

The International Community and Democracy

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October 21, 2025

Puzzles

- Aristotle: politics is the study the laws of a city, the action its citizens undertake, and leadership
- Thucydides: history is an account of what states do
- What do citizens do, why they do it? When do nations make war?
- What is the state? What is a regime?

Theme I Emotions and Motivations



Among the silent
protesters in Taksim
Square.
Joachim
Ladefoged/VII, for The
New York Times

Figure: They expect governance

Theme II Maps



Theme III Why Nations Fail



Figure: Most human settlements are no longer

Theme IV Who Tells the Story?

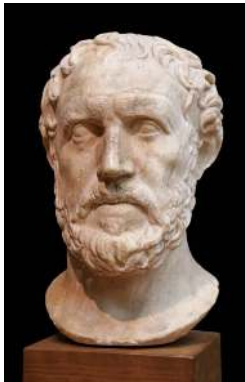


Figure: Dead White Men

Theme V Rights and Control



Of course, this comparison between prisons and schools was articulated by the French sociologist and philosopher Michel Foucault – the theorist whose work I am using to build a theoretical framework for teacher discourse on Twitter. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault makes this grand claim:

“Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” (Foucault, 1995, p.228)

Figure: Now on Netflix!

Realism prediction: Borders

- Prediction of realism - states will try to grow as much as they can, until they hit resistance
- What are the function of borders? Protect settlements, in order to collect tax from the people
- Romans build roads, walls, to protect populations
- The business model of the barbarians was hit and run - they did not have to build roads or anything
- The cost of supplying the army imposed limits on imperial expansion
- Roman borders held out, ultimately gave way

Autocracies and War

- Why do they start them?
- How do they fight them?
- What are their effects?



Figure: Byzantium's borders - subcontracting security

Forms of Organization

- City-states
- Empires
- Feudal states
- Westphalian sovereign states - later, nation-states

Questions

- We have to look at what is good, for society
- We will look at why nations rise and fall, how they war, prosper and decline, repress and empower

If we thought of our subject as a house, and of explanations as stories, we will need a story about the stories of this home



Figure: four epochs, now on sale!

Explanations

- Why does something happen in this and not in that way?
- Description is not the goal, explanation is
- Theories are a means to an end, never a goal in and by themselves
- You need to know what scholars have said but do not overdo this
- Scientific method is the “science” in political science

IR

- International relations are relations between states
- To understand how they work, we need to talk about The State

The State

- a nation or territory considered as an organized political community under one government
(New Oxford American Dictionary, 3rd Edition)
- What do we want to know? “Power”, origins, definitions
- We care about explaining normatively-relevant variation

Origins

- Agriculture and relief enable stable political organization
e. g. Mesopotamia
- The people with the swords can organize the people without,
for a fee
- Tilly calls this “organized crime,” $\equiv$ The State

Sumerian Standard of Ur

- Centrality of Violence in State-Making
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWl6eolbQ2g>

Tilly's Definition and Treatment of Violence and the State

- "...centralized, differentiated organizations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory."
- - it is a double-edged protection racket.
- - as an aside: is the state's monopoly on violence 'legitimate'? does it have the assent of the governed?
- - does force have to be used all the time, for it to be central in state formation?

Tilly wants to know why some states did better

- Entrepreneurs who wanted to build states
- - did better if they had capital,
- - did better if they could collect taxes,
- - did better if they could control rivals domestically and fight them externally

State Success

- Key, reinforcing ingredients include:
- Capital: - borrow money, or take-over other states and plunder resources, or subcontract with pirates and marauders
- Taxes: - on land, trade, maritime and river routes
- Rivals: - disarm opponents, create large central armies

Basic Model of the State

- Ruling Class; everybody else.
- “If a prince could create a sufficient armed force to hold off his and his subjects’ external enemies and to keep the subjects in line for (cost) 50 megapounds, but was able to extract 75 megapounds in taxes (tribute) from those subjects for that purpose, he gained a rent of $(75-50 =) 25$.”
- with the ‘profit’ - build a fine palace, eat well, what else?

Tilly

- “Racket” is to protect a against the consequences of one’s own actions: pay up or I will beat you
- Early on, many parties shared the right to use violence
- This was costly to the ruler so we saw the demilitarization of the great lords under Tudor
- This encourages the police and bureaucracy that enable the state to project order without local rivals

Tilly

- Princes who could create more elaborate machineries of violence could conquer more land
- Naval cities and empires were first
- transportation made it hard to have armies and to do things and to supply capital cities
- capital was important for military expansion
- war, state, taxation, borrowing - advanced together

Tilly

- English expected king to live on own expenses, taxes only for war
- taxes rose as a result of the enormous cost of war making
- Britain had excise taxes and customs taxes - cheaper than land and property
- Denmark astride the Baltic Sea could cheaply collect customs revenue

Tilly

- Constantly changing map of Europe -
- External compacts merely sanction the winners of the international and domestic war making

Tilly

- To build their power state makers had to concede to limits and more protections of their subjects

Predictions on Regimes

- Evolution of regimes over time:
 - 1 Shifts in ruling classes, different patterns of taxation and representation
 - 2 Property rights as an important innovation, allowing subjects (at least some) to keep a portion of the fruit of their labor
 - 3 As returns to the dominant classes started to exceed the returns to the ruler, modern capitalist states were born
- Note connections between capitalism and state formation

War Making and State Making as Organized Crime

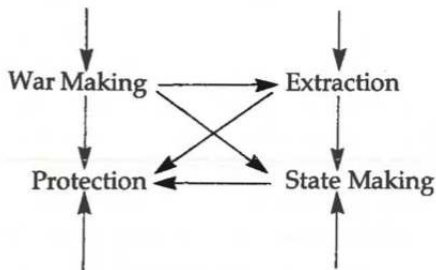


Figure: Tilly's World: State Formation Flow

The Need to Succeed Produced Some Unanticipated Consequences

- Bureaucracies help the state extract in the absence of local feudal agents
 - 1 they are expensive and require extensive control
- Control over land is expensive
 - 1 which explains the success of maritime states Venice, Antwerp, England
- Coalition-making with the economically-productive class greatly lessened the authority of many kings
 - 1 modern Western democracies rest on this bargain

What do we learn from this?

- Tilly has something to say about the export of this state model to the Third World
 - 1 Borders in the third world are guaranteed by outsiders so you do not have to worry to create a strong state, you can pillage your population domestically without any problem
- Tilly has something to say about democracy . . .

But we have much more here!

- A theory, a model... ruler wants to do stuff/faces constraints...
 - 1 Ruler can seek help, empowering some groups and in turn becoming subject to rules (Social Contract)
- Economics matters: how are resources extracted/value added?
 - 1 who keeps the surplus
- Technology matters: for warfare/for production
- Terrain matters!
- Certain groups/classes matter: Marx!

We can try to explain regime type as a result of a fight between three classes:

- Barrington Moore's Thesis
- Landed Class, Capitalist Class and Labour Class characterize states entering modernity
- How did the agrarian economy end?
- Where aristocracy and bourgeoisie allied, we had fascism with the landed elite preserving its power
- Where peasants and bourgeoisie allied, we had communism
- Where the bourgeoisie prevailed, making an alliance with the aristocracy and wiping out the peasant class, we had capitalist democracy
- Economics and trade matters: shift from subsistence to modern agriculture transformed the class system

Lecture: The Regime

- We know the state.
- How is the regime different?
- Let's turn to Dahl and then see how rulers live

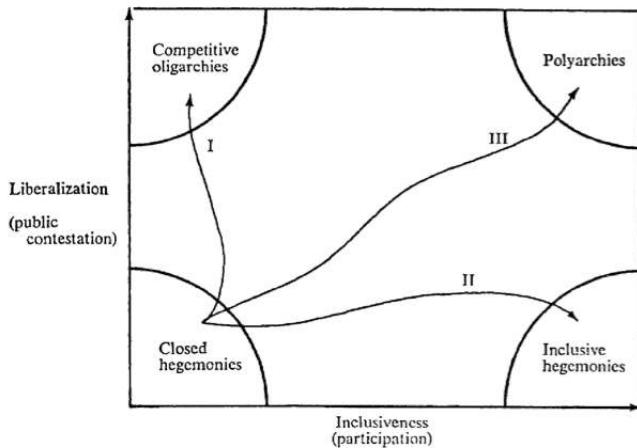


Figure: Dahl's Regimes

Two Regime Dimensions

- Contestation
- Inclusion
- What do these mean?

Why do these dimensions matter?

- Different participation leads to different outcomes: normative justification
- Examples

Why do we construct classifications?

- We want to explain under what conditions regimes move along the dimensions

Models to explain regime change

- Marx and his class-struggle model was smart but we have made some progress
- Game-theoretic models help us understand the behavior of regimes
- Models simplify the world by stripping it to essentials
- They are things we take for granted and things we seek to explain
- What are some building blocks?

Citizens and Elites

- Actors are citizens who are numerous and elites who are a small number
- How are they different? What do they want?
- How else do we distinguish actors: leaders, winning coalition, selectorate

Citizens and Elites and Ruler

- What can actors do?
- De jure vs De facto power
- Constraints

Citizens and Elites and the Ruler

- What do actors care about?
- Income/Asset ownership
- Taxation - ways to affect that
- Public and private goods provision
- Income redistribution

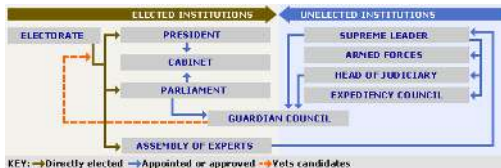
Citizens and Elites and the Ruler

- What are the fundamental problems faced by the actors?
- How to live together is a challenge
- Avoiding socially costly conflict is important
- Commitment problems:
 - how can we know we can trust each other?

Definitions

- Dictatorship fails to one of the two conditions for democracy: (1) free periodic elections for a legislature/parliament and (2) executive elected either directly or via the freely elected legislature
- If a regime satisfies both = democracy, if it fails one or both = dictatorship
- Just how power passes in autocracy is a question of extraordinary diversity: whereas democracies are alike (power passes through elections). We can use Tolstoy's happy families analogy.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish democracy from autocracy, consider Iran:



Figure

Svolik Sees Two Problems Dictators have to contend with

- Power-sharing
- Control over the population
- Whether and how dictators resolve the problems of power-sharing and control is shaped by two distinctively dismal features of authoritarian politics they lack an independent authority with the power to enforce agreements among key political actors, and, violence is an ever-present and ultimate arbiter of conflicts in authoritarian politics.

Difference between Dictatorship and Democracy is one of a kind

- Tyranny is a kind of monarchy which has in view the interest of the monarch only; oligarchy has in view the interest of the wealthy; democracy of the needy. None of them the common good of all. Aristotle, Politics, Book 3
- Still democracy appears to be safer and less liable to revolution than oligarchy. For in oligarchies there is the double danger of the oligarchs falling out among themselves and also with the people ... Aristotle, The Politics, Book 5

Three dictatorships

- Chile
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6kkaIfy9wU>
- Russia
- Lenin in Bolshevik Time
- Syria
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9R5qTQ3Gxw>

Passports and Starvation

- I used to have two passports. The story of why communist countries had two passports is connected to the story of a boy called Józef Sobolewski who thought he saw wheat in Ukraine in 1933 (see [Snyder](#))

Figure:
BG
Pass-
port
1



Figure:
BG
Pass-
port
2



Passports and Starvation

- WWI ends, Germany defeated, USSR - powerful, Poland finds its way onto the map Bloodlands

Figure
Book



Figure:
Map

Timothy Snyder, 'Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin', 2012, Penguin Books. The map is based on the New York Review of Books.

Passports and Starvation

- The population of Ukraine is useful to the dictator, and is suspicious - foreign threats magnify domestic threats
- The 'solution' - starve 4 million in the Bloodlands in 1933, terrorize
 - 1 The mass murder of Ukrainians was not justified by any societal need
 - 2 It protected Stalin's grasp on power

Prominent Features of These Stories

- International Environment - foreign powers helping regime transitions, shaping threats to leaders
- Violence:
 - 1 War, civil and between countries
 - 2 Repression and Purges
 - 3 Security and Military Apparatus
- Leaders and Personality Cults

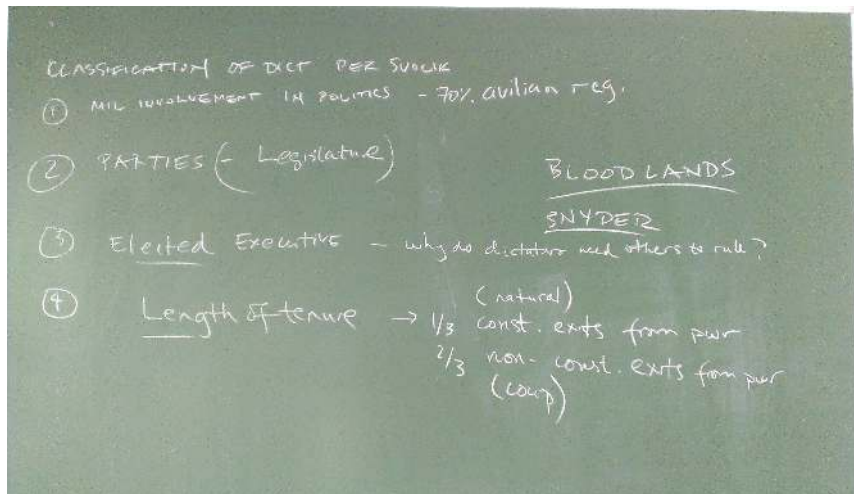


Figure: Prominent Characteristics of Dictatorship, to be explained

Explanandum

- In the book, Svolik uses data on the timing and manner of entry into and exit from office for all authoritarian leaders throughout the period 1946-2008.

