Aligning the Two Main Approaches
to the Study of Democratization

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Abstract: This article approaches democratization from the point of view of an assemblage of two main social forces - the elite and the institution. It draws on the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) ontology of association to connect structural and agential traditions- that treat elite and institution as separate entities-in the field of democratization research. It argues for the viability of ANT's ontology of association as a lens for understanding democratization as a domain-independent association of elite agency and institutional norms. This complex interdependency between agency and structure manifests in politics in ways political practices and actions are fabricated as permissible in the state of affair.

Introduction

Since Riker (1980) presented his analysis attempting to align the two major traditions in social sciences – that is traditions that overemphasized institutions and traditions that overemphasized choices, values, tastes etc ? there has been very little in the way of research that seeks to understand democratization by connecting these two traditions. The two major approaches that have dominated the field of democratization research treat structure and actor as separate entities. The structural approach subsumed the democratization process under the perspectives of modernization; that is, democratic change grows out of economic and social developments and the actor/strategy approach confines the determinant of political change to choices, behaviors and strategies of principal political agents. Although each of these approaches has offered us useful theoretical analyses, often sequencing democratization in a particular teleological action course, they are tentative in their appreciation of complex interaction of elites and institution in the process of democratization.

This article approaches the democratization context from the point of view of an assemblage of two main social forces ? - elite and institution. It draws on the Actor-Network Theory (hereafter, ANT) ontology of association to connect the two main approaches to democratization, structural and agential traditions, in order to highlight democratization as a domain-independent association of elite and institution. The ANT serves a dual purpose, first, it enables us to rethink the very idea of democratization as a domain of the political distinct from the social constitution of the society. Secondly, it makes clearer the importance of the two societal forces as necessary condition for understanding the outcome of a social decision – such as democratization in a polity.

In following the tradition of the actor-network, structure and agency are brought into an intimate relationship of actors who are, in turn, the effects of the network (Best and Walters 2013, p. 332). In this perspective, the nature of democratic institution is contingent on the meanings focal actors ascribed to it rather than by some inherent quality. Democracy, in this regard, is made visible through the ways in which structure and agency produce it as reality and on the basis of how political activities that made it up are performed in a particular context.

This conceptualization considers actor's subjectivities in the process of democratization without appropriating to democracy a sort of self-constitutive nature. This helps us to see the process of democratization as an interactive phenomenon.

The agency /structure approaches to democratization engage elites/institutions as separate, independent and causal entities of democratization. The core contention of mainstream scholarship on democratization in the 1960s and 1970s was that the underlying causes of democratization in a country correlate with the extent of its modernization (Lipset 1959, Almond and Verba 1963, Moore 1966, Dahl 1971, O'Donnell 1979). This stand point actually builds on classical sociologists, in a Durkheimian fashion, in the tradition of accounting for social structure as a constraint on human actors.[1] The deficiency of the structural approach in underemphasizing (and unspecifying) collective decisions and political interactions in the search for determining preconditions for democracy (Lipset et al 1956, p. 213) was the basic criticism of the approach.

Scholars such as Rustow (1970) and Bratton and van de Walle (1997) were at the forefront of advancing the autonomy of principal political actors in the processes of democratization. The contingency approach grants conceptual primacy to the freedom of central political actors to make choices that potentially shape and determine the outcome of democratization (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p. 24). This perspective sees political leadership as prime determinants for political transition. Rustow (1970), O'Donell and Schimitter (1986), Linz (1990), Burton and Higley (1987, 1989) all converge on the argument that the choices, behaviors, and strategies of a relatively small number of elites are critical in triggering democratization and determining the pace of consolidation.

However, none of these approaches are sufficiently determinative (as they are both interrelated), as the cause of democratization. The interrelatedness of elite and institution in the context of democratization is best understood through ANT's ontology of association. This approach enable us to bypass the agency/structure dichotomy to inscribe in relations of democratization network thinking that views both as intermingled i.e., binding political transition to the social fabric of society. In this network thinking, transitional elites align and advance their interests through translating and enrolling institutions in the process of democratization.

