Democratic Failure: Tracking the Ebb of Democracy's Flow, 1800–2006

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DEMOCRATIC FAILURE:

TRACKING THE EBB OF DEMOCRACY'S FLOW, 1800-2006

by

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ABSTRACT

DEMOCRATIC FAILURE: TRACKING THE EBB OF DEMOCRACY'S FLOW, 1800-2006

Sonja E. Sray
Old Dominion University, 2008
Director: Dr. Kurt Taylor Gaubatz

Scant attention has focused on the systematic study of democratic failure. This dissertation partially corrects this oversight. Tracing the roots of antidemocratic sentiment across the centuries, it first argues that the advance of institutions, fueled by underlying shifts in values and innovation in political philosophy, was key to freeing democracy from its bondage as a most disparaged form of governance. Focusing on the measurable aspects of these institutions, the study focuses on describing patterns of behavior when democracies fail. First, it shows that there have been clusters of democratic failure. These clusters, or counterwaves, find their roots in ancient antidemocratic sentiment with modern ideological twists. The comparison of these counterwaves helps illuminate threats to democracy present in antidemocratic ideals that have held sway in the international system at varying times. Examining democratic failures in high level democracies, mid-level democracies, and low level democracies, it shows that democracies by and large fail quickly and dramatically. It highlights the issue of repeat offenders, those democracies that repeatedly attempt "rule by the many" even when plagued with democratic failure. Finally, it also shows the relevance of the deepening of autocracy as it interacts with the idea of the failure of democracy.
For William and our family, in gratitude to the Giver
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Across the street, my neighbor is building a detached 2 car garage. My neighbor works full time, but not on his garage. He had the sense to hire someone to pour the foundation, but has attempted to juggle the needs of his family, his job and the desire to finish the garage ever since. From time to time, friends will drop by to help, but essentially he works on this project alone. The result? He often takes one step forward and 2 steps back. The tar paper on the roof was put into place with a flurry of activity one day, but he couldn’t quite manage to put the shingles on overtop. Unfortunately, a storm came along before he got back to his roofing project, and tore vast sections of the tar paper away. A couple weeks later, he repaired the tar paper covering, but again didn’t get to the actual shingle placement…with the same result. As I write, the plywood roof peeks through the remaining shreds of disheveled tar paper, clinging to the roof like mangled pieces of skin. Having worked on the garage project for nearly 2 years, my conclusion is that Steve will never finish his garage without single-minded determination and help from others.

I made the same discovery with my dissertation. I would write a bit, then a storm would blow in. When I came back to my writing I had to reacquaint myself with the topic and try to tack the tar paper back down. I finally realized I would never reach the end without single-minded determination and help from others. I would like to take the time to thank those who stepped in to offer help at crucial times in order to spur me to completion.
Key to the completion of this project was the Dissertation Fellowship awarded by the Graduate Studies Program of Old Dominion University. This project would have foundered upon the rocks of procrastination if not for that award. My thanks also to my dissertation study group, most especially to Eva Svobodova, who made the writing of this dissertation seem a bit less like solitary confinement. Thanks to David Dickson, who offered wise counsel at a crucial moment. Thanks to those others at Westminster, particularly those in my Covenant Group, for supporting me through this project and having the courage to ask the oft dreaded question “So, how’s your dissertation coming?” even when a heavy sigh or baleful glare was the consistent reply. To Tom Bonner, I give my undying gratitude for unlocking the secrets of Excel graphing, and for doing so with extraordinary patience and competence.

A heart-felt thanks to my parents, Marg and Darold Hill, for not relinquishing the parental role of prodding a child toward completion of a project, even when that child happens to be married and in her thirties with 2 children of her own. Thanks for offering food, shelter, and childcare on my one week jaunts to Michigan. You both always rearranged your schedules to accommodate us and spent such wonderful time loving my children that I knew they weren’t suffering a bit from my dedication to my dissertation. The 2 of you are among my most cherished gifts. My additional thanks to Kristen Campbell for the dedicated care she took of Mariah and Micah at a critical stage in the completion of my dissertation. Thanks for loving my kids!

Of course, I must also thank my long-suffering dissertation committee. My thanks to Dr. Arthur Waldron, who has hung with me ever since I started my graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania. I am grateful for his long-running support.
Thanks, too, are due Dr. David Earnest, for his insight and encouragement of this project. These gentlemen have made this dissertation better than it would have otherwise been, earning my gratitude. My deepest thanks and appreciation go to Dr. Kurt Taylor Gaubatz for believing in this project from start to finish. Kurt, you talked me back from the ledge of scholarly panic on numerous occasions, offered wisdom, insight and sage advice, and maintained confidence in the importance of the project when I was ready to throw in the towel. You shifted effortlessly from roles as counselor, teacher, mentor, computer guru and statistician. You taught me life skills along the way, such as how to do brush clearing and the value of waving my hands at things, until at times I felt more Pentecostal than Presbyterian. Thanks for teaching me to be teachable and for sticking it out with this project. It would not have happened without you.

Finally, I must thank my immediate family. Mariah and Micah, you both had to put up with my absence from your lives for several days each week. I know this probably hurt me more than it hurt you, but thanks for loving me, and always welcoming me home with open arms. Mariah, you must have been especially frustrated at my snail’s pace since you finished your dissertation on goldfish, stingrays, and jellyfish at the age of 3, while I labored on. What fun it will be to explore the world with you 2, minus the company of this dissertation! To my husband, I owe the most. Bill Sray, if this marriage was built on pay backs I would be hopelessly indebted. Only I know all you quietly sacrificed over the years it has taken me to obtain this degree. You put your own desires second, standing in the gap with the mundane undesirables: chores around the house, grocery lists, cooking and keeping the children entertained when I was busy studying, even though a crucial stage of this dissertation came at a very demanding time in your
career. Most amazingly, this gift was freely, not begrudgingly, given. Thanks for teaching me lessons about self-sacrifice, the extension of grace, and putting others before oneself. It will no doubt take a lifetime for me to fully absorb these truths. Sharing life's journey with you and these children is my great reward. Let's get on with it!
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the words of Anatole France, "All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another."¹ At its heart, this dissertation is about change. While France was clearly philosophizing about change impacting individuals, his words seem apt for nation states as well. The process of changing one's political power configuration is not without angst. This study looks at a particular aspect of change, one in which states return to that which they left behind. To be more explicit, this is a study of nation states that commit, on some level, to democratic governance only to backslide on their commitments. It is the story of nations that, at least on some level, didn’t die to one life before entering another.

These renegade democracies cluster together at certain points in history. It’s as if they are collectively struck by a sort of melancholy with democratic progression, and turn their backs on democracy en masse. Little has been said about this collective commitment to democratic decline. Instead, attention has focused on democratic progression. Samuel Huntington has quite famously described democracy’s forward march as a historic process of ever increasing waves.² He tracks 3 historic waves of democracy, each involving more countries than the wave which preceded it.

¹ Anatole France, http://thinkexist.com/quotation/all_changes-even_the_most_longed_for-have_the/220920.html (accessed October 8, 2008).
Why commit time to study the backward steps of this dance when the forward motion seems dominant? Has not Western academia reached the rather solid conclusion that democracy is inevitable, except perhaps for certain odd-ball regimes and extremist religious cultures? True, the euphoria that immediately followed the Cold War’s dramatic conclusion has largely evaporated, as a forced to acknowledgement that the process of democratic transition and consolidation has not been as Pollyannic as hoped. Still, democracy remains the only legitimate form of governance, the evolutionary end point, the signpost of a civilization’s true arrival. Defeating all comers in the political brawl across the centuries, today it is the last man standing. This work focuses on the times democracy falters, stumbles, and even falls, because the picture of democracy’s success can only be understood against the backdrop of its failures.

Today democracy boasts the power to modify the actions of even the most absolute dictator. Even highly autocratic regimes pay twisted homage to democracy by holding “elections,” which apparently must go on even in the wake of extreme natural disasters. In some token way even these enemies of democracy confirm its power. Even those societies that are not democratic often placate their populations with the succor of economic transformation now, promising political transformation later. Few regimes indeed dare to say that democracy is a flawed institution.

In the West democracy has been seen as a key to achieving a more peaceful international system. The United States has identified democracy promotion as priority number one in the foreign policy arena. In fact, all post-Cold war presidents, regardless

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of party affiliation, have emphasized the promotion of democracy as a key foreign policy objective. So drastic is this commitment that even the C.I.A. has apparently been realigned to see democracy promotion as a prime objective. Meanwhile, the European Union has pushed democracy as a necessary precursor for membership. While the origins of the EU orbited around economic considerations, nations have been admitted into membership when their economic outlook was far from certain. Less flexibility, however, has been extended to nations with robust economies but damp commitment to democracy. Democracy has served as the sine quo non for the EU states.

Nor is democracy confined to the geographic boundaries of Europe and North America. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, nations turned to democracy like refugees fleeing civil war. As early as the 1970s, Latin American nations turned toward democratic reforms as well. African nations, in the wake of colonialism's death, initially maintained the democratic institutions of their colonizers. Asia, too, is the home of mature democracies. No continent, then, has been left untouched by democracy's forward march.

So again, why bother with democratic decline? Democracy's advance, instead of denigrating the need to study democratic decline, instead lends urgency. As the international system has more of a stake in democratic progression, it has more of a stake in preventing democratic decline. Understanding and describing democratic decline

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becomes of vital interest to those who would defend democracy. Only by acquiring a
greater understanding of the threats to democracy can one truly bolster and defend it.

The Gap

Surprisingly, there has been little systematic work in this area. An examination of
the gap should precede the discussion of the meat of this study. The gap in the literature
is actually two-fold, existing both in the democratic failure literature as well as in the
treatment of clusters of democratic failure. This project aims to partially bridge this
double gap.

Democratic failure

It would be incorrect to assert that no one has given thought to why democracies falter. There are several extant theories on democracy’s demise. Some assert that
democracy fails when faced with outside security threats.\(^9\) It devolves into a type of
“garrison state” mentality that values security over democracy. Thus, democracy is
sacrificed at the altar of security when sufficient threats arise. In a slight variation of this
theme, others assert democracy is a luxury good only afforded by those states without the
pressures of trying to secure their borders.\(^10\) If one has a threatening neighbor,
democracy is likely to falter.

By other measures, democratic reforms fail when the elites from the former
political system are not assimilated into the new democracy, or at least duly compensated

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\(^10\) In his paper “Defensive Democratization” Kurt Taylor Gaubatz discusses this traditional viewpoint, then shows its limitations. Please see Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, “Defensive Democratization: International Relations Theory, Strategic Politicians, and External Incentives for Regime Change,” unpublished manuscript (Norfolk: Old Dominion University, 2008).
for sacrificing their power. This can be as simple as failing to ensure a “golden parachute” to elites who have much to lose from a transition to democracy or can occur when the complexities of the transition are bungled.\textsuperscript{11} Heterogeneity of society has also been associated with democratic failure. A society divided into many factions—whether ethnic, cultural, political or religious—provides infertile ground for democracy’s growth.\textsuperscript{12}

And, of course, there is the cultural argument. Some argue that democracy will not flourish in certain environments, simply because the culture is hostile to the ideals necessary for democracy.\textsuperscript{13} These cultures have not cultivated the necessary “habits of the heart” and thus democracy finds a hostile reception.

Democracy may also falter when it fails to meet up to domestic expectations. Democracy is charged with making life better for all who live under it, improving the condition of the poor, indeed acting as a savior for any number of problems in society. Failure to meet these expectations has been linked with democratic failure in a variant of Ted Robert Gurr’s theory of the J curve.\textsuperscript{14}

These works, however, are piecemeal in their approach, selecting a country or grouping of countries upon which to base their assertions. Curiously the most prominent book on the subject was written by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan nearly 30 years ago, in

the midst of the most sustained forward wave of democratization.\textsuperscript{15} Even this tome only
dealt with selected cases in Latin America and Europe. Since that time, the case study
approach has dominated.\textsuperscript{16} The few cross-national analyses that exist deal with regional
considerations and not the system at large.\textsuperscript{17} While the in-depth case study analyses and
regional studies have provided important insights, the lack of macro-level analysis of
democratic failure across time leaves a gap that needs to be filled. This focus on the trees
leaves little room for studying the forest. In the case of democratic failure, key findings
on the deforestation of democracy provide important insights into managing forest health.
It begins the process of guarding against the forest fires known also as the counterwaves,
a phenomenon impossible to even detect when focusing exclusively on case studies.

\textit{The counterwaves}

While many of these theories of democratic failure bring insight, they are
primarily focused on internal dynamics. Perhaps this is only natural since the domestic
stories are so interesting. While you can’t have a democratic demise without a domestic
story, the international component has been largely ignored. By implication, the
literature would have us believe the domestic story is the only story. These clusters of
democratic failure by their very presence imply an international component, and yet this
has received little attention.

\textsuperscript{15} Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, \textit{The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
\textsuperscript{16} For examples of the case study approach see: Robert Fatton Jr. “The Impairments of Democratization:
Haiti in Comparative Perspective,” \textit{Comparative Politics} 31, no. 2 (January 1999): 209-229; Paul
Zaforski, “Democratic Breakdown in Paraguay and Venezuela: The Shape of Things to come for Latin
America?” \textit{Armed Forces & Society} 30, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 87-116; Vedi Hadiz, “Reorganizing Political
Power in Indonesia: a Reconsideration of so-called Democratic Transitions,” \textit{The Pacific Review} 16, no. 4
(December 2003): 591-611.
\textsuperscript{17} See, for example, Michael Bratton’s “The ‘Alternation Effect’ in Africa,” \textit{Journal of Democracy} 15, no.
4 (October 2004): 147-158; Pat McGowan and Thomas H. Johnson, “African Military Coups-d’Etat and
In looking again to Huntington, we find he has dedicated a scant few pages to the idea of the counterwaves, or democratic reversals that occur in clusters. He notes that after each advance of democracy, there is a retraction of democracy.\textsuperscript{18} And yet, by implication if there are international components to democracy’s advance, there seem also to be international components to democracy’s retreat.

