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FUNDAMENTALISM

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In the 1950s and 1960s many social scientists argued that secularization was an inevitable concomitant of modernization. Increasing economic and political development would disseminate secular values, hence the role and impact of religion in society and in politics would subside to negligible levels. The 1970s and 1980s, however, witnessed developments diametrically opposed to those predicted by the modernization theories. Around the world, and particularly in Muslim countries, the power of religion did not diminish but increased substantially instead. Indeed, it can be argued that Westernization and secularization served as a catalyst for the revitalization of religious political movements, mobilizing large numbers of people in support of fundamentalist causes. Thus the contemporary emergence of fundamentalism challenges the central assumptions of the modernization literature and poses important questions for investigation.

One of the most difficult and challenging questions that social scientists confront is how to understand and analyse populist religious fundamentalist movements. In some parts of the world, religious fundamentalism has been the means for progressive social change, improvements in social welfare for the poorest members of society and increased political participation by formerly disenfranchised masses. In other parts of the world, religious fundamentalism has mobilized popular support for conservative causes and for efforts to circumscribe or abolish the rights of certain members of the political community. The same phenomenon then could be said to foster both justice and injustice.

This essay will consider three distinctive forms of religious fundamentalism: Islamic fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism and Jewish fundamentalism. Although each form of fundamentalism shares a commitment to a hegemonic ideal and manifests a willingness to engage in diverse modes of political action to realize that ideal, the differences among these forms of fundamentalism are more prominent than their commonalities.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

Followers and believers in Islamic fundamentalism not only reject the idea of contradiction between religion and progress or modernization, but claim that religious principles are in fact the most relevant means for development and progress in many Islamic societies.

Islam is regarded as a total and eternal system which is for all times and all places applicable to all peoples. Its major difference from Christianity is that the separation of religion from the state is not even conceivable. Government is part of Islam. The Qur'an is the law and government is established to implement the law. But, it is argued, the implementation of Islamic principles and values does not mean that the conditions of life during Prophet Muhammad's time are to be emulated. In fact, some fundamentalist movements have tried to incorporate more recent values and principles which do not contradict religious precepts in order to strengthen their movements and give them viability in the context of the modern world.

Islamic fundamentalism is a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, historically it has been a means for popular expression of hopes and anxieties, derived from native cultural factors. On the other, it has been the channel for confrontation and struggle in Muslim societies during the post-colonial period. Some Muslim scholars have argued that Islamic fundamentalism has two strands: one positive and another negative. The negative is composed of struggle against secularism and the secularist ideologies of nationalism, capitalism and socialism in the Muslim world. The positive strand is represented by attempts at revitalization and rediscovery of Islam, not only as a total system but also as a complete ideological blueprint for life (Ahmad 1983:221-8).

Some Muslim thinkers believe that 'fundamentalism' is a peculiar phenomenon born out of the unique conditions in Christian history where effort was made to impose the literalist interpretation of the Bible on all Christians. Christian fundamentalism is seen as more conservative and supportive of the status quo, trying to strengthen the moral and ethical fabric of society. Christian fundamentalists are generally regarded as reactionary and unrealistic by the public while Islamic fundamentalism is highly political and revolutionary, wanting to change every aspect of socio-economic and political life of the people.

Islamic fundamentalism is a phenomenon that has emerged from indigenous and native cultures as a reaction to upheavals facing the Muslim societies and calls for a return to Islam and its fundamental precepts and principles. These precepts are embodied in the culmination of the Qur'anic revelation, the traditions, the utterances and actions of Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs (Rashidun), who established the first Islamic community and state which comprise the supreme model for emulation. One well-known Muslim writer has

summarized Islamic fundamentalism in this way: 'It is the confirmation of Islamic social morality and the rededication of oneself to the establishment of social justice and equity in society' (Ahmad 1983:227).

The most important fact about Islam is that there is no distinction between the secular and religious spheres. The Prophet Muhammad himself set up in Medina a governing body of rules and laws. Because of this, Islamic fundamentalism has always remained a latent political force, and a common aspect of the mission of Islamic movements has been their emphasis on Islam, not just as a set of beliefs and rituals, but as a moral and social movement to establish the Islamic order. This has meant a wider participation in Friday public prayer, more media attention to issues of faith and behaviour, Islamic styles of dress, and a heightened sense of religiously inspired social responsibility in general. Hence, Islamic fundamentalism, it is argued, is to be seen as a pragmatic, dynamic and progressive ideology that is well equipped to meet the demands of modern society. The different Islamic fundamentalist movements, despite some local variations and indigenous details, have endorsed similar objectives and exhibited common characteristics. They have demonstrated unwavering commitment to Islam and great capability to face the challenge of modernization creatively (Ahmad 1983:222).

All Islamic fundamentalist movements seek comprehensive reform, that is, changing all aspects of life, making faith the centre point. They claim that what is needed is not new interpretations of old principles, but a stricter adherence to what had already been revealed to be the true path. The *Shari'a* must serve as the supreme source of law, completely replacing the alien laws imported from the West. The replication and implementation of foreign laws, they insist, is a rejection of God's laws which will lead to the destruction of the foundation of an Islamic society.

Some of the major reasons for the appearance of populist Islamic fundamentalist movements are related to the failure of secular and Western ideologies to resolve the socio-economic and political problems in society. This failure has led to disillusionment, gloom and wariness of the Western ideologies of Marxist materialism and liberal pluralism which had been presented in the guise of theories of modernization only a few decades earlier. With the importation of Western and foreign ideologies of capitalism and socialism by the political rulers and ruling regimes in Muslim societies, the perceived threat of undermining the traditional system of values and social identity was intensified among the masses. This perception of danger forced the population to search for an authentic and indigenous point of reference: an alternative ideology. This ideology was clearly found in Islam. In general, threats to group ethnic identity and social and political integrity from outside lead them to resort to the

restoration of traditional values and familiar culture as a defence mechanism against the perceived external threat to the group national integrity and identity.

Many scholars have advanced the view that in most Islamic societies the most important factor in the revitalization and rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements has been the search for identity and security, the discovery of familiar values and beliefs in the midst of swift social, economic and political change. Muslim fundamentalists, therefore, are determined to create lifestyles, social systems, and individual as well as state values that will be able to cope with the tremendous instability and insecurity created by the Westernization of their societies, and to protect and defend their societies from the harmful impact of Western ideologies (Ruthven 1984:287–352).

It has been asserted that the secularist leaders and rulers in Muslim countries have not only failed in the modernization of their societies but that they have also caused colossal upheavals and confusion, resulting in dependence on the West. This in turn has led to public questioning of the rulers' authenticity and the legitimacy of the political establishment. In addition, political oppression, lack of social justice and economic equity, moral decadence and increasing corruption threatened the eradication of traditional values. It is further argued that this confused state of affairs has contributed to a revival of the political role of religion. Islamic ideology presented a clear vision of the future and the promise to solve all problems, offered solace and a sense of refuge to the followers and believers, assisting them in carrying the heavy burden of life.

The role of the traditional clergy in Islam became vital in this regard due to the fact that historically the Muslim clergy have very often acted as the agents of socialization and political mobilization of the masses. In addition, the clergy have acted as the protectors of the people from the oppressive and unjust authority of rulers and have played the intermediary role between them and the government. The clergy promise to advance the interests of the masses who, in the decades of change, had been largely left out of the domain of modernization culturally, socially, and economically.