This interaction analysis of democratization contributes to literature that attempts to reconcile the structure-agency dichotomy in the social sciences. The structure-agency debate in the social sciences is based on the macro-micro social science traditions often used in comprehending the nature of social and political life and their organization by social scientists (Riker 1980). In this debate, there are social thinkers, such as Emile Durkheim, that emphasize the importance of structure as responsible for orchestrating the conduct of human action. This macro perspective takes structure as having greater influence on individual decision-making, as oppose to the influence the individual can have on the structure. On the other side of the debate are those that believe in the primacy of individual judgment – Max Weber stresses human intentionality and calculation in the process of social action in his social-theoretical work – in emphasizing the importance of human agency over social structure in social life (Tan 2011, p. 38). The micro perspective affirms the individual ability to make choices, guided only by human desires and wishes.

The next section revisits the two main approaches to democratization, which develop based on the agential-structural dichotomy in the study of society. In the third section, the ANT is examined to get a grasp of its signature concept of symmetry which is basic for understanding the "ontology of association" embedded in the theory. The ANT's "ontology of association" is used in the fourth section to explain the interaction process of elite and institution, that is – how the political process constitutes itself through the manner in which elites work with and through institutions to produce outcomes visible as democratization (democracy). The last section concludes the paper by suggesting that the interaction of elite and institution grants

democratization its sociality.

Determinants of Democratization – Revisited

The two major perspectives that have dominated the study of democratization have been the structural and the actor/strategy approaches. These approaches derive from the two major traditions in social sciences which, on the one hand, emphasized institution and, on the other hand, emphasized human choices and values as determinants of social and political outcomes (Riker 1980). The explanations of the determinants of democratization align with either of these two social science traditions underpinning structural (economic and social conditions) or contingent (actor/strategists) reasons that trigger the process of democratization.

The contingent model of democratization assumes that one agent's initiative prompts another actor's response and political events reiterates from one to another (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p. 25). In this light, the democratic process is composed of actors (players) and their involvement in the democratic game; that is, its rules may be designed as inducements to players in the building and shifting of alliances and coalitions that may support a political system newly emergent from an authoritarian experience (Martz 1991, p. 88). In Mcfaul (2002, p. 215) in "Transition from Authoritarian Rule" edited by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, elite groups are constructed as real actors with autonomous causal power to influence the cause of regime change (Mcfaul 2002, p. 215). According to this school of thought, there are four sets of choice-making actors in the transition drama: soft-liners and hard-liners within the ruling elite of the ancien régime, and moderates and radicals among the challengers to the ancien régime (Ibid., p. 216).

In an actor/strategist perspective therefore, elite-action and -bargaining are responsible for the national transition from a non-democratic rule to a democracy. According to Bratton and van de Walle, regime transitions are shaped by the willful strategic choices of principal political agents (1997, p. 24) and not by some institutionalized structures which are themselves the product of human actions. Welsh noted that in many of the redemocratization processes, i.e., in Eastern Europe and Africa, elite bargaining and accord was responsible for the choice of transitional government (1994, p. 384). The bargaining and interaction that spurred the transition, "political crafting" as described by Juanz and Alfred Stepan, were therefore precursors to democratization (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p. 25).

In all cases of democratic transition, as concluded by Diamond, the choices, behaviors, and strategies of a relatively small number of leaders in the regime and opposition – including the conflict they wage, the understanding they reach, and the agreement they negotiate – are critical in determining whether, how and at what pace a democratic transition will be effected (1993, p. 43). Guiseppe Di Palma's "crafting", describes four aspects of democratization: the choice of rules and institutions among the many available options, the mode of decision-making in selecting from amongst the alternatives, the alliances and coalitions forged in the transition and the timing of the transitional tasks and stages (Martz 1991, p. 87).

According to structuralists, however, the prospect of democratic change is embedded in the architecture of the social system - structural changes in society matter in terms of understanding the causes of democratization. Seymour Martin Lipset (1968) and Barrington Moore (1966) were the early proponents of this argument. Lipset suggests that "the more-well-to-do a nation, the greater the chance that it will sustain democracy" (1959, p. 75). In other words, the rising level of wealth and education and the increasing rate of industrialization will manifest in economic development important for stimulating democracy and ensuring its consolidation (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p. 21).

In this view, the hitherto subordinate classes have acquired sufficient power, through growing wealth, education and access to information, and are able to challenge the dominant elite class for participation in the political process. It is based on the notion that the middle class (with now sufficient power) would favor their own inclusion in political decision making and would therefore seek higher levels of participation. The middle class hypothetically gained their power partly as a result of capitalist expansion in society and partly through a willingness to have a say in government.