Other scholars mention the counterwave phenomenon in a peripheral way. Larry Diamond published an article entitled “Is Pakistan the (reverse) wave of the future?”\textsuperscript{19} In it, he fretted that Pakistan’s failure would kick off a grand counterwave, given its high population, its status as a nuclear power, and its residence in a sensitive region. His concern was also elevated by his prediction that the Pakistani government was unlikely to recover democracy in the near future. And yet, in a subsequent article he largely laid these concerns to rest, concluding that no antidemocratic ideology had emerged to challenge democracy’s normative hold.\textsuperscript{20}

Michael McFaul also flirted with the idea of a counterwave in his article “The 4\textsuperscript{th} wave of democracy and dictatorship.”\textsuperscript{21} He studied the transitions of post-communist states and tracked their progress away from communism. He noted that in countries with nearly equivalent power distributions between democrats and autocrats, protracted confrontation, not democratization, resulted.

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\textsuperscript{19} Larry Diamond, “Is Pakistan the (Reverse) Wave of the Future?” \textit{Journal of Democracy} 11, no. 3 (July 2000): 91-106.
While Huntington, Diamond and McFaul all acknowledge the idea of the counterwave, Renske Doorenspleet challenges the very existence of waves of democratization. This article critiques Huntington’s methodology in terms of his case selection criteria. She asserts that Huntington focuses on some aspects of democracy, such as competition, to the exclusion of other aspects of democracy, such as inclusion. She critiques Huntington’s demonstration of democratic momentum by arguing for a methodology that includes the percentage of world states that are democracies. This is central, she asserts, since the total number of states in the system hasn’t remained constant. If one takes these factors into account it leads to different outcomes, including a diminished appearance of reverse waves. In other words, Doorenspleet argues that we should raise the bar for defining democracy. In so doing, both waves and reverse waves are less distinct. My approach, as discussed more fully in the section describing the undergirding assumptions of this project, challenges Doorenspleet’s notion that setting a high bar for democracy is the best way to study its progression and regression.

Drawing on Related Literature

The gap in the literature surrounding democratic decline and failure and the gap in the literature surrounding the counterwave are now evident. The related literature on democratic transition and democratic consolidation feature fewer holes. An increasing concern over the stalling of democratic reforms is particularly evident in the literature.

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While this literature doesn’t alleviate the gap this work is addressing, it does provide a related literature upon which to draw. As such, it deserves some discussion here.

**Illiberal democracy and hybrid regimes**

In a critical article, Thomas Carothers calls into question the legitimacy of the democratic transition literature’s assumptions. He points out the overly optimistic nature of much of the democratic transition and consolidation literature, accusing advocates of democratization of being somewhat naive in their assessments. He finds particular lack of support for the assumption that stalled democratization is an inherently unstable position. He also challenges the assertion there are distinct stages to democratization.

This concern is echoed in a growing literature concerned with illiberal democracies and democracies, or those nations that seem to demonstrate Carothers’ point by stabilizing in their stalled semi-democratic state. In fact, there has been increasing concern over the faltering democratization process in many countries. While the initial assumption of many scholars of democratization was the expectation of a few bumps along the pathway to democratic consolidation, reality is now forcing a different perspective. Many regimes seem content with what Larry Diamond has called “hybrid regime” status. While elections may be taking place at some level, these states do not exhibit any motivation to continue on the path to full-fledged liberal democracy.

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literature demonstrates the dawning realization that democratization has not proceeded in the linear fashion envisioned by early democratic theorists. In fact, illiberal democracy, usually as a result of democratic reversal, is a prevalent concern. Concern is rising that illiberal democracy may not be the inherently unstable entity it was once assumed to be, but instead may rest quite comfortably in a political zone that straddles democracy and autocracy. In spite of these broadly voiced concerns, no one has yet attempted a systematic evaluation of the spread of anti-democratic norms.

**Democratic consolidation**

By default, the democratic consolidation literature is related to democratic decline. If a particular variable is needed in order for democratic consolidation to happen, one can infer the absence of this would predicate democratic failure. And yet, the distinctions between democratic failure and democratic consolidation are real as noted by Linz and Stepan in their influential book on the problems of democratic consolidation.

The democratic consolidation literature has several dominant theories. Of these, the economic development strain is probably the most prominent. The main argument is that a GDP of around $5,000 seems to guarantee democratic stability and insulate against

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reversal.  

Barbara Geddes, in her assessment of democratization, asserted that only the economic theory of democratic transition had garnered strong evidence.

Another economically derived democratic transition theory links likelihood to transition with resource endowment. These theorists argue that high resource endowment, especially with oil and diamonds, tend to impact a society's receptivity to democracy by creating anti-democratic incentives on the part of the elite.

Institutions play a prominent role in another strand of the democratic consolidation literature. Some scholars emphasize the type of political institution as being important in democratic consolidation. Others emphasize the stability and enforcement aspects of institutions, such as rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. Still others emphasize the importance of civilian control of the military.

Societal factors have also been considered. Some have investigated the claim that certain cultures are simply unresponsive to democracy. Others argue that ethnic divisions...
certainly impact a society’s ability to absorb democracy, as ethnic fragmentation leads to problems with conflict resolution. Still other scholars have noted the importance of shared values in the process of furthering political democratization.

There is even a smattering of articles that consider international factors. Some argue that foreign aid is detrimental to democracy. Colaresi and Thompson argue that a number of international factors, such as external threat and trade openness, can aid or hinder democratization. In addition, Mark Peceny found that American sponsorship of elections during military interventions aided democratization, so a lack of external involvement could also be inferred to be detrimental to developing democracies. Other scholars have demonstrated the influence of outside information on the course of political change. This study lays the groundwork for examining the explanatory power and limits of these various theoretical strands within the democratic consolidation literature. The macro nature of this study will enable subsequent consideration of these competing explanatory theories.

42 Mark Peceny, “Forcing them to be Free,” *Political Science Research Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (September 1999): 549-582.
43 See, for example, Nader Sohrabi’s “Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew about other Revolutions and why it Mattered,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 1 (January 2002): 45-79.
Causal mechanisms of democratic failure

As has already been stated, some of the literature that has already been examined infers a cause of democratic failure. For example, when Adam Przeworski and company demonstrate the impact of GDP on democracy’s sustainability, the inference is that poverty causes of democratic failure.\textsuperscript{44} Many authors focus so exclusively on factors leading to consolidated democracy that one must draw inferences regarding democratic failure. There is also a considerable literature on the causes of democratic failure as studied in their own right. As with the other literature examined, there tend to be constellations. Myriad break-off theories of democratic failure exist, but this discussion will be confined to the main constituents.

One constellation orbits around the role of political parties. A recent study has found that the initial level of competition between political parties in new democracies is crucial to its future. Low levels of initial political competitions are associated with democratic failure.\textsuperscript{45} Others have focused on the level of competition between the parties, locating an optimal level of competition with continued democratic governance, while democratic failure is associated with very high and very low levels of political competition.\textsuperscript{46} As evidenced by further studies, these scholars argue that political parties are central to determining whether a democracy will fail or not.\textsuperscript{47}

A related constellation turns on the role of elites, a different category only because elites may or may not be members of political parties. The extent to which elites find it in their interest to either support or undermine democracy impacts its continuance or demise.\cite{Higley29} The attitudes of the elites greatly impact the stability of democracy.

The social fabric, particularly in regards to either homogeneity or heterogeneity, has also been linked to democratic failure. It may seem so obvious that it's not worth mentioning, but new democracies that are at war are predisposed to fail.\cite{Wright29} A society's presence as a British colony, particularly as a long-term British colony, is linked with democratic survival.\cite{Bernhard29} A more traditional social fabric argument is that democracy is not sustainable in heterogeneous societies.\cite{Rabushka29} Even the early democratic theorist John Stuart Mill, thought democracy could not exist in heterogeneous societies.\cite{Mill29}

Economic concerns form another main constellation of literature. As has already been discussed, poverty has been associated with democratic failure.\cite{Przeworski29} Subsequent studies have developed this idea in more nuanced directions. Some find the greatest danger to democracy in states that combine a "basic needs" shortfall among the general

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Wright29} Joseph Wright, “Political Competition and Democratic Stability in New Democracies,”\textit{British Journal of Political Science} 38 (April 2008): 221-245.
\bibitem{Bernhard29} Michael Bernhard, Christopher Reenock and Timothy Nordstrom, “The Legacy of Western Overseas Colonialism on Democratic Survival,”\textit{International Studies Quarterly} 48, no. 1 (March 2004): 225-250.
\end{thebibliography}
population with increased economic development.\textsuperscript{54} Others have linked a non-diversified, resource endowed state with democratic failure.\textsuperscript{55}

There is also a strand of literature looking at systemic concerns as they impact democratic failure. Some of these emphasize the role of conflict in the international system,\textsuperscript{56} others look at exogenous structural considerations,\textsuperscript{57} while others have focused on the structure of the bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{58}

It should be noted at the outset that while the cause of democratic failure is an important subject, it will not be the focus of this work. Instead, this work will focus on describing the incidence of democratic failure across time. Ultimately, the task of applying the findings of this study to future analyses of the underlying causes of democratic failure is left to others.

\textit{Democratic diffusion}

The study of democratic failure also has much to gain from the literature surrounding the study of democratic diffusion. The counterwaves, in particular, might be conceived of as a sort of democratic diffusion in reverse. Simmons and Elkins have presented seminal studies on the topic.\textsuperscript{59} While acceptance of the idea of democratic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Christopher Reenock, Michael Bernhard and David Sobek, “Regressive Socioeconomic Distribution and Democratic Survival,” \textit{International Studies Quarterly} 51, no. 3 (September 2007): 677-699.
\item \textsuperscript{57} G. Alexander, “Institutionalized Uncertainty, the Rule of Law, and the Sources of Democratic Stability,” \textit{Comparative Political Studies} 35, no. 10 (December 2002): 1145-1170.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Shu Yun Ma, “The Rise and Fall of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism in Chile,” \textit{Studies in Comparative International Development} 34, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 51-65.
\end{itemize}
diffusion is hardly universal, the literature surrounding the idea is broad enough to have made several contributions to democratization theory. One might reasonably ask if anti-democratization trends share links and similarities to democratic diffusion trends.

Undergirding Assumptions

Key concepts are fleshed out in this section, along with a brief description of the methods used. In more common parlance these might be called the underlying assumptions. Since the notion of underlying assumptions implies subliminal or surreptitiously derived meanings, I treat these as undergirding assumptions, since they form the structure upon which this project is built.

The first assumption is that democracy can be defined. Can democracy be defined? Off the cuff, the answer is in the affirmative. Some states are democratic and others are not. Regular election cycles, the peaceful transfer of power, and competitive elections undergird the definition of democracy. To take it a step further, there are distinctives of “liberal” democracy, such as an independent judiciary, a certain set of guaranteed human rights for all citizens that cannot be voted away by the majority, lack of military involvement in the political process, etc. Tomes have been filled with various definitional considerations for democracy.

In the years since the felling of the World

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Trade Center, scholars and policy makers have struggled to define terrorism. As of this writing, their efforts have failed to form an international consensus. When one looks at the volumes filled with efforts to define democracy, the temptation is great to assume a lack of agreement in definition here as well. This work will not attempt to add to this philosophical debate, as worthy as that endeavor might be. Defining democracy is certainly not as easy a task as it first might seem, but through solid scholarship core accepted definitions have emerged.\textsuperscript{63} I do assert democracy is definable, even though common parlance applies imprecise nuances to the word.

The second assumption is that democracy can be measured in ways that are meaningful, if not complete. If scholars have long debated the definition of democracy, the idea of somehow quantifying and measuring democracy has come in for even more debate. As Seymour Lipset and Jason Lakin have said "key parts of democracy lie outside the bounds of quantification."\textsuperscript{64} How does one measure and quantify a culture’s commitment to democracy? I well remember in the days following the tragedy of September 11\textsuperscript{th}, the terrorist assaults on the United States, being in a graduate seminar with several international students. One of my colleagues had grown up in Ukraine, largely under the Soviet Union’s control. He immediately suggested that the United States close down the borders and enforce curfews. He couldn’t understand why his American born colleagues looked at him with incredulity.

This example is purely anecdotal, but it illustrates some of the elusive characteristics of democracy. These types of differences between cultures are difficult to

\textsuperscript{63} See, for example, Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, “Introduction: What Makes for a Democracy?” in \textit{Politics in Developing Countries} (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 1-66.

\textsuperscript{64} Seymour Martin Lipset and Jason Lakin, \textit{The Democratic Century} (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2004), 12.
quantify, although few would dispute their existence. While democracy's success in Asia significantly undermines the cultural argument, neither can we entirely ignore Tocqueville's "habits of the heart" argument, which infers that commitment to democracy must be cultivated in a culture's ideals. Instead, I readily acknowledge that all aspects of democracy can not be entirely quantified.