What we need to explain

Svolik's arguments clarify why such dictators - like Fidel Castro, who ruled Cuba for a half-century until his retirement in 2008 - emerge across all kinds of dictatorships, develop personality cults, and enjoy long tenures: They have effectively eliminated any threats from their ruling coalition. This last point helps us understand not only the variation in the length of dictators' tenures but also the manner by which they lose office.

Explanandum

- The book explains why some dictators, like Saddam Hussein, establish personal autocracy and stay in power for decades; why leadership changes elsewhere are regular and institutionalized, as in contemporary China; why some authoritarian regimes are ruled by soldiers, as Uganda was under Idi Amin; why many dictatorships, like PRI-era Mexico, maintain regime-sanctioned political parties; and why a country's authoritarian past casts a long shadow over its prospects for democracy.

Explaining Prominent Aspects of Dictatorship

- How do leaders of dictatorship end their time in office?
- Svoboda shows that the main threats to dictators are coups, assassinations, less common threats are uprisings, elections
- Natural death is least common:
 - 1 “Authoritarian politics has always been a ruthless and treacherous business. For most dictators, merely dying in bed is a significant accomplishment.”

Building blocks of Svolik's Theory

This is what I call a ruling coalition:

- “select group” the “close circle,” or-most commonly-the “ruling group”
- danger: allies' rebellions, mirroring the language of the right to a “baronial rebellion”

Dictatorship can be contested or consolidated

Svolik: “contested and established autocracy corresponds to the empirical difference between oligarchy and personal autocracy”

- Stalin goes from contested to consolidated
- China after Mao goes the other way

Comrade Stalin

- § Although distinct stages can be identified in Soviet history, in terms of the structure of supreme authority there are only two periods: oligarchy (Lenin) and dictatorship (Stalin)
- § Historians of the Soviet Union distinguish between the pre-Purges and the post-Purges Stalin
- § The possibility of such “upward mobility” is intimately tied to the distinctively toxic conditions under which authoritarian elites must operate. A small dose of uncertainty about a rebellion’s success will limit the allies’ ability to credibly deter the dictator from attempting to usurp power at their expense.

Comrade Stalin

Stalin's rise to power is perhaps the most prominent example of the transition from contested to established autocracy. Stalin rose from the position of an "obscure party functionary" (Suny 1998, 49) in the 1920s to an indomitable autocrat by the end of the 1930s. Stalin eliminated from the Communist Party the key opposition groups associated with Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Bukharin). In 1924, when the terminally ill Lenin warned that Stalin had accumulated too much power, the Party ignored him, and Stalin was retained as the general secretary (Suny 1998, 146-8).

Comrade Stalin

Ten years later, in another push to consolidate his power, Stalin's Purges transformed the Communist Party from an ideological organization of elites and intellectuals, whose primary political interest was the promotion of Communism, into a party in which power rested in the hands of people of low-class origins whose primary personal loyalty was to Stalin. Stalin eliminated more than one-half of the 1,961 delegates and more than two-thirds of the 139 Central Committee members elected at the 17th Party Congress in 1934, the last such Congress before the Great Purges. He purged about one-half of the officer corps from the army and executed more officers than died in WWII.

were unclear to both his followers and his opponents (Teiwes 2010, 86).

More generally, however, the autonomy associated with delegated power in most political systems is amplified by the secrecy and back-channel politics that are typical in dictatorships. During the struggle for Soviet leadership after Vladimir Lenin's health deteriorated between 1921 and 1924, Joseph Stalin's maneuvers to accumulate influence by securing key appointments for himself and his loyal followers in the Party hierarchy at first went unnoticed by many powerful figures (Suny 1998, 143–8).

Figure: Stalin Piles Up Power

The allies' imperfect information about the dictator's actions and a rebellion's potential failure jointly undermine its *ex-post credibility*. This is how the two factors interact: The potential failure of any rebellion makes its staging costly – even if it is expected to succeed. The dictator's allies would therefore like to avoid staging it unless they are certain that the dictator is indeed trying to usurp power at their expense. But, because they observe only an imperfect signal of the dictator's actions, they never have such certainty. Stated simply, the allies would like to threaten a rebellion but will be reluctant to carry it out.

Figure: Why Allies May Fail to Prevent That

Comrade Stalin

By the end of the 1920s, Stalin had eliminated rival factions headed by Leon Trotsky, Gregory Zinoviev, and Nikolai Bukharin; by the end of the 1930s. Although Molotov was fortunate enough to have Stalin's death arrest his political demise, more than half of the full or candidate members of the Soviet Politburo between 1924 and 1952 either were imprisoned, assassinated, executed, or had committed suicide.

Comrade Stalin

- By the time of his death, Stalin arguably held “the greatest power over the greatest number of people in history”

Evidence of Consolidated Dictatorship Dynamics

And Then There Was One!

77

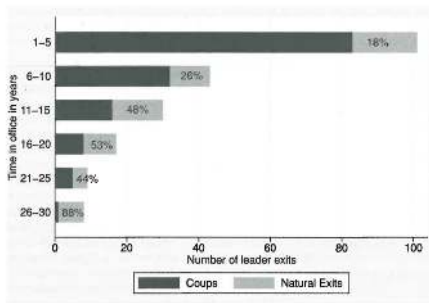


Figure: Svoboda - Dictators Experience Fewer coups the longer they manage to stay in power

Established Dictators

Once a dictator is established, he may, of course, still lose power, but such instances should be rare and occur primarily by a process that is politically divorced from the interaction between the dictator and his ruling coalition. Hence, rather than by the hands of their inner circle, established dictators should more often lose power by popular uprisings - as in the case of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali - or by foreign interventions. Accordingly, Saddam Hussein was brought down by a foreign occupier, Muammar Qaddafi by a popular uprising, and Joseph Stalin by a stroke - none of them at the hands of their inner circle.

And then there was one!

- The term “cult of personality” probably appeared in English around 1800-1850, related to the Romantic “cult of genius”
- The political use of the phrase came first in 1877:
 - 1 “Neither of us cares a straw of popularity. Let me cite one proof of this: such was my aversion to the personality cult that at the time of the International, when plagued by numerous moves to accord me public honor, I never allowed one of these to enter the domain of publicity. - Karl Marx, A Letter to German political worker, Wilhelm Blos, 10 November 1877
- The terms “cult of personality” and “personality cult” were popularized by Khrushchev’s Secret Speech of 1956.

World Leaders Stamp Collection



(a)



(b)



This is why personality cults are the hallmark – and primarily a consequence rather than the cause – of established autocracy. According to Suny (1997, 38), Stalin – who was short in stature, a mediocre speaker, and the “ultimate man of the machine” – did not project an image of a leader until one was created for him. Unlike regime propaganda, the purpose of which is to disseminate ideology, a personality cult aims to reinforce the dictator’s paramount political standing. Thus Hafez al-Asad was the twentieth-century’s Saladin (Wedeen 1999, 1); Saddam Hussein was the new Nebuchadnezzar (Karsh 2002, 152–3); and His Excellency, the Generalissimo, Doctor Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina, Honorable President of the Republic, Benefactor of the Nation, Restorer of the Financial Independence of the Country, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces was right next to God when his regime ordered that even churches display the slogan “God in Heaven, Trujillo on Earth” (López-Calvo 2005). Even more than that: The self-dubbed Light of Human Genius Kim Il Sung could control the weather with his mood (Oh and Hassig 2000, 4); Chairman Mao could swim nearly four times the world record (Harding 1997, 176); and Togo’s Gnassingbé Eyadéma commanded superpowers in the comic books that his regime commissioned (Lamb 1984, 48).

Whereas an established autocrat boasts of supernatural powers, everyone else fades into anonymity. Thus at the peak of Mobutu Sese Seko’s personality cult in 1974–1975, official media were banned from mentioning by name any

Figure: Superheroes!

And then there was one!



Saddam celebrates the fall of Jerusalem with Salaf al-Din and Nebuchadnezzar on a billboard near the ruins of Nimrud, May 1990.

Figure: An Illustrious Line

And then there was one!



Figure: Paying Their Respects

And then there was one!



And then there was one!

degree, we were allowed to go on living and working. —

Whereas the transition from contested to established autocracy happens with a positive (if small) probability, there is no return from established to contested autocracy. Once a dictator is established, he may, of course, still lose power, but such instances should be rare and occur primarily by a process that is politically divorced from the interaction between the dictator and his ruling coalition. Hence, rather than by the hands of their inner circle, established dictators should more often lose power by popular uprisings – as in the case of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali – or by foreign interventions – as in the case of Jean-Bédel Bokassa of the Central African Republic. In terms of the dictator's position vis-à-vis his ruling coalition, established autocracy is one in which all ends are tied up (“atado y bien atado”), to paraphrase Franco's assurance about the continuity of his regime (Payne 1987, 575).

Figure: No way back

Rotations and Demotions Ensure only ONE NAME matters!

The conspicuous feature of these practices is not only the temporariness of political appointments but also the arbitrary and public nature of their abrogation: In most accounts; rotations, dismissals, or personal attacks come unexpectedly, without an objective rationale, and are accompanied by a campaign of public humiliation. This suggests that the common primary purpose behind these practices is to publicly signal the dictator's independence from his administrators. That is even if established autocrats depend on their administrators as a collective, they ensure that such dependence does not translate into the public perception that any individual administrator is indispensable.

Institutions for Powersharing (and Control)

Dictators' path to stability is not only consolidation of personal rule.

Institutions: provide information and reassure - when power is equal and the number of allies is neither small nor large, power sharing can be facilitated

Institutions for Powersharing

- Once formal, deliberative, and decision-making institutions are in place, two mechanisms alleviate commitment and monitoring problems: (1) The ease of monitoring reassures the allies that actual attempts by the dictator to usurp power will be caught before it is too late (2) greater transparency among the ruling elites prevents misperceptions of the dictator's actions from escalating into regime-destabilizing confrontations.

Institutions for Powersharing

- The deliberative and decision-making institutions that perform these functions most typically take the form of committees, politburos, or councils that are embedded within authoritarian parties and legislatures. The National Revolutionary Party - which eventually became the Institutional Revolutionary Party that governed Mexico for seventy years - functioned between 1929 and 1938 as a civilized conclave of generals who resolved their differences without drawing their revolvers.
- The adoption of term limits and retirement-age promotions on the tenure of top leadership posts exemplifies how formal rules facilitate the monitoring of a dictator's commitment to sharing power. Prior to Deng Xiaoping's institutional reforms, there were no formal restrictions on lifelong tenure of political leaders.

Politburo as an Institutions for Powersharing

- After Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, for instance, his ruling circle resurrected formal institutions of "collective leadership" out of fear that someone among them would attempt to replicate Stalin's usurpation of power. In contrast to its defunct status toward the end of Stalin's life, the new Presidium (as the Politburo was renamed) convened regularly after 1953 and adopted clear rules of membership, agenda setting, decision making, and protocol - thus making apparent any member's attempt to sidestep collective leadership.
- Nikita Khrushchev's increasing unpredictability and unilateralism first united a majority of the Presidium's members in a failed attempt to unseat him - during the so-called anti-Party plot of 1957; a second attempt in 1964 led to his ultimate demise.

Other Institutions for Powersharing

- In the case of the Argentine junta of 1976-1983, such rules - including the rotation of the presidency and the sharing of government posts among the multiple branches of the military - were explicitly motivated by the marginalization that the military experienced after bringing General Juan Carlos Onganía to power a decade earlier
- Institutions that facilitate authoritarian power-sharing can build on traditional institutions, as in the case of various advisory councils in contemporary Arab monarchies, or are *sui generis*, as in the case of the complex system of overlapping leadership institutions in post-revolutionary Iran. The latter includes the uniquely Iranian Council of Guardians and Assembly of Experts

Authoritarian Control

- We have the problem of a small authoritarian elite in power and the much larger population excluded from power
- Dictatorships resolve this problem in two principal ways: by repression and by co-optation
 - 1 Cooptation (parties) is costly
 - 2 Repression entails a fundamental moral hazard: The very resources that enable the regime's repressive agents to suppress its opposition, also empower them to act against the regime itself

Cooptation and Repression as Strategies of Power-Sharing and Control

- Svolik identifies three core institutional features that turn authoritarian parties into effective instruments of authoritarian control:
 - 1 hierarchical assignment of service and benefits,
 - 2 political control over appointments, and
 - 3 selective recruitment and repression.
- The two problems are often interconnected: when indispensable in repression, soldiers transform from obedient agents into political rivals who demand a cut from the spoils of their complicity. Meanwhile, in order to co-opt effectively, authoritarian parties promise upward mobility that over time begets a new political elite.
- Repression and co-optation thus each empower different actors and institutions

Dictator: Should I empower the military?

