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**Defining, Promoting and Sustaining Democracy:
Formulating an A.I.D. Strategy for Development
Assistance and Evaluation**

Harry Blair
POL/CDIE/E/POA

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Executive Summary

For A.I.D. to formulate and implement a strategy to support democracy in the LDCs, there must be a solid theoretical understanding of what democracy is and how it works. Such a theory should indicate how the various parts of democracy link together and what causal sequences there are among those linkages. At the present time, however, in contrast to the wealth of theory in the economic development field, democratic development is essentially lacking in theory. What is available consists largely of lists and taxonomies, offering little help in determining priorities or sequences for donor interventions.

This essay has four objectives:

- To establish a workable *definition* of democracy;
- To establish a *causal linkage* between the elements of such a definition;
- To begin constructing a *strategy* for supporting democracy; and
- To start thinking about how to *evaluate progress* toward democracy.

Caveats. The paper does have some limitations. First, it focuses principally on *processes* and characteristics of democracy, rather than on particular institutions like the media or political parties. Second, it elaborates a *generic model* of democracy as opposed to the region-specific or country-specific ideas pursued by the regional bureaus within A.I.D. Third, the paper endeavors to be *parsimonious* in its formulation, offering a skeletal outline rather than a fully fleshed-in model. Fourth, it focuses mainly on relationships between democracy and *civil society* (or what might be called political and associational life) rather than on economic development. The latter is surely important in its relationships with democracy, but will have to await future analysis. Fifth, the paper aims to be *provocative*, not definitive. Comments and criticisms are most welcome.

A.I.D. democracy theory thus far. In its principal effort to date in formulating a democracy strategy, A.I.D. in its November 1991 policy paper on "Democracy and Governance" has put together a list of democratic characteristics centering around

political competition and liberties, human rights and lawful governance. This approach is contrasted in the essay with another that focuses on what democracy *does* in the sense of what problems it solves. Neither is found to be very helpful in guiding intervention strategy, for they contain no causality or sequencing.

A model of democracy. The bulk of the paper is devoted to building a theoretical approach to democracy, first by linking a set of logically sequential elements to each other and then through a more deductive approach. These elements are arranged in sequential groups as depicted in Figure 1, beginning with *elite commitment* as the essential Pre-condition or *sine qua non* for beginning a democratic polity and for keeping it in place. Elements in the second Maintenance Requisites group are *liberal philosophy* and *civic education*, which are needed to sustain democracy over time. These elements in groups I and II in turn support Human Rights (group III), which consist of *protection rights* (against state torture, arbitrary imprisonment, etc.), *civil rights* (freedom against discrimination by ethnicity, sex, religion and the like), and *survival rights* (some minimal "floor" for social welfare).

The next group (IV) is Societal Freedoms, of which the first is the familiar *freedom of speech*, particularly for the media, and the second is *freedom of assembly*, i.e., the right to organize in associations. The third element in the group is *economic freedom* -- the right to participate in the economy, as expressed in A.I.D.'s "voice and choice" theme. Next in the linkage come the System Inputs of group V, which might be called the "mechanics" of democracy -- *free and fair elections*, and *lawful governance*. The former have come frequently in recent years as LDCs flock to the democratic banner, but the latter is much harder to achieve. Democratic governance might best be thought of as managing a state strong enough both to provide the services it must offer (such as education and public health) and to support the private sector by enforcing commercial law, tax codes and the like, while avoiding the three principal dangers of corruption, arbitrariness and ineffectiveness. One added problem here is that while some sectors of state activity like the judiciary should be *insulated* from immediate public influence, others like education should be sensitive to what parents want for their children.

The last group is the Societal Effects, or in other words *accountability*, which is in the end how the state is made to be responsive and responsible to its citizens. Regular elections are the most obvious mode of ensuring accountability, but the state must be accountable in between elections as well. The principal means for assuring this is making sure the state follows the processes of lawful governance, with the freedoms of speech and assembly helping to keep the state on the democratic course. If the polity works

properly, accountability has a feedback effect on the other elements in the system, ensuring that they remain in good working order.

The second, more deductive approach begins with the central defining characteristic of democratic politics – accountability through pluralist competition – and asks what is needed to ensure its continuation. Pluralist competition acts similarly to market competition in the economy, forcing both "buyers" (citizens and voters) and "sellers" (political leaders) to compete with each other and thereby preventing domination of the system by a few. For it to endure over any length of time, a number of processes are needed: free and fair elections; lawful governance; freedom of speech; and freedom of assembly. These processes in turn require secure human rights, and the chain can be traced back to elite commitment, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Building a democracy strategy. Elite commitment (the model's first element) and accountability (its last element) are the two most important components in sustaining a democratic polity. But neither can easily be a direct target for A.I.D. support. Elite commitment is primarily self-generated (though it benefits from donor encouragement) and accountability is essentially a "downstream" or dependent effect of the other elements in the system, rather than an independent element (though it in turn affects the other elements through the feedback mechanisms mentioned above). The most appropriate elements for foreign assistance, then, are those in the middle of the process, namely Human Rights, Societal Freedoms and System Inputs, as outlined above.

Which elements should get a higher priority in A.I.D. activities? The answer would depend on how far a country is along the democratic path. A nation like Chile, which is returning to democracy after a prolonged detour has the elements of groups II-III-IV essentially place, as well as the free and fair elections component of group V. Assuming continued elite commitment, aid could then be most fruitfully directed "downstream" toward lawful governance. Other nations like Nepal or Zambia, which are in effect just beginning their democratic experiments, would need more support at the "upstream end," say with Human Rights in group III.

Evaluating democratic progress. The logical place to begin in evaluating a country's state of democratic health would be to look at the group V System Inputs, for if elections and governance are healthy over time, then it follows that the backward linkages to the other elements must also be exhibiting strong vital signs. But no democratic system works perfectly, and in any particular country there are bound to be problems. The advantage of the model here is that it offers a guide to tracing such problems back through the chain of linkages. For instance, if there are problems with ballot tampering

in elections, it may be that the press cannot monitor and report voting fraud, so the solution lies in improving freedom of speech (in group IV). Or the real problem may be that significant constituencies such as religious minorities are simply denied the right to vote, so that the situation is really one of civil rights (in group III). In either case the model provides guidance for diagnosing democratic problems and suggesting solutions.

Conclusion. This essay represents an initial endeavor to build an applied theory of democracy that can inform A.I.D. programming strategy in its democracy initiative and can guide evaluation of democratic progress. Where should such an effort go from here? What should be added or dropped as the analysis moves to specific regions and countries? If such a tailoring is begun, can the kind of generic model presented here be retained? The essay closes by raising questions such as these.

Defining, Promoting and Sustaining Democracy:
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Introduction

If A.I.D. is to undertake a serious effort to support democracy, it needs an understanding of how democracy works, a theoretical framework to inform its strategy. In economic development, there are a number of competing theories available, each offering an explanation of how an economy works and what kinds of interventions would best promote economic growth. On the political side, however, such theories are largely lacking; while the Agency has undertaken a large range of activity supporting democracy (see Hansen 1991), the theory initiatives that A.I.D. has developed thus far are largely lists and taxonomies that, while useful in pinning down just what democracy might consist of, provide little understanding of how the various elements of democracy fit together in any causal sense. Thus they offer only slight help in deciding what kinds of interventions are called for to support democracy, to say nothing of what should be the weighting or sequence of such interventions. There is, in sum, no theory to guide the formulation of an A.I.D. democracy strategy.

This short paper attempts four things:

- To pin down a reasonable *definition* of what democracy consists of, largely by re-distilling various A.I.D. attempts to do so;
- To connect the elements of this definition together in a *causal linkage*;
- To use the first two parts of the exercise to formulate some *strategic concepts for promoting democracy*; and
- To derive from this understanding an approach to *evaluating progress in democratization*.

The underlying idea is that some theoretical picture of how a democratic polity sustains itself will lead to a focus on what elements or aspects of democracy it makes most sense to support. No donor can support everything in a sector of activity, so one has to pick and choose, a need that is reinforced by the relatively modest funding available within A.I.D. for supporting democracy. If we can figure out what aspects of democracy are most important in any given situation, it becomes easier to decide what a democracy initiative should focus on.

Several caveats should be stated at the outset:

- The principal focus of the paper will be on democratic *processes and characteristics*, such as free speech and elections, rather than on specific institutions like print media and political parties.
- The paper will concentrate on a *generic mode*¹ of democracy, rather than on the various approaches to democracy formulated by the different regional bureaus within A.I.D.¹ or the specific types of democracy practiced in particular countries (though it will mention individual countries as examples).² Accordingly, it will begin with the agency's policy paper on "Democracy and Governance" (A.I.D. 1991); it will not examine the various regional bureau strategies that have been set forth (this will have to be done in the course of things, but doing so would add too much depth to this already overlong concept paper).
- Any theory should strive to be as *parsimonious* as possible in its explanation, and this prescription has been followed in the present endeavor at theory building. Still, the lack thus far of a workable applied democratic theory means that relatively little common understanding can be assumed and that accordingly relatively more explanation will be needed. The reader's indulgence is requested.
- While the democracy initiative taken up by A.I.D. has had two principal foci — civil society and economic development — the present essay examines primarily the *civil society* sphere.³ Economic policy and development do come into

¹ Several of the A.I.D. regional bureaus have published democracy strategies, with more currently in preparation. Among those which have already appeared are APRE (1991) and LAC (1991). Strategies in progress include NE (1992?) and Charlick (1992) for the Africa Bureau.

² On the varieties of democracy, see Gastil (1992); on the many ways countries can become democracies, see Huntington (1991-2).

³ The American foreign aid effort over the past four decades and more has concentrated primarily on promoting economic development as both an immediate and a long-term goal. It is thus only natural that A.I.D.'s democracy initiative should focus on this objective as well, for example in concerns over how well democracies can cope with structural adjustments and policy reforms. Interestingly, economics does not figure explicitly in the Agency's policy paper on democracy, (see A.I.D. 1991), and the same is true for three of the four regional bureau democracy strategies on which material has thus far emerged (APRE 1991; LAC 1991; and Charlick 1992; on the other hand, the NE Bureau's approach [NE 1992] does include a specific political economy component). In past years the promotion of civil society, while certainly not completely absent from the Agency's agenda (e.g., programs supporting non-governmental organizations), has held a much lower priority than economic development. But a democracy effort virtually by its nature necessarily must emphasize civil society at least as much as (if not more than) economic development. A conference explicitly exploring this dual democratic focus was held in Washington on 6-9 May 1992, on the topic "Economy, Society and Democracy," organized by Larry Diamond and the Hoover

the picture at times, but only peripherally; to bring these concerns in more completely will probably require another dimension to what is at this point essentially a two-dimensional schema.

- A *ceteris paribus* assumption has been made with respect to exogenous factors, except for donor interventions. In a strict sense this is of course unrealistic, for external events and trends certainly do affect the polity, but in order to put together a dynamic model of how the political system works, we have to assume for the purposes of argument that such externalities are not determining, as is done in building models in economics.
- The paper is intended to be *provocative and heuristic*, not definitive on the topic of democratic theory. Its central underlying question is whether to proceed in constructing a theory of what might be called "applied democracy" that will be useful to A.I.D. in building a democracy strategy and in evaluating progress toward democracy. In short, the paper offers preliminary field notes for a considerably more ambitious task. Comments and criticisms are most welcome.⁴

What does democracy mean? Two approaches

Recent years have seen a number of attempts to define democracy, within both academic and donor communities.⁵ The first one to be considered in the present paper stems from a lengthy effort within A.I.D. to distill a working definition that would lead to formulating a

Institution, sponsored by the RD/EID Office of A.I.D.