And yet, as a former skeptic of all quantitative approaches, I must admit the utility of the more easily quantifiable aspects of democracy. Key to measuring democracy is the ability to observe certain measurable components. Can one ascertain whether elections are taking place? Yes. In spite of the fairly recent propensity of even grossly autocratic rulers to use elections as a means for continuance of rule, one can observe and record elections. One can determine the presence of regular elections and there are many signposts to indicate whether they are open and competitive. One can look at the constitutions and institutions that govern the actions of nations. One can point to whether or not these documents and institutions actually are taken into account when decisions are made or simply remain lofty ideals held apart from the gritty realities of political vice.

Coups are observable phenomena, as is military interference in the political process. One can observe the repression of human rights and the lack of freedom of the press as well as the reaction of the government to the opposition. One can observe whether the opposition is jailed and persecuted or permitted to air their views.

These tangibles may not be sufficient in and of themselves for sustaining democracy over time. However, these measurable components of democracy are crucial in inculcating the habits of the heart. In fact, it is evident that these habits of the heart and the cultural supporting mechanisms that give democratic rule sustenance are
impossible without these initial measurable mechanisms. For the purposes of this study it is enough to acknowledge the crucial interplay between the measurable and unquantifiable components of democracy in its maintenance over time. This study will focus on the nuts and bolts of democracy, knowing that these measurable components, while not sufficient, are entirely necessary.

Fortunately, several databases now exist for measuring democracy. The Freedom House index and the Polity IV database are the most widely used of these, with the Polity IV exceeding Freedom House in scope of time. In addition the Polity IV database has benefited from testing and improvements in transparency and through systematic study of the database's weaknesses. Because of its longer duration, the Polity database has served as the underlying measure of democracy and autocracy for this study. The Polity database looks at institutionalized authority characteristics. Since I view institutions as a reflection of the values held by a society, or at least by those in power in a society, this helps bridge the gap between inherently measurable aspects of democracy and the "habits of the heart" discussed earlier.

The third assumption is that both scaled and dichotomous measures of democracy are useful. For the most part, I treat democracy as a scaled measure, as something that can be present in increasing and decreasing concentrations. Why take a scaled approach? Doesn't this run the risk of diluting democracy until it means nothing at all? It seems that Juan Linz has this in mind when he exhorts:

New adjectival democracies are labeled "pseudo", "semi", "illiberal," "electoral", or "delegative"—but these terms are in fact being used to describe nondemocratic regimes (or in a few cases, low-quality democratic governments). To avoid confusion, I propose the addition of adjectives to "authoritarianism" rather than to "democracy": for example, electoral authoritarianism, multiparty authoritarianism, center authoritarianism with subnational democracy.⁶⁷

While Linz is absolutely correct in the dangers of viewing democracy on a scale, his approach fails to adequately take in the changes that have taken place within the system. It is difficult to highlight these changes, which have been profound even when the progression to coherent democracy has not been utter and complete, without referring to these nation states using a scaled description of democracy. This project looks at trends so it is particularly useful to categorize democracy as a scaled variable. Doing so gives us leverage in comparing and contrasting and allows us to track changes in the levels of democracy across time.

As has already been discussed, much study has gone into the measurement criteria for democracy. The debate over measuring democracy as a dichotomous or scaled variable has also benefited from scholarly discourse. In their article "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts," Collier and Adcock argue that the use of democracy as a dichotomous variable or graded variable depends on the goals of the research.⁶⁸ Elkins argues that on the whole graded measures have superior validity and reliability.⁶⁹ For the purposes of this study, a scaled approach is used, except when issuing broad level comparisons between democracy and autocracy.

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⁶⁸ See also the useful article by Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (September 2001): 529-546.
The Polity IV database gives each nation state in the international system with a population of one million or greater, a polity score for each year. This score is based on a scale ranging from -10 to 10, with -10 being the most autocratic and 10 the most democratic. This study divides democracy into 3 subgroups, based on their polity score. On one end, we have high level democracy, with scores of 8 to 10. Next is mid-level democracy, with scores of 5 to 7. The final category is low level democracy, with scores of 1 to 4. Democracy is clearly present in the high level subset, which includes most Western nations and an increasing number of non-Western nations as well. The mid-level democracy category includes those nations typically described in the literature as consolidating. Low level democracies are sometimes not referred to as democracies at all, but are often described as weak autocracies or liberalizing regimes. Democratic failure is defined as a 3 point drop in polity score, which Polity has created as their threshold for regime change.\(^7\)

The fourth assumption is that a macro-level systematic analysis of democratic failure is of value. Having dealt with the main definitional considerations, I will now discuss the systematic nature of this study. Is this really the best approach? Would it not instead be better to jump on the bandwagon of the burgeoning democratic consolidation literature and attempt to problem solve using individual case studies? What is learned from this method that can’t be learned from case studies? Are there benefits to a “large N” study or do the generalities that derive from such a study only mask the fact that all cases of democratic regression are so individualized that studying them corporately is futile?

The fact that democracy’s regression is clustered in certain time periods suggests there may be systemic factors at work, exacerbating the domestic picture. While it is beyond the scope of this work to definitively pinpoint all the systemic factors that contribute to democratic failure, an in-depth description of the actual phenomenon should serve to elucidate certain characteristics of the trend. This I shall do in Chapter III.

It is worthwhile to note that only through systematic study was the international component of the forward progression of democracy described. As previously noted in Samuel Huntington’s *Third Wave*, the phenomenon of democracy’s forward march across time was broadly characterized to the general benefit of the field. In fact, this book sparked an outpouring of literature on the progression of democracy. The big picture characterization of democracy’s forward waves allowed other questions to be asked, and other hypotheses to be tested.

The fact that this service has not yet been performed for the counterwave phenomenon is somewhat puzzling, but may be due to a preoccupation with democracy’s advance. While scholars have recognized the challenges faced by transitions to democracy, as evidenced by the large extant literature on democratic transitions and consolidation, the field has given little attention to the potential links in democratic regression.

This study, therefore, will largely approach things at the macro level, supplementing with specific examples only in an illustrative manner. The compatibility of the 2 approaches is fleshed out in Michael Coppedge’s article “Thickening thin concepts and theories—Combining large N and small in comparative politics.”

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author argues that small n studies benefit from the testing of large N studies, while quantitative studies gain richness and depth from the case study approach.

Like an epidemiologist, this work will look at the epidemics, hitherto little described, that strike democracies. The causes of democratic decline vary by location and circumstance. Some democracies are aborted, some only wounded, some diseased and others stunted. Their recovery is similarly distinct. Some democracies, like cats, seem to have 9 lives. Others use their experience with decline as a sort of vaccination experience, contracting a mild form of an illness while building immunity. This study does not mean to imply that the individual patients are unimportant. It merely suggests that challenges to democracy—whether experienced as complete failure, stagnation or decline—are largely clustered together in time. Just as democracy goes forward in waves, it retreats in waves as well.

Just as the study of epidemics in no way obviates the need for individual physicians, this work doesn’t obviate the need for case study analysis. Indeed, it draws upon case study analysis. However, it does take a macro level approach that allows a big picture view that facilitates a broader understanding of the threats to democracy. This is an apt argument for macro studies.

This study attempts to untangle the big picture. Some might argue that there is no big picture, but I disagree. The big picture is and has always been there, but in this age of increasing globalization and information overload with increasing means of communicating, the big picture is increasingly important. In order to put together patterns, make sense of trends and prepare and equip nations for life in the international system, the big picture is more important than ever.
The fifth assumption is that history teaches important lessons. If the world is a completely unpredictable place, wholly separated from historical context, if the past has no bearing on the present, if we are doomed to always repeat the same policy mistakes over and over again then there is no reason for scholarly debate. In the realm of international study, academic endeavors are "graspings after the wind" in a world where history doesn't matter. I argue this is not the case. History is important. At times history demonstrates the ways we have changed, at other times the ways we have remained the same. Regardless, it is impossible to fully understand the present without an understanding of the past.

Conclusion

Understanding democratic regression is crucial to safeguarding democracy. While the literature on democratization is burgeoning, few scholars are devoted to studying the threats to democracy. Perhaps this is hardly surprising given the optimism surrounding the spread of democracy. In the euphoria surrounding the end of the Cold War, democracy's triumph took on the air of inevitability. Democracy had survived and as the last man standing, seemed to point to itself as the ultimate political endpoint. Francis Fukuyama's oft-quoted article trumpeted and celebrated this triumph of liberal democracy as the end of history. In a more recent book, however, Fukuyama rushes to qualify his thesis by arguing the triumph of liberal democracy was never automatic, and is in need of safeguards to assure its continued progression. As some hard-won

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democratic gains seem increasingly tenuous, the time is ripe for a comprehensive evaluation of democratic failure and the examination of that failure as it has functioned in the international system. The time is right to provide a safeguard to democracy by filling the gap in the literature with a comprehensive treatment of democratic failure in the context of counterwaves. Fortunately, the existing literature has laid both the theoretical and methodological groundwork that make this project possible.

This study also offers a venue to add to our understanding of the antidemocratic movements which had such great historical impact. While fascism and communism, along with the impacts of colonialism, have been discussed in great depth, they have yet to be discussed in great width. This study offers just such an opportunity to investigate the width of the historical incidence of anti-democratic political change.

Looking at democracy as a scaled variable offers important comparative perspectives across the spectrum. I will examine highly organized forms of autocracy and democracy, as well as looking at political systems with mixed autocratic and democratic characteristics. Doing so gives us a better idea of the function of the democratic ideal. It also offers points of comparison for nation states that swing back and forth between democracy and autocracy. Through it all, I look at the way the international system has evolved over time. In particular, I observe the ways it is both different and the same since the adoption of democracy as the driving force behind ideal and legitimate governance.

How will all of these things be accomplished? Before embarking on the meat of the project, I will take a chapter to examine the oft-neglected foundations of democracy and anti-democracy. I will look at this from the standpoint of political philosophy and
historical chronology. With this knowledge firmly in hand, I'll examine the counterwaves, the clusters of democratic failure. From there, I'll embark on an examination of polities in order of decreasing democratic characteristics. I will first consider high level democratic failure before turning to dissonant democracies, those nation states with lower levels of democratic governance that have decidedly mixed authority traits but still have discernible democratic characteristics. Finally, I'll look at autocratic states, in particular at those states that have experienced the deepening of autocracy. I'll then end the study where it began, with a discussion of the implications of the findings, with a particular focus on tying together the remnants of antidemocratic thought and its impact in the modern international system.
CHAPTER II
FOUNDATIONS FOR ANTIDEMOCRACY

For philosophers and theologians alike, the problem of explaining the existence of evil has been somewhat intractable. Is evil a force of its own, or is it simply the absence of good? Is it defined as an independent entity, or only in relation to its twisting and perversion of good? These questions of good and evil may, at first glance, seem to have little place in a discourse about democratic failure, but I believe they inform our discussion in important ways. The point is not to assert that democracy is good and democratic failure is evil, but rather that democratic failure in and of itself is defined as a lack of democracy. The reversion to some other form of governance is couched in terms reserved for democracy.

Even speech patterns revolve around democracy in order to describe democratic failure. In fact, Charles Tilly, in his book *Democracy*, could only refer to democratic failure using terms like “undemocracy” and “de-democratization.”¹ This is not simply a matter for philologists, but gives important insight into how democratic failure is viewed as a concept. It suggests that the various forms of autocracy are no more than the absence of democracy.

I suggest that antidemocracy is a more apt term to describe the undercurrents in democratic failure. I contend there are, and certainly always have been, forces aligned against democracy, that by the same token form an ideational alternative to democracy. This chapter traces these ideas through history, examines the main themes in

antidemocracy in greater detail, then closes with an examination of the iterations of antidemocratic ideals that continue to resonate today.

Antidemocracy through History

To frame the discussion of antidemocratic ideas, one must first look at the possible constellations of power. Where does power reside? There are 3 basic possibilities and myriad idiosyncratic manifestations. One person can be in charge, the rule of one. A group of elite can be in charge, rule of the few. Or everyone that meets certain requirements has a say in governance, rule of the many. All governments, historic and present, can be loosely described as fitting into one of these 3 broad categories. The purpose of this portion of the chapter is to journey back through history to examine the ways each of these 3 different forms has been advocated at different points in history, determining how democracy became the most venerated form of governance today. This recap identifies undercurrents that are still present and highly relevant to the discussion when government by “the many” lapses back into rule by one or the few.

The East

The East has never been accused of being naturally fertile ground for democracy. This is not to say hints of democracy have been completely absent in the East, but without doubt democracy first took root in the West. This becomes less surprising if one examines some of the main constellations of thought prevalent in the East and their predispositions toward democracy.

Indian philosophy winds back into pre-recorded history. The dominant religious and cultural traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism both found their genesis in India.
While these religious traditions are complex and distinct, they do share some similarities that are important to this discussion. Both emphasize the importance of the self, which at first glance might seem fertile ground for democracy since rule by the many presupposes the importance of the individual. But, the focus turns to inward self improvement. Above all else, Indian philosophy desires the liberation of self from fragmented existence, through self-discipline and self-knowledge. Indian philosophy rests upon two further fundamental assumptions. It presupposes universal moral justice. The world metes out to us only what we deserve. We bear the responsibility, and have determined our own past and future. The other assumption is the unity of self and universe. Because of this unity, the undivided whole, each individual has the ability to find this wholeness through self-knowledge. Because self-knowledge is central, truth is relative.

It is impossible for one person to subscribe to one “true” philosophy and to regard the others as completely false. Truth in philosophy depends upon the human subject, and another’s experience can be known only as an object. There is no knowing the other as subject. Consequently, there is no rejecting the other’s experience as inadequate or unsatisfactory.