- Thus we frequently observe that in return for the military's complicity in the suppression of internal opposition, the government concedes to it greater autonomy, resources, and a say in policy.
 - 1 Classic examples of such concessions are the privileges that Roman emperors gave the praetorian guards and the army in return for their support against rivals and the Senate
 - 2 A modern counterpart is the autonomous revenue that militaries enjoyed in some dictatorships, such as the military-run enterprises in Egypt, Indonesia or the military's monopoly over smuggling in Paraguay and import licenses in Syria

Inequality and Repression

- In dictatorships where a few in power control a disproportionate share of wealth, repression is simply more attractive than co-optation. In these regimes, it is cheaper for the regime to pay its repressive agents to suppress any opposition than to assuage it by co-optation.
- Consider Uruguay under Juan Maria Bordaberry, who assumed the presidency in 1972. Facing an increasingly polarized society, militant labor, and a continuing leftist insurgency, Bordaberry expanded the central role that the Uruguayan military assumed in the suppression of domestic opposition under his predecessor, Jorge Pacheco Areco.

Inequality and Repression

- The Uruguayan military soon capitalized on its newly acquired political strength: The generals began to publicly diagnose Uruguay's political ills, press for its preferred solutions, and veto Bordaberry's policies and appointments.
- By the end of 1973, Bordaberry was a figurehead president of a military dictatorship that disbanded the National Assembly, banned all political parties, and in 1976, forced Bordaberry's resignation, preferring to govern through a more compliant figurehead.

What if you do NOT empower the military?

- Contrast Bordaberry's policies and fate to those of the former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who fled into exile in January 2011.
- Ben Ali, like his predecessor Habib Bourguiba, relied for repression on internal security forces rather than the military.
- Both presidents deliberately kept the Tunisian military small, underequipped, and out of politics, fearing that a politically indispensable military might turn against them.
- When mass protests erupted in 2010, Ben Ali ordered the army to assist the overwhelmed police and internal security services in suppressing the protesters. Lacking a vested interest in the regime's survival, the army chief of staff General Rachid Ammar refused the order, thereby sealing Ben Ali's fate

Case-Study Uganda

- When indispensable for a regime's survival, repressive forces metamorphose from an obedient servant into a potential political rival - regardless of any formal constraints on their prerogatives. This is what General Idi Amin Dada did in Uganda after he became indispensable in Milton Obote's suppression of opposition to his eventual consolidation of dictatorial powers.

Case-Study Uganda

- Beginning in 1965, Obote used Amin's loyal following within the armed forces to eliminate opposition, first in the parliament, then from the country's ceremonial president, and ultimately from within his own party.
- By the time Obote established a full-fledged dictatorship, he needed Amin and his army more than Amin needed Obote. In 1971, Idi Amin deposed Obote in a military coup d'état and established what would become one of the most brutal dictatorships of the twentieth century.

The Value of Joining the Party

We will talk about how the creation and maintenance of political parties helps autocrats. Also in focus - elections and parliaments

Cooptation as a Strategy of Power-Sharing and Control: Elections in Autocracies

- When power is widely dispersed, elections help to allocate resources to the most influential notables precisely because, under dictatorship, voters can be not only convinced but also bought and coerced. This may have been the role of elections in the aristocratic republics of 19th-century Latin America and the city republics of Renaissance Italy. Only a small fraction of their populations could vote and, in the latter case, offices were frequently tied to guild membership. Similarly, elections in the single-party regimes of Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, and Ivory Coast served, as “a mechanism for the accommodation and integration of a fairly narrow political elite” into broad multiethnic alliances.

Elections in Autocracies

- In most dictatorships, parties, legislatures, and elections do not perform the same political functions as their democratic counterparts
 - 1 17 percent of authoritarian legislatures are either unelected or appointed;
 - 2 37 percent permit only a single party or candidate per legislative seat;
 - 3 in a further 13 percent, the largest and almost always regime-sanctioned, governing political party controls more than 75 percent of legislative seats.
- Authoritarian legislatures are often gathering of the "Who's Who" in a regime's echelons of power.

Parties

- Parties require significant resources!
- Parties function in 3 ways: hierarchical assignment, political control and selective admission and repression
 - some people now have sunk costs (it was more likely to enter schools if family belonged to party)
 - ideologically close go first
 - standards rose and fell for admission into Cuban communist party depending on the economy

How does the King of Morocco use political parties?

- ...moreover, the masterminds in the opposition partisan organizations are tracked down to attract skilled activists and appoint them in high-ranking positions. The late King Hassan II was very good at this, ... his son, King Mohammed VI, had(s) surrounded himself with leftist ex-prisoners. Through this tactic, he ... (1) strengthened the regime. (2) by appointing opposition figures to high positions, he made these figures appear in the eyes of their supporters as traitors... This policy ... aimed to eliminate the opposition, making each individual worry about his or her own fate. When there is an absence of concern for a collective fate, politics dies. The third objective was attracting skillful civil servants, thus allowing the king to drain the opposition of its intellectual capacities. [link](#)

How does the King of Morocco use government jobs?

- These are called “ghost civil servants,” and they receive their wages without performing any actual services. Blind loyalty and the lack of an independent opinion are prerequisites for promotion . Those who conform to an absolute obedience of orders have greater chances of becoming rich, enjoying the spoils of their position that turned out to be a veritable gold mine. ... The majority of Moroccan politicians who have occupied high-level positions were civil servants who were promoted for one reason or another. They were not politicians elected by the people but rather by the administration. A civil servant who works in politics, trade or both is bound to become rich. [link](#)

Case-Study Syria

- Bashar al-Asad was not meant to be a dictator. Although he was the son of Syria's long-serving president, Hafez al-Asad, Bashar's education and career were nonpolitical. In 1988, at the age of twenty-three, he received a degree in ophthalmology from the University of Damascus and moved to London four years later to continue his medical residency. Hafez al-Asad had instead groomed Bashar's older brother, Basil, as his successor. Yet Bashar's seclusion from politics ended in 1994 when Basil died in an automobile accident. Bashar was recalled from London, entered a military academy, and quickly advanced through the ranks, while his father spent the last years of his life eliminating potential challengers to Bashar's succession

Pyramidal Structure of the Baath Party in Syria

Syrian Baath Party



Figure: Pyramid

Case-Study Syria

■ Response to the Arab Spring:

- 1 Asad's first response to the protests was to offer restive Syrians some proverbial "carrots." In fact, even before the actual protests began, the regime had already frozen rising electricity prices, increased heating-oil subsidies, and raised salaries for public workers - anticipating that the wave of uprisings emerging across the Middle East may spread to Syria.
- 2 A few weeks later came the sticks: by late April, the government was stepping up arrests, imprisoning activists, and firing live rounds on demonstrators across the country. Bashar al-Asad's response to the Arab Spring exemplifies two principal ways in which dictators resolve the problem of authoritarian control: repression and co-optation.

What do authoritarian parliaments do?

- Generate information and seek accountability - Gandhi p59:
Members of Moroccan parliament can quiz ministers and are entitled to a response
- Provide a convenient scapegoat, giving the King the *good* cop vs bad cop role
 - 1 When times get bad, call new elections
- Use information to inform policy
- Steal talent
 - 1 Offer people a stake in the system, sunk, ruler-specific costs

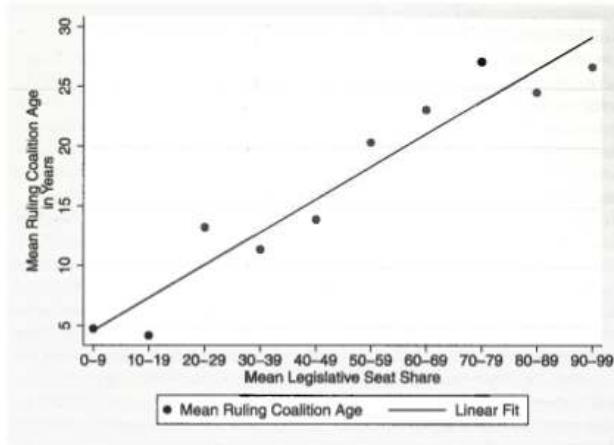
When are Auth Parliaments Adopted?

- In Kuwait, the Emir first shared power, then retrenched when oil was discovered in the 1930s (Gandhi)
- When the threat is large and they need cooperation, they will make concessions (Gandhi)
- Gandhi p98 When Resources diminish and income inequality rises, parties are more likely (and more than 1 party is more likely)

What are the effects of auth. Parliaments and Parties?

- Gandhi Chapter 4,5:
- Autocrats spend less on defence when you adopt parties, income per capita grows more

Autocracies where the main party has more seats in Parliament have longer-running ruling coalitions



Leaders of autocracies with legislatures are less likely to leave power as a result of a coup

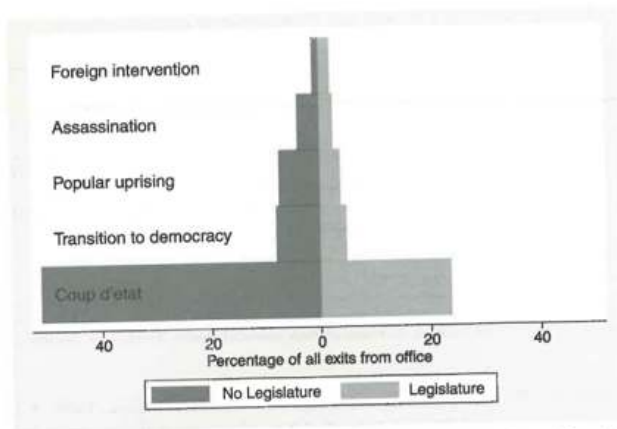


FIGURE 4.4. Nonconstitutional-leader exits from office in dictatorships with and without legislatures, 1946–2008. *Notes:* Exits of interim leaders are not included. Unambiguous

Parties in Dictatorship:

- Good?
- Bad?
- Good for autocracy, if you have the resources, they help you co-opt. Possibly not that bad for the people in a sense. Precursors of democracy? We do not know.

War in Ukraine

- Different account of Bloodlands in Germany and Moscow, partly used to start the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014/2022



Democratic Origins

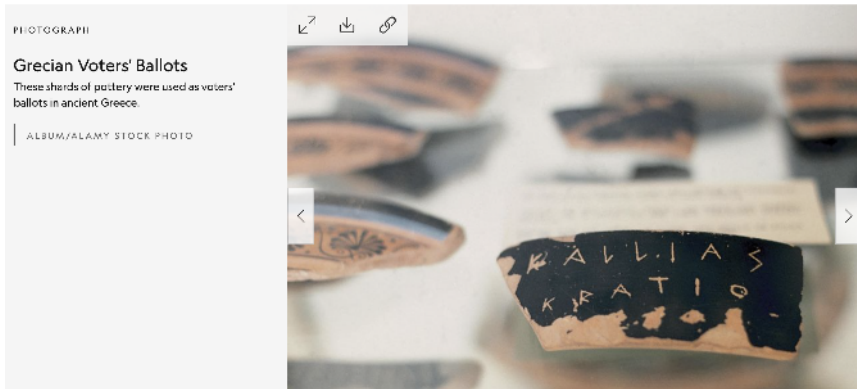
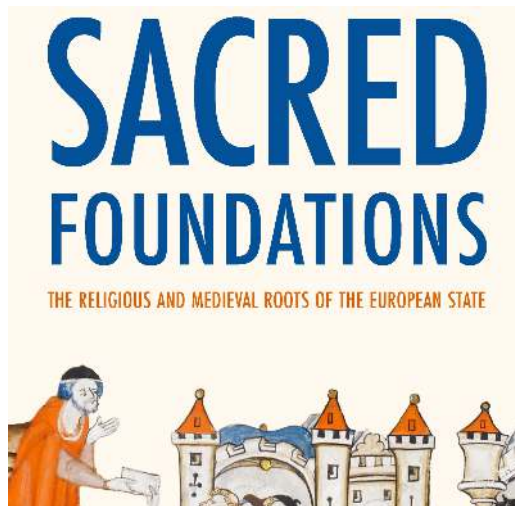


Figure: Ancient Athens was a [direct democracy](#) - republican Rome, an [oligarchy](#)

Historical process

- Grzysmala-Busse identifies the Church as an important driver of what ultimately become democracy:
 - 1 fragmentations
 - 2 rules
 - 3 representation
- Parliaments were versions of early synods or Councils
- Magna Carta

Grzymala-Busse's Book



Fragmentation in Europe Result of Papal Action

[56] CHAPTER 2

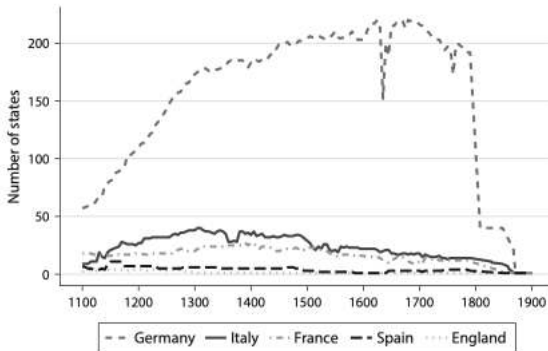


FIGURE 2.4. The fragmentation of Europe, 1000–1900.

