
base communities, women's organizations, elite financial interest groups and academic associations). Civil society influences policies between election through mechanisms for redress and citizen influence. To consolidate democracy, civil society must participate as fully as possible to ensure that democratic institutions are legitimate and that political parties are transformed into institutions which are capable of representing their constituents.

Devolution of Power

Concentration of economic or political power leads to highly unstable societies, if the majority is struggling to survive alongside a minority which controls all the levers of power. Democracy, by definition, involves a distribution of power. Distribution promotes stability, as people are not as likely to be tempted by extreme alternatives for survival and legitimacy.

Culture of Democracy

Legitimate democratic institutions foster a culture of democracy. A democratic culture is the outcome of a successful democratic process. It is not a character trait which a society either has or does not have. It is fostered through the consolidation of a routinized democracy. Democratic culture requires democratic institutions as tools through which culture is formed. Democratic culture is also a function of broad public participation.

Democracy is a process, not an end point

All existing democracies are at different stages of development: from transition to consolidation. Democracies are flexible systems which allow for varied levels of the qualitative elements-- so long as the fundamental elements are in place.

3. Canada's Role in Promoting Democracy Abroad

In the context of a coherent foreign policy which places a high priority on democratic development, Canada should seek ways of exercising its comparative advantage in forwarding this goal.

Canada's Strategic Choices

As the desirability of democracy spreads, Canada is being called upon to contribute to its development through bilateral and multilateral channels. Canada has gained a solid reputation and is increasingly called upon to assist in various aspects of the democratic process. From electoral monitoring to police training and beyond it should choose its interventions according to two basic criteria: (i) the legitimacy of the democratic process and (ii) the value-added for Canada in promoting unity, Canadian values, ethnic ties and stability.