The Indian philosophic concentration on self-discovery, its commitment to relative truth, and its presupposition of universal moral justice did not give rise to a robust tradition of political philosophy. The presupposition of universal moral justice, in particular, reinforced societal suffering as deserved, while also reinforcing the notion that the requisite tools for escaping that suffering were already available to each person within himself. Given these philosophical presuppositions, it is not surprising democracy was birthed outside India’s borders. And yet, democracy has managed to survive there in

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3 Ibid., 6.
modern times, in spite of the cultural foundation that would seem to oppose it, urging caution to those who would argue democracy can only be sustained where it was birthed.

Much blame for Asian distaste for democracy has also been laid at the feet of Confucius, born around 551 B.C. Unlike his Indian counterparts, Confucian philosophy was essentially political in nature. Living in a tumultuous time, he founded a political philosophy that permeated every aspect of social relationships. Centralized leadership, in the form of an emperor, was crucial to his idealized society, as were correct social boundaries and loyalties. The ruler was to be emulated as he modeled correct adherence to virtue, while social relationships were governed by the key virtues of filial piety, loyalty, and manners. While much wisdom can be garnered from *The Analects*, democracy, with its focus on individual rights, is not one of them. Still, at various points of time in imperial China, the governing system which rested on Confucian ideals supported a meritocracy in which the best and brightest experienced significant social mobility while providing a system of some restraint against highly centralized imperial rule.

*The West*

We’ve established some antidemocratic leanings in the main thoughts of Eastern philosophy, now we turn to Western philosophy to see if the case is any different. Interestingly, echoes of Confucian philosophy can be found in the writings of Plato. Written around 360 B.C., Plato’s *Republic* puts forth the rule of a philosopher king, supported by an elite class of educated philosophers, who would rule by example, training and educating the masses in the ways of virtue. His idealized society

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emphasized education as a key to advancing the mind and taming the spirit. The king would be the idealized form of all these important attributes. Plato never even hints that democracy is an acceptable form of government. Like Confucius, his ideal governance centers on a good ruler as the key to a stable utopian society.

Thucydides, a contemporary of Plato, offers a slightly different perspective on the value of democracy. Athens, often cited as a democracy, elected their generals and city treasurers, showing the tangible difference between the East and the West in terms of the practice of democracy. Defying predictions to the contrary, the Athenian democracy lasted for 150 years, with only a couple brief interludes of oligarchic rule. While Thucydides wasn’t glowing in his review of democratic rule, he includes Athenogoras’ defense of democracy, in response to the charge that democracy was neither wise nor equitable:

I say, on the contrary, first that the word demos, or people, includes the whole state, oligarchy only a part; next that if the best guardians of property are the rich, and the best counselors the wise, none can hear and decide so well as the many; and that all these talents individually and collectively, have their just place in a democracy. But an oligarchy gives the many their share of the danger, and not content with the largest part takes and keeps the whole of the profit.

Thus, even in a form of democracy that today would be treated as quite limited, democracy was viewed by some as the most equitable form of governance. In fact, it is reasonable to assert that the brevity of the 2 oligarchic disruptions in democratic rule

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6 I am fully aware of the fact that only men who were citizens could vote, which left out the masses of slaves who greatly outnumbered citizens. Still, in such cases I think it wise to look in relative terms. Athens was cited in derision, as a democracy by surrounding city states. In comparison to the other city states of its time, it was peculiarly democratic. While it can’t be claimed as a democracy in today’s terms of the word, it deserves to be described as a democracy.
indicates the democratic form of governance was important to the general public, otherwise it would not have been reinstated and defended.

Aristotle, in his *Politics*, made the contribution of advocating a mixed form of governance. While Aristotle, like Plato, emphasized the virtues of the rulers, he stressed the constitution as the key to limiting the power of rulers. He saw the importance of creating a convergence of norms and ideas of governance. If everyone buys into the constitution, a system of constraint is in place so that the type of governance is unimportant. This seemingly even-handed approach to regime type belies Aristotle’s underlying prejudice against democracies. He notes that “while it is possible for one or a few to be outstandingly virtuous, it is difficult for a larger number to be accomplished in every virtue.” Perhaps more in accord with his teacher Plato than he would like to admit, throughout the book he hints at the relative practical ease of kingship and the relative difficulties inherent in mass representation. At best, he gives the “rule by the many” a place alongside other legitimate forms of government as long as it doesn’t descend into a deviant form. While he advocates working toward the common good, he indicates the achievement of this ideal will more likely occur in rule by the one or the few.

From the ancient Greece we leapfrog through history to reach Machiavelli in a fragmented Italy that still resembles the city state mentality of the Greek period we’ve just been discussing. In his well-known essay *The Prince*, again the admiration for strong a centralized authority figure emerges. While his essays in *The Discourses* offer a defense of democracy that contrasts to his better known piece, Machiavelli’s practical advice to

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8 It is important to qualify this with a definition of “constitution.” Here, it seems, Aristotle did not refer to a written document, but rather to a way of living under a certain political system.
the ruler of his day in *The Prince* at least demonstrates the continuing reliance on centralized rule by the one or the few as the most practical political arrangement, while the arguments of *The Discourses* demonstrate some of democracy's desirable components.

From Machiavelli, we fast forward again through the dominance of monarchy and city states to a time in Western history when legislatures were finally in ascendance and change was in the air. In this grouping, the works of some of the Enlightenment political philosophers will be considered. Particular attention will focus on the issue of ideal governance, in a time when shifts away from traditional monarchy marked a break from the past.

Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan* in 1651, raising his overarching concern for protection from anarchy. He emphasized the importance of stability and sacrificed freedom. But it is his role as an advocate of the absolute necessity of a centralized power that remains the distinguishing characteristic of his book. The central power's actions are unpunishable. He is both the maker and enforcer of laws, and the maker of both war and peace. Hobbes blames the division of these sovereign rights (into powers for the King, powers for the Lords, and powers for the House of Commons) for the Civil War that was taking place in Britain at the time of the writing of his book. It is not surprising that the thoughts found here. The ultimate value placed on a stable society echoes the works of Roman writers who also wrote during times of civil war. The

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11 Ibid., 123-126.
12 Ibid., 127.
premium placed on security, when security is absent, certainly has informed regime type choices, and remains relevant today, finding echoes in the “garrison state” literature mentioned in the previous chapter.

Writing a rough 100 years after Hobbes, Rousseau published *The Social Contract* in 1762. His critique of monarchy, especially the argument that a monarchy was best suited to preserving stability at all costs, was quite direct...even cheeky:

Life is also tranquil in dungeons; is that enough to feel well in them? The Greeks imprisoned in the Cyclops’ cave lived there tranquilly while awaiting their turn to be devoured.14

Departing from guarantees of societal stability that were rooted in centralized authority, or in a virtuous king, Rousseau’s main proposal took a modified community utilitarian approach. This approach answered the puzzle of finding “a form of association that will defend and protect the persona and goods of each associate with the full common force.”15 This compact, which he dubbed the “social contract,” solved the problem he saw with man’s natural tendency to look only to his own self-preservation and the impact this had on society in general. In describing this philosophy Rousseau envisioned that “each of us puts his person and his full power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”16

While concern for equality was central, enforcement of the contract hardly required the direction of the many. As the author himself acknowledged, it depended on a dictatorial community that did whatever it took to enforce the contract:

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15 Ibid., 49-50.
16 Ibid., 50.
Hence, for the social compact not to be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the following engagement which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the entire body; which means nothing other than that he shall be forced to be free….17

So, we can see that Rousseau introduced this idea of a centralized authority that would enforce the will of the majority. This paternalism, while a step away from Hobbes more starkly conceived central authority, is by no means a friend to liberal democracy. Perhaps it is all the more dangerous for being insidious.

Of course, there were other writers during this time period that made significant contributions to liberal democracy’s advance. John Locke, added formulations of the rule of law in his Treatise.18 Immanuel Kant for the first time linked regime type to propensity for conflict, suggesting an international system populated with republics would be key to peace.19 John Stuart Mill pointed out the dangers of Rousseau’s Social Contract by delineating the tyranny of the majority.20 These works were important in countering the antidemocratic currents of the Enlightenment.

In direct counterpoint to the ideal of democracy as the future of pure governance was the ideal of communism. Occupying scarcely more than forty pages of typewritten text, The Communist Manifesto makes up for in substance what it lacks in duration. The spark for a movement that changed the direction of history and impacted the lives of millions, this slender volume deserves careful consideration.

With its famous opening line to Chapter One, this essay promptly divides the world into 2 groups, the oppressor and the oppressed. The essay traced the impact of the Industrial Revolution, and the free trade movement as harbingers of a new class they called the industrial proletariat consisting of workers that were being exploited by the resource-rich bourgeoisie. Some elements of the modern anti-globalization movement find roots here as Marx and Engels lament the dependency that the spread of commerce has induced in foreign lands throughout the world.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

At its most basic level, the manifesto deals with the fundamentals of human purpose and existence, these being the struggles to live with technology, to find meaning in life, and to deal with change.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjugation to capital,
the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.  

The Communist movement searched for significance in the midst of a world that seemed threatening. It offered the hope of change for the better to those left behind in the shuffle of “progress.” It resonated with the target audience of the disenfranchised, even when they didn’t fit the label “modern industrial labor.” The Communist movement remains an example of the power of an idea to motivate diverse unhappy people worldwide to participate in, or submit themselves to, revolution. At its peak it faced democracy with a grave threat, seizing upon the ideas of equality and a type of social contract for the betterment of the majority. The political systems that emerged promised basic levels of goods to all. In return, the central State took a great deal of authority and left little individual autonomy. Communism, in short, combined several of the ideals of Hobbes’ leviathan state and coupled them with Rousseau’s ideas of working for the good of the majority. It was the culmination of a fusion of ideals.

The threads of this discussion hint at the inherent weaknesses long dead political pundits saw in democracy. Some of these can be explained away simply because the word democracy means something different in common usage today than it did in previous eras. Still, the idea that “the masses” would be involved in governance has brought up interesting, and sometimes enlightened, discussions on the frailties of democracy. In this treatment of democratic failure, the examination of these critiques is well-served. It addresses the fundamental concept of how much the international

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community of today is different than that of the past, and the ways it is the same. From this topic we will now turn to recurring themes in antidemocracy.

Themes in Antidemocracy

This section will explore various themes in antidemocracy. These themes undermine the democratic ideal and form an important base for the discussion of democratic failure in the time period under consideration.

Mass rule equals instability

What does it mean to say “the people have spoken?” This phrase could rightly be uttered at the conclusion of a lynching or at the announcement of the winner of a well-ordered election, although the circumstances surrounding the 2 differ dramatically. And yet, both cases reflect the will of the many. Mob rule is hardly considered an appropriate expression of democracy today, and yet mobs on violent binges consistently appear in historic criticisms of democracy.

Even Cicero, often described as one of the most eloquent defenders of electoral contests, speaks of democracy as a type of mob rule with “cruel and violent potential” although with benefits if managed by a good leader. This mercurial aspect of mass rule has been decried across the centuries as an undesirable side effect of democratic rule. Given this, chronic instability should surface as a major failing of unrestricted mass rule. Cicero thus advocated a public united in a genuine “partnership founded on law,” otherwise mass participation devolves into a “despotism exercised by the mob.”

28 Ibid., 186-187.
When this rule of law is absent, mob rule indeed becomes violent. This is true in the Roman Empire as well as in ancient Greece. What has been referred to as “direct democracy,” where mass assemblies were in control, can only be described as volatile and violent. Polybius, a Greek statesman, described the strength of the Roman constitution as being mixed, in the best Aristotelian sense. Comprised of checks and balances, it was able to stave off the undesirable side effects of the simple forms of rule by one, rule by the few, and rule by the many. As John Dickenson notes:

According to Polybius, each of these forms was represented, respectively, by the consuls, the senate, and the assemblies; but through the reciprocal checks and balances which existed among the organs representing the principles of these different forms of government, the mixed form, operating in mutual interdependency of all three, exhibited special strength by maintaining an appropriate equilibrium among them.29

When the system of checks and balances degenerated, the atmosphere within the Roman Empire changed, reverting back to mob rule which in turn paved the way for “irresponsible demagoguery as a normal feature of political activity.”30 Within the space of 40 years, Roman politics featured decreased senatorial influence and power, chronic election riots and prevalent bloodshed.31

While Aristotle was not fond of democracy in his writings, we can perhaps attribute a portion of this to the way democracy was conceived in his time. In ancient times the word was associated with the immediate action of the mob, who might then regret their decisions, while democracy today is associated with measured action. Today the whole judicial process in liberal democracies is associated with slowness, not immediate justice. Aristotle’s advocacy of a mixed constitution contemplated the idea
for a system of checks and balances, which could temper the very dangers of instability he feared in the democracy of his time.

Machiavelli echoes Aristotle’s concerns, adding his voice to those fearing instability in democracy saying “Thus monarchies easily become tyrannies, aristocracies become oligarchies and democracies slide into anarchy.”32 It is important to notice that although both tyranny and oligarchy are on Aristotle’s list of bad outcomes for a nation, the dissolution of democracy plunges a city state into “ungovernment” while the other transformations from “good” rule to “bad” rule are still functional governments…even if considered evil. This peculiarity of democracy suggests a similarly peculiar logic. When the people no longer attend to the government, there is no alternative other than anarchy. With monarchy, when the government degenerates, it simply collapses in and shows its might. With aristocracies, they centralize and rule by force as well, but for a democracy the dissolution leaves no structure behind, since “we the people” have abandoned the structure of government and nothing remains with which to construct even an authoritarian government. After all, it is impossible for “we the people” to tyrannize themselves. Thus, instability reigns chief. While Aristotle’s definition of democracy differed somewhat substantially from that of today, the critique of democracy as a destroyer of stability is still touted today as democracies are seen as particularly unstable and prone to disintegration.33

While recognizing these frequent critiques of democracy, De Tocqueville observed none of them in the newly made United States. As has already been noted, a

critique of democracy that consistently surfaces is the lack of stability for this particular type of governance, but de Tocqueville notes a change that has occurred with the leap of democracy from city state to nation state:

I hear it said that it is in the nature and the habits of democracies to be constantly changing their opinions and feelings. This may be true of small democratic nations, like those of the ancient world, in which the whole community could be assembled in a public place and then excited at will by an orator. But I saw nothing of the kind among the great democratic people that dwells on the opposite shores of the Atlantic Ocean.\(^\text{34}\)

The democracy of nation states, almost invariably larger than the city states where direct democracy was more plausible, depended upon institutions. These institutions seemed to tame direct democracy’s dark side, creating a system of checks and balances within rule by the many that represented a deviation from past forms of democracy.