Fragmentation in Europe - Result of Papal Action



FIGURE 2.5B. Europe in 1300, showing the territories of the Holy Roman Empire.

Figure: Competition had many unanticipated consequences

Grzymala-Busse's Book

[80] CHAPTER 3

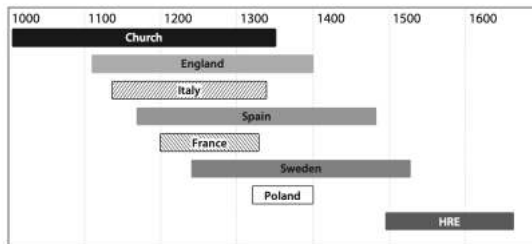


FIGURE 3.1. Summary of the emergence of early state institutions.

Figure: States arose modelled on the Church

Grzymala-Busse's Book: Bishops knew the law

CIVIL LAW

Much of Justinian's *Corpus*, including the only copy of the *Digest*, was owned by a monastery in Pisa since the 700s. It was eventually copied, and Irnerius began to interpret the manuscripts, along with four main collaborators, together known as the "fathers of the law."⁷ By the 1070s, a monk named Pepo was already lecturing on the *Corpus*, and within a decade, students had organized law lectures at what would become the University of Bologna. There, scholars carefully scrutinized and interpreted the Justinian compendium of Roman law, giving rise to a legal science unknown since the third century. Their glosses, or comments, were added to the original body of law, and a succession of glossators added new interpretations until Accursius published his collection in the thirteenth century (Brooke 1938, 390).⁸

Figure: The Law was useful in controlling conflict

Grzymala-Busse's Book

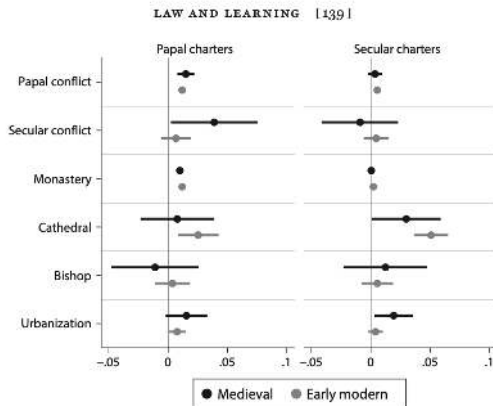


FIGURE 4.3. Papal conflict is associated with universities with both secular and papal charters (ME with city-year level 2 clusters). Horizontal lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Commune variable not shown.

Grzymala-Busse's Book

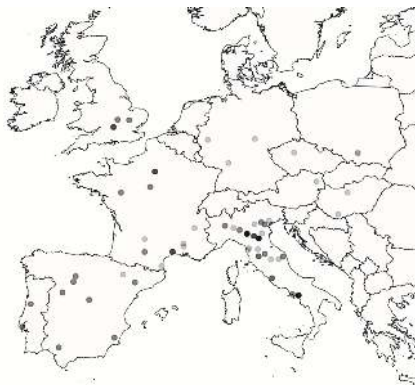


FIGURE 4.1. Medieval universities, 1000-1400. Darker dots indicate earlier founding date.

Figure: More universities where the Pope had more conflict

Doctrine

- With the rise of law, State and Church became separate from King and Pope
- That means all can have rights, including you and I
 - 1 Legal and ideological doctrines were born
 - 2 Conservative - sovereignty
 - 3 Enemies-Friends
 - 4 Important
- State vs. Individual
- Domestic vs International

The Institutional or Property Rights Perspective on the origins of economic growth

- The paradox of Unlimited Power
- If you can expropriate your subjects, no one would lend to you
- A king who imposes constraints on their own powers, can get more 'power' in return
- Presumably, this is why or how England became so militarily successful

The Institutional or Property Rights Perspective offers a puzzle

- How can the king restrict his power, given that he has advantage over any one competing group in society
- The answer: A model from North and Weingast
- Bargaining Perspective of the rise of limited government:
 - 1 Illustrated with the Glorious Revolution in England

The Institutional or Property Rights Perspective offers a solution

- A “grand” bargain
- In which democracy means limits on executive authority, powered by a joint threat of rebellion by all
- Tilly’s perspective on the rise of the state and work on the Catholic Church both argue that the strongest states arose where power was limited - king had to succumb to Parliament and Parliaments ultimately started appointing the government

Who Guarantees Democracy?

- All power is subject to the reach of elections, no institution is truly untouchable
 - 1 This means that we all guarantee democracy
 - 1 it is self-enforcing
 - 2 We agree that if the ruler attacks one group, all others will come to its rescue
 - 3 The ruler would lose and so would not try to abuse his power in the first place

Definitions, re-enter

- Procedural democracy:
 - 1 We emphasize how power is transferred
 - 2 Why?
 - 3 Because it is important
- Liberalism also important
- Good governance also important
- but we study procedures, liberalism, governance separately

Protests in Autocracies

- Sometimes usher in change:
 - 1 may result in democracy
- Can lead to civil war
- Can invite reprisals
- Will not appeal to all the citizens

Factors and Transitions

- How does economic growth/crisis affect transitions?
- Inequality?
- A large or small middle class (another actor)?

Participants willing to effect a democratic transition face a collective action problem

- A critical number of people are needed to put enough pressure on the government, so that it agrees to step down and hold elections
- If this number is not met, violence makes protest participation very costly (risk of death)
- If the number is met, then government refrains from using violence, or finds itself incapable of deploying the latter
- This number is sometimes called the tipping point number (beyond which regimes collapse)

Transitions are hard to predict, or nearly random, from the point of view of the observer (researcher)

- Still, there are risk factors that make transitions more likely
 - 1 Low economic growth
 - 2 High corruption, together with inequality and poverty
 - 3 Loss of a war
- These erode the legitimacy of any government, democratic or authoritarian
- They make the breakdown of any government (regime) more likely

Transitions

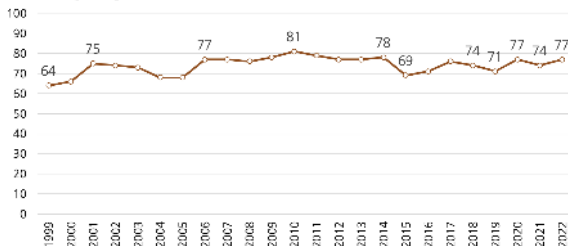
- While some circumstances make instability more likely, we cannot predict transitions
- Democracy arises in many ways (as if random) but we know that if it arises in a rich country, it will endure

Satisfaction with Democracy is Important



"Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with how the Swedish democracy is working?"

Satisfaction with democracy in Sweden (percent)
Share very/fairly satisfied



Source: The national SOM surveys 1999-2022

Figure: If more people like democracy, democracy would be defended
source SOM

Development and Democracy

- Democracy has never faltered in a rich country
- The Modernization Perspective
 - 1 Hungary has 18 K per person in GDP, Austria - 55 K
 - 2 We have a type of autocracy in the first but not in the second one
 - 3 The GDP of developed countries starts at 30 K a year

Do people like democracy

- Democracy will only survive if broad coalition would fight for it
 - 1 Global crisis in how much people like their democracies
 - 2 The U.S. went from 75 per cent liking to fewer than a half liking
 - 3 This is worrisome
- Source: [Global Dissatisfaction with Democracy](#)

Factors explaining the endurance of a Democratic regime

- Regimes end by challenges by specific elites
- Such challenges are less likely in wealthy societies
- One reason is that the rich do not fear the tax rate the median voter chooses
 - 1 but they would in a poor society,
 - 2 where the median voter demands too much in taxes

Median Voter Theorem

- Three car-mechanics drink beer in a bar, each makes 50 K USD per year:
 - 1 Their mean income is the sum $50+50+50$ divided by their number=3 so $150/3$ yields 50 K
 - 2 Their median income is 50, 50, 50 - we pick the one in the middle (median), so it is 50 K (again)
 - 3 This is a nice symmetric distribution - mean and median coincide, you could say “a group of three guys with mean or median income of 50 K drink beer in a bar”
- In democracies, key decisions are made by the median voter
- The less scary the choices made by the median voter, the easier is it for groups to pass peacefully power to each other

Median Voter Theorem

- Now Jeff Bezos who makes \$ 12.5 billion USD per year walks into the same bar:
 - 1 The mean income is now the sum $50+50+50+12.5$ billion divided by number=4 so more than 12 billion
 - 2 The median income is 50, 50, 50, 12.5 billion - we pick the one in the middle (in this case the average of the two middle 50's which is still a 50) so it is 50 K again
 - 3 This is a very asymmetric distribution - mean and median diverge, you could say "a group of three guys with mean income of 12 billion or median income of 50 K drink beer in a bar" and both statements would be correct!

Median Voter Theorem

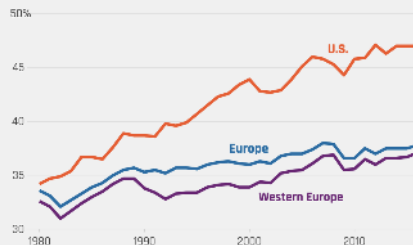
- Such skewed distributions feature income polarization - the right-end is wayyyy to the right - in the billions!
- The person in charge is the median voter - so they could vote to take away the wealth of Bezos
- Bezos does not like this, pays a bunch of goons to take power in the bar, suspends democracy, declares dictatorship
- Median Voter Theorem:
 - 1 ...says politicians will cater to the median voter
 - 2 ...if wealth is very unevenly distributed, the median voter may ask for a lot of it - which may spook the richer voters
 - 3many would argue that growing inequality in the West, particularly in the USA, has generated unhappiness with the distribution of wealth which makes democracy unstable

Has the U.S. become a more unequal society?

Figure 3

Inequality has increased more rapidly in the U.S. than Europe

Share of national income earned by the top 10% of earners, 1980-2016



Source: OECD (2017)

Equitable Growth

Figure: Why defend a democracy in which you are falling behind? [source](#)
Equitable Growth

- If democracy is government by the people, and if the people want better lives, should democracy not lead to growth?
- Intuitively plausible

Governance - polarization, unity

- Explain mechanism of breakdown
 - 1 If polarization too great, a house divided

Would Democracy Survive?

- Only if people unite to defend it:
 - 1 Democracy has to be self-enforcing
 - 2 Groups of people or all voters must be on board
 - 3 The rules of the game should be accepted
- That power changes hands via elections should be acceptable to all

Why Might Democracy Not Survive?

- Polarization can undermine trust that others are fit to govern:
 - 1 divisions in left vs right
 - 2 cosmopolitan vs. nationalistic groups
 - 3 immigrant-loving vs. traditionalist-nationalists
- Information: without good information we cannot hold rulers accountable
 - 1 politicians may manipulate information
- Corruption: if institutions do not work, maybe we need strong leader as a fixer

Polarization is a problem for the EU

This page is also available in:

FR



PROGRAMME



REGISTRATION



NETWORK



SPEAKERS

STRENGTHENING COHESION AND PARTICIPATION IN POLARISED SOCIETIES | 17-20 March 2025

In recent years, overlapping crises – from the lingering effects of the pandemic to the escalating challenges of

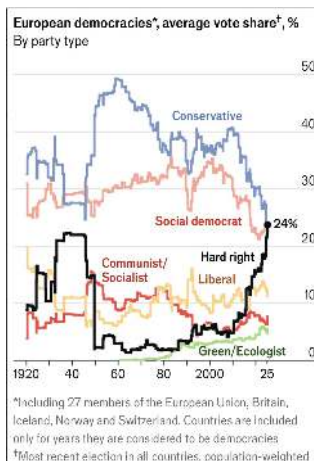
Figure: Workshop in Brussels [link to event](#)

Why Might Democracy Not Survive?

