The DEMOCRACY of France.

Cap of Liberty

Ca ira, Ca ira, Ca ira!

Hold me well up or I will Bite off your Head.

By Gar 'tis Var Heavy, O dear; O dear! it will fall.

The RISE of DEMOCRACY

REVOLUTION, WAR AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SINCE 1776

CHRISTOPHER HOBSON

THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION:
BEYOND THE 'END OF HISTORY'

We have suffered in the past from making democracy into a dogma, in the sense of thinking of it as something magical, exempt from the ordinary laws which govern human nature.

(Lindsay 1951: 7)

The exponents of liberal democracy make the mistake of ignoring the all-important fact that democracy is not something given once and for all, something as unvarying as a mathematical formula.

(Hogan 1938: 10)

INTRODUCTION

Little over 200 years ago, a quarter of a century of war fundamentally reshaped the European international order. That conflict was triggered by the advent of popular doctrines in revolutionary France, and fears that it might seek to export 'all the wretchedness and horrors of a wild democracy', as the British ambassador Lord Auckland described it at the time (quoted in MacLeod 1999: 44). In stark contrast, today 'rogue regimes' are defined by the fact that they are *not* democratic. In the intervening period a remarkable series of revisions took place in the way democracy was understood and valued in international society. In a relatively short space of time, popular sovereignty went from being a revolutionary and radical doctrine to becoming the foundation on which almost all states are based, while democratic government, long dismissed as archaic, unstable and completely inappropriate for modern times, came to be seen as a legitimate and desirable method of rule. This book examines these changes in the concept of democracy, and considers how these processes have interacted with the structure and functioning of international society. Put differently, this

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study is structured around the historical contrast between, on the one hand, the high degree of acceptance and legitimacy that democracy now holds, and on the other, the strongly negative perceptions that defined democracy when it reappeared in the late eighteenth century, which should have seemingly limited the possibilities of it becoming understood so positively.

The book seeks to throw new light on a central feature of the current international order, in which – according to Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen – democracy has become a 'universal value', having 'achieved the status of being taken to be generally right' (Sen 1999: 5). It explores the remarkable reversal that took place, accounting for democracy's rise from obscurity to its position as a central component of state legitimacy. In contrast to the influential accounts of liberals, who too easily universalise democracy's current meaning and suggest its 'triumph' was somehow inevitable, this book illustrates the opposite: just how unlikely this outcome was. Indeed, the success of these changes is reflected in the extent to which they go unquestioned today. This is hardly a new phenomenon, however. As the opening quotes from Hogan and Lindsay attest, there has been a longstanding tendency to reify, if not deify, democracy. Consequently, we often forget that its recent ascendance is not a natural or inevitable condition, but the result of political and sociological processes that have led to a certain set of ideas and institutions prevailing. In this regard, the book uses history as a resource for better understanding the contemporary challenges democracy faces, and in doing so, it develops a normative defence of democracy based on its uneven and contingent past. It reminds us that a world in which democracy is the dominant form of government is not the norm, but a historical anomaly, which in turn should promote a sense of humility.

DEMOCRACY VICTORIOUS?

When considering the standing of democracy in contemporary politics, a logical starting point is the end of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, democracy was left alone and ascendant, having seen off the great twentieth-century challenges of fascism and communism. Francis Fukuyama famously heralded this as signalling the 'end of history', in so far as liberal democracy presented itself as the ideational endpoint for societies to move towards (Fukuyama 1989; Fukuyama

1992). While his thesis has been widely criticised for its excessive triumphalism, Fukuyama did verbalise a significant transition that was unfolding. As democratisation scholar Juan Linz noted at the time, 'ideologically developed alternatives have discredited themselves and are exhausted leaving the field free for the democrats' (Linz 1997: 404). In the early 1990s it certainly appeared that a new democratic era was dawning. As Thomas Carothers and Saskia Brechenmacher recall, 'the decade was marked by a strong sense of liberal democracy as a universally valid normative ideal. The remaining authoritarian regimes were in a phase of relative weakness as the tide of history appeared to be running against them' (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014: 22). The 'third wave' of democratisation was reaching its peak: having traversed much of the globe from southern Europe across to Latin America and Asia, it was then spreading through eastern Europe and Africa. This represented a truly unprecedented expansion of democracy, reflecting that it had become an aspiration for people across the world and an important marker of state legitimacy.

