



Evolutionary Basic Democracy

The Theories, Concepts and Practices of Democracy

General Editor: **Jean-Paul Gagnon**, School of Political Science and International Studies and the School of Mathematics and Physics, University of Queensland, Australia

The discourse of democracy suffers from ambiguity: its literature is too vast and there is no codified understanding of its theories, concepts and practices. The uncertainties surrounding the meaning of democracy resulted in serious political problems for all levels of democratic government – both historically and presently. The literature on democracy is so vast that it is highly improbable for one person to understand the core of this mass. Such an understanding is, however, needed to resolve the problematic ambiguity associated with democracy.

The aim of this book series is to define, analyse and organize democracy's hundreds of theories, concepts and practices. The objectives, supporting this aim, are as follows:

- Curate and consider works on democracy;
- Identify and fill gaps in the literature on historical and contemporary democracies;
- Find opportunities to synthesize or separate specific theories, concepts or practices of democracy.

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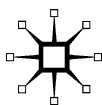
Evolutionary Basic Democracy: A Critical Overture



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To John Keane for heartening my confidence

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Preface

It would be helpful to state three things in this Preface. The first is the concept of democracy that I use in this book. The second is the working status of the model I present in the book's Introduction. And the third concerns the way this book fulfils its promises.

The definition of democracy that I use comes from my journal article entitled 'Democratic Theory and Theoretical Physics', which was published by the *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* (a robust and open-access academic periodical). For that paper I collected works that together explained more than 40 different types of democracy. And, using computational analytics, I asked that body of data what these different types of democracy had in common. This work resulted in the first argument for the theory of basic democracy. At that point I thought that for any democracy to exist, the polity or society in question has to have an observable engagement with the following six parameters:

- 1) a non-violent citizenry;
- 2) the citizenry declaring and exercising its sovereignty;
- 3) a discourse on equality;
- 4) communication on social, political, economic and similar topics;
- 5) a process of collectively deciding leadership;
- 6) and a means to collectively determine, and then pursue, a society's long-term goals.

A particular style of democracy emerges depending on the way a polity or society engages the parameters above. The

emergent style depends on what problems exist in these engagements, what institutions have been built and what normative communal desires exist about each parameter.

This is the way that I understand democracy and discuss it from Chapters 1 to 4. It is the lens that I use to look at nonhumans. That being said, my definition is inescapably subjective and parochial. If a different scholar deployed my analytical study it is possible that she would build a different list from my own. Also, when I revisited my paper to add more types of democracy to my analyses, I noticed that the vast majority of democracy types that I originally used were Eurocentric. They were also bound to specific *times* in a mostly Eurocentric history. Because of that, this theory of mine is limited and cannot speak for the world. It does not represent ‘democracy itself’ but rather a conception of what a specific type of democracy might be. Every theory of democracy suffers the same.

The problems raised in my conceptual work resulted in the model of democracy that I offer in the Introduction. I am building this model at the University of Queensland. It is a real and existing project. The model is in the process of being designed for 4-dimensional use on the Internet. My aim is to establish and then manage a collaborative research programme designed to populate the model with data on democracy. These data must come from all known planetary space and all known human *and* nonhuman time. We will need to bring in these data from as many languages as possible. As I explain in greater detail below, we need this body of carefully organized data to reach a scientific definition of democracy. Without a definition of this type – something that must be widely agreed upon by scientists and philosophers alike – we cannot with certainty say what is democratic and what is not. This is one root of certain serious problems in the contemporary politics of the world.

The American philosopher Sidney Hook said it best in his 1949 work ‘The Philosophy of Democracy as a Philosophy of History’ (p. 582):

The recognition that our own lives and those of our descendants depend mainly upon the political decisions we take in this generation makes political ideas today causal factors of the first rank. It reinforces the necessity for an analysis of the democratic ideals that are invoked as principles of justification. It is at this point particularly that philosophers can do a much needed work of clarification. One of the most curious phenomena of our time is the way in which all totalitarian governments have sought to pass themselves off as species of democracy – as ‘organic democracies,’ ‘directed

democracies,' 'higher democracies.' And it is intellectually scandalous that even some American philosophers have lent themselves to this campaign of semantic corruption which judges a culture not by its practices and institutions but by the holiday rhetoric with which its public documents and officials gloss them over. Such stupendous naiveté which would make every ruthless despot a brother democrat provided he talks about the classless society, or about the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, is a preface to political folly.

