international relations constitutes a separate discipline (and foreign policy analysis just a sub-section of that), or instead refers to just one specialized dimension of political studies, hardly seem important.

Why democratization?

The benefits to be gained from multidisciplinary and by drawing on a wide range of area studies are not peculiar to the study of democratization. There are other political and social phenomena that offer themselves as prime candidates, nationalism and globalization (and their interconnections) being obvious examples. So why does this volume privilege democratization? Democracy combines unprecedented worldwide interest with an ancient lineage, democracy's roots being in the ancient Greek *polis* and classical political philosophy. Democracy remains to this day a strongly contested idea, occupying a large literature in social and political philosophy that needs no elaboration here. Moreover the politics of democratization too is more than a struggle for democracy – it is a struggle about the very nature of democracy (Luckham and White 1996: 277). That makes democratization an essentially value-laden project, a realm where no discipline can claim a monopoly on wisdom. And it is

no mere coincidence that disciplines other than politics have construed democratization as a social process or as an economic process well before politics discovered the 'third wave'. They see its relevance to a variety of 'sites' other than just government or the political system, such as the family or the workplace, and situated not just at the national but at local and international levels too. Political democracy may *never* acquire the sort of unparalleled global legitimacy that premature claims to the end of history at one time appeared to suggest. But, if the Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999: 3) is right in saying that the rise of democracy is the most important occurrence of the twentieth century, then the case for *using all available means* to raise the levels of understanding now looks unanswerable.

That said, there is a special reason why political scientists, especially observers of international politics, should be sympathetic to the idea that the subject of democratization is a prime candidate for the approach taken in this book: the systematic study of politics has itself been a notable beneficiary of democratization. Huntington, widely known as author of *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991), said 'where democracy is strong, political science is strong; where democracy is weak, political science is weak' (Huntington 1988: 7). His claim is borne out by the evidence, as can be seen in the expansion of political studies in the post-communist countries, fed by scholars branching out from hitherto politically safer disciplines, such as history, sociology and philosophy. Thus democratization has left its mark not simply on the world of politics but quite specifically on the study of politics (*as well as on other disciplines too*). That means decisions about whose politics are worth studying and about the practical possibilities too: for instance, Russia's opening up to public attitude surveys, and innovations like David Beetham's 'democratic audit'. Lewis (Chapter 10) shows how studies of central and eastern Europe are extending the conceptual sensitivity and the aspiration to general theories grounded in data analysis that have been well established traits in the comparative political science of Western Europe, even if the achievements so far are modest. And organizations such as Freedom House (established in 1941), a Washington, DC-based, non-profit non-governmental body whose annual

surveys of freedom in the world are cited in a number of the chapters in this book, have acquired greatly increased international prominence.⁷

The literature on democratization has also added new words to our politics vocabulary, such as 'transitology' and 'consolidology', together with a large assortment of terms to depict states of near-but-not-quite democracy, or 'democracy with adjectives'. In a citation index 'low-intensity democracy' (Gills, Rocamora and Wilson 1993) is one such term that would feature very strongly. The study of democratization has provided a new arena for replaying recurring big debates in politics, such as those over the competing claims of voluntarism and determinism. At the same time it has promoted a revival of interest in some hitherto neglected terms, 'civil society', for example,⁸ and not just among political scientists; analysts of international affairs are now beginning to consider how democracy's prospects could benefit from the emergence of global civil society. Newer concepts have come to the fore, such as 'social capital' (discussed by Gonzalez and King in Chapter 15). We have been led to re-examine such long-standing puzzles as the relationship between structure and agency in order to pinpoint who or what accounts for different stages or phases of democratic political change. Here, Karl's (1991: 5–8) idea of 'structured contingency' looks a particularly promising analytical suggestion and has been widely endorsed, but is far from simple to put into operation.

Democratization has changed both the curriculum and the political science profession in ways that go beyond merely repackaging, relabelling, or reshuffling, although there have been numerous examples of those things too.⁹ And just as the spread of democratization inspires some thoughts that a universal study of politics, employing concepts, theories and empirical generalizations that are more or less universally valid, could be coming that much closer, so it has made the profession more cosmopolitan (Norris 1997). Intellectual communities in countries that were hitherto marginalized have entered the central flow, even if, as Blondel (2001: 4–5) claims, too much empirical political research is still country-based and not enough is oriented towards general comparative model-building. The academic study of politics is making its own distinctive contribution

to 'globalization' in the form of a knowledge-based community that transcends national boundaries, assisted by democratization. Indeed Norris (1997: 30–1) argues this common node of study could be helping to bridge the methodological rift that has existed between European and American political science, although inter-collegial transatlantic collaboration still remains limited. The links between scholars and bureaucrats, and between academics and the media, have also increased as a result of public interest in democratization and the increase of international programmes and projects of democracy assistance. However, none of this is to claim that the general social standing of political scientists has increased, or that political studies now exerts greater influence on world events.

