

DEMOCRATIZATIONS:
Comparisons,
Confrontations,
and Contrasts

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Egg in one hand: Akan (Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire) people's symbol for insinuating that "Power is fragile. Like an egg. Hold it too tightly, and it might break and spill all over the hand. Yet hold it too loosely, and it might fall, break, and splatter all over the floor."—*Ed.*

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book offers intrasystemic reassessments of democratized and democratizing civic cultures that have evolved and are continuing to proliferate around the globe. Not all of the countries scrutinized assure the emancipation of their citizens. Nor, indeed, do all of the citizenries examined show an innate capacity for self-transformation via self-characterizing means to self-actualizing ends by initiatives that they truthfully can boast to be their very own. As is typical of nonlinear processes, initial conditions seem to matter significantly, as do also the situational contexts and the propelling values, which, as they evolve, individualize trajectories, characterize directional pursuits, and have an impact on basic approaches, thereby imparting idiosyncratic destiny to predetermined destination and particularity to generality.

Our initiative finds its inspiration and drive in our perception that civic awareness fosters self-emancipation and in our observation that active civic participation generates a more palpably practical sense of belonging, crucial for equality and justice on the level of the citizen and vital to legitimacy of sovereignty on the level of the citizenry's government.

In that sense, this book constitutes a serendipitous tribute to Thomas Jefferson, who knew of "no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves" and who suggested that even when one should judge the plebe to be "not enlightened enough" to exercise the control of the powers vested in it with "wholesome discretion," the proper action ought not to involve acts that deprive the populace of its powers, but rather, initiatives tailored to edify a people-in-becoming or a citizenry-in-the-making, of its discretion. Thus more specifically, this book seeks to inform semicitizens and subjects around the globe and possibly to assist them in reorienting their pursuits, in disincentivizing their deferrals, in dissipating their dormancies, and in daring

themselves to take charge of their human condition. Would that the pages ahead offer choice of direction and force of will, but above all courage of action to the many around the world still too resignedly awaiting to be made into whom they can be or too perplexed to figure out where and how to start the journey into what they would elect to become once they realize whom they are not.

To that end, we bring together seasoned practitioners and senior scholars from a variety of pertinent disciplines. We interconnect our perspectives, to enable ourselves synergetically to scrutinize the makings and failings of institutions, constitutions, and practices in the domains of that elusive idea commonly referred to as *democracy*. We weigh the relative merits of some select methods of and approaches to democratizations, taking extreme care not to lump these under one and the same rationale. We braid our analytic strands in ways that should allow the reader to draw from our comparative syntheses cogent contextualized perspectives at each of three levels of overview: the theoretical-conceptual; the geopolitical/macrospatial; and the micro-issue/macro-policy-specific epiphenomenal. This we do by striking a balance between several chapters under each dimension. Ideas, forms, pursuits, practices, and problems come alive as we circumnavigate the globe hand in hand with our readers. In virtue of its ambitious reach and its enveloping embrace, our book seeks to inform the novice and to alert the expert via clarity of thought and limpidity of language. It hence is written to serve a broad range of readership—students, researchers, practitioners, teachers, analysts, policy makers, and not least, the ubiquitous, intelligent, well-read eclectic individual with an inquisitive spirit and an inquiring mind.

I wish herewith to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Brian Spooner—Professor of Anthropology and then-Acting Director of the Middle East Center at Penn—who appointed me Research Fellow at the Center, in order to protect our transdisciplinary series of interfaculty seminars titled *Cross-Campus Conversations at Penn* and to facilitate the materialization of this book project. I thank also Dr. Jay C. Treat, Director of Instructional Computing at Penn's School of Arts and Sciences, for his gracious facilitation of our internal communication and electronic-blackboard postings in time-efficient and cost-effective ways. To Ms. Adela Smith, Executive Assistant to the Vice Provost and Director of Libraries at Penn, who always helped me secure the most appropriate seminar spaces I could reconnoiter and request in advance, I convey my appreciation and amity. I reserve my highest admiration

and especial thanks for my fellow travelers who endowed this project with superb intellectual qualities. To my loved ones, deservedly, I offer my deepest gratitude for their sustained share of the selfless sacrifice.

This project completes the work of the third academic cycle in the series of cross-disciplinary interfaculty exchanges founded by the Editor on the Campus of the University of Pennsylvania under the title *Cross-Campus Conversations at Penn*—an initiative that has been able meanwhile to transgress the boundaries of a single campus, the borders of a single country, and yes, also the disciplinary confines of single-minded inquiries into subject matters of compound complexity.

Jose V. Cipurut