A quarter of a century later and much of the initial bravado has since disappeared, but democracy – even if bruised and battered – remains ideationally in the ascent. Larry Diamond, a leading democratisation scholar, still regards it as being without peer: 'no other broadly legitimate form of government exists today, and authoritarian regimes face profound challenges and contradictions that they cannot resolve without ultimately moving toward democracy' (Diamond 2014: 8). This is reflected in the fact that few, if any, states openly repudiate the label, while most authoritarian governments tend to either claim to be democratic or suggest that they are progressing towards it (McFaul 2010: 37–41). Even China, widely seen to embody the most serious challenge to liberal democracy, does not directly deny the ideal, although it certainly does so in practice (Economist 2014a). In the speeches of world leaders, democracy is taken as a 'natural' state of affairs compared with the 'distortions' of dictatorship and other forms of authoritarian rule. Reflecting on the current state of affairs, Fukuyama's position is now much more nuanced, but he maintains that 'in the realm of ideas … liberal democracy still doesn't have any real competitors. Vladimir Putin's Russia and the ayatollahs' Iran pay homage to democratic ideals even as they trample them in practice' (Fukuyama 2014a).

The present ideational supremacy of democracy reflects both its institutional successes and the failures of its historic competitors. The

spread of democracy across the world since the end of the Second World War is a remarkable achievement that is unlikely to suddenly disappear (Levitsky and Way 2015; Ulfelder 2015). Following the 'third wave' of democratisation from the 1970s through to the 1990s, and the subsequent Colour Revolutions and Arab Spring, different forms of democracies can now be found across all regions of the world. According to the most recent Freedom House report, 89 out of 195 states are considered 'free', collectively making up nearly 2.9 billion people or 40 percent of the world's population (Freedom House 2015: 7). The vast majority of the world's most stable and prosperous countries are democratic, suggesting that 'there is a broad correlation among economic growth, social change, and the hegemony of liberal democratic ideology in the world today' (Fukuyama 2012: 58). Democracy is seen to be uniquely capable of providing a wide range of domestic and international goods, from better protecting human rights and preventing famine, to behaving peacefully and following international law. These beliefs have helped inform the liberal ordering strategy the United States has pursued since 1945 in which the advancement of democracy has played a central role (T. Smith 1994; Ikenberry 2000).

The breadth of acceptance of democracy is further reflected in the increasingly prominent place it occupies in the programme of the United Nations (UN). While the UN may now closely align itself with democracy, this represents a marked change from the original charter, which is noticeably free of any references to it. This was updated by the 2005 World Summit outcome document, which included an explicit statement that 'democracy is a universal value' (United Nations General Assembly 2005: 30). It was followed by the UN secretary general's guidance note on democracy, which proposed that

> democracy, based on the rule of law, is ultimately a means to achieve international peace and security, economic and social progress and development, and respect for human rights – the three pillars of the United Nations mission as set forth in the Charter of the UN. (Ban 2009: 2)

Further examples can be found in the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund in 2005, which reflects the pivotal position that democracy now plays in post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts, what has been dubbed the 'New York consensus' (Hassan and

Hammond 2011: 534). These developments have been partly motivated by arguments from academics and think tanks that propose that the spread of democracy will help foster a more peaceful and prosperous international order (Parmar 2013; T. Smith 2007). Not only is democracy presented as a universal value, it is seen as having instrumental value in that it is seen to offer the best route to peace and prosperity. As such, democracy is supported and advanced for both ethical and practical reasons.