- Polarization causes people to defend the leader of their side at all costs
 - 1 even if the leader commits offenses against democracy or the law
- In a polarized setting, people stop trusting the other group
 - 1 which makes it more likely they will refuse to share power with them through elections

Support for the Alt-Right

■ Why?



Think again

Hard-right vote share in latest election, %

0 10 20 30 40 50 60

■ No data



Source: PSE website (The European Parliament website, Brussels, 2019).
Hard-right vote share in latest election, %

European democracies* hard-right vote share and population

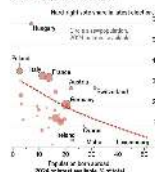




Figure: Autocrat or Hero?

We the People, - Delegation and Agency



The Principal-Agent Model of Controlling Politicians

- In a democracy, “the People” delegate to politicians
- In autocracies, the People or regime insiders can implicitly rebel
- delegation implies a contract and sanctions
- What are sanctions in democracies? Autocracies?

The Principal-Agent Model of Controlling Politicians

- orators (proposers) and generals (implementers) in Athens
- controlled by the Assembly, where all decisions are taken
- In autocracies, the People or regime insiders can implicitly rebel
- delegation implies a contract and sanctions
- What are sanctions in democracies? Autocracies?

Plato's Philosopher King



Figure: Recruit the smart people, who are unwilling to be leaders, and burden them with the task of governing. The cave is dark, they can see.

The Principal-Agent Model of Controlling Politicians

- conditioning on results in Athens
- punish envoy for bad news because ...
- failure is commonly the result of sloth
- a nation at war – as greece was could not afford to be soft
- a general was tried for not rescuing sailors and the defense of a storm preventing that did not carry the day

The reason Athenians punished politicians for bad outcomes is because this helps weed out sloths

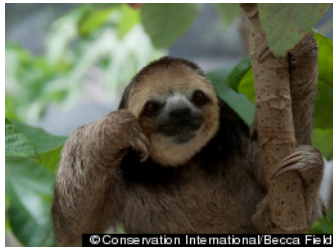


Figure: Sloth is cute but very lazy mostly

Of course, politicians could be WORSE than lazy



Figure: Politician: I will take your taxes now (and not even say PLEASE)

Controlling Agents by Delegating to a Virtuous Type



Figure: A Founding Father

What did he do anyway?

George Washington was the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He presided over the convention that drafted the United States Constitution, which remains the supreme law of the land. Washington was elected President as the unanimous choice of the electors in 1788, and he served two terms in office (–1797). He oversaw the creation of a strong, well-financed national government that maintained neutrality in the wars raging in Europe, suppressed rebellion, and won acceptance among Americans of all types.

The Principal-Agent Model of Controlling Politicians: Voting as a Sanction

- voters observe performance
- when gvt uses taxation for public goods only - no stealing and no special groups: reappoint
- when not: fire

Problems with voting as a sanction:

- The problems of conditioning on performance - you may fire a capable (performing) politician or fail to fire an incapable (non-performing) politician

Information

- For governance to work you need information
 - 1 Democracy may or may not provide it
 - 2 Why?
 - 3 Important
- Explain the model
- We know this

Problems with voting as a sanction: Machine-Politics, Non-programmatic promises

- get a promise for a specific good for vote

Why could a democracy fail to grow economically:
Machine-politics and vote-buying

- If the voter can be intimidated into voting for a leader, based on criteria other than performance in office, politicians will focus on stealing
- Examples

This lady is happy to get a political “present”



Figure: Ntlokondala shows food she received from Sassa on Wednesday with the help of an ANC ward candidate

Problems with voting as a sanction: Why vote?

- why vote?
- why read about politics?
- disillusionment may cause voters not too vote precisely where problems are worst
- if most people stop paying attention, politicians can get away with more - and elections are more likely to be decided by radical or bought voters

Most Bulgarians Support Democracy

В СТРАНА С КАКВО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ИСКАТЕ ДА ЖИВЕЕТЕ?

	ЛИБЕРАЛНА ДЕМОКРАЦИЯ	НОРМУВНАТИВНА СТРАНА	АВТОРИТАРЕН РЕЖИМ
ГЕРБ-САС	81,1%	3,9%	12,2%
ПП-ДВ	90,2%	0,8%	6,8%
ИТН	65,7%	5,7%	17,1%
БСП	30,2%	41,3%	25,4%
АПС	57,1%	11,4%	27,1%
ВЪЗРАЖДАНЕ	46,4%	9,5%	41,7%

Figure: Only pro-Russian Parties unsure

Democracy Has Never Lost at the Ballot Box

- This means, as long as people are allowed to vote, they will keep doing that - and would never select to give unelected power to the leader
- The real problem is, democracy may cease functioning as a democracy while maintaining some official rituals like (fake) elections
 - 1 we need to understand what allows leaders to claim so much power as to gut democracy from any real content and bite
 - 2 the biggest threat to democracy these days is not the coup but its gradual erosion to leader power grabs

Carl Schmitt Tells Us Why and How Democracy May Yield to Another type of politics

- Liberalism says politics is about conflict that can be resolved through taking turns at governing
- Carl Schmitt says this is a naive and incomplete:
 - 1 Most human conflict is between friends and enemies - politics is about constituting the groups (friends are our nation, enemies are outsiders)
 - 2 To win against our enemies, we need a strong leader. We give the leader special powers ('state of exception') to circumvent the Constitution and summon the power of the community against our enemy
- Schmitt's political philosophy aims to justify nazism, but also animates 'identity' politics, 'culture' wars and is part of the authoritarian playbook

Identity Politics



Protesters seen in the reflection on the sunglasses of a California National Guard member in Los Angeles on June 8, 2025. (Photo by Apia Gomes / AFP via Getty Images)

Figure: Who is American? Protest against the policy of Detaining Immigrants while the government watches who is protesting (and potentially protesters can be declared an enemy of the people)

Getting an Upper Hand



Figure: Over the Opposition in Turkey: Part of the Authoritarian Playbook

Attack Your Opponents



Figure: Repression of Public Officials in the U.S. - part of the Authoritarian Playbook

Identity Politics or Legality?



Figure: Snatching People from their jobs: Identity politics opens conflict in society while claiming to be enforcing the law

Cruelty is the Point

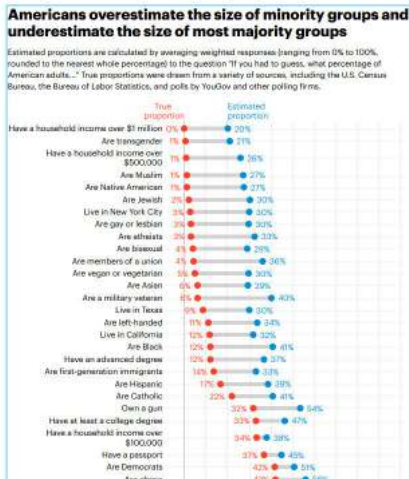


Figure: Attacking Immigrants is Purposefully Done Incompetently to Create More Social Division and Conflict

The Surveillance State: Identity Politics Enables Governments to Control ALL citizens



Identity Politics and Propaganda Cause People to Have a Skewed View of Other Groups



Free Speech, Hate Speech



Figure: She called for attacks on immigrants and was silenced, defense of democracy or censorship which is part of the authoritarian playbook?

Complaint About Incendiary Rhetoric Ignored by EU



Free Speech or Hate Speech



Figure: I wrote to the EU

Free Speech

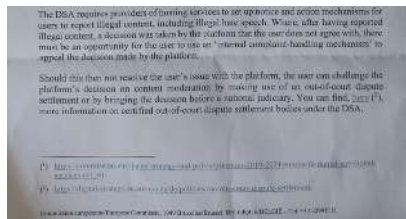


Figure: They said nationalist pro-Russian politician is fine

Autocrat AI

- **AutoCrat.ai** is the world's first platform that automates the establishment of an authoritarian regime. I'm not joking. We combine the two current megatrends – artificial intelligence and authoritarianism. The past few years have shown explosive demand: captured institutions, concentrated media ownership, and overworked players who dream of automation so they can free up time for other affairs. **How does it work?** The foundation consists of 7 modules:

Autocrat AI

- 1. ****TenderMaster**** – for the automatic selection of contractors in public procurement. The kickbacks go through the platform. You just set the winner and the percentage.
- 2. ****ProcuraDelay**** – an algorithm for stalling court cases and selecting judges. Works by nickname, too.
- 3. ****WitnessGen**** – AI-generated witnesses with perfect memory. No more arguments with the unreliable ones.
- 4. ****AI-SLAPP**** – automatic generation of lawsuits against media, NGOs, and competitors.
- 5. ****MediaStream**** – automatic selection of news with the right angle, without last-minute phone calls to editors.

Autocrat AI

- 6. ****ScandalShield**** – generates scandals that overshadow other scandals. You just choose the keywords.
- 7. ****BlackMark AI**** – automatic smear campaigns in the media plus triggering of inspections and institutional harassment. Just enter three names.
- ****Monetization:**** PayPerCoup
- ****Market potential:**** 250+ institutions, 20+ parties, 200+ municipalities, 160+ media outlets, 20+ analysts, one polling agency.

Autocrat AI: **Testimonials**

- “Before AutoCrat, to stop a single case I had to call five people. Now it’s one click.” ÑRegional Governor
- “I can’t remember the last time I called the news desk. Since I got AutoCrat on my phone, I even have time to harass my family.” ÑParliamentary Leader
- “AutoCrat is brilliant! Before, we had to drive the witnesses around, explain things, and they still didn’t get it.” ÑProsecutor
- **Why now?** A market with low competition and high readiness. Still, 68% of detention facilities remain empty. If you want to be part of the next big success story, write to **mailto:invest at autocrat.ai** and you’ll receive a deck (minimum investment 100K).

Conspiracy Theories

- The Matrix (movie) says what appears to be real is not
 - 1 9/11 was an inside job? People who do not trust the government and believe in unseen forces, believe that most big events are controlled by shadowy forces and cabals
 - 2 While some skepticism of governments is healthy, too much is probably not
 - 3 Governments can exploit people's willingness to go for difficult to verify claims
- The authoritarian playbook supports conspiracy theories - the opposition is bad people trying to destroy the nation, bad people are bad-mouthing the leader

Misinfo is a Potent Threat



Figure: Our biases can be turned into weapons, see also [use](#) in Syria

Spotting False News

Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 21 February 2025

Spotting false news and doubting true news: a systematic review and meta-analysis of news judgements

Jan Pfänder & Sachs Altay 

Nature Human Behaviour (2025) | [Cite this article](#)

4885 Accesses | 74 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

How good are people at judging the veracity of news? We conducted a systematic literature review and pre-registered meta-analysis of 303 effect sizes from 67 experimental articles evaluating accuracy ratings of true and fact-checked false news ($N_{\text{participants}} = 194,438$ from 40 countries across 6 continents). We found that people rated true news as more accurate than false news (Cohen's $d = 1.12$ [1.01, 1.22]) and were better at rating false news as false than at rating true news as true (Cohen's $d = 0.32$ [0.24, 0.39]). In other words, participants were able to discern true from false news and erred on the side of skepticism rather than credulity. We found no evidence that the political concordance of the news had an effect on discernment, but participants were more skeptical of politically discordant news (Cohen's $d = 0.78$ [0.62, 0.94]). These findings lend support to crowdsourced fact-checking initiatives and suggest that, to improve discernment, there is more room to increase the acceptance of true news than to reduce the acceptance of fact-checked false news.

