

GOVT S-1113

Democracy's Century: Democratic Transitions in Comparative Perspective

Instructor: Dr. George Soroka

Time: M, W 6:30pm-9:30pm EST (live web conference)

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On the cusp of the new millennium, Freedom House issued a report concluding that while in 1900 there were no polities that qualified as democratically governed (as even among those we typically think of as early democracies there were significant franchise restrictions), by 2000 119 featured universal adult suffrage and competitive elections, meaning that by this time nearly 60% of the world's population resided in political units that satisfied at least a minimalist definition of democracy.¹ While the enumerative methodology employed by Freedom House is open to debate, the report's central findings are not: the 20th c. truly was, in a global sense, "democracy's century." Attesting to the profound paradigm shift that transpired during this period, today even otherwise blatantly authoritarian regimes routinely cloak themselves in a veneer of electoral contestation and grassroots political participation. Normatively speaking, this underscores that democracy has come to be regarded far and wide as "the only game in town," the most, or even sole, legitimate form of governance.

However, despite democracy's advance in recent decades and the predilection exhibited by many world powers for fostering its continued expansion, the starting points for, and long-term results of, democratic transitions vary greatly across differing contexts. Consequently, at the most basic level this course seeks to ascertain what initial factors are advantageous versus disadvantageous for democratization, and then to assess whether, in the latter instance, there exist mechanisms capable of mitigating less-than-ideal background conditions.

Implied here is an underlying question: "Is democracy possible everywhere?" To address it, we will focus on examining regime transitions that take place under adverse circumstances. Conceptual readings concerning possible prerequisites for democracy will be combined with historical and contemporary case studies of successful and not-so-successful democratization attempts from around the world in an effort to identify common themes. Note, though, that we will not restrict our inquiry only to the influences that facilitate or hamper the shift to democratic governance, but will also concern ourselves with what induces democratic regimes, once established, to persist or fail and how these conditions may change over time. (Though obviously entwined, the processes of democratization and democratic consolidation are nonetheless distinct; moreover, they are not necessarily linear or teleological processes, as democratic breakdowns and "re-democratizations" do occur.) In addressing these outcomes, this course pays particular attention to the interplay between structure (e.g., level of economic development, geographic

¹ "Democracy's Century: A Survey of Global Political Change in the 20th Century," (http://www.social-sciences-and-humanities.com/PDF/century_democracy.pdf).

“neighborhoods”) and agency (e.g., constitutional choices, the sequencing of reforms, charismatic pro-democracy leaders).

GOVT S-1113 is designed with four primary goals in mind: a) to define democracy in contradistinction to other regime types and consider the factors that assist or hinder the respective processes of democratization and democratic consolidation; b) to familiarize students with specific cases illustrating instances in which democracy survived and thrived against the odds, as well as those where it failed to do so; c) to think about whether careful institutional design and/or external support may attenuate less-than-propitious starting conditions and aid in avoiding the societal costs of enduring a democratic reversal; d) to consider the degree to which it is possible to draw generalizable lessons for democracy’s prospects going forward.

We will begin this course by focusing on the theoretical literature concerning the challenges facing democratizing polities (many of which also apply to established democracies). The next section of the syllabus consists of analyzing cases that these readings suggest would constitute difficult transitions, paying attention to the approaches reformers have employed under such circumstances. Examined here are not only individual countries but also broader regions, with the objects of our attention ranging from regime transitions undertaken in the immediate aftermath of WWII through to those occurring in the present day. Finally, the last segment of GOVT S-1113 concentrates on discussing the degree to which democracy may be portable, and identifying how the knowledge we have gained may prove useful in fostering future democratizations. However, students are cautioned that they should not expect to come away from this course with an infallible set of policy guidelines, but rather with a greater appreciation for the complex interplay of factors that contribute to democratic transitions and their subsequent durability, or lack thereof.

Course Requirements:

1. *Class Participation* (30%): On-time attendance and *active* participation is expected (the quantity as well as the quality of your contributions count). I will grade your participation for each class on a scale of 0-2 (0=absent or did not contribute; 1=contributed sparse or off-topic comments, did not demonstrate familiarity with the readings, arrived late to class; 2=contributed thoughtful comments, demonstrated obvious knowledge of the readings, on-time attendance) and will share your participation grade with you whenever you wish. Depending on the number of students enrolled and the material covered in a given week, our time together may take the form of a lecture followed by discussion, or a seminar-style dialogue regarding concepts and readings. ***Please note: this is a video conference course, so all students will be expected to participate via video, not just audio.***

2. *Midterm Exam* (20%): The in-class midterm will be comprised of two sections, the first requiring short-answer identifications and the second an essay response to a prompt. Makeup exams will be granted only in cases of documented emergencies or absences for religious reasons (the latter should be discussed with the instructor in advance).

