

contracting has focused exclusively on the United States or United Kingdom, this is significant.

Krahmann's comparison assembles a wealth of interesting and important data in one place, thereby forcing the reader to think about the issue of privatization in new ways. Those with an interest in the comparative dimensions of the privatization of security should find much to be gained from grappling with his challenging contribution.

The Prospect of Internet Democracy. By Michael Margolis and Gerson Moreno-Riaño. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. 200p. \$99.95.
doi:10.1017/S1537592711000818

— Jay G. Blumler, *University of Leeds*

If you want to inform yourself fully about the reasons why the coming of the Internet has not yet initiated a radically different and utopian system of political democracy and is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future, then this is the book for you. *The Prospect of Internet Democracy?* Forget it, the authors say—at least if “democracy” is conceived in any bottom-up sense. The title of their second chapter, “Impossible Dreams,” hits off their thesis as well as their basic line of argument. They repeatedly juxtapose visions of an Internet-launched new democratic order against prevailing, powerful and obdurate constraints, rooted in hierarchically controlled political and economic institutions. It's sort of Rousseau versus Machiavelli, with the latter holding most of the cards most of the time.

The authors' commitment to this intellectual strategy is evidenced by the way they dramatically frame the issues under consideration: Will the Internet “transform” democratic politics? Will it “revolutionize” democratic politics? Will it achieve a “radical renewal” of American democracy? Are notions of direct democracy realizable? Will the Internet “revolutionize” policy making? Will the dynamic nature of the Internet facilitate not just rapid change but revolutionary change throughout society? Will it introduce an electronic commonwealth? Can it give ordinary people control over the political agenda? Can formerly ignored citizens be empowered at last? Will the Internet be used for civic purposes that enhance democratic values like equity and fairness?

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the authors' answers to all of these questions are resoundingly in the negative. And indeed, if these are the questions that we should be asking about the place of the Internet in democratic politics nowadays, then their argument stands up; their answers, which are developed thoroughly, do appear convincing.

They argue that the prospects for democratic transformation and renewal are obstructed by powerful obstacles: elite domination and behavior, resulting for example in a colonization of most important Internet sites; the “commodification of everything” in a capitalist society, tending to marginalize politics on the Internet and encouraging many people to think of themselves more as consumers

than as citizens when using the Internet; the tendency of leaders and officials to put many more resources into e-government than into e-democracy; and the role of “human nature in politics,” ensuring that most people devote far more energy and thought to a host of everyday pursuits and pastimes than to civic affairs (as long maintained of course by such theorists of elite democracy as Graham Wallas, Walter Lippmann, and Joseph Schumpeter among others; against this last factor it can be counterargued, however, that public involvement in politics is more of a variable than a constant, differing across societies, demographic subgroups, current issues and events, and even institutional arrangements).

In my view, two of the more interesting chapters of this book are less reliant on the stark contrast of political idealism versus political realism that shapes the rest of the analysis. Chapter 4 on “Democracy, Tolerance and the Internet” offers a refreshing and nuanced discussion of how Internet-based discourse can foster both intolerance of the views of others and tolerance of them. And Chapter 6 on “The Internet and Democratic Education” considers how increasing uses of new media in universities and colleges are lowering educational standards and short-changing the preparation of students to become critically informed citizens. The picture here is unremittingly grim—of a dystopia in the making, as it were.

But one is bound to wonder whether the central argument of this book hasn't reached its sell-by date by now. How many times must the dreams of classical democrats be punctured before turning to other issues? Can anything significant really be added to a critique that has already become so familiar? Are Margolis and Moreno-Riaño in danger of flogging, if not a dead horse, then one that is ripe for retirement?

In any case, their master conceptualization is itself open to criticism on at least three grounds. First, it is normatively unhelpful. Thinking about democracy in either/or terms (either classical or elite systems of democracy) leaves no room for attempted betterment, which, though short of the wholesale change that they rule out, might well be worth achieving in its own right. In theory and practice, progressive democrats can and do work meaningfully on a more-or-less basis—more or less participation, consultation, involvement, deliberation, public understanding, popular control, etc. Second, the conceptualization is arguably simplistic—in the sense that by bundling up all political communications into two contrasted models, it tends to overlook the many different, complex, and sometimes conflicting ways in which the Internet, especially, is, and is becoming, involved in democratic politics (so many actors, so many roles, so many relationships, so many types of political and communication efforts, so many directions of message traffic, so many consequences, etc.). The implications of these several elements for citizenship and democracy, whether positive or negative, will only be adequately understood by to some extent

identifying and studying them individually. Finally, the label “Internet democracy” is questionable. Arguably, there is no such thing. Particularly since the Internet is such a multifaceted medium and houses so many different communication endeavors, its democratic impulses (as well as its less democratic ones) are also quite varied, ranging from populist to deliberative approaches to democracy, with others in between no doubt (audience democracy? hit-and-run democracy? etc.).

