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Preface

Giovanni Finizio, Lucio Levi and Nicola Vallinoto

This book has had a long and complicated gestation. It was in 2007 that we first had the idea of an International Democracy Watch. However, the draft of this first report required extensive preliminary work involving elaborating a method and selecting experts.

As regards the first issue, we were aware from the very beginning that a survey of international organizations (IOs) written by about 40 authors ran the risk of becoming a heterogeneous collection of chapters held together only by a common subject; hence the need to build the analytic capability of the research team. Our method has been to try to achieve a basic uniformity of approach through the use of 10 indicators. The three editors submitted each text to a critical reading and suggested changes, when necessary, to ensure that we achieve a truly joint text. Within the limits of possibility, this operational unit has made sure that there has been a unified effort for the plan of the work.

We have experienced much greater difficulty than expected in finding scholars specialized in the study of international organizations because of a shortage of experts able to collaborate on so demanding and innovative a project. Expanding capabilities in this field of research has not only required money, but also time, both of which are limited resources.

For practical reasons, we decided to produce a work that could be published in a single volume. Therefore, we have had to move the analysis of campaigns for international democracy to a second volume. This book contains only a general introduction to the theme.

This is a pioneering work. As we have explored a new region and experienced a new research method, the result is far from perfect. Nevertheless, we expect that other scholars will join us in the near future to improve our work.

1 International Democracy Watch

There are various reasons for creating an International Democracy Watch (IDW). The first concerns the progressive reduction in the role and influence of national states in the process of governing the economic and social globalization and the ensuing birth of a process of creating supranational organizations at both the regional and the global level.

The second concerns the creation and growth of transnational civil society movements, the principal aim of which is to foster international democracy, i.e. the globalization process through the democratization of international institutions.

Finally, we underline the existence of institutions that monitor the growth and the spread of democracy within national states. However, no such institution exists performing similar activities with a focus on international relations and on international democracy.

The current lack of instruments to check the progress or regression of international democracy has encouraged us to create the IDW. Even though several scholars believe that democracy cannot extend beyond the borders of nation-states because of the absence of adequate social conditions, the European Union (EU) is the first concrete example, as yet uncompleted, of supranational democracy, and similar processes are underway in other regional contexts, albeit more slowly.

The aim of the IDW is to check the state of the art and development of democracy in international institutions, at the regional, inter-regional and world levels, and to measure the progress (or regression) through a regular monitoring, the results of which are available on the IDW website, and the publication of a periodic *International Democracy Report*.

2 Rationale and content of the book

Several books on international democracy and supranational federalism have recently been published.[1] These works are usually focused on political and normative theory. Other works provide some pioneer and useful theoretical attempts to analyse the process of democratization and legitimation of regional organizations, supplemented by a few case studies (see, for example, van der Vleuten and Ribeiro Hoffmann 2006). However, the aim of this theoretical discussion is not elaborating a set of indicators to be applied to such organizations; it lacks any empirical dimension and, furthermore, it is not systematic.

Although based on the premises of political theory, which are described and debated in the Introduction, this book is empirical in nature. Only a few works have attempted to develop a comparative analysis of the democratic features of international institutions. In 2006, for example, Thomas Zweifel constructed seven qualitative indicators, applying them to a few international organizations. In addition to considering international organizations, the Global Institutional Design project at the London School of Economics and Political Science, led by David Held, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, Anthony McGrew and Paola Robotti, also takes into account other institutions like the G8 or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[2] Finally, One World Trust looks at four dimensions—transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response mechanisms—and applies them to selected international organizations, simple organs of those organizations, transnational corporations and international NGOs (Lloyd *et al.* 2008). However, these attempts only consider a few selected organizations and their focus is usually limited to the concept of accountability, which One World Trust defined as 'the processes through which an organization makes a commitment to respond to and balance the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making processes and activities, and delivers against this commitment'.[3] In our view, accountability is only one facet of democracy. In particular, these experiments do not appear to deal with statehood; indeed, the indicators constructed thus far seem to have been purposefully conceived of to be applied to non-state actors. However, as noted previously, many international organizations are in an ongoing process of acquiring more and more elements of statehood. On the other hand, empirical reality shows that statehood is the necessary framework within which democracy can work. First, because supranational institutions enable the assertion of political authority and general interests of citizens, and not only those of the states. Second, because democracies cannot function without a government to manage public goods and enforce the application of legal and constitutional rules, or at least to be able to threaten their enforcement.

This book aims to describe the democratization process affecting international organizations and systematically assess the democratic features of most of them at the global, regional and inter-regional level by using a set of qualitative macro-indicators developed by the Editors, which identify the features of international democracy. Therefore, this book is the first systematic attempt to assess empirically the democratic features of a wide range of international institutions on the basis of a clear definition of international democracy, and providing a useful instrument for further comparative research.