2. *Weekly Assignments* (20%): As specified below, students will complete a total of five short projects, consisting of four 2-3 page response papers (double-spaced, 12 pt. font, one inch margins) and a brief (15-20 minute) in-class presentation. Written work is ***due no later than midnight the day before class***, submitted electronically through the GOVT S-1113 website. ***Late papers will not be accepted, nor will presentation make-ups be allowed.***

4. *Final Exam* (30%): The cumulative final, like the midterm, will consist of short-answer identifications and essay responses to prompts.

Academic Integrity/Collaboration Statement:

Students are encouraged to continue course-related discussions outside of the classroom, but are expected to be responsible for their own work and preparation. As such, in taking this class you are agreeing to do all the assigned readings yourself. Students are likewise cautioned that written assignments handed in for evaluation must constitute original work not previously submitted for another class. All forms of collaborative writing are prohibited (except for the group presentation).

It is your responsibility to fully understand Harvard Summer School policies regarding academic integrity (<https://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-responsibilities>) and how to cite sources properly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. Plagiarism, whether unintentional or deliberate, will absolutely not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. See *Resources to Support Academic Integrity* for more information (<https://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources-support-academic-integrity>).

Accessibility issues:

The Harvard Summer School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Accessibility Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to those with documented disabilities. Visit <https://www.summer.harvard.edu/accessibility-services> for more information. Students with accessibility issues should contact the Accessibility Services Office at accessibility@extension.harvard.edu or 617-998-9640 as early as possible.

Course materials:

Required books are noted below and may be purchased from Amazon or other online sources. All other readings (e.g., articles, book chapters) are available via the GOVT S-1113 website.

Required Books:

Jan Teorell, *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972-2006* (Cambridge UP, 2010)

Steve Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010)

Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 [2nd ed.])

Alfred Stepan & Juan Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996)

James Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford, 2015 [2nd ed.])

I. Introduction: Theories, Definitions, and Their Limits (June 24)

Christian Welzel, "Theories of Democratization," in Christian Haerpfer *et al.* (eds.) *Democratization* (Oxford UP, 2009), ch. 6

William A. Galston, "The Populist Challenge to Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 29.2 (April 2018): 5-19

Takis S. Pappas, "Distinguishing Liberal Democracy's Challengers," *Journal of Democracy* 27.4 (Oct. 2016): 22-36

II. Does Democracy Demand Prerequisites I? (June 26)

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (Yale UP, 1972), ch. 1-2

Seymour M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53.1 (March 1959): 69-105

Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Towards a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 2.3 (April 1970): 337-363

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon, 1963), ch. 7

Sheri Berman, "How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe," *Journal of Democracy* 18.1 (2007): 28-41

III. Does Democracy Demand Prerequisites II? (July 1)

1st response paper due by midnight before class

Alfred Stepan & Juan Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Johns Hopkins, 1996), ch. 1-2

Samuel Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 2.2 (1991): 12-34

Harry Eckstein, "A Theory of Stable Democracy," *Regarding Politics* (U. of CA, 1991), ch. 5

Jan Teorell, *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972-2006* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 1-6

VIDEO: Ivan Krastev "Can Democracy Exist Without Trust?"

https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan_krastev_can_democracy_exist_without_trust?language=en

IV. The Political Economy of Democratization (July 3)

Evelyn Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & John D. Stephens, "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7.3 (1993): 71-86

Adam Przeworski & Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics* 49.2 (1997): 155-183

Elisabeth Wood, "An Insurgent Path to Democracy," *Comparative Political Studies* 34.8 (October 2001): 862-888

Carles Boix & Susan Stokes, "Endogenous Democratization," *World Politics* 55 (2003): 517-549

Stephan Haggard & Robert R. Kaufman, "Inequality and Regime Change," *American Political Science Review* 106.3 (August 2012): 495-516

VIDEO: "Yasheng Huang: Does Democracy Stifle Economic Growth?"

