

Democratic Theory and Theoretical Physics

Jean-Paul Gagnon

Abstract

This essay argues, somewhat along a Simmelian line, that democratic theory may produce practical and universal theories like those developed in theoretical physics. The reasoning behind this essay is to show that the theory of “basic democracy” may be true by way of comparing it to Einstein’s Special Relativity—specifically concerning the parameters of symmetry, unification, simplicity, and utility. These parameters are what make a theory in physics as meeting them not only fit with current knowledge, but also produce paths toward testing (application). As the theory of “basic democracy” may meet these same parameters, it could settle the debate concerning the definition of democracy. This will be argued first by discussing what the theory of “basic democracy” is and why it differs from previous work; second, by explaining the parameters chosen (as in why these and not others confirm or scuttle theories); and third, by comparing how Special Relativity and the theory of “basic democracy” may match the parameters.

Key words: Social science, political theory, physics, democracy, Einstein.

This essay deals with two areas: the first is a new theory and definition of democracy and the second is a methodology which is used in physics to ascertain the truth of a theory. It is argued that by scrutinizing this new theory of democracy using the “universal truth” methodology, such might contribute evidence toward the argument that there are universal laws in the social sciences and that perhaps the definition of democracy debate is now closer to being resolved with the creation of this new conception of democracy.

Given the advances in democratic theory since 1998, namely the focus on democracy as something universal¹ to all humanity and as something with

Jean-Paul Gagnon is a social and political theorist with a Ph.D. from the Queensland University of Technology. He is the editor of the *Journal of Democratic Theory*, *The Journal of Politics and Islam*, and *The Politics and Sociology of Climate Change*. <jpg@jeanpaulgagnon.com>

¹ Amartya K. Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3, (1999): 3-17.

a history that does not solely belong to Western ideology,² it is now perhaps possible to propose a new conceptualization of democracy. Before engaging what this concept is, we must first understand that democracy in its most basic form (that from which all other styles, types, or forms of democracy are derived) does not have a singular definition or theory in the extant literature (as can be seen by the admissions of Weale³ and Crick⁴). It must also be noted that it is this “basic democracy” which is the focus of this work, not the various typologies of democracy that are derived from it. Democracy is viewed as a type of government which has no rulers.⁵ This type of government contends with other governmental types which do have rulers (totalitarianism, communism, oligarchies, and elitist systems, for example). It is argued that this battle between the two governmental types may have been ongoing since the Mesolithic period some 46,000 years ago, as various political formulas⁶ gradually came into being; but this is something that requires further research. Because governments grew and different systems matured, it is possible to see through a historical analysis of various polities that governments shifted between these two extremes. Depending on how the citizenry is defined, and how these citizens exercise their sovereignty, a type of democracy can have rulers (examples include ancient Athens, Rome, and Sparta, where elites controlled government and other members of society were excluded), or it may not (examples include the wider franchise of modern citizenries and the attention given to equal socio-political rights in monitory democracy). We can also see that democratic government can be suppressed by nondemocratic systems such as totalitarian dictatorships because socio-political rights are not given to the citizenry, nor are citizens allocated the right to select officials, nor do they have politically recognized sovereignty, as such rests with the state or ruler(s). It can also be seen that nondemocratic governments may have a growth of democracy should the ruler(s) allow, *inter alia*, freedom of speech, freedom of association, periodic elections, and tolerance of minorities composing the citizen plurality. Viewed in this manner, we can see that there is duality between the rule of none versus the rule of one.

But what is “basic democracy” and what methodology permitted the formation of this concept? To answer this question, we must first explain the state of the extant literature and answer why this analysis has not been previously conducted. At present, we do not have a taxonomy of democracy which illustrates exactly how different typologies emerged from basic

² John Keane, *The Life and Death of Democracy* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

³ Albert Weale, *Democracy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

⁴ Bernard Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵ Keane, *Life and Death of Democracy*, 2009.

⁶ A term used by Gaetano Mosca in his work, *The Ruling Class* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1939).

democracy,⁷ mainly because the concept of basic democracy had no agreed upon definition and still does not. From reading Lijphart,⁸ Dahl,⁹ Sartori,¹⁰ Barber,¹¹ Oakeshott,¹² Mosca,¹³ Rawls,¹⁴ Dworkin,¹⁵ Habermas,¹⁶ Weale,¹⁷ Keane,¹⁸ Crick,¹⁹ Lipset,²⁰ Diamond,²¹ Held,²² Dunn,²³ and Ober,²⁴ among others, it is understood that basic democracy has something to do with a

⁷ This is a current project of mine, expected to be completed by 2011 and to be included in an edited collection currently entitled *A New Democratic Theory?*

⁸ Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), and id., *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries* (London: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁹ Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1985); id., *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); and id., *Toward Democracy—A Journey: Reflections, 1940-1997* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies Press, University of California, Berkeley, 1997).

¹⁰ Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1987), and id., *Democrazia e Definizione* [Definition of democracy] (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973).

¹¹ Benjamin R. Barber, “Which Democracy and Which Technology?” in *Democracy and New Media*, ed. Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); id., *Fears Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003); and id., *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

¹² Paul Franco, *The Political Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹³ Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, trans. Hannah D. Khan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1939).

¹⁴ Thomas W. M. Pogge, *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁵ Ronald Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?: Principles for a New Political Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Thomas A. McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 1984); Robert C. Holub, *Jurgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 1991); and Stephen K. White, ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁷ Weale, *Democracy*.

¹⁸ Keane, *Life and Death of Democracy*.

¹⁹ Crick, *Democracy*.

²⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (London: Heineman, 1960), and Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries*, vol. 3 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1989).

²¹ Larry J. Diamond, “The Globalization of Democracy,” in *The Globalisation Reader*, ed. Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), and Larry J. Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008).

²² David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 2006), and id., *Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995).