Performance legitimacy, a lack of peer competitors, and the nominal backing of the global hegemon have certainly provided strong foundations for the ideational dominance of democracy. Yet initial hopes that the end of the Cold War would mark the dawn of a new, and fundamentally better, era of international relations – defined by the spread of democracy – have failed to come to full fruition. Instead, the 1990s now appear as something of a liberal interregnum. This change of affairs has led Azar Gat to suggest that we have reached 'the end of the end of history' (Gat 2007). Democracy is increasingly questioned, as doubts about its normative value and institutional strength proliferate. These growing concerns have been reflected in a spate of recent books on the health of democracy and whether it is now in crisis (Coggan 2013; Dunn 2013; Kurlantzick 2013; Ringen 2013; Runciman 2013). Certainly the challenges democracy faces are manifest and they are real. A number of significant trends are pulling at the threads of democracy, threatening to slowly unravel it. The continued rise of non-democratic China, the resurgence of an increasingly authoritarian Russia, a United States weakened by political dysfunction at home and costly adventurism abroad, growing dissatisfaction and disengagement in many established democracies, the failed attempts to democratise Afghanistan and Iraq, the 'third wave' leading to a proliferation of 'hybrid regimes' rather than functioning democracies, and a growing backlash against democracy promotion efforts, are among the most obvious negative trends that are leading some to question democracy's future.

It may seem strange to be publishing a book entitled *The Rise of Democracy* at a time when people are increasingly wondering if it is decline. Few can doubt that democracy's standing has weakened since the early 1990s. This is hardly a surprise given the excessive optimism and confidence of that moment. Nonetheless, it is here that Fukuyama's kernel of truth remains relevant: democracy still does not face a clearly defined ideological competitor in the way it previously did

with fascism and communism. To date, increasing dissatisfaction with the way democracy works has manifested itself more in discontent and calls for better-functioning democracy. It has not yet led to widespread support for alternative political systems, although there is no reason to believe this cannot change. On the whole, Sheldon Wolin's summary of the situation in 2004 remains largely accurate:

> One of the most striking facts about the political world of the third millennium is the near-universal acclaim accorded democracy. It is invoked as the principal measure of legitimacy, as the standard for any new states wishing to gain entry into the comity of nations, as the justification for a pre-emptive war, and as the natural aspiration of peoples struggling anywhere for liberation from oppressive systems. Democracy has thus been given the status of a transhistorical and universal value. (Wolin 2004: 585)

This is not to deny the limitations and weaknesses of contemporary democracy, or the considerable challenges to it that presently exist, but to appreciate that there has been a remarkable consensus over its normative and political desirability in the post-Cold War world, and that the historical trend has been broadly in the direction of democracy, albeit not in any simplistic, unidirectional manner. Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning are ultimately justified in concluding that 'the democratic *zeitgeist*, though less ebullient than . . . it was just after the Cold War ended, still reigns' (Møller and Skaaning 2013: 106). In this context, what this book illustrates is that democracy is simultaneously more secure and more vulnerable than is commonly appreciated.

TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY

> Since we are all democrats (or so one may hope!), we tend to see democracy as the fulfilment of our political destiny and as the political system that will remain with us for the rest of human history. For what alternative is there to democracy?
>
> (Ankersmit 2002: 10–11)

Is democracy's time in the sun coming to an end? Or are the reports of its demise greatly exaggerated? It is here that returning to democracy's past becomes such a productive and necessary exercise. On the one hand, doing so guards against a misplaced faith that democracy's

recent ascendency reflects some deeper Truth or answer to History. On the other hand, it also warns against excessive pessimism, given democracy's remarkable resilience and its ability to provide comparatively convincing answers to some of humanity's most challenging political questions. By returning to a time where democracy had yet to be endowed with the positive connotations that now shape it, this study seeks to counter the tendency to be 'bewitched' by this normatively powerful concept (Skinner 2002: 6). In this sense, it is a 'history of the present', which examines democracy's past as a way of better understanding its current role in international politics and what its future may hold. Adopting such a perspective foregrounds the limitations and fragility of democracy, and cautions against the excessive confidence that has too often defined the dominant liberal account.