History of Islamic Fundamentalism

The roots of Islamic fundamentalist movements are found in the history of Islam, both medieval and modern. The history of Islam has contained an element of fundamentalist reaction from the time of its inception. For example, a group known as the *Kharijites* (exiters), deserted 'Ali, the fourth caliph, accusing him of disobeying the literal meaning of the Qur'an because of his agreement to arbitration over the issue of Mu'awiyya's claim to the caliphate. There is total agreement among all Islamic fundamentalists that the very condensed period of the first sixty years after the rise of Islam (from Prophet Muhammad's prophecy

to the death of 'Ali, the last Rashidun caliph) is the foundation of the true and pure Islam.

The twentieth century has witnessed the advent of several Islamic spokesmen and leaders of Islamic thought and ideology whose writings have had immense impact not only on their contemporaries but also for future generations. These writings have occupied the supreme place in forming and shaping a comprehensive Islamic vision and a blueprint for action to confront the threat posed to Islamic ways of life by inroads of Western and modern values and institutions.

One of the most outstanding and important Islamic fundamentalist movements by far has been that of the Ikhwan al-Muslimin in Egypt, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, a school teacher. The Ikhwan is regarded as one of the most popular and aggressive of Islamic fundamentalist organizations. The influence of the Ikhwan went far beyond Egypt and spread into many neighbouring Arab countries. As a conservative organization, it provided the only channel for the expression of anger, frustration and disillusionment with secularization and Westernization for many millions of Muslims. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Ikhwan remained the only prominent means for the expression of Sunni Islamic political thought in Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Jordan.

A similar organization, Fadayan-i Islam, was founded in the mid-1940s by Navab Safavi in Iran. All the leaders of the group were executed in 1956, after which the organization went underground. It has reappeared following the 1979 revolution under the leadership of Ayatollah Khalkhali (The Executioner Ayatollah) but remains a fringe organization.

Few Islamic thinkers and scholars of the twentieth century can compare with Seyyid Qutb (1906–66), the leader of the Ikhwan in Egypt, in the significant impact upon the revitalization and restoration of Islam and development of Islamic thought and ideology in contemporary Muslim societies. His writings have led to the emergence of several Islamic movements in the Muslim world.

The foundation of Qutb's thought was based on the premise that the Western world (capitalist or Marxist versions) has failed in establishing the promised conscientious and humane societies and that this failure has led the Muslims in search of other acceptable, indigenous alternatives in order to save their societies from the dangers posed by the invasion of alien cultural values. This alternative ideology is found in Islamic culture. Seyyid Qutb's works consist of careful analysis of the 'disease' with which Muslims are afflicted. He found that this disease was nothing but adaptation of foreign ways and alien models and blind imitation of Western ideas in their countries. Some scholars regard Seyyid Qutb as the person who tried to bridge the wide gap between the ultra-conservative, traditional *ulema* and the modern sciences and knowledge by opposing the excessive materialism of the West and secularization of Muslim societies but not opposing modernization and progress in economic and social areas as long as

they were not detrimental to the welfare of the society or in conflict with basic Islamic values.

Today, Qutb must rank among the most popular and respected authors in the Islamic world. Indeed he may be the single most widely read writer among Muslims and is highly regarded for the quality of his intellect. His works, originally written in Arabic, have been translated into other languages of both the Islamic and Western worlds (Qutb 1976).

Another example of the Islamic fundamentalist position is that contained in the writings of Allamah Abul Ala al-Mawdudi (1903–79). In fact, no discussion or reporting of Islamic fundamentalist movements would be complete without an examination of the role that Mawdudi's works have played in these movements. Certainly, Mawdudi and the organization he founded, *Jama'at Islami*, which he led, was the most important factor in the establishment of Pakistan during the partition of the Indian subcontinent. In addition to being the founder and leader of the *Jama'at*, he was also its ideologue.

He is described by Wilfred Cantwell-Smith (1957:234) as 'the most systematic thinker of modern Islam' and is revered in many Muslim countries as one of the foremost exponents and interpreters of fundamentalist Islam.

Until his death, but especially prior to his retirement from the leadership of the *Jama'at* in 1972, Mawdudi was the most controversial, dogmatic and visible fundamentalist leader of his time and his *Jama'at* organization spearheaded the movement for the shift in Pakistan from a Muslim country to an Islamic state.

The foundation of Mawdudi's ideas and assumptions is that Islam is a complete and total ideology which does not need explanation or interpretation except within its own context. For Mawdudi, Islam is perfect and there is no need for its justification. His defence strategy for the preservation of Islamic values and principles is as follows: the Western world is corrupt and morally decadent and must be strenuously opposed. He claims that Islam is a total ideology which has appropriate answers to all human predicaments and social dilemmas. Mawdudi insists, without hesitation, that the *Shari'a* must be supreme and rule over all humankind. Mawdudi was perhaps the most dogmatic and uncompromising of Islamic fundamentalist leaders.

One of the least studied of contemporary Islamic fundamentalist leaders is Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–89). Khomeini's message was lucid and unambiguous. To the classic Islamic call for the struggle against imperialism and secularism, he added the unique and unprecedented corollary that the religious leaders must fully participate in the governance of the Islamic community. He declared that it was not only the right but the responsibility of the religious establishment to rule and control the affairs of the country. This doctrine was at once ultra-conservative and revolutionary. It advocated that all people must

participate in politics as a religious duty and that the clerics were bound by religion to govern.

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM

Within the Christian context, the term 'fundamentalism' seems to have acquired its current meaning from twelve volumes of essays called *The Fundamentals*, written between 1910 and 1915 by several prominent conservative Protestant scholars (Dixon *et al.* 1910–15). Commissioned and underwritten by two wealthy Californian laymen alarmed by the increasing 'worldliness' of mainline Protestant churches and wanting a forceful statement of the true religion, *The Fundamentals* were a stunning success. Over three million copies were distributed and a movement was launched.

In its historical and current American context the term fundamentalism refers to those primarily Protestant Christians who firmly believe in (a) the literal truth or accuracy of the Bible in all its statements, (b) the need to avoid contemporary seductions in personal conduct (depending on the person and the group to which he or she belongs, this may include such things as abortion, birth control, pornography, divorce, movies, dancing, gambling, drinking of alcoholic beverages and the practice of yoga), and (c) the utter impossibility of achieving eternal salvation by human effort. Salvation is achieved by faith in Jesus Christ which is manifest in a zealous witness to the truth.

While Christian fundamentalism is most prominent in the United States, its influence has spread elsewhere, particularly in Latin America and English-speaking nations. Northern Ireland is home to the Revd Ian Paisley, a fundamentalist leader with American ties who has mixed virulent, anti-Catholicism with conservative Protestant dogma. In England, Festival of Lights, a political movement with some fundamentalist leadership, has worked quietly for two decades to enhance public decency.

Fundamentalism is often confused with other concepts, such as Evangelicalism, of which it is a subset. Evangelicals are biblical literalists who believe it is their primary duty to proclaim the gospel. They may be politically liberal, conservative, radical pacifist or strictly non-political. Fundamentalists are evangelicals who are militantly conservative and who see themselves in a war with secular humanists for cultural dominance in America. There remains a tension within fundamentalist ranks between those who believe the best way to fight is to separate from organized political and social interaction with the larger culture to concentrate on individual conversion and those who believe it necessary to take the battle to the larger political and cultural arena.