²³ John Dunn, ed., *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey, 508 BC to AD 1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

²⁴ Josiah Ober, “Natural Capacities and Democracy as a Good in Itself,” *Philosophical Studies* 132 (2007): 59-73.

sovereign citizenry and typically the formation of a government that operates by permission from the citizenry. That rather nebulous understanding has sprouted over forty different typologies of democracy, and counting. Because of this situation in the literature which has camps debating with each other in the effort of finding the “true” democracy (direct versus representational is one example), and because of the necessity of having to identify specifically what one means by “democracy” when using the term in a work which is periodically not adhered to in the literature, which causes some confusion, it was decided to take the body of literature concerning these various typologies and to examine it as primary source materials.

A list of forty democratic typologies was created, which guided the research needed to accumulate the literature dealing with each separate concept of democracy. When these various texts were joined together in one document, a word frequency analysis program was commanded to demonstrate which were the most common words used in the textual data. This empirical analysis was conducted to provide a certain degree of separation between the biases I had abductively and deductively formed from reading the textual data. When the program had completed its analysis, it provided a numbered list showing the one hundred most frequently used words in all of the textual data concerning the forty democratic typologies. The results supported my initial assumption that there probably are certain fundamental concepts on which every type of democracy is based.

At this stage, it was necessary to make sense of the empirical result which is, unfortunately, where my hand is present. A grounded theory analysis²⁵ was used to answer what the most fundamental concepts of democracy are. This involved logic and necessitated the formation of categories which would then create a theory that could be used to analyze or explain each democratic typology (a second form of empirical analysis, which we will get to shortly). Thus, the combination of abductive and deductive reasoning with a preliminary empirical analysis that had its results argued through the use of a grounded theory analysis resulted in the following: that basic democracy involves the concepts of a citizenry, sovereignty, equality, communication, law, and the selection of officials. By conducting a second empirical analysis of the data using Adobe Acrobat’s PDF reader, we can see the prevalence of these concepts via a frequency analysis. The only difficulty concerns the use of the term “selection of officials,” as it is obscure and used to express that there exist other methods of selecting officials beyond elections and voting and to also express that there are no rulers of the citizenry in basic democracy. In order to verify the frequency of this concept, it will be necessary to search for “election(s)” or “voting,” as these institutions have become the current international standard in

²⁵ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Political Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2006).

selecting officials. Finally, a third empirical analysis of the textual data showed that these concepts were highly related. A proximity analysis of the concepts showed that they frequently appeared in proximity to each other, suggesting that they were interrelated. However, further argumentation concerning these results is still required.

Once triangulated²⁶ empirical work was conducted on the textual data representing forty different typologies of democracy, the theory of “basic democracy” emerged. The democracy from which perhaps every style of democracy is derived can be explained as *a citizenry exercising its sovereignty through the institutionalization of the citizenry’s conceptualizations of equality, law, communication, and the selection of officials*. It is important not to seek a predetermined definition of each concept, but to understand their fundamental constructs to keep the terms “empty” so that basic democracy can be *observed* in a society and not *applied* (in other words, we understand the various tea cups but have not filled them). By observing how a society defines its citizenry, and how the citizenry defines its sovereignty, and how the citizenry defines equality, law, communication, and the selection of officials, we “fill” those “empty” concepts (or tea cups) and we can most likely determine which styles of democracy are present in a government. This concept of “basic democracy” can also be used as the root in the taxonomy of democracy, as the empirical analyses suggest that each type of democracy can be traced back to “basic democracy.” Similarly, historical governments like those of ancient Athens and the Republic of Rome might have their styles of democracy clarified using this method.

However, this work is nascent and there is much further research required. For example, questions such as what the political implications of basic democracy are, still need to be answered, as they have thus far evaded my humble attempts at resolving them. It is supposed that, should a society have its government analyzed, this would provide information to the government concerning the political wants of its citizenry, perhaps a relatively good indication of the “general will.” In other words, understanding basic democracy and using it to map which types of democratic concepts are being used in government, may allow for the quality of governance to improve, which may help advance the human condition or even speed societal progress so that we reach our collective goals faster. As can be seen, greater minds are needed to further understand the political implications of this work.

This essay shows that the theory of “basic democracy” may be true, by way of comparing it to Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity. This comparison is necessary, as political theory can be argued to be hindered at times by ideology and positivism—something Miller²⁷ argued—which can negatively affect the

²⁶ Weale argues “the fact that a finding is established by different methods of inquiry makes it more plausible precisely in virtue of that fact.” Weale, *Democracy*, 49.

²⁷ David Miller, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1987), 385.

chances that basic democracy has to potentially resolve the debate over the definition of democracy. A stable definition of basic democracy, as previously mentioned, has been sought for some time. The previously mentioned theorists have been attempting this through various methods, but have been unsuccessful because they were defining styles of democracy and not democracy itself as an unbiased and observable theory supported by anthropological and archaeological evidence as well as by several empirical analyses. Had they been successful, there would currently be a universally accepted definition of democracy other than the previously mentioned rather nebulous notions of “the power of the people” and now incorrect references to democracy having its birthplace in ancient Athens or that the “USA equals democracy,” or that democracy was invented by the “West” (which Keane and others have shown it was not).

Pluralism, Sovereignty, and the State

It should be noted that this current work is not something out of the blue, as it is built and inspired by the works of those mentioned earlier. For example, Lijphart’s work on consociationalism led me to question the way sovereignty is perceived in styles of democracy. It became clear after reading his work that the modern citizenry is viewed as a plurality and not as a homogeneous majority, although now it is understood that citizenries can be defined in various ways which result in various democratic typologies. Lijphart’s work then permitted me to view the nature of sovereignty in the pluralities of citizenries, as individuals composing various social groups share power under certain normative regulations enforced by the legitimate power of the state. We should also take note that the democratic state is not viewed as a body composed of elites or in majority controlled by elites, but as something in existence and legitimized by the plural citizenry. The state serves to maintain the way the plurality wishes its society to be ordered. This may be called the “democratization of the state” and is, in my view, a phenomenon occurring worldwide. This can be seen, for example, in states that do not ascribe to a democratic governance system, as the plurality does not have accessible means to control the state but as such has a weakened democracy.

Dahl, like Lijphart, contributed to my understanding of pluralism. His work helped to balance the elite theory that has come out of Mosca,²⁸ Pareto,²⁹ Michels,³⁰ and Mills,³¹ and to provide a deeper understanding of pluralist

²⁸ Mosca, *The Ruling Class*.

