Is There an Emerging Global Crisis of Liberal Democracy?

Larry Diamond

April 2017
THE GLOBAL EXPANSION OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM, 1974-2016
Liberal (High-Quality) Democracy

1. **Democracy: “Majority rule”**
   Popular Sovereignty and Control over Government
   Competition, Participation, Vertical Accountability, Responsiveness

2. **Liberal government: “Minority rights”**
   Freedom, Equality, Civic Culture

3. **Republican government: “Good Governance”**
   Rule of Law, Horizontal Accountability, State Effectiveness
The Global Expansion of Democracy, 1974-2016

(note: liberal democracies refers to Freedom House classification)
Electoral Democracy by Population

- In 1996, 53% of countries had populations under 1 million.
- In 2006, 58% of countries had populations under 1 million.
- In 2016, 54% of countries had populations under 1 million.

- In 1996, 71% of countries had populations under 1 million.
- In 2006, 76% of countries had populations under 1 million.
- In 2016, 90% of countries had populations under 1 million.

Categorical: < 1 million, > 1 million
The Growth of Democracy in the World
1974-2016 (pop > 1 mil.)

- Electoral Democracy
- Liberal Democracy
Democracy by Region, 2016

- **EUR/ANG**: 100% Electoral Democracy, 100% Liberal Democracy
- **Pacific**: 75% Electoral Democracy, 65% Liberal Democracy
- **CEE**: 88% Electoral Democracy, 65% Liberal Democracy
- **LAC**: 85% Electoral Democracy, 48% Liberal Democracy
- **Asia**: 48% Electoral Democracy, 16% Liberal Democracy
- **SSA**: 41% Electoral Democracy, 16% Liberal Democracy
- **FSU**: 25% Electoral Democracy, 0% Liberal Democracy
- **MENA**: 11% Electoral Democracy, 5% Liberal Democracy

Colors:
- Red: Electoral Democracy
- Blue: Liberal Democracy
THE DEMOCRATIC RECESSION
2005-2016
Democratic Stagnation:

- The number of democracies peaked in 2006 at 62% of all states. Since then it has declined and increased within a narrow band.
Many Countries in the Gray Zone

Many 2016 democracies w/ FH scores of 4 on PR, CL or both:
Ecuador, Guatemala
Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Kenya, Niger, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Liberia, Madagascar, Cote d’Ivoire
Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan*
Fiji

*5 in CL
Eleven consecutive years of declining freedom scores, losses outpacing gains.
Ratio of Gains to Declines in Freedom, 1991-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Democratic Recession 3

A rising pace of democratic breakdowns

And in big, strategically important states:

Russia, Nigeria, Venezuela, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Kenya

- 29 breakdowns or reversals of democracy since 2000
  (Approximately half of the total during the third wave).
Rate of Democratic Breakdown 1975-2016

- 1975-1984: 16.9%
- 1985-1994: 9.0%
- 1995-2005: 9.4%
- 2006-2016: 15.7%
- 1975-2016: 31.6%
Trends In Political Rights, ROL, and Civil Liberties in Eastern Europe, 2006-2015

- Political Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Transparency & Rule of Law
Trends In Political Rights, ROL, and Civil Liberties in the Middle East & N. Africa, 2006-2015
Trends In Political Rights, ROL, and Civil Liberties in Latin America, 2006-2015
Trends In Political Rights, ROL, and Civil Liberties in Asia, 2006-2015

![Graph showing trends in political rights, civil liberties, and transparency & RoL in Asia from 2006 to 2015. The graph displays a steady increase in political rights and civil liberties, with a slight decrease in transparency & RoL during the same period.](image-url)
5. Incremental Erosion of Democracy in Latin America

- Deepening (now crisis) of populist authoritarianism in Venezuela
- Breakdown of democracy in Nicaragua, Honduras.
- Rising violence in Mexico & upper Cen Am
- Incipient populist authoritarian leadership in Bolivia and Ecuador
- Between 2005 and 2016, eight countries deteriorated in FH score (five in both Political Rights and Civil Liberties), while five improved
6. Arab Freeze

- Authoritarian resurgence in Egypt
- Crushing of the Arab Spring in Bahrain
- State fragmentation in Libya
- Civil war in Syria
- Destabilizing spillovers of Syrian civil war in Jordan and Lebanon
- Collapse of national dialogue in Yemen
- Hardening of autocracy in the Gulf
- Democracy, but with big challenges, in Tunisia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PR   CL</td>
<td>PR   CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Democracy</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>7    5</td>
<td>1       3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Authoritarian</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>5    3</td>
<td>5       4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>5    6</td>
<td>5       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>7    7</td>
<td>7       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Monarchies</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>4    5</td>
<td>5       5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>5    4</td>
<td>5       4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian Monarchies</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>7       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>6       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman, Qatar</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>6       5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>5       5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>7    6</td>
<td>7       7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elec. Authoritarian</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>6       5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically Closed</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>6       5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing State</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>6    5</td>
<td>7       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>7    6</td>
<td>7       7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Democracy is in Danger

1. Weak Rule of Law
   - Corruption, abuse of power
   - Abuse of indiv. rights, impunity
   - Violence, criminality, lawlessness

