Comparing democracies. A spatial method with application to ancient Athens

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Abstract: A graphic method for specifying historians' judgments about political change, with special reference to the distance and the direction that Athenian democracy had moved from the era of Cleisthenes to that of Lycurgus. For Vincent Azoulay and Paulin Ismard (eds.). *Cleisthène et Lycurgue d'Athènes: Autour du politique dans la cité classique.* Editions du Sorbonne, Paris.

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Comparison is a fundamental tool of historical scholarship: historians and political scientists compare states, cultures, situations, individuals, and so on. In this volume, our common concern is to compare two periods of Athenian political history: the ages of Cleisthenes and Lycurgus. The question of how alike or different these two eras really were is important, among other reasons because it bears directly on central issues of democratic stability and development. But comparisons are inherently difficult to measure: Just *how* similar or different does each of us imagine that the ages of Cleisthenes and Lycurgus really were? How far do we each suppose that the democracy of the later fourth century B.C. had moved from the original principles and practices of the democratic founding in the late sixth century B.C.? How, in short, might we compare scholarly views about specific historical comparisons?

I suggest that a simple graphic matrix would allow scholars interested in the historical development of Athenian democracy to map our different conceptions of how the democracies of Cleisthenic and Lycurgan Athens were alike and different. Each scholar could, if the method were widely adopted, compare his or her own results more readily with the results of others. This sort of approach should help to clarify where different individual scholars and schools of thought stand in relationship to one another. It could also, if the technique were adopted more widely, allow comparison of scholarly opinions on comparative democratic development in other periods and places.

This paper proceeds as follows: Section 1 describes a new methodology for mapping scholars' positions on historical democratic development onto a standard two-

dimensional x/y matrix. Section 2 applies the method to my own positions on Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracy, and illustrates how the quantitative mapping approach could allow a range of scholarly positions to be compared. Section 3 explains my justification for the substantive positions that I take on the degree and direction of change from Cleisthenic to Lycurgan democracy, arguing against the idea that Lycurgan democracy was a betrayal of the revolutionary "Cleisthenic moment." Section 4 concludes.

1. Mapping democracy

Democracy is, of course, a highly complex phenomenon; it cannot be reduced to a set of objective facts. The sort of comparison I suggest, of reasoned but necessarily subjective positions held by different scholars, requires reductive simplification. I focus here on just two aspects of democracy, but they are aspects that I suppose most historians and social scientists would regard as fundamentally important: First, evaluative ideals regarding the legitimate source of democratic authority and, second, the source of institutionalized practices. In order to define evaluative ideals about legitimacy and institutional practices, we may pose two basic questions about sources of democratic legitimacy and institutions.

Question 1 concerns theoretical evaluation of legitimate authority: *Where would a thoughtful citizen of the time in question locate the proper source of democratic authority?* I suppose that there are two ideal-type (that is, reductively simple, intentionally unsubtle, even extreme) answers to the question:
- 1a: The source of democratic authority is the established constitutional rules.
- 1b: The source of democratic authority is the People's will at any given moment.

Question 2 concerns institutional practice: *What is the actual source of the democratic institutions current at the time in question?* Again, I suppose that there are two ideal-type answers:
- 2a: Democratic institutions derive from a formal plan, a political blueprint that makes manifest the aims of a founder or current leader.
- 2b: Democratic institutions emerge adaptively, as citizens and leaders respond to changed circumstances through ongoing political experiments.

If we are to think in spatial terms, we may imagine that each of these four ideal-type answers (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b) defines the end-point of a linear continuum. We can set out those two linear continua on a standard two-dimensional x/y graph: The result is illustrated in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 about here]

The scale of 100 on both the x (horizontal) and y (vertical) axes of the graph is arbitrary; it gives us gives us a standard way to define specific location-points on the two-dimensional grid. Each location-point will be determined by two numbers in the form x, y (x = horizontal axis, y = vertical axis). Because the ideal-type answers are meant to define end-points of continua, I assign answers 1b and 2b the very low value of 5, and I assign answers 1a and 2a the very high value of 95. Because we have two linear continua, defined by the four ideal-type answers to questions about democracy, we can set out the

four corners of a conceptual space in which to compare the real-world democracies with which we are concerned. The four corners of the space are defined by combining the answers to the questions as follows:

1a,2a (95, 95); 1b,2b (5,5); 1a,2b (95,5); 1b,2a (5,95).

Keep in mind that Figure 1 is intended to illustrate the terrain of scholarly interpretation, and that the terrain is defined, at its limits, by simple and reductive ideal-types. The actual democratic forms of government that concern most historians and social scientists will fall inside those limits, and thus closer to the center of the graph.

The four location-points defining the corners of our graph of evaluations of democratic authority and institutional practices can be defined as follows. Note that, whereas I seek to clarify each position by reference to a noted theorist of politics, I do not claim that these positions would actually be endorsed, in the very strong form set out here, by the theorists I mention.