*Autocracy’s lingering power*

Machiavelli described another aspect of the instability of new democracies as centered in the nature of the people long accustomed to an autocratic regime and their inability to adjust their faculties to democracy and greater freedom.

There are numerous examples to be found in ancient history that show how difficult it is for a people who are accustomed to being ruled by one man to preserve their liberty if by some chance they acquire it, as Rome acquired its liberty when it threw out the Tarquins. This is as you would expect, for such a people are no different from a wild beast which, although by nature savage and untamed, has been raised from birth in a prison and in slavery. If it is then allowed to wander freely in the countryside, because it has no experience of hunting for its food and no knowledge of where to take refuge, it will be recaptured by the first person who sets out to hunt it down. The same thing happens with a people. Being used to living at the commande of others, having no experience of debating questions of strategy, whether of defense or offense, having no knowledge of their neighboring rulers, and being unknown to them, they quickly succumb once again to a ruler’s yoke and usually end up under a harsher tyranny than the one from which they have just escaped....In addition, there is another problem, which is that a state that becomes free acquired bitter enemies, but not loyal allies. All those who benefited under the previous tyranny, who fed off the wealth of the ruler, become

bitter enemies. They have lost the opportunity to become rich, and so cannot live content. Each one of them is forced to try to reconstruct the old tyranny in order to recover his old influence.\textsuperscript{35}

Machiavelli deals with several themes that certainly still resonate today. He asserts that highly centralized rule, even once it has been defeated, leaves a residue staining the people whose minds have been sheltered from the necessities of daily rule. He accuses the people of ignorance, and the inability to break out of the shackles of their minds. In short, "the many" don't know the ropes and so they hang themselves. In addition, Machiavelli addresses the problem of the disenfranchised elite, who automatically become enemies of the new regime, an idea with resonance today.\textsuperscript{36} The failure to offer adequate options, even "buy outs," to former regime officials is still positively associated with democratic failure.

\textit{Democracy is too utopian}

"If there were a people of Gods, they would govern themselves democratically. So perfect a Government is not suited to men."\textsuperscript{37} With this statement, Rousseau condemns democracy as unfettered idealism. But was he really talking about democracy as known today, or was he using the word to mean something completely different? Clues are given by the context surrounding the statement. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's definition of democracy is a different animal than that as later conceived in the American, and even the French, Revolution. The "new" democracy involved certain intrinsic rights, something Rousseau rejected. Today, the democratic ideal includes guarantees of

individual freedoms, not unlike those guarantees involved in the Bill of Rights, and reacting against the “tyranny of the majority” mentality. Rousseau, in contrast, had called for a tyranny of the majority as the true reflection of the best way forward. This is another good example of the caution we need to show in assuming words have had the same meaning across time. The same words are oftentimes used, but with very different meanings and contexts. Caution is in order.

In today’s common parlance, democracy is not only a type of government, it is also a hypothetical ideal. Perfect participation, the perfect expression of all segments of the population eligible to participate in politics, occurs only in the realm of the ideal. Utopian democracy is indeed a dream, but democratic governance does exist. In this world of imperfect and flawed people, democracy fairly reflects the qualities of its constituents. Democracy is largely about the exercise of restraint. The beast may paw at the ground, but the people serve as both bridle and bit that direct the leviathan.

And yet Rousseau dismissed democracy as an inherently unrealistic form of governance saying:

> In the strict sense of the term, a genuine Democracy never has existed, and never will exist. It is against the natural order that the greater number govern and the smaller number be governed. It is unimaginable that the people remain constantly assembled to attend to public affairs, and it is readily evident that it could not establish commissions to do so without the form of the administration changing.\(^{38}\)

Clearly, Rousseau could not foresee any arrangement of democratic institutions that could convert democracy from Utopian ideal to tangible governance. The fact that these institutions did evolve freed democracy from these antidemocratic entanglements. In modern times, however, the criticism of democracy as too utopian still surfaces,

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particularly when speaking of countries that do not have well-developed institutions to both tame democracy and ensure forward progress beyond legislative gridlock.⁴⁹

There are other weaker variants of the idea of democracy as utopian. Even Alexis de Tocqueville thought democracy had only arisen in American because of the lack of external threats. He argues that democracy was able to flourish in America because it was “a nation without neighbors.”⁴⁰ He saw external threats as an impetus for the increase of the executive government, since foreign affairs remains the one arena where democracy cannot penetrate.⁴¹ One can infer from Tocqueville’s argument that in the continental context of Europe, democracy would be harder to implement. This expands a bit on Machiavelli’s discussion of a similar point, that when a power is brought down the alliance structure necessary for state survival is difficult to implement since all those in the system have a vested interest in the prior status quo.⁴² These arguments demonstrate the perceived difficulties of being a democracy in an international system that didn’t respect that type of governance.

*The dangers of democracy’s rhetoric*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was also very concerned with the perversion of democracy. In particular, he distrusted clever politicians who could sway the people with smooth rhetoric. He saw that public deliberations could bring with them the danger of convincing the people to do something that was actually not in their interest:

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⁴¹ Ibid., 232-235.

It does not follow, however, that public deliberations are always equitable; they may not be so regarding foreign affairs; I have stated the reason why this is so. Thus it is not impossible that a well-governed republic might wage an unjust war. Nor it is impossible that the council of democracy pass bad decrees or condemn the innocent: but none of this will ever happen unless the people is seduced by private interests which some few skillful men succeed by their reputation and eloquence to substitute for the people’s own interest. Then the public deliberation will be one thing, and the general will another thing entirely. Do not, therefore, raise the democracy of Athens as an objection to me, because Athens was in fact not a democracy, but a most tyrannical aristocracy governed by learned men and orators. Attend carefully to what happens in any deliberation, and you will see that the general will is always for the common good; but very often some secret division develops, some tacit alliance which causes the assembly’s natural disposition to be eluded in favor of private views. Then the social body really divides into other bodies whose members adopt a general will, good and just with regard to these new bodies, unjust and bad with regard to the whole form which each of them dismembers itself.\footnote{Jean-Jacques Rousseau, \textit{The Social Contract and other Later Political Writing}, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8.}

Rousseau was concerned about the way minds can be swayed away from what is for the general good. The general will is always for the common good, but if something is passed that is not for the common good then it is not the general will. This would seem a rather circular argument. At any rate, the solution to such a problem is clear, as has already been discussed earlier in the chapter. The “social contract” will have to be enforced by a central authority with power over all to enforce the common good. Here, Rousseau’s foundation is paternalism. It rests on the assumption that the people may in fact be deluded into acting against their interest. In a well-ordered democracy, however, even if this should occur the people have opportunities to redress the situation. The danger of Rousseau’s argument, the antidemocratic quality, is toxic as it easily leads to a centralized power structure to “enforce the common good.” Upon this paternalistic foundation many an autocratic state has been formed.
Perhaps this was in Tocqueville’s mind when he expressed a fear that democracy would lead to tyranny by way of paternalism:

I have not fear that they will meet with tyrants in their rulers, but rather with guardians... The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd... Our contemporaries are constantly excited by two conflicting passions: they want to be led and they wish to remain free.\(^4\)

He goes on to explain why he feels democratic governance is particularly vulnerable to this sort of absolute despotism, in ways that echo Machiavelli’s concerns:

I believe that it is easier to establish an absolute and despotic government among a people in which the conditions of society are equal than among any other; and I think that if such a government were once established among such a people, it not only would oppress men, but would eventually strip each of them of several of the highest qualities of humanity. Despotism, therefore, appears to me peculiarly to be dreaded in democratic times. I should have loved freedom, I believe, at all times, but in the time in which we live I am ready to worship it.\(^5\)

Tocqueville’s concerns projected into the twentieth century, when democracy did indeed face dire threats to freedom, the subject of the next section.

**The New Challenges of Modern Antidemocracy**

The beginning of the Great War brought into sharp focus the new challenges of the modern age for democracy. The nineteenth century had been one of great change, with technological advance introducing mechanization and the need for resources in an unprecedented fashion. It was a world dominated by Europe, having been in large


\(^5\) Ibid., 322.
measure carved and split between the various European nation states. Winston Churchill describes that European world on the eve of WWI with great nostalgia and fondness:

Like many others, I often summon up in my memory the impression of those July [1914] days. The world on the very eve of its catastrophe was very brilliant. Nations and Empires crowned with princes and potentates rose majestically on every side, lapped in the accumulated treasures of the long peace. All were fitted and fastened—it seemed securely—into an immense cantilever. The two mighty European systems faced each other glittering and clanking in their panoply, but with a tranquil gaze. A polite, discreet, pacific, and on the whole sincere diplomacy spread its web of connections over both. A sentence in a dispatch, an observation by an ambassador, a cryptic phrase in a Parliament seemed sufficient to adjust from day to day the balance of the prodigious structure. Words counted, and even whispers. A nod could be made to tell. Were we after all to achieve world security and universal peace by a marvelous system of combinations in equipoise and of armaments in equation, of checks and counterchecks on violent action ever more complex and delicate? Would Europe thus marshaled, thus grouped, thus related, unite into one universal and glorious organism capable of receiving and enjoying in undreamed of abundance the bounty which nature and science stood hand in hand to give? The old world in its sunset was fair to see.  

But if the world of 1914 brings a nostalgic half-smile to mind, the realities of the post war era sober even the most committed optimist. The world has always known divides. Language, culture, religion, and distance have divided humanity for long centuries. With the onset of modernity, some of these divides have been lessened but in their wake others have arisen. Antidemocratic ideals divided the world after World War I in ways that were previously impossible. The divides of liberal democracy and fascism, along with liberal democracy and communism were ignited by the horrors of this great conflict.

The word fascism is derived from the Italian word describing the symbol of ancient Roman government, tightly bound sticks with an axe in the center. Mussolini’s vision of a highly centralized government derived from his desire for a strong state that

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could never be broken. Fascism, unlike communism, has no overt shared ideology. It is difficult to determine with precision the differences between a fascist and a highly autocratic regime. This distinction is unnecessary. While autocratic regimes today are not deemed fascist, perhaps because of the connotation linked with World War II, for all intents and purposes any nation committed to the antidemocratic principles of highly centralized power structures with no accountability to the many, shares the essential qualities of Mussolini’s Italy. They are indeed tightly bound.

Communism, its ideas first presented in the aforementioned Communist Manifesto, was able to wed the nation state because of the Great War. While this ultimately ended in a great divorce, the world is a vastly different place today because of the marriage. After World War II, with the onset of the Cold War, the more institutionalized communism of the USSR courted foreign dignitaries and rabble rousers, educating them in the art of revolution and state craft.\textsuperscript{48} Communism derived its legitimacy from the ideology of absolute equality. Practically speaking, however, this equality had to be enforced by a central authority, “a la Rousseau,” that was supposed to act in the best interest of the people. Hitchhiking from the German example of totalitarian rule, the Soviets married ideology with a totalitarian regime that was inherently antidemocratic in nature.

Somewhat ironically liberal democracy in general, and the United States in particular as the most powerful liberal democracy post-1945, reacted to this threat by quashing fledgling democracies and supporting autocrats that were friendly to Western

interests. Confirming the earlier critique of democracy as inherently unstable, the U.S. feared the advance of Communism in these fledgling democracies and preferred stability at all costs.

If globalized conflict impacted the conflict of liberal democracy versus fascism and communism, it also introduced a new divide between nation states and those lacking a national identity. In the decolonization era that followed World War II, former colonies now faced the task of cobbling together governance over a national territory whose boundaries had often been drawn by outsiders. As seen in the post-colonial legacy, a lack of identity can have lasting ramifications. In commenting on the loss of identity Neville Brown says:

Loss of identity may by then have been more a fount of radicalism than penury per se. Those trapped in grinding poverty are usually more concerned to break out than to save humankind at large. The world of the near future may likewise contain more people who have been radicalized by identity crisis than is currently anticipated either by governments or by the literati. The signs are very evident in a swathe of territory extending through the Horn of Africa, Arabia and the Gulf to Central Asia.  

While the radicalization of those in identity crisis as a threat to global security is one aspect of this new challenge, another is that experienced internally with chronic instability. Whether by frequent coups or by civil war, many of Europe's post-colonial holding still harbor antidemocratic legacies.