Fundamentalism is also sometimes confused with the New Right, a popular American political phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s. The New Right was a loosely and often tenuously affiliated movement of several major ideologies:

Economic Libertarianism, a largely secular movement supporting free enterprise, less government regulation and low taxes; Social Traditionalism, a collection of groups concerned with the breakdown of the traditional family, religion and morality; and Militant Anti-communism, a collection of groups, many with roots in the old right and McCarthyism, who considered the Soviet Union to be a continuing threat and who are concerned with national security and military spending. Perhaps the one thing all three groups have in common is a hatred for liberals, whom they consider the source of many of the world's problems. Fundamentalists are heavily concentrated in the Social Traditionalist stream, although a few theological entrepreneurs such as Hal Lindsey (1970) have attempted to tie in Christian concepts such as millennialism and a final battle between the forces of good and evil at Armageddon with anti-communism and nuclear war.

Contemporary social scientists and journalists have expanded the concept of 'fundamentalist' to encompass any group, no matter what its belief system, which they perceive to be religiously motivated, which proclaims dogmatic adherence to a certain set of religious beliefs and which are socially rigid and led by zealous proselytizers. The expansion of the concept to include non-Christian groups is not without value for there are common threads which run through various religious movements.

The power of contemporary fundamentalist movements has caught most social scientists and Western policy makers by surprise. Exactly why development and so-called modernization had quite the opposite effect from the predicated secularization is a matter of some dispute. Perhaps the most widely held hypothesis, based on a theory of status politics, holds that not only does development proceed with a differential impact, improving the economic lot of elites far more rapidly and dramatically than that of ordinary citizens, but modernization confronts the basic values, traditions and lifestyles of non-elites through conspicuous consumption, the introduction of new materialism, and public displays of heretofore alien symbols, dress, and social activities. Under this hypothesis fundamentalists became politically active in response to perceived threats from the larger environment. The difficulty with this hypothesis is that it is not borne out by available data. What data do show is that fundamentalists in each tradition have moved into the economic middle class, are more urban than rural, are very close to the educational levels of the larger non-fundamentalist majority and tend to be as technologically sophisticated as other citizens. A second hypothesis, which might be called a political entrepreneur theory, posits that fundamentalists were enticed out of their political isolation by other more secular conservative leaders, political entrepreneurs who had considerable organizational skills and who had developed financial resources through mass-mailing techniques. These leaders recognized fundamentalists as social traditionalists who could be mobilized to become active participants in a new conservative majority.

Enlisting the fundamentalists gave these entrepreneurs a rich tradition of symbols, rituals and values with which to appeal to 'the silent majority' of Americans, as well as access to local communities and several highly visible and charismatic leaders. A variation of this is the Resource Mobilization Model which posits that fundamentalism, like any social movement among identifiable groups, emerges when three factors are present: opportunities, resources and incentives or motives. These factors were available in Christian, Jewish and Islamic movements.

History of American Christian Fundamentalism

The roots, if not the name of fundamentalism, reach as far back in American history as the two great Awakenings in the 1740–50s and 1830–40s. In each instance a popularized, non-hierarchical and theologically unsophisticated wave of religiosity swept through the Congregational and Episcopal churches through revivalist preaching and, in the rural areas, camp meetings. Separate Baptist and Methodist churches quickly evolved into distinct traditions, gaining adherents not only from among the older mainline churches but from the large numbers of unchurched as well. The message was simple: every person can read and interpret the Bible, immoral acts are to be avoided, salvation comes from faith in Jesus Christ, and spread the Good News. This was broad gauge evangelicalism, and some have argued that in the pre-Civil War period it also represented mainstream America.

The post-Civil War period confronted this righteous, self-assured popular Protestantism with enormous challenges. Immigration, industrialism, Darwinism and socialism, each in a somewhat different way, threatened to overwhelm what was perceived as an emerging Christian culture. Immigration and industrialization brought waves of Catholic and Jewish workers to rapidly expanding cities where drinking, gambling, dancing and other social vices made a mockery of the virtuous life so central to the Protestant ethic. Darwinism confronted the biblical literalism that provided the foundation of evangelical Christianity, and socialism promised a worldly salvation that had no need for faith at all. While mainline churches attempted to incorporate new ideas and adapt to modernization, evangelicals fought back in both public and private arenas. They became, in their own way, extraordinary social reformers, working for prison reform, establishment of private charities for the poor, the ill, the alcoholic; they fought first for public schools and then for Sunday Bible schools, and for laws prohibiting gambling, pornography, prostitution and work on Sunday. Above all they worked for temperance. Although never developing a sophisticated intellectual tradition, they saw Darwinist evolutionary theory as a direct challenge to biblical literalism and fought to keep it out of the public schools. Ironically, despite their social and theological conservatism, evangelicals

were among the first to grasp the implications of technological innovations such as the radio and mass fund-raising. For over two decades the *Old Time Gospel Hour* had the largest audience of any radio programme.

Two major crises occurred in the 1920s that radically altered the thrust of evangelicalism/fundamentalism for several decades. In 1925 the widely publicized Scopes trial, in which a young Tennessee teacher was convicted of teaching the theory of evolution, exposed fundamentalist beliefs to widespread ridicule. The late 1920s also saw a major backlash against the prohibition amendment for which fundamentalists had fought so valiantly, and which had proved to be a social disaster. Although the amendment was not officially repealed until 1933, by that time the thoroughly discredited fundamentalists had withdrawn from public debate over social issues to organize and build their own institutions. This retreat was aided in no small measure by the emergence of a doctrine of dispensationalism which held that salvation was an 'other-worldly experience' based on personal victory over sin and on personal witnessing. Fundamentalists, in short, became emphatically nonpolitical. For several groups this 'separation' became a touchstone of true faith.

In the late 1960s fundamentalist preachers, many of whom had developed large church followings and TV ministries, began to speak out on political issues. Pressure began to build as a result of several Supreme Court cases outlawing officially sponsored prayer in the public schools and various legislative enactments which fundamentalists perceived as promoting a general moral permissiveness and undermining the family. Most commentators agree that the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*—declaring many restrictive abortion laws to be unconstitutional—was the single most important trigger for political activism. The lobby group, Moral Majority, founded in 1979 by the Revd Jerry Falwell, was the most visible of several groups formed to press for a conservative political social agenda. In 1988 fundamentalist TV minister Pat Robertson mounted a credible, if short-lived, campaign for the Republican nomination for the presidency. By 1989, however, the power, prestige and funding of fundamentalists groups dropped significantly. In large measure their constituency became disillusioned after scandals rocked the TV ministries. In addition, the presidency of George Bush proved to be less receptive than that of Ronald Reagan, and as victories declined so did interest and funds. Moral Majority was disbanded and replaced by a much smaller, less active Liberty Federation. The Revd Jerry Falwell himself drew back to focus his efforts on his church and Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Christian fundamentalism has a long tradition; it will not disappear quickly. Political activism among fundamentalists, however, does ebb and flow as the opportunities, resources and incentives dictate. The 1970s and 1980s saw a massive outflow of energy which had a significant influence on the American

electorate's shift to a conservative direction. The early 1990s appear to be witnessing a period of withdrawal and regrouping. The Gulf crisis helped accelerate a return to dispensationalism (Iraq is the site of Babylon of biblical times and has great significance in Christian prophecy about the second coming of the Messiah). But while fundamentalism may be in a period of political quiescence, it remains a latent political force among a large minority of American Christians.