The power of the middle class as an outcome of capitalist development provides the link between democratization and capitalism. Classical scholars have advanced arguments on the relationship between democracy and capitalism. The contributors to this debate include Karl Marx, Marx Weber and Emile Durkheim who noted an affiliation between capitalist industrialization and political democracy. Capitalism in this sense is seen as destroying the "old" order and implanting new processes, which include institutions, cultures and relationships of power. Therefore the structuralist perspective broadly sees the establishment of democracy largely as a result of the combination of favorable economic, social and cultural conditions. Almond and Verba, for instance, argue that the level of aggregate economic development and development of mass society is not the only main determinant of democratic success; certain cultural attitudes are necessary for democratic development (1965). The cultural necessity was also echoed by Edvardsen who contends that the "culture of a society" is relevant for explaining the preference for a particular mode of transition (1997, p. 213).

David Latin (1986) earlier contended the importance of culture in ordering political priorities. In spite of the fact that Latin draws his conclusion on the importance of culture in politics from an anthropological perspective, he sheds light on Social System Theory's specification of the link between cultural meanings and political or economic behavior (Latin 1986, p.11).[2] Latin states that meaning, values, and preferences are embedded in symbolic structures, which he termed culture, in which the individual seeks to manipulate in order to enhance their power and wealth. To understand how this guides political preferences is to appreciate social system theorists belief that culture is deeply influential and that its embedded values affect political and economic behaviour (Ibid 1986, p.11-12).

Although there have been scholarly acknowledgements of the inextricably linked relations between the behaviour of elites and institutional outcomes (Diallo and Lafreniére, 2014) there has been very little in the way of research that integrates both in explaining the process of political development in Africa. The political-institutional approach (Bratton and van de Walle 1997) which attempts to bridge this dichotomy downplays the primacy of political actors, whilst overemphasizing the role of the institution, in shaping contingent political events. The recognition of leadership and governance as separate entities is evident in the focal point of donor agencies and organizations for Africa development such as the European Union which support enhancing capacity of state institutions and the World Bank which concentrates on efficient management of resources through structural adjustment programs.

Clemens and Cook have noted that scholars have recognized the interrelationship of political actors and institutions and have attempted to conceptualize this through structuration theory (1999, p. 442). Anthony Giddens introduces the term 'structuration' with which he intends to go beyond materialist and objectified notions of class to consider how classes operate and are experienced in practice, in other words, the actual extent of class consciousness and conflict (Wittington 1992, p.695). In this theory Giddens attempts to rework the micro-macro dichotomy in terms of the duality of structure. The macro gets connotatively identified with social structure (which in turns signifies determinism) and the micro becomes the realm of individual agency (which equates to personal freedom) (Mclennan 1995, p. 121).[3]

Giddens inserts the concept of system between structure and agency in order to overcome their

'dualism' to create what he calls an independent duality (Wittington 1992, p.695). "According to the notion of duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both mediums and outcome of the practices they recursively organized" (Giddens 1984, p. 85). The "duality of structure", which is the dualism of structure and agency, reflects the chief institutional axis of modernity (Mclennan 1995, p. 121). The "structure and agency" are, however, the outcome of their own activity. Giddens noted the processes of selective filtering occur in many contexts of social life whereby actors seek to regulate the overall condition of system reproduction, either to keep things as they are or to change them (Giddens 1984, p. 27-28).

The most widely cherished approaches to the study of democratization can, however, be located in the two main traditions of the social sciences. They are: traditions that overemphasized institutions (structures), and those that overemphasized choices, values, tastes etc (agency) (Riker 1980). These approaches have been used as straightforward frameworks of explaining what factors are especially important for explaining the process of democratization, however the trajectory of democratization is subjected to both elite influences and institutional constraints. It is in this regard that neither the elite nor the structure is a sufficient condition for understanding the democratization process and its outcome. In an interactional perspective, therefore, both are seen as necessary for understanding the processes of democratization. The Actor-Network Theory (which is explained in the section below) enables us to track the social process of democratization, whilst in the fourth section we address the "reassociation and reassembling" of elite and institutions.

The Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

Although originally theorized by Focault but not nurtured and, therefore, muted in his governmentality study (Jan-H and Rowland 2010, p. 825), actor-network theory was finally developed at the Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation (CSI) of the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris in the early 1980s in an attempt to understand processes of innovation and knowledge creation in science and technology by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law.

The actor network theory (ANT) evolved out of Latour's critique of Bourdieu's field theory as deterministic. In his field theory, Bourdieu assumes that the reasons for actions are not accessible to actors but rather guided by a force, i.e. "illusion" which makes actors misinterpret their own actions (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu argues that there exist relatively autonomous structured fields, with structuring capacity, that impose their necessities on agents (1977, p. 184). In this field, according to Bourdieu, actors are important because the effects of the fields are traceable in the bodies of actors as habitus, which in turn shapes their actions (Guggenheim and Potthast 2012, p 159). In doing so, Bourdieu separates the causes and effects of an action.

However, Latour contends that "practising sociology is not reconstructing structures of society that operate behind the actors. Rather, doing sociology means to describe the world as the sum total of all controversies" (Latour, 2000, p. 109-10; 2005). In other words, Latour attempts to overcome Bourdieu's deterministic approach by focusing on controversies and situating the fight for reputation within scientific practice itself. In his analysis of scientific controversies, his first empirical work Latour portrays scientists as fighting for reputation by making decisions about field research publications and budgets (Latour and Woolgar, 1979).

According to Latour, sociologists should refrain from supposing a pre-existing field, but should trust their ethnographic sensibilities and "follow the actors", in order to understand how science works (Latour, 2000). Therefore, Latour moves the forces of fields from the actors back to the scientific objects, laboratories and texts (Guggenheim and Potthast 2012, p. 160). The actor-network therefore constructs a world of relations between human and non-human actors thereby revealing the complexity of every situation (Cooper 2008, p. 308).

In the socio-technical approach of actor-network theory, the role of object in the social order is critical to understanding human actions. The actor-network theory idealizes the object as having equal significance in the social organization of things. It sees techniques and humans as components of a network which it views as equal in the social relationship. As such, the theory is best known for its unorthodox insistence on the agency of non-human actors in networks (Jan-H and Rowland 2010, p. 826). The basic idea in the actor network theoretical approach was therefore to identify social structures on the basis of social relations instead of cultural categories or individual attributes (Mutzel 2009, p. 873).

The idea is not to occupy a position in the agency/structure, nature/society, local/global debates, or even to overcome them, but just to ignore or bypass them (Latour 1997, p. 2, Murdoch 1998, p. 357). The actor-network theory is an attempt to bridge the gap between two schools of thought, that is, the technological determinism schools[4] and their social determinist[5] counterparts. ANT scholars, particularly its originators, consider both schools of thought to be flawed and propose as an alternative the actor network theory. They offer a socio-technical account in which both the social and the technical are important elements in social relations (Callon 1986, 1991, Latour 1988, 1999, Law 1991, 2000, Callon and Latour 1992, Callon and Law 1995, 1997). This theory has however been criticized on its idea of flat-ontology that sees no difference in the layers of things and human being (Cooper 2008).

As the ANT explores the ways in which the networks of relations are composed, it sees the relationship between human and non-human as circulatory. The ANT, according to Latour, is a theory of space and fluidity in which the social has become a certain type of circulation (1997, p. 2). Latour describes the social as having, perhaps, "a bizarre property not to be made of agency and structure at all but to be a circulating entity" (Ibid, p. 2). According to him:

> [...] the most useful contribution of ANT has been the transformation of the social from a surface, from a territory, from a province of reality, to a circulation. [...] as a theory, it argued that by following circulations we can get more than by defining entities, essences or provinces (Latour 1997, p. 2).

Therefore, ANT is relational in the sense that the "actants" (Mutzel 2009) that populate a network take on meaning only in relation to one another rather than in isolation from one another by some inherent quality (Jan-H and Rowland 2010, p. 826). In this sense an actor is not just an element, but is rather in an association of heterogeneous elements in which that actor constitutes part of the actor-network. This informs the situation of hybridity between the social and the technical elements as emphasized in the ANT. The approach of the ANT therefore sums up these interactions into something very practical (Latour 1997, p. 2).