Even when valuable resources are discovered in countries with antidemocratic currents, transitions to stable democratic rule are often problematic. New resources, such

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as oil, have seemed to stack the deck against democracy. A dominant rationale is that nations wealthy in resources such as oil have no need for parliaments because they "win popular acquiescence through distribution rather than support through taxation and representation."\(^5^2\)

Fueled in part by the nation states made wealthy by resource endowment, the transition to market economies has not led to strong democracies, leaving a weaker than anticipated link between strong economies leading to strong democracies. As Michael Dauderstadt has noted, while the democratization process has stalled out in many transition countries, some of the greatest economic successes have been generated from authoritarian rule.\(^5^3\)

Adding to this is the continuing divide between the "haves" and the "have-nots". While this divide is not new in origin, the awareness of the divide is more prevalent today than ever before, imbuing a seething resentment. The intersect of the post-colonial residue and the increase in state power as located in nation states has resulted in a discernible "north-south" divide. As noted by Gurr et al:

The successful political systems of the northern hemisphere have matured into two increasingly distinct and internally consistent types: coherent multiparty democracies and one-party autocracies. The political patterns of Latin America and the postcolonial Third and Fourth worlds are far more heterogeneous. Their histories of experimentation with democracy, autocracy, and mixed regimes are fraught with instability and few show evidence of sustained linear progression toward one or another of the increasingly pure types that prevail in the northern hemisphere.\(^5^4\)


But the story is not rosy for democracy in these northern hemisphere countries either. When Susan Pharr and Robert Putnam published the original version of *Disaffected Democracies*, the world seemed cold toward democracy. The Soviet Union was becoming more assertive, Nixon had been forced to resign, and Europe was divided, with the Western half at times seeming to cower in the shadow of its Soviet neighbors. In the midst of this uncertainty perhaps it is not surprising that Pharr and Putnam’s study found broad disillusionment with democracy among the high level democracies. The results of their updated study in the 1990s, a time of euphoria and optimism concerning democracy and its spread, are more troubling. Even with the triumph of democracy over communism 25 years later “the low confidence in government in America and other Trilateral countries has not only continued but deepened.” What this portends, I won’t predict, other than to say this further highlights the need to study and understand antidemocracy in the context of history more fully.

**Conclusion**

Dominant today as the most popular form of legitimacy, rule by the many argues that government exists at the people’s mandate. As this discussion has demonstrated, that view has been a minority one across the span of history. Long held in poor esteem, democracy was traditionally viewed as little more than mob rule. Decried as inherently unstable, utopian, and prone to dangerous rhetoric, democracy has only recently become the government of choice. Autocracy, however, was seen as so powerful that even if a


56 Ibid., xxvi.
nation escapes its clutches the people remain damaged by their autocratic experience, thus predisposing them to an even more extreme subsequent autocracy.

While innovations in democratic institutions, coupled with advances in technology and bureaucracy, have enabled democracy’s escape from many of the historic critiques, it faced new challenges in the 20th century. Global conflict created great ideological divides between governments centered on liberty, governments centered on stability, and governments centered on equality. These various governments derived their legitimacy from varying locations. Governments centered on stability derived legitimacy either as a birthright, or from the idea that strong central governance is in the best interest of all since it serves as the key to preserving order. Governments centered on equality drew on ideological substantiation for their legitimacy, while claiming to rule in a way that reflected the will of the people as their guardians. Governments centered on liberty continued their legitimacy by reflecting the will of the people as mandated by the people.

Stability, equality and liberty are all popular values, but at various times in history stability and equality have excluded liberty as the weaker and less necessary partner. The way governments have reflected antidemocratic undercurrents across time is the subject of this study. The exploration continues by looking at those times when those undercurrents took control. The next chapter examines the counterwaves.
CHAPTER III
THE COUNTERWAVES

"But always the Dark was there, swelling and waning...."\(^1\)

If democracy is light and antidemocracy dark, then the counterwaves are the times when "the dark is rising."\(^2\) Clustered in time, the counterwaves are pockets of strong antidemocratic sentiment. As demonstrated by the previous chapter this undertow, until more recent history, was the dominant force in governance and world politics. Only in the last 200 years has liberal democracy overcome this pull and only in the past few decades could liberal democracy be rightly described as the dominant source of legitimacy for nation states in the world system. In some sense, then, one might describe the counterwaves as inherently conservative movements, a harkening back to the ways of a previous order.

Antidemocracy, however, has evolved in ways that defy this simple description. As modernity drew the entire planet into her orbit, the use of power to govern changed in meaningful ways as well. This is true for both liberal democracy and autocracy. The counterwaves, the first occurring from 1922-1940 and the second from 1957-1977, occupy interesting time bands of history. Our first task, then, is to situate the counterwaves properly in their historical context, before examining them in general and comparative terms.

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\(^1\) Susan Cooper, *The Dark is Rising* (New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999), 107.

\(^2\) This references the title of Susan Cooper's book.
Important Historical Context

Change occurs on a daily basis, but big events seem to infuse the system with energy, and force spurts of intensive change. While the norm is a gradual and manageable tension, at times there are earthquakes and eruptions. Shifts in the status quo take place and rapid changes in the landscape result. The twentieth century saw tremendous and intense times of sudden shifts. To give context to the era of the counterwaves, one needs to touch on 4 macro processes, roughly chronological in nature, that have shaped democratic failure, particularly as it relates to the counterwaves. These processes are: nationalism, colonialism, globalized conflict and de-colonization.

The relative stasis of the 1800s belied the important processes at work. At the dawn of the 19th century, feudal institutions were weakening, and with them the personalistic allegiance structures. In place of these structures, more centralized state systems emerged empowering legislatures, entities that in turn defined law and society in new and malleable ways. This represented a tremendous break from the past. As J.M. Roberts wrote:

To a medieval European the idea that there might not be rights and rules above human interference, legal immunities and chartered freedoms inaccessible to change by subsequent law-makers, fundamental laws which would always be respected or laws of God which could never be contravened by those of men, would have been social and juridical, as well as theological, blasphemy.³

One should not lose sight of the fact that a rise in democratic power represented a shift away from previous well-ordered social structures. The secularization of culture, the sense that history was progressing toward an apex, and the veneration of scientific knowledge as the key to limitless progress were all legacies of the Enlightenment, the

birth place of liberalism. The American and French Revolutions set the stage for sweeping change, as “belief in Man, individual Man, his Nature, his Reason, his Rights” advanced the cause of secular humanism, in lock step with democracy. Democracy emerged as a viable form of governance when individualism and rationalism accorded man with abilities previously possessed only by deities. Scholars of nationalism, while disagreeing about much, almost universally affirm this notion of nationalism as filling the void left by religion. These broader trends also fed into notions of democratic governance and rule of law. In fact, Harold Berman called individualism, rationalism and nationalism “the Triune Deity of Democracy.”

The implications of these “modern” ideas permeated the globe. Even those nation states that didn’t “modernize” following the pattern of the West were swept up by changes in social structure. Bernard Lewis illustrates this distinction between traditional society and the nation sate. Modernization destroyed the whole apparatus, or “consensual order” that had previously operated in traditional society. In that setting, there were all sorts of orders in society that were well-entrenched and could exercise a restraining influence. To illustrate his point, Lewis uses the example of the report of the French ambassador in Turkey in 1786, who pointed out the sultan had nothing like the power of the French king, but instead had to consult the military chiefs, the religious chiefs, and the heads of departments before making important decisions. With the coming of

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modernity, these traditional checks and balances were eroded. The centralization of power strengthened the autocrat and gave him all the methods of surveillance and repression common to the nation state. Centralized autocracy significantly differs in scope from its pre-modern predecessor, just as democracy too represented a departure from past governance.

Some argue nationalism, a key unifying conceptual framework in the 1800s, was conceived in order to sell this centralization of power. Europe, having recovered from Napoleon's misadventures in 1815, was none the less fundamentally changed by the experience, and the inability to return to an exact status quo. With the emergence of a united Germany in 1871, nearly all of Europe was organized into nation states, with an accompanying national identity. What was the impact of this nationalism? The answer centers on the question of identity. When a majority of the constituents buy into the idea of releasing their small group identity and being subsumed under a larger rubric, everything changes. Being Italian took on more meaning than being Venetian. Venetians bought into the idea of a united Italy as an important sense of identity. Nationalism brought the power of shared identity to bear in a political sense with amazing consequences. Newly emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these nation states have been referred to by Leonard Dudley in stripped down terms as "new national information networks."

The advent of greater communication capabilities, coupled with transportation innovations, facilitated the projection of power and increased both the scope and depth of

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international relations. Previously remote cultures and populations were subdued and subsumed by the European empires. With a sense of identity shaped by European nationalism, Europeans accepted the “white man’s burden” and set about the task of civilizing the globe by setting up distant outposts of colonial power. Europeans had gone out into the world, exploring and mapping the globe with ardor from the 1400s forward. True of the earlier era of exploration, it was also true during the era of colonization. By 1900, it is no exaggeration to say that “the peoples of Europe and European stock overseas dominated the globe.”

Latin America housed Spain and Portugal, North America housed the British and the French, the British had rooms in India while the Spaniards were found in the Philippines. The United States forcibly “opened” Japan to trade, while Britain fought the Opium Wars in China. The Dutch took up residence in Southeast Asia and carved up sections of Africa. That continent was also segmented by French and British colonial interests. The Middle East, as well, was divided into segments of various European national interests. Europeans imposed national borders, along with their governance styles. While most texts couch the Europeans as exploiters, one should remember the cash flow spreadsheet rarely worked in favor of the colonizer, leading to the famous British cry “No more Indias!” Whatever the motivations, there can be no doubt that colonization had far-reaching implications for antidemocracy, as is especially seen during the second counterwave of 1957-1977, when the countercry to imperialism shaped antidemocracy, a topic that we will return to in our discussion of the second counterwave. The process of colonization bore direct impact on the shape of the globe, especially when global war was instated.

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With the global extension of European nation states, European conflicts were also exported with relative ease. In 1914, when divisions in the newly unified Germany and the newly unified Italy were becoming evident, the European alliance structure ensured that any conflict would be monumental. The Great War was devastating as the industrialized nation states devoted entire economies to the craft of conflict. With its broad scope, it destroyed much. In the words of one young British economist at the Versailles peace conference that marked its end:

We are at the dead season of our fortunes. Our power of feeling or caring beyond the immediate questions of our own material well-being is temporarily eclipsed...We have been moved beyond endurance and need rest. Never in the lifetime of men now living has the universal element in the soul of men burnt so dimly.\(^{13}\)

The economic depression that followed the Great War was preceded by a spiritual one. Enlightenment ideas, faith in progress and man’s positive evolution lay littered on the battlefields, casualties in the ideational realm that echoed the many casualties in the physical one. This sense of disillusionment can perhaps best be illustrated in the vast changes that occurred in the realm of art. While in earlier eras art had rested on shared experience, in the years after 1918 art worshipped disintegration. “In Surrealism even the notion of the objective disappeared, let alone its representation. As one Surrealist put it, the movement meant ‘thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.’ Through chance, symbolism, shock, suggestion and violence the Surrealists sought to go beyond consciousness itself.”\(^{14}\) The world of art, then, was exhibiting visually the challenge to liberal ideas that shook the democratic establishment in the international community.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 946-947.
When this Great Depression put on economic garments, liberal democracy seemed ill-equipped for dealing with the challenges. If the universal element in the soul of men burned dimly, so too did the soul of democracy. The Great War left a devastated Europe, hell-bent on revenge instead of restoration. Into this void flowed new ideas, but ones that proved poisonous to democracy. As J.M. Roberts has said “The disaster was a promising setting for the communists and the fascists, who expected or advocated the collapse of liberal civilization and now began to flap expectantly about the enfeebled carcass.”

With the Communist revolution in full swing in Russia, communist evangelism sparked fear, with its self-avowed international militarism. Added to this were the equally strident fascist threats in Italy, Spain, and Germany. These ideologies have been called “the utopia of those who had lost the old utopias of the Enlightenment, the programme of those who had lost faith in other programmes, the prop of those who had lost the support of older political and social certainties.” With the strident recovery of Germany and the assertive rise of Japan, global conflict once again enveloped the world.

It was a truly dark time for those who had so fervently believed in the good will and perfection of humanity, embodied by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Communism offered a short cut to modernity that promised to side step the problematic inequality that plagued liberal democracies with unfettered capitalism. Fascism, on the other hand, represented a strength of character and decisive leadership that appealed to those shaken by the instability in post-war liberal democracies. Liberal democracy began its retreat.

16 E.J. Hobsbawn, Nations and Nationalism since 1780 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 144.
The details of World War II are not especially relevant to this discussion, but the state of the world at its close bears direct importance. While the conflict again spread to some of the European colonies, it was the Japanese who had the more immediate impact on colonial holdings at the war's end. By founding the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere during their rise, the Japanese pillaged the colonies of needed raw materials, but also made it difficult for colonial powers after the war to return to the status quo ante by delegating issues of local governance. These Asian nations were in no way prepared to accept the colonizers anew in the post-war period. The African nations followed suit, demanding independence from their colonial overlords. This post-WWII independence movement introduced new levels of uncertainty in the governance structures of colonized states that had been delineated on a map, but struggled to formulate a national identity.

The death of the European empires began a torturous journey for many of the former colonies, as the new nation states tried to forge an independent identity in an uncertain world. For these newly minted nations, the struggle for identity was complicated by complex realities. On the one hand, the impetus was strong to invent a national identity apart from the colonizers. In most cases, the colonial overlords were well-established, Western democracies who sought to inculcate some sort of democratic institutions in their colonies. Independence, then, called for a new nationalism to forge a new kind of national identity.

Nationalists texts were addressed both to 'the people' who were said to constitute the nation and to the colonial maters whose claim to rule nationalism questioned. To both, nationalism sought to demonstrate the falsity of the colonial claim that the backward peoples were culturally incapable of ruling themselves in the conditions of the modern world. Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people; it also asserted that a backward nation could 'modernize' itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the
very intellectual premises of ‘modernity’ on which colonial domination was based.¹⁷

The nexus of modernization, liberation, and nationalism in the decolonization process proved challenging, as this new nationalism often married antidemocracy, in forms recognized as national strains of communism or fascism, in the quest for a national identity distinct from the colonizers.