²⁹ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (London: J. Cape, 1935).

³⁰ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Free Press, 1962).

³¹ Charles Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

power sharing (his polyarchy). Yet, Dahl was not writing in a period which stressed the need for a new democratic theory, as the grounds covered and directions worked in were done mainly with the understanding that democracy was a Western affair and that it needed to be exported to other non-Western countries in a style that worked. But we have been learning, as of the late 1990s, that democracy is not a Western affair and that styles which work in certain countries are not necessarily appropriate for other ones, as pluralities and their power-sharing structures differ from country to country. This is what I meant when stating that “they were defining styles of democracy—not democracy itself,” as we are currently engaged in trying to figure out what a universal, unbiased, and observable democracy is (should that even exist, which I think it does).

Dahl’s arguments in *A Preface to Democratic Theory*³² touch on this issue of universality. His critique of Madisonian democracy, which so trusted institutions to correct the deficiencies of liberal constitutional federated democracy, argued that democracy is a social norm, that is, it first and foremost is a society espousing democratic ideals which creates democratic institutions instead of the other way around. This focus on the importance of these natural rights and the argument that they are societal axioms which underpin basic democratic ideology helped direct the study which led to the formation of my theory of “basic democracy.” Dahl’s work is sometimes criticized because of the lack of empirical evidence to support his logic-based arguments, which was a situation I wanted to avoid. This is why I used quantitative word frequency and proximity analyses to help construct the theory.

Dahl,³³ when reflecting on a half century of political science, acknowledged the growing tendency for political scientists to reject universal laws and depend on cultural relativism for all conclusions. Dahl wonders “whether [this] is a perspective that can be enjoyed only by intellectuals.”³⁴ It seems that he is in support of trying to find these universals in social science for its practical utility, yet he remains rationally conscious that this is something that will require the appropriately rigorous and innovative methods to achieve. Perhaps this work can offer something in that respect.

Previous Definitions of Democracy

Sartori was helpful because of his stress on the need for more clarity when engaging the concept of democracy or using democracy as a term. As Mosca

³² Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956).

³³ Robert A. Dahl, “Reflections on a Half Century of Political Science: Lecture Given by the Winner of the Johann Skytte Prize in Political Science, Uppsala, 30 September 1995,” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 19, no. 2 (1996).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

wrote, “confusion in terminology leads to confusion in ideas.”³⁵ Despite this, it is evident at present that a wide variety of academics still use the term “democracy” in a rather confusing way, as they fail to conceptualize what it is that they mean. This leaves the reader either having to guess the author’s conceptualization or read the work with the reader’s own understanding of democracy, which may be contrary to what the author intended. But we can also see in Sartori’s work that he did not achieve an unbiased, universal, and observable definition of democracy, despite his stress on the need for clarity. We have all come to appreciate his brilliance in explaining political parties and equally understand his concern about equality eroding the style of liberal democracy as he explained.³⁶ It is clear, however, that Sartori was engaging his understanding of liberal democracy and not basic democracy itself.

Barber’s works provided further evidence for me to see that he, like Lijphart, Dahl, and Sartori, was once more engaging styles of democracy. Barber³⁷ develops various categories such as “thick” and “thin” democracies, but is, in effect, speaking of liberal representative versus his own personal construct, which seems to be mostly inspired by Rousseau (general will) and Schmitt (the great leader). He also writes about the importance of “moral leadership” and the importance of having a strong civil society. Although this work, and consequently later ones, has its moments of genius, it still is apparent that this mode of democratic theory is stressing styles and institutions due to the understanding of democracy at the time.

Oakeshott’s focus on civics and what it means to be a citizen, as opposed to discussing styles of democracy, tied in with John Keane’s focus on civil society, which stressed the need for a democratic theory based on the sovereignty of individuals composing the plurality. Rawls’ focus on equality and his affinity toward social democracy contributed to viewing justice as a concept achieved through a plurality’s own conceptualization of the end (of achieving justice). Habermas, like Rawls, prompted greater consideration of the impact of the “public sphere.” Why is a strong, egalitarian, and civic culture necessary? Habermas argued later in life that such a public sphere was necessary to keep the ill effects of globalization in check, and certainly can be viewed to keep elitism at bay as well. I hope that it is now clear that these previous thinkers were viewing democracy in a manner which stressed different areas and used different knowledge. Whereas today, some are stressing a new democratic theory of unbiased, universal, historical, and immediately observable democracy on which all styles of democracy (the old democratic theory) are based. Arthur Livingston said it quite nicely in his introduction to Mosca’s *Ruling Class*: new

³⁵ Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, 20.

³⁶ Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1962).

³⁷ Barber, *Strong Democracy*.

things come to the foreground when different stresses are taken--especially in times of new information.

Moving forward, a point that Keane³⁸ missed when proving that Athens was not the cradle of democracy, is that it shows the focus that Sartori and Dahl (or earlier with Mill and Paine) took on direct democracy being some form of an ideal, is misguided. This focus on direct democracy and arguing its applicability over the last few centuries led to the push for representation and voting mechanisms which are so commonly mistaken for democracy today. Methods of representation are institutions which were, in most part, developed to create a likening of “directness” in countries with large populations and geographic space. But with Athens now being seen as not the creator of democracy, but another ancient polity which practiced a style of it, it is clear that works to date have been arguing over styles of democracy and not democracy itself. This is a point that is evident in Sartori,³⁹ as he notes that academics (and imaginably regular people alike) lump together so many concepts when using the term democracy. He then does not direct his work at defining democracy but rather talks about how liberal democracy is the best model for Western polities to adopt. A difficulty Sartori neglected to address is that liberal democracy is still a contentious concept, as the style does not apply everywhere in the “West,” especially in this ever-growing multicultural and cosmopolitan world.