- 1a/2a. Rules/blueprint. Upper-right. x=95, y=95. We may call this point "Scalian" based on the U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia's doctrine of strict constitutional interpretation (which Scalia, 1997, calls "textualism"). One might also think of the political writing of the conservative British politician and theorist Edmund Burke, the American Federalists of the late 18th century, or Plato's Callipolis. This position supposes that loyal citizen ought to believe in the rule of constitutional law. In practice institutions are always be practical manifestations of the plan of the founders, and in full conformity with their expressed intentions. The political pathology associated with this position is ossification: the incapacity of the system of government to adapt to change, even when such change is essential to the continued flourishing of the community. At the far corner from this first point is:

- 1b/2b. Will/experiment. Lower-left. x=5, y=5. This point may be named "Wolinian" for the American political theorist Sheldon Wolin's (1996b) theory of "fugitive democracy." We may also think of the conditions of Paris in 1968, the claim, made, according to Xenophon (*Hellenica* 1.7.15) by many in the Assembly during the debate over the fate of the generals at Arginousai, the that "it is terrible if the demos is not able to do just as it wishes." This position holds that democracy exists only in revolutionary moments, in ephemeral actions in which the people's will is made manifest. Institutions (if necessary at all), are to be in perpetual flux, responding to the needs of the moment. The obvious political pathologies of this form of democracy include majoritarian tyranny and outright anarchy.

- 1a/2b. Rules/experiment. Lower-right (x=95, y=5). This third form of democracy may be called "Dworkinian," after the American legal theorist Ronald Dworkin's (1986) concept of the "living constitution. We may also think of Aristotle's prescriptions in the *Politics* for the improvement, through institutional change, of

existing "incorrect" regimes: changes are to be in line with the fundamental principles of the regime, but are experimental in that these changes do not follow an original blueprint. This position holds that the fundamental principles of justice are enshrined in a good constitutional order. Yet that order ought not to unduly constrain change. Democratic institutions can and should be changed over time in order to suit the evolving needs of a changing society. Those making the changes ought not be constrained by the intentions of any founder or leader but are constrained by the principles of justice underlying the original constitutional order. The political pathology of this sort of democracy emerges when experimental rulers seek revolutionary changes based on an appeal to "constitutional" principles of justice that are highly disputable; an obvious historical example is the ferocious debate over the "ancestral constitution" in late fifth-century Athens.

- 1b, 2a. Will/blueprint. Upper-left. x=5, y=95. The final form of democracy may be characterized as "Maoist" for Mao Zedong's (1967) theory and practice of institutionalized revolution. A possible ancient parallel might be sought in Thucydides' (2.65) vision of Periclean Athens as "in name democracy but in fact the rule of the first citizen." This position favors a perpetual revolution, the manifestation of by the revolutionary will of the mobilized People. Yet in practice all institutional arrangements will conform to the plan of the leader. The pathology of this political form is outright dictatorship.

Once again, the four location-points that define the corners of the graph in Figure 1 are extremes. None of these points is likely to suit any actual historical example of a working democracy. Certainly none of the terrain-defining location-points can be regarded as the correct place to locate ancient Athenian democracy in any period. Indeed, the corner points may not define theoretical positions that any reasonable person is committed to. And to repeat, I do not claim that Scalia, Wolin, Dworkin or Mao would endorse the extreme positions I have sketched here.

Most democratic theorists and citizens in the real world are likely to embrace some aspects of both popular will and to respect some form of pre-established rules. Likewise, in practice, a given array of democratic institutions will manifest some features that derive from formal planning, and other features that emerge from ad hoc experiments (this is discussed in Ober 2008, chapter 7). So we would expect real-world democracies to be located at some distance from the far corners of the chart. The four corner points are meant only to establish the limits of the space within which we will be seeking to locate Cleisthenic and Lycurgan models of democracy.

2. Comparing posited changes in democracy: Direction, slope, and distance
With a methodological framework in place, we may now ask: Where on the chart ought one to place point C -- representing a contemporary Athenian citizen's belief about the source of democratic authority and the source of democratic institutions in the era of Cleisthenes? And where should one place point L, for the democracy of Lycurgus? Each specialist in the history of ancient Athenian democracy will presumably have a somewhat

different answer. The purpose of this exercise is not to claim that there is a single correct location on which all scholars will agree, but to allow for comparison between a variety of reasonable answers, given by serious scholars, to the question of how Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracies were similar and different.

My own answers are illustrated in Figure 2. I place point Cjo" ("C" for Cleisthenes, "jo" being my initials –since this is my own assessment of correct placement for Cleisthenic democracy) in the lower left (will/experiment) quadrant of the chart, with an x-axis (authority) rating of 20 and a y-axis (institutions) rating of 20. I place Lycurgan democracy ("point Ljo") somewhat higher and considerably to the right, with an x rating of 75 (thus well into the "constitutional rules " side) and a y rating of 50 (at the midpoint between experiment and blueprint). In sum my location points can be expressed as follows:

Josiah Ober: Cjo 20,20. Ljo 75,50

[Figure 2 about here]

Below, I will explain why I place these points just where I do. But first, it is necessary to stay a bit more about how the spatial graphing method expresses judgments about democracy, and how it allows the judgments of scholars with differing views on substantive questions to be compared.