JEWISH FUNDAMENTALISM

Jewish fundamentalism has both similarities to and differences from the Christian variety. Unlike the latter its roots lie not in particular biblical or Talmudic texts but in nineteenth-century European Zionism—a movement to create a homeland for Jews in Palestine, the land from which they had been driven by the Romans nearly two thousand years earlier. Jews of the Diaspora lament the destruction of Jerusalem and pray daily for a Messiah who will restore Jewish dominion in the land of Israel. All this, according to Jewish tradition, is to be accomplished by God at the chosen time. Originally something of a radical fringe group of intellectuals, Zionists were condemned by mainstream Jewish leaders for trying to force God's hand through political action. However, the violent outbursts of anti-Semitism across Europe in the 1870s gave credence to the claim that Jews needed a land of their own, and gave Zionism a legitimacy it had lacked earlier.

As the Zionist movement expanded and matured it became clear that there were three groupings or streams of thought. First, religious Zionists who adhered to and believed that a return to Israel was a part of God's overall plan for Jews. Second, labour Zionism which grew out of European socialist roots, and which, while it did not reject religious elements, was far more interested in economic growth and organization. Finally there was a secular, rationalist stream which sought to create a democratic Jewish nation without religious regulations or trappings.

When the state of Israel was formed in 1948 these three streams continued to assure tension and division among the Jewish population. While labour Zionism was the largest stream, it was not strong enough to rule without compromise and creation of coalitions. The second largest grouping, and thus the natural competitor to the Labour Party, were the secularists. As a result the smaller religious parties were the natural coalition choices. Indeed, in order to create a governing coalition in 1948, the Labour Party was forced to enact certain elements of orthodox Jewish law, namely:

- 1 public observance of all Jewish holidays and the sabbath;
- 2 respect for the law of kosher in government agencies;
- 3 public financing for religious schools; and

4 observance of orthodox marriage and divorce laws.

In 1950 these were supplemented by the Law of Return, which stated that every Jew around the world had a right to come to Israel and attain citizenship.

These actions had an enormous impact on later fundamentalism because they established a basis for a religious Jewish identity rather than simply a territorial or ethnic identity. Religiously orthodox Jews, although always a minority in Israel, remained a vibrant, insistent, and often passionate voice in Israeli politics, continuously pushing for greater adherence to the law of the Torah in return for their willingness to become part of any ruling coalition.

The trigger issue which galvanized Jewish fundamentalism was the Six Day War in June 1967. In a stunning victory Israel captured the Sinai peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from Jordan. The conquest brought not only large areas of land and a large, hostile Arab population under Israeli control, but posed a religious problem of enormous difficulty to the Israeli government. How much of the land should it keep? Should Jews be allowed to settle in the conquered lands? Out of these questions was born contemporary Jewish fundamentalism.

Many religious Zionists took the Israeli victory as vindication of their belief that they were following God's plan. While others, both within Israel and in the broader international community, believed that Jews were now in a position to trade the captured land (excluding holy sites and some small areas deemed necessary for national security) for guarantees of peace, religious Zionists made retention of the lands a fundamental religious issue on which there could be no compromise and no concessions. They were joined for the first time by militant secular nationalists with whom they formed a contentious, adamant, united front to block any efforts by the government to negotiate.

A primary strategy quickly developed of erecting Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank, in order to make return of the land more difficult for the government. In 1974 these efforts led to the formation of Gush Emunim, 'Bloc of the Faithful', a fundamentalist, religio-political movement which both legally and illegally developed new settlements that they defied government to tear down.

A second, more ominous strategy was to harrass and drive out Arabs who refused to sell their land for these settlements. In 1977 a stunning victory of the right-wing Likud Party, led by Menachem Begin, over the Labour Party, resulted in a governing coalition significantly more sympathetic to Gush Emunim goals, and Jewish settlements in the occupied territories quickly expanded. According to one authority, Gush Emunim 'more or less deliberately encouraged the harrassment of Palestinians in the West Bank in order to create tension and

increase Israeli reluctance to withdraw from the area' (Tessler 1990:285). If this was indeed their strategy, they certainly succeeded.

One result was to change the political climate so that a number of new fundamentalist religious parties emerged, including Morasha and Kach, the latter a violence-prone group organized by former American Meir Kahane with the stated objective of expelling all Palestinian Arabs from the conquered land. While these groups remain a small minority in Israel, their emergence has added support for Gush Emunim and the settlement movement. It is now unlikely that any Israeli government could forceably dismantle the settlements or withdraw the military from occupied territory.

A second result of settlement and harrassment by fundamentalist groups was an explosion of protests, commonly called the 'intifada', or uprising, among the over one million Arabs, which all but assured that no peaceful co-existence would be possible in the foreseeable future. A third result was a further erosion of support for Israel around the world, including in the United States and Britain.

Jewish fundamentalism remains a strong, militant force in Israeli politics. Whether their policies will result in a backlash among Israeli citizens and a subsequent decline remains to be seen. It had not happened by late 1991. Only one thing seems certain: whether it is manifested in Islamic, Christian, Jewish or other religious traditions, fundamentalism remains a limited but potent political force and is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

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PART IV

**CONTEMPORARY
POLITICAL SYSTEMS**

LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

G.BINGHAM POWELL

Liberal democracies are identified by an implicit bargain between the representative governments and their citizens and a specific arrangement which regulates that bargain. The bargain is that the government's legitimacy, its expectation of obedience to its laws, is dependent on its claim to be doing what the citizens want it to do. The organized arrangement that regulates this bargain of legitimacy is the competitive political election.

In competitive political elections voters can choose from among alternative candidates. In practice, at least two organized political parties that have some chance of winning seem to be needed to make choices meaningful. The people are allowed basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly and organization so that they can form and express preferences about political policies. Using these freedoms, all citizens can participate meaningfully in the competitive elections which choose the rulers. Such electoral participation means that the people participate indirectly in the general direction of the public policies of the society. Participation in policy making by the people is the fundamental meaning of democracy (Cohen 1971: chapter 1).

A number of liberal democracies also make some occasional use of direct citizen involvement in policy making through the referendum, a popular vote on a proposed law (Butler and Ranney 1978). However, even in Switzerland, where the device is used more frequently than elsewhere, most legislation is made through the representative institutions.

The term 'liberal' in 'liberal democracy' draws attention to two related features of these political systems. First, their claim to democracy rests on responsiveness to the wishes of the citizens, not to some vision of citizens' best interests as defined by the rulers or by some ideological system. Second, the wishes of a majority are not to override all the political and civil rights of the minorities. At a minimum these rights include the political freedom to organize and participate. They may also include rights of due process, privacy and personal property, although liberal democratic theorists are less unanimous on

the boundaries of these rights. The 'liberal' and the 'democratic' elements in liberal democracy may be in tension if citizen majorities favour policies that curtail political and civil rights. More often the two elements support each other; each is an essential component of liberal democracy.