Contrasting with the criticism of Sartori’s work, which lacked a clear attempt at defining democracy, is Dworkin,⁴⁰ who in turn makes that very attempt:

The two views of democracy that are in contest are these. According to the *majoritarian* view, democracy is government by majority will, that is, in accordance with the will of the greatest number of people, expressed in elections with universal or near universal suffrage. There is no guarantee that a majority will decide fairly; its decisions may be unfair to minorities whose interests the majority systematically ignores. If so, then the democracy is unjust but no less democratic for that reason. According to the rival *partnership* view of democracy, however, democracy means that the people govern themselves each as a full partner in a collective political enterprise so that a majority’s decisions are democratic only when certain further conditions are met that protect the status and interests of each citizen as a full partner in that enterprise.⁴¹

³⁸ Keane, *Life and Death of Democracy* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009).

³⁹ Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*.

⁴⁰ Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

As can be seen, Dworkin defines democracy by dividing it based on *views* and not harder evidence. Furthermore, Dworkin is not defining democracy, but detailing two popular differences concerning the nature of the pluralist citizenry's *sovereignty* (although his styles can be conceptualized as procedural and substantive democracies, respectively). Once a pluralist citizenry has established (either implicitly or explicitly) the nature of its sovereignty, its members may then express it via their own interpretations of equality, communication, law, and the selection of officials. After that point, the adoption, modification, or creation of institutions occurs and a culturally relevant style of democracy perhaps emerges.⁴² That is democracy because it may apply, as will come to be seen, everywhere presently and historically, which is something no other definition has yet achieved.

The importance of this is twofold: first, it could solidify the validity of a universal theory and definition of democracy by establishing that it meets nonideological parameters, that it is useful (and hence true from a Nietzschean perspective), and that it may be applied in political science because democracy may be observed in unbiased space. Second, this essay establishes a methodology through which other theories in social science can be tested. Do they meet the same parameters as accepted theories in physics? Are there testable applications? And finally, are they useful? This method of testing social theories could be the answer that Miller⁴³ was seeking below:

Whereas the classical political theorists were unavoidably amateur political scientists—gathering information by casual observation and hearsay in a fairly haphazard way—their would-be successors are liable to be overwhelmed by systematically gathered data...[in reference to later political theorists]. Their work is philosophically sophisticated but poorly-grounded empirically, and highly vulnerable to criticism by social scientists. Further progress in the field must involve rectifying this imbalance, a task that is, however, easier to set than to achieve.⁴⁴

Although this is a common issue between the social sciences and positivism, it is hoped that using the positivist method in theoretical physics strictly in line with a useful outcome for the social sciences will perhaps

⁴² Culture can be viewed to be figmentive and that it is nothing but the sum of individuals interacting via identifiable social parameters, which creates an ever-shifting generalization called culture. Culture is viewed as the unique result of many individuals interacting with each other and not a generalized stereotype, partially due to how it fits my arguments concerning the pluralist citizenry (in that there is no such thing as the majority unless certain processes are followed).

⁴³ Miller, *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 385.

provide a middle ground. It is evident in physics that laws are not immutable, as those explanations which were useful in the past became redundant as those individuals who exhausted its utility began answering the unanswered questions and forming new laws of even greater utility or precision. I think to a certain degree the same can be said for the social sciences. One example that stands out is how Darwin's work led late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century thinkers to interpret their societies, which ultimately ended up scuttling previously held ideas of racial superiority. Evolution might hold true in its exact form for the foreseeable future, or it may become more precise, as I doubt it would be disproved, gauging by the existing evidence. Perhaps the same will be said for this work on democracy as more evidence is accrued by better minds.

Areas of Critique

At this juncture, "basic democracy" and a stable universal definition of democracy are co-dependent and perhaps the same thing. The theory is necessary to explain how the definition was created and as such provides a theoretical foundation for the definition of democracy. And the definition of democracy, in turn, may validate the theory when the term is used or when the concept is discussed, as the theory gains practical validation through political analysis. Despite this, a critical issue to address is the "so what" question. Should the theory and definition be accepted by the reader, are they too general, and if so, what use do they then have? First, general can be conceptualized in a way that connotes a lack of utility, which is not the case for the work herein. The theory and definition are perhaps universal rather than general and fill a large gap in democratic theory. In the theory of basic democracy, a genealogy of democracy is argued to be over 46,000 years old. Democracy is thought to have been practiced by early Mesolithic humans. It is also argued that the universality of democracy is applicable at every level of government, despite country or culture. The view that democracy is, and has been present, in all polities due to its organic qualities (meaning it cannot be destroyed, only suppressed) is also present, as is the falsity behind current democratic practice and theory stating the need for certain institutions to be present in a country or polity for democracy to happen. Ultimately, democracy's parameters need to be defined by the population in which they are being observed, which allows culturally relevant institutions to emerge and produce a distinct style of democracy.

The definition, on the other hand, might permit the analysis of democracy to happen in unbiased space. It states that democracy is none other than a body of individuals expressing its power through its own implicit understandings of a citizenry, sovereignty, equality, communication, law, and the selection of officials. These parameters might be measured in any polity around the world, with results illuminating a specific nature of democracy that underlies entire democratic governance structures which are currently present. This form of

analysis might be able to be reproduced and may have unbiased capacities, which might allow for democracy to be observed as an ever-changing constant, like a house that sports different colors as time goes by. The structure (democracy) is the same, but the colors (understandings of the various concepts inherent in basic democracy) change over time, as the plurality of the citizenry and its issues modifies and creates different institutions to support these changes. The importance of this is that it may produce statistics which indicate how governing institutions should be styled, what policies are most relevant, and ultimately what needs to be done to complete the pluralist objectives of the citizenry for progress and the advancement of the human condition. It is unfortunate, but most of these things are not effectively happening (some are not happening at all) under current understandings and practices of democracy, which is one reason why we are experiencing a backlash against democracy: those fighting for it, and against it, do not understand what it is.

This work and its forthcoming argumentation through the use of a methodology to ascertain “universal truth” require a great deal of further thought and research. As mentioned, understanding the political implications of the theory of “basic democracy” is still yet to be known. So is using the theory as an analytic framework for examining various polities. Can this essay in some way contribute evidence to the long-standing debate that there are universal laws in the social sciences? What does it mean for us and what can it show? More importantly, what can we do with “basic democracy” and what does it change?

