

Trust and Rule

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Trust and rule

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Abstract. Over most of history, participants in trust networks such as clandestine religious sects and kinship groups have shielded them from rulers' intervention, rightly fearing dispossession or exploitation. Yet no substantial regime can survive without drawing on resources held by trust networks. In particular, democratic regimes cannot operate without substantial integration of trust networks into public politics. Rulers' application of various combinations among coercion, capital, and commitment in the course of bargaining with subordinate populations produces a variety of regimes. Contemporary democracies face a threat of de-democratization if major segments of the population withdraw their trust networks from public politics.

Between 1367 and 1393, Franciscan Brother Francois Borrel, inquisitor of the high Alpine diocese of Embrun in Dauphine, scourged the Waldensians of his territory. From the Catholic Church's perspective, those primitive Christians qualified as heretics worthy of extermination. After all, they refused to swear oaths, opposed capital punishment, denied the existence of Purgatory, rejected papal authority including the pope's right to canonize saints, and claimed that sacraments administered by sinful priests had no efficacy. In the small, high Dauphinois valley of Vallouise alone, during three years for which full records exist between 1379 and 1386, the diocese prosecuted at least 300 Waldensians. When church authorities captured the accused heretics, they tried them in ecclesiastical courts, routinely convicted them, turned condemned heretics over to secular authorities for burning or hanging, and then seized their property. The many Waldensians from Vallouise who fled across the border into Piedmont also lost their belongings. During those inquisitorial adventures, Vallouise yielded about 5 thousand florins worth of confiscated property. That amount equaled about 40 percent of the money that the whole of Dauphine had paid as royal taxes during the prosperous year of 1343.¹

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Before the Protestant Reformation, Waldensians never called themselves Waldensians; their enemies used that name. They called themselves variously Brothers, Poor of Christ, or Poor of Lyons.² The pejorative label comes from the name of the sect's putative founder, a Vaudes or Valdes who belonged to a wealthy Lyonnais mercantile family, underwent a religious conversion around 1170, gave up his property, and began a ministry among the city's poor. Like the contemporaneous Cathar Perfects of Languedoc and the Pyrenees so vividly evoked by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie³ as well as the Czech Hussites of the early fifteenth century, the Poor of Lyons aspired to recover the simplicity of earliest Christianity. (Indeed, their self-descriptions came to obscure their twelfth-century origins and to claim continuity from Christianity's founding years.) Eventually the Lyonnais sect fled the city and filtered up Alpine valleys, linking families across Dauphine and Piedmont through missionaries called *barbes* for their customary beards. At times, the Brothers sent colonies to the Po Valley, Apulia, Calabria, Burgundy, Provence, Austria, and even the Rhineland. But over four centuries of clandestine existence they congregated especially in the high Alps.

During the early Reformation, *barbe* Georges Morel wrote Protestant leaders of Basel and Strasbourg to explain the poor folks' virtuous vision of their ministry:

Our people almost always come from herding and agriculture. They are 25 to 30 years old, and have no education at all. We try them out among ourselves for three or four years during the two or three winter months.... During that time, we teach them to write and read, and to learn by heart the gospels of Matthew and John, chapters of all the canonical Epistles, and a good part of Paul.... Those who qualify are taken to a certain place where a few women, our sisters, live as virgins. In that place they spend a year or two, actually devoting most of their time to working the earth. After that time the disciples, by the sacrament of the Eucharist and the laying on of hands, are admitted to the ministry of priesthood and preaching, and are sent out two by two to evangelize. The first one of the two admitted always leads in honor, dignity, and authority, and is the master of the second.... None of us marries, even if to tell the truth we do not always live chastely. Our food and clothing come as alms from the people we teach.⁴

Once past their early years of activity in Lyons, the *barbes* did not preach publicly, for justified fear of persecution. Instead their proselytizing passed from household to household, from person to person, in protected secrecy. Brought before the Dominican inquisitor Jean of Roma in Provence during 1532, the young preacher Pierre Griot (who had always served as second man on his missions) gave these replies:

So why they are ashamed to preach their doctrine in public

— he answers that he believes it is out of fear.

Questioned as to whether their doctrine is good or bad,

— he says that they believe it is good.

Questioned, since they think it is good, why they do not preach in public

— says in reply that it is from fear.⁵

As Protestantism gained public ground during the sixteenth century, most of the Brothers merged into one branch or another of the new religious movement, and thus left behind both centuries of clandestine life and most of their distinctive practices. Despite intermittent persecution, a formally organized (and so named) Waldensian Church became the Protestant nucleus in Piedmont. It survives today within a small but vigorous set of congregations across the western world. But as a distinctive, tightly knit network of trust the Poor of Lyons disintegrated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Brothers' turbulent particular history dramatizes a general problem in the history of political regimes. Over thousands of years, ordinary people have committed their major energies and most precious resources to trust networks – not only clandestine religious sects, to be sure, but also more public religious solidarities, lineages, trade diasporas, patron-client chains, credit networks, societies of mutual aid, age grades, and some kinds of local communities. Rulers have usually coveted the resources embedded in such networks, have often treated them as obstacles to effective rule, yet have never succeeded in annihilating them and have usually worked out accommodations producing enough resources and compliance to sustain their regimes.

From time to time, nevertheless, regimes emerge in which many citizens actually put their lives and assets at risk to bad political performance. They use legal tender, buy governmental securities, pay taxes, rely on government-backed pensions, yield their children to military service, appeal to courts, contribute to public services, and rely on publicly recognized political actors for help in communicating their grievances or aspirations. At least to that extent, they integrate

their trust networks into public politics. At least to that extent, the people who currently run their governments – their rulers – gain access to precious resources that historically have stayed sequestered within trust networks, well protected from public use.