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Liberal democracy is primarily a phenomenon of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, only the United States, France and Switzerland had approached universal manhood suffrage by the 1870s; the vote for women came even later. Using quite loose standards of voter eligibility, there were about nine democracies among forty-eight independent nations in 1902. After the First World War internal pressures from social groups and international emulation led to a spread of both representative assemblies (Gerlich 1973:94–113) and the suffrage (Rokkan 1961:132–52). By 1929–30 there were perhaps twenty-two democracies among the sixty-five independent nations then in existence. Some of these, most notably Weimar Germany, collapsed in the turmoil of the worldwide economic depression of the early 1930s. Following the victory of the allied powers in the Second World War and the breakup of the European colonial empires, there was a further spread of liberal democratic practices. Many newly independent Third World nations (such as Nigeria, Ghana and Pakistan) began as democracies, but were unable to stabilize their political systems.

The number of liberal democracies has waxed and waned since the 1950s, although gradually increasing with the number of independent states. Some well-established democracies have been overthrown (Chile and Uruguay in 1973, for example), while some authoritarian regimes have been replaced by democracies (for example Spain in 1977). Several states (such as Greece, Turkey and Argentina) have experienced both democratic and authoritarian interludes. Various analyses of the 1960s and 1970s placed the number of stable contemporary democracies between thirty and forty, somewhat less than one-quarter of the world's independent national governments (Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1984; Powell 1982a; Rustow 1967). A careful comparison suggested that as many as 30 per cent of the regimes in 1985 might be classified as liberal democracies, but the stability of some of these seemed doubtful (Coppedge and Reinicke 1988:101–25). (See also Gastil 1988:3–86; Anderson 1988:89–99.)

Most studies of contemporary liberal democracies are dominated by the nations of Western Europe and North America (including Costa Rica and the English-speaking Caribbean), Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India and Venezuela, plus scattered small states. In the late 1980s developments in Latin America, the Pacific rim, and Eastern Europe indicated movement towards features of liberal

democracy in all three regions: increasing freedom of information and organization and even semi-competitive elections, in which citizens could vote freely with some constrained degree of choice. In 1989 a spectacular movement towards full liberal democracy took place in the previously tightly controlled regimes of Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

MAJOR VARIANTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES: CONSTITUTIONS AND PARTY SYSTEMS

The detailed arrangements by which contemporary liberal democracies choose policy makers and make policies are extremely varied and complex. Various analysts focus on different features in constructing ‘variants’ of liberal democracies: unitary and federal systems, presidential and parliamentary systems, two-party and multi-party systems.

Constitutional organization: decision rules

In stable democracies there is agreement on a ‘constitution’ (whether a single written document or a set of practices and statutes) that specifies how laws must be made (the ‘decision rule’) and how the makers are to be chosen. The most fundamental conceptual property of any decision rule is its degree of inclusiveness: what part of the membership must agree before a policy is accepted. In a pure dictatorship, the decision rule would be that one individual (the dictator) decides all the policies. In a majoritarian system, the decision rule is that 50 per cent plus one must agree on a policy before it is accepted. In a completely consensual system, the decision rule is unanimity: everyone must agree to a policy before it can be adopted.

Democratic theorists agree that dictatorships and all decision rules requiring the assent of only a small minority are not compatible with the concept of democracy. Most would agree that complete unanimity is impractical if any policies are to be made. They are divided, however, on whether a simple majority or some more inclusive rule is preferable. Theoretically we expect that the majoritarian form would be more efficient at making policy, but the consensual form would be more protective of the rights of minorities (Buchanan and Tulloch 1962).

Many democracies explicitly require application of a more inclusive decision rule for changing the constitution itself (Lijphart 1984:187–96). Such rules range from a two-thirds vote in the national legislature to elaborate ratification by regional units, as in the American case of ratification by three-quarters of the states. Others may require more inclusive support for some particular legislation, such as treaty ratification (the United States) or even raising new taxes (Finland).

In addition to explicit requirements for more than majority support for passing legislation, most democracies have institutional arrangements that in effect involve the concurrence of representatives of more than a simple majority of the citizens. Many of the institutional differences in liberal democratic constitutions can be understood as implying an expansion of simple majoritarian decision rules for the representatives.

Lijphart's analysis of majoritarian and consensual elements in twenty-two stable democracies identifies a 'federal-unitary' dimension that includes the number and strength of the legislative chambers, the effective centralization or decentralization of the government, and the arrangements for constitutional change (Lijphart 1984: chapter 13). At the majoritarian extreme are New Zealand and Britain. In these countries there are few restraints on the power (or responsibility) of the central government. At the federal extreme are Germany, the United States and Switzerland, where a variety of different institutions, including a second legislative chamber and regional governments, must be involved in many areas of policy-making. The work of Strom (1984, 1990) suggests that legislative committee systems can also work to give minorities the ability to constrain government policies. Again, the effect is to make policy making in a country such as Norway or Belgium more inclusive than simply majoritarian. In such systems, major policy change must typically engage the consent of representatives of far more than a simple majority of citizens.

The distributions of power between the legislature and the chief executive are another important aspect of the decision rule. In the parliamentary systems of most European nations, the chief executive, the prime minister, is chosen by the legislature and can be removed by it. The executive may dominate the legislature through control of a disciplined majority of legislators, but the two are closely fused. In true presidential systems, such as those of the United States and Venezuela, the legislature and the chief executive are independently elected and have separate resources for shaping decision making. The balance between them will depend on the specific powers of each, as well as interconnections of party control. When party control is divided, these systems will become less majoritarian and require broader coalitions. France and Finland provide cases of mixed 'semi-presidential' regimes (Duverger 1980).

Constitutional organization: election rules

A second critical feature of democratic constitutions specifies the rules by which the representatives who make policy are selected.

As Riker (1982b) has pointed out, it was already suspected in the nineteenth century that the type of electoral election rules known as first-past-the-post would tend to lead to exclusion of smaller parties and creation of majorities. Much later,

French sociologist Maurice Duverger (1954) stated the ‘law’ that such rules tend to create two-party systems. Duverger proposed that the majoritarianism is supported both by ‘proximate’ or ‘mechanical’ effects in the aggregation of votes and by ‘distal’ or psychological effects as voters and politicians anticipate the mechanical effects. Recent research (Rae 1967, 1971; Riker 1982b; Gunther 1989; Lijphart 1990) has discovered evidence of both mechanical and psychological effects, but the former seem to dominate in most cases.

‘First-past-the-post’ election rules, in which a country is divided into single-representative constituencies and the candidate with the most votes (plurality) wins the district, are widely used today in Britain, the United States, and many nations once under British domination, such as New Zealand, Jamaica, Canada, and so forth. The British general election of 1983 produced an example of the mechanical effects, in which smaller parties with votes evenly distributed across districts do badly, and legislative majorities can be created. The Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance gained 25 per cent of the vote and came in second in more districts than either ‘major’ party, but gained only a handful of parliamentary seats. On the other hand, the Conservatives gained a solid legislative majority with only about 40 per cent of the popular vote.

The major alternative forms of election rules are the various versions of proportional representation (PR). Favoured by most of the nations of continental Europe, PR provides for multi-member legislative districts, with parties represented in proportion to their voting support in the district. The size and complexity of the districts, the exact rules for distributing ‘remainder’ votes, and the presence of ‘cut-off’ rules eliminating parties below a certain size can shape the working of the system (Rae 1967; Groffman and Lijphart 1986; Lijphart 1990). But in a system such as that of the Netherlands or Denmark, the presence of PR allows a large number of small parties to form, seek, and obtain legislative representation with only a few per cent of the national vote. It is difficult for single parties to gain legislative majorities under PR rules.