The relationship between the points Cjo and Ljo on Figure 2 expresses three distinct judgments about the relationship between Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracy in the form of (1) a *direction of movement,* (2) an *angle of slope*, and (3) a *distance* between the two points. The direction of movement indicates a judgment about the overall historical trend of political change: In this case, the direction is North-East: up (away from experiment and toward blueprint) and to the right (away from will and toward rules). This direction of movement might be regarded as a historically "conservative" trend; whereas down and to the left might be read as a "radical" trend." Angle of slope indicates a judgment about whether the posited change is primarily on the x axis (authority) or on the y axis (institutions). In this case, the angle is 29 degrees of arc. An angle of less than 45 degrees (as here) indicates the change is regarded as being more on the x axis; a slope of greater than 45 degrees would indicate that the posited change is more on the y axis. The distance of movement indicates a judgment about the extent of change: a greater distance obviously indicates more substantial change. In this case the distance is 63 units. By way of comparison, this is 49% of the "maximum" distance of 127 units from an extreme lower left will/experiment "Wolinian" position (5,5) to an extreme upper right rules/blueprint "Scalian" (95,95.[1]

In sum, my own position on the question of the difference between the conceptions of legitimate authority and institutional practice of democracy in the ages of Cleisthenes and democracy in the age of Lycurgus can be expressed schematically as

Josiah Ober: Cjo 20,20. Ljo 75,50 = NE 29 degrees, 63 units (49% of max).

Some other hypothetical scholar, call him "Bill Smith," interested in comparing the two periods of democracy, might offer substantially different answers in regard to each of the questions in section 1. This would result in placing his points C and L in places quite different from my own. Billy Smith might, for example, suppose that democracy in the era of Cleisthenes was characterized by an attachment to pre-existing rules and based on a blueprint, whereas the Lycurgan democracy was concerned with popular will and experimentation. Say that Smith's location-points, and thus direction, slope, and distance are as follows:

"Bill Smith": Cbs 60,55. Lbs 35,40 = SW 31 degrees, 29 units (23% of max).

By observing Smith's location-points, I realize that we have a profound disagreement about the relationship between Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracy. Smith's two location-points yield the direction of movement as South-West (the opposite of my North-East). Smith posits a slightly steeper slope (thus a bit more emphasis on the y axis of institutions). There is a considerably shorter distance between his two points, meaning that he sees considerably less overall difference between the two eras than do I. The hypothetical Smith and I are now in a position to discuss just why our results are so starkly opposed.

Alternatively, a second hypothetical scholar, call her "Pamela Jones," might place her location-points as follows:

"Pamela Jones": Cpj 15,10. Lpj 80,60 = NE 38 degrees, 82 units (64% of max).

Observing Jones' location-points, I know that Jones and I are in general, but not full, agreement about the relationship between Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracy. We agree on the direction of movement (North-East, from the "will/experiment" quadrant towards the "rules/blueprint" quadrant), but Jones regards the changes from the Cleisthenic to the Lycurgan period to be considerably more pronounced on the two other measures (steeper slope, greater distance) than do I. Again, learning this ought to be the basis for more fruitful discussions between us.

In the real world of classical scholarship, there is a considerable range of scholarly opinion on the evaluative question of how Athenians in the age of Cleisthenes and Lycurgus thought about the sources of legitimate authority that I am calling "People's will" and "constitutional rules"; and scholars are likewise divided over the question of the extent to which, in practice, Athenian institutions of each era were based on a leader's plan or ad hoc experimentation. I would not expect any other student of Athenian democracy to place points C and L just where I have. Yet if other scholars were to place their own points C and L on the chart, we could readily compare our positions, and we could see quite clearly the degree and direction of our agreement and disagreement. This seems to me to be potentially valuable: It may be that there is general agreement on, or on direction of movement, or on the relative importance of the two axes, or on distance. If that proved to be the case, then our discussion might fruitfully concentrate on those areas

in which there was substantial disagreement.

The method I am advocating, charting different models of democracy in two-dimensional space, is reductive and abstract. It can capture only simple features of the phenomena with which we are concerned and certainly cannot be imagined as a *replacement* for subtle and detailed comparative arguments. But as a *supplement* to more familiar forms of analysis, spatial graphing would have the advantage of allowing each specialist interested in ancient (or modern) politics, to compare his or her positions on certain relevant features of given political systems with the positions of other specialists. If we could accumulate a database of many location points, proposed by many scholars with a wide range of views, it would be possible to offer a map of the state of scholarship on the questions at issue.

If spatial graphing were to prove valuable for thinking about the democracy of the Cleisthenic and Lycurgan periods, it could be extended to other periods, for example to the Athenian political order in the eras of Solon, Peisistratus, Themistocles, Pericles, Cleon, Nicias, Phrynichus, Alcibiades, Critias, Thrasybulus, Eubulus, Demetrius of Phaleron, and Callias of Sphettos. The result would be, for any given scholar willing to fill in these points, a path of posited Athenian political development. I suppose that it would be fruitful to discuss the differences between the assumptions of scholars whose posited paths were, for example, straight, or parabolic, or wandering. Moreover, "evaluative ideals on legitimate authority and institutional practices" is only one set of political factors that might be spatially graphed. Other sets of factors might include "value of citizenship and percentage of state residents who are citizens," "economic equality among citizens and personal freedom of citizens," and so on.