Two large puzzles emerge from this curious history:

Puzzle 1: Given the usual prevalence of predatory rulers, grasping politicians, and bad governmental performance, how and why do members of trust networks sometimes subject crucial resources and enterprises to the risks of public politics?

Puzzle 2: Given that people usually defend trust networks zealously from top-down governmental control, how and why do connections nevertheless develop, and what determines their form?

Schematically, and in a very preliminary fashion, this article unpacks the two puzzles. It presents a way of thinking about changing relations among rulers, public politics, and trust networks rather than a systematic body of evidence. Although its arguments should apply in principle to multiple political levels, it concentrates on the national scale, the scale of states. It focuses especially on relevant processes that promote democratization and de-democratization at that scale. It closes by asserting that extensive withdrawal of trust networks from democratic public politics threatens democracy in principle, that increasing reliance on electronic mediation for social movements and democratic deliberation carries just such a threat in practice, and that supporters of democracy therefore need better to understand the processes described here.

Trust, trust networks, and relations to rulers

Like identity and political involvement, trust clearly calls up two different images: one of phenomenology, the other of social transactions.⁶ As with identity and political involvement, we can think of trust as an attitude or as a relationship. For the purpose of resolving our two puzzles, it helps to concentrate on the relationship, leaving open what sorts of attitudes might motivate, complement, or result from a relationship of trust. Trust consists of placing valued outcomes at risk to others' malfeasance. Trust relationships include those in which people regularly take such risks. Although some trust relation-

ships remain purely dyadic, for the most part they operate within larger networks of similar relationships. Trust networks, then, consist of ramified interpersonal connections within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance of others.

Characteristic enterprises in which trust networks figure importantly include cohabitation, procreation, provision for children, transmission of property, communication with supernatural forces, joint control of agricultural resources, long-distance trade, protection from predators, maintenance of health, and collective response to disaster. With marked variation from setting to setting, trust networks often take the forms of religious sects and solidarities, lineages, trade diasporas, patron-client chains, credit networks, mutual aid societies, age grades, and local communities.⁷

We should avoid thinking of such trust networks as leftovers from primeval *Gemeinschaft*. People create and recreate them all the time. Consider a remarkable analysis of credit networks in sixteenth-century England. Craig Muldrew looked closely at uses of credit in commercial transactions, which expanded rapidly after 1540 or so as England engaged more heavily in textile production and continental trade. Legal tender then consisted almost entirely of gold and silver coin. The money supply, however, expanded much more slowly than production of goods and the pace of commerce. Most likely some deflation and some acceleration in monetary circulation occurred as a consequence. But expansion of interpersonal credit – more to the point, of credit among households and the commercial enterprises embedded in those households – far outstripped changes in money as such. Note some crucial effects:

As credit networks became more complicated, and more obligations broken, it became important before entering into a contract to be able to make judgements about other people's honesty. The more reliable both parties in an agreement were in paying debts, delivering goods or in performing services, the more secure chains of credit became, and the greater the chance of general profit, future material security and general ease of life for all entangled in them. The result of this was that credit in social terms – the reputation for fair and honest dealing of a household and its members – became the currency of lending and borrowing. Credit ... referred to the amount of trust in society, and as such consisted of a system of judgements about trustworthiness; and the trustworthiness of neighbours came to be stressed as the paramount communal virtue, just as trust in God was stressed as the central religious duty. Since, by the late sixteenth century, most house-

holds relied on the market for the bulk of their income, the establishment of trustworthiness became the most crucial factor needed to generate and maintain wealth.⁸

In the first instance, a household's credit did not depend on its material possessions or its cash on hand. It depended on relations to other households, so much so that people commonly spoke of each other's credit-worthiness in terms of their ability to raise money from other people on short notice.⁹ Muldrew's analysis helps explain why ties of kinship, neighborhood, and shared religion remained crucial to risky commercial transactions as an ostensibly rationalizing and depersonalizing market expanded. It also helps explain why, in a time of economic expansion, members of ascendant commercial classes increasingly condemned proletarians who did not qualify for credit as improvident, bibulous, and morally unreliable.

Muldrew's analysis stands Max Weber – at least the individualistic Max Weber of *The Protestant Ethic* – on his head: where Weber saw the Protestant Reformation as promulgating doctrines of individual responsibility that favored capitalist achievement, Muldrew perceives a transformation of social relations that made a reputation for uprightness crucial to commercial viability. In regions and classes where heterodoxy, mayhem, debauch, and pillage had long prevailed, religious, political, familial, sexual, neighborly, and commercial irregularity all came to raise doubts about the creditability of any particular person, household, or social category.¹⁰

Muldrew offers us a delightfully subversive perception; it not only reverses the causal arrow between belief and practice, but also indicates that far from dissolving previously existing social ties, market expansion depended on the creation of far more extensive interpersonal relations. Instead of deriving relations of trust from general culture or contract-enforcing institutions as is currently fashionable, furthermore, he derives new attitudes and contracting-enforcing institutions from alterations in social relations. Despite some concessions to trust as attitude or belief, furthermore, he advances analyses of trust by treating it as a feature of social relations themselves; by implication, trust consists of placing valued resources and outcomes at risk to the malfeasance of (trusted) others. In line with those recent economic historians and analysts of Eastern Europe who have emphasized the significance of trust-sustaining networks for markets and other forms of economic organization, Muldrew insists on the priority of social ties.