A Methodology for Universal Truth

Drawing insights from the natural sciences is, of course, a contentious issue, as it can either be viewed favorably or not. In one respect, for those who are sympathetic toward there being certain underlying laws for human behavior, this methodology may be acceptable. For others, who view human events as being isolated and predicated on the events of the day (critical realists and or cultural relativists), this may be tiresome to read. In spite of the current duel between positivism and the social sciences, I would like to ask both sides to try to engage the following with an eye toward its practical utility for answering the long-standing issue of an unbiased, observable, and universal democracy that is currently wanting, and by extension, the applicability of this comparative methodology for use with other theories in the social sciences.

The aspects of the “universal truth” methodology used herein include testing the theory of “basic democracy” for “beauty” and “truth.” Beauty details the notions of harmony, unification, and simplicity, which are guides used in theoretical physics to gauge the worthiness or “fit” of a new theory. Truth simply equates to utility in this context. It is useful at this juncture to further explain this notion in physics, which may be alien to social scientists

and political theorists alike. Longair⁴⁵ describes the situation best through Dirac:⁴⁶

Previously, I was interested only in exact equations. It seemed to me that if one worked with approximations there was an intolerable ugliness in one's work and I very much wanted to preserve mathematical beauty. Well, the engineering training which I received did teach me to tolerate approximations and I was able to see that even theories based on approximations could have a considerable amount of beauty in them.⁴⁷

Longair⁴⁸ continues to discuss that this notion of beauty is an important sentiment. "Note that Dirac was describing theoretical physics at its very highest level—concepts like Newton's laws of motion, special and general relativity, Schrödinger's equation and the Dirac equation are the *very summits of achievement of theoretical physics...*" He continues to share that "the same sentiments [of beauty in approximation] apply, however, in their various ways to all aspects of research as soon as we attempt to model quantitatively the natural world." Zakrzewski⁴⁹ furthers, when discussing Zee's⁵⁰ work, that Zee employs real life examples so as to make his writing more accessible to the non-physicist reader. Zakrzewski goes as far as to point out that comparisons among art, music, and even ice cream can be made with theories in physics. The same is probably applicable for social science, especially as the theory of democracy discussed herein is considered an observation of objects in space or universal foundations in human organization rather than an individual ideology.

In a talk at a conference, Nobel winner Murray Gell-Man⁵¹ stated that "what is especially striking and remarkable is that in fundamental physics

⁴⁵ Malcolm S. Longair, *Theoretical Concepts in Physics: An Alternative View of Theoretical Reasoning in Physics for Final Year Undergraduates* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁴⁶ Thomas S. Kuhn and Eugene Paul Wigner, *Interview with P. A. M. Dirac* (Princeton, NJ: Niehls Bohr Library and Archives, 1962).

⁴⁷ Dirac, 1962, quoted in Longair, *Theoretical Concepts*, 7.

⁴⁸ Longair, *Theoretical Concepts*, 7-8. Other examples and explanations of "beauty" in physics can be seen by investigating Marc Henneaux and Jorge Zanelli, eds., *Quantum Mechanics of Fundamental Systems: The Quest for Beauty and Simplicity* (New York: Springer, 2009), as well as Anthony Zee, *Fearful Symmetry: The Search for Beauty in Modern Physics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁴⁹ Wojtek J. Zakrzewski, "Fearful Symmetry: The Search for Beauty in Modern Physics," *Journal of Physics and Mathematical Theory* 41 (2008): 019002.

⁵⁰ Zee, *Fearful Symmetry*.

⁵¹ Murray Gell-Man, "Murray Gell-Man on Beauty and Truth in Physics," at Ted Conference, 2007, video, http://www.ted.com/talks/murray_gell_mann_on_beauty_and_truth_in_physics.html (accessed May 14, 2010).

a beautiful or elegant theory is more likely to be right than a theory that is inelegant.”⁵² He continued to share that,

In 1957 some of us put forward a partially complete theory of weak force, in disagreement with the results of seven experiments. It was beautiful and so we dared to publish it, believing that all those experiments must be wrong. In fact, they were all wrong.⁵³

The theory of “basic democracy” may do the same in political science. There are many attempts that previous and current thinkers made trying to understand, peg, and ultimately measure what democracy is—however, all of them have been unsuccessful to date because they are unfortunately inelegant. To reiterate from before, it is a fact that people have been defining only styles of democracy (subjective democracy) rather than searching to theorize democracy itself (unbiased democracy). That statement has its exceptions in scholars such as Keane,⁵⁴ Casanova,⁵⁵ Watkins,⁵⁶ Ober,⁵⁷ Morozov,⁵⁸ and Sen,⁵⁹ as well as in dignitaries such as Kofi Annan and Boutros-Ghali, or the work of the UNDP, as these actors and many others previously mentioned in this work were the major ones to push away from stylized democracy to focus on unbiased democracy. Keane wrote extensively on violence, civil society, the Internet, and the history of democracy; Casanova argued for the need of a nonexclusive democracy, which is something conceptually similar to unbiased democracy; Watkins devised a methodology to circumvent the current problem of describing what an author means by democracy; Ober wrote of democracy as a “good-in-itself” and has been working on a neoclassical theory of democracy; Morozov described how this misunderstanding of democracy is a growing international problem specifically among Russia, Europe, and the United States; Sen wrote

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Keane, *Life and Death of Democracy*; id., *Violence and Democracy*; John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003); id., *Whatever Happened to Democracy?* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2002); and id., *The Media and Democracy* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1991).

⁵⁵ Pablo González Casanova, “Universal Democracy and the Social Sciences,” *Current Sociology* 46, no. 29 (1998): 29-38.

⁵⁶ David Watkins, *Conceptualizing Democracy in a Global Era* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Washington, 2008).

⁵⁷ Josiah Ober, “Natural Capacities and Democracy as a Good in Itself,” *Philosophical Studies* 132 (2007): 59-73.

⁵⁸ Viatcheslav Morozov, “Sovereignty and Democracy in Contemporary Russia,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (2008): 152-180.