Thus, the impact of these trends of nationalism and modernization, colonization and decolonization are interwoven with the story of the counterwaves. They form the historical backdrop against which the rise and dominance of antidemocratic sentiment was played out. In the case of both counterwaves the voice of democracy was overwhelmed by the voices of alternative government choices. It still remains to examine these periods of clustered antidemocratic sentiment.

The Counterwaves

The discussion now turns to a more mechanical description of the time clusters when antidemocratic governance experienced its greatest strength. As mentioned previously, Samuel Huntington noted these “reverse waves” in passing, but defined them differently. I argue that Huntington did not define the counterwave phenomenon broadly enough. Huntington’s focus and purpose was different than mine, but his brief exploration of the counterwave offers an instructive counterpoint to illuminate the rationale underlying this project. Huntington defined the counterwave in terms of those democracies that had been converted in the recent wave of democracy, a narrow

conception of the counterwave. This project, on the other hand, opens things up to look at the impact of antidemocracy on all types of polity, from varying levels of democracy through autocracy. This question gives a broader range in which to judge the true power of democracy, as a concept that either attracts or repels, across time.

In the century that followed, in spite of sputters and missteps, the overall trend reflects an increase in the mean polity score in the international system. The mean polity score reached its first peak in 1921, when the average polity score was 2.13 for the 62 nations in the system. After this long and fairly steady climb in the mean polity score, 1922 signaled the beginning of a precipitous decline in the polity score. This was the beginning of the first counterwave, a cluster of antidemocratic sentiment that represented the reversal of democracy's advance through the nineteenth century and signaled the beginning of the first challenge to the liberal ideals that had been birthed and grown throughout the Enlightenment.

The first counterwave (CW1), as seen in Graph 1, occurred from roughly 1922 until 1940, spanning nearly 2 decades. During that time the mean polity dropped from its height of 2.05 in 1921 to a low of -2.24 in 1940, a reversal that took the mean polity score back 70 years in history to the year 1870. Of further interest, we find a relatively constant number of nations in the international system during this period.

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In 1921 there were 62 recognized nation states and in 1940, there were 63. In the interceding years 8 new nations were created, but others were absorbed keeping the overall numbers of nations in the international system fairly steady.

The second counterwave (CW2) also occurred over a roughly 20 year period. After reaching a low in 1940, the polity score began to climb again. By 1946 it had climbed back into positive territory again, to a meager .09. It sputtered into negative territory again from 1949-1956, before a brief re-emergence onto the positive side of things again in 1957. The second sustained counterwave, however, began the following year. In 1958, the score had dipped to -.44 and continued a rather steady decline until
bottoming out in 1977 at -2.59, an even deeper decline than experienced in the first counterwave.

*The counterwaves as distinct bands*

How are the counterwave periods of time any different from the rest of history? How is democratic failure distributed across time? Democracy, or those nations scoring from 1 to 10 on the polity scale, fails 145 times over the course of the time studied. Of these 145 democratic failures, 72 of them take place during counterwave time periods, leaving 73 that take place outside of these time periods. This is made significant by the fact that the counterwaves account for only 18% of the total time studied. In other words, nearly half of all democratic failures are clustered in these narrow time bands. As an archeologist digging through the rubble of democratic failure, while shards of destroyed democracy are sprinkled throughout the soil layers of history, one discovers concentrations of shattered democracy in the time bands of 1922-1940 and 1957-1977.

*The global reach of the counterwaves*

To further the exploration of the importance of the counterwaves, it is useful to explore its geographic reach. While most of this work is focused specifically on those nations who reach failure threshold, a polity drop of 3 points, it is important to include here all those nations that experienced negative polity change during the counterwave.
It should be noted that some of these countries, shown in Figure 1, only experienced slight negative polity change in the counterwave years. By way of illustration, take the examples of the first counterwave. Six of the nations (Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Ireland, Mongolia and the USSR) only experienced a slight (2 point) drop in their polity scores. For 2 of these nations (Afghanistan whose autocracy deepened to -10 in 1945 and Haiti, who declined more precipitously in 1946) the counterwave initiated a process that was brought to completion in the years just outside CW1. The remaining 4 went on to recover. Ireland, which had dipped to 8 in 1933, recovered its perfect score of 10 in 1952. Cuba, a weak democracy at 3 that dipped down to 1 in 1928, recovered its previous polity score in 1933. Mongolia and the USSR both experienced deepening autocracy in the counterwave years, but recovered their less autocratic score of -7 in 1952 and 1953 respectively. Even these slight variations, and the subsequent recoveries, indicate the power of the counterwave years across the board, in strong and weak
democracies and even in autocracies, in initiating a more extreme virulence against
democracy.

But the extant literature ignores this phenomenon. The literature on
antidemocracy largely focuses on the extreme cases of Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s
Russia.¹⁹ Others focus on antidemocracy generically, providing important scholarship on
issues of various types of autocratic regimes but without looking at their prevalence in
particular time bands.²⁰ These are important contributions but they neglect the
fundamental scope of the counterwave impact. While the transience and resilience of the
downturn varied by individual case, which will be addressed in upcoming chapters, the
prevalence of the downturn has not been fully described. Seeing the geography of the
counterwaves reinforces not only their importance, but also their prevalence. Figure 1
reminds us of the impact of the counterwave, even upon nations that did not actually
reach failure threshold. From the map we can see the impact of negative polity change in
South America, all of Europe, Central America, huge segments of the island nations, as
well as the Middle East. Africa certainly did not escape the impact of negative polity
change, and Asia was involved in its near entirety. The broader geographical spread
points to international trends at work, and yet these broad trends of antidemocratization
have been understudied.

¹⁹ Hannah Arendt, Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966); Robert
²⁰ Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).
Comparing Counterwave 1 and Counterwave 2

Having established both the global reach and the distinctiveness of the counterwave phenomena jointly, I will now turn to comparisons of them individually. Do CW 1 and CW 2 reflect the same phenomenon? Are they another example of history repeating itself? Do they look the same? Do they look different? Did both counterwaves impact the same geographical regions? What about the composition of the counterwaves? Was CW 1 composed of the same types of failures as CW 2? Was the mechanism for the polity decline consistent for both?

Differing geography of the counterwaves

The counterwaves share in common a wide geographic reach. Neither was confined to one continent, or even 2, as can be seen in Figure 2. The counterwaves were both global. However, it is not fair to say they are identical. There are important
differences, even from the standpoint of geography. Western Europe was swamped by the first counterwave, but not as effected by the second. Africa and Asia were largely outsiders in the first counterwave, while clearly inside participants in the second. Interestingly, both counterwaves lapped the shores of Central America, while only the second had any great impact on the Middle East.

This reinforces the notion that not only were the counterwaves global phenomena collectively, they were also global phenomena individually. However, the difference in the locus of the global phenomena indicates the importance of contrasting them in further detail.

Composition of the counterwaves

As seen in the first counterwave, a higher percentage of high level democracies failed than in CW2. In fact, nearly half of all high level democracies during the 18 year period of CW1 experienced failure. This is in contrast to 31% of all high level democracies during the 20 year period of CW2 that experienced failure. In CW1, the nations that failed had achieved the highest level of institutionalized authority characteristics measured for democracies before their failure. In addition, they had all been high level democracies for at least 8 years before experiencing failure. In CW2, only 2 level 10 democracies failed, France and Malaysia. During the second counterwave, high level democracies were more resilient than they had been during CW1, with level 10 democracies proving the most resilient of all.

The other 2 components of democratic failure, mid-level and low level democratic failures, were quite comparable in failure rate when comparing CW1 and CW2. In CW1 55% of all democracies characterized as mid-level failed. This is quite comparable to the
60% of all democracies characterized as mid-level in CW2. This phenomenon will be discussed in more depth in the chapter on dissonant democracy. The failure rate for low level democracies remained constant for both CW1 and CW2. In both instances, it was 45%. Perhaps even more interesting, while the number of nations in the international system ballooned between CW1 and CW2, the number of low level democracies remained relatively constant.

Like the mid-level and low level democratic failure rate, autocratic deepening is pretty consistent between the 2 counterwaves. In the first counterwave, 23% of all autocracies experienced a deepening of that autocracy, while in the second counterwave that percentage dropped to 19%. This may seem like a false comparison since the democracies are split out in subsets while all levels of autocracy are treated as a whole. To allow for this, one can combine all levels of democracy and compare them with all levels of autocracy. If we do this, we find that 48% of all nations that experienced any level of democracy failed, while only 23% of nations experiencing any form of autocracy experienced a deepening of the autocracy. While the deepening autocracy certainly contributes to the counterwave phenomenon, it is quite evident democratic failure bears greater responsibility for the counterwaves.

*Interruptions in polity*

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, at its heart, this dissertation is concerned with describing change. Change in polity impacts the larger question of stability. In the case of the nations under consideration for this study, some nations do not have polity scores for the entire time span of the counterwaves. The answers to these cases of the disappearing nations provide further distinctions between the counterwaves.
Why would a nation be missing? It could be that the nation was born during the counterwave. This is certainly true of many nations during CW2 as nations declared independence from colonizers. At the other end of the spectrum are those nations that went out of existence, such as the Baltic nations and Poland, before reappearing on the international stage at a later time. By far the largest culprit, however, is an interruption in polity. Polity interruptions take on 3 basic subtypes. In some cases, such as with Hitler’s march across Europe, the nation has been taken over by an external actor. While these external takeovers clearly demonstrate a failure in democratic governance, assigning a precise polity score is difficult, so a -66 interruption code is the solution. Yet another possibility is internal turmoil, such as civil war or lack of a coherent central government. In such cases, these nations appear as -77 in the dataset until the situation is resolved. For other countries, a state of flux ensues where a specific polity score can’t be reached, coded as -88. While these scenarios differ significantly in scope and impact, all types of interruption represent grave instability. As such, the number of nations not present for the entire span of time for the counterwaves can be one indicator of the amount of upheaval in the international system. For the first counterwave, 27% of the countries were not present for the entire time. In the second counterwave, we see that the number of nations not present for the entire time increases dramatically. In fact, 42% of the nations were not present over the entire time span of the second counterwave. These various interruption codes give us both a way to measure the instability in the international system, and a way to compare that instability between the counterwaves.
As shown in Graph 2, interruptions also spiked around the counterwave time spans. In the first counterwave, 25 observations were excluded because of external takeover. In the second counterwave, the number of external takeovers is much lower. Only 5 countries qualify as -66 during this time span. This is yet another indicator of the differences between the 2 counterwaves. The interruptions in polity that characterized the second counterwave were due to internal unrest (civil war and collapse of the state), while direct external military intervention was a more prominent feature of CW1.

*Increasing complexity, more moving parts*

The world was a more complex place at the beginning of the second counterwave, than at the onset of the first. One of the most obvious observations that need to be made
Graph 3. Number of nation states versus mean polity score.

about the 2 counterwaves is the proliferation of nation states that occurred in the interim between the first counterwave and the second, as can be seen in Graph 3.

During the years of the first counterwave (1922-1940), 70 states comprised the international system. This stands in stark contrast to the number of nations in CW2. In the time span from 1957-1977 there were 142 nations in the international system, in other words the number of states in the system more than doubled. What happened to cause this proliferation? The international system underwent a period of fragmentation. Larger territorial entities broke into smaller component pieces. The biggest contributor to this phase of fragmentation was decolonization. In the post WWII era, the international system experienced a time of great flux and change. While upheaval in conflict is a
foregone conclusion, the dramatic shifts that were sparked by WWII may seem less obvious. In the aftermath of WWII, the great colonizing European nations lost sway over their colonies. En masse, colonial holdings in Africa and Asia defected, declared independence and embarked on the path of national governance. Many new nations were born. In Graph 3, it is evident the sharpest spike in the birth of nations occurs during the second counterwave. When the somewhat arbitrarily drawn boundary lines of the colonial era proved untenable to governance, conflict erupted again. Civil wars, conflict over power, and power vacuums all contributed to an era of chaos that approached anarchy in some nations. Newly independent governments had to deal with myriad issues that had been temporarily plastered over by the colonial rulers, who had oftentimes dumped copious amounts of capital into the colonial empires.

This seismic movement marks a point of contrast from the first counterwave. The flavor is different. While the first counterwave follows the march up to WWII, the second counterwave mirrors the international aspects of the Cold War. It is safe to assert that the world is a more complex place with 142 nations than it was with 70. This increase in complexity, and in moving parts, is especially characteristic of the second counterwave.

Conclusion

The counterwaves represent time bands of history when the tide of antidemocracy rose precipitously. Impacting even autocracies, the counterwaves subsumed democracies of all levels and degrees to an even greater extent. The counterwave was global in reach, and distinctly recognizable on the canvas of history.
That canvas gave color to the counterwaves. Against the white hope in mankind kindled by the Enlightenment, the counterwaves strike more somber shades. Faith in individualism, rationality, forward progress had stoked the fires of modernity. With modernization came the emergence of the nation state, with innovative centralized power structures. Secular humanism struck a divide between belief in the divine and the newly emerging societies, while borrowing religious capital in the terms of fervor and passionate belief.

When the giant Enlightenment fell during World War I, he scarred the international system with the lasting imprint of his fall. Disillusionment reigned. New ideologies were birthed in the turmoil. Communism and fascism stepped in to interpret events and bring new promise. These new ideologies, antidemocratic in their foundation and applications, gave birth to the first counterwave.