National governments eventually intervened massively in credit-connected markets by establishing central banks, issuing paper money, and regulating commercial transactions. Creation of a Bank of England (1694) coupled with parliamentary control over governmental indebtedness to produce a relatively secure national debt, heavy involvement of London financiers in the funding of that debt, and widespread investment of the wealthy in government securities.¹¹ But, according to Muldrew, authorities intervened not in a void but in dynamic networks of connection among households. Indeed, Muldrew argues that credit's expansion eventually produced uncertainties favoring both calls for governmental intervention à la Thomas Hobbes and the spread of a more pessimistic, individualistic view of human nature.¹²

Meanwhile, local authorities and interacting households fashioned or adapted their own trust-confirming institutions: kinship, common religious affiliation, oath-taking, public tokens of indebtedness, earnest payments, courts of settlement, and more. "The phrase 'to pay on the nail,' " reports Muldrew,

comes from Bristol where there were four bronze pillars erected before the Tolzey – the ancient covered colonnade where merchants conducted their business, and which was connected to the sheriff's court where most debt litigation was initiated. The 'nails' are still in existence, and have flat surfaces where downpayments, and payments in cash, would have been made, and the practice of doing so was considered to be symbolic of the trust invested in the agreements. The date of the oldest nail is not known, but the other three were erected as gifts to the city in 1594, 1625 and 1631 to meet the need of increased business. The most interesting fact about the pillars are the inscriptions around the capitals on the religious and social nature of trust, which were comments upon the bargains made over them. One repeated the classical dictum that, 'No man lives to himself', and another stated: 'The Church of the living God is pillar and ground of trewth.'¹³

Thus, religious beliefs and practices fortified the politics of reputation, but by no means explained the vast changes that were occurring after 1530.

Fundamental alterations of social relations brought new forms, practices, and symbols into everyday prominence. Public oaths, mutual surveillance, and representations of social ties as if they were contracts proliferated. Literature gave expanded attention to credit and contract. "Shakespeare," remarks Muldrew,

often used this language in metaphors and conceits, as in Sonnet 134 where debt, sureties, bonds, a mortgage and a law suit were all used to describe the relationship between a lover, his former mistress and her new lover. They were also a common feature in drama, with some of the most obvious examples being Shakespeare's treatment of the ethics of forgiveness and discretion versus the binding force of contract in *The Merchant of Venice*, Philip Massinger's comedy about miserliness and prodigality, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and Webster's tragedy about uncharitable litigation, *The Devil's Law Case*.¹⁴

Muldrew backs such general interpretations with systematic analyses covering thousands of sixteenth-century court cases. His evidence establishes deep, rapid increases both in uses of credit and in disputes about its abuses.

Muldrew's analysis of sixteenth-century England therefore brings two precious observations into an analysis of trust networks and political regimes. First, it shows people creating new trust networks in response to unsatisfactory governmental performance – the failure to provide sufficient currency for expanding commercial transactions – rather than relying on old solidarities of religion, kinship, and local community. Second, it describes a process in which the trust networks thus created began to disintegrate of their own complexity, and came increasingly to rely on governmental backing. It shows us the partial integration of crucial trust networks into public politics.

Integrated trust networks

Despite an analytic line that at first view seems quite hostile to this article's argument, Margaret Levi also makes an important contribution to explaining integration of trust networks into public politics. She astutely chooses to analyze resistance to and compliance with military conscription – a quintessential case in which individuals face the choice of bearing large costs on behalf of benefits they will share little or not at all, and to which their participation will make little difference. Conscription does not rely entirely on altruism because conscripts ordinarily belong to the citizenry on whose behalf they serve. Conscripts therefore stand to benefit, however slightly, from their own military service. Still, their service certainly exemplifies the placing of valuable enterprises – in this case, the lives and future labor of young men – at risk to political malfeasance.

Levi self-consciously builds her analysis on game theory.¹⁵ She thereby commits herself to single actor explanations of social behavior: individuals make decisions that affect other individuals in response to incentives operating within constraints. She moves beyond bare rational actor formulations, however, in two significant ways. She first identifies relations with others as significant constraints on individual decision-making and, second, sketches histories of the institutions that shape constraints, including relations with others. Repeatedly, as a result, she reaches beyond the self-imposed limits of her models to examine interactive processes such as continuous bargaining. Concretely, she analyzes situations in which potential soldiers, governmental agents, and other subjects of the same government bargain out consent to military service or resistance to that consent.

Levi's model of "contingent consent" states that individual citizens are more likely to comply with costly demands from their governments, including demands for military service, to the degree that

1. citizens perceive the government to be trustworthy
2. the proportion of other citizens complying (that is, the degree of "ethical reciprocity") increases, and
3. citizens receive information confirming governmental trustworthiness and the prevalence of ethical reciprocity.¹⁶

More loosely, Levi argues that citizens consent to onerous obligations when they see their relations to governmental agents and to other citizens as both reliable and fair. Fairness and justice matter.¹⁷ Levi does not specify what mechanisms produce these effects; she treats them as empirical generalizations to verify or falsify. She implies, however, that the effective mechanisms are cognitive: they consist of individual-by-individual calculations concerning likely consequences of compliance or resistance. "Contingent consent requires," she declares, "that an individual believe not only that she is obliged to comply but also that others are or should be obliged to comply."¹⁸ Like other rational action theorists, she centers her explanations on cognitive processes.