Propaganda

- Propaganda is the creation of one-sided narratives that have an advantage over other narratives
 - 1 Propaganda often builds on group divisions and stereotypes
- Propaganda is part of the authoritarian playbook

Propaganda in AI

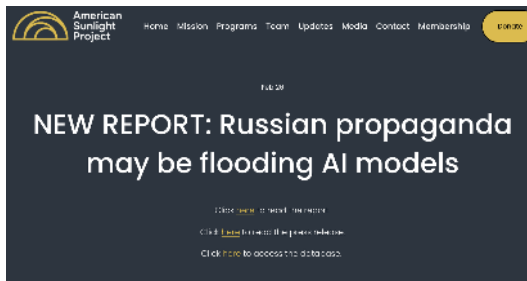


Figure: AI is omnivorous, see [source](#)

Putin's discourse in America - all who disagree with the leader are 'paid', insincere, unpatriotic



Figure: Flood the zone with lies

Why Trump pivot to Putin: Reasons to Learn from Autocrats if you want to be one



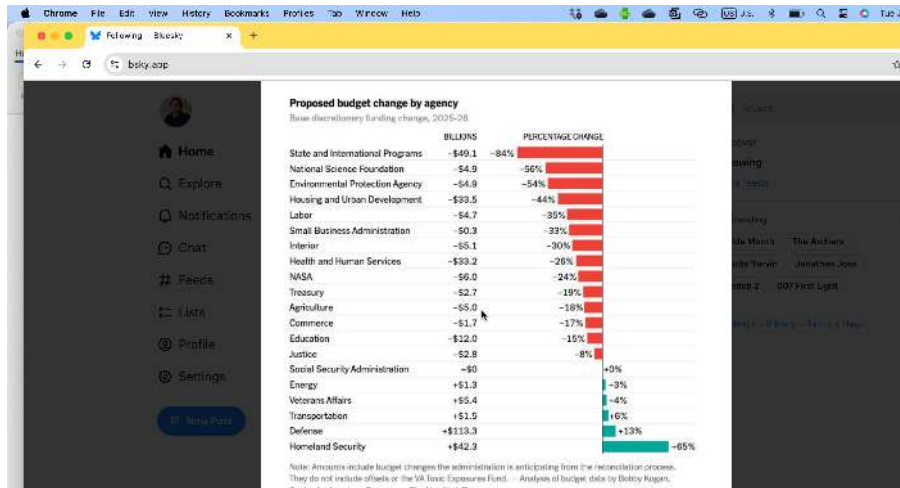
Figure: A domestic explanation, [min 16 and on](#)

Protest Movements

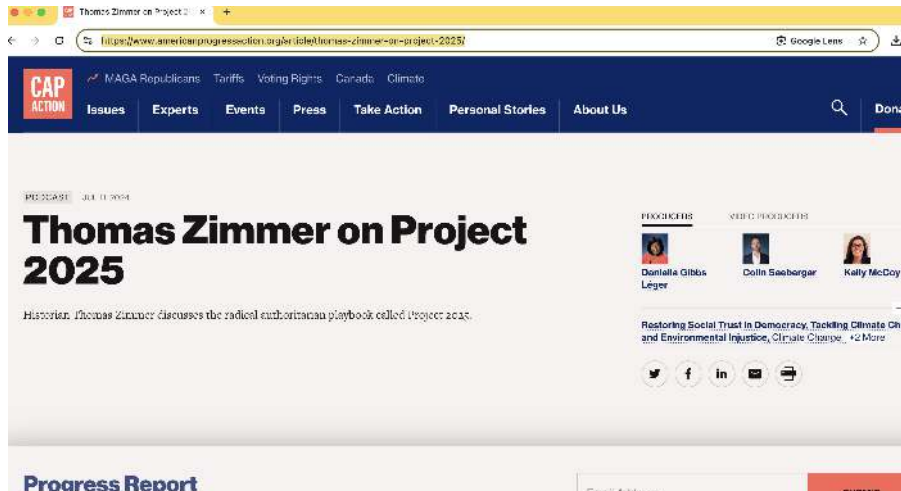


Figure: Turkey: Authoritarian Playbook Claims They are Orchestrated by Soros

Budgeting for Autocracy: War on Universities and Science



Zimmer Warning: Project 2025!



Populism

- Populist leaders simplify the world, offer simple solutions to complex problems
 - 1 Solutions may not work
 - 2 They often appeal to cognitive biases, divide people
- Populism is often part of the authoritarian playbook

The Twilight of Populism

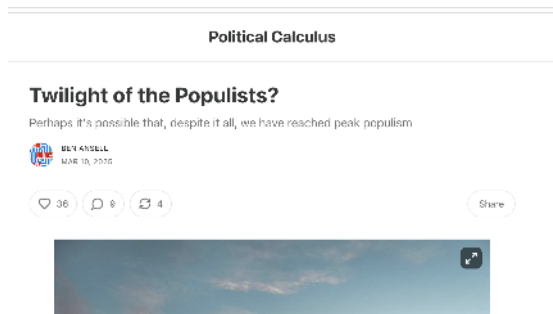
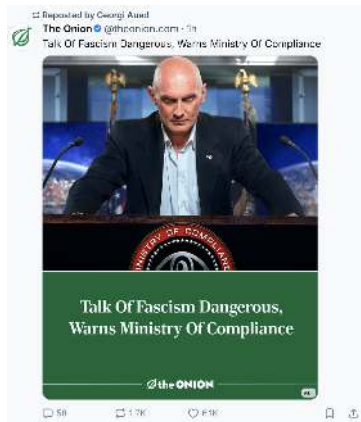


Figure: Have we reached a peak in populism? [link](#) by Ben Ansell

Ur-Fascism is with us

- We have always had fascist-type divisions in society (Umberto Eco, [Ur-Fascism](#))
 - 1 identity politics, action over thinking, tribalisms
 - 2 The conflict is between countries also within countries: some people may have 'authoritarian' traits (defer to authority, fit in hierarchy, privilege group over individual)



Figure

Academic Freedom Under Threat in Autocracies



Figure: Orban has waged a campaign to close a University [link](#)

How Democracy May End

- We have two leaders one who questions the value of media and information, and another who questions the importance of the law and limits on executive authority

Figure:
Musk

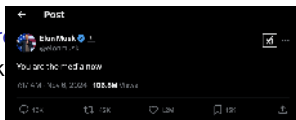


Figure:
Trump



Truth Inc

- Silencing journalists in democracies: Murdered by people high in government



Figure: Jan Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová

Reducing the Bite of Elections



Figure: Getting an Upper Hand via Gerrymandering is part of the authoritarian playbook

Can the Govt Lose Elections?

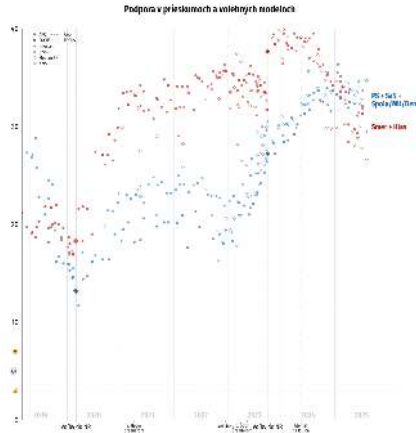


Figure: If yes, then Slovakia is a democracy (with flaws): Authoritarian Playbook Seeks to Give the Govt an Unbeatable Advantage

Democracy Promotion vs the Autocratic International



Figure: Hello, World!



War in Ukraine

- Russian economy is screaming

Как меняется ключевая ставка ЦБ

14 октября 2013 года – 13 сентября 2024 года, %

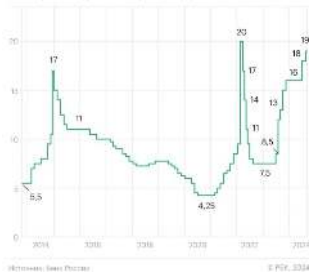


Figure: Bank rates

War in Ukraine

■ Russian Losses are mounting



Figure: Russian Losses

Realism and Its Limits

- Mearsheimer and other realists argue that spheres of influence should be respected.
 - 1 Peace is maintained when power is balanced.
 - 2 Regime type does not matter: states are *black boxes*.
 - 3 It follows that building foreign policy on regime type is naive and dangerous.
- Popova argues this is wrong:
 - 1 Supporting Ukraine — a democracy — is both right and stabilizing - Russia has imperial ambitions
 - 2 Regime type is *endogenous to war*: democracy **is** power.
 - 3 Balancing power requires understanding how power is produced within states.

Back to Tilly and the Origins of Power

- Charles Tilly's dictum: *"War made the state, and the state made war."*
 - 1 Violence has historically been competitive and unpredictable.
 - 2 States that managed to contain internal violence became stronger.
- The liberal democratic state emerged as a winner:
 - 1 Institutions limited executive power.
 - 2 Citizens retained most of the product of their labor.
 - 3 Wealth accumulation replaced domestic violence as the path to power.
- After WWII, empires dissolved — power advanced through production, not conquest.

Autocracy, Containment, and Europe's Role

- Autocracies remain grounded in violence and fear of internal rivals.
 - 1 Economic elites must be controlled, often through corruption.
 - 2 This weakens investment, innovation, and competitiveness.
- Russia's behavior toward Ukraine reflects this logic of insecurity.
 - 1 External war converts into internal repression.
 - 2 Appeasement only displaces conflict further outward.

Report Details HR Abuses by Russia

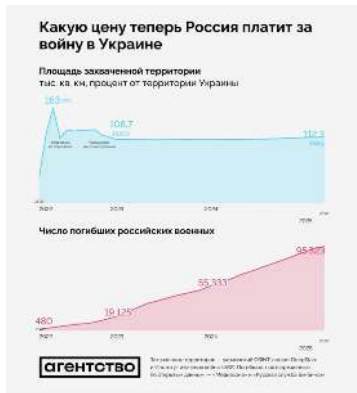


Figure: Norwegians abducting children actually applies to Russia doing that [source](#)

Can Europe Fight Back?

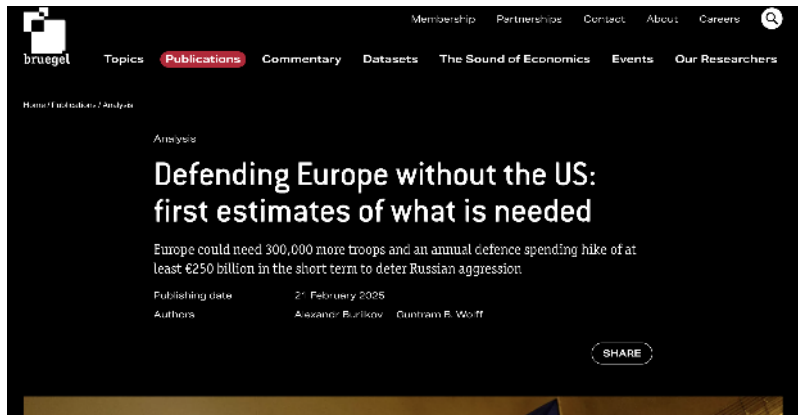


Figure: Here is the bill, [Bruegel and Kiel](#) also see [Weiss and Rushton](#)

Asymmetry and Authoritarian Advantage

- As China has emerged as a global power, many societies misunderstand how the world's largest dictatorship operates.
- Beijing's global propaganda machine deliberately shapes perceptions, producing a deep knowledge gap.
- This asymmetry works to the strategic advantage of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).
- In bilateral relationships, smaller states are often outmatched when unprepared to deal with an integrated authoritarian power.

Source: Chris Walker, "The World Has Become Flatter for Authoritarian Regimes," Journal of Democracy, 2024.

Information and Technological Asymmetries

- Authoritarian powers exploit asymmetries in information, technology, and finance.
- Surveillance and secrecy have become the default norms of the international environment.
- Autocracies can monitor their populations while preventing citizens from monitoring the state.
- The PRC's vast domestic surveillance system and censorship architecture extend abroad through digital platforms and media partnerships.

Walker, "The World Has Become Flatter for Authoritarian Regimes."

Reckoning with the Authoritarian Advantage

- Democracies face systemic disadvantages in key domains of power and influence.
- Addressing authoritarian advantage requires:
 - 1 Deepening cross-regional information sharing;
 - 2 Exposing secrecy and surveillance;
 - 3 Strengthening civil society's capacity for transparency and informed policymaking.
- Democratic resilience depends on reclaiming openness, accountability, and free expression.

Walker, "The World Has Become Flatter for Authoritarian Regimes."

Autocrats are fighting back

- We are not really setup to intervene abroad (sovereign norms)
 - 1 Autocrats claim to speak for their people
 - 2 It is difficult to speak to an actor different from the ruler
- Autocrats are using foreign support to outlaw and hound the opposition (foreign agents laws)

Political Biases on X before the 2025 German Federal Election



Figure: External help for AfD See [source](#) and [source](#)

New Technologies Allow for Massive Intervention

- You are the media now



Figure: Study review on EU level, see EC commission

Open Season

■ Ways of silencing dissent:



Part of the challenge in the current day and age is the narrative

- Autocrats create the narrative of failing laughable Western agencies and:
 - 1 promote narratives that liberal states are weak
 - 2 that they losing their unity and community to immigration and liberalism
 - 3 These arguments echo [Carl Schmitt](#)
- Democracies are vulnerable as publics are partial to such narratives

Chinese Academic Espionage at Stanford

- A Chinese Ministry of State Security agent posed as a Stanford student.
- Target: Students researching China-related topics.
- Tactics included offering financial support for travel and gathering sensitive information covertly.
- CCP strategy: “non-traditional collection” — using civilians instead of official spies to acquire intelligence.
- Stanford’s prominence in AI research makes it a prime target for such operations.
- Chinese law obliges all nationals to cooperate - with consequences to the whole family if they do not.
- Response: Professors worry about safeguarding research integrity while protecting academic freedom.

Source: *The Stanford Review*, “Investigation: Uncovering Chinese

Serbia's Student-Led Civic Uprising

- Trigger: Novi Sad railway canopy collapse, 16 dead, sparking national outrage.
- Symbolic rallying cry: “We are all under the canopy”, frustration with systemic corruption.
- Student movement is decentralized, highly coordinated, and “leaderless”
- Tactics: peaceful, vigils, marches, flash-mob roadblocks, art installations.
- Coalition-building: expanded beyond students to farmers, veterans, artists, and rural communities.
- State response: repression, surveillance, arrests, judicial intimidation.
- Impact: demonstrated civic courage, created new energy.