3. Cleisthenes' "machine" in Lycurgus' Athens
Turning from method to substantive historical argument, my justifications for my placing of the points Cjo and Ljo are follows.

Point Cjo: 20, 20. In previously published work (Ober 1996, 1998, 2007) I claimed that what happened in 508 B.C. was a revolution, that the revolution saw the crystallization of the demos' recognition of its own capacity to make history, that the revolution had as its effect the emergence onto the stage of history of the demos as a collective actor capable of doing things in its own name, and that Cleisthenes was less a self-conscious constitutional planner than he was an astute interpreter of revolutionary action. I still think that series of judgments is right, so I place point C relatively fairly low and to the left of center. That is to say, I imagine that on the subject of legitimate authority, the ideals of a good Cleisthenic era Athenian citizen (whether or not of Cleisthenes himself) were substantially more concerned with the popular will than with constitutional rules. And next, I suppose that in practice the institutions that came to characterize Athenian democracy in the immediate aftermath of 508 B.C. were brought about, in the first instance, through a series of ad hoc experiments rather than being pre-determined by any formal blueprint.

Point Ljo: x 75, 50. Based on the work that led to my recent book, *Democracy and*

Knowledge, I place point L to the right of center on the evaluative x axis: This is because it seems to me that a good Athenian citizen in the age of Lycurgus, while respecting his state's revolutionary heritage, had become quite deeply committed to the value of stable constitutional rules. I place Lycurgan practice exactly in the center of the y axis of institutional practice: By the 330s Athens had, I think, achieved a balance in terms of institutions that were robustly capable of adaptive experimentation while also drawing much of their enduring form from a set of formal plans. The blueprints included the legal reforms of the late fifth century and historical accounts of the Cleisthenic system itself (which was not, if I am right, originally based on a blueprint, but was now functioning as a blueprint).

If I am right about Cleisthenic and Lycurgan democracies, how would a democrat of the age of Cleisthenes regard the democracy of the Lycurgan age? Would he regard Lycurgan a betrayal of the earlier Athenian democracy?

Sheldon Wolin, the influential American political theorist whose work is the inspiration for the "Wolinian" lower-left point on Figure 1, has argued that whenever democracy gains a constitutional form and adopts a norm of stability and fixed rules, democracy is thereby lost – or at best becomes a "fugitive" phenomenon. Wolin has argued that fourth-century Athenian democracy in particular represented a betrayal of the democracy's revolutionary origins. I have considerable sympathy with Wolin's position on the value of revolution. But I think he is wrong about Athens and wrong to say that true democracy can have nothing to do with either blueprints or with constitutional ideals.[2]

I cannot, in the space available, attempt to *prove* that Wolin is wrong to regard later eras of Athenian democracy as a betrayal of the earlier democracy, but I can try to *illustrate*, by means of another sort of thought experiment, why I think it is wrong to describe the difference between earlier and later eras in the terms of betrayal: Imagine an Athenian who had participated in the Athenian Revolution of 508, who had internalized the ideals of the revolution, and who had subsequently participated actively for a generation in the new institutions that were put in place following the revolution: A man who had become a member of a new tribe, had judged the citizenship claims of his neighbors in his home deme, had served on the Council of 500, voted in Assembly, cast his ostrakon against Hipparchus in 486, and so on. Call him Poseidippos (cf. Ober 2008: 143-51)

Suppose that Poseidippos is transported in time to the Athens of Lycurgus, and has a chance to observe the Lycurgan-era "machine" of democratic governance. As a point of reference, we might think of what a reborn Tocqueville would have to say about "Democracy in America in 2009." The difference in time between Cleisthenes (ca. 508 B.C.) and Lycurgus (ca. 330 B.C.) is just the difference between Tocqueville's original travels in North America (in 1832: Tocqueville 1835) and the date of this paper (2009).

Let us suppose time-traveling Poseidippos attended a meeting of the Athenian Assembly in 325 BC – the meeting at which Cephisophon of Cholargos passed a decree providing for warships to be dispatched in support of an Athenian naval station in the Adriatic.[3] What would Poseidippos make of democratic practice in the age of Lycurgus? Would

Poseidippos have reason to assume that the ideals of his own revolutionary era had been betrayed? My claim is that time-traveling Poseidippos would be struck by both continuities and changes in institutions and ideas about legitimate authority, but he would not regard the developments as a betrayal of Cleisthenic democracy.