Everything has its limits

Politics has been defined *inter alia* as the art of the possible. This book is not an encyclopaedia and makes no pretence to be comprehensive; it has been selective in the choice both of disciplines and of the building-blocks for comparative politics. And while the chapters in each Part are arranged alphabetically, readers should make their own choice of starting-point; there is for instance no logical reason for starting with anthropological perspectives.

On the one side, the rationale for including Europe and North America is that democratization is unfinished business; in theory democracy could become weaker there, and, according to some critics that is precisely what is happening (the increase of judicial power in Britain being but one possible example). A significant literature on growing disaffection towards politicians and the established institutions of 'mature' democracies has brought to attention distinctive issues of both a theoretical and practical nature, not least the significance of social capital and civic trust. There is a growing crisis over the financing of political competition – its reputation for lack of integrity – which implies lessons for much newer democracies. The possibility that old democracies could be infused with new vitality by different kinds of participation, like those involving 'third sector'

associations, and by experimenting with forms such as deliberative democracy, is a more positive contribution to the debate, and has resonance in emerging democracies.

On the other side, the omission of the Middle East and the Arab world from this collection owes more to pragmatic grounds. Democratization is generally reckoned to have made least headway there, and the outlook is unpromising (both the record and the prospects in black Africa now look more fragile too, compared with the early 1990s). Of course, in the broader scheme of things *any* region's omission is inexcusable. For our understanding of a phenomenon may well be assisted by comparisons with locations where it has not occurred, especially if there are some shared features with more successful newly democratizing countries – economic backwardness, for example. Ignoring a region like the Middle East clearly will not help us to predict if the countries there will ever successfully introduce democracy and if so how, when and what kind of democracy.

Turf wars over boundaries between disciplines and the demarcation of sub-disciplines can cause genuine confusion. International political economy is one example: is it a ward of international relations, a descendant of politics, or of economics, or an extension of political economy in the original sense of the late-eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment? Is it in the process of becoming a discipline in its own right? The inclusion of a chapter on the unique perspectives offered by gender and women's studies may well not be controversial, even though 'the majority of the mainstream democratization literature has remained gender-blind' (Waylen 2003: 157). After all, it has been said that 'if democracy (or lack of it) is something which transcends all human relations, then, surely, relations between the genders lie at the heart of democracy?' (Allison 1994: 100). Rai's call (in Chapter 4) to expand our definitions to encompass not only the public but the private sphere chimes with this, offering not so much a view within politics but a view of politics itself. And of course it is true that a case could be advanced for several other branches of knowledge – development studies, race (or racial) and ethnic (ethnicity) studies, and nationalism studies, and so on – that are not included here. But although these branches of inquiry are all institutionalized in the sense of having such things as

research institutes, university departments or teaching programmes and major journals devoted to them, it is less obvious that they offer distinctive methods of inquiry or techniques. Nor do they appear to offer their own *modes* of explanation. Their *raison d'être* is to privilege certain issues, explanations and facets of the human condition precisely because other disciplines (political science included) could have given them greater prominence but so far have failed to do so. They are studies and are not (yet) generally thought to possess the conventional status of disciplines. Take each one in turn.

First, development studies might be held to offer great purchase for examining the future prospects for democratization, given that not just the country long called the world's largest democracy (India) but all of today's least democratic countries are found in the developing world. Furthermore, it is the changes that have taken place in development thinking that help explain the growth of international democracy-promotion. But much more even than political science, development studies draws on economics and sociology (as well as on politics), to name but some of its tributaries. China, of course, is the most dynamic large economy in the developing world. Recent claims that China's political evolution in the 1990s had unparalleled significance for democratization trends worldwide (Youngs 2001: 165) look to be an exaggeration. Even so, as the most populous country China could potentially make a dramatic difference to surveys like Freedom House's annual review of democracy and freedom in the world. Breslin's sceptical account (in Chapter 11) shows that not just in China but in East Asia more generally a historical perspective and recent international economic developments should both be taken into account when assessing democratic trends and possibilities. The other groups of countries that development studies feature most prominently are typically found in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. All these regions are already represented in this volume, with for instance Philip (Chapter 13) explaining how the persistence of democracies *without* democratic consolidation is a distinguishing feature of politics in Latin America today.

Second, there can be no disputing the claim that attempts to establish democracy in multiethnic and multicultural

societies raise special questions about who constitutes the *demos* and the underlying sense of community. A discussion of the politics of identity becomes unavoidable. The growth in citizenship studies itself owes something to the spread of democracy, both as an emancipating trend and as a potentially destabilizing force in divided societies that previously were tightly controlled by highly centralized states. Innovative ideas of global citizenship are currently being advanced as part of the international studies agenda. But in principle there is no reason why other well-established fields of study such as anthropology and sociology cannot shed more light on these subjects (see for example Chapter 2). And here, relevant area studies are offered as a proxy (see for example the discussions of identity and ethnic and/or racial dimensions in Chapters 12, 14, and 15).