Source: Maskimovic & Popovic, Journal of Democracy, 2025.

Killing Dissidents Abroad

The poison-tipped umbrella: the death of Georgi Markov in 1978 - archive

The Bulgarian dissident died after being jabbed by an assailant on Waterloo Bridge. Like the recently poisoned Russian dissident **Alexei Navalny**, he was an acute irritant to his government. See how the Guardian reported events



📷 Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov. Photograph: AP

Killing Dissidents Abroad 2.0



Figure: Putin tried to kill Grozev

Paid By Russia



The (Western) International Community and Democracy

- There is a traditional division in PoliSci between IR and Comparative Politics
 - 1 This corresponds to a division in state ministries into national or domestic and international or foreign;
 - 2 Tied to this is the view that democracy is a local affair;
 - 3 and that international politics is talk between capitals
- This view is misleading: it limits our perspective the set of questions we can pose

Typically the Question We are Dealing with

- ...is thought of as democracy promotion:
 - 1 countries or organizations give \$ to another country to improve democracy;
 - 2 this aid is non-partisan and apolitical;
 - 3 the only question is what works in furthering democracy.
- There are numerous problems with this approach - some of them illustrated by the demise of USAID under Trump

Realism Prediction: Balance of Power in the Concert of Europe

- CoE was a system of balancing power in Europe
- Realism would predict that a balanced system will be peaceful
- Today, would realism predict the war with Russia?
- Sometimes people invoke realism to anticipate a US-China war
- By itself, realism does not fully count as a scientific theory
- scientific theories make predictions, as x changes, y changes

The role of ideas

- Constructivists claim that 'anarchy' is made up, want to know why slavery ended, why debts are no longer collected with the use of force
- Constructivism is not necessarily social science but it is a source of insights
- You can use game theory to think of ideas as social science

America's Grand Liberal Strategy

- Soft power, institutions, support for democracy are sometimes thought to be in the U.S. interest
- Realpolitik critics respond that this is silly, and may encourage war
- Case in point - Did NATO expansion cause the war in Ukraine?

What is a better way to think of the international community and democracy

- We need to think of:
 - 1 democracy, and autocracy - state formation
 - 2 history and evolution
 - 3 realism and power and IR
 - 4 imitation and norms
 - 5 organized hypocrisy
- The net result is different

The State

- The state in which the ruler collects taxes and fights other states has evolved since Sumer
 - 1 In Europe, there was an extended competition
 - 2 States, the Pope, all fought over resources
 - 3 The winners won because and when:
 - 4 they limited government
 - 5 they developed bureaucracy and law
 - 6 they left the productive class to produce
- The net result of this bargain is liberal democracy (Tilly, North and Weingast, [Grzymala-Busse](#))

Sovereignty

- State competition produced many wars, and a norm
 - 1 Sovereignty says that each Ruler/State/Land is sovereign and others should leave it be
 - 2 Sovereigns decide between war and peace
 - 3 Popular sovereignty does not change the equation
- The norm of sovereignty means that by the XVII century, all rulers are expected to mind their own affairs

How Does Democracy Emerge?

- The picture is complex:
 - 1 Long-run processes
 - 2 The answer to all ills after a crisis
 - 3 including, after a military debacle or occupation
- In general predictions are hard

The International Sphere Matters for Democracy!

- War and competition for resources created innovations that lead to democracy
 - 1 War and defeats and occupations continue to bring democracy
 - 2 Imitation and the power of democracies inspires and motivates
 - 3 Consider the 1960's, 80's, 90's - now
- International impacts are huge: narratives, tied to power, move people

Waves



Figure: Explaining the Waves of Democratization

Democracy has spread

- And so have its discontents
 - 1 Many argue that democracy is not for everyone
 - 2 that imposing elections may produce bad outcomes
 - 3 sometimes this is rendered as modernization theory vs actor-based theory
- But this is not satisfactory - while democracy will not readily take hold everywhere, if we are to be honest, we do not know who is fit for democracy

In general the debate is:

- Intervening, within a set of available interventions:
 - 1 while measuring or monitoring the outcome.
- Punishing non-democracy, welcoming democracy:
 - 1 sanctioning states that shoot protesters - restricting military aid
- None of these are easy to do, and accusations will fly

Take USAID

- USAID supports civil society (as does Sweden, the EU):
 - 1 they give grants to NGOs in countries such as Georgia
- Does that work?
 - 1 measuring success (“program evaluation”) is nearly impossible
- What to do with programs that possibly work - we just cannot tell?

Take Sanctions

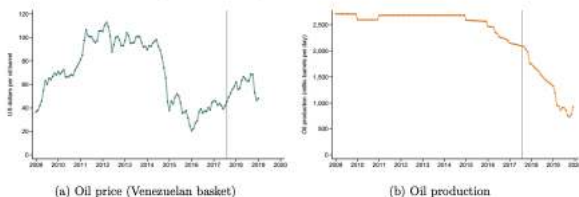
- Conditioning foreign aid on progress toward elections after coups works:
 - 1 see [Goemans Marinov 2013](#)
- But sanctions against autocrats do not produce democracy
 - 1 and may possibly help the rulers by making it more valuable to belong in the ruling circle see [Escribà-Folch Wright 2008](#)
- Does that mean autocrats should be allowed to walk-away scot-free?

Economic Sanctions (for Democracy) As Another example

- When rulers rig elections, the answer has been imposing economic sanctions
- The problem is:
 - 1 Big states are not sanctioned
 - 2 Sanctions hurt the wrong people
 - 3 Sanctions help the wrong people
- The net result is ambiguous

Effects of Sanctions in Venezuela

Figure 4: The collapse of the Venezuelan oil industry



These figures plot monthly data on the price of Venezuelan oil in current US dollars (on the left) and the production in million barrels per day of Venezuelan oil. The vertical line is in August of 2017 and marks the imposition of financial sanctions on the country. Subsequent sanctions on the Venezuelan oil industry were placed after 2017 but are not marked in the figures for presentational purposes. Figure 4a clearly shows how the price plummeted in 2014, also driving production down, as seen in Figure 4b. Nevertheless, the price of oil began to recover in 2016, and oil production never did. This is a consequence of the poor management of PDVSA and the sanctions placed in the country starting in 2017, which effectively closed international markets for Venezuelan oil. The data comes from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Figure: Steep fall in oil revenues. See [Idrobo 2025](#)

Turnout decreased most in opposition strongholds. See Idrobo 2025

Figure 9: Turnout decreased more in
(a) 2017-2021

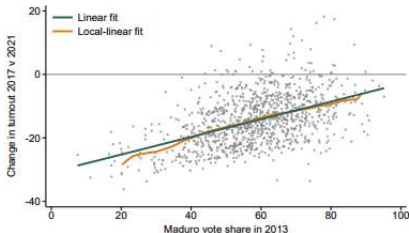


Figure: This suggests the opposition was hurt most by sanctions. See Idrobo 2025

Cooperating/non-Cooperating with authoritarian regimes

- Sanctions:

- 1 may increase the value of belonging
- 2 may weaken the regime militarily

- Cooperation:

- 1 may channel the gains through existing structures

Take Election Observation

- Election Observation Started as national delegation, then specialized groups started evaluating the quality of elections
 - 1 Elections are important to democracy so why not?
 - 2 The practice appears non-partisan and apolitical.
- But only at first blush:
 - 1 rulers have found this threatening → making the issue political
 - 2 observers have started to tone down criticism ⇒ toothless reporting
- Election observation has showed the limits of non-partisan democracy-promotion

The First Color Revolution (Black Fist)

The screenshot shows the 'Global Nonviolent Action Database' website. The main entry is titled 'Serbians overthrow Milosevic (Bulldozer Revolution), 2000'. Below the title, there are several sections: 'Goals', 'Primary', 'Secondary', 'Wave of Campaigns', 'Global Movement', 'Time period notes', 'Time period', 'Country', 'Location', 'Focuses in Background', 'Open On Map', 'PUS Tags', and a list of tags.

Global Nonviolent Action Database

Serbians overthrow Milosevic (Bulldozer Revolution), 2000

Goals

Primary: Overthrow Slobodan Milosevic
 Secondary: Free and Fair Elections, free university, free and independent media

Wave of Campaigns

Global Movement 2000s

Time period notes

Although Otpor began before February 2000, they had been inactive for some time because of the NATO bombings of Serbia. February 2000 marked the groups founding as a mass

Time period

February 2000 to 7 October, 2000

Country

Serbia

Location (City/State/Province)

Focuses in Background, but with actions nationwide

Open On Map

PUS Tags

- (Successfully or Partially) Student Exchanges
- An Exemplary Sequence of Progression
- An Example of Program Change

Figure: In Serbia 2000 Otpor prevented Milosevic From Stealing the Election

The EU's Leverage and Post-Communist Transitions (Vachudova)

- After 1989, the EU emerged as a key driver of reform in Eastern Europe.
 - 1 Conditionality linked to accession provided powerful incentives for democratization.
 - 2 The promise of membership tied political and economic reforms to tangible rewards.
- Vachudova calls this mechanism the “active leverage” of the EU.
 - 1 It worked most effectively where domestic elites were divided and opposition could mobilize.

Slovakia: From Illiberal Drift to EU-Aligned Reform

- Under Mečiar (1990s), Slovakia initially diverged from democratic consolidation.
 - 1 Exclusion from early EU accession rounds created domestic political costs.
 - 2 Civil society and opposition parties framed reform as a route “back to Europe.”
 - 3 that is how they gained power
- Once reformist elites gained power, EU conditionality accelerated transformation.
 - 1 Democratic institutions and minority protections were strengthened rapidly.

Limits and Evolution of EU Leverage

- EU leverage was strongest before accession — when membership could still be withheld.
 - 1 After entry, conditionality weakened; compliance became more symbolic.
- Vachudova warns of “passive leverage” after accession.
 - 1 The EU's influence depends on domestic political competition and civic engagement.
 - 2 Cases like Hungary and Poland illustrate how post-accession backsliding can occur.

Backsliding and the Politics of Accommodation in the EU

- The EU is a democratic organization but has become vulnerable to democratic backsliding.
 - 1 Backsliding governments exploit the EU's norm of accommodation to protect their illiberal projects.
 - 2 They repurpose cooperative bargaining practices to avoid isolation or sanction.
- Success depends on strategic restraint and political cover.
 - 1 Opposition is limited to EU competences that most constrain domestic control.
 - 2 Accommodation works only when democratic governments view such opposition as legitimate and face weak parliamentary oversight.
- This dynamic exposes the EU's "autocratic predicament": tolerance of illiberal members within a democratic system.

Based on Thomas Winzen, "Backsliding and the Politics of Accommodation in



Political Repression in Bulgaria



Figure: The view from Brussels [source](#)

Protest in the City of Varna



Figure: The view from Varna [source](#)

Election Interventions

New Trump administration's sudden involvement bewilders Kosovo ahead of elections



Figure: US in Kosovo

The Romanian Constitutional Court annulled the presidential election over foreign intervention:

- What do voters think?
 - about interventions
 - about their democracy
 - about responses

Foreign Election Interventions

- We have deployed pilots in Bulgaria, Portugal and Italy

Всего пять человек из восьми в шахматной партии сыграли на выиграв, и в большинстве случаев один. Среднее число побед почти в три раза превышает число поражений (35% против 12%), а количество ничьих составляет почти половину. Почему так обстоит дело? Причина очевидна: кто-то играет с кем-то из незнаний или по ошибке, а кто-то играет наизусть, и поэтому победа за одним из игроков почти неизбежна.

побудителни и емоционални са на много голямо. В резултат на това у детето, на което не действат безразличията от участите в дейност. При възрастен човек често се наблюдава обратен процес: след като човек изживее емоционално преживяване, то става немотивационно, а човек се отказва от участие в дейността.

Swaying Democracies



Figure: Election Intervention in Germany

Foreign Election Interventions

- Our main finding is that 1/3 of voters in BG accept interventions, “depending on who is supported and what kind of intervention” (similar in Italy and Portugal)

Фигура 1. Каква роля играе чувството на мясца в изборите ни?