As might be imagined, defining "civil society" proved a nettlesome task for the conference, but for purposes of this essay the term can be taken to mean institutions and associations existing apart from the state, in which membership is essentially voluntary. Insofar as they relate to this essay, a major (though not necessarily the only) purpose of such bodies is to serve as intermediaries between the individual and the state.

For its part, the World Bank, appears to view democratization almost exclusively in relation to economic development. "Accountability," for example, is seen largely as economic and financial accountability rather than the sort of political accountability that is analyzed in the present paper. See World Bank (1991). More recently, a Bank workshop dealing with democracy focused almost exclusively on economic matters; its title was "The Political Economy of Structural Adjustment in New Democracies," was held at the Bank on 4-5 May 1992. There is, however, at least a small interest at the Bank in the political and civil society side of democracy, however; see Brautigam (1991).

⁴ In reaction to earlier drafts of this paper, I have received most helpful comments from William Cole, Jonathan Conly, John Eriksson, Gary Hansen, Michael Morfit, Christopher Sabatini (all of AID) and Robert Charlick (of Associates in Rural Development) and Gordon Hein (of the Asia Foundation). The usual disclaimers apply, however; responsibility for the essay is mine and not theirs.

⁵ For two efforts to summarize these various definitions, see Schimpp (n.d.) and Wong (1990).

strategy, and the second comes from a survey commissioned by the Center for Development Information and Evaluation's Office of Evaluation (CDIE/E) within A.I.D.

Defining democracy by what it is (or is thought to be)

The outline below is derived from the A.I.D. policy paper on "Democracy and Governance," (DGPP, dated November 1991). The word "derived" is used deliberately here, inasmuch as the paper is at places inconsistent as to what exactly should be included in democracy (in part perhaps because it is endeavoring both to define democracy and outline a program for nurturing and strengthening it).

According to the DGPP, then, democracy consists of:

- (1) Political competition and liberties --
 - (a) free and fair elections with universal suffrage;
 - (b) freedom of speech (press, media, etc.);
 - (c) freedom of assembly (associations, organizations, etc.) [this implicitly includes freedom to petition and advocate policy choices, to influence not just the public debate but the decisions made.

- (2) Human Rights --
 - (a) personal political rights (freedom from police abuse, arbitrary imprisonment, political execution, etc.);
 - (b) personal human rights (for women, ethnic and/or religious minorities, children, etc.).

- (3) Lawful governance (in both administrative and judicial systems) --
 - (a) established and open laws and regulations applicable to all;
 - (b) transparency of governance process;
 - (c) accountability of officeholders/policymakers to citizenry (included implicitly in 1a above, but explicitly here).

Left out of this formulation are

- (4) Economic rights, of both kinds --
 - (a) freedom from control, i.e., freedom to participate in the economy;
 - (b) freedom from want, i.e., freedom to survive (basic human needs).

The first of these economic rights is a more individualistic formulation, corresponding to the idea of "liberalism"⁶ as it existed in the 19th century (cf. Francis Fukuyama 1992), the second a more social concept. It could be argued that (a) leads to (b) or that (b) leads to (a), or even that the causal linkages lead both ways, but the important point is that neither is included in the DGPP. Could meaningful democracy exist without either (a) or (b)? There is widespread agreement today that (a) is essential to encourage economic development, but there is no firm idea on whether it is necessary for democratic political development, quite likely because the evidence on the relationship of capitalism and democracy is so mixed. Is there some minimal level of (b) that is required for a self-sustaining democracy? Neither is there any firm idea on this issue. In the Western democracies there is a widespread belief that some minimal "social wage" is required to maintain the civic culture, but systems like India's offer evidence that democracy can exist amid very widespread poverty. Still, even in India the state has attempted a concerted (and largely successful) effort to prevent deaths during famines, so that there is some basic floor for social welfare. Can there be "economic democracy" without political democracy? China and the Eastern European states provide interesting cases here. Deng Xiaoping would say yes, while most survivors of the former communist systems in Europe would say no.

Defining democracy by what it *does* (to solve problems)

This is the approach taken by Jerome Segal in his March 1991 CDIE paper "Goals and Concepts in A.I.D.'s Democratic Initiatives." His basic idea is that just as a public health program is designed to attenuate or eliminate specific public health problems (e.g., gastrointestinal problems contributing to infant and child mortality, which might be dealt with through a large-scale oral-rehydration therapy [ORT] project), so a democracy program might be designed to overcome specific political problems.

As was done above for the DGPP, the list below is derived from the original formulation. Taking some liberties with Segal's approach, political democracy can be defined as the principal antidote or remedy to the following systemic problems:

- (1) Violated personal human rights;

⁶ This troublesome term will be considered in more detail below, but for the present it can be defined as a combination of a democratic polity and a competitive economy.

- (2) A government unresponsive to human needs and/or unaccountable to its citizenry (this would tend to be oligarchical government — rule by a relative few in their own interest and contrary to the interests of the majority);
- (3) Violent civil conflict —
 - (a) contests for power, esp. civil wars like those in Sri Lanka, Somalia, etc.;
 - (b) [by implication] inevitable succession crises, such that power can be transferred only by *coup d'état* or popular uprising;
[a possible (c) is pervasive large-scale banditry, but this could be solved by a sufficiently repressive autocracy];
- (4) Violated civil political rights (suppression of political freedom). Segal argues in effect (it's a bit unclear) that a people could agree by consensus to suppress political freedoms, but this needs more thinking also;
- (5) System vulnerability, i.e., the tendency to develop one or more of the first four problems.

Again as with the DGPP approach, though Segal does not specifically raise the issue, we could think about adding violated economic rights in the sense of both material want and inability to participate in the economy. This raises the question of the linkage between politics and economics. Can political democracy offer a "social therapy" for violations of either sort of economic rights? Perhaps so in the sense that in a democracy the poor or aspiring entrepreneurs (or petty traders for that matter) can mobilize to participate in the polity like any other group and thereby try to secure themselves a place in the system.⁷

Clearly at least some of these attributes must be interactive. To put the matter another way, is it possible to realize any of the items on the DGPP list by itself, in the absence of the others? By the same token, is it possible to solve any of the problems on the Segal list without solving all the others as well? In other words, does democracy have to be "all of the above" if it is to be "any of the above?" For instance, could a system have serious political competition without having personal political rights? Could a system solve its human rights problems and yet remain unaccountable to its citizens? Certainly more progress could be

⁷ But then again the non-poor majority could democratically decide to lower the "social wage." If a minimal level of basic human needs were perceived as a constituent element of democracy, though, lowering the minimum social wage below that level would amount to a violation of the poor's economic rights. The issue is complex.

made in some dimensions than in others according to either list, but it is difficult to conceive of significant improvement in one area without any progress in the others. Still, there may be causal linkages or sequences such that improvement in some areas may lead more easily to progress in others. This theme will be explored below.

How can we promote and strengthen democracy?

Both the approaches analyzed just above imply program efforts. The DGPP approach holds that we should support more democratic directions along the three lines noted above (i.e., competition [called "representation"], human rights and lawful governance) and that a fourth line be added, labeled "democratic values," which include:

- (a) civic education; and
- (b) leadership training.⁸

This amounts to a normative approach, holding that in order to become democratic a system should follow a given set of democratic practices. In other words, the definition of democracy is basically exhortatory: do these things, it is urged, and democracy will be achieved.

Segal's problem-solving approach would urge that we encourage democratic practices that would solve or ameliorate the problems that result from an absence of democracy. A country-specific program would then presumably first diagnose the country's political problems and then offer particular remedies to ameliorate the maladies discovered.

But in the end both approaches amount to list-making, because there is no theoretical understanding linking things together in a causal or sequential fashion such that we could find specific entry or intervention points, as is done in public health efforts. For instance, with a malaria eradication program, the idea is to break the cycle by interfering with the mosquito's egg incubation sites (e.g., by putting kerosene in stagnant water). With an ORT program, the idea is not to deal with the vector (e.g., by purifying unsanitary drinking water) but

⁸ Democratic values are included as an element of A.I.D.'s democratic initiative (cf. A.I.D. 1991: 9), but do not appear to be part of the definition (ibid.: 5-7), though they are mentioned as a "characteristic" of democracy (ibid.: 5). The inference here would be that such values help create (and perhaps maintain) democracy but are not part of democracy itself. Others urge the opposite -- that democratic values or a "civic culture" are the product of democratic practice over time but do not produce it (see Schmitter and Karl 1991: 21 &ff). And still others (most notably the originators of the term "civic culture," Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba 1963 and 1980) hold that democratic values are the core element in both building and practicing democracy.

rather to apply heroic measures to the symptoms by force-feeding the patient massive quantities of fluid until his or her constitution recovers sufficiently to retain fluids by itself.

With democracy, though, by not establishing any underlying theory and thus offering no priorities, both the DGPP and the Segal approaches in the end rather resemble the "big-push" economic development approach of the late 1950s, which urged that all sectors of the economy be dealt with simultaneously. Another and more recent analogy comes from some of the integrated rural development (IRD) projects of the late 1970s, which prescribed large investments and concerted technical transfer throughout the countryside. Given enough resource commitment and expertise, such strategies would doubtless work, but in fact neither "big push" nor IRD was affordable in terms of the resources needed, and both approaches were eventually abandoned.

With sufficient funding, democratic development could also be promoted by pushing everywhere at once, but at the likely levels of support that will be available some fairly stringent prioritization will be needed. Where to proceed first? Without some theoretical understanding of what is important and how it causally fits together, it is not possible to formulate logical ideas of where to start. What follows is an attempt to start building such a theory.

An applied theory of democratic politics

A good place to begin in constructing a theory of applied democracy is to ask what is the most important defining characteristic of democratic politics and proceed from there. The initial step here is relatively easy, for there is by now enough historical experience at hand to state with confidence that pluralist competition is in the most basic sense what makes democracy work. The way it works is through accountability — leaders are held accountable by the citizenry whom they serve — but the mechanism to make that accountability functional is pluralist competition.⁹

⁹ One can think of the market here. In the ideal market, producers are made accountable to buyers exercising consumer sovereignty — those who offer what buyers want are rewarded, while those who do not are punished. But the *mechanism* that makes this whole process work is marketplace competition.

There will be a number of analogies to economics in this paper, primarily to neo-classical (or "liberal" in the sense used here) economics, both in terms of how it works and market failures. This is so largely because much more analysis is available on market theory and practice than on democracy, where theory has concentrated more on why it works or fails to work in concrete cases rather than how to make it work in a more abstract sense. The situation is beginning to change (as with the work of Larry Diamond in this field, e.g., Diamond 1992d), but

What then does pluralist competition consist of? What is necessary to make a political system pluralistic? In a sense, all the elements gathered together in the DGPP contribute to pluralism. If any one of them were absent, say freedom of speech or transparency of governance, a system would not be a pluralistic and thus would not be true democracy. But what priority can be established among these elements, in terms of sequential or deductive logic?

The argument here will proceed along two tracks, one more theoretical and inductive, the other more practical and deductive. The first will build a causal linkage or sequential model, in which step A is necessary to get to step B which is a prerequisite to move to step C and so on, with the final step being a pluralist accountability. Then when the pieces are all in place that lead to pluralist accountability, the second track will be taken up — what is most immediately necessary for pluralism to survive, what in turn is needed for such a requisite to exist, and so on. In other words, we begin in this second approach with pluralism and work back from there, ascertaining at each stage what it implies. The overall model will then incorporate both approaches and can be employed to address the question of building a democracy support strategy.

A causal linkage approach to democracy

The elements presented in the normative DGPP and the problem-solving Segal approaches are arranged in Figure 1 by a number of groupings that are causally linked together. There are, however, several additions: first, two columns on the left side of the figure contain several pre-conditions and requisites that are necessary if democratic politics (columns III-IV-V) are to be sustainable over time; second, an accountability column (VI) appears on the right which links back to the other columns. By looking at all these factors in a causal linkage model, it should be possible to get some idea of where interventions would be most fruitful.