The book undertakes a macro-historical study of democracy's conceptual development in modern international politics, considering how it emerged in relation to changing understandings of legitimacy and sovereignty. These principles are what help identify democracy as an international issue, as legitimacy and sovereignty are closely related phenomena that extend across and shape both the domestic and the international realms (Bukovansky 2002; Wight 1972). In considering these historically shifting and complex conceptual relationships, the study simultaneously provides a series of snapshots of the way democracy has been interpreted at different moments in time. Through examining the conceptual history of democracy, it will be seen that it has developed in close relation with the functioning of international politics (Fukuyama 2014b: 534–7). As a study by UNESCO reveals, the changing and contested nature of democracy is linked to the most basic issue that dominates the discipline of international relations (IR): 'it is not only a problem of philosophy ... it is a problem of war and peace' (UNESCO 1951: 514).

The focus is primarily on moments of revolutionary upheaval and war, as these are times when the meanings of basic concepts undergo great change, and principles of legitimacy are challenged and revised. As Raymond Aron explains, 'the phases of major wars – wars of religion, wars of revolution and of empire, wars of the twentieth century – have coincided with the challenging of the principle of legitimacy and of the organization of states' (Aron 1966: 101). The study commences with the American Revolution. While clear precursors to the doctrine of popular sovereignty can be found, most notably in Britain (Morgan

1988), it was with the founding of the United States that it was explicitly introduced into, and interacted with, international politics. The majority of the study focuses on the period between the American Revolution and the end of the First World War, by which time popular sovereignty was embedded in international society, and democratic government had come to be recognised as a legitimate form of constitution. What would follow was a contest that raged until 1989, which Philip Bobbitt terms 'the long war', between different forms of domestic constitutions – democracy, communism and fascism – ultimately leading to the widespread acceptance of democracy as the most legitimate form of government (Bobbitt 2002). Underpinning these observations, and the book as a whole, is a conception of international society, as questions about legitimate forms of statehood and domestic governance, which frame much of this investigation, only make sense within some kind of interpretative community where shared assumptions, norms and beliefs exist. These theoretical assumptions are outlined in more detail in the next chapter.

In considering democracy's conceptual development, it can be seen that historically democracy has meant two things: a form of state, what is commonly referred to as popular sovereignty, and a form of government, a set of domestic governing institutions, how democracy is now generally understood. Employing Kant's distinction between *forma imperii* (state form) and *forma regiminis* (government form), it is argued that to properly appreciate democracy's conceptual development and emergence in international society both meanings must be tracked. In ancient Greece, where the origins of modern democracy lie, *dēmokratia* was a direct form of rule where the people both constituted the polity and exercised power. Popular sovereignty and democratic rule existed together. When democracy reappeared in modern politics, these two dimensions were disaggregated. Popular sovereignty was separate from democratic institutions, and preceded it. The former was able to receive far greater and quicker acceptance in international society because it was more limited: the location of sovereignty was challenged, but its nature was left untouched. Furthermore, popular sovereignty did not necessarily entail a certain set of domestic institutions: it may point towards democracy, but it need not. One need only recall Hobbes's theory or the fascist regimes of the twentieth century for important examples of where consent-based notions of sovereignty did not entail popular rule. As a form of government, democracy

struggled against a diachronic structure that strongly advised against it. Nonetheless, through a series of conceptual revisions, ridding it of the negative connotations that had plagued it for so long, democracy came to be regarded as a legitimate form of domestic constitution. Once this occurred, the nature of the contestation shifted, with much of the twentieth century being defined by a battle between different domestic regime types. With communism following fascism into the dustbin of history, democracy was left standing alone at the end of the twentieth century, but most of the conceptual innovations that laid the foundations for this outcome had finished being laid almost a century earlier.