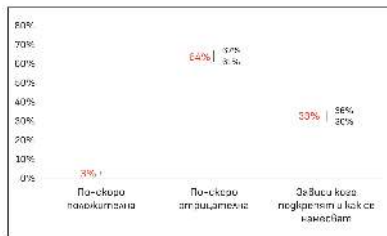


Figure: One Third Say Intervention Not Always Bad

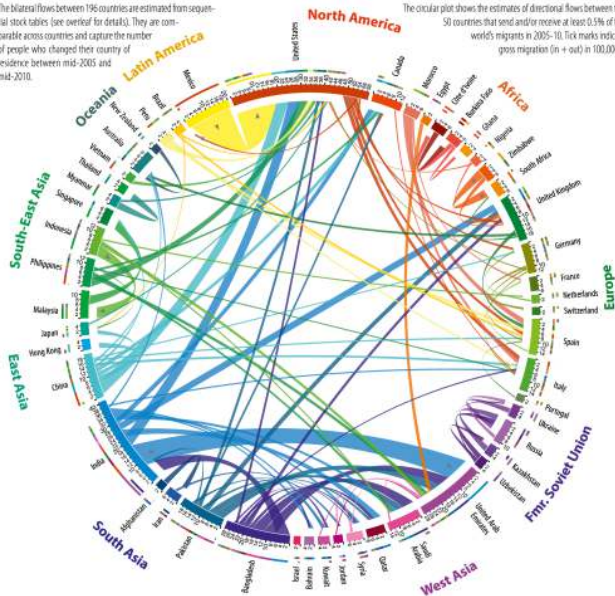
Our contribution:

- In election interventions:
 - It is key to distinguish between pro-candidate and pro-democracy/democracy-eroding interventions
 - voters have a richer set of opinions and reactions - such as counterinterventions and institution-building
 - how do voters feel about elite sellouts, being in control and other questions that are important for the health of a democracy
 - In the context of the EU, an important set of cases:
 - What are appropriate policy measures?

Democract vs Autocracy

- There is an enduring clash:
 - Both democracies and autocracies intervene in each other's politics
 - In some ways, who will come out on top, will depend on normative question -
 - Which regime generates more affluence for its people?
- If China could promise more to Taiwan (or Russia to Ukraine) than the West and democracy could -
 - they could simply win hearts and minds, and accomplish their goals without tricks, violence

The bilateral flows between 196 countries are estimated from sequential stock tables (see overview for details). They are comparable across countries and capture the number of people who changed their country of residence between mid-2005 and mid-2010.



The Democratic Advantage

About Steve Jobs and Other things

- Who was he?
- Why relevant?

Most famous Arab in the world

- [http://www.ibtimes.com/
steve-jobs-dies-he-was-most-famous-arab-world-321498](http://www.ibtimes.com/steve-jobs-dies-he-was-most-famous-arab-world-321498)



Civilians in Homs, Syria, left for a safer part of the city Sunday. Despite a cease-fire, aid convoys were attacked over the weekend. Bassel Tawil/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Figure: Scapegoat



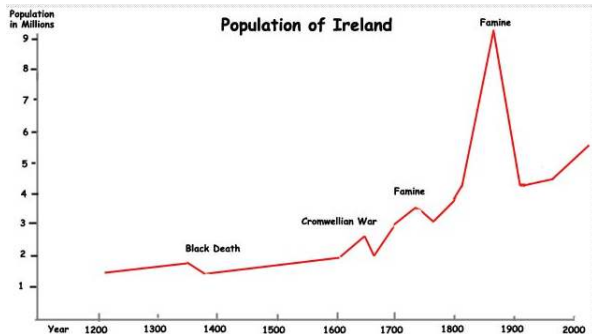


Figure: Records show that no representation makes disasters possible

Terrible repression is unknown in democracies: The Remarkable, Forgotten Story of How a Soviet Town Disposed of Its Dead

<https://globalvoices.org/2015/11/05/>

[russia-the-remarkable-forgotten-story-of-how-a-soviet-town](https://globalvoices.org/2015/11/05/russia-the-remarkable-forgotten-story-of-how-a-soviet-town)

Stalin's rule was directly responsible for some 20 million deaths!

Terrible repression in autocracies - how the STASI dealt with
“problem” women in the G.D.R.

[http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/04/23/
inside-the-east-german-std-clinics-for-troubled-women.
html](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2017/04/23/inside-the-east-german-std-clinics-for-troubled-women.html)

Also story of [Greenland](#)

Sergey Brin born in Moscow, USSR



Figure: Whisked away at age 5

John von Neumann (wiki)

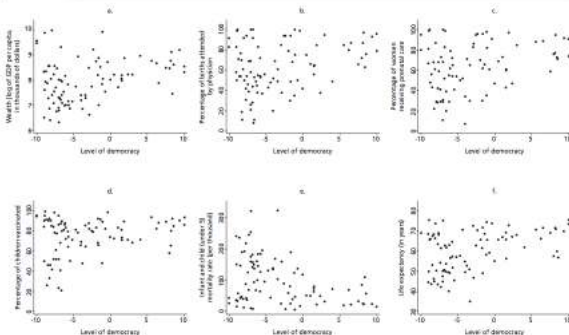
- He was a pioneer of the application of operator theory to quantum mechanics, in the development of functional analysis, a principal member of the Manhattan Project, and a key figure in the development of game theory and the concepts of cellular automata, the universal constructor, and the digital computer.
- Between 1926 and 1930, he taught as a Privatdozent at the University of Berlin, the youngest in its history.
- In 1930, von Neumann was invited to Princeton University, New Jersey. In 1933, he was offered a position on the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study; von Neumann remained a mathematics professor there until his death. His mother and his brothers followed John to the United States.

Regime Type and Economic Growth

- Clearly, people sometimes vote with their feet, driven by the belief that some jurisdictions are better for them than others.
- Often dictatorships have lost considerable human talent to democracies.
- Are democracies better for economic growth and why?
- Asking google produces 50 billion results in .33 seconds

- Let's talk how broadening participation and increasing contestation play into economic growth
- Both democratic and authoritarian governments may be capable of increasing economic growth

Figure 9.4 The Effect of Democracy on Various Indicators of Material Well-Being



Note: The horizontal axes measure a country's average level of democracy from 1960 to 1990 as coded by Polity IV. The measure ranges from -10 (most dictatorial) to +10 (most democratic). The vertical axes vary by graph.

◁ □ ▷ ◂ ◃ ◅ ◆ ◇ ◈ ◉ ◊ ○ ◌ ◍ ◎ ● ◐ ◑ ◒ ◓ ◔ ◕ ◖ ◗ ◘ ◙ ◚ ◛ ◜ ◝ ◞ ◟ ◠ ◡ ◢ ◣ ◤ ◥ ◦ ◧ ◨ ◩ ◪ ◫ ◬ ◭ ◮ ◯ ◰ ◱ ◲ ◳ ◴ ◵ ◶ ◷ ◸ ◹ ◺ ◻ ◼ ◽ ◾ ◿ ◰ ◱ ◲ ◳ ◴ ◵ ◶ ◷ ◸ ◹ ◺ ◻ ◼ ◽ ◾ ◿

- Recall the problems of control and of power-sharing in autocracies
- Recall that democracies use elections to allocate power so no need for control and for powersharing
- How rich you can get in an autocracy or democracy will depend on the differences between the two regimes types

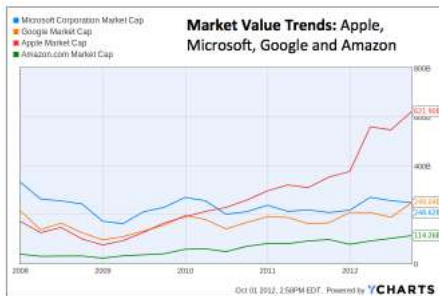
- Let's talk about the stationary bandit and the roving bandit analogy in autocracies
- A roving bandit sacks and pillages everyday somewhere else: the Huns
- A stationary bandit can sack and pillage but has lasting control over a territory: the Romans
- The incentives of the two to conserve wealth differ

- The dictator was a “benevolent” corruption-leader: fleecing some of society’s profits while leaving other businesses alone

- Just as switching to one mafia overlord may well increase economic prosperity!
- (Paying two means overpaying while possibly getting no protection from either)
- Indonesia proves that corrupt rule may be compatible with robust growth
- (normative issues - was it just? - aside)

- The stationary bandit emphasizes the incentive of any regime type to safeguard wealth to some extent
- There are plenty of dictatorships that did not grow spectacularly, while being fairly repressive
- Stalin, Hitler
- But again, we have to contend with China and Chile's successes under communist and Pinochet rule
- Svoboda and others provide partial answers

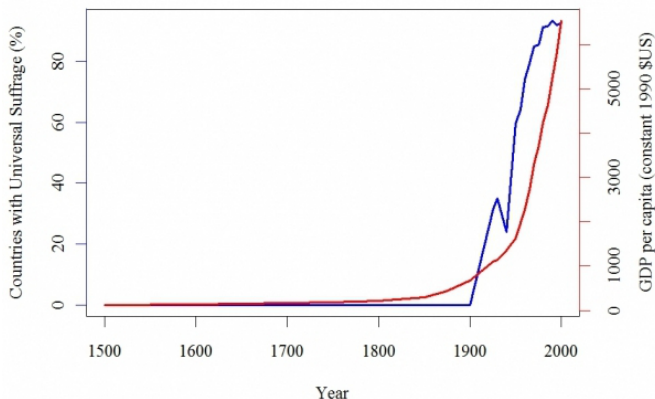
Human rights are related to property rights: Can this happen in autocracy?



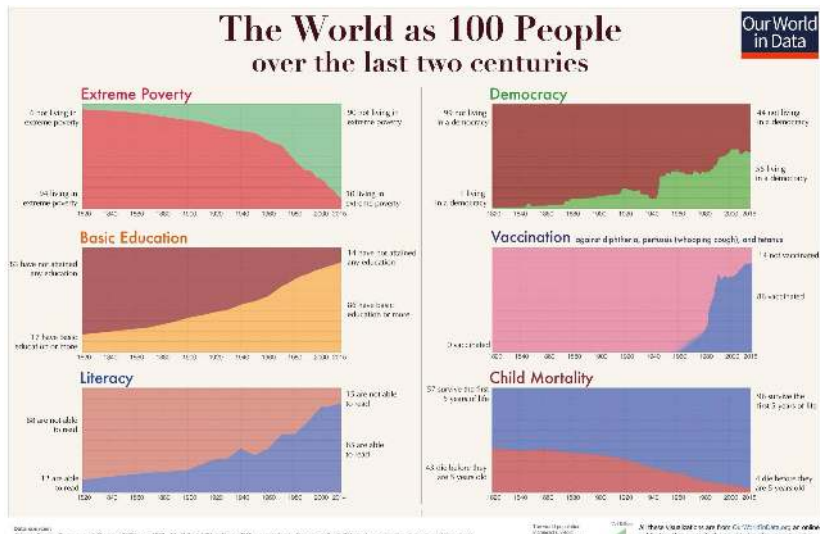
Figure

So we are back to Mr Jobs: Most wealth today is in democratic states. While autocracies can grow and democracies can stall, the achievements possible in democracy are impossible in autocracy

Global Trends in Wealth & Democracy over the Last 500 Years



So we are back to Mr Jobs



Amartya Sen's Approach: Property Rights as Human Rights, Development as Empowering the Individual, and we are back to Mr Jobs

- Some people say, choose development over freedom
- Sen says, development is freedom - by allowing individuals to be free, you entitle them to their own selves, or give them property rights over their happiness, aspirations, and labor
- Thus, to exclude freedom from development is impossible

- Problems trying to setup apple in China or Russia
- Enormous wealth — mil resources translates — mil might (GDP of russia vs GDP of US)
- Liberal democracy is end of history per Fukuyama

Suppose a 'benevolent' dictator. Why would an autocracy have a problem governing modernizing states?

- A problem of information and a problem of management
- totalitarianism
- Examples

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China train crash kills 32

Another 200 taken to hospital following crash after train lost power due to lightning strike in Zhejiang province

Cherry Wilson

The Observer, Saturday 23 July 2011 23:35 BST



A train crash in China's Zhejiang province killed at least 32 people and injured 200 more. Photograph: Aly Song/Reuters

Figure

Back to the Roman Empire

- Understanding the regime remains paramount
- Before it crumbled, Rome had been riven by rivalries for power
- Roman armies battled as much each other as they did the barbarians
- Creating just and desirable human organizations domestically will likely allow for better outcomes internationally
- Top national/international problems - poverty, corruption, civil war, war, the climate crisis and the water crisis



Figure: Institutions are Key to Domestic State Building

Russia vs Bulgaria

■ Who's ahead and why?

Russia / GDP per capita

13,817.05 USD (2023)



Explore more →

Bulgaria / GDP per capita

15,885.54 USD (2023)



Selling residency in Bulgaria

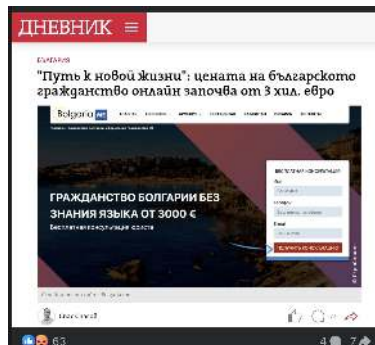


Figure: Selling permanent residency to Russians

Can we renovate this house?



Figure: What would you build on top of it?