⁵⁹ Amartya K. Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999): 3-17.

of how democracy has become a universal value; Annan spoke of the necessity for democracy to be something that rose from the bottom-up, something that ultimately needed to be culturally applicable; and the UNDP currently focuses on dialogue and nonviolence as the key requisites for democracy to succeed. It is a focus on objects in social organization rather than subjective ideologies and how they impact objects. The theory of “basic democracy” would not have been able to come about without these previous works in that unbiased direction.

Gell-Man⁶⁰ shares that “a theory appears to be beautiful or elegant (or simple) when it can be expressed concisely in terms of mathematics [or understanding] we currently have.” Short of going into the formal theory of democracy (which is something I am hoping a formal theorist will take on), there is already perhaps an elegance and simplicity to the theory. First, the theory may be culturally relevant, meaning that it might be observed⁶¹ in every country of the world; second, democracy may be present in every polity level of the world (municipal, local-regional, state-provincial, national-federal, and international); third, evidence shows that democracy may have been practiced for at least the past 46,000 years; and, finally, the theory currently may be the only theory of democracy that is universal and unbiased or less biased.

The simplicity of the theory is as follows. Democracy is the pluralist citizenry (however that is composed) expressing its sovereignty (whatever the citizenry defines sovereignty as) through their own human and cultural practices of equality, law, the selection of officials, and communication. Absolutely anything beyond that is a stylization of democracy, not democracy itself. The grounded theory analysis and commensurate empirical analyses that ultimately led to the theory were done because it was seen that no other thinker had conducted this form of analysis before. For example, Dahl, Lijphart, Dworkin, and Rawls were drawing from that tricky nexus that Miller⁶² mentioned of observation mixed with empirical evidence. The observation did not have a platform on which to operate (how does one observe democracy when democracy itself is not defined), and the empirical evidence being drawn from is based on experiments that have operated on inaccurate theories of democracy. These thinkers were noticing the importance of equality, law, the

⁶⁰ Gell-Man, “Beauty and Truth in Physics.”

⁶¹ This is a particularly important point. Democracy is, as was discussed, potentially everywhere and may have been for over 46,000 years. It is not something that is to be imposed; it is not something that was developed by the Mycenaeans 1,500 years before many other polities in the Mediterranean had a go at it (see Keane, *Life and Death of Democracy*). Democracy is potentially something that simply needs to be cultivated. A people need to realize that there is no need to build it for it is already there. Once a people recognize this, culturally relevant methods of enhancing democracy can take shape and a particular (as well as appropriate) style of democracy emerges *from democracy itself*.

⁶² Miller, *Blackwell Encyclopaedia*.

selection of officials (by way of voting), and communication, but they did not manage to put them together to see how they unified with the pluralist citizenry and sovereignty, as is done herein. They also were not at the stage of recognizing democracy as something that needed to be culturally subjective (in that the unbiased parameters must be defined by the citizenry), especially in the face of Huntington's clash of civilizations and the incorrect understanding that democracy was invented by the Greeks and, hence, a Western affair.

Chandrasekhar⁶³ stated that "beauty is that to which the human mind responds at its deepest and most profound." Furthermore, Bussey⁶⁴ argues that universality applies to beauty in physics, that the theory applies everywhere in the physical world, and that nature itself defines the objectivity of the observation. It would be difficult to ascertain if the minds of readers would be responding in "deep and profound ways," which is why that will be left to the reader to decide.

Gell-Man continues to share that, "Nature obeys laws and, in Newton's words 'It is the business of natural philosophy to find them out'... The laws are not just some construct of the human mind, although human beings are engaged in an effort to find successive approximations to those laws and finally, perhaps, discover their exact form."⁶⁵ This corresponds with Bussey's statement that "we do not invent these things—it seems that we uncover them. They are hidden harmonies."⁶⁶ The same argument can be perhaps made in relation to "basic democracy." It is not a construct of my mind, for it is observable, perhaps by any observer, in action possibly everywhere human polities are operating. A first attempt in a currently unpublished work resulted in the development of a methodology which can be used either in a quantitative or qualitative framework. The method used in the paper was to qualitatively analyze Australian media, national and international law concerning equality, communication, law, and the selection of officials. This analysis resulted in an implicit understanding of the state of democracy in Australia by identifying the problems surrounding the four parameters. In other words, it was an observation of the issues about which Australians were concerned in regard to the four parameters, which painted an approximation of democracy in Australia. This methodology can be used at the state, local-regional, or municipal level. There is the more precise methodology of surveying the citizens of Australia and asking them hyper-specific questions relating to the six parameters, which would produce better quantitative results. That technique, however, is expensive, but could be done in conjunction with a national census, as unrealistic as that may

⁶³ Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, *Truth and Beauty: Aesthetics and Motivations in Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

⁶⁴ Peter J. Bussey, "Beauty and Physics," *Contemporary Physics* 50, no. 3 (2009): 479-482.

⁶⁵ Gell-Man, "Beauty and Truth in Physics."

⁶⁶ Bussey, "Beauty in Physics," 480.

sound. It is reasoned that population sampling would be equally appropriate, which, despite my dislike of sampling populations in preference for long-term, costly, but ultimately better statistics, is a recommended avenue for the reader to take when conducting an explicit analysis of, for example, democracy in Perth.

Leibowitz's⁶⁷ work compares the shared effects of beauty in physics and art. He argues that both have the same effect on the mind of the observer (recalling Chandrasekhar). Why do fine art and ice cream warrant comparison with physics, with social science considered too ideological? If Leibowitz can show that the aesthetics and esoteric nature of art is comparable to the same concepts in physics, social science can surely gain the same repute. "Basic democracy" is only one example used in this work, but the writings of Simmel, Weber, Marx, and other early theorists can similarly have their ideas put to the same test, as currently they are enjoying a resurrection due to the fact that their observations still relate to modern society.