What about the interactive aspect of these characteristics that was mentioned earlier? If it's not possible to have democratic practice in one area without having it in all the others (at least over any significant period of time), then how can it make sense to provide international assistance in one area (or several) without providing it in all areas? The answer is that, if there is some causality, then improvement in one area should lead to progress in others.

slowly. This is not surprising, for not only has development economics been with us for many decades, but economics as a discipline has always had a policy-oriented concern for promoting growth that has been lacking in political science, which has traditionally been focused more on analyzing political activity than on promoting the growth of democracy.

And if one chooses an area that is more nearly an "independent (i.e., causative) variable" than a "dependent (acted upon) variable," the intervention would likely be more effective in that it would have "downstream" effects through the system.¹⁰ In other words, even though in the end no area stands alone and all are essential, some areas may be more crucial than others in strategic and programmatic terms.

The sequencing issue should also be mentioned at this point. Figure 1 presents a logical sequence¹¹ of cause-and-effect linkages, but this is not at all necessarily a historically accurate chain of stages. Some fledgling democracies (e.g., Nepal) begin with elections that are remarkably free and fair, even though the Human Rights and Societal Freedoms (columns III and IV) charted in Figure 1 have only begun to evolve (see Blair et al., 1991). Others like India have had free and fair elections for decades despite an uneven progress in the Human Rights sector. Still others like Taiwan have spent decades altogether working slowly on the first three columns of Figure 1 before quite quickly opening up a pluralist political culture in the mid-1980s (see Myers 1992). And certainly some systems have retrogressed, moving "upstream" or to the left in terms of Figure 1; Latin American examples abounded in the 1970s, with Chile being the most notable. Still, any democracy that is sustainable over time will need all the pieces to be discussed in this essay, and a logically sequential model can be of great utility in informing both policy-making and evaluational efforts.

It will be noted that the "liberal democracy" or "liberal philosophy" model to be sketched out here is quite Western in its assumptions and approach toward sequencing. Intellectually it follows the path charted by Hobbes, Locke and their successors in starting with the individual and moving from there to civil society and finally to the state. This is not the only way to fashion a political development model, however. The former communist regimes of Eastern Europe began with the state, moving then to civil society and only in the end to the individual. And in most traditional LDC systems, politics began with civil society first, only then proceeding to the individual and state levels. Indeed, one could argue that the tradition of political philosophy reaching back to Plato and coming down through Aquinas and present-day thinkers like John Rawls is similar: The individual finds meaning only in the context of

¹⁰ In terms of Figure 1, the only truly independent variable is elite commitment and the only real dependent one is accountability (though in a sense, as we shall see, even accountability has some causative attributes), but in a relative sense those toward the left ("upstream") end of the figure are more independent, while those toward the right ("downstream") end are more dependent.

¹¹ The models presented here are not logical in the formal sense of logic, however, for they are self-consciously causal and time-oriented.

civil society. The "liberal democracy" approach beginning with the individual is thus not even the only Western one. This civil societal model can also be incorporated within the Figure 1 framework, by substituting a social philosophy (e.g., John Rawls 1970) for the liberal philosophy in column II. This would be equivalent to a Scandinavian social democratic model, which at the moment in practice appears to be converging with the liberal democracy model sketched out here.¹²

Whether one comes to the model as what might be called a Lockean democrat or as a Rawlsian democrat, however, the basic approach is fundamentally a Western one; it is not natural to the human condition, any more than is the market economy, which like democracy traces back in its modern form no more than two or three centuries. But just as markets have become quite universal, working well in "non-Western" settings, so too democratic politics has moved into equally "non-Western" environments. It should be feasible, then, to construct a generic model of how it works.

If it is not already clear, it will soon become so that the following discussion could continue indefinitely, well into (or even beyond) book-length proportions, but I will endeavor to be as brief as possible in connecting the groupings and sectors shown in Figure 1. As mentioned earlier, it should be noted that the focus here is on processes not institutions. These processes of course must be implemented by such institutions as the press, political parties, legislatures and the like, but it is the functions or purposes of these institutions that must be dealt with initially if a theoretical framework is to be developed for a democracy support strategy.

¹² I am indebted to Deyan Kiuranov (1992) for the first three examples below, on the basis of which the fourth seemed to make sense, offering some useful distinctions between approaches to political development.

System type	Logical order of sequence		
	first	second	third
Western democracies (individualist)	individual	civil society	state
Communist systems	state	civil society	individual
Hegel's Germany	state	individual	civil society
Western democracies (social democratic) & traditional pre-colonial LDCs	civil society	individual	state

(I) Pre-condition and (II) Maintenance Requisites.¹³

Although not explicitly included in either DGPP or the problem approaches, there are several conditions necessary to democracy. Of the three items considered here, elite commitment is the most immediately crucial for starting and continuing democracy, while the other two — liberal philosophy and civic education, or collectively civic culture — are more important for maintaining it over the longer term.

(a) The key pre-condition: elite commitment. This is the quintessential *sine qua non* for a democratic polity. In virtually every case of creating new democracy (or maintaining traditional democracies), key elites in the system have been at least supportive and most often in the leading role. In the recent Eastern European shifts, key elites in the military and bureaucracy had to decide that the command polity was no longer viable, and much the same happened in the recent Latin American transitions (as well as some of those in Africa and Asia), as key élites concluded that military domination could no longer adequately manage national affairs and that possession of state power was no longer by itself enough to provide legitimacy to the possessors. Arguably the single most crucial factor in keeping these fledgling democracies on their newly chosen path is continued elite commitment — if elites believe the experiment should be kept on course it can sustain any number of economic or social reverses. If they lose heart, some and eventually a crucial number among them will see a green light to shut it down

Who are the "key elites?" Their identity will vary from one country to another, but in the less developed world they will always include the top military officers. In many countries, particularly former British and French colonies in Africa and Asia, they would include bureaucrats in the "elite cadres" that trace a direct descendance from the colonial era and that continue to dominate the commanding heights of governmental agencies. The elite business community is harder to define. In many countries it consists essentially of traders and indenters — a "comprador bourgeoisie" — while in others an industrial sector is sufficiently well developed to be a significant factor. Professional elites usually play a key role: the support of doctors, lawyers and journalists is generally crucial to regime survival. Another vital group are the political leaders, particularly if a country has had a previous experience in democracy. In most LDCs the larger landowners — often a rural gentry — form a key elite

¹³ The roman numerals here refer to the column headings in Figure 1.

group, sometimes in alliance with other elites and sometimes (more often when democracy is the issue) in opposition to them. And finally, intellectuals are also essential in maintaining democracy. Other critical groups play a role as well, such as trade union members, the lower strata of government workers, students, and the urban lower classes, but their role is largely manipulated by various elites. Urban demonstrations, student marches or labor strikes do not occur without the guidance of disaffected elites.¹⁴

Must all the relevant elites be committed to democracy to ensure its survival? Probably not. At least some intellectuals will always be pining for revolutionary change (generally on the left, though many Muslim intellectuals today urge fundamentalist theocracies to replace democracy), and at least a few military officers will always think that a military coup is the proper tonic for the country's troubles (usually on the right, though there are a few cases — Peru in the 1960s and Portugal in the 1970s — where leftist officers took the helm). Rural landowning elites are probably more often opposed to democracy rather than supportive of it, realizing at some level that democratic politics is all too likely in time to wean their dependent clients away from them, possibly even threatening their traditional dominance in the countryside. Given that a few elites will always be at best unenthusiastic about democracy, then, the crucial issue is how many additional elites become alienated from the incumbent constitutional order. If the disaffected military clique attains a critical mass, possibly in collusion with the rural gentry, democracy is in danger, especially if a significant portion of the upper level bureaucracy becomes disillusioned as well. Or if enough professionals and businessmen agree with the opposition politicians that the present order is unworkable, the military will quite likely join them in toppling the regime. Every *coup d'état* (as well as every failed *coup*) has a unique composition of players, just as each democracy has its own characteristics. But there are patterns: if enough key elites support democracy, it will continue; if they desert, it will end.¹⁵

¹⁴ This account has been essentially an urban one. Rural elites are critical in the longer run, and they must be brought into a democratic polity if it is to survive over time, but their commitment is not as critical on a day-to-day or month-to-month basis as is that of the other groups. And like their urban counterparts, the rural masses must be brought into a democratic system in some role, with the risk of their exclusion being rural insurrection. But *coups d'état* in the short term are the principal immediate danger to democratic experiments rather than revolutions.

Students as a group may need some special analysis here. Do they act more or less autonomously like other "key elites," at least in some cases? My own South Asian experience says "no", but recent history elsewhere (e.g., Eastern Europe) may tell a different story.

¹⁵ The clearest test comes when things go against the anticipations of key elites, as in the Chilean plebiscite of 1988, which Pinochet unexpectedly lost. But the military stayed the course with the democratic constitution implemented at the beginning of the decade (see Gold 1992; Graham 1992). Another recent example occurred in Zambia in 1991, when incumbent President Kenneth Kaunda stepped down after losing the first free election in his

An issue outstanding here is whether this insistence on elite commitment comes down to begging the question. When we say that the real test of regime survival is whether elites support it and then explain regime collapse by elite desertion, we fall in danger of asserting a tautology, in effect defining regime survival as support of the state by a sufficient proportion of key elites. But it should be possible to establish the case through case studies on this point.¹⁶

(b) Liberal philosophy. While elite commitment is enough to start a country down the democratic path, it is by itself not enough to keep the country on such a course. If democracy is to endure over time, it must have a self-sustaining ideology, which becomes embedded in the civic culture and which holds out the democratic path as the best one for the nation. In this context a "liberal philosophy" can be defined as one affirming the worth and efficacy of all the elements in Figure 1.¹⁷ More than a generation is probably required for such an ideology to become firmly rooted. As examples Germany, Japan, Italy and India have all now had democratic systems for more than 40 years. Is this long enough? For Italy probably so, and for Germany most likely, while for the other two many analysts continue to wonder. For Sri Lanka, the long democratic run beginning with its independence in 1949

27-year rule. At the other extreme, the Burmese military's reaction to its unexpected reverse in that country's 1990 election offered a tragic example of the opposite scenario. Haiti's recent history offers yet another example in which elites refused to accept the legitimacy of a national election. In a number of countries, the frequent reverses democracies have experienced can be attributed in significant measure to the fact that key elites (particularly in the military) never really committed themselves to democracy at all. Nigeria and especially Pakistan are cases in point (see Agbaje 1992; Khan 1992).

¹⁶ Two examples known to the author are the transitions to democracy in Bangladesh and Nepal in 1990. The pattern in both cases was that a rising wave of disaffection with the autocratic regime, beginning with students and intellectuals (a large portion of whom are usually against the regime in most countries most of the time), was augmented by professional groups, the bureaucracy and eventually by key elements in the military. The moment of truth came when the head of state ordered the army to put down the protests by whatever means needed, and the military declined to do so, more gently in the Nepal case (where the king still reigns as a constitutional monarch), more abruptly in the Bangladesh instance (where President Ershad was promptly clapped into jail to await prosecution). Both cases are strikingly similar to what occurred in the Philippines in 1986 with the Marcos government. Sometimes, regrettably, things take a different course, as in Burma in 1988 or China in 1989, when the military did follow orders to fire on the demonstrators, even though many other national elites had deserted to the opposition.

Is the military the only elite that counts in the end? Certainly it has more force than the other players, but it cannot rule by itself for any length of time, so needs collaboration from other key elites to stay on top. If too many other elites desert, military rule becomes unviable, as in Eastern Europe in recent years.

