

PROLOGUE

On February 16, 1886, the Anthropological Society of Washington heard James H. Blodgett read his report, "Suffrage and Its Mechanism in Great Britain and the United States." Published in the newly established journal, *American Anthropologist*, three years later, the report detailed an extensive range of practices, rationales, and legal statuses in relation to electoral elements such as voters, registration, ballots, ballot boxes, financing, and representation in more than 40 legislative bodies in the United States and Great Britain (Blodgett 1889). He framed his descriptions of suffrage with a serious question for democracy: What are "the best modes of securing a true representation of the community?" For example, while the British Ballot Act of 1872 replaced public declaration with a secret ballot, Blodgett noted that in the United States, "ballots are only incidentally recognized in the laws of a few States." Were ballots a better mechanism for democratic representation than public declaration, especially given the size of modern societies? But how should the ballots work? His data demonstrated that no single answer existed. Marking on the back of ballots was generally prohibited; some states prescribed the size of ballots; two states (California and Louisiana) provided paper to secure uniformity; errors in the spelling of candidate or party names invalidated the vote in some states, while other states specified that unless the spelling introduced doubt about the voter's intent, the ballot should be counted (1889:70). In the late nineteenth century, therefore, variance characterized the administration of elections.

A discussion of proof of residency followed Blodgett's talk. While states and territories limited franchise by a variety of factors, including gender, age, literacy, property ownership, and tax payment, almost all

had residency requirements, which ranged from three months to two years. Three members of the Anthropological Society picked up the interesting but unexamined question of how potential voters demonstrated residency. According to the *American Anthropologist*,

DR. ROBERT FLETCHER stated that when offering a vote at Nashville, Tenn., he was asked where he had his washing done, and found, when about to resent the inquiry as impertinent, that it was the legal test of residence.

COL. F. A. SEELEY gave instance in which the residence of canal boatmen, whose place of occupation was movable, was sometimes determined by the question where their washing was done.

COL. GARRICK MALLERY instanced an important suit in which the plaintiff, suing as a citizen of New Jersey, was non-suited because the jury determined that as his washing was done on the west bank of the Delaware, or in Pennsylvania, his residence was in the latter State. (Blodgett 1889:73–74)

These comments demonstrate how residency interacts with class, occupation, gender, and location and thus also with political representation. It is also possible to imagine the policy brainstorming that might have gone into deciding how to prove residency for the highly mobile or the poorly housed. How did laundry become the proxy indicator? Would laundry also have been a test of residence for women if they had achieved suffrage?¹ Why did Dr. Fletcher consider the question impertinent? Under what circumstances was the question asked, and to whom?

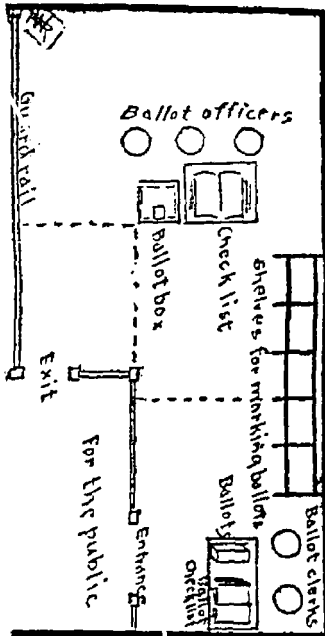
Debates about how best to represent the people and count their will took place at philosophical and pragmatic levels as well as in the general public. Phenomena such as ballots (and secret ballots) were contentious throughout the nineteenth century. Objections toward ballots revolved around the increased possibility of fraud (e.g., people impersonating other voters, voting more than once); the supposed unmanliness of voting by ballot rather than by voice; whether ballots preserved aristocracy, given the necessity of literacy; whether secrecy diluted democracy (i.e., truly free men proudly voted in public) (Brent 2006; Markoff 1999). Discussion of how representation could be technically manifest was loud, and experimentation was active. In Australia, for example, ballots and ballot marking schemes had already gone through several developments by 1886. The Victoria ballot, introduced in 1856, is often described as the first secret ballot. Other “secret” ballot systems were in use around

the world prior to the Victoria, but they involved voters supplying their own paper or taking them from political parties and candidates (Brent 2006). The Victoria system was revolutionary because the government printed the ballot, it bore the names of all the candidates, and voters were required to prepare their ballots in private (Brent 2006). Thus, no one could any longer distinguish between ballots. Observers could not determine a voter's will by the color of his ballot or by watching from which pile he chose his ballot, and voters could not wave their ballots grandly in full view of passersby. Two years later, in 1858, legislation changed the marking scheme from an "obliteration" system to a "mark-in-square" system, in part to save ink. Rather than striking out the names of candidates for whom they did not intend to vote, voters were required to make a cross opposite the name of the candidate or party being voted for. However, the new system confused electors and was consequently highly unpopular; even its inventor, William Boothby, considered it a mistake. Most Australian jurisdictions reverted back to or retained the strike-out method until federation (in 1902), while most countries adopting the Australian ballot (as the Victoria system came to be known) shifted to the mark-square method.