Levi means to refute several counter-hypotheses. They include 1) habitual obedience, 2) ideological consent, and 3) opportunistic obedience.¹⁹ Each of these identifies a different cognitive orientation

of subjects to authorities. Habitual obedience falls away because it offers an inadequate explanation of variation and change. Ideological consent characterizes some zealots, but not the bulk of compliance with military service. Opportunism, as Levi defines it, can respond to a variety of incentives including secret satisfaction, side benefits, social security, and group pressure. In fact, argues Levi, opportunism would more often dictate draft dodging than dutiful service. Her evidence from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, Australia, and Vietnam concerns differential compliance with demands for military service according to period, population segment, and character of war. Observed differentials challenge habit, ideology, and opportunism accounts while confirming Levi's empirical generalizations summarizing contingent consent: on the whole, compliance with conscription occurred more widely in situations of relatively high trust, and so on.

Institutions, organizations, and social relations enter Levi's explanations as background variables – not as direct causes of compliance but as shapers of the perceptions and information that themselves explain compliance. In her account, Canada's sharp division between anglophones and francophones helps explain both readiness of the Anglo majority to impose conscription on the entire country and greater resistance of the French-speaking minority to military service.²⁰ Institutions, organizations, and social relations also affect available courses of action and their relative costs. Thus French history, with its long establishment of the nation in arms and its weak development of pacifist sects, made conscientious objection much less available to draft resisters in France than in Anglo-Saxon countries.²¹

Toward the end of her analysis, Levi offers a larger opening to social processes: she argues that third party enforcement strongly affects the actual likelihood of other people's compliance, hence any particular individual's perception of fairness.²² Governmental coercion of potential defectors significantly affects not only those recalcitrants themselves but also others who become more willing to serve when they know that others will have to serve as well. At this point in Levi's analysis, networks of interpersonal commitment start playing a significant and fairly direct part in the generation of social action. Levi offers another opening to social processes by recognizing how significantly governmental performance affects compliance; poorly or erratically performing governments receive less compliance. By this point, interactive processes are doing an important part of Levi's explanatory

work. Without ever saying so, she is actually analyzing the operation of interpersonal trust networks in the public politics of conscription.

Levi's two overtures to social processes deserve a whole opera. We have, for example, some evidence that in wartime workers strike more frequently and soldiers desert in larger numbers when their country's military forces show signs of losing badly.²³ For North Carolina's Confederate forces in the American Civil War, Peter Bearman has shown that ordinary individual-level characteristics tell us little or nothing about propensity to desert, but that collective properties of fighting units made a significant difference.²⁴ Early in the war, locally recruited companies tended to stick together, while geographically heterogeneous companies suffered relatively high rates of desertion. As the war continued, however, the pattern reversed: after the summer of 1863, members of geographically homogeneous companies became more likely to desert the cause. "Ironically," notes Bearman, "companies composed of men who had the longest tenures, who were the most experienced, and who had the greatest solidarity were most likely to have the highest desertion rates after 1863."²⁵

Bearman plausibly accounts for this surprising shift as the result of a relational process: Confederate recruiters originally concentrated on forming companies locally, but deaths and tactical reorganization eventually made some companies geographically heterogeneous. Early in the war, commitment to a locality and commitment to the Confederate cause as a whole aligned neatly. As the war proceeded, however, overall losses introduced increasing discrepancies between national and local solidarity; collective connection to the same locality simultaneously activated commitments to people at home and facilitated collective defection from the national military effort.

Variable desertion connects closely with another phenomenon: a tendency of strikes, rebellions, and revolutionary situations to concentrate in immediate postwar periods.²⁶ One Levi- and Bearman-style component of these phenomena seems to be the following: governments pursue major wars by imposing tightened central controls and accumulating large debts, but by so doing they also expand their commitments to all collaborating parties. During the war, signs that governments are losing capacity to meet those commitments induce collaborators in the war effort to press claims for immediate advantages or to withdraw their effort. After the war, few governments actually retain the capacity to meet their wartime commitments; in

Levi's terms, they suffer declines in trustworthiness. The worse their losses in war, the more they lose capacity and suffer discredit.²⁷ In these circumstances, disappointed political creditors respond by accelerating their demands or withdrawing their compliance with the government's own demands.

Despite Levi's emphasis on cognitive orientations, these are not mere mental events; they involve genuine changes in relations among important actors within a regime. Levi gives us two structural processes to examine seriously: 1) alterations in networks of interpersonal commitment, 2) changed relations between governmental agents and citizens. Although the terminology of trust networks remains quite alien to Levi's own analytic lexicon, her work establishes clearly that such networks sometimes do integrate partway into public politics. It therefore makes more salient the question of how that happens.

What's to explain?

The contrasting experiences of Waldensians, sixteenth-century English mercantile families, and twentieth-century conscripts suffice to establish change and variation in relations among rulers, public politics, and trust networks. They range from energetic segregation of trust networks against intervention of political authorities (Waldensians) to contingent, consequential integration of those networks into public politics (conscription). Let us think more generally about what sorts of change and variation we have to explain. Figure 1 schematizes the general analytical problem: What sort of variation in connections between rulers and trust networks must we account for? The vertical axis distinguishes roughly among a) segregation of trust networks from rulers, b) negotiated connections between the two and c) integration of trust networks directly into systems of rule. The horizontal axis distinguishes among three means of connection between rulers and ruled: coercion, capital, and commitment.

Coercion includes all concerted means of action that commonly cause loss or damage to the persons or possessions of social actors. It features means such as weapons, armed forces, prisons, damaging information, and organized routines for imposing sanctions. Coercion's organization helps define the nature of regimes. With low accumulations of coercion, all regimes are insubstantial, while with high levels of coercive accumulation and concentration all regimes are formidable.