3 Qualitative macro-indicators

The analysis of international organizations is based on 10 qualitative macro-indicators working as guidelines: appointment; democracy at the

national level; input legitimacy; participation; control; inter-state democracy; supranationalism; power limitation; human rights; and output legitimacy.

Appointment

How are key officials appointed or elected, and what is the agency's governance structure (single-headed agency, multi-headed commission, self-regulatory organization, etc.)? Who can belong to the institution—only states or also non-governmental actors? Does a parliamentary body exist? Are its members directly elected by people or are they representatives of national parliaments? In the former case, are the elections free? Is there free mass media (private and/or public) to make citizens aware of government alternatives?

Democracy at the national level

Immanuel Kant and authors like Norberto Bobbio after him highlighted very effectively how there is a two-way connection between domestic (national) and international democracy (Kant 1988; Bobbio 1987; Held 1995; Archibugi 2008). A non-democratic and state-centric world order limits domestic democracy, as the Cold War amply demonstrated. Transnational phenomena like globalization gradually erode domestic democracy, breaking the symmetry and congruence between decision makers and decision takers in a fixed, territorially based community—the nation-state—(Held 2000, 18). However, on the other hand a democratic world order made up of non-democratic states is inconceivable. Indeed, Kant identified a republican domestic order as a prerequisite for a cosmopolitan (and thus democratic and peaceful) world order. Therefore, this indicator reflects to what extent the member states of an international organization are democratic.

Input legitimacy

The traditional source of legitimization of international organizations is *output legitimacy*, i.e. the legitimacy that comes from the policies and activities of the organization ('government *for* the people'; Tholen 2007, 21). In other words, international organizations are considered legitimate to the extent that the shared procedures in the founding act are respected (Hurd 2007), and the organization proves to be useful in resolving problems that member states are unable to solve alone (Levi 2012, 60–62). The third wave of democratization (Huntington 1991), along with the globalization process (which brought global civil society to the fore), has instead made the question of *input legitimacy* ('government *by* the people'; Telò 2012, 30) more pressing, leading to the conceptualization of so-called democratic deficit, first in the EU (Scharpf 1999) and then in other organizations.

Does a civil society exist, organized at the level of the institution and articulating the political demand? How developed is it? Is it autonomous from public powers and from market forces? How is it funded? How is it organized? Do political parties exist, organized at the level of the institution and aggregating the political demand? To what extent are they autonomous from national parties? Is the decision-making process managed according to formalized and observed rules?

Participation

This indicator describes the citizens' ability to influence and participate in decision making. Are citizens endowed with the right to address petitions and with the right of legislative initiative? Are they consulted through referenda or through public hearings conceived of to amplify their voice? If a civil society and political parties organized at the level of the institution exist, what is their role in decision making? Is there a provision for a consultative status for NGOs, associations and trade unions? To what extent can citizens participate in the life of political parties and influence their positions? To what extent are women involved in political elections and in the organization's institutions and bodies?

Control

This indicator reflects whether citizens and civil society are able to check the political authority of the monitored organization. Can citizens appraise whether their representatives implement the mandate according to which they are elected? The answer implies the evaluation of transparency in the decision-making process: are the documents and acts produced by the political authority freely available to public

opinion? Are bodies required to publish reasons for their decisions and are these reasons widely accessible? Are the parties involved allowed to have access to the information? Do independent mass media exist? If a parliamentary body exists, can it exercise effective powers of monitoring organization's bodies (e.g. through questions and parliamentary enquiries)? Is parliament competent in all the issues managed by the executive power? Can it apply to a court when it finds that a decision produced by governing bodies is against the law?

Inter-state democracy

This indicator reflects the quality of member states' participation in the decision making of the monitored organization. In general, every organization has a plenary body in which all member states are represented. However, we must first understand how much weight each member within the body has: are states represented according to the sovereign equality principle, with the same powers in the decision-making process (one country, one vote), or is decision making based on weighted voting as in the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank)? What are the relevant principles on which weighted voting is based?

Second, we need to understand whether there is a correspondence between state representation and power relationships, and to what extent the two elements are at odds. The most striking case is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an organization in which the principle of sovereign equality is in force, but in which power is dramatically skewed in favour of the foremost military power in the world, the USA. Moreover, this means clarifying whether power relations give rise to a balance of power or to a unipolarism involving one or more countries. In the former case, the organization will tend to function better both in terms of output, i.e. the quality of the politics produced (benefitting output legitimacy), and in terms of correctness of the procedures and centrality and effectiveness of the shared norms (Köchler 2012; Oppenheim 1905). Finally, it is essential to determine what power the plenary body really has in the life of the organization and what the relationship is with other bodies of the international organization, particularly those having a restricted membership. Does such a body actually have effective power to produce policies and laws or is it subordinate to other bodies? Does it have executive and/or legislative power, or is it only a forum for discussion? What is its relationship with legislative body?