https://www.ted.com/talks/yasheng_huang?language=en

VIDEO: "Eric X. Li: 'A Tale of Two Political Systems'"

http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_x_li_a_tale_of_two_political_systems?language=en

Recommended:

Stephen Haber & Victor Menaldo, "Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse," *American Political Science Review* 105.1 (February 2011): 1-26

Jorgen Andersen & Michael Ross, "The Big Oil Change: A Closer look at the Haber-Menaldo Analysis," *Comparative Political Studies* 47.7 (2014): 993-1021

V. Institutional Legacies, Political Culture and Civil Society (July 8)

2nd response paper due by midnight before class

Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," in Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 [2nd ed.]), pp. 227-240

Michael Foley & Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 7.3 (1996): 38-52

Francis Fukuyama, "The Primacy of Culture," in Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 [2nd ed.]), pp. 320-327

Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49.3 (April 1997): 401-429

John Higley & Michael G. Burton, "The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns," *American Sociological Review* 54.1 (Feb. 1989): 17-32

Guillermo O'Donnell, "Why the Rule of Law Matters," *Journal of Democracy* 15.4 (2004): 432-461

Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 1

VIDEO: "Srdja Popovic: How to Topple a Dictator"

https://www.ted.com/talks/srdja_popovic_how_to_topple_a_dictator

VI. Constitutional Engineering and Reform Sequencing (July 10)

Robert G. Moser, "Electoral Engineering in New Democracies: Can Preferred Electoral Outcomes be Engineered?" in Zoltan Barany & Robert G. Moser (eds.), *Is Democracy Exportable?* (Cambridge UP, 2009), pp. 131-154

Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, pp. 111-180 (multiple authors) **Read the individual articles in order, as they are replying to one another**

Scott Mainwaring & Matthew Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal," *Comparative Politics* 29.4 (July 1997): 449-471

Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (Yale UP, 1977), pp. 1-2, 16-52

Thomas Carothers, "The 'Sequencing' Fallacy," *Journal of Democracy* 18.1 (January 2007): 12-27, and the accompanying exchange in the *Journal of Democracy* 18.3 (July 2007): 5-22

VII. MIDTERM (July 15): Exporting Democracy: The Efficacy of Exogeneity?

*Note: The midterm will be a one-hour exam (online); we *will* have class afterward*

Mitchell A. Seligson, Steven Finkel & Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, "Exporting Democracy: Does it Work?" in Zoltan Barany & Robert G. Moser (eds.), *Is Democracy Exportable?* (Cambridge UP, 2009), pp. 222-241

Andrew Enterline & J. Michael Greig, “Beacons of Hope? The Impact of Imposed Democracy on Regional Peace, Democracy and Prosperity,” *Journal of Politics* 67.4 (2005): 1075-1098

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, “Intervention and Democracy,” *International Organization* 60.3 (2006): 627-649

Mark R. Beissinger, “Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5.2 (June 2007): 259–76

Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 2

VIII. Case Studies: Pacts and Imposition (Spain, Germany, Japan, & Iraq) (July 17)

3rd response paper due by midnight before class

Alfred Stepan & Juan Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), ch. 6, 9

“The West German *Grundgesetz*, 1949-1989,” *Occasional Paper No. 13* (German Historical Institute, 1995), pp. 7-81 (*skim to get general historical outline*)

Michael Bernhard, “Democratization in Germany: A Reappraisal,” *Comparative Politics* 33.4 (July 2001): 379-400

Mary Alice Haddad, *Building Democracy in Japan* (Cambridge UP, 2012), pp. 46-72

John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of WWII* (Norton, 2000), pp. 65-84, 346-404

Eva Bellin, “The Iraqi Intervention and Democracy in Comparative Perspective,” *Political Science Quarterly* 119.4 (2004/2005): 595-608

Mieczyslaw Boduszynski, “Iraq’s Year of Rage,” *Journal of Democracy* 27.4 (Oct. 2016): 110-124

IX. Case Studies: South and East Asia (July 22)

Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 7

Ashutosh Varshney, “India Defies the Odds: Why Democracy Survives,” *Journal of Democracy* 9.3 (July 1998): 36-50

Sumit Ganguly, “India Under Modi: Threats to Pluralism,” *Journal of Democracy* 30.1 (Jan. 2019): 83-90

Zoltan Barany, “Burma: Suu Kyi’s Missteps,” *Journal of Democracy* 29.1 (Jan. 2018): 5-19