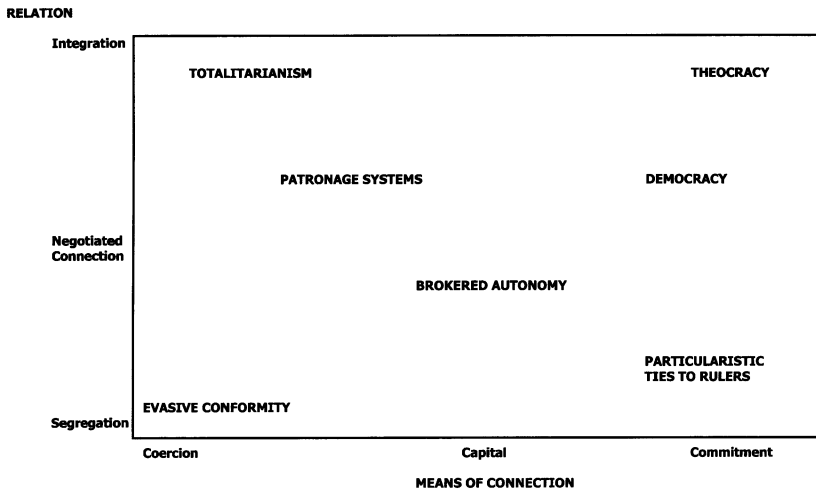


Figure 1. Relations of trust networks to centers of powers.

Capital refers to tangible, transferable resources that in combination with effort can produce increases in use value, plus enforceable claims on such resources. Regimes that command substantial capital – for example, from rulers’ direct control of natural resources, itself often undergirded by coercion – to some extent substitute purchase of other resources and compliance for direct coercion of their subject populations.

Commitment means relations among social sites (persons, groups, structures, or positions) that promote their taking account of each other. Commitment’s local organization varies as dramatically as do structures of coercion and capital. Commitments can take the form of shared religion or ethnicity, trading ties, work-generated solidarities, communities of taste, and much more. To the extent that commitments of these sorts connect rulers and ruled, they substitute partially for coercion and capital.

Following these definitions, Figure 1 distinguishes exemplary forms of connection between trust networks and rulers that fall into different locations within the space:

- *totalitarianism*: extensive coercive integration of trust networks into regime politics; example: incorporation of local solidarities into the Italian Fascist regime
- *theocracy*: extensive integration of trust networks organized around communities of belief; example: Iran during the 1980s
- *patronage systems*: combinations of coercion with capital (and at least some minimum of commitment) into patron-client chains that produce negotiated, mediated connections between rulers and ordinary people's trust networks; example: nineteenth-century Latin American cacique regimes
- *democracy*: partial (but never total) integration of trust networks into public politics emphasizing commitment, but not excluding some deployment of capital and coercion; example: contemporary Switzerland
- *brokered autonomy*: arrangements in which leaders of trust networks yield resources and compliance to rulers in return for significant autonomy within their own domains; example: the Ottoman millet system
- *evasive conformity*: arrangements in which participants in trust networks shield them from rulers to the extent possible, but yield resources and external compliance when coerced; example: Mongol empires
- *particularistic ties*: formation of religious, kinship, or other commitment-forming ties directly linking rulers differentially to distinct trust networks; example: multiple connections of Japan's Tokugawa shoguns to different constituencies

No one should take this as a rigorous or exhaustive classification. It serves simply to describe substantial, consequential variation in connections between rulers and trust networks. No simple yes-no, in-or-out dichotomy will serve to pose the analytic problem usefully.

We can visualize the political problem thus posed from the top down or the bottom up.²⁸ From the top down, rulers face a dual challenge: how to get access to essential resources currently embedded in trust networks, and how to enlist cooperation and consent on the part of

participants in trust networks. Coercion, capital, and commitment provide them with different means of meeting that challenge; each has substantially different consequences for their own political activity and relation to their subjects. Regimes vary greatly depending on the relative weight of the three means of connection and on the extent to which they integrate trust networks directly into systems of rule. Top-down strategies of resource extraction and political control therefore vary accordingly.

From the bottom up, the problem looks very different. Ordinary people must worry about how to assure their own futures and those of the relations on which they rely as they defend crucial resources from expropriation. Because many vital enterprises that are either irrelevant or hostile to rulers' interests depend on the maintenance of trust networks, ordinary people or their patrons must usually preserve some insulation between their networks and public politics. Over the long run of human history, people have usually invested large efforts in segregating crucial networks from scrutiny, intervention, and expropriation.

Three major exceptions, however, have sometimes occurred. First, trust networks in the form of religious sects, kinship groups, or mercantile networks have occasionally established their own systems of rule. Second, at least temporarily, totalitarian regimes have managed extensive incorporation of existing trust networks into authoritarian systems of rule. Third, democracies accomplish a partial integration of trust networks into public politics. Bottom-up strategies for protection of trust networks vary accordingly.

Top-down and bottom-up strategies interact to produce different systems of rule. Relatively effective totalitarian regimes succeed in weakening most trust networks they do not incorporate, but they always drive some underground. One plausible line of argument claims, indeed, that highly centralized regimes always depend in part on illicit networks for the actual execution of top-down plans, because central planners can never anticipate variation in local conditions and because subordinates cope by working out their own accommodations.²⁹ Thus we might expect a three-way split in such regimes: trust networks extensively integrated into public politics, illicit trust networks operating in uneasy symbiosis with the regime, and underground networks practicing evasive conformity or clandestine opposition.