Moving forward, Gell-Man states that assumption in certain areas of physics is quantum-mechanical and thus "predicts probabilities (some of which can be near certainties) for future events, given past ones."⁶⁸ This is another example of how "basic democracy" may shine. The archaeo-anthropologic argument used, as was explained in a previous work, describes the past events and genealogical evidence of democracy. The mechanics of democracy may be observed in ancient polities as well. A picture of democracy in Athens or Rome can be displayed first by analyzing the nature of sovereignty and the composition of the citizenry. From that point, the pluralist citizenry's definition of equality, law, communication, and the selection of officials can be stipulated, ultimately resulting in an understanding of the state of democracy. From that point, institutions and other practices are better understood as they are created on that picture of democracy.⁶⁹

Johnson⁷⁰ brings about an interesting argument that beauty can be present in experiments, with Bussey relating this better than I could have hoped to: "A beautiful experiment must be planned. Its execution must be both a physical and an intellectual exercise, combined. Matter and form are being united in a

⁶⁷ Jack R. Leibowitz, *Hidden Harmony: The Connected Worlds of Physics and Art* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

⁶⁸ Gell-Man, "Beauty and Truth in Physics."

⁶⁹ It should be noted that endemic governance problems are also responsible for the creation of institutions as polities seek to mitigate them. Endemic governance problems are a set of seven issues observed to have been plaguing polities for at least the last 3,500 years (these problems still persist). They are: (1) accountability; (2) corruption; (3) transparency; (4) representation; (5) campaigning methods; (6) constitutional issues; and (7) lack of long-term goals. The problems are intrinsically linked to democracy, and it was argued in an unpublished work that, if they are mitigated, democracy may be enhanced. This is, of course, another area needing further research.

⁷⁰ George Johnson, *The Ten Most Beautiful Experiments* (London: Bodley Head, 2008).

temporal way now, and here one might find potential analogies to music, to dance and to drama.”⁷¹ In discussing ballet, Bussey describes that there are forms which must be followed but the result, for example the slaying of the villain, may not be a foregone conclusion, which is the same with physical experiments, he states. When engaging the theory of “basic democracy,” the forms of the analysis are present, but the mystery of the outcome remains: What will the style of Berlin’s local democracy be? Or what do the people of South Dakota or Ontario consider equality to be? And although it was not a goal of this work to create a “political science of ballet” analogy, it seems to work in the given context.

Continuing, Gell-Man also states that, as new theories are created or as science achieves the recognition of a smaller particle, the theory resembles the one before it, which is also the case with democracy.⁷² The theory of “basic democracy” did not emerge out of a vacuum but was simply the unification of previous work done on the matter through a unique perspective. It was taking the Nietzschean approach to truth in that the definition of democracy must be useful; it was taking the Simmelian path to recognizing the unbiased by comparing the subjective through a grounded theory analysis first supported by empirical analyses; it was applying the endemic governance problems historical analysis viewpoint to democracy’s history and observing democracy from a Rosanvallon,⁷³ Girling,⁷⁴ and Adamsian technique;⁷⁵ it was tracking democracy’s genealogy through an archaeo-anthropological argument; it was recognizing the works of other thinkers, professionals, and organizations that thought and worked with democracy; and it was ultimately the formation of a potential unified theory of democracy. In hindsight, this all seems deliberately planned, but it was rather fumbled upon. Here, Gell-Man discusses symmetry:

⁷¹ Bussey, “Beauty in Physics,” 481.

⁷² Gell-Man, “Beauty and Truth in Physics.”

⁷³ Pierre Rosanvallon, “Intellectual History and Democracy: An Interview with Pierre Rosanvallon,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68, no. 4 (2007): 703. Rosanvallon stated that it was necessary for one to know the history of a subject before being able to comment on it.

⁷⁴ John S. Girling, *Corruption, Capitalism, and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1997). Girling (p. 152) stated that history can be used “to provide the organizing principle. In this sense: historical investigation over a sufficient lengthy period of time—from decades to a century or more—reveals, in the first place, dominant patterns of activity....,” which summarily can be said to “let history do the talking.”

⁷⁵ Daniel L. O’Neil, “John Adams versus Mary Wollstonecraft on the French Revolution and Democracy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68, no. 3 (2007): 451. “Adams turned to history, understood as a repository of empirical evidence, examples, and data pertaining to the success or failure of particular institutional experiments in governing human beings over time” (page 8). Adams thought that scrutinizing history “could reveal the motive force, the crucial independent variable, if you will, driving it.” (page 8). The question Adams’ perspective brought about throughout the thesis is whether endemic problems are a “motive force” for enhancing democracy and improved governance.

We must now refer to the idea of symmetry. A circle, for example, is symmetrical under all rotations about the centre of the circle. In three dimensions, a sphere is likewise symmetrical under all rotations about its centre. An object or a phenomenon exhibits a kind of symmetry if performing certain operations consistently on all parts leaves its description unchanged. We say the object or phenomenon is symmetrical under those operations.⁷⁶

Take the phenomenon of “basic democracy” and consider its symmetry. It may theoretically be observed in Capetown, Washington, Beijing, and Manila; it may possibly be observed in present-day hunter-gatherer societies or in Mesolithic or Neolithic people based on behaviors inferred from archaeological evidence; it may be observed in Quebec, Texas, Bavaria, or Western Australia; it may be observed in Samoa, Sri Lanka, Somalia, and Peru; and it may likewise be observed in the EU, the UN, NATO,⁷⁷ ASEAN, and NAFTA. In other less tiresome words, the phenomenon can be rotated in various applications but its theoretical description remains unchanged. The sphere rotates just as the constructs of “basic democracy” do; it is possibly a construct apparent in human politics which may be observed even in countries that are considered nondemocratic. The only way personally imaginable that “basic democracy” can be compromised is if humans are completely destroyed, as democracy may be endemic to human nature; it could be an organic form of social organization. These theoretical statements are all, of course, needing to be engaged by greater minds or else they may remain mere postulations.