From this perspective, the theory sees "network(s) as heterogeneous chains of associations made up of multidimensional and evolving entanglements of human, non-human or collective actors (all are *actants*)" (Mutzel 2009, p. 876). In order to do a proper analysis of all the actors across heterogeneous elements, ANT relies on the principle of symmetry and association. The principle of symmetry describes the behavior of the human and the non-human symmetrically (Whittle and Spicer 2008, P. 620), and this is done by aligning and advancing the interest of potential actors through "translation, intressement and enrolment" (Jan-H and Rowland 2010, p. 826).

According to John Law, translation refers to the work of making two things that are not the same, equivalent.

> "Translation [...] refers to how network-builders harness symbolic meanings to attract the interest of potential recruits. Translation also has a geometric meaning that refers to mobilize human and non-human resources. The twin meanings are unified in ANT

> [...]. Network-builders *enroll* heterogeneous actors through translations that iteratively define and position actants in networks of builder's making. *Intressement* is the group of actions by which a network-builder attempt to impose and stabilize the others it define through its problematization" (Jan-H and Rowland 2010, p. 826).

The ANT presents itself as a tool for assembling the process of democratization as performed assemblages of elite and institutions.[6] This understanding transcends the normal readings of ANT which, on the one hand, emphasizes its applicability to technoscience and, on the other hand, essentializes hybridization in its conceptualization of the world to "among ANT", that highlights the quality of the theory as a domain-independent ontology of association (Oppenheim 2007, p. 472).[7] The normal reading of ANT, as proposed by Oppenheim, should give way to "among-ANT" to realize its value beyond it most usual deployment.

This approach is useful for analyzing democratization as a process and practice shaped by both the institution and the elites of the country in which it is taking place. In applying the ANT to the critical analysis of space, Murdoch examines the main types of actor-network spaces in a typical network configuration (1998). He identified two main spatial types, "spaces of prescription" and "spaces of negotiation", which are linked to the degrees of remote control and autonomy found in the actor-network respectively (Ibid). Murdoch draws from Harvey (1969) to explain the relative conception of space in order to show how activities and objects are defined spatial fields of influence (Murdoch 1998, p. 358).

The context of democratization can thus be understood in this regard as an adaptive system of relations of actors, whether in transition or consolidation of a democracy. Wellbrink et al conceive of a complex adaptive system as consisting of many agents, acting in parallel without centralized control (2004, p. 31). The non-linear interactions between these agents lead to adaptive and emergent behavior which enables agents to organize in dynamically re-arranging non homeostatic structures (Ibid, p. 31). With regards to democratization, it builds an internal (implicit or explicit) model of the future and look to act in accordance with its model, thus making it a social force with human agency at its heart.

This approach sees political space as constructed within networks of relations or associations of both human and non-human elements. Latour argues that the mixing of human and non-human materials allows networks to both endure beyond the present and remain stable across space (Murdoch 1998, p. 360). In this regard, the ANT provides us with both the analytical and methodological tools for bundling the relations of the elites and the institutions in the political space together as a circulating network of stable social relations which inform intermittent social reorganization at every point in time.

Although early research work on affiliation networks established the ways to analyze the nexus between actors and events (Mützel 2009, p. 873), it must be noted that there is divided opinion among social scientists about the degree to which institution as well as personal value, opinions and tastes affect the content of social decision (Riker 1982, p. 3). The next section explores the sociality of democratization through the lens of "among ANT". Democratization is explored as a context in which the two main approaches to democratization are not only connected using the ANT of reassembling, whilst suggesting this associative process of elites and institution be appreciated in the study of transitional democracy.

The Sociality of Democratization

In this section, the actor-network theory is used to connect the two main approaches to democratization in order to explain the nature of democratization as socially-conditioned phenomenon. This analysis places emphasis on how human beings work with and through institutions, thereby

reinforcing the social aspect of democratization. This offers an avenue for making a case for a domain-independent ontology of association of agency and structure necessary for understanding transitional democracies. It is inadequate to capture democratization as a mere execution of governance model, leaving out the relational character of elite agency and structure which is an inherent property of social and political processes.

The functioning of an institution is a result of how it is applied by human agency in the process of democratization. This metastasizing of elites and institutions is captured in ANT's principle of symmetry and association. This principle describes the behavior of the human and the non-human symmetrically (Whittle and Spicer 2008, P. 620), which is done by human agents aligning and advancing their interests through the translation of institution. Translation in this conceptualization therefore implies elites enrolment of institutions in rendering what they do intelligible as political outcomes.