Although some patronage obviously occurs in highly centralized regimes, full-fledged patronage systems operate rather differently. Where warlords, landlords, lineage heads, ethnic leaders, or religious magnates control extensive followings through their own applications of coercion, capital, or commitment, from the top down rulers must choose among co-opting those intermediaries, bypassing them, destroying them, or granting them significant power within their own domains. Historically, most stable large-scale systems of rule have incorporated substantial elements of patronage. But they generate their own bottom-up strategies, since patron-client relations remain contingent on continued distribution of benefits and provide strong incentives for new patrons to vie for their own clientele.

Despite the existence of some patronage within democratic regimes, democracy operates in yet another manner from systems relying heavily on patronage. In this schematization, it combines extensive (but by no means total) integration of trust networks into public politics with heavy reliance of rulers on commitment rather than coercion and capital as means of assuring political compliance. If trust network integration were total, goes the reasoning, citizens would lack the means of contingent consent so acutely analyzed by Margaret Levi; super-integration of trust networks de-democratizes. In democracies, partial integration of trust networks into public politics may mean direct reliance on government guarantees, subventions, and services for sustenance of valued long-term resources and enterprises. But it also commonly takes the form of involvement in labor unions, political parties, and other partly independent organizations that retain some autonomy from governmental control. Hence the question: given the usual antagonism of trust networks to public politics across history, how does such a junction ever form?

In general, the junction forms dialectically: on one side, trust networks disintegrate or lose their capacity to guarantee risky enterprises; on the other, ordinary people, their patrons, and those who run their institutions bargain out contingent agreements with public authorities. Those agreements may emerge incrementally and need not belong to explicitly democratic programs. But they provide crucial support for democratic practices and relations.

Democratization

How will we recognize democracy and democratization when we see them? Many widely used definitions of democracy concentrate on the quality of interactions among citizens: whether they are just, kind, considerate, egalitarian, and so on. Others stress legal criteria: contested elections, representative institutions, formal guarantees of liberty, and related political arrangements.³⁰ Here, however, let me insist that, like tyranny and oligarchy, democracy is a kind of regime: a set of relations between a government and persons subject to that government's jurisdiction. The relations in question consist of mutual rights and obligations, government to subject and subject to government.

Democracies differ from other regimes because instead of the massive asymmetry, coercion, exploitation, patronage, and communal segmentation that have characterized most political regimes across the centuries they establish fairly general and reliable rules of law.³¹ A regime is democratic to the extent that:

1. regular and categorical, rather than intermittent and individualized, relations exist between the government and its subjects (for example, legal residence within the government's territories in itself establishes routine connections with governmental agents, regardless of relations to particular patrons or membership in specific ethnic groups)
2. those relations include most or all subjects (for example, no substantial sovereign enclaves exist within governmental perimeters)
3. those relations are equal across subjects and categories of subjects (for example, no legal exclusions from voting or office-holding based on gender, religion, or property ownership prevail)
4. governmental personnel, resources, and performances change in response to binding collective consultation of subjects (for example, popular referenda make law)
5. subjects, especially members of minorities, receive protection from arbitrary action by governmental agents (for example, uniformly administered due process precedes incarceration of any individual regardless of social category)

Thus, democratization means formation of a regime featuring relatively broad, equal, categorical, binding consultation, and protection. Note the word *relatively*: if we applied these standards absolutely, no regime past or present anywhere in the world would qualify as a democracy; all regimes have always fallen short in some regards when it has come to categorical regularity, breadth, equality, consultation, and protection. Democratization consists of a regime's moves *toward* greater categorical regularity, breadth, equality, binding consultation, and protection, de-democratization consists of moves away from them.

If democracy entails relatively high levels of breadth, equality, consultation, and protection by definition, as a practical matter it also requires the institution of citizenship.³² Citizenship consists, in this context, of mutual rights and obligations binding governmental agents to whole categories of people who live subject to the government's authority, those categories being defined chiefly or exclusively by relations to the government rather than by reference to particular connections with rulers or to membership in categories based on imputed durable traits such as race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. It institutionalizes regular, categorical relations between subjects and their governments.

Citizenship sometimes appears in the absence of democracy. Authoritarian regimes such as Fascist Italy institutionalized broad, regular, categorical, and relatively equal relations between subjects and their governments, but greatly restricted both consultation and protection. Powerful ruling parties and large police apparatuses inhibited democratic liberties. Citizenship looks like a necessary condition for democratization, but not a sufficient one.

What sorts of social transformations promote democratization? To put the matter very schematically once again, in currently undemocratic regimes four social processes create favorable conditions for the establishment of political arrangements involving regular, categorical relations between subjects and governments, relatively broad and equal participation, binding consultation of political participants, and protection of political participants, especially members of vulnerable minorities, from arbitrary action by governmental agents. The four processes include:

- increases in the sheer numbers of people available for participation in public politics or in connections among those people, however those increases occur
- equalization of resources and connections among those people, however that equalization occurs
- insulation of public politics from existing social inequalities
- partial integration of interpersonal trust networks into public politics

The fourth forms the focus of this article, but the four work together in the production of democracy. None of these constitutes democratization in itself, but all of them promote democratization, especially if they occur together. Let us consider each of the four in turn.

Increases in numbers and connections among potential political participants

When rulers form a tiny elite that governs through patronage, sale of state-controlled resources, or brute force, democracy has little chance to flourish. But circumstances such as defense against common enemies, calls for increased resources to support war or public works, demographic increase within the ruling class, expanding communications, and forceful demands for inclusion on the part of excluded parties push rulers to expand the circle of participants in public politics.

