

The introduction of democracy

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



The notion of regime change within the context of a nation where totalitarian or counter-democratic rule presides is among the great challenges of human history. The notion of self-determination drives the question at the center of this discussion, regarding the optimization of conditions for the stimulation of a democratic movement. Ultimately, it is clear that a culture of popular discontent must prevail.

According to Putnam, there are three schools of thought through which we may come to an understanding of that which allows democratic order to thrive. Putnam identifies the political culture, political economy and political institutionalism which are at play in defining or spawning real democracy. With these terms in mind, we must recognize that fundamentally, democracy is founded in the principal of an empowered populace. Therefore, any positively effected change in a non-democratic form of government will be brought about only by peaceful overthrow.

Positive examples from recent history include that in which the Ukraine, following more than half a century under Soviet influenced government, witnessed its public march on the public square to demand that the its president step down in favor of the democratically elected candidate. This was demonstrative of a grass-roots popular event which occurred not through political organization but as a genuine function of civil discontent. This would be demonstrative of a changing political culture in a context where such resistance has previously been unheard of.

Our research helps to conceptually underscore the nature of such an event. According to Sodaro, “ political culture is the pattern of shared values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations and attitudes that relate to politics and its social

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context. ” (256) Where these are collectively tolerant of totalitarian rule, such will prevail. By contrast, where a truly popular and thus irresistible movement does seize an interest in democracy, many of the governments which are propped precariously upon terms of totalitarian rule will be unable retain meaningful rule.

Political institutionalism also causes us to consider the impracticality of certain preferred means of instituting democracy. Namely, there is a core flaw in the presumption that democracy can be forcibly given to a people. The expectation that its subjects will then function according to some impression of possessing free will is undermined by the concept noted in our research as political spectatorship. Flanagan writes of those upon whom democracy is foisted that “ they watch the political battles being fought in the national arena from the sidelines with a curious interest but without signs of personal involvement.” (142)

Such is to say that for many contexts, in which democracy is a relatively nascent concept with little historical or cultural grounding, it is unrealistic to believe that individuals who are involuntarily introduced to democracy will necessarily embrace its terms. And of course, absent of the genuine will of the people to actively take part, democracy is a mere shadow of that which is intended. Often the spectatorship of individuals subjected to differing systems of government is precipitated by a limited to impoverished political economy.

Such is to say that in many contexts where opposition and organization are not enables, it is also often the case that the resources and personnel do not necessarily exist to allow such progressive political reorientation to succeed.

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Ultimately, in reflection on Dahl's question concerning the uphill introduction of democracy, we find that all schools of thought are underscored by the demand the democracy be actively and voluntarily pursued by its intended subjects. If said subjects are unable to stimulate democracy, it is also reasonable to argue that they are ill-prepared to handle the implications of its persistence.