Supranationalism

Most studies on the democratic nature of international organizations focus on limitations or lack of democracy, i.e. on the democratic deficit of those organizations. From this perspective, the literature tends to adopt the axiom that the more supranationalism (and hence power) increases and makes the organization autonomous vis-à-vis the member states, the greater the democratic deficit (Scharpf 1999). In this sense, while international organizations are a response to the need to govern phenomena that the states cannot manage alone, thus offering solutions to the decline of the state and the relative democratic system, they are also a part of the problem. This discussion appears almost tautological: an organization that acquires powers and supranationalism suffers from a democratic deficit insofar as it is not accompanied by its concomitant democratization. If we look at this from Dahl's perspective, who believes international organizations cannot be democratized (Dahl 1999), the problem must be considered irresolvable, condemning democracy to an inexorable decline.

However, supranationalism is necessary for international democracy in two ways. Firstly, supranationalism implies the idea that political authority promotes the general interests of the citizens, rather than those of the states (Erthal 2007, 39). Secondly, history shows that democracies cannot function without a government that imposes the application of legal and constitutional rules, or at least threatens their imposition. On the other hand, democracy is worthless if the political authority lacks decision-making powers.

Thus, this indicator enables to answer the following questions: if a legislative body exists, does it have legislative powers? Are the rules approved by the organization directly applicable and enforceable in the legal order of member states? Does a supranational executive power exist and what are its powers and competences? How is it composed and what principles regulate the composition process? What is its relationship with the legislative body? If the organization has a secretariat, to what extent is it independent from member states and what are its powers and competences? Does a jurisdictional body exist and how is it

composed? What are its competences? Are its decisions binding and how are they implemented? Does a central bank exist, independent of member states? What are its competences? Does a common currency exist and how is it managed? Are norms and decisions enforced through supranational police forces or through the executive powers of the member states? Does the organization have a legal status? Is the organisation endowed with security forces? Does it have the power to intervene in the domestic jurisdiction of the member states (e.g. when gross violations of human rights occur)? Is this power concretely exercised?

Power limitation

This indicator reflects the availability of checks and balances between the organization's powers. Is there a separation between the executive, legislative and jurisdictional power? Are the executive power's acts submitted to the control of a court, and what is the power of the latter in this context? Can it block an act or does it only produce advisory opinions? Is there a clear division between the state's powers on the one hand, and the organization's powers on the other?

Human rights

An everlasting relation links democracy and human rights both directly and indirectly. As has been noted (Beetham 1999), civil and political rights are constitutive elements of democracy because without freedom of expression, of association, of assembly and of movement one cannot have a voice in the organization of civil society or in matters of government policy. The economic and social rights are in a position of interdependence with respect to democracy.

a) On the one hand, their observance is a requirement of democracy, which in turn is a condition for those rights to be observed (ibid.: 35).
   The principle of political equality, the basis of democracy, is jeopardized by socio-economic deprivation, which diminishes—to the point of nullifying it—the ability of individuals to exercise any formally recognized right, virtually excluding them from the democratic process. In general, the quality and the sustainability of democracy is also damaged. For example, the deprivation causes social consequences like increasing insecurity, which in turn favours repressive responses by the state and intensification of the most authoritative forms of social control, as well as support for policies of intolerance called for by populist parties that translate anger about insecurity into hate for minorities.
   Therefore, it can be said that the failure to defend economic and social rights has many and diverse negative effects on democracy. First, it undermines the status of citizenship of the victims of the violation and inhibits their ability to exercise civil and political rights. Second, the general democratic life is damaged due to the phenomena of social disintegration. Third, this failure erodes the legitimacy of the democratic institutions themselves, and makes them more vulnerable to forces that intend to subvert them.
b) On the other hand, it is widely known that democracy is a prerequisite for satisfying economic and social rights. Certainly, democratic systems are not all the same and some leave more to desire than others from this point of view, but the highest levels of economic and social well-being have been achieved in democratic countries. Even though right-wing and left-wing authoritative regimes are disposed differently towards such rights, they have both proven to be ineffective.