Hook's point reveals the seriousness of the predicament we are in concerning democracy's condition of problematic uncertainty. Part of my book's purpose is to detail a method that will resolve this global political issue.

My book is an introduction. It is an *overture* to a different way of thinking about democracy. It is meant to set the grounds for further research. Because of that, the book is meant to be capacious. It has to raise more questions than it answers. The book fosters the growth of what I think is an already established, but rather new, ontology of democracy.

Acknowledgements

This book is technically my third contracted book for Palgrave Macmillan, but the first of the three to be published. It (the book being an entity unto its own now) and I owe a great deal to two specific individuals at Palgrave Macmillan: Amber Stone-Galilee, senior editor for politics, and Andrew Baird, editorial assistant for politics. From letter of inquiry to final manuscript submission my work was put under impressive editorial scrutiny. It was sent for blind peer-review multiple times and fit to the format that would best suit the book's chances on the market. Communication was efficient. The editors worked hard to answer every one of my enquiries. I am grateful to you both for your kindness and professionalism. My thanks also go to Newgen Knowledge Works.

As the book was in its final drafts, I sent individual chapters to colleagues asking for candid appraisals. Dr Mark Chou, Phil Paine, Dr Ron Levy, Professor Steven Muhlberger and Professor Gavin Kendall contributed generously. Their critical remarks were poignant and were of great value.

Chapter 2 of this book is indebted to a number of brilliant minds that agreed to share their time with me. I am grateful to Professor Uwe Meierhenrich for discussing the notion of democratic prebiotic and amino acid behaviour, Professor Zhi-zhong Xing for explaining how quarks and leptons can be made democratic, Dr Austin Lund for deconstructing a baker's dozen of physics papers to me specifying how and why 'democracy' and 'democratic' were used therein, Associate Professor Tamara Davis for answering my weird questions on 'democracy in outer

space, Professor Kevin Foster for explaining the uncertainties biologists have about gamete social behaviour, Dr Darryl Preece for easily explaining 4-dimensionality to me (he deserves a prize for his teaching skills) and Professor Gerard Milburn for setting me on the right path of inquiry.

I would like to thank Sarah Chen for her professionalism, artistry and enthusiasm. She brought the model of evolutionary basic democracy to visual-life for which I am interminably grateful. To others who follow the siren call of social and political philosophy (or theory) and would like to employ visualisation in their works, please think of Sarah Chen: scientific illustrator extraordinaire at <http://www.sarahachen.com/>.

It is to a specific ten-year old boy, and nephew, named Max that I would like to express my gratitude. One day after school I showed him the table of animate nonhuman democracies (Table 1.1). I had just finished reading a large number of papers on microbial cooperation and was excited about this burgeoning field. Max asked whether the table was about species making decisions with *other* species. This was a subtle dimension of the literature, one that I did not think to pursue. This led to the paragraph on interspecies democracy in Chapter 2. Thanks to you Max for your poignant question. I hope that you continue to nurture your curiosity and to ask the questions that need asking.

I owe a special debt to the University of Queensland, specifically the School of Political Science and International Studies as well as the School of Mathematics and Physics for their support. Without these institutional pillars the writing of this book would not have been possible. Great thanks go specifically to Dr Martin Weber, Professor Gillian Whitehouse, Professor Halina Rubinstein-Dunlop, Associate Professor Richard Devetak, Dr Heloise Weber, Professor Stephen Bell, Professor Jean-Louis Durand, Dr Phil Orchard, Dr Shannon Brincat, Dr Frank Mols, Professor Roland Bleiker, Dr Ian Ward, Dr Sebastian Kaempf and Kamil Shah.

Finally, I want to thank my family, friends and the strangers that I have yet to make friends of, for their unexpectedly courageous support, unyielding encouragement and uncompromising generosity. These thanks go especially to my beautiful wife Tracey – the greatest of my muses. I take full responsibility for any flaws in this book. I would, however, like to share the success its strong points might enjoy with all thanked above and the many others who are too numerous to mention.