The account provided is one that emphasises the historical contingency of democracy, detailing how its meaning and significance changed as a result of political contestation and conflict. During the founding of the United States, the classical interpretation of democracy dominated the revolutionaries' imaginary, meaning that they constituted their new country on the basis of popular sovereignty, while actively denying the concept of democracy. The peripheral location of the United States, and the conformist aspirations of the founders, served to blunt the impact of this new republic being constructed on legitimacy principles that contradicted those that prevailed in Europe. With revolution in France, however, democracy powerfully emerged as a political force at the heart of international society. In comparison to America, there were two conceptions of popular sovereignty at play – representative and direct – which strongly shaped the impact of the revolution on France and the rest of the society of states. The *ancien régime*, built on custom and precedent, was violently challenged and undermined in a way that it would be impossible to recover from. Despite attempts by the statesmen at the Congress of Vienna to turn back the clock, it was not long before democracy would reappear. In America one finds a particularly early re-evaluation of the concept. While democracy retained radical connotations during the revolutions of 1848, in the United States it was widely supported and conceived of positively. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the rise of democracy was increasingly seen as something almost inevitable, and monarchical principles of legitimacy were further eroded through the institution of constitutionalism. It was the First World War, though, that would prove determinative in shaping democracy's fortunes. Through America's entry into the war, which resulted in the reframing of the conflict in terms of democracy, followed by the subsequent defeat of the Central Powers, democracy

emerged fully as a legitimate form in international society. The war led
to popular sovereignty supplanting monarchical sovereignty in relation
to principles of international legitimacy, and through the ideological
innovations of Woodrow Wilson the positive evaluation of democracy
as a form of government was transposed from the American domestic
context to the international realm. What would follow until 1989 was
primarily a contest around the legitimacy of the constituted power: the
people as the constitutive power had become a foundational premise
on which international society still rests.[1]

DEMOCRACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Democracy has the rather odd distinction of being central to the history
and contemporary functioning of international politics, but occupying a
marginal place in IR as an academic discipline. If one looks at the most
significant conflicts and upheavals over the last few centuries, democ-
racy and popular sovereignty have regularly played an important part.
The American and French revolutions, the 'springtime of the peoples'
of 1848, both world wars, the Cold War and the War on Terror: democ-
racy has figured in all of these. Yet if one turns to the field of IR there
has been remarkably little interest in the nature of democracy and its
role in international affairs. Writing just over a decade ago, Hazel Smith
posed the right question: 'why is there no international democratic
theory?' (H. Smith 2000). Neither her account, nor much of the schol-
arship since, has offered a compelling answer, however. For the most
part, IR scholars have tended to view democracy as a topic best left for
political theorists and comparativists. 'IR theory's neglect of democracy
lingers on in certain core assumptions,' Ian Clark observes, which has
fostered a perception that the discipline is 'entitled to pay scant regard
to democracy except inasmuch as, as an attribute of some actors, it has
an effect on international outcomes: it is not, by itself, the stuff of the
subject' (Clark 1999: 146). Meanwhile, political theorists have regu-
larly failed to account for the wider international context within which
democracy has appeared and operated.[2] On both sides of the discipli-
nary divide, reflecting the domestic/international dichotomy, there has
been a common inability to appreciate democracy's emergence in more
holistic terms. In contrast, this book denies too strict a division between
the state and international levels, instead regarding the two realms
as ontologically related. It follows Robert Jackson's observation that

'international theory and political theory diverge at certain points but they are branches of one overall theory of the modern state and states system' (R. Jackson 2005: 39).