When that happens, ironically, the overall proportion of the subject population that is connected to and socially adjacent to the newly included (and therefore in a strengthened position to demand inclusion as well) usually increases. That sort of enlargement occurred with the British Reform Act of 1832, which brought merchants, smaller property-owners, and masters into the governing coalition but excluded ordinary workers, many of whom had backed the Reform campaign. Chartism then gained its edge between 1838 and 1848 from the fact that workers' coalition partners in the pro-Reform mobilization of 1830–1832 acquired power but then enacted legislation regulating the poor while denying workers political rights.

Equalization of resources and connections among potential political participants

If overall inequality between categories – male and female, religious affiliations, ethnic groups, and so on – diminishes for whatever reason, that equalization facilitates broad, equal involvement of category members in public politics as it discourages their unequal treatment by governmental agents. It thus boosts both protection and citizenship. Relevant resources and connections certainly include those provided by income, property, and kinship, but they also include literacy, access to communications media, and organizational memberships; when any of these equalize across the population at large, they promote democratic participation.

Equalization of resources and connections among potential political participants encourages both political competition and coalition-formation. Together, competition and coalition-formation promote establishment of categorically defined rights and obligations directly connecting citizens to agents of government in place of particular communal memberships and patron-client ties; legal establishment of electorates provides the most visible examples, but a similar enactment of legally equivalent categories commonly occurs in the licensing of associations, authorization of public meetings, policing of demonstrations, and registration of lobbyists.

The very articulation of rules for these activities produces categories rather than particularistic arrangements, and thereby encourages collective seekers of rights to argue on the basis of their similarities to members of privileged categories rather than their valuable and distinctive properties. Women who struggled for political rights in western countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regularly pointed out that the rules and justifications backing male rights to vote and hold office provided no defensible rationale for excluding females from the same rights. For all the celebration of queer culture, gays and lesbians regularly insist on their political similarities to previously excluded minorities and demand rights that are already available to other categories of the population.

Competition and coalition-formation also inhibit the pursuit of control over governmental activities, resources, and personnel by other means than those categorically defined rights and obligations; blatant use of personal connections or brute force becomes corruption. Even-

tually the sheer expansion and partial equalization of the British ruling classes made it advantageous for dissident members of the new elite to join forces with excluded people as a makeweight against the old landed classes.

Insulation of public politics from existing social inequalities

Democratization does not, however, depend on radical leveling of material conditions; the partial democracies of today's rich capitalist countries – all of which maintain extensive material inequalities – testify as much. Over the long run of democratization, indeed, erection of barriers to translation of existing inequalities by race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, or locality into public politics has no doubt played a much larger part than material leveling. If barriers arise to the direct translation of persisting categorical inequalities into public politics (for example, through the institution of the secret ballot and the creation of coalition parties that cross lines of gender, race, or class), those barriers contribute to the creation of a relatively autonomous sphere of public politics within which categorically defined breadth, equality, binding consultation, and protection have at least a chance to increase. Although white male Americans fiercely excluded women and blacks from nineteenth-century public politics, adoption of a rigorously geographical system of representation, continuous movement of people to the frontier, and formation of patchwork political parties all blunted the direct translation of categorical differences within the white male population into public politics.

Despite residential segregation and despite gerrymandering, formation of heterogeneous political units and electoral districts similarly inhibits direct translation of categorical inequalities into public politics. A primitive version of this representation effect operated in Great Britain, where the chiefly territorial allocation of parliamentary seats – by no means a democratic innovation back when barons and bishops forced the English king to hear their complaints, conditions, and demands – simultaneously gave voice to disfranchised British subjects and provided incentives for members of Parliament to seek expressions of popular support when they held dissident positions. As Parliament gained power relative to the crown and great patrons during the eighteenth century (once again no triumph for democratization in its own terms), the insulating effects of territorial representation increased. Similarly, broadly shared jury duty, military service, school enrollment,

and responsibility for public works need not originate in democratic practices, but cumulatively tend to promote democratization by insulating public politics from existing social inequalities.

Trust networks and democratization

Trust networks figure more subtly, but no less potently, in democratization. As many democratic theorists have sensed, connections between interpersonal trust networks and public politics significantly affect democratization.³³ Democratization entails a double shift of trust. First, within the political arena, citizens trust the organization of consultation and protection sufficiently to wait out short-term losses of advantage instead of turning immediately to non-governmental means of regaining lost advantages. Second, citizens build into risky long-term enterprises the assumption that government will endure and meet its commitments. In both regards, they place valued network-based enterprises at risk to malfeasance by governmental agents or public political actors. Both are extremely rare circumstances over the long historical run. Within any regime that is not currently democratic, their realization faces enormous obstacles.

In those rare cases where it actually occurs, integration of trust networks into public politics operates within any of four channels: 1) disintegration of previously effective insulated trust networks, as when natural disaster reduces regional patrons' capacity to pay, feed, or arm their clients, 2) formation of commitments directly binding governmental agents and citizens, as when governments establish welfare agencies and citizens begin to rely on those agencies for absorption of long-term risks, 3) formation of similar commitments between major political actors and their citizen members or clienteles, as when legally recognized trade unions become administrators of workers' pension funds, 4) incrementally, in response to governmental performance. None of the four regularly forms part of explicitly democratic programs, except insofar as complaints against corruption imply demands for more reliable and even-handed delivery of governmental services or protections.

Paths to and from democracy

When it comes to trust networks, this analytic story identifies two rather different paths to and from democracy. The first connects regimes that feature relatively high, mainly coercive integration of trust networks to democracy. Democratization, along this path, depends on a double shift from coercion to commitment and from extensive to decreasing central control over trust networks. Such a shift may not affect equality or breadth of political participation, but it greatly promotes binding consultation and protection. De-democratization occurs, correspondingly, with rising integration of trust networks and shifts toward a government's coercive control over those networks.