Fareed Zakaria, “Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1994), and rejoinder by Kim Dae Jung, “Is Culture Destiny?” *Foreign Affairs* (Nov/Dec 1994)

Susan L. Shirk, “China in Xi’s ‘New Era’,” *Journal of Democracy* 29.2 (April 2018): 22-36

VIDEO: National Endowment for Democracy, “Democratizing China,” April 2016

<http://www.ned.org/events/democratizing-china-insights-from-theory-and-history/>

Note: video is quite long—watch as much as you are able

X. Case Studies: Latin America (July 24)

4th response paper due by midnight before class

Alfred Stepan & Juan Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), ch. 11-12, 14

Steve Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 4

Moisés Naím & Francisco Toro, "Venezuela's Suicide: Lessons from a Failed State," *Foreign Affairs* Nov./Dec. 2018.

Eduardo Mello & Matias Spektor, "Brazil: The Costs of Multiparty Presidentialism," *Journal of Democracy* 29.2 (April 2018): 113-127

Kenneth Greene & Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer, "Latin America's Shifting Politics: Mexico's Party System Under Stress," *Journal of Democracy* 29.4 (Oct. 2018): 31-42

Recommended:

Scott Mainwaring & Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall* (Cambridge UP, 2014), ch. 8

XI. Case Studies: Post-Communist Europe (July 29)

Alfred Stepan & Juan Linz, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), ch. 15, 19

Steve Levitsky & Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 3

Anders Aslund, "The Three Regimes of the Old Soviet Bloc," *Journal of Democracy* 28.1 (Jan. 2017): 89-101

Grzegorz Ekiert & George Soroka, "Poland," in Isobel Coleman & Terra Lawson-Remer (eds.), *Pathways to Freedom: Political and Economic Lessons from Democratic Transitions* (CFR, 2013), pp. 77-104

Wojciech Przybylski, "Explaining Eastern Europe: Can Poland's Backsliding Be Stopped?" *Journal of Democracy*, 29.3 (July 2018): 52-64

George Soroka, "Assessing Domestic Security Challenges in Post-Maidan Ukraine: Two Critical Dimensions," in *Ukraine after Maidan: Revisiting Domestic and Regional Security* (ibidem 2018), pp. 93-134

VIDEO: "Russia as a Global Challenge" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVgoht2DaZk>

Recommended:

Joel Hellman, "Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions," *World Politics* 50.2 (1998): 203-234

XII. Case Studies: Sub-Saharan Africa (July 31)

Steve Levitsky & Lucan Way *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge UP, 2010), ch. 6

Michael Bratton & Nicholas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge UP, 1997), ch. 2

Michael Bratton, "Sub-Saharan Africa," in Christian Haerpfer *et al.* (eds.) *Democratization* (Oxford UP, 2009), pp. 339-355

E. Giymah-Boadi, "Africa's Waning Democratic Commitment," *Journal of Democracy* 26.1 (Jan. 2015): 101-113

Brett Carter, "Autocrats versus Activists in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 29.1 (Jan. 2018): 54-68

Recommended:

Staffan Lundberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), ch. 1, 7

XIII. Case Studies: A Cold Arab Spring? (make-up class time tbd)

James Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford UP, 2015 [2nd ed.]), pp. 1-92, 141-158

Francesco Cavatorta, "The Middle East and North Africa," in Christian Haerpfer *et al.* (eds.) *Democratization* (Oxford UP, 2009), pp. 321-338

Alfred Stepan, "An 'Arab' More than 'Muslim' Electoral Gap," *Journal of Democracy* 14.3 (July 2003): 30-44

Eva Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* 44.2 (January 2012): 127-149

Tarek Masoud, "Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?" *Journal of Democracy* 26.1 (2015): 74-87

Geoffrey Macdonald & Luke Waggoner, "Dashed Hopes and Extremism in Tunisia," *Journal of Democracy* 29.1 (Jan. 2018): 126-140

VIDEO: "Wael Ghonim: Let's Design Social Media that Drives Real Change"

https://www.ted.com/talks/wael_ghonim_let_s_design_social_media_that_drives_real_change?language=en

Recommended:

Jillian Schwedler, "Can Islamists Become Moderates?: Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics* 63.2 (April 2011): 347-376

XIV. Final Exam (August 5)

Note: The final will be a three-hour, online exam