Let’s move on therefore to a range of empirical and normative concerns about the still evolving role of the Internet in politics, aiming eventually to sum them up in conceptualizations that will be more suited to contemporary political communication conditions than classic versions of democracy can be, without accepting the rigidities of elite versions of democracy.

Measuring Democracy: A Bridge Between Scholarship and Politics. By Gerardo L. Munck. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. 200p. \$ 28.00. doi:10.1017/S153759271100082X

— Henry E. Hale, *The George Washington University*

Democracy is surely one of the most important concepts in political science, but it is also one of the most elusive. Two and a half millennia after its Athenian incarnation, scholars continue to debate what constitutes its essence in the modern world. Is democracy only about elections? Are civil rights, a market economy, the rule of law, or human development necessary components? Is “democracy” the same thing across different cultural contexts? As one can imagine, the challenges are still greater for those who want to reduce the concept to numbers that can facilitate the systematic study of patterns across time and space.

With this remarkable little book, Gerardo Munck succeeds in adding clarity to a muddled discussion, presenting a distinct conceptualization of democracy and putting the effort to quantify it on much more solid logical ground. Informed by both theory and practice, Munck’s effort is important reading for those in both academia and the policymaking community who wish either to use or to create data on democracy or the lack of it.

After laying out the different uses to which data on democracy are put in today’s world, Munck launches into a critique of existing measures and how they are used. While all are found wanting, Freedom House’s Freedom in the World indices come under particularly strong criticism, primarily for their lack of theoretical grounding (e.g., why should the index be additive instead of multiplicative?), their murky coding rules that complicate replication, and their methodology’s tendency to change from year to year without adjustment of prior scores to ensure consistency.

At the same time, Munck develops some important principles for how indices of democracy should be constructed. Most fundamentally, they should be theory driven.

Analysts must explicitly disaggregate the concept of democracy, paying special attention to different levels of disaggregation. If democracy, for example, consists of the two attributes of contestation and participation, then each of these attributes break down into several components. Freedom of the press and the right to form parties, for example, are components of contestation. Good indices must carefully distinguish between these different levels, avoiding redundancy or the conflating of levels. In addition, theory must guide how different components and attributes are aggregated in the index. For example, Freedom House treats aggregation as an additive task, counting and averaging point scores. But Munck ultimately argues for a multiplicative approach, meaning that if a country scores a zero on an essential component of democracy, it scores a zero on the larger index.

The central contribution of *Measuring Democracy* is to propose an actual measure, the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI), which the author together with Jay Verkuilen developed to evaluate democracy in Latin America for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The index itself is elegant and commonsensical, breaking “democracy” down to the following four attributes: the “right to vote,” “clean elections,” “free elections,” and the filling of the most important state offices (legislative and executive) by elections (p. 55). Importantly, “each attribute is held to be a necessary condition” (p. 57). Thus where an additive index would rate a country with universal suffrage and clean elections for all important state offices, but with only half-free elections, as still seven eighths democratic (i.e., pretty good), Munck’s index would rate that country only half democratic. Munck also develops an admirably clear scale that expert coders can use to assign the corresponding numeric values, a scale developed according to principles he helpfully lays out. He presents specific data from Latin America that reveal the index to be highly reasonable.

While compelling, the EDI does have some weaknesses, at least as described in the book. For one thing, the multiplicative nature of the index can magnify any problems in the definition of the attributes or the coding rules. Take, for example, the attribute of clean elections. In essence, on a three-point scale, a country scores a zero if there are major irregularities that determine the outcome of an election, and a one if irregularities exist but do not have a major impact on the outcome (p. 58). But where an election is close, a small amount of fraud can determine the outcome. Thus if we assume a small amount of fraud is a constant, it could be the case that a country moves from a one to a zero on the “clean elections” criteria not because fraud increased, but because the election got more competitive, meaning that the fraud became decisive. The consequences would be severe, as the zero would multiply with the other attribute measures to produce a zero for the whole democracy rating, equating such a country with North Korea on the EDI.