Human rights are a legal expression of the *individual* needs of human beings, while democracy is a tool for achieving the *common* good. The link between human rights and democracy, between individual good and the common good, is civil society, composed of private individuals who think about and pursue the public good (Barber 1998). Civil society thus performs an operation of synthesis, in which human needs merge into the 'public need'. It will then be the democratic institutions instead, by translating the mechanism into authoritative terms, to make human rights merge into 'democratic public law'.[4]

Therefore, international democracy involves tools for promoting and protecting human rights at the level of the organization under consideration. This indicator thus reflects the extent to which human rights are recognized and enforced at the supranational level. Are there human rights charters produced by or in force at the level of the monitored

organization? Are they binding or not? To what extent are they obeyed and perceived as binding by member states? Are these documents directed only to states or also to their citizens and non-governmental actors (NGOs, corporations etc.)? How many countries have ratified these documents? How can the reservations that states have about signing the documents be judged? How can the range of protected rights be evaluated (e.g. compared with the United Nations (UN) Treaty on Civil and Political Rights, or the UN Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)? In particular, do the documents only provide civil and political rights, or economic, social and cultural rights as well, or even third-generation rights? How developed is the machinery for protecting the rights? Is its nature only political, or quasi-jurisdictional or jurisdictional? Are human rights justiciable? Does the organization have an executive mechanism regarding human rights? Are these mechanisms used effectively and considered sound protection instruments? Are there extra-jurisdictional mechanisms for protecting human rights (e.g. an ombudsman) and what power and competences do they have? Are their decisions efficacious and do their observations get results by the organization's authorities? Do the authorities respond to them and apply them? Is there a common passport and a common citizenship (which can be complementary to the national ones)? Are criminal law and criminal jurisdiction provided for within the framework of the monitored organization?

Output legitimacy

The distinction between input and output legitimacy has been highlighted by Fritz Scharpf, who argues that democratic legitimacy is a two-dimensional concept that refers to both the inputs and the outputs of a political system. In terms of output, Scharpf argues, democracy would be an 'empty ritual' if the democratic procedure were not able to produce effective outcomes, i.e. 'achieving the goals that citizens collectively care about' (Scharpf 1997, 19; see also Papisca 1995). Therefore, this indicator enables to explore the output of the international organization and to assess its quality, describing to what extent it corresponds to the competences and the objectives accorded to it by member states and citizens. In other words, it is about the organization's ability to provide effective solutions in order to gain legitimacy by its member states and citizens. Does the organization concretely perform its constitutional functions? With what degree of success? In particular, what role does the organization play in promoting democracy within its member states?

4 Structure of the book

In addition to the Introduction, Part I of the volume includes a thorough study by Claudia Kissling on the legal and political status of international parliamentary institutions, some of the most relevant signs of international democracy.

Part II considers a selected range of global international organizations, i.e. the UN, the International Labour Organization, the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. These institutions are the most significant ones at the global level, and are increasingly regarded by civil society movements and scholars of international democracy as the first institutions to be democratized. One particular institution is also included in this section: the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Since its members are not states' representatives but national parliamentarians, it has been debated whether the IPU itself would qualify as and be willing to strive to transform itself into something resembling a global parliament. On the other hand, as an international institution it is qualified to be included within the scope of this book.

Part III considers the main regional organizations in Europe, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania. These organizations should be kept analytically separate from the functional and universal organizations treated in Part II because they differ in some important areas, both on the 'demand side'—as regards the high expectations citizens have in terms of regional development, security, human rights protection, etc.—and on the 'supply side', as regional integration is 'multidimensional' and includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects, and finally because regional organizations are generally marked by territorial characteristics.

Three chapters are dedicated to the EU because: a) it is the most advanced and effective form of regional organization; and b) it represents a model or a point of reference for several regional organizations on other continents. The first chapter, by Mario Telò, analyses the theoretical debates that took place around the democratization of the

EU and describes the history of this process. The second chapter, by Lucia Serena Rossi, focuses on the process by which the EU has developed supranational powers and institutions. The third chapter, by Dawid Friedrich, provides an empirical assessment of the EU's democratic features.

Part IV considers inter-regional institutions, which include states belonging to two or more regions of the world. While these institutions are generally looser than those analysed in the previous chapters, they do have some democratic features.

Parts III and IV also include a few surveys on minor institutions having parliamentary assemblies.

Part V, edited by Laura Roscio, presents the most important autonomous international parliamentary assemblies not included within the framework of international organizations.

Finally, Part VI analyses the role of global civil society movements in the democratization of international organizations. It gives a general perspective on the globalization process and shows the creation and the growth of transnational networks and movements with a main objective of fostering international democracy.

Notes

1 See, for instance, the seminal works by Daniele Archibugi, David Held and Martin Köhler (1998); Barry Holden (2000); Bruce Morrison (2003); Daniele Archibugi (2003); and the several single-authored books that have proliferated in more recent years (for instance by Daniele Archibugi (2008), James Bohman (2010), Luis Cabrera (2006), Lucio Levi (2008), Raffaele Marchetti (2009), George Monbiot (2004), Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen (2004), Jackie Smith (2007) and others).

2 See www2.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/research/globalGovernance/gid.aspx.

3 See www.oneworldtrust.org/globalaccountability/gar/methodology.

4 This expression is borrowed from Held (1995).

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