Lastly, there is the argument that the political science literature on democratization underestimates the importance of nation- and state-building, which betrays its origins in the study of Latin America and southern Europe. According to Kopecý and Mudde (2000) this shortcoming in the literature limits its ability to illuminate the more recent experience of democratization in such places as central and eastern Europe. Whatever the merits of that argument, the threat globalization now poses to nation and national identity even in established democracies is assessed in Chapter 6, by Cerny, who details the transient historical circumstances giving rise to the nation-states system that enabled, and perhaps necessitated, democracy as we know it. In any event, we can always turn to the historical literature on earlier 'waves' of democratization in Western Europe if we want to investigate nationalism's contribution to stimulating or subverting movements towards greater democracy, as Kopecý and Mudde (2000: 529) themselves admit. Thus it is self-evident that an understanding of the past should not necessarily compete with our interest in the present and our desire to foretell the future. Instead history should be viewed as a complementary source of revelation (see Chapter 5, by Calvert); the fact that previous 'waves' of democratization ended in democratic reversal only serves to sharpen the point. If prediction is the Grail of political science then the comparative historical method is at the very minimum a useful handmaiden. And for analysts with a more prescriptive

intent, such as the democracy-promoters and their 'democracy trainers', history – including the failed attempts by Western powers to transfer democracy in previous decades – should be considered essential reading.

Notes

- 1 Comparative politics 'does not consist only in cross-national analysis. It is also necessarily a cross-disciplinary endeavor, because in comparative research we are crossing units (nations) and variables (numerical and nominal). . . . The relations between variables are often more important for theoretical explanations than the discovery of analogies and differences between nations'; 'Comparative politics across disciplines means first of all crossing history' (Dogan 1996: 122, 123).
- 2 Barry (1999: 435) claims that the political science profession 'is still more hospitable to those with doctorates outside the subject than its sister disciplines'.
- 3 'The vote is not primarily a token of individual choice but part of a calculus of patrimonial reciprocity based on ties of solidarity' (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 39). Political anthropology gained ground in studies of Third World politics as a critical reaction to 'a simplistic zero-sum view of tradition and modernity'; social anthropology followed on, evincing a desire to 'fill the gap in dependency theory' (Randall and Theobald 1998: 6). Dogan (1996: 117), however, argues that in post-colonial regions area studies have taken over the mantle of anthropology without respect for disciplinary boundaries.
- 4 'Democratization backwards' refers to the introduction of competitive elections before establishing the basic institutions of a modern state, such as the rule of law and the institutions of civil society (Rose and Shin 2001).
- 5 The study of international relations 'takes aspects of theory from all sorts of different places; but if you try to think of what IR has exported to any of the other disciplines, or indeed whether any of the other disciplines pay any attention to it at all, it's a much bleaker landscape' (Buzan 2001: 12).
- 6 But on the United States see Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi (eds) (2000). A sizeable literature exists on the 'democratic peace' hypothesis, which is said to warrant unambiguous support for the internationalization of democracy.
- 7 Freedom House's annual assessments of political rights and civil liberties around the world define democracy as, at minimum a political system in which people choose their authoritative leaders freely from among competing groups and individuals who are not chosen by the government. Democracies are judged to be either free or partly free (scores 1.0–3.0 = free; 3.0–5.5 = partly free; 5.5–7.0 = not free). Although this idea of democracy and the organization's methodology for scoring countries are challenged, especially by European social scientists, the assessments are widely used and there appears to be no superior, more generally accepted source of convenient data.

- 8 However, reputations have not fared equally: the renewed prominence of Alexis de Toqueville (author of *Democracy in America*, 1835 and 1840) undoubtedly reflects the preponderant American displacement in the political science of democratization. By comparison John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) are rarely mentioned.
- 9 Among the more visible signs of democratization's impact on academia are a stream of major conferences and workshops (for example IPSA's sixteenth World Congress in 1994 was on 'Democratization'; the Political Studies Association in Britain chose 'The Challenge of Democracy in the 21st Century' for its 50th annual conference, in 2000); specialized book series on democratization (three in Britain alone); new book titles (web sites list several hundred titles in English containing the keyword 'democratization' and several thousand containing the keyword 'democracy'); the publication of encyclopaedias of democracy (in the US, 1995) and democratic thought (in Britain, 2001); dedicated new journals, most notably the *Journal of Democracy* (the first issue each year publishes the latest Freedom House assessments) and *Democratization*, publishing many issues each year (in total well over 1,000 articles to date); and numerous 'special issues' of many longer-established journals and area studies periodicals. There are many special 'Centres' or 'Institutes' of research into democratization scattered around the globe; and universities have constructed graduate programmes and customized undergraduate modules on democratization.