2. Executive abuse of power; weak constraints on executives by constitution, parliament, civil society

Which comes first, culture or institutions?
Why Democracy is in Danger 2

3. Severe polarization around ethnic, religious, class or identity lines; intolerance

4. Weak & Ineffective Political Institutions (parties, parliaments, systems of horizontal accountability)

5. Poor Economic Performance
   • Poverty, inequality, injustice → BAD GOVERNANCE
AN EMERGING CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY?
Autocratic Resilience
The Authoritarian Resurgence

- Enhanced repression and media/Internet censorship: Russia, China, Egypt, Iran, etc.
- Assaults on civil society, declining space: Criminalization of receipt of foreign donor support by NGOs
- Cooperation among authoritarian regimes, sharing of tools and techniques (Shanghai Coop Org, GCC)
- Authoritarian soft power projection (Russia, China)
- Coercion, intimidation, military force (Russia)
- Chinese geopolitical expansion—S China Sea, Cen Asia
Other Reasons for Concern

- Presidential impeachments in Brazil and S. Korea
- Paralysis, deadlock, poor performance of the advanced democracies
- Troubled democracies within the EU
- Decline of democracy in Hungary and Poland, assaults on independent institutions, especially constitutional courts, civil society
Emerging Autocrats Threaten Democracies

South African President Jacob Zuma

Philippines President Elect Rody Duterte, who vows to be a “dictator” against “evil”

Peruvian Presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori, daughter of the former dictator

Hungarian PM Viktor Orban, with Pres. Putin
Why Liberal Democracy Is in Danger

- Erosion of traditional mediating institutions: Established parties and mass media
- Social polarization driven by social media, fragmentation of the public square
- Rise of illiberal and antidemocratic parties
- Declining trust in government and support for democracy
- Economic decline and insecurity of traditional working and lower middle classes
- Cultural insecurity of traditional identity groups that feel threatened by immigration and globalization
Turkey’s PM Tayep Reccip Erdogan
Erdogan on election night, March 30, 2014

“We are the owners of this country, the people will not bow and Turkey is invincible.

Those [who revealed state secrets] who managed could flee. More can flee tomorrow. …from now on, we’ll walk into their dens. They will pay for this. How can you threaten our national security? Dirty relations and unnamed alliances have lost today… hit with a full Ottaman slap by the nation.”
EUROPE'S RIGHT TURN?
THE POLITICAL SHIFT IN HUNGARY, POLAND, AND FRANCE
Authoritarian Values in 9 Countries
World Values Survey, 2010-14

---

- **Strong Leader Good**
- **Army Rule Good**
- **Democracy Bad**

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Strong Leader Good</th>
<th>Army Rule Good</th>
<th>Democracy Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Korea</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trust in government and perceptions of government fairness


Government fairness trend sources: National Election Studies and CBS/New York Times polls. Annual means calculated for years with more than one poll.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
## Political Party Types in Liberal Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>NonDemocratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal (nativist)</td>
<td>Absurdum (non-existent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative for Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria—Freedom Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-liberal</th>
<th>Populist</th>
<th>Anti-democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right Parties:</td>
<td></td>
<td>France-FN, Jean-Marie Le Pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy—Berlusconi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Greece, Golden Dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary—Fidesz, PM Orban</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hungary, Jobbik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland—Law &amp; Justice (PiS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communist parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Parties:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece—Syriza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain—Podemos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems of American Democracy

- Increasing political polarization: residential sorting, ideological distancing
- Winner-take-all elections → polarization
- Social media → echo chambers, social polarization
- Two-party duopoly, alienation of independents
- Congressional paralysis, dysfunction
- Rising and enormous cost of election campaigns
- State capture: lobbying, dark money in politics
- Declining confidence in Congress & government
- Declining prestige of American democracy
Needed Reforms

- Electoral reform ➔ IRV (RCV), or PR
- Campaign finance reform
- Reform of congressional procedures and order
- Election administration reform
- Other ways to deepen participation
- Reviving, improving civility and a civic culture
Future Prospects
Reasons for Hope?

- Consolidation of democracy in
  - Most of Central and Eastern Europe
  - Taiwan and South Korea
  - Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and Brazil
- Political reform in the Philippines
- Electoral alternation in India and Indonesia
- Democratization in Tunisia and Ukraine
- Partial democratic reform in Burma
- Empowerment of civil society in digital era
- The ultimate transformation of China, Vietnam, etc.
Causes of Democratization

- Authoritarian regime failure (economic crisis, defeat in war)
- Authoritarian regime success (modernization → social change, value change)
- Regime divisions, factionalization between hardliners and softliners
- Globalization → changing norms and interests
- International pressure and engagement
The Autocrats’ Dilemma

- Authoritarian success (economic development) → rising demands for democracy
  - Singapore, Malaysia, eventually China, Vietnam

- Authoritarian failure → decay, vulnerability
  - Venezuela
  - Russia
  - Cuba, North Korea, Cambodia
Policy Implications

- Physicians, heal thy selves
- More mobilization of linkage and leverage—aid with standards
- Re-engage with under-performing third wave democracies
- Expand democracy assistance, including to media, civil society
- Invest in information, democracy education, campaign of ideas and knowledge
- Bet heavily on potential successes that could swing either way: Tunisia, Ukraine
THANK YOU