Some may counter this argument by pointing to the sizeable literature by liberal scholars centred on the empirical claim that a zone of peace exists between stable, liberal democracies (Geis and Wagner 2011; Hayes 2012; Hegre 2014). In one sense, this certainly represents a significant corrective to the lack of interest that has previously prevailed in IR. Yet on closer inspection, this shift is much less dramatic than what it may first seem. These scholars, relying heavily on quantitative large-*N* studies, reduce democracy to a variable, of use in so far as it helps explain state behaviour and international outcomes. Yet understanding democracy in such a fashion, detached of its historical and normative roots, takes away the very features that make it such a politically significant concept in the first place. As Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen observes, 'democratic peace theorists need not relate to the desirability of democratic peace or the consequences of establishing it. They are in the business of describing, not prescribing' (Rasmussen 2003: 9). This means that the argument for democracy ultimately becomes rather functional: its value lies in its contribution to interstate peace. Thus, the democratic peace claim – and the wider democratic distinctiveness literature – ends up looking like an exhibition at Madame Tussauds: the likeness may be extremely close, but it is missing something vital that distinguishes the real thing from the replica. To understand democracy, to come to terms with its complicated reality and the equally complex concept that signifies it, one must grapple directly with its normativity. And to do this, it is necessary to reconnect democracy with history and political theory. Democracy is much more than a variable in a data set.

A central claim of this book is that an appreciation of the contested and contingent nature of democracy's past can provide foundations for a strong normative defence of democracy, one rooted in its fallible, incomplete and exploratory nature. The value of adopting such an approach is expressed by Pierre Rosanvallon: 'democracy takes on meaning and form only as a *construction in history*' (Rosanvallon 2006: 205; original emphasis). He further explains that 'the object of such a history ... is to follow the thread of trial and error, of conflict and controversy, through which the polity sought to achieve legitimate form' (Rosanvallon 2006: 38). This effectively blurs the lines between history and political theory, as genealogy becomes the foundation

of a normative argument for democracy. It is inspired by Reinhold Niebuhr's assertion that 'democracy has a more compelling justification and requires a more realistic vindication than is given it by the liberal culture with which it has been associated in modern history'(Niebuhr 2011: xxxi). In this regard, there is no pretence that this study has been completed by an objective bystander assessing democracy from afar. It has been undertaken and completed in democracies, and has been unavoidably shaped by that context. This is hardly a revolutionary claim, but it is worth making precisely because so much scholarship on democracy commences from an unstated preference for this regime type. Indeed, as Patrick Deneen notes, 'contemporary research in the social sciences and humanities is now almost universally undertaken with the assumption that democracy is the sole legitimate form of political governance' (Deneen 2009: 42). This is particularly evident in the case of democratic peace research. As John Owen observes, 'of all the statistical correlations with war that *could* be uncovered and *could* spark a large literature, it is no accident that several US researchers discovered *this* one and found it worth pursuing' (Owen 2011: 162; original emphasis). Yet the vast majority of that work lacks the theoretical resources to defend the researchers' unstated normative preference. In contrast, this study demonstrates how work on democratic peace, and democracy in IR more generally, can be strengthened through actively engaging with normative arguments, rather than trying to banish them.

Seriously engaging with the history of democracy leads neither to unabashed confidence nor to corrosive scepticism, but instead to a cautious recognition of both its achievements and its limitations. The misplaced and excessive optimism that has defined much of liberal thought following the fall of the Berlin Wall reflects its presentism and a shallow, linear understanding of democracy's past. Democracy is not the ultimate harbinger of freedom or equality or any other value, though it may provide some of these to a greater degree than many of its historical competitors. Instead, it represents a form of rule that remains open and adaptable in a way that reflects individual and collective desires for liberty, and provides a framework for peacefully reconciling the differences and disputes that unavoidably shape politics. The rise of democracy does not mean the dawn of a new, more peaceful and prosperous age. It certainly does not mark the endpoint of humanity's ideational evolution, even if liberal democracy remains the most widely accepted and legitimate form of polity in contemporary

politics. Ultimately, what democracy offers is something much less grand, but still very significant. As Niebuhr memorably puts it, 'democracy is a method of finding proximate solutions for insoluble problems' (Niebuhr 2011: 118).