¹⁷ The term "liberal philosophy" is somewhat troubling here, denoting in this context not a place on the left-right American political spectrum, but rather a view of society incorporating both democratic politics and a market economy, thus using the word "liberal" in its 19th century meaning. Another term might be less confusing, but there doesn't seem to be a suitable one easily available. See Fukuyama (1992).

has come into severe jeopardy in recent years, in no small measure because a liberal philosophy began to wither as elites in successive regimes came to think that Human Rights and Societal Freedoms (groups III and IV in Figure 1) should not completely apply to the Tamil population. In the Philippines, where a kind of democratic politics flourished from independence in 1946 up until the Marcos declaration of martial law in 1972, it may have appeared that a liberal philosophy had taken root, but in retrospect it clearly did not. Liberal philosophy, then, can take a long time to become fully accepted in a country's political climate.

(c) Civic education. This is the means through which committed elites spread liberal philosophy to the citizenry as a whole. In significant measure it coincides with the formal education system, but it also includes adult and non-formal education efforts, the continual learning process engendered by the exercise of Societal Freedoms (group IV in Figure 1), and the cumulative impact of System Inputs (group V), so that much of it amounts to an unintended consequence of democratic politics in action over time. The very practice itself of liberal democracy, in other words, educates the citizenry about the worth of democracy and thereby helps it endure from one generation to the next.

Together a liberal philosophy and civic education comprise the civic culture -- an abiding sense within the citizenry that democracy is the appropriate system for the polity and that political business should be conducted according to democratic procedures.¹⁸

Causal linkages. Initially, there must be an elite commitment to liberal philosophy, at least for long enough to get a democratic polity started, but then liberal philosophy must become sufficiently well established to reinforce the elite commitment itself, that is, causality must go both ways. Both elite commitment and a liberal philosophy must continuously inform the civic education process. The main guarantor of Human Rights (the next columnar grouping in Figure 1) must also be elite commitment (which instructs the state to support Human Rights), but liberal philosophy and civic education play their role here as well, in insisting that Human Rights and Societal Freedoms (the third and fourth groupings in Figure 1) are fundamental to practicing democracy.

¹⁸ See Almond and Verba (1963) for the classic formulation of the concept.

(III) Human Rights

The different kinds of individual rights necessary for democracy can be divided into the three groups noted below. Because some of the terms like "civil rights" and "human rights" have been used in various contexts, there is much overlap between them, so the present taxonomy should be taken as stipulative rather than definitive.¹⁹

(a) Protection rights. Individuals must be free from violations of their integrity such as arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, police torture, state executions and the like.

(b) Civil rights. The term "civil" here intends a more narrow definition than the broader "Human Rights" used to describe the entire bundle of individual rights. Accordingly, civil rights in the present context is taken to mean freedom from discrimination by ethnicity, sex, religion, etc. In some countries (not just the U.S. by any means), civil rights is considered to include an affirmative action component as well, but not so in other democracies that have flourished for many decades. Presumably, then, a democracy can exist without it, though in the U.S. it has become a core aspect of the polity.

(c) Survival rights. Democracies generally try to provide some individual economic rights to protect individuals against outright privation and destitution. There are considerable differences in what level of "survival rights" are in fact provided, with a number of the European democracies providing a higher "social wage" than the U.S., others such as Sri Lanka furnishing a much lower one, and still others like India offering a welfare floor that does exist in some regions such as Maharashtra State with its Employment Guarantee Scheme but (aside from famine relief) is only rhetorical in most areas of the country. In general terms, survival rights could be equated with the "basic human needs" package that has long been an element in development work, consisting of minimum acceptable levels of food, housing and health.

Setting minimal standards. For democracy to function over any length of time, both protection rights and civil rights must be defended and preserved. But to what extent? Changing standards make this question hard to answer. Protection rights were routinely

¹⁹ The classification used here largely follows that developed by George Lopez (1992). Another term that could be used here to denote the whole bundle of rights would be "individual rights," which would distinguish them collectively from the group-based nature of the Societal Freedoms analyzed in section IV of the text below.

violated through such police abuses such as the "station house confessions" that were quite common in the U.S. earlier in this century, and civil rights were abridged through restricting the suffrage to males and in many areas to whites. Today either practice would be considered unacceptable. But the prevalent police excesses in a country like India are not generally considered to preclude it from being considered a democracy (although they do give it a lower score in various democracy indices²⁰). Different systems appear to have different thresholds here, and those thresholds change over time. Setting a minimal level of survival rights needed for democracy is even more difficult. It may be that the precise mix of Human Rights has to be determined individually for each country. Still, it would appear that each of the three types discussed above must exist in some measure for democracy to work.

Causal linkages. Elite commitment is certainly required for Human Rights to endure. If elites condone (and even approve of) "death squads" as in much of Latin America in the 1970s, then these organizations will tend to become a part of the political landscape. Similar elite tolerance (and often support) for systematic repression of the Indian population in Latin America has exercised a severe constraint on democracy. As democracies do develop over time, elite commitment becomes reinforced by a liberal philosophy and civic education in supporting Human Rights.

Can the Human Rights in group III of Figure 1 precede the full development of the Maintenance Requisites in group II? In the short term, the answer would seem to be yes, as can be seen in a number of Latin American experiences such as Chile and Argentina, where Human Rights recently have attained sufficient strength to facilitate democratic polities, though it is not clear that liberal philosophy and civic education are as well established as they should be. If democracy is to endure in those and other similar countries, however, these two elements in group II will have to become much stronger than they are at present.

Human Rights facilitate the exercise of the Societal Freedoms discussed in the next section. Freedom of speech, for example, does not function well when civil rights are so feeble that certain social groups are prohibited from speaking out, nor does freedom to assemble mean much to those who are liable to be "disappeared" by the state authorities if apprehended.

²⁰ Such as those developed by Freedom House (see McColm 1992) or Coppedge and Reinecke (1990).

(IV) Societal Freedoms

The Human Rights described above are enjoyed by individuals as individuals, i.e., apart from their place in society. They assert in effect that an individual must be free from state-instigated abuse, from harassment based on ethnicity, religion, etc., and from destitution. But there are also freedoms to do things, specifically to participate in society, that are also essential to democracy.

(a) Freedom of speech. Like the other Societal Freedoms, freedom of speech has no meaning apart from society: one must be free to urge his/her ideas upon the public, generally through the media,²¹ but also personally, as in London's Hyde Park tradition of public speechmaking. In practical terms, freedom of speech is not equally accessible to all members of the society, for some are more articulate than others, some have easier access to the media, some can purchase access, and so on. The same is true for the other two Societal Freedoms discussed in this section. What is critical for all the Societal Freedoms, however, is that enough divergent voices in the society can make themselves heard, such that a pluralistic competition obtains between them and that entry to the marketplace of ideas not be constrained.

(b) Economic freedom. The freedom to participate in the economy is a fundamental aspect of the liberal state, and finds expression in A.I.D.'s "choice and voice" theme. Again, from the standpoint of maintaining democracy it is not essential that everyone be equally able to participate, whether as wage earners, petty hawkers or industrial magnates, but rather that enough competitors participate and that entry for all types of economic participants remain reasonably easy. Of course for all democracies it must be anticipated that entry in any capacity will be relatively easier or harder as an economy goes through expansionary or contractive phases of the business cycle.

(c) Freedom of assembly. This includes the freedom to organize, to demonstrate and to petition the state for redress of grievances. Unless possessed of wealth or similar resources

²¹ In many and probably most LDCs, "media" here must mean the print media, since the broadcast media remain government-controlled. If the print media are sufficiently vigorous, however, as in India for most of its history, their presence may be enough to give a reasonably full flowering to freedom of speech. That freedom would be enhanced, of course, if the broadcast media were equally free (assuming there were also an energetic competition in that sector).

(e.g., status in many societies), individuals can only rarely **have any significant impact** on the political system. By acting in groups and associations, however, they can have a profound effect, as Tocqueville (1835) observed so long ago in the **United States**. As with freedom of speech and economic freedom, competition and ease of entry **are essential**. A critical aspect of freedom of assembly is the right of **minority groups to participate**.

The distinctive vehicle for participation is of course the **political party**, but equally important are advocacy groups of all sorts, whether political action is **their main purpose** (as with many human rights organizations, for instance) or is largely a **sideline activity** to other goals (e.g., a farmers' cooperative that eventually enters the political arena to press for higher producer prices). In many ways these advocacy groups are even more **important** than parties, for while the parties seek to control government through winning **elections** at periodic intervals, the advocacy groups try to influence those already in power **on a continuing basis** rather than endeavor to take power directly. It is these groups that are **the essence of "civil society."**²²

Limits on Societal Freedoms. Whereas Human Rights must **in a significant sense** be considered absolute and inviolable, Societal Freedoms will **inevitably need muting and tempering** in some degree. Torturing police suspects should **not be acceptable** under any circumstances, nor should oppression of religious minorities or **preventable starvation** be tolerated. But freedom of speech, to repeat the famous dictum, does not necessarily include the right to cry fire in a crowded theater. Freedom of assembly does not include the right to lynch minorities. And economic freedom does not cover any **right to serve tainted food** in a restaurant or hire goons to eliminate one's competition literally. **All the Societal Freedoms**, in short, are surrounded by behavioral limitations, more in **some societies** and less in others.

Causal linkages. The three Human Rights have a **causal relationship** to the three Societal Freedoms in that they are logically anterior to the latter and are necessary for the latter to exist at all in any **meaningful sense**. Citizens must enjoy immunity from state abuse and discrimination if **they are to practice freedom of speech**, participate freely in the economy, etc., and if they do enjoy that

²² As noted above (fn. 3), "civil society" is hard to define exactly, but it can be thought of here as voluntary membership groups existing apart from the state but having as at least a **major part** of their purpose to influence the latter's actions.

immunity they can pursue the Societal Freedoms. But these necessary Human Rights conditions are not sufficient ones. The three types of Human Rights may be quite secure yet not lead to Societal Freedoms. It could be argued that over time fully protected Human Rights must inevitably lead to Societal Freedoms,²³ but in the shorter term a system could very well have the former without the latter (e.g., Singapore). So while there may be causality in the longer run there is little evidence for it in the shorter, and it is the latter time frame in which A.I.D. must operate.

Certainly causal linkage does not go the other way. That is, since Human Rights are necessary conditions for Societal Freedoms, the freedoms could not logically exist without the rights already being present. The arrows in Figure 1, in other words, can only go from rights in group III to the freedoms in column IV.

Within the Societal Freedoms group, exercising economic freedom provides the most important resource permitting the exercise of the other two freedoms. Other resources are of course important, such as number of group members, skills at mobilizing, access to decision-makers, etc., but money tends to speak the loudest here as elsewhere. Thus arrows in Figure 1 lead from economic freedom to the other two kinds. There is also some reverse flow from freedom of assembly to economic freedom, depicting the tendency for successful interest groups (e.g., middle peasant farmers, or retail merchants) to use their political skills to enlarge their opportunities to participate in the economy. Any similar flow from freedom of speech to economic freedom would have to be considerably more subtle and so is not shown.

On a larger scale, elite commitment is necessary to secure both Human Rights and Societal Freedoms, and a liberal philosophy expressed through civic education must convince enough of the citizenry over time that these six aspects (three rights and three freedoms) are the bedrock of democracy. It is important to note that the entire populace need not consciously support these rights and freedoms. Indeed, numerous public opinion polls show a majority of Americans not

²³ For example, if immunity from arbitrary police abuse is maintained, then in some ultimate sense free speech cannot be denied, for the contradiction between protecting the civil rights of minority groups and refusing them freedom of assembly would eventually become too apparent to be denied.

particularly supportive of the Bill of Rights (e.g., the Fourth and Fifth Amendments against unreasonable search and self-incrimination), but consistent elite support combined with that of at least a broad cross-section of the public has kept the Bill of Rights essentially in place.