Competitive party systems: critical linkage

Competitive party systems shape the critical electoral linkages between citizens and policy makers. Bryce’s observation seventy years ago holds true today: no large democracy has been able to do without political parties as the vehicle for organizing and structuring elections (Bryce 1921 (vol. 1):119). Without such organization the ability of citizens to have an impact through elections is extremely limited.

Moreover, parties are a means through which constitutional arrangements shape democratic policy making and, sometimes, a means through which constitutional arrangements can be overcome. Party competition is affected by

the historic social and political cleavages of the society (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), the strategies of politicians (Downs 1957; Mueller 1979), and by the values of the society, as well as by the constitutional arrangements. Party systems also have autonomous influence of their own and, usually, substantial ability to sustain themselves over time (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Inglehart 1984). Lijphart found that the consensual elements other than the unitary-federal ones formed a dimension most closely approximated by the number of effective political parties (Lijphart 1984: chapter 13).

The literature on party systems and party competition is voluminous. (See, for example, discussions in Duverger 1954; Neumann 1956; Downs 1957; Dahl 1966; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Epstein 1967; Sartori 1976: chapter 6; Powell 1982a: chapter 5; Strom 1985, 1990; Ware 1988.) Two major distinctions dominate much of the analysis. The first of these distinguishes two-party, or at least majority electing, systems from multi-party systems. Theorists and observers who favour clarity of responsibility and the power to implement promises (Schattschneider 1942; Ranney 1962), and/or the pre-election aggregation of citizen preferences (Lipset 1960; Almond and Powell 1966; Epstein 1967) that seem to go with majoritarian government naturally favour two-party systems. Those who favour explicit representation of social and political factions in policy making and elaborately consultative political processes tend to favour multi-party systems (Nordlinger 1972; Lehbruch 1974; Lijphart 1977, 1984).

A second major distinction between party systems focuses on the degree or type of political conflict that they express. Most party system theorists hold that highly polarized party systems, in which there is a great gap between the espoused policy packages (ideologies) of major parties, or in which 'extremist' parties, who challenge the basic ground rules of the society, gain substantial strength, are dangerous for the continued performance of democracy (Duverger 1954:419–20). Sartori's influential analysis of polarized pluralism (Sartori 1976: chapter 6) argues that the polarized systems enhance the ideological intensity of policy debate, encourage a pattern of irresponsible 'outbidding' by extremist parties, and discourage turnovers of power that could keep incumbent parties responsible to citizens (see also Powell 1987). Substantial research suggests that polarized or extremist party systems tend to promote instability of party governments, and perhaps mass turmoil as well (Taylor and Herman 1971; Hibbs 1973; Powell 1981, 1986a).

The two distinctions are often associated in argument, as many theorists have explicitly or implicitly linked multi-partism and polarization. It seems to be true that the constitutional arrangements that encourage multi-party legislative representation will also allow extremist party representation if discontent emerges. However, there is less empirical support for the argument that multi-partism as such encourages or exacerbates political conflict (Powell 1981; 1982a:

chapter 5; 1987). Some multi-party systems, such as those of Norway and the Netherlands, have continued for long periods without destabilizing political extremism.

Interest group systems

While the 'major variants' of liberal democracy have traditionally been defined by constitutional and party systems, political scientists have also focused considerable attention in the last decade on the ability of certain systems of interest group arrangements to deal more effectively than others with national economic problems. A set of such arrangements called 'democratic corporatism' has included a relatively centralized and comprehensive system of interest groups, continuous political bargaining between groups, political parties and state bureaucracies, and a supportive ideology of national 'social partnership' (Katzenstein 1985:32). It has been pointed out that the countries having these regularized corporatist relationships (among them Austria, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries) had better combined inflation/unemployment performance in the difficult years of the mid-1970s and early 1980s than did systems with more competitive interest group and party relationships, such as Britain and the United States (Berger 1981; Schmitter 1981; Cameron 1984; Katzenstein 1985). While research to date has concentrated primarily on labour and industrial relations, investigation of the consequences of various systems of interest group relations in other policy areas and at other times is underway in many countries.

CITIZEN INFLUENCE IN DIFFERENT VARIANTS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The many details of constitution, party and interest group systems can be simplified theoretically into a single dimension of majoritarianism and consensualism. Where the constitutional arrangements, party and interest group systems work together to elect controlling government majorities, able to make and implement policy without further elaborate bargaining, it should be easy for citizens to assess policy responsibility and hold incumbents accountable. If policy outcomes are unsatisfactory, the incumbents can be ejected and the opposition(s) brought to power. Citizens should frequently get the policies they want without an elaborate process of search and rejection, because incumbents desiring re-election will anticipate citizen's desires (Downs 1957; Pennock 1979: chapter 7).

Such majoritarian governmental systems can also promote mandate processes (Ranney 1962; Birch 1972). If the parties offer alternative policy choices to citizens and keep their promises when elected, citizens can use elections to set the

basic policy agenda for the future. Such alternative promises may be an important way for options to be widened and policy change desired by citizens to come into focus. Moreover, the clarity of responsibility in the majoritarian system will make it easy for voters to punish incumbents who fail to keep their promises.

The difficulty for citizen control posed by the majoritarian variants lies primarily in the bluntness of the electoral weapon under conditions of many different political issues. Unless all these issues can align citizens the same way, form a single 'dimension', there will be different possible alliances of citizens on different issues. Citizens in the majority on one issue will be in the minority on another. The tendency of the pure majoritarian variant to 'freeze' into policy all the promises of the party winning office will result in some policies that do not have majority support. (British politics provides various examples of this, such as Labour's nationalization of the steel industry after the 1966 election, or the Conservative government's privatization of utilities after the 1987 election. Both policies were carried out as 'mandates'; both were clearly opposed by citizen majorities.) Situations where the government majorities are created from the operation of the electoral laws on less than a majority of the vote (the most common situation in democracies, as shown by Rae 1967:74) are even more uncomfortable for the concept of citizen control.

Furthermore, the presence of multiple issue dimensions creates difficulties for simple accountability of incumbents as well. On which issue are they to be held accountable? And what shall the voter do if the opposition promises future policies that are as unpalatable as the incumbent's failures?

The consensual variant of democracy avoids some of these difficulties. An inclusive decision rule and election rules that help bring into power a variety of parties or factions that represent many configurations of voter opinion will open up the possibility of forming different governing coalitions on different issues (King 1981). First, the parties must negotiate parliamentary coalition governments that will have positions corresponding more complexly to the variety of clusters of voter preference, and which may change before the next election. Alternatively a 'minority' government may gather support from different parties outside the government on different issues. Second, the party government will have to negotiate with individuals or parties that have resources from committee positions (Strom 1990), the other legislative house, the regional governments, and so forth. 'Early elimination' of possible majorities (Riker 1982a) will be less frequent.