In Bourdieu's analysis of structure and individual variations, he contends that there are areas, in all viable systems, where the individual is free to make choices to manipulate the system (1977, p. 26). The choice desire of the elite cannot therefore be completely subsumed into the structure (institution) because of their desire to integrate variations, exceptions and accidents into the rules and norms governing the functioning of institutions. This leaves either institutions or human actors with insufficient determinative capacity regarding a social outcome.

The point is that the whole process of democratization is run by elites who seek to balance their interests by manipulating political institutions, which in turn serves to constrain their actions, albeit limited by the condition within which political preferences are chosen. Institutions influence behaviour by affecting the structure of the situation in which actors select strategies for the pursuit of their preferences (Aoki 2011). This basically takes into account the agent's role in creating institutions and the institution's role in constraining agent behaviour through creating political preference structures that guide elite action, an idea also shared by rationalists.

In the traditional simplification of rational behaviour, narrowly defined self-interested behaviours by an actor (whether a person, group or political entity) are channelled to further the actor's perceived interest, and these are subject to information and opportunity cost (Monroe 2001, p. 152).[8] At the same time, there are sets of beliefs about the causal structure of the situation, which determines what causes of action will lead to what outcomes. This process, as noted by Nee and Ingram, is built into the ongoing social relationships in which institutions produce performance through the structuring of social interaction – a domain of network analysis in sociology (1998, p. 19). Elster and Hylland state that to justify and explain behaviour, the actions should be viewed as feasible, which explains the set of all courses of actions that (are rationally believed to) satisfy various logical, physical and economic constraints (1986, p. 4).

The implicit character of democratization is thus the metastasizing of value of the focal actors that initiated a transformation process and institutional norms and procedures. Whether through popular revolution or via a crack within a ruling set of elites, the nature of the outcome of political change is determined by a small group of leaders (i.e., the few front runners in the case of a popular revolution or the few elite individuals that lead a change in the case of the falling of a ruling elite). The elites who, for whatever reasons (national or international), see the need to transition or consolidate a democracy have certain values which will manifest in the process. The degree of functionality of the institution is, in this process, thus related to political actions and activities, which are influenced by the elite's value of transitional elites.

From this relational perspective, democratization is argued as a performed assemblage of people's values and institutional norms. As a performed assemblage of elites' values and institutional norms, the outcome (or nature) of democratization relates to the whole history of the production of elites' values (political value) which have become embodied in the agents who operate the institutions. Therefore, the best prediction of the nature of outcome of democratization stems from

the embodied values of the agents carrying out democratization. The embodied value is build up against experience of compliance (and of punishment for deviation) to norms of practice. The elite alignments, and advancements, with institutions are carried out through the reassembling of practices of governance which may, or may not, destabilize the process. This reassembling process takes into account the cultural dimension of elite-institution relationship and this includes the construction of meaning for the process as well as actors' interpretations of it. In this understanding, it is suggestive to say that democratization is driven not only by political interests but society's value and culture that build towards enrolment of the principles of democracy over time.

As a result of focal actors' translation and enrolment of institutions, democratization becomes a bundle of entanglements with their own particularities, contradictions and surprises. In this sense, the nature of democratization is dependent on the nature of relationship between elite and institution – a relation that models the "democratization space" as an outcome of the collectivities of agents and institutions. The interaction between elites and the institution in the process of democratization leads to an adaptive and emergent system which is fluid and dynamic and continues to modify itself to suit the political situation.

The bizarre property of democratization is therefore in its social circulation, the collectivities of agents and institutions. In this regard, democratization (in actor-network terms), becomes that which provides political actors with their actions and their subjectivity in a particular context. In this light, the context of democratization cannot be explained in 'straightforward' terms; that is, it cannot be explained *only* through changes in the social structure or through elite strategies. It is instead the combination of the two as a necessary determinant of the nature of democratization, and the outcomes of this in a particular context.