Now comes the aspect of utility. If we were to attempt the observation of a certain style of democracy in a universal aspect, say for the sake of argument, liberal American (whatever that might actually be), such would not work as many of the institutions built atop democracy in America are culturally alien or inappropriately engineered for the different cultures of the world. Barring Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global Financial Crisis, and so on, from the example, it is directly possible to see that it would not be useful to try to observe or install American democracy in a different country, because it would be the stylizing of one plurality’s democracy over the style of another plurality’s

⁷⁶ Gell-Man, “Beauty and Truth in Physics.”

⁷⁷ Taking NATO as an example, the methodology for observing democracy is still most likely sound and uncompromised. Which individuals comprise the “citizenry” of NATO (all those people involved in the treaty)? What is the nature of their sovereignty (as in what powers do they have)? How do they select officials? What are their laws? What is the nature of their communication? What is their understanding of equality? By answering these questions, democracy in NATO comes apparent. This technique can be extended to business and other social constructs. Some may show democracy is suppressed or skewed and appear to be more autocratic (like some political parties or political regimes), while others may have all parameters active and styled a certain way.

democracy, rather than trying to assist the other country in promoting its own style of democracy. The modern argument that a certain level of economics, development, or institutions are necessary for democracy to happen in a country is most likely rubbish. It is, in my humble opinion, already there, which is something that warrants a fair deal of consideration.

This is because democracy is probably observable in current polities, including “nondemocratic” governments, and the theory of “basic democracy” may be used to explain the progress of democracy in past polities, as well. The argument is that democracy is, and has been, present in human polities independent of civilization. The complexity of the democratic style which emerges from the plurality is, however, linked to civilization and involves institutions, infrastructure, and typically a link to economics, in that people need time to act on surplus cognitive resources rather than spend most of their daily lives toiling for sustenance. The uniqueness of a *style* of democracy is, as such, predicated on such things as economics and civilization, but democracy itself is probably not. The only matters to which economics, and so on, relate are once more the stylizations of democracy and not democracy itself. That is why the theory of “basic democracy” is useful and, hence, true, as it assists even in defining styles of democracy. It is not dependent on institutions, it is not necessary to have high-speed Internet, parliaments, or a certain capital index (although these things can be useful if a culture appropriates them), for democracy is arguably a constant. It is probably already in the Niger delta, and was most likely in Iraq 40,000 years before the Bush administration invaded, and also may have been present in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, albeit in a suppressed form. All of this, of course, requires further investigation.

It is at this stage that we can begin to appreciate democracy as a property and not an ideology. As Gell-Man stated, gravity and the movement of the planets are not the design of a single mind but something that everyone knows. It is certainly something that can be appreciated by the human mind, but is not localized to one individual ideological truth. In other words, democracy is most likely a realistic function found in all human polities, just as gravity forms its own rules about the natural environment. They are both possibly observable everywhere they apply, and it is, once more to extend from Gell-Man, a good probability that life on other planets will come to have this form of governance present as well. There are but a finite number of ways that social organization can occur, given our anthropologic history of governance. Totalitarian brutality is one extreme, and a functioning super-enhanced democracy the other. Social organizations have the capacity for each, for as democracy is present at all times, so is the threat of totalitarian rule which cannot erase democracy but suppresses it until it manages to rise again.

Conclusion

It is at this stage prudent to discuss Einstein’s Special Relativity in conjunction

with what has just been learned about “basic democracy” and the methodology used in physics to ascertain the veracity of one theory over another. Special Relativity concerned in most part the simplification of Maxwell’s equations. “Basic democracy” is comparatively the simplification of previous attempts at “solving” democracy. It explains that other thinkers have stressed different aspects of democratic theory, and provides a much simpler way of viewing and understanding this method of social organization. Like the work that Relativity enabled in the future, “basic democracy” may permit the realization that democracy is probably over 46,000 years old; that it may be an unbiased property found in all polities; that it may never be erased without erasing all humans; that it possibly is universally observable; and that essentially most of what has been written about democracy is unfortunately incorrect and needs rethinking—especially concerning the way the term democracy has been used over the years and the way it is conceptualized in the current global discourse.

Einstein’s Special Relativity had beauty. It was useful for describing certain aspects of the universe, it was simple and elegant, it had perfect symmetry, and it did not come out of a vacuum (meaning that we could tell from where Einstein’s work came). As was seen, it can be argued that the theory of “basic democracy” met these criteria. To my mind, it has elegance, simplicity, symmetry, history, universality, and is all the more beautiful because it can be observed by anyone. It is, thus far in my abductive logic, a property of social organization, just as gravity is a natural law.

The importance of this argument is that it shows political theories can, like theories in physics, or bodies of art, have universal applications and can also be put to the same standardized tests for truth. The example used was the theory of “basic democracy,” which, as was shown, has perhaps defined democracy as a property or unbiased element found in social organization wherever human polities existed or currently exist. This was seen first by discussing this universal theory of democracy; second, by discussing the existing literature and how “basic democracy” differs from previous thought; third, by showing what the parameters of beauty and truth are in physics and how “basic democracy” meets those criteria; and fourth, by briefly showing that this new definition of democracy stands as true as Special Relativity did⁷⁸ since Einstein’s theory met the same criteria.

⁷⁸ Einstein’s Special Relativity is currently being challenged as truth (utility) in physics, and this challenge continues to grow. Should anyone find the comparison between the theory of “basic democracy” weakened by this circumstance, Newton and his work on gravity can be substituted for Einstein. This also brings about an interesting point: If Einstein’s work was once true (should it be refuted in the future), is the same predictable for the theory of “basic democracy” or other theories in social science? The answer, in my opinion, is, should social organization advance to such a degree as to be alien from what has been known since before the Mesolithic period, then maybe democracy has an expiry date. But until such a time, democracy (certainly not a specific style of it as Fukuyama infamously argued) might stay as true as gravity.

It is hoped that this work proves to be a useful step toward several points: the first, that political science (and by extension social science) may have universal laws; the second, that the theory of “basic democracy” may be the definition of democracy we have been seeking; third, that physics’ “universal truth” methodology may be used in social science; and fourth, that this new understanding of democracy has an important function to play in our societies and in the literature. Many of the answers to these questions elude my limited mental faculties, and as such, I invite greater minds to take this small step and built on it should that be of interest to any particular reader.