When read against voting in contemporary democracies, washing as a proof of residency, ballots as written and self-furnished, and crossing out unwanted candidates might appear bizarre or old-fashioned or even quaint. The incredible historicity of electoral objects and democratic practice is immediately striking. Now, government-issued identification documents, standardized and preprinted ballots, and marking with a tick, check, or cross next to the name (or sometimes the picture) of the person or party desired is universally standard. Democratic practice has become narrower and narrower with the passage of time; there are fewer and fewer ways of being democratic.

When read against postwar elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1996–2000), the strangeness of early election administration does not seem so strange. Rather, these two phenomena together highlight the contingency, pragmatics, arbitrariness, and experimentation of electioneering, pinpointing the mental, technical, and logistical work undertaken by publics and administrators seeking to achieve democratic representation, participation, and trust. Almost contemporary with Blodgett, an 1892 *Los Angeles Times* article (fig. 1) can be read as one instance of this work. Informing readers about the new layout and modus operandi of California voting, the article attempted to make a novel system simple and clear, walking voters through the polling place

Cut No. 2 shows the position of the ballot clerks, voters in the stalls, and the officers of election checking the voters as they deposit the ballots in the box near the exit. Enter with the man to the right of the cut, and get a ballot from the gentleman standing at the end of the table, provided the young man at the desk finds your name properly registered in the Great Register open before him.



Then walk over to one of the open stalls and mark your ballot in accordance with your wishes, and pass in front of the group at the left and announce your name to the judges of election. When the young man sitting at the desk finds your name properly registered you are permitted to deposit the ballot in the box and pass out. That is all there is to it.

Fig. 1. Excerpt from an August 21, 1892, *Los Angeles Times* article explaining how to vote under the newly adopted Australian system. The polling station layout is remarkably similar to layouts in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see fig. 11).

and procedures step by step. The article also detailed how the new electoral system—a variant of the Australian ballot system—prevented fraud and trickery:

A correspondent of the [San Francisco] Examiner warned the California electors of the method by which the Australian ballot system was beaten in Montana. . . . The voter is forbidden to leave

the booth until he has delivered up the ballot he has received on entering. He must give it to the inspector if he wishes to vote it, or return it to the ballot clerks in case he does not. (*Los Angeles Times* 1892)

In this regard, the 1892 text resonates with information pamphlets from Bosnia-Herzegovina that explain polling procedures, how to mark ballots correctly, voter registration procedures and criteria, the electoral system, and the fraud prevention checks built into it. All of these factors are material articulations of making democracy work. A handout (fig. 2) given to people waiting to vote during Bosnia-Herzegovina's 2000 general election specified,²

From the moment you arrive at the polling station to the moment you leave the polling station, you must pass the following procedure:

In every voting screen, you will find a pen that you can use to vote, but you can use your own pen if you prefer.

If you spoil your ballot paper, you can exchange it for another if you give the spoiled ballot back to a member of the polling station committee.

Read carefully the instructions of the poster "Description of the Ballot" or the explanation on the ballot itself to be sure that you vote correctly.

Graphics with captions gave form to the six steps of voting: (1) having fingers checked for invisible ink, (2) presenting appropriate identification, (3) signing the voter register, (4) having fingers marked with invisible ink, (5) taking a ballot, and (6) going to the voting booth and voting. The back of the handout provided more detailed information about what a voter should do if his or her name did not appear on the voter register or if he or she needed assistance. Without these informational messages given to voters—whether in 1892 or 2002—democracy could not work properly: voters need to know what to expect and how to act properly, and they need to trust in the integrity of the system.

This is not to suggest that no changes have occurred over the past century, of course, or there would be no reason for this book. Rather, it shows that democracy is neither natural nor intuitive. It is not the mode of government toward which humans inherently gravitate. The introduction of democracy does not always have the same effects or out-

Процес гласања на бирачком мјесту

Од Вашег доласка на бирачко мјесто па до тренутка напуштања бирачког мјеста проћи ћете кроз следећу процедуру:

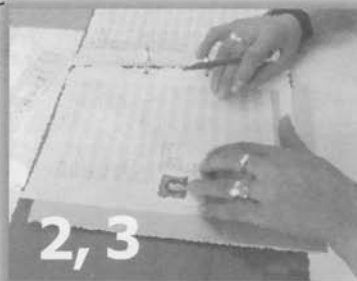
У свакој гласачкој кабини биће завезана оловка која ће бити коришћена за гласање, али такође можете користити и своју оловку.