(V) System Inputs

These are what might be called the mechanics of democracy, **that is, processes** that are part and parcel of it, as opposed to the rights and freedoms that are its characteristics.

(a) Meaningful elections. "Free and fair elections" are generally considered a touchstone of democracy, even to the extent that if they are present, nothing else need be of concern. But recent experience in Burma shows that an election — however free and fair it might be — is insufficient by itself to guarantee democracy in the absence of elite commitment. Haiti offers another current example here. And the even more recent events in Algeria would seem to demonstrate that even if incumbent elites were to abide by election results, a lack of commitment to Human Rights and Societal Freedoms among the incoming political elite (i.e., the leadership of the fundamentalist party) would soon doom the democratic experiment there. Finally, the presidential *autogolpe* ("self-coup") perpetrated in Peru in April 1992 illustrates how fragile an election-based regime can be. Elections are essential, in other words, but scarcely enough by themselves to make democracy work. They are also arguably the single area where democracy has made the most progress in the recent rush to democratic polities, for while they are often complex, they are also sufficiently discrete in time and substance that they can be managed in the short term in relative isolation from the other processes of society. Thus Argentina, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Zambia for example could all have quite free and fair elections in the early 1990s, even though all the backward democratic linkages were not at all fully in place. Whether they will be able to stay the democratic course remains to be seen.

(b) Lawful governance. This might be thought of as the "guts" of democracy. In between elections, the state must be open and transparent as well as predictable and honest in the conduct of its business, so that citizens will know how to deal with it. And governance must be perceived as fair and impartial. Just as important, it must be responsive to people's wants and needs without becoming captive to the wants and needs of a few. A state having

elections but not lawful governance would at most amount to a sort of plebiscitary democracy, in which voters give a blank check to a set of governors until the next election with little knowledge of or input to what happens in between.

Lawful governance includes activity in all three of what Americans think of as the "branches of government." The bureaucracy, the legislature and the judiciary all must operate according to established and transparent rules of procedure. The three principal dangers here are corruption, arbitrariness and ineffectiveness. Corruption really means that government becomes accountable not to the citizenry as a whole but to a few — those who can pay the bribes or have the rights connections and have thus become "rent receivers." Arbitrariness means that accountability has become even narrower, so that government officials have become so autonomous that they need only answer to themselves. Finally, ineffectiveness refers to an inability to implement what a government decides — Gunnar Myrdal's (1968) "soft state." Often all three pathologies coalesce into the kind of statism often extant in Africa, where a government tries to regulate everything, but through a combination of corruption, arbitrariness and its own general ineffectiveness ends up controlling virtually nothing at all (see e.g., Hyden 1983 on Africa; and deSoto 1989 on Peru). To put the matter another way, while it has certainly been the case that overly strong states have greatly inhibited both economic and political development (most obviously the former communist states in Eastern Europe, where arbitrariness as here defined was the main problem), it is also true that very weak states also inhibit development along both lines, for they so easily become riddled with corruption and ineffectiveness that they cannot provide the environment needed by both economy and policy to flourish.

An additional consideration under the lawful governance heading is that of insulation, which constitutes one of the most difficult matters to deal with in the whole area of democracy. Simply put, the question is this: What state activities need to be segregated against public pressure and what operations should be open to it? Some sectors like the judiciary should be well protected against public interference, lest popular passions of the moment overwhelm the system's integrity. Other activities like tax collection also need insulation to protect them against corruption. On the other hand, there are also many activities that need regular citizen input if they are to be effective; schools must provide instruction that people want their children to receive, agricultural extension agents must provide assistance for actual problems farmers find themselves facing, public health officers must deal with epidemics as they arise, and so on.

In between these two types of government activity lies a vast area where the "right" amount of insulation is not at all clear especially the policy-making sphere. Governments undertaking "structural adjustment" reforms will likely need a good deal of insulation, if they are to pursue efforts to pare redundant public employees from the payroll, close down or sell off non-performing parastatals, etc. But too much insulation can give a government a blank check to design and implement counterproductive structural reforms, as apparently happened in Peru during the 1980s (see McClintock 1992; Pastor 1992).

An especially knotty problem here is the judicial sector. Americans are accustomed to thinking of "independence of the judiciary" as a sacrosanct principle of the polity. Court decisions should not be subject to popular pressures, we believe. But when low judicial salaries, huge case backlogs and inefficient management systems all combine to inject large-scale corruption into the system, it may well be that insulation from the popular will is not the appropriate path to take in restoring honesty and integrity to the judicial sector.

Other policy areas also present dilemmas here. To what extent, for example, should an environmental regulatory body be subject to popular pressure and to what extent should it be independent? Regulatory agencies accountable to a national environmental constituency, say in opposing the Silent Valley dam complex in southern India, may find themselves vigorously opposed by other constituencies wanting to exploit the natural resources at hand as expeditiously as possible (see Herring 1990; also Blair 1991). This kind of balancing issue is one that in the end each society will have to decide for itself.

Causal linkages. The connection between the freedoms of speech/assembly in Figure 1's group IV and elections/lawful governance in group V are clear. The former are essential for making elections free and fair and for ensuring that governance is open, impartial and predictable.

The role of economic freedom here is less obvious. Are capitalism and democracy causally linked? Or are they linked at all? Evidence is at best mixed on this issue (see Diamond 1992a, 1992b and 1992c; Haggard 1990). Successful market economies can but do not necessarily lead to democracy, as with the "East Asian tigers" and the ASEAN nations. On the other hand, if the full range of Human Rights is in place, it would be difficult to refuse citizens the right to

participate in the economy as buyers and sellers of goods and services.²⁴ Thus there is an arrow in Figure 1 connecting Human Rights (group III) to economic rights but no arrow leading from the latter to System Inputs (group V).

(VI) Societal Effects

When all is said and done, the abiding quality of democracy is that the state must be accountable to its citizens in a systematic way on a continuing basis.²⁵ It is held accountable at election time on an up-or-down basis, but also in between elections in that it must follow the due process of lawful governance in what it does. In the end, it is the presence of accountability that tells us that democracy is alive and well and functioning in a country.

Causal linkages. All the elements in Figure 1 have some effect on accountability, but four in particular have a direct relationship with it — elections, lawful governance, free speech and freedom of assembly — while that of the other elements is more removed. Elections and lawful governance have a more immediate effect on accountability in that the linkage is more routinized and predictable; citizens hold their leaders to account in elections, and bureaucrats must account for their behavior by prescribed rules.

Free speech and freedom of assembly also have a direct relationship with accountability, in that the press can expose wrongdoing in the system and aggrieved groups can mobilize to demand a righting of wrongs. But these two Societal Freedoms have in addition an indirect effect, in two ways. First, they operate through election and lawful governance mechanisms to maintain accountability. Secondly, even when they do relate directly to accountability the outcome here does not operate according to fixed (or at least largely predictable) rules as with elections and lawful governance. Instead, each journalistic expose is a unique case, and every attempt by an interest group to press its case is going to be a bit

²⁴ There does, however, appear to be some relationship between democracy and human development (see Schimpp 1991).

²⁵ It should be noted that accountability here refers to *political* accountability of the state to its citizenry. The World Bank, as mentioned earlier (n 3 above), sees accountability essentially in *economic and accounting* terms (World Bank 1991: 8-10 *et passim*). A second difference lies in *to whom* the accounting must be made. In the present paper, it is the citizenry, while in the Bank's treatment, it is not clear who the recipients of accountability exactly are (foreign donors? domestic investors?).

different. In sum, each of the four elements has a critical role to play in assuring accountability, and each has a somewhat different role. All four are necessary.²⁶

Of these four elements, two have an essentially negative effect while the other two can be positive as well as negative. Lawful governance and freedom of speech impart negative guidance to the state: malfeasance is exposed in the press, and misbehavior is punished by the judiciary. The other two elements give negative instruction as well, as when the voters reject an incumbent government at the polls or pressure groups mobilize to oppose some government activity. But elections and interest groups also offer positive guidance. A new government can receive an electoral mandate to change things in some fundamental direction, and lobbying can urge more particular courses of action. The principal difference is that elections can only provide such guidance at periodic intervals (and except in extraordinary circumstances cannot be reduced to a single overriding issue that would form a clear-cut mandate), while interest groups are constantly operating and continuously pushing very particular issues and policy solutions. This latter kind of guidance is inconsistent and even contradictory most of the time, as different groups want different and often irreconcilable things, but then that is what pluralist accountability is all about — many different groups demanding different things tends to preclude a few groups from seizing control of the public agenda.

Accountability also has a nurturing effect on all the other elements, ensuring that they remain in good working order. Just as elite commitment is absolutely crucial as the beginning point or essential pre-condition for democracy to endure, accountability is similarly crucial as the final effect or impact of a functioning democracy, but it is an effect that is also causal (as indicated by the feedback loop arrows stretching across the top and bottom of Figure 1) in keeping the rest of the democratic machinery operating properly.

²⁶ If freedom of assembly were absent but the other three elements were present, for instance, wrongdoing would be publicized and disciplined, but citizen groups would not be able to petition for redress.

A more deductive and practical approach to democracy

Thus far we have been taking a more or less inductive approach to applied democracy, tracing its thread from the beginning requisite of elite commitment down to its actualization in accountability. But while we have a picture of linkages, we do not get from that exercise alone a grip on what aspects are most important. How do we know that a political system really is a democracy? Civil rights protection *per se* will not do the job, nor will securing all the Human Rights in group III of Figure I. To take another example, several recent cases (e.g., Haiti, Peru) show that free and fair elections are not enough to secure democracy on a lasting basis either.

What then is "enough" — or a sufficient condition or set of conditions — to make a system democratic? This is another way of asking what is the defining characteristic of democracy, and the answer is what was stated at the beginning of this section on applied theory in democratic politics: accountability through pluralist competition. This is what drives a democracy and what makes all the pieces in Figure 1 work to sustain the democratic process. More specifically, pluralist competition is the dynamic and accountability is the result (whence the title "Societal Effects" for group VI in Figure 1).

Here in this subsection, the analysis begins with a discussion of what is entailed in pluralist competition. It then moves to construct a deductive approach to applied democracy, starting with pluralist competition and working through successive stages of what it implies for democratic processes. This second model should also be more useful in the applied sense, as a tool for diagnosis and donor-sponsored development interventions. While the principal rationale for the first, more theoretically complex and more elegant model are to explore all the major structural linkages in a democratic polity, the major purpose of the second and more spare version is to offer a coherent guide to international donor development strategy.

Pluralist competition

Just as a market system needs competition among both buyers and sellers, so a democratic system needs competition between its players, both among "buyers" (citizens and voters) and "sellers" (political leaders). Pluralist theory has been analyzed at great length by Robert Dahl (e.g., 1971, 1982) and other political scientists, but for our purposes pluralism can be summed up as the system effects created by political competition among people (or more

commonly groups of people) acting in their own interest. To be more specific, it is pluralist competition through which people will hold their leaders accountable for their stewardship of the polity. Public accountability is the objective and pluralist competition is the means for achieving it.

If pluralism is the centerpiece of sustainable democracy, what is most immediately necessary to keep it working? What activities, in other words, are most important in making leaders accountable? Honest elections are an obvious factor here, as is lawful governance, for the people must be able to change their governors and must be able to require that state policies be responsive to their needs and wants. But periodic elections and processes for petitioning the state are not enough here, for elections occur infrequently and state agencies, whether executive or legislative, can only respond slowly and imperfectly, whatever their intent. Fortunately, there are processes to facilitate accountability more immediately, namely freedom of speech, which enables the media to uncover malfeasance and sloth, and freedom of assembly, which empowers citizens to mobilize in order to demand redress of grievances or press for state action beneficial to themselves. To bring the argument back to Figure 1, we could say that these two Societal Freedoms together with the two System Inputs in effect combine to constitute the environment that sustains democracy, and that they do so by producing accountability (i.e., Societal Effects). Thus arrows in the Figure lead directly from each of these four elements to accountability.