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2 commences with a deeper consideration of existing scholarship on democracy in IR, focusing primarily on the democratic peace research programme, arguably the most influential version of liberal internationalism at present. It is argued that this scholarship reproduces a limited, incomplete understanding of democracy, stripped of historical context and normative meaning. While these shortcomings are noted, it is also suggested that critical democratic peace research needs to move from critique to further substantiating an alternate way of studying the complex and ambiguous relationships between democracy, peace and war. This is a core aim of this book, which is fulfilled by demonstrating how insights can be generated through examining the historically contested nature of democracy in an international context. The remainder of the chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual framework for the historical study to follow. It identifies how conceptions of democracy have developed in relation to principles of sovereignty and legitimacy in international society. It is proposed that an effective methodology for studying these issues is the conceptual history approach, which is outlined by drawing on the work of Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck.

Chapter 3 focuses on the United States, which since its birth has been democracy's most important international champion. Yet the role played by democracy in America's founding is much less straightforward than is often presumed. The revolutionaries held a highly sceptical view on democracy as a form of government, while at the same time strongly supporting popular sovereignty. Their thinking was heavily shaped by classical interpretations of the concept, which is illustrated through a pre-history that identifies how democracy's meaning remained structured by the negative legacies of ancient Athens. The result was what may now seem like a rather odd arrangement: the attempt to base the United States on popular sovereignty and establish a government that was answerable to the people, while steadfastly refusing to label it a democracy. The chapter explores how the founders sought to reconcile

these contradictory aims through instituting a representative form of rule based on the will of the people. While the founding of the United States did not significantly alter conceptions of democracy as a governmental form, popular sovereignty was asserted in a very powerful manner and in so doing, the Americans helped introduce a new, and revolutionary, conception of sovereignty into international society.

Chapter 4 considers the monumental French Revolution. This period is pivotal in terms of the narrative of the book, as it represents the intersection of fundamental changes in the nature of international politics with the modern appearance of democracy as a political force. The chapter examines in depth the way the concept of democracy was used and contested during the revolution, and how two conceptions of popular sovereignty emerged. These developments directly challenged an international society composed of monarchs, and ultimately manifested themselves in the revolutionary wars. A strong holistic narrative is developed locating the changes within the international context of *ancien régime* Europe, arguing that France became both 'behaviourally' and 'ontologically' dangerous to the existing order.[3] What makes the period so crucial to this study is that monumental shifts in the nature of international relations took place in unison with and in response to the democratic principles emerging from revolutionary France.

The fifth chapter explores the way the popular doctrines that emerged from the American and French revolutions developed across the nineteenth century. The chapter opens by considering the negative standing of democracy at the end of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. At the Congress of Vienna the new international order was constructed against the popular doctrines that had emerged from revolutionary France. The international order constructed at Vienna was able to endure for a century, but conservative attempts to re-establish monarchy based on principles of legitimacy were ultimately unsuccessful. Like the proverbial genie in the bottle, once released the principle of popular sovereignty could not be fully contained. While the peace was held between the great powers, ongoing nationalist struggles and domestic unrest peaked in the revolutions of 1848, marked by an outburst of discussion over democracy. The old international order survived, although it was hollowed out from within. There was a growing perception in Europe that democracy – in one form or another – was somehow inevitable. The chapter concludes with the end of the

nineteenth century, being a transitional moment for popular sovereignty and democracy: emergent, but still on the defensive.

Chapter 6 examines the First World War, which would decisively shape democracy's rise in international politics. When the war commenced, it was fought for old-fashioned reasons, with little concern for democracy. This changed drastically in 1917, due to revolution in Russia and America's entry into the war, two events that are considered in depth. The reframing of the conflict as one of democracy versus autocracy was facilitated by events in Russia, but it was Woodrow Wilson's intervention that was crucial in thrusting democracy onto the international agenda. With the defeat of the Central Powers, popular sovereignty supplanted monarchy as the dominant form of state legitimacy. This also confirmed democracy's remarkable ideational transformation into a normatively acceptable, and for many desirable, method of government. The final section of the chapter considers the attempts to build a new international order at Versailles and the role that democracy played in these plans.