Ако упропастите свој гласачки листић, може Вам бити издат други гласачки листић ако члану бирачког одбора вратите упропашћени гласачки листић.

1. Провјера трага невидљиве тинте на прсту



1



2, 3

2. Идентификација бирача
3. Потписивање бирача на бирачки списак

4. Означавање прста невидљивом тинтом



4



5

5. Добијање гласачког листића



Да бисте правилно гласали пажљиво прочитајте упутства на постеру "ИЗГЛЕД ГЛАСАЧКОГ ЛИСТИЋА ЗА ВАШУ ОПШТИНУ" или упутства на предњој страни гласачког листића.

6

Одлазак у гласачку кабину и гласање



Fig. 2. "The Voting Process in the Polling Station," 2000. This informational sheet was to be handed to voters while they waited in line to vote so that they were prepared for what was to come. (Courtesy of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.)

comes. Peter Pels et al. (2007) highlight the reshuffling, recombining, and reinventing that occur when technologies travel to other sets of social, political, and economic circumstances. The secret ballot, for example, did not always liberate individual choice, as is usually presumed, but could instead limit access, articulate the alienation of state authority, or act as a means to continue traditional decision making in a new form (Pels et al. 2007). Technological change does not always map onto or fit into a neat narrative of progress. We should be wary of evolutionary tales in new guises as well as assumptions of universality. Indeed, the term *democratization* suggests an evolutionary linearity, with democracy as the end point. This book analyzes the democratization effort in Bosnia-Herzegovina not from the point of view of democratization strategies or their efficacy but as a lens through which to view the cultural and political practice of democracy making. I am concerned with how the democratic process makes meaning rather than with teasing out an evaluation of democracy or of efforts to promote it. Reading democracy and democratization within a progress narrative is dangerous as it often hides and displaces the work that goes into legitimating and actualizing democracy at any particular point in history. For example, democracy historically carried negative connotations as a result of its associations with anarchy and mob rule. Furthermore, cultural analysis suggests that we should never assume that anything will remain fixed; cultural forms are dynamic and constantly in flux via innovation and contestation. Too often, evolutionary arguments assume an end point—often a single end point. Reading democratization in a progress narrative suggests that a possible end point exists and that different states lie at different points on a democracy scale. This uniscalar valuation of democracy is unhelpful. It is also not helpful to construct straw men, of course, and many scholars would point to the wealth of literature on the electoral fallacy (i.e., democracy and elections are not synonyms) and the plurality of democratic forms and regimes (see Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1977, 1984, 1999; Lijphart and Aitkin 1994; see also Collier and Levitsky 1996; Schmitter and Karl 1991 on reconceptualizing democracy). However, at the same time that we take seriously comparative political science and hear cries espousing democratic variance and the need to think of democracy on a matrix rather than on a continuum, we see international democratization efforts engaging in what some have called cookie-cutter approaches (see Call and Cook 2003; Ottaway 2002). What then is the same, and what is different? The evolutionary progress line assists in the codification of certain features and the era-

sure or delegitimation of others.

This work seeks to understand which features and meanings are becoming normalized and naturalized and how this process is occurring. As a result, there is a danger of neglecting democracy's emancipatory qualities and the very real struggles for recognition taking place around the world. This book does not ignore events such as the 1994 South African elections, described as miraculous by many participants who never even dreamed of voting and who had viewed the elimination of apartheid as unthinkable (Thorold 1995).³ Rather, like Nicolas Guilhot, I seek to understand democracy as one of the organizing principles of the new international order (2005:1). In *The Democracy Makers*, he lucidly documents how the form and function of emancipatory activism has changed with the professionalization and specialization of democratization as a field of study and as a business industry. As he says, "State institutions, international bureaucracies, and professional networks have colonized the turf of social movements" (2005:3). Democracy has become a vehicle with many other passengers (e.g., neoliberal, legal, and moral norms).

In the new millennium, work is still occurring around the globe to make democracy and elections desired and actual end points, as in California in 1892 or Australia in 1886. Substantial cultural, political, social, and economic effort goes toward explaining how democracy works, making it work, and convincing people to want it. This volume, then, studies how this process occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the years immediately after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, when socialism "lost" the cold war and Francis Fukuyama (1992) famously commented on liberal democracy as the final form of government (as the end of History).