The second path runs between a) regimes featuring evasive conformity in the face of coercion and b) relatively democratic regimes. Along this path, democratization entails increasing integration of trust networks into public politics combined with shifts from coercion to capital to commitment. Such an avenue of change promotes the creation of regular and categorical relations between the government and its subjects as it fosters binding consultation and protection. De-democratization, by the same token, involves both increasing segregation of trust networks from public politics and declining regime reliance on commitment. Figure 2 sketches the two paths.

In this scheme, Opening Up represents the path most often considered by theorists of democratization: an authoritarian regime that relies heavily on coercion and closely controls existing trust networks relaxes its controls and moves toward combinations of capital and commitment as incentives to public political participation. Standard accounts of democratization do not much mention trust networks, but they almost universally represent the crucial transition as displacement or enlargement of a narrow, authoritarian elite by a broader array of political actors.³⁴ Reversals of these tendencies – Closing Down – de-democratize.³⁵ To the conventional picture, the present analysis adds three elements: specification of trust networks' role in democratization and de-democratization; insistence that democracy depends on partial but not complete integration of trust networks; and recognition that partial integration of trust networks reinforces commitment as a means of connection between rulers and ruled.

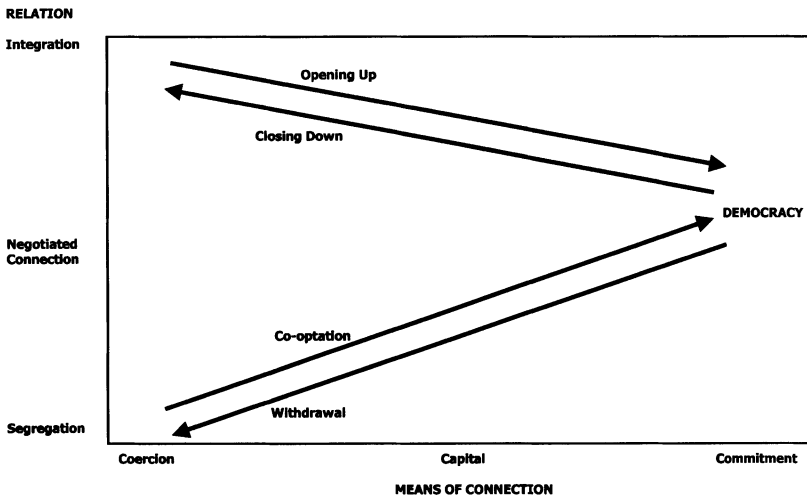


Figure 2. Trust networks' paths to and from democracy.

Co-optation, within the same scheme, represents a less commonly recognized but widely significant democratizing process. In fact, most democratizing regimes do not originate in the upper left-hand corner of our space, with coercive control accomplishing extensive integration of trust networks. Much more commonly, democratizing regimes start from patronage systems, brokered autonomy, evasive conformity, or particularistic ties to rulers.³⁶

From the first three points of departure – patronage, brokered autonomy, and evasive conformity – democratization entails overcoming substantial barriers between public politics and existing trust networks. That occurs through combinations of the four processes described earlier: 1) disintegration of previously effective insulated trust networks, as when natural disasters destroy the capacity of regional patrons to pay, feed, or arm their clients, 2) formation of commitments directly binding governmental agents and citizens, as when governments establish welfare agencies and citizens begin to rely on those agencies for absorption of long-term risks, 3) formation of similar commitments between major political actors and their citizen members or clienteles, as when legally recognized trade unions become administrators of workers' pension funds, and 4) incremental bargains, individual by individual or group by group, in response to governmental performance.

All of these can reverse, thereby promoting de-democratization. Although democrats properly worry about governmental controls that destroy trust networks' autonomy and about the possibility that particular trust networks (e.g., religious sects or credit networks) will seize control over governmental institutions, they should worry equally about the complete withdrawal of trust networks from public politics. That withdrawal, when it occurs, undermines democracy. Withdrawal on the part of the powerful (for example, financial magnates) or on the part of the weak (for example, members of poor minorities) threatens democratic participation.

If this analysis is correct, democrats should also worry about increasingly frequent proposals to organize social movements and practice democracy through electronic mediation.³⁷ The Internet, cellular telephones, and other electronic media unquestionably lower the coordination and communication costs of political action within the circles of participants who have access to those particular media. But the new media suffer from three weaknesses that actually undermine democratic deliberation. First – precisely as advocates claim – they facilitate the rapid, large-scale organization of petitions, polls, simultaneous demonstrations, and other forms of coordination among scattered sites in ways that allow participants to opt out easily when the next call comes, and that inhibit continuous negotiation outside the sites of temporary action. Second, they restrict communication to those who have ready access to the particular communications media employed, thus sharpening the division between insiders and outsiders; at a time when about 94 percent of world population lacks internet access,³⁸ the division matters. Currently available electronic media are rapidly connecting rich parts of the world, but increasing the communications gap between rich and poor.

The third weakness matters most for present purposes. Despite the likelihood that electronic communication will sometimes reinforce previously existing intimate ties,³⁹ heavy reliance on new media for large-scale democratic deliberation will dissolve connections between public politics at the national scale and the trust networks on which people routinely rely for protection against life's major risks. Over the long run, that dissolution will provide new incentives for sequestering trust networks from national political life. Over the long run, it will therefore threaten democracy.

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