First, and most obviously, Poseidippos would see immediately that the demos was still authoritative and its authority was taken as legitimate by the community as a whole and by the many individuals and government bodies given orders in the decree. This primacy of the role of the demos is prominent in the enactment formula of Cephisophon's decree,: (§1) "For the good fortune of the Athenian demos, in order that what the demos has resolved … may be done as quickly as possible, be it decreed by the demos…"

Next, the Lycurgan system had kept faith with the Cleisthenic system in that a primary *purpose* of the system, managing elite competition, had been maintained. The original purpose of the Cleisthenic democracy (as Sara Forsdyke 2005 has persuasively argued), was to control elite competition, and to do so without driving Athenian elites into hostile opposition or leading them to withdraw into disgruntled quietism. This had required that each element of the Cleisthenic system, from the new tribes to the new Council of 500, to the new mechanism of ostracism, be designed in such a way as to avoid elite capture (that is so that it could not be manipulated by strategic action on the part of individuals or groups of cooperating individuals). It also required that the mechanisms of control, for example the power of the demos to expel individuals without trial, be carefully circumscribed so as to avoid en masse elite defection. In sum, the incentives and sanctions had to be quite delicately balanced.

Poseidippos would of course recognize the name of the man designated by the demos as the founder of the new naval station (§5c): The fact that Miltiades, a member of a family that was already very prominent in the age of Cleisthenes, was granted a leading role in the age of Lycurgus, and the fact that that he had accepted a role assigned him by the people's decree, would tell Poseidippos that the Cleisthenic system had worked: The elite families had neither come to dominate the system, nor had they defected from it. Poseidippos would recognize the gold crowns offered the first three trierarchs to arrive at the docks (§3) as incentives meant to encourage the very wealthy to engage in publicly beneficial competitions with one another, contests established by the demos with awards determined and granted by the demos. The wording of the decree could not be more explicit: the crowns were to be awarded, "in order that the competitive zeal [*philotimia*] of the trierarchs towards the demos may be evident [*phanera*]."

The sanctions established against elites who did not act properly were likewise clear and restrained (§7): "The Council of 500 is to look after the dispatch [of the ships], punishing any lack of discipline among the trierarchs in accordance with the laws." So any errant trierarchs could expect to be disciplined by the Council, but the extent of that punishment would be determined by pre-existing law. Likewise the legal mechanism of exemption from trierarchic service (§4) allowed elites who believed their estates were being unfairly burdened by trierarchic liturgies to plead their case before a popular jury of 201 citizens.

Poseidippos might initially be concerned that no ostracism had not been carried out for almost 100 years. The people no longer gathered in the agora to cast their ostraka and thereby expel an errant member of the elite. But Poseidippos would, I suppose, recognize that the establishment of formal rules in the form of laws, far from betraying the Cleisthenic commitment to "the power of the people," enabled the demos more effectively to exert its authority through its constituent bodies (for example the Council). The existence of established laws provided a standard against which deviant behavior would be judged by the People's magistrates or popular juries. Certainly, Poseidippos would note that the decree provided for very severe sanctions for disobedience: (§6): "if anyone to whom each of these things has been commanded does not do them in accordance with this decree, whether he be a magistrate [*archôn*] or a private individual [*idiôtês*], the man who does not do so is to be fined 10,000 drachmas"

Third, Poseidippos would recognize some, but not all of the institutions mentioned in the decree. He would note that the Thesmothetai had been retained from the era of Solon, and would perhaps be amused when he noticed that the relationship between the value of the crowns offered by the demos (500, 300, 200 dr) exactly matched the ratios of the original Solonian *telê* (*pentecosiomedimnoi*: 500, *hippeis*: 300, *zeugitai*: 200) The fact that Cephisophon son of Lysiphon was identified by his deme (Cholargos) would immediately indicate that the deme/trittys/tribe system, a hallmark of the Cleisthenic system, had been retained. The prominence of the Council of 500 and the *prutaneis* of the Council would assure Poseidippos that this linchpin Cleisthenic body had remained centrally important to Athenian government.

Clearly, then, the very experimental system that Poseidippos had participated in had caught on. The ad hoc arrangements of the post-revolutionary era had been codified and had become a sort of blueprint guiding the development of the later democracy. But formalization and codification had not led to elite capture: any concern that the Council might have given elites a strangle hold on the government itself would be set at rest by the fact that the decree was passed by a resolution of the demos alone (not by the Council, and not, in this case, of the Council and the demos). The Council was given authority (in §9) to pass supplementary legislation, but the demos' hierarchical superiority in the institutional order was manifest in the admonition that the Council must not "annul any of the measures decreed by the demos."

Other institutional offices would be unfamiliar to Poseidippos: *apodektês, symmoria, euthynos, paredros, apostoleus*. Some of these were of recent vintage. From this, Poseidippos would reasonably infer that the Cleisthenic system, had not become an straight-jacket: Athenians in the era of Lycurgus were clearly still quite capable of ad hoc institutional experimentation.