Human agency assumes its focal actor position because of its capacity to put other "non-human" (i.e. institutional) actants (Mutzel 2009) in circulation. Their connection and association enables the translation of meaning from one to the other. As much as there are inherently natural variations in focal actors' enrollment of institutions in democratization, so we should also expect varieties in the outcomes of democratization. For instance, the analysis of "Third Wave" democratization has captured the process as producing varieties of democracy through concepts as "hybrid-regime" (Diamond 2002), "virtual democracy" (Joseph 1997), "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way 2010) and weak democracy etc.[9]

Although the process of democratization functions according to the prevailing strategy of interaction between the elite and institutions, the driving force of this prevailing strategy is not some abstract principle but rooted in experience of interaction of these two social forces. Such experience may contradict, or conform to, the tradition of liberal democracy but still guide political practices. This makes differences and discontinuities a governing condition for democratization. The elites are constrained to act within this political culture framework rather than from the perspective of public choice and democratic accountability theorists, who rigidly reduce the actions of elites within the rational choice and procedural democracy perspectives.

For instance, the traditional institutions/structures of primordial societies have defining influence on the opportunity structures of political entrepreneurs in the civic polity.[10] The implication of such a preexisting structure on democracy should be understood, in this regard, as both a constraint and an enabling factor for democratization. As a constraint, it offers the limits to which the institution of democracy can be entrenched in a non-western polity. As an enabling factor, it is the platform upon which democracy may incubate, grow and standardize itself.

The democratization context thus becomes a system of association of elite and institution in a particular political space. This conceptualization sees the relation of democratization as actor-networks of elite and institutions. The ever-present process of enlisting an institution in the actor-network relation gives form to the reproducibility of the democratization process. It is the interaction of the elites and institutions that reproduce themselves as democracy (variants

of democracy) and provide the conditions used to influence and modify the actants i.e. elites and institutions. We can say that the human shapes democracy (non-human institutions of governance) and democracy gives shape to human behaviour; therefore democracy acts.[11] Latour captures this idea of association very well in his sociology of the Door-Closer, where he states this as a projection of human behaviour onto a nonhuman object, one which by nature, is impervious to any feelings (Johnson 1988, p. 303).

While institutions are examined here as platforms on which human agency operates for political transformation, the institutions become actors themselves, making themselves and the human actor in the network metastasize together in order for democratization to unfold as a process. Classical sociological scholars such as Tocquelle, Weber and Durkheim have effectively utilized institutions – such as cultural beliefs, myths, customs and norms – in explaining macro-sociological phenomena (Nee 1998). In the view of the romantic school of law, legal institutions emerged in the context of popular customs and beliefs (Brie and Stölting 2012, p. 21).

Even though democracy is based as far as possible on active involvement of the citizens, it still boils down to following procedural rules and regulations that guide people's actions in the process. The debates over the meaning of democracy actually narrow down to two core definitional issues: the first pertains to the nature of democracy, whether it is distinguished according to the form of its *procedures* or the *substance* of its results; the second involves the minimal set of essential requirements for a nation to warrant being called democratic (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997, p. 12). Democracy is seen, from this perspective, as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble to carry out its will" (Schumpeter 2003, p. 5).

As procedures, democratic institutions provide a framework for elites to act "democratically". In this understanding, institutions are seen as having a relationship with elites while at the same time serving their function of regulating them in the process of democratization. Best and Walters note that the process of translation implies the establishment of relationships of equivalence between ideas, objects, and materials that are otherwise different (2013, p. 333). In light of this, the nature of democracy is an outcome of the mutation of the dynamic relationship between agents and structures, which continually redefine themselves, constituting a particular political landscape.

This interaction approach lends credence to the character of social change as alternating patterns of intermittent social reorganization (Blau 1986, p. 336). It reifies performation over the constitution of political activities in transitional democracies. The reification of performation over constitution subjects the democratization process to power influences beyond institutional constraints. It is in this regard that politics becomes a dependent variable, which stands in contrast to political scientists' ideas from classical times onwards that argue that politics is sui generis an autonomous institutional realm in which the exercise of power gives shape to the social and economic world (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p.20).

The ANT's ontology of association is relevant for understanding the merging of elites with institutions, and the character of their composition in the context of democratization; whether as a transition from an undemocratic to democratic governance, or as a process of consolidating a democratic transition. Democratization in non-western societies, in this sense, cannot be fully understood without understanding how elites translate the will of institutions into their own. In constructivist terms, we need to know the ways in which something is socially constructed in order to understand it. Likewise, the realist perceives social change as transformational, thus, to induce a transformation there needs to be an understanding of the emergent nature of social change (Pawson 2006, p.18).