But the consensual version has the difficulties of its virtues. The complex stages of bargaining make it difficult for voters to see any connection between their choices and government policy. The absence of connection can be frustrating even for those not wedded to a strict mandate model, as Dutch voters

emphasized over twenty years ago in their support for the (then) protest party D66. Even more fundamentally, it can be difficult to assess responsibility for policy. American voters facing divided presidential-congressional control, shifting party factions and strong committees in Congress, significant state government authority, and an often intrusive Supreme Court may well find it impossible to know whom to blame for policy failure. Similarly, short-lived coalitions, frequent minority governments, and strong committees can make responsibility equally hard to pin down in Switzerland, Italy or Belgium. It is hard to find a way to express fundamental democratic dissent by throwing out the incumbents when the potential alternative policy makers are also contaminated by power-sharing.

There may be no variant of democracy, or at least none yet identified by political science, that guarantees the most effective single approach to citizen influence. Rather, each of the major variants and their combinations has its own strengths and weaknesses (Powell 1989). The importance of each type of weakness may depend on the number and intensity of the issues that divide (or unite) the citizens, as well as on the qualities that citizens most value. Perhaps it is sufficient at the moment to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Whatever the possibilities for control created by the different democratic variants, it remains up to the citizens to make use of them. Effective citizen control will require employment of both electoral and non-electoral channels to supplement the blunt, but essential, electoral instruments with forms of participation capable of conveying citizen's desires more clearly and completely (Verba and Nie 1972:322-7).

Voting participation

It is clear that voting is both the most widely used and most equally used form of citizen participation in liberal democracies (Verba *et al.* 1978; Barnes Kaase *et al.* 1979). It is also clear that levels of citizen voting participation differ systematically across the liberal democracies. Voter turn-out in national elections ranges from around 50 per cent of the citizens of voting age in Switzerland and the United States to about 90 per cent in Australia, Austria, Belgium and Italy. Average turn-out in nations without compulsory voting provisions is slightly under 80 per cent (Powell 1982a:14; 1986b). While turn-out does vary from election to election, usually turn-out within each nation is relatively consistent compared to the striking cross-national differences. Differences in rates of

political participation are in part a consequence of differences in the attitudes and characteristics of the citizens (education, interest, confidence, party commitment). Even more important are differences in the institutional context, such as compulsory voting, registration laws, nationally competitive election districts, and, somewhat less certainly, other features of the policymaking and party systems (Powell 1986b; Jackman 1987).

Campaign and communal participation

The importance of institutional setting applies to participation in campaign activity as well as to voting. It is clear that in some countries election activities, such as working for parties and candidates, are dominated by small numbers of dedicated activists or by party members rewarded by patronage. In other countries, especially in the United States, the decentralized but extensive organizations of party and candidates mobilize far more citizens into campaign activity (Barnes, Kaase, *et al.* 1979:541–2; Verba, *et al.* 1978:58–9).

None the less, participation studies (Verba, *et al.* 1978; Barnes and Kaase, *et al.* 1979) suggest that the individual characteristics of citizens, such as education, interest, socio-economic resources and partisanship, are more important in explaining who participates in election campaigns or community activity than in explaining who votes. The combination of a relatively educated and organized citizenry and significantly independent local governments have led, for example, to impressive amounts of communal participation in the United States; it is, however, participation more frequently from the better-off citizens in the society (Verba and Nie 1972). The participatory advantages of citizens with more social and economic resources can be countered in part, but only in part, by deliberate efforts of unions and labour parties to organize and mobilize the disadvantaged. (See Verba *et al.* 1978:94–142, on the connections between socio-economic resources, organizational systems, and degree and equality of political participation in different democracies.)

Constructing a full picture of the degree, types, and equality of citizen utilization of the possibilities for democratic participation is a still-incomplete task for political science.

Interest groups and citizens in liberal democracies

Groups that endeavour to press the interests and demands of their members on policy makers are found in every kind of political system. The conditions of freedom of organization and communication found in liberal democracies naturally encourage the formation of innumerable interest groups of many kinds. As societies become more complex and organizationally differentiated,

and as individual citizens become, on average, better educated and informed, these groups proliferate. Some of these are formed explicitly to articulate political demands; even more are pressed into political service when the groups' interests encounter a potentially political issue. However, for both historical and socio-economic reasons, democracies vary substantially in the density of interest group organization, as well as in the connections between groups and political parties. Citizen participation in voluntary associations seems to be high in the United States and Austria, even higher in Sweden and some other Scandinavian countries (Pestoff 1977:65; Verba *et al.* 1978:101).

Some scholars have seen such activity on the part of labour unions, consumer groups, churches, business and professional associations, recreational groups, and so forth as essential to liberal democracy. One line of thought emphasizes conflict mediation. 'Cross-cutting' multiple group affiliations can tie individuals together and encourage taking account of multiple views (Truman 1951; Lipset 1960; Pestoff 1977). Another line of thought focuses on group activity that can mediate between the citizen and the state (Kornhauser 1959), helping citizens to develop and clarify their own desires, interpret them politically and participate in politics beyond the electoral arena (Almond and Verba 1963:300-22). The group activity can articulate the wants of individual citizens to policy makers with far more clarity and targeted precision than the crude linkage of party and election. They can bring to bear more resources than can the citizen acting alone. Even if organized initially or primarily for some other purpose, their presence can solve many of the problems of organizing and mobilizing faced by discontented, but scattered, individuals (Olsen 1965; Verba *et al.* 1978).

Other democratic theorists have regarded interest groups (pressure groups) suspiciously, stressing that the special demands and advantages of such groups may be contrary to the public interest or the interests of the less well organized, who are also commonly the less educated and well-off members of the society. Schattschneider, for example, wrote of 'the pressure group' as 'a parasite living on the wastage of power exercised by the sovereign majority' (Schattschneider 1942:190) and later argued that 'the business or upper-class bias of the pressure system shows up everywhere' (*ibid.* 1960:30). (See also McConnell 1966.)

In a general sense, of course, competitive elections should help check the tendency of policy makers to respond to the more frequently articulated interests of the better-off and the organized, just as they should check the tendency for policy makers to follow their own desires. In practice, problems of citizen attention, information and competing issues limit the electoral constraint. Hence the importance of interest group organization for all parts of the citizenry.

CONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINING LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Liberal democracies exist in societies of many different types and sizes. Given a certain degree of autonomy and the desire for liberal democracy on the part of the citizens, it is possible to introduce and sustain a liberal democracy in any society. Certain conditions of the social setting are, however, much more conducive to liberal democracy and provide better prospects for its survival than others. Moreover, political theorists have long believed that certain variants have greater survival capacity than others.

As a first condition, the international setting will have important effects on the prospects for liberal democracy. In the extreme case, such penetrated societies as the nations of Eastern Europe in the period from 1945 until very recently may not be allowed to develop liberal democracy. The Soviet Union made it very clear in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 that it would not allow multi-party competition and free elections in those societies, whatever the desires of the citizens. Dramatic changes in the Soviet Union's policies in the late 1980s paved the way for the introduction of democracy in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the financing of internal rebellions by outside governments, or the perception by an internal minority that they might be part of a majority in another state, can fuel internal conflict and weaken a wouldbe democracy.

Less directly, international conditions can give a strong argument for or against internal proponents of democracy. Pro-democratic forces in Spain and Greece in the 1970s were strengthened by the expectation that liberal democracy would be a prerequisite to full entry to the European Community and its valuable markets. In the broad historical sweep, as Huntington suggests, 'the rise and decline of democracy on a global scale is a function of the rise and decline of the most powerful democratic states' (Huntington 1984:154).