One final point: despite its distance from the Cleisthenic system in terms of both ideas about legitimate authority and institutional practices, Poseidippos will correctly infer that the Lycurgan system was recognizable as a descendant of the Cleisthenic democracy: and not merely in the degree to which it conformed to a Cleisthenic era blueprint. As Poseidippos well knew, from his own political experience, the public institutions and the

emerging democratic culture of Athens served to educate citizens who participated actively in political life. Poseidippos, born and raised before the revolution, had later gained an extensive civic education as a result of participating actively in "working the machine" of the early democracy. As a result of that civic education, Poseidippos (like his fellow politically active Athenians) had come to embrace a new identity: a democratic civic identity that was quite different from anything his own ancestors had known.

As the civic identity of citizen-participants evolved, the Council, Assembly, and other institutions changed as well. The process of civic education and institutional evolution was continuous and reciprocal: institutions and culture reformed citizens who in turn reformed institutions and culture. In brief, then, the Cleisthenic machine not only "worked on the external world" in order to enable the polis of Athens to fulfill its public purposes, the machine also "worked on itself." The Cleisthenic machine was not, therefore, a simple, steady-state machine well designed by an inventor-founder to "go of itself" (cf. Kammen 1986) so as reliably to produce the same product year in and year out. It was instead a much more dynamic sort of machine that would inevitably change over time, and would produce different products.

There was every reason for our fictional time-traveler, an imagined product of the first generation of the working of the democratic machine, to expect that the process of change would continue in future generations. Before his leap forward in time, there was no way that Poseidippos could have predicted the distance that this self-revising democratic machine would move over the next five generations. Nor could he have guessed the likely direction or slope of its movement. But, in light of the Lycurgan democracy's persistent commitment to the authority of the demos, its sustained capacity to manage elite competition, and its ongoing capacity for experimental adaptation, it does not seem to me to that either the distance or the direction of movement observed by Poseidippos in Lycurgan Athens would be regarded by him as a betrayal of the democracy of his own Cleisthenic era.