Conclusion

The ANT's ontology of association enable us to bring together the institutional components of the state and leadership, i.e. elites, which have been mostly analyzed as separate entities in the study of democratization, in order to understand democratization as socially-conditioned phenomenon. The explanation of the nature of democracy as an outcome of the content of the values of elite and institutions in time and space demonstrates an understanding of how political outcomes are produced in transitional democracy. It is an approach that places emphasis on how a human being works with and through institutions by translating institutional will into its own will. In this perspective, democratization provides the context within which the translation occurs and could therefore be seen as a site for the production and resolution of political tension.

This interaction approach offers an avenue for making a case for a domain-independent ontology of association of agency and structure necessary for understanding transitional democracies. It is inadequate to capture democratization as a mere execution of norms and practices leaving out how the elites work with and through these rules and norms. The relational character of elite agency and structure is an inherent property of social and political process. In this regard, democratization is not taken for granted as a phenomenon, but it is made visible through the way action and agency are composed and on the basis of how actions and words produce it as reality. As a product of "associational style of elite and institution" the character of democratization basically "gives a face" to the style of democracy.

In this regard, a domain independent ontology of association approach comprehends the persistent variants of democracy and how such democracies consolidate themselves, in particular ways. The social is the result of networks of elite and institutions that create the social by association and by translating one meaning into another. In this sense, ANT enables us to model democratization as an outcome of collective action. It is an approach that transcends normative analysis which understands the problem of democracies in non-western societies in relation to incompleteness of nation building, the impact of the colonial state and the structures of internal and external domination.

Therefore, the interaction of elites and institutions is a precondition that grants democratization its sociality and which it plays out at every point of the democratization process.[12] The sociality of democratization that derives in the complex interactive nature of institutional norms and value of elites explains why democratization outcomes, though similar in principle, differ in their actual functioning. By granting democratization sociality, democracy is a phenomenon constructed by the elites and institutions, i.e. agents and structure, through ascribing meanings to one another, rather than in isolation from one another, by some inherent quality.

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Notes

[1] In *Rules of Sociological Method* (1938), Durkheim argues that social structure serves external constraints on human beings. This structure, he believes, constrains and shapes human actions in society.

[2] According to Latin, social system theorists believe that culture is deeply influential and that its embedded values affect political and economic behaviour. These theorists attempt to specify the link between cultural meanings (embedded in symbols) and political or economic behavior." (Latin 1986, p.11). This he called the first face of culture.

[3] Giddens structuration theory was inspired by his concern to underpin agency by social structure (Wittington 1992, p.695).

[4] The technological determinism school's central tenet has to do with the argument that technology shapes and alters most things including human behavior and society at large. It contends that all outcomes of technological change can be attributed to technological rather than social change. Therefore, technology has implications for our conduct, our interpersonal relationships, and also for our values.

[5] Social determinism is the antithesis to technological determinism. It argues that social connections and constructs alone determine social categories. To them, technological changes can only be explained through social categories.

[6]It suffices to note that structure is used interchangeably with institution because they are synonymous. Pierre Bourdieu clarifies this in his explanation of the science of structure by stating that the concomitant representation of practice is a mechanism through which relationship is established between structure and practices; that is to say, that impersonal rules (institutions) as structure are the representation that accompany practice (human behavior) (1977, p. 21).

[7]Oppenheim highlights the quality of ANT as a domain-independent ontology of association in making a case for the value of ANT to anthropology beyond its most usual deployment in studies of science, technology and society (2007).

[8]In his first major work, *The Theory of Social Action* (1937), Talcott Parsons articulates a voluntaristic theory of action that would overcome the limitations of utilitarianism and yet find room for rational action within the parameters of societal cultural constraints(Kivisto and Swatos 1990, p. 156).

[9]These were all efforts at capturing the extraordinary uncertainty and difficult dilemmas often embedded in the process of actors' enrolment of institution that is adaptation to the principles of democracy.

[10]The institutions are embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances (March and Olsen 2006, p. 3)

[11]According to Mutzel, the actor-network theory is not interested in causal explanation but rather offers descriptions as explanations (2009, p. 877).

[12]"Subjectivity seems also to be a circulating capacity, something that is partially gained or lost by hooking up to certain bodies of practice." (Latour 1997, p. 2).