Second, the level of modernization of the society will affect its prospects for sustaining democracy. The greater wealth and income of economically developed societies make it possible for them to deal with internal conflict, especially economic conflict, in a greater variety of ways. Closely associated, the greater levels of literacy, the more dense communication media, and the more complexly developed-patterns of associational life all encourage a citizenry able to deal with democratic participation. The level of modernization is also strongly associated with development of an autonomous, indigenous middle class, which has historically been an important democratizing force. (For reviews of the large literature on these points, see especially Huntington 1968, 1974; Dahl 1971:62-80; Powell 1982a:34-41.) Democracy has been sustained in some relatively poor and economically undeveloped societies, such as India, but they are the exception.

Third, the degree of internal social and ethnic fragmentation is likely to affect the prospects for stable and successful liberal democracy (Hibbs 1973: chapter 5;

Powell 1982a:42–7). Nations with divisions of language, ethnicity, race, religion and other demographic characteristics that involve the deep personal identity (and identifiability) of individuals and groups are likely to have a more difficult time in achieving political stability under any system. They often face public policy issues that are particularly difficult to resolve through compromise and partial measures. Situations involving simple divisions of the society into majority and minority ethnic groups can be even more difficult to resolve than multiple groups with no majority.

Moreover, the threat to the identity of individuals and social groups makes for great intensity of feeling and easy development of fear and distrust. Once internal ethnic conflicts are mobilized and fear and grievances accumulated, ethnic conflicts may defy the most imaginative efforts at democratic reconciliation. The long-running conflicts involving Northern Ireland in the UK and the Basques in Spain provide examples. The relative successes of ethnic politics without major deadly conflict in Switzerland, Belgium and Canada show that ethnic homogeneity is not a prerequisite for stable democracy. But it surely makes the task easier.

There seems little doubt that a supportive international environment, socioeconomic development and ethnic homogeneity are conditions that make it easier to introduce and sustain liberal democracy. In practice it is also true that the contemporary democracies are found in societies with market-oriented economies. It is difficult to know if this association is the result of the group autonomy encouraged in free markets, or a consequence of incompatibility of general societal command control systems with both liberal democracy and market-oriented economics, but the association is surely present.

Beyond these more or less objective conditions of the social and economic setting for democracy, it is also likely that the cultural traditions and values of a society may can work for or against liberal democracy. As France has demonstrated to the rest of Europe for two hundred years, historical political cleavages and conflicts can haunt a nation's political life and make democratic conflict resolution more difficult. The general association between a Protestant religious heritage and successful democratic development has frequently been noted; particular difficulties for democracy in Islamic nations have been suggested (Huntington 1984). The presence of such citizen attitudes as social trust, subject and participant competence, social co-operativeness (Almond and Verba 1963:504; Inglehart 1990), and an 'ethos of civic involvement' (Putnam *et al.* 1983) seem to enhance the stability and performance of liberal democratic systems.

Theorists of the consequences of liberal democratic constitutions and party systems have been seriously divided over the merits of each major variant for sustaining democracy. Under conditions of general citizen agreement on the

basic procedures and policies of the society, any of the approaches will probably survive. In his study of twenty-two liberal democracies stable since the Second World War, Lijphart (1984) found examples of both highly majoritarian types (Britain, New Zealand) and highly consensual ones (Switzerland, Belgium). He also found various mixes of centralized, multi-party systems and federalized majority party systems. On the other hand, under conditions of extreme pressure any of them may fail.

Nor is it obvious whether or not intense polarization of citizen opinion is better dealt with through enforced incorporation within two-party, majoritarian politics than through proportional representation and consultation. Supporters of majority government stress its ability to make policy rapidly and decisively, and suggest that this capacity can be critical in times of great stress. At least since the fall of the Weimar Republic, many writers have seen multi-party systems as fatefully unable to deal with major internal crisis (for example, see Bracher 1964; Dahl 1971:173). A view with often contrary implications is that majoritarian politics is destabilizing in the presence of intense opinion conflicts (Lehmbruch 1974; Lijphart 1977, 1984; Nordlinger 1972). Majoritarianism tends to lead to suppression of minorities and/or too much threat for incumbents to yield power. Societies divided by ethnicity or other sources of intense disagreement must move to non-majoritarian, consultative arrangements. Another suggested element in the situation (Powell 1982a, 1986a) is that multi-party or consensual arrangements may not exacerbate conflict but do tend to move turmoil from the streets (protests and riots) to the constitutional arena (less durable coalitions).

If democratic failure occurs, it may well take different forms in the different democratic variants. Majoritarian systems are more likely to succumb to the temptation of the strong government (of either presidential or parliamentary type) to constrain civic freedom or even competition in the name of stability, or do away with elections entirely in the name of fear or continuity. Consensual systems are more likely to become immobilized, unable to address serious policy issues, lose citizen confidence and open the path to military intervention (see Powell 1982a:170-4). But there is no magic formula that applies to all cases; rather it is up to the elites in the society to devise ways of overcoming the weaknesses and taking advantages of the strengths that reside in their variant of liberal democracy (Lijphart 1977; Powell 1982a:218-24). It is the essence of liberal democracy that ordinary citizens must also have the attentiveness and wisdom to support the efforts to sustain democracy and freedom.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES AND NON-DEMOCRATIC
ALTERNATIVES

As recently as the mid-1970s liberal democracy seemed in retreat. The overthrow of apparently well-established stabilized democracies in Uruguay, Chile, Turkey and the Philippines by military or executive coup; the tragic civil war in Lebanon; the suspension of democratic elections and rights in India and Sri Lanka, suggested that democracy was too fragile to cope with Third World conditions. In the (post-)industrialized West, academics shaken by student revolts, terrorist attacks, 'stagflation', strikes, and declining party identification wrote grimly of the 'ungovernability' of liberal democracies in contemporary societies (for example, see Crozier *et al.* 1975). They despaired over the short-sighted expenditure-driven policies of mass electorates and democratic politicians (for example, see Brittan, 1975).

It seems likely that hard times will come again. Therefore, it seems appropriate to conclude with a few words of comparison between democracies and the non-democratic alternatives. First, the easiest area in which to document superior performance of democracy is in sustaining civil rights and personal freedom from elite abuse. A review of the yearly studies of political rights and civil liberties by Freedom House (Gastil 1978, 1988) makes this association quite clear. Some authoritarian governments permit substantial civil freedom. Some liberal democracies have adopted restrictions on press freedoms and civil rights, or have abused the positions of minorities. But the general intertwining of electoral competition and political rights with civil freedom is obvious.

Moreover, there is some evidence that democracy contributes to the containment of serious violence. This evidence would probably be more compelling if we had better data on violence in authoritarian systems. But Hibbs's very careful analysis of mass political violence on a worldwide scale (Hibbs 1973) found that regimes in which elites were electorally accountable were less likely to use repression against their citizens. He also observed that such elite restraint when confronted with citizen protest and turmoil helped prevent the escalation of serious violence (*ibid.*: 186-7).

In areas of welfare policy and economic growth, it is more difficult to be sure about the evidence for liberal democracy. Both problems of data and the rather different strategies within each type of regime make comparison a complex task. We would expect from theory, of course, that the liberal democracies would be more likely to develop welfare policies and otherwise respond to consensual policies (if any) preferred by the electorates. It is precisely this expectation that made many scholars of Third World development pessimistic about the ability