4. Conclusions

I have suggested a method for specifying my own (and, potentially, others') judgments about the distance and the direction that Athenian democracy had moved from the era of Cleisthenes to that of Lycurgus. I hope to have shown that, although the distance was considerable and the direction was clear, the later democracy can be understood as having been produced by the dynamic institutional and cultural processes typical of the earlier democracy. Finally, I hope to have shown why it is wrong to speak of the later democracy as having betrayed either the ideals or the practices that emerged with the Athenian Revolution of 508 BC.
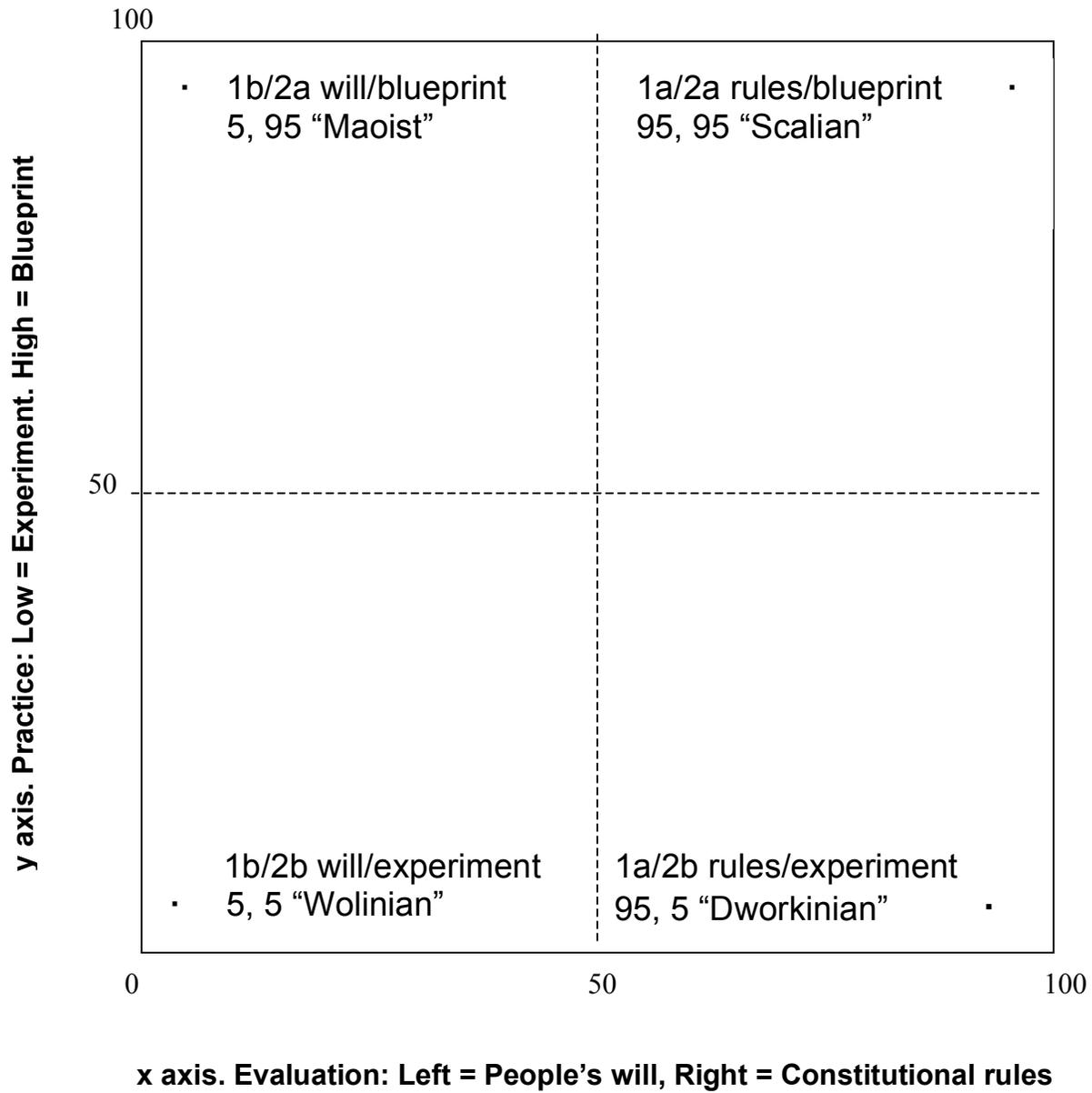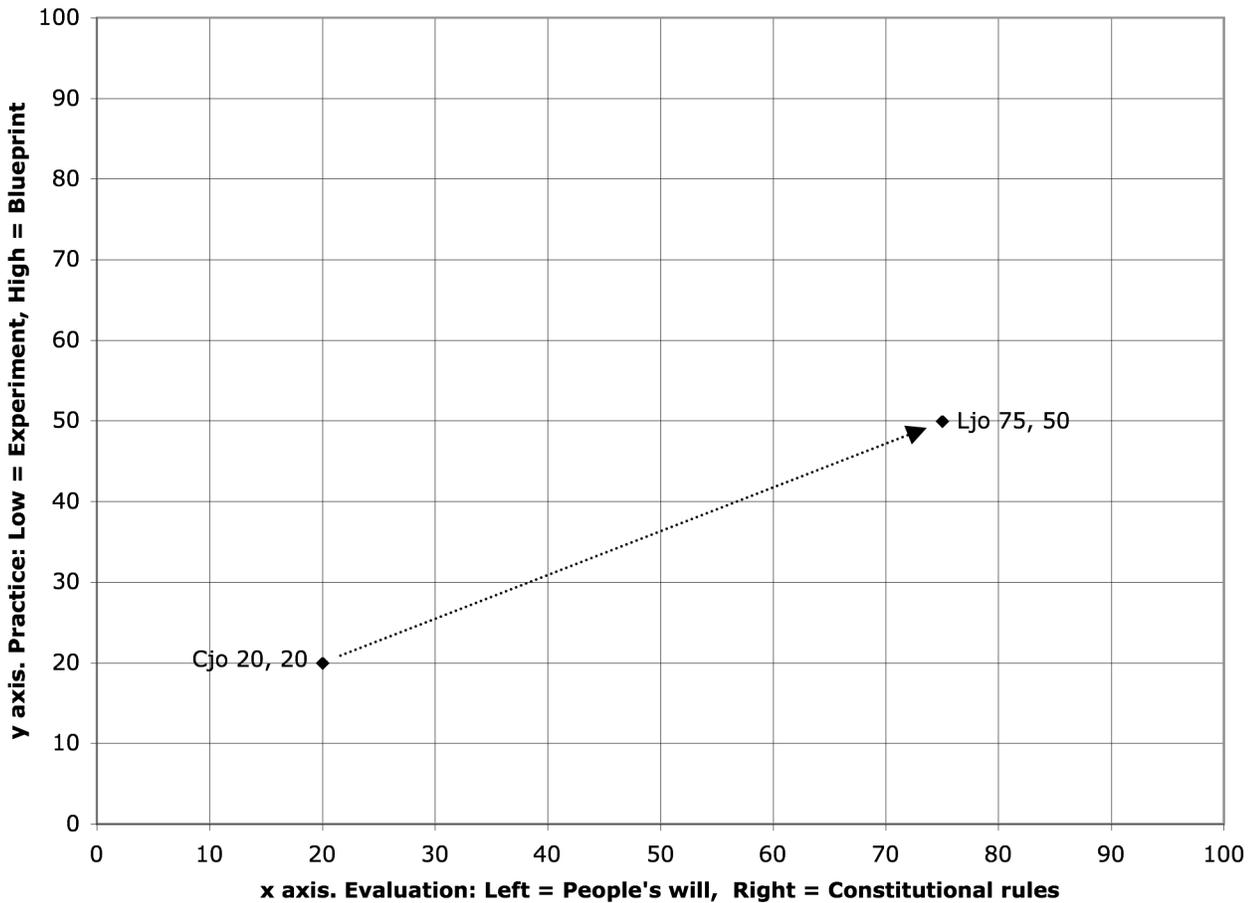
Figure 1: Models of Democracy: 4 Ideal types

y axis. Practice: Low = Experiment. High = Blueprint

100

· 1b/2a will/blueprint
5, 95 "Maoist"

1a/2a rules/blueprint
95, 95 "Scalian" ·

50

1b/2b will/experiment
· 5, 5 "Wolinian"