A different way to put the matter is to ask Segal's question: what problems does pluralism solve? What dangers to democracy does it combat? The greatest single danger to the democratic polity is that a few people (or groups) may take over the machinery and operate it in their own interest and against the interests of the majority (or of significant minorities). This "rent seeking" behavior can occur in any of the elements in Groups III or IV. A few sellers (or buyers) can collect unearned income ("rents") through controlling the marketplace and setting prices as they choose in the absence of competition. Similarly, a small inner circle of interest groups can collude together to receive unearned benefits (subsidies) from the state, or an oligopoly may control the media to its own advantage and thus name its own terms to the public. Elections may be so dominated by one party that others are eliminated or at best reduced to the role of sideline players, and government officeholders may find themselves able to sell the state's services (or resources or licences, etc.) to the highest

bidder. All these perversions of pluralism constitute one form or another of rent collecting behavior.²⁷

What can prevent this from happening? When all is said and done, the answer must be that different groups with different and opposing demands compete with each other vigorously enough so that no one group (or combination) can get control at the expense of the rest. In the short term, a set of laws or constitution with enforcers can keep the system accountable to the citizenry as a whole in the absence of competition, but it too is subject to subversion over time. In the longer run, it must be competition itself that keeps the system honest and responsive by ensuring that no one group or alliance dominates it.²⁸ Pluralism can be thought of as the socio-political environment in which the five elements of the Societal Freedoms and System Inputs groups in Figure 1 interact with each other, as depicted by the dotted line enclosure.²⁹ Meaningful competition must obtain between those operating within each of these five spheres. Should competition fail or be precluded in any one sphere, could a system still be democratic? Could freedom of speech and elections, for example, carry the load if freedom of assembly and lawful governance were severely restricted by the state? Probably not, for such a system would become at best a "plebiscitary democracy" in which the citizenry could elect their governors and complain, but could not really find out what the state was doing nor could they mobilize to demand redress and reform. What if the media were controlled by a small oligopoly or a single political party? The results would be similar

²⁷ There are any number of other rent-seeking behaviors. Cabals of interest groups can force the state to purchase unneeded produce (e.g., surplus agricultural commodities), bureaucratic interests can preserve unproductive jobs (e.g., in parastatal corporations), etc.

²⁸ In the very long run, of course, it must be a liberal philosophy or civic culture that keeps the system honest, by maintaining a deep sense that the system's fundamental principles (in the U.S. case the Constitution and Bill of Rights) must be kept in place. Over the decades and centuries, it is this sort of devotion to a Platonic *nomos* (set of laws) that keeps a political system on course, but AID practitioners will be concerned more immediately with the socio-political environment and the degree of pluralism that exists within it.

²⁹ Economic freedom is certainly related to and supportive of the freedoms of speech and assembly, but the relationship of market economies to democratic polities is unclear, as has been discussed earlier in the text. For this reason, it is included as part of the pluralist environment (within the dotted line in Figure 1), but not in quite the same sense as the other four elements.

A special note must be entered on the lawful governance sphere, which it will be observed in Figure 1 is half inside the pluralist enclosure and half outside. This is because, as discussed earlier in connection with insulation, while some lawful governance institutions must be subject to popular inputs, other agencies in this sphere definitely should not be. Those institutions like education agencies which should be subject to a pluralist environment would be inside the dotted line, while those like tax collection that should be insulated are outside it. And, as also discussed earlier, in every society there will be some institutions whose position is unclear.

and for similar reasons: competition would be snuffed out, pluralism would fail and democracy would wither.

The present focus on pluralist competition leads back to the earlier discussion of accountability and insulation. How much accountability must there be and how much insulation is needed in public policymaking? To put the question in Segal's terms, if we assume that some insulation is necessary in any governmental operation, at what point does it become too much insulation and lead to an unhealthy dampening of pluralist competition, thereby constituting a problem that more competition would solve? All governmental institutions must be subject to some kind of accountability, but just how much and just what kind is not always clear. The judiciary, to take the archetypal case, should not be affected by short-term popular passions, as mentioned before, but on the other hand, too much judicial insulation in all too many LDC settings constitutes an invitation to corruption. Finding the right mix is difficult indeed.³⁰

In that large area where the proper degree of insulation is less clear, neither are the mechanisms of accountability clear cut, but some mechanisms must function if democracy is to survive very long. Economic planners need some insulation if they are to undertake the kinds of reforms sorely needed in many LDCs, for example, but they cannot be allowed completely to ignore citizen needs and wants. To take again the economic planners who were too well insulated in Peru during the 1980s (McClintock 1992; Pastor 1992), accountability came in the form of ensuing national elections as the incumbent parties were dismissed by the voters largely on account of the economic havoc they had caused while in office. Less insulated planners might well have taken heed from popular dissatisfaction at their policy nostrums and changed course earlier. The ultimate type of accountability, of course, is found in the sanctions imposed when overly insulated governments lose legitimacy altogether and find themselves abruptly dislodged from office, as happened in Eastern Europe in recent years.

How much accountability should be owed to whom in the democratic polity? Accountability is probably impossible to achieve perfectly in the sense of each constituent in the system

³⁰ Somehow over time the judiciary's standards and mores must be in consonance with those of the society in which it is embedded. In most advanced democracies, this longer term consonance is effected through the appointment of judges, who are expected to reflect the highest ethical and judicial standards of the society at the time they are appointed. And as standards change over time, the composition of the judiciary changes as well. Accountability is there, in sum, but it is to be found over the course of decades, not in the short run as a function of elections or citizen petitions or investigatory journalism.

having a voice commensurate with its size and weight, such that, if for instance agriculture produced 35 percent of GDP and employed 50 percent of the labor force, it would enjoy something like a proportional influence in affecting the polity,³¹ and the state would be accountable to the agricultural sector to approximately that extent in matters relating to the economy. Or if a minority faith accounted for one-fourth of the population, then in issues concerning religion that group would contribute approximately one quarter of the total input into making policy decisions. But agriculturalists will never have precisely their proportional share in accountability; it will always be more than or (more often in their case) less than their "proper share." The same will hold true for minority religionists.

In this sense accountability is somewhat akin to equilibrium in economic analysis. Competition between buyers and between sellers is what drives a market toward equilibrium, but the market's dynamics (e.g., introducing new products or new technologies for producing old products) plus constantly intervening exogenous factors (e.g., competition from other markets, as when trucks began to challenge railroads for freight traffic in the U.S. in the 1950s) prevent a true equilibrium from ever being achieved except perhaps momentarily. Indeed in a way it is this very inability to achieve equilibrium that keeps the market operating efficiently. A market in which supply and demand were in perfect balance would be a stagnant market with no chance of innovation or expansion. Similarly a polity that achieved exactly proportional accountability to all would probably be a stagnant one. It is the constant competition between players wanting a greater share that gives a democracy its dynamic quality.

A deductive approach

We are now in a position to look at applied democracy in a deductive manner, beginning with its central defining characteristic of accountability through pluralist competition. Figure 2 will illustrate the discussion. Democratic accountability needs a flourishing pluralism if it is to work. And a thriving pluralist competition in turn implies that four democratic

³¹ To take the agricultural example given in the text, if economic contribution and numerical participation were to be weighted equally, agriculture might be allotted a $(35 + 50)/200 = 42.5\%$ "share" in the polity. Merely performing the math here indicates how difficult it would be to construct a system in which each sector had its rightful "share." Defining a "share" would be almost impossible in the first place (share of what?), and even if it could be defined, the sizes would grow or shrink as society did (e.g., a decreasing agricultural contribution to GDP) and most people would be represented in more than one group, meaning that shares would overlap (e.g., female farmers from a minority religious sect would have to participate in three sharings where their group interests might well conflict: for example, the best use of the land might be to produce grapes for winemaking, though the minority religion forbids alcohol and its consumption is mostly by male household heads with generally unfavorable effects on household welfare). Accountability, in short, can never be an exact science.

processes are in good working order: free and fair elections; lawful governance; freedom of speech; and freedom of assembly. If any one of them seriously sags or breaks down for any length of time, pluralist competition suffers. Economic freedom, as noted earlier, is also a necessary part of the process here, but not in quite the same sense, in that the other two freedoms can be enhanced by it, but political pluralism is not directly dependent on it, so it goes on a separate line in Figure 2.

If these five processes (three freedoms plus elections and lawful governance) are in good working order in a system, then it must be the case that the three types of human rights are well secured, for the former could not be sustained over any length of time if the latter were regularly violated. A healthy human rights environment (as reported, for instance, in the annual State Department survey) must mean a combination of dominant liberal philosophy and prominent civic education along with elite commitment if it exists over the long run. If human rights have been secure only for a relatively short time, it may be due primarily to elite commitment, but if that security is to last, the other two elements will be needed as well.

What we now have, then, is a more stripped-down and practical guide to a democracy policy initiative. Pluralist competition leading to democratic accountability is what a democracy initiative should aim at fostering, and the conditions needed to bring it about are free and fair elections, lawful governance, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. These four conditions in turn are dependent on three kinds of human rights, those pertaining to protection, discrimination and survival. Finally, these rights, as well as the system as a whole are dependent on a continued liberal philosophy and civic education being in place and upon the sustained commitment of key elites. In the next section, we will look at how this model can inform both diagnostic assessments of present political systems and plans to support their democratic components.

Building a democracy support strategy

If elite commitment, accountability and pluralist competition are the three most important elements in sustaining a democratic polity, then A.I.D. support should be directed there. But all these elements are somewhat indirect or oblique, and not easily made the target of an A.I.D.-supported project. Elite commitment is essentially self-generated at the outset (as

elites conclude that non-democratic forms of government are basically unviable and so turn to democracy) and is sustained through an on-going elite decision-making process concluding (and continually re-concluding) that democracy is better than whatever alternatives elites may be tempted to take up. Elite commitment can be encouraged and perhaps reinforced through "policy dialogue" carried on by the in-country US ambassador and senior embassy staff, senior A.I.D. mission staff, USIS-supported visits to the U.S., etc., but it cannot easily become the focus of a specific A.I.D. project.

At the other end of the democratic linkages depicted in Figure 2, accountability is not so much a human or societal right like freedom of speech or a process like elections and governance as the cumulative effect of all these things. Accordingly, it would be difficult to design an "accountability project," although improved accountability could well be a purpose or goal of some other project activity, for example building investigative journalism or facilitating public dissemination of court decisions. Indeed, in standard A.I.D. logframe terms, accountability could be considered as a major long-term goal of any project effort intended to support democracy.

Similarly, pluralism or pluralist competition cannot be formulated into a development assistance project. It too must be the by-product of other activities taking place over a long period of time.

What then are the most appropriate elements for foreign assistance? The model outlined in Figure 1 offers five sets of elements to choose from: (I & II in the Figure) Pre-conditions and Maintenance Requisites; (III) Human Rights; (IV) Societal Freedoms; (V) System Inputs; and (VI) Societal Effects. As noted above, the very first and the very last elements are the most essential, but they are also the most elusive in foreign assistance terms, in that A.I.D. cannot work on either the first cause (elite commitment) or the final effect (accountability) directly in project terms. Nor can the pluralist socio-political environment depicted in Figure 1 be addressed directly.

And neither of the two civic culture Maintenance Requisites — liberal philosophy and civic education — lend themselves easily to A.I.D. efforts, at least in the short term. Both are in

part a result of formal education, and so could to a degree be "projectized,"³² but they are in societal terms much more the product of long experience: the results of seeing democracy work over many years and decades.³³

This leaves the elements in between to choose from. These can be grouped into two sets: (1) Human Rights; and (2) Societal Freedoms/System Inputs, as in Figure 2, where Human Rights comprise the lower middle group on the chart and the Freedoms/Inputs constitute the upper middle group. The three elements in the Human Rights set are all fundamental to the exercise of democracy, and their presence is necessary for the second set of Freedoms/Inputs to be of any long-term efficacy.