The seventh chapter focuses on the 'long war' that was waged between competing ideologies for most of the twentieth century, which ultimately resulted in democracy left alone without peer. With popular sovereignty confirmed at Versailles, the conceptual battles surrounding democracy in the twentieth century were no longer with the *ancien régime*, but the modern doctrines of fascism and communism. Immediately after Versailles, democracy was in the ascent, but only decades later its very existence was in question. The Allied countries would fight in democracy's name, but ultimately it was a war for survival against the vicious imperialism of the Axis powers. The grand alliance between the democratic powers and the Soviet Union was able to defeat fascism, but this was due in large part to force of numbers and the self-destructiveness of the Nazis. Now contestation would continue between the two remaining ideologies of democracy and communism. The ideological tensions between the East and West meant that the international society founded after the Second World War would be strongly pluralist, with an emphasis on sovereign independence and equality. In 1989 the 'long war' finally came to an end, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing collapse of the Soviet Union. The ideological contestation that had defined so much of the twentieth century had stopped, replaced by a remarkable consensus around liberal democracy. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the

liberal *zeitgeist* of the post-Cold War era, considering the many ambiguities, contradictions and tensions underlying the supposed 'triumph' of democracy.

The conclusion returns to the somewhat contradictory position democracy finds itself in early in the twenty-first century, in which it remains without peer but its future is being increasingly questioned. Building on the preceding study, it is proposed that history can provide the foundations for a normative defence of democracy. It is argued that a deeper recognition of the way democracy has historically developed – one that appreciates not only its strengths, but also its ambiguities and weaknesses – is necessary for dealing with the challenges it now faces. Returning to democracy's past is a way of demystifying it, ridding ourselves of simplistic platitudes about its virtues or shallow scepticism bred by its shortcomings. And by being more attuned to democracy's uneven, contested and fraught trajectory, there is cultivated a sense of humility and cautious appreciation of its strengths.

LIMITS AND CAVEATS

On all great subjects much remains to be said.
John Stuart Mill (quoted in Bagehot 2001: 3)

The only way a study of this magnitude can be managed is through a strict demarcation of the nature and scope of the enquiry, which unavoidably limits the work in certain ways. The macro-historical approach utilised sacrifices a degree of depth for breadth. It is simply not possible to trace the development of the concept of democracy in international politics without forgoing the level of detailed analysis found in case-specific studies. When considering major and complex historical events, the focus is limited specifically to the way these were connected to popular sovereignty and democracy. Unlike some other macro-histories in IR, this work is not trying to understand systemic change at the international level. Neither does this study attempt to provide a 'theory' of democracy in international politics, *per se*. Rather, it seeks to understand and account for the development of democracy in relation to shared principles of international legitimacy and sovereignty. This is also the reason that the focus is primarily on changes in Europe and the United States. Practices and understandings of democracy have certainly existed elsewhere, but the conception now dominant is one

that emerged from the West. As John Dunn observes, 'the main battleground on which the struggle for democracy's mantle was initially fought out was the continent of Europe' (Dunn 2005: 153). Moreover, international society as it presently stands is one that has grown out from Europe, even if this interaction has not been in the form of a unidirectional expansion (Keene 2002; Suzuki 2009). Finally, the study does not deal with democracy between or above states, nor with the amount of democratisation in international politics. What it does illustrate, however, is that democracy is much more closely intertwined with the state form and the anarchical international environment than cosmopolitan democrats may wish to admit.

Notes

1 This distinction between 'constitutive power' and 'constituted power' is taken from Sieyès, and is considered in more detail in Chapter 4.
2 Recent scholarship on transnational and cosmopolitan democracy has begun to correct the tendency for political theorists to ignore the larger international context, yet it tends to do so through a contemporary lens, while empirical political scientists have been slow in incorporating international factors into their considerations on processes of democratisation, although this has been rectified to a large degree.
3 These categories are taken from Donnelly (2006).