1a/2b rules/experiment
95, 5 "Dworkinian" ·

0   50   100

x axis. Evaluation: Left = People's will, Right = Constitutional rules

Figure 2. Models of Democracy: Cleisthenic and Lycurgan Athens

C = Cleisthenic democracy. **L** = Lycurgan democracy. **jo** = J. Ober's placement of points.

x-axis (vertical) measures the relative impact of a leader's or founder's plan (blueprint) and ad hoc experiments on the democratic institutions of a given era. Higher score indicates that planning was more important; lower score indicates that institutions took their form from ad hoc experimentation.

y-axis (horizontal) measures the normative conception of an ordinary "good democratic citizen" from a given era. Further to the left: the citizen regards the essence of democracy to be defined by the immediately expressed will of the people at any given moment. Further to the right: the citizen regards the essence of democracy to be defined by well established rules (constitutional laws or customs).

Appendix.

Rhodes and Osborne. *Greek Historical Inscriptions*. 100 (adapted). 325 B.C.

Cephisophon son of Lysiphon of [the deme] Cholargos made the proposal. For the good fortune of the Athenian **demos**, in order that what the demos has resolved concerning the colony to the Adriatic [in a previous decree] may be done as quickly as possible, be it decreed by the demos that:

1. The **curators of the shipyards** are to hand over the ships and the equipment [to the trierarchs] in accordance with the [authorizing] decree of the demos,
2. and that the **trierarchs** [ship commanders/equippers] who have been appointed are to bring the ships up to the dock [in Piraeus] in the month of Mounichion, before the 10th of the month, and are to provide them equipped for sailing.
3. The demos is to crown the first [trierarch] to bring his ship [to the dock] with a crown of 500 drachmas and the second with a crown of 300 drs and the third with a crown of 200 drs,
   a. and the **herald** of the **Council** [of 500] is to announce the crowns at the contest of the Thargelia [festival],
   b. and the *apodektai* ["receivers" of public funds] are to allocate the money for the crowns,
   c. [all of this is] in order that the competitive zeal [*philotimia*] of the trierarchs towards the demos may be evident [*phanera*].
4. In order that pleas for exemption [from trierarchic service] may be heard, the *thesmothetai* [judicial magistrates] are to man *dikastêria* [People's courts] with 201 jurors for the **general elected to be in charge of the symmories** [boards of trierarchs] on the 2nd and 5th of the month Mounichion.
   a. The **treasurers of Athena** are to provide the money for the courts in accordance with the law [*nomos*].
5. In order that
   a. the demos may for all future time have its own commerce [*emporia oikeia*] and transport in grain [*sitopompia*],
   b. and that the establishment of their own naval station [*naustathmos oikeion*] may result in a guard [*phulakê*] against the Tyrrhenians [i.e. Etruscan pirates],
   c. and Miltiades the founder [of the naval station colony] and the settlers may be able to use their own fleet [*oikeion nautikon*],
   d. and those Greeks and barbarians sailing the sea and themselves sailing into the Athenians' naval station will have their ships and all else secure, knowing that … [lines missing, due to damage to the stele]
6. …but if anyone to whom each of these things has been commanded does not do them in accordance with this decree, whether he be a magistrate [*archôn*] or a private individual [*idiôtês*], the man who does not do so is to be fined 10,000 drs, [the money to be] sacred to Athena, and the *euthunos* [magistrate in charge of accountability proceedings] and the *paredroi* [his assistants] are of necessity to condemn them or themselves owe the money.
7. The Council of 500 is to look after the dispatch [of the ships], punishing any lack of discipline among the trierarchs in accordance with the laws.
   a. The *prutaneis* [a tribal subset of the Council] are to arrange for the Council to be in session continuously on the dock [in Piraeus] in connection with the dispatch, until the dispatch takes place.
   b. The demos is to choose from the whole body of Athenians ten men as **Dispatchers** and those chosen are to look after the dispatch as the Council has ordered.
8. It is to be possible for the Council and the *prutaneis*, when they have looked after the dispatch [of the ships], to be crowned by the demos with a gold crown of 1,000 drs.
9. If there is anything lacking in this decree about the dispatch [of ships], the Council is to have authority to pass a decree, provided it does not annul any of the measures decreed by the demos.
10. All this is to be for the security of the homeland [*eis phulakên tês chôras*]. (Translation Rhodes and Osborne, slightly modified.)

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Notes. Ober.

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[1] The angle of slope is caclulated by a simple mathematical formula:
arctangent (run/rise)
Run = horizontal distance between the two points. Rise = vertical distance between the two points. Distance is calculated the Pythagorean theorem:
$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$
a = run, b = rise, c = distance. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

[2] Wolin's relevant work includes Wolin 1993, 1994, 1996a, 1996b.

[3] Rhodes and Osborne 2003: no. 100; see Appendix, with Ober 2008: 124-33. Note that the translation of the decree in the appendix has been divided into sections and subsections for ease of reference; citations are to these sections rather than to line numbers.