Human Rights

A.I.D. has supported Human Rights³⁴ in the past, providing a great deal of assistance for survival rights through its various food security programs. It could be argued that much of its public health work has contributed to survival rights as well, and indirectly economic development efforts in general have done so, insofar as they have succeeded in increasing the total supply of goods and services, and have attained some equity in distributing those gains. But supporting democracy has really been a by-product for these activities rather than their major purpose, and while they may well help democratization, such efforts in the future cannot be justified solely (or even predominately) as democracy programs.³⁵

³² An A.I.D. project could for example focus on promoting civics curricula in the public schools, emphasizing the virtues of liberal philosophy. Given the plethora of failed experiments at molding the political thinking of the young in so many LDCs (even if these efforts were largely inspired by now-discredited ideologies), however, any such enterprise on A.I.D.'s part should be viewed with considerable wariness.

³³ Democratic civil education has in some ways been an indirect and long-term outcome of various A.I.D. training projects in the past. The prolonged exposure to American practices gained by successive cohorts of graduate students in their training quite likely played a significant role in propelling Taiwan and South Korea toward democracy, for example, as those ex-students gradually moved to high-level decision-making posts in their governments. Perhaps in time current efforts to train Central American students in American universities under the auspices of the CLASP program will have a similar impact on civic education in their home countries.

³⁴ It should be recalled that "human rights" as used here incorporates protection rights, survival rights and civil rights (cf. Figure 1).

³⁵ This is because, given their large costs, projects in food aid, health, infrastructure, etc., would likely absorb all the funding available for democracy and leave little or nothing left over for other activities that are more directly related to democracy itself. Moreover, it should be remembered that such enterprises in the past have supported dictatorships just as easily as democracies.

More recently A.I.D. has provided assistance for monitoring protection rights, an effort which has been of great significance in helping countries embarking on the democratic path to stay on that course. Just because a regime at the upper levels decrees an end to police torture (even assuming the decrees to be serious) does not mean *ipso facto* that the constabulary will overnight completely **change** its behavior patterns. A vigilant monitoring effort is needed almost everywhere to **ensure** that protection rights are in fact preserved.

Support for civil rights is somewhat more complex, in that there is less widespread agreement on civil rights against discrimination (e.g., against women in some Muslim countries) than there is concerning protection against physical abuses of individuals. And still less is there a consensus on affirmative **action** to advance the rights of groups discriminated against in the past. In spite of these **constraints**, however, A.I.D. by now has a considerable experience with its Women in Development (WID) initiative, and has launched a number of activities that could be described as affirmative action oriented (e.g., small enterprise projects for women). There is, of course, **much** discrimination along non-gender lines (e.g., ethnicity, religion) that WID efforts do not deal with, but which have been addressed by some of the monitoring activities **mentioned** above in connection with protection rights.

In terms of future support, survival rights can best be left to efforts in other sectors, such as agriculture, health and the like, **which** have promoted overall economic growth and where social impact analyses have customarily drawn attention to matters of distributional equity. Instead it is in the protection and **civil rights** fields that A.I.D. should direct its democratization attentions, particularly for **countries** just beginning to embark on the democratic path (those further along that path will **presumably** need less help here). Monitoring agencies can be supported and strengthened. Civil rights can also be covered in some respects by A.I.D.'s WID efforts, which can **be** integrated with the agency's democracy initiative. Also advocacy groups for women, ethnic minorities, and aboriginal peoples have grown up in recent years, which can be supported through A.I.D.-assisted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like CARE, the Asia **Foundation**, and the like.

While they are important in their **own** right and will have a material impact on democracy, however, all these "upstream" activities will necessarily be small and selective. Monitoring human and civil rights is vital in **fledgling** democracies prone to lapses and backsliding. Level of funding is not the crucial factor, however, and a relatively small effort here will probably be enough, provided that **the** remaining "downstream" elements are in place. To be

sure, Human Rights are difficult to preserve, often even in advanced polities, but in all political systems the main work in preserving them has to come in the end from accountability.³⁶

Societal Freedoms and System Inputs

The best candidates for supporting democracy would be the four elements leading most directly to accountability: freedom of speech; freedom of assembly; elections; and lawful governance. If these four areas flourish (and if elite commitment is continuing), accountability will keep the system as a whole on an even democratic keel by maintaining a pluralist political environment. And in terms of the model, success in these areas is strong evidence that Human Rights must be in good shape, for none of these four can thrive for any length of time if Human Rights are seriously abridged.

A.I.D. has supported freedom of speech through technical assistance for journalists, as well as for developing the print and broadcast media. More could be done to build capacity in investigative journalism in particular, as well as local, low-budget, private sector radio stations and low-cost (e.g., desk-top) publishing, which would serve to disseminate the results of journalistic work. Public opinion polling can serve to feed popular views back into the polity as well as make citizens aware that their ideas are significant.

Although A.I.D.'s original intent in most cases was not to support freedom of assembly through its efforts to assist NGOs, this has been an outcome of such assistance in some cases where they have entered the political arena to demand more benefits for their members, take issue with restrictive governmental regulations, forestall attempts to constrain them, etc. An exception has been assistance provided through the National Endowment for Democracy, which has explicitly supported political parties through the National Democratic Institute and the National Republican Institute. In future efforts, A.I.D. could usefully assist NGOs outside the political party fold to become interest groups, not to enable them to compete with political parties, but rather to develop their capacity to put pressure on the parties and the

³⁶ The mechanism here is that the freedoms of speech and assembly in combination with lawful governance create and sustain an environment of pluralist competition that produces accountability, and this in turn maintains the three Human Rights. This process is illustrated in the feedback arrows in Figure 1.

political system generally.³⁷ Such an effort would have to be appropriately broad, so that a few interest groups did not get the upper hand. Examples in a number of countries would be the women's rights groups and environmental groups that have come into being in recent years.³⁸

A.I.D. has contributed considerable support for free and fair elections, both in the form of technical assistance for registering voters, counting ballots, reporting results, etc. and for monitoring election conduct. Quite a few other DAC donors have participated in similar efforts. In the aggregate, these activities have been salutary for democracy, contributing significantly to the legitimacy it presently enjoys in many LDCs. An honest and effective electoral structure is not built with one or two contests, however, and the temptations (as well as opportunities) for backsliding are immense. Thus assistance will be required in this sphere for some time to come, even over successive free and fair elections, until countries can build their own effective monitoring systems.

The lawful governance sector is considerably more complex. Here A.I.D. has supported such diverse activities as training judges and publishing judicial decisions, strengthening parliamentary committee systems, and routinizing bureaucratic procedures. The scope for future work in this general area is immense, larger by far (though not necessarily more important for a strategy to support democracy) than in any of the other sectors discussed here. While in some cases past assistance may well have been counterproductive (e.g., making a bureaucracy more efficient in implementing government policy could easily make it more effective in imposing its wishes on an unwilling public), A.I.D.'s democracy initiative should make agency personnel more conscious of ensuring that future activity supports rather than constrains democracy.

³⁷ This has been the pattern in much of the Asia Foundation's assistance to NGOs in recent years, funded largely by its direct grants from the Congress through the State Department (the so-called "151 accounts"), rather than by A.I.D. contracts.

³⁸ There is some overlap here between interest groups furthering the interests of their own members (such as small businessmen, labor unions, middle peasants or landless laborers) or causes (like the environment) and civil rights groups, which generally also promote the cause of their own members (e.g., women, religious minorities). In terms of the present discussion, *all* these groups are interest groups (and thus fit into the "freedom of assembly" box in Figure 1), while only *some* of them are civil rights groups (thus fitting also into the "civil rights" box).

Evaluating democratic progress

In attempting to assess democratic progress, there are at least four major challenges: determining priorities for evaluation; figuring out sequences; developing indicators; and deciding attribution. Unless our understanding of democracy moves beyond what are essentially lists of its characteristics, there is no reason to think improvement or retrogression in one sector is more or less important than movement in any other. Nor do taxonomies offer any causal explanations, so we have little idea of what leads to or contributes to what. And once it has been decided what to activity to evaluate, we need some gauges to tell us what gains may have occurred. Finally, when progress does occur in an area, it is hard to say whether the improvement stemmed from some specific development intervention, had some exogenous cause, or would likely have occurred anyway.

A theory of democratic development should be able to guide assessment by indicating priorities in two ways: pointing to some things as more important than others; and specifying some things as causally anterior to others, such that progress in the "upstream" areas should lead to improvement in the "downstream" areas.

In these terms, then, the best test of democratization over time would be how well a country performs in the two systems inputs categories — successive free and fair elections and sustained lawful governance. If these two elements are doing well over an extended period, then it can be concluded from our understanding of causal linkages that the freedoms of speech and assembly are healthy,³⁹ and that in addition (following Figure 2) the three Human Rights are all performing well. Between elections and governance, the former is the obvious first choice for evaluation here, for measurement is relatively straightforward. Monitoring elections is still a somewhat inexact science (international observers cannot be everywhere in a country at once to look at an election while it is taking place), but reasonably accurate estimates can be made comparing countries with each other and over time (see, e.g., Coppedge and Reinecke 1990, and Ryan 1992, or, more ambitiously, Hadenius 1992).

³⁹ The same conclusion cannot be made directly about economic freedom, since it is not causally connected to elections (cf. Figure 1), but it is linked to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, so it could be gauged indirectly through the same causal chain pursued for the other societal freedoms. Perhaps of more relevance here is the fact that A.I.D. (and other donors) have much interest in (and many methods for) evaluating the extent of economic freedom in any given country. No matter how much concern focuses on democracy, it is safe to say that economic development will remain the centerpiece of international donor interest, and that there will be no shortage of methods advanced to measure it.

With lawful governance, evaluation is considerably more difficult. To begin with, government corruption, arbitrariness and ineffectiveness (the three principal threats to lawful governance analyzed earlier) all make measurement difficult and time consuming at best. Such analysis of course would also be highly sensitive, in that **host** governments tend to be averse to both research and findings on these topics, particularly on corruption and arbitrariness. For example, even the World Bank's Country Economic Memorandum series (in which individual countries are profiled each year) are confidential, in large measure for fear of offending host governments, though they generally touch only peripherally on corruption and arbitrariness, concentrating as they do largely on economic policy issues and performance. A promise of confidentiality might facilitate evaluating A.I.D. activity in the lawful governance sphere, but, given that a basic purpose of evaluation should be to publicize the results, such a constraint would be counterproductive.

And even assuming that host country reservations are assuaged, what kind of methodology would be appropriate? How, for instance, could one evaluate the lawful governance aspects of a public health program which included a requirement for public participation in planning and implementation? The evaluators would be looking for evidence that the freedoms of speech and assembly permitted and encouraged citizens to have a significant voice in the project as it unfolded. The mechanisms here might be press coverage, concerned citizens associations' participation in planning and/or monitoring efforts, lobbying or protest activity directed at the ministry of health or its local field offices — all these are ways in which people can hold the bureaucracy to account. But to measure such effects would require quite a sophisticated methodology combining qualitative and quantitative research skills from political science, public administration and social anthropology, and perhaps other disciplines as well.

The public health example just given would constitute a lawful governance enterprise that we hope *would* be affected by the pluralist competition. A project to improve tax collection, on the other hand, would be expected not to be subject to pluralist influence if all went well.⁴⁰ From the democratic initiative perspective, then, the evaluational task would be to assess the extent to which the effects noted in the previous paragraph did *not* occur. Presumably much the same methodologies would be appropriate.

⁴⁰ In terms of Figure 1, the public health example would fall in that part of the lawful governance box that is inside the dotted line surrounding the pluralist socio-political environment, while the tax collection example would fall outside it.

Is it enough to analyze elections and governance without also looking at the backward linkages to Societal Freedoms and Human Rights? Probably so, if a system measured very highly on both processes over time, for that would indicate that the backward linkages were all functioning healthily as well. But in most — in fact almost all — LDCs there will be problems with either or both elections and governance. Thus it will be necessary to look at the other elements as well. But beginning with the System Inputs should reduce the effort required by guiding the analysis of backward linkages. For example, if there are problems with elections, do they seem to revolve around ballot tampering? If so, guaranteeing access to the vote-counting process plus freedom to report violations would be required to assure accountability. If lawful governance is tenuous, perhaps the problem seems associated with an inability to gain access to decision-makers, which would be a freedom of assembly issue. In either case, the model offers guidance on pinpointing a diagnosis and suggesting remedies for future assistance to democratic efforts.

Thus a good assessment of democratic progress in any given country would most likely involve examining a number and perhaps even most of the elements shown in Figure 2. But it would be a purposeful analysis of a structure of causally linked aspects of the polity, rather than an attempt to measure a group of things on a list with little if any idea of which should be examined first or how they all fit together. Moreover, the analysis would more easily lead to programmatic improvements if there is a theoretical understanding to guide a democracy strategy.

When the elements to be assessed have been selected, there remains the problems of what indicators to be employed for the evaluation task. Some of those suggested by various A.I.D. missions for measuring progress made by their democracy projects toward strategic objectives and program outcomes are ill-defined, unmeasurable, or meaningless, while others are reasonably precise, meaningful and measurable. In the legislative sector, for instance, "routinization of the legislative process" is unclear at best and would be very hard to measure, and while "number of legislators and staff trained" may be easy enough to count, the statistic by itself says nothing about whether the training was relevant, well administered or put to use. It is as yet early days in A.I.D.'s democracy initiative, however, and as this effort goes on, it should be safe to assume that better indicators will be developed. To take the legislative example again, one such measure offered by an A.I.D. mission is "legislative

control over own personnel and finances," which is relatively precise, assessable and meaningful.⁴¹

The problem of attribution — always nettlesome in evaluation work — is probably even more difficult in assessing any effort to promote democracy. A.I.D. assistance may have contributed significantly to a free and fair election, or to a human rights monitoring endeavor, but how much of the success of such activities can be attributed to the foreign assistance and how much to domestic support? Having a workable theory of applied democracy cannot solve this kind of problem, but it should help to deal with it.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this essay to begin building an applied theory of democracy that could inform A.I.D. programming strategy and that could guide evaluation of democratic progress. The absence of an overall applied theory of democracy forms a serious constraint on these tasks, both of which must be at the core of any A.I.D. enterprise concerned to promote democracy in the LDCs. Is it feasible to construct a theoretical framework that would meet these needs? Does the present essay represent a reasonable start on an undertaking of this nature? If so, where should such an effort go from here? Is the account given here and summed up in Figures 1 and 2 a satisfactory minimalist generic explication? What needs to be added or eliminated, particularly as one moves to specific regions of the world and within them to specific countries? If such a tailoring effort is undertaken, can a generic model of the sort presented here be kept as an umbrella under which regional and country variations would fit? This essay closes by raising these questions.

⁴¹ The Systems Design and Support Office in A.I.D.'s Center for Development Information and Evaluation has been working on building sets of indicators suitable for the Agency's democracy initiative. See e.g., Mason (1992) and supporting materials. For a more detailed set of indicators pertaining to the justice sector, see Heilman et al. (1992).

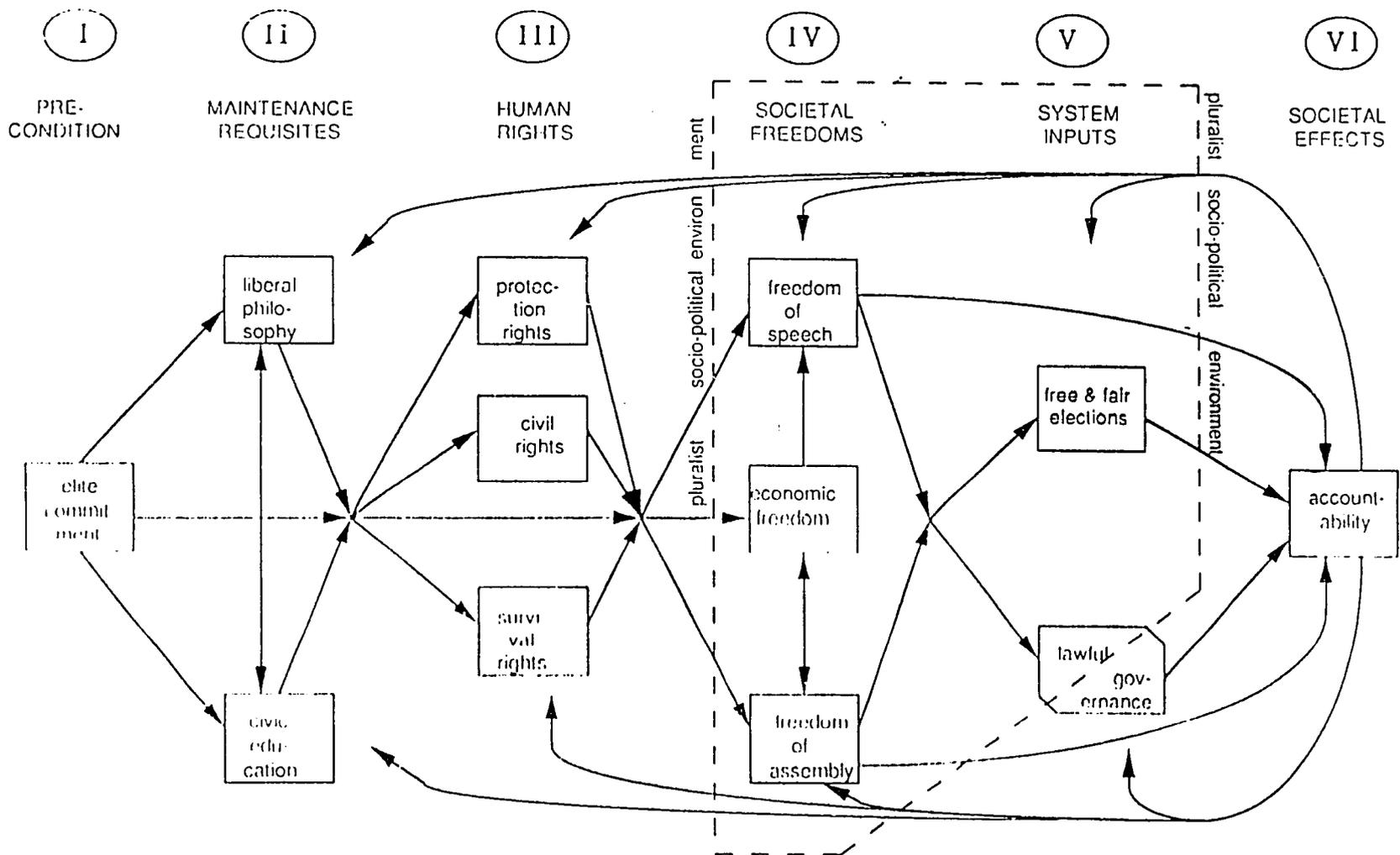


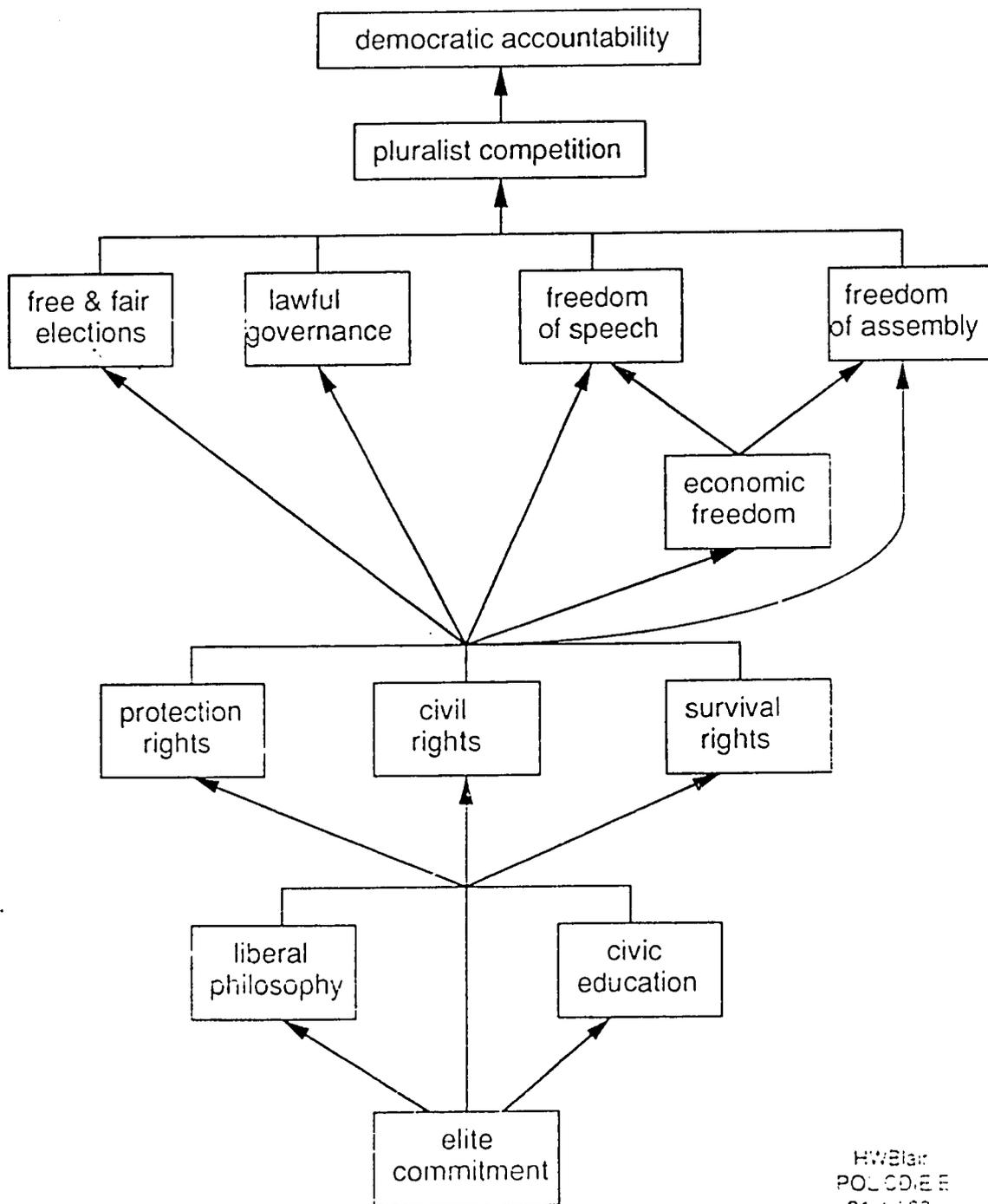
Figure 1

Elements of democracy and their linkages

HWBlair
POL/CDIE/E
30 MAY 92

Figure 2

A causal model of democracy



HWBlar
POL/CD/E/E
31 Jul 92

ACRONYMS

A.I.D.	United States Agency for International Development
APRE	Bureau for Asia and Private Enterprise
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation (in the Directorate for Policy)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DGPP	Democracy and Governance Policy Paper (A.I.D. 1991 in
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
LAC	Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
LDC	Less Developed Country
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ORT	Oral Rehydration Therapy
RD/EID	Office of Economic and Institutional Development, Bureau for Research and Development
USIS	United States Information Service
WID	Women in Development

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