While Europe may have been the epicenter of the first counterwave, antidemocracy rang around the world. The first counterwave followed the world’s first real experiment with globalized conflict. Antidemocracy was built upon the modern ideologies of communism and fascism, which fed off the instability of that conflict.

The 2 counterwaves are different in some important ways. And yet, the second counterwave also echoes the first. It followed a period of globalized conflict, but was experienced by a somewhat different set of nation states. Some who experienced the first counterwave were inoculated in 1945, but for many other nations, antidemocracy was still relevant. Antidemocracy was still built on the echoes of communism and fascism. In the antidemocratic movements that swept Africa, Asia, parts of Europe and Latin America from 1957-1977, both the communist and fascist echoes strongly presided.
Newly independent states often aligned with either the far left or the far right as the third great globalized conflict, the Cold War, got underway.

Not all nation states were equally vulnerable during the counterwaves. One of the most interesting findings of the study of these counterwaves was high level democracy's disproportionate vulnerability. The counterwaves represent one important way to conceive of democratic failures. In order to add to the understanding of democracy's vulnerability, however, it is also helpful to study failure against the backdrop of broader history. The next chapter turns to an in-depth look specifically at high level democratic failure, both inside and outside of the counterwaves.
CHAPTER IV
WHEN COHERENT DEMOCRACY FAILS

Clusters of antidemocracy reached full concentration in the counterwave years, but antidemocracy escapes the confines of these time bands. In seeking to more fully describe the phenomenon of democratic failure, we too must leave the confines of the counterwave years. For the rest of this work, the counterwave will serve as a primary frame of reference and point of comparison, but our focus will shift to a broader conception of antidemocracy, as experienced by democracies of 3 varying concentrations. Failure in the most concentrated form of democracy, high level democracy, leads off this trio.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the Polity dataset measures the institutionalized authority characteristics present in governance structures. In particular, it focuses on the degree to which restraint of authority is present in the institutions of government. Restraint in governance is a characteristic of particular import to democracy, which finds its legitimacy in the bridle of the people. In non-democracies, legitimacy might be found in bloodlines, military power, ideology, or party membership, each of which offer their own rules of engagement, but only in democracy does legitimacy rest expressly in the people’s choice, a mediated expression of the rule by the many.

High level democracies, to return to our subject, are those polities organized around this concept of restraint. To the highest extent, this grouping is internally coherent. High level democracy can be operationalized as a polity “in which (a) political participation is fully competitive, (b) executive recruitment is elective and (c) constraints
on the chief executive are substantial." In other words, institutions have been constructed to support the underlying ideals of democracy, namely regularized elections with a continuing atmosphere of restrained executive power. Ideals, as we have discussed in previous chapters, shape institutions. This, of course, links the study of the failure of democratic governmental institutions to the faltering of the democratic ideal.

**Examining Decline in High Level Democracies**

While the concept of democracy has been around for centuries, high level democracy is a fairly recent innovation. The United States formed the vanguard in 1809, but only in the later years did high level democracy emerge across a broader scale.

In Graph 4, the relative novelty of the onset of high level democracy as a force in the international system is demonstrated. High level democracies, non-existent in 1800, comprised less than 10% of all the nation states in the world system until the twentieth century. While only 9 nations were high level democracies in the 1800s, 66 more would join their ranks in the 1900s with 10 more joining after the millennial change. Over the course of the time covered by this study, 86 nations have been high level democracies at one point or another, some remaining so for the duration of the time under study while others have reverted to lower levels of democratic governance, or even fallen into autocracy. There are more high level democracies today than at any other point in history. By the end of 2006, high level democracies comprised over 40% of the world system.

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1 The Polity IV User's Manual describes as "coherent" those having a score of 7 or higher. I have raised that threshold, however, and use 8 and higher as my definition of coherent democracy.
The chapter focuses on the failure of these high level democracies, as tracked in Graph 4. Even though it has been discussed in earlier portions, it is probably good to recap the description of high level democracies. High level democracies are not perfect. Nations can be high level democracies, even before they let women vote. The United States was a high level democracy, even during the years before the civil war with institutionalized slavery. There is some part of us that thinks this ought not to be. In our minds we equate democracy with liberty, justice and equality of opportunity. Indeed, democracy does cohabitate with these ideals, and yet high level democracy has existed

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even when these ideals were not perfectly expressed. Just as democracy as an ideal has evolved over time, so too has high level democracy. So, how can we deal with the changes in what high level democracy has looked like across the span of this study?

There are 2 concepts crucial to our discussion of how this can be. The first of these is historical context. Was Athens a democracy? Certainly not by any standards that we would accept today, and yet when comparing its governance style to those of all the nations in its sphere of influence, it was distinctively democratic in the way that it made its decisions. Was the United States a democracy even when it had institutionalized slavery? If we use the same format, looking at participation in governance, the U.S. was a recognizable democracy, very different in its decision making processes than any of its contemporaries.

More importantly, however, is a return to our focus on institutionalized authority characteristics. In measuring democracy, as mentioned before, this study has utilized only the observable institutional environment. In the case of high level democracies, there are few institutionalized hangovers from either incomplete democratic transformation or autocratic remnants. So, while high level democratic governance is not perfect when compared to ideal democratic governance, it is institutionally distinct.

General Findings

There are 35 nation states that represent 42 incidents of high level democratic failure, as seen in Figure 3. Obviously, there are some repeat offenders within the ranks of the high level democratic failures. Greece fails 3 times, (1915, 1936, 1949) as does Pakistan (1958, 1977, 1999). France (1940, 1958) Turkey (1971, 1980) and Lesotho
Figure 3. High level democratic failures.

(1970, 1998) have each experienced failure as a high level democracy twice. The subject of repeat offenders will be covered in more depth in the next chapter, where repeated high level democratic failure will be situated within the context of the repeated failure of mid and low level democracies.

_Falling fast and far_

Within the 35 nation states that have experienced high level democratic failure, there are 2 identifiable subsets. There are those members that barely meet the qualifying criteria, experiencing a minor slide of only 3 or 4 points in their polity score. Given the high level of institutionalization of democracy within this group, it would be reasonable to assume that when failure occurs it occurs as a downgrading of democracy, an erosion of democracy to a lower level. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that most of the high level democratic failures would consist of minor slides. Instead, this group is a distinct
minority, making up only 14% of the failures.\textsuperscript{3} The rest of the high level democracies failed dramatically. In fact, only 11 of the cases maintained even the lowest levels of democracies, the rest swung over into the autocratic territory. In other words, only 30% of these high end democracies remained democracies in any sense of the word. The other 70% experienced such decline that they were characterized as autocracies. Even when we include those that experienced minor levels of democratic failure, the average polity drop was 10 points. Of the majority of high level democracies that experienced deep democratic failure, the shift was so profound that they were in the bottom quadrant of autocracy after having occupied the heights of democracy.

Of equal importance to the depth of the failure is the rapidity of the failure. Have high end democracies historically failed gradually or quickly? A gradual decline in democratic values, with a slow deprivation of democratic rights seemed the only way a populace who had instituted democratic governance would tolerate the deprivation of such rights, having been lulled into a false sense of security. This assumption proved incorrect. The vast majority of the declines were precipitous, taking place over the course of a year. In fact, only 4 of the cases took longer than a year. So, not only were the failures deep, they were dramatic. High level democracies fall far and fast.

These findings are of particular concern in a world where high level democracies now make up nearly half of the system. The implications of cause for concern become even more apparent when we look at the nature of these high level democracies.

As mentioned before, high level democracies are composed of nations with a polity score of 8, 9, or 10. As one might expect, level 10 democracies have experienced

the greatest level of stability. Unfortunately, the number of level 10 democracies in the international system is quite small. In 2006, there were 35 nation states that were number 10 democracies, representing only 21% of the international system. Of even more concern, these nations were concentrated in the West. Of the non-Western nations who are number 10 democracies, only 5 nations were both non-Western and non-island states.

Why is this of concern? Because while level 10 democracies have experienced failure, most especially concentrated within the first counterwave as will be discussed later in this chapter, level 8 and 9 democracies make up the larger contingent of high level democratic failure. Table 1 lists all the high level democracies that have experienced failure. This table demonstrates a further 2 things. First of all, even number 10 democracies are not immune to failure. Secondly, level 8 and 9 high level democracies are even more vulnerable. This should raise our concerns about the impacts of a future counterwave on high level democracy.

One might justifiably ask how these high end democratic failures are distributed relative to the counterwave. Interestingly, these high end failures seem to happen most frequently during counterwaves. In fact, nearly 60% of the failures occur during the 2 counterwaves. This is especially striking since the sum total of the time represented in the 2 counterwaves, a total of 40 years, only represents 18% of the total time studied. Sixty percent of all high level democratic failures occur in a time span that represents 18% of the total time.

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4 These countries are Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Mongolia and Israel.
Table 1. High level democratic failures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Hi</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Delta</th>
<th>Fail time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Myanmar (Burma)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>-6</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-77</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 5. Percentage of high level democratic failure versus the average polity score.

What does this mean? Well, as shown in Graph 5, the highest percentage of high level democratic failures occurred at the end of the first counterwave, when nearly 45% of all the high level democracies in the international system experienced failure. While the same graph shows the continuance of high level democratic failure during the second counterwave and beyond, it demonstrates the particular toxicity of the first counterwave to high level democracy.

The relationship between the counterwaves and high level democratic failure is even more striking when comparing the percentage of high level democracies in the world system to the counterwave years. In returning to Graph 4, one sees that the percentage of high level democracy in the world system tracks with both counterwaves,
especially in the period of 1922-1940, but also we see the decrease of high level democracy in the world system in the second counterwave, 1957-1977.

*Distinctions of high level democracy's progression and recession*

As has already been mentioned, a particularly disproportionate number of high level democracies suffered failure during the counterwaves. There are some interesting distinctions between CW 1 (1922-1940) and CW 2 (1958-1977). During the first counterwave, many of the high level democracies that had been born in the early 1900's failed. While high level democracies had been coming into existence at a rate of several a year, by the onset of the first counterwave in 1922, the birth rate of high level democracies lurched to a halt. In fact, during the first counterwave no new high level democracies were born.

In contrast, during the years of the second counterwave, high level democracies continued to come into existence. Oftentimes, however, the life spans of these high level democracies were quite short-lived, as decolonized nation states came to grips with the complexities of their new-found independence.

Even those high level democracies born during the second counterwave that escaped failure in the counterwave itself, have proven less than resilient in the intervening years. In fact, only 29% of the high level democracies born during the second counterwave have managed to survive through 2006. Thus, 61% of the high level democracies born during the second counterwave had failed by 2006.
Mechanism of Democratic Failure

Looking at the Table 2, we can see some striking differences in the way high level democracies failed. Again, there are important contrasts between the first and second counterwaves. In the first counterwave, external takeovers were the most common form of high level democratic failure. While the counterwave moved beyond Hitler's march, the aggression of the Third Reich bears the lion's share of responsibility for high level democratic failure in the first counterwave, with repression and coups playing a less prominent role. Civil war is completely absent as a cause of high level democratic failure in CW1. In contrast, external takeovers had no role to play in the second counterwave. Here, coups play the leading role, with repression as a secondary cause and civil wars a distant third. When we move look at those high level democratic failures that took place outside the counterwave, we find yet another striking difference, with repression taking the lead role as a cause of high level democratic failure, coups as a secondary cause and external takeovers and civil wars tied for a distant third place.

Table 2. Mechanism of failure for high level democracies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>MECHANISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 1</td>
<td>External Takeover 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repression 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coup 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 2</td>
<td>External Takeover 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repression 34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coup 53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War 13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Counterwaves</td>
<td>External Takeover 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repression 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coup 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objections to these Findings

I suspect few would argue studying high level democratic failure is unimportant. I, also, suspect that this chapter will still manage to find controversy, centering around 2 main objections.

The first objection centers on the argument that these aren’t high level democracies. Who in their right mind would render 1960 Laos a high level democracy? Since when can Ecuador be considered a high level democracy? This discussion is entirely uninteresting because it includes many countries that are clearly not high level democracies. These clearly are not consolidated democracies, objectors might say.

How, one might ask, can we recognize a consolidated democracy? Isn’t one of the primary characteristics, aside from its coherence, the fact that it hasn’t failed. I’m certainly not the first one to observe these problems with the whole concept of consolidation, but let us admit from the outset that the consolidation argument is not a valid one, since one of the primary means of identifying a consolidated democracy is by noticing it hasn’t experienced failure, an essentially circular argument.\(^5\)

Setting aside the issue of consolidation, let’s acknowledge that not all of the countries that make up the high level democracy group are equal. In fact, even from the standpoint of coherence, there is some variance in this group.

Having looked at the constituents of high level democratic failure, some may argue that the level 8 and 9 democracies are unimportant, and the only ones to study and include in an examination of democratic failure are those who have achieved a score of

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10. Obviously, I think the weight of the evidence lies in the opposite view. It is rare to be introduced to even high level democracy without some remnant of past imperfections. Only 17 nations out of the 86 nation states that have ever been high level democracies, managed to debut at 10 when they first became high level democracies. Eleven of the 17 did so after 1945, when democracy had won a significant battle against fascism. So, we see it is quite rare to have one’s house in full order even when it comes to institutional coherence within a democratic government, upon the initial entrance into high level democracy. The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Ireland, and France all debuted at less than 10, and yet today all are vibrant democracies. The possibility to be a vibrant democracy lies within each nation who reaches the threshold of high level democracy, and yet we somehow are tempted to think differently of the potential of Ghana and Indonesia, both level 8 as of 2006, than we do of the United Kingdom, an 8 in 1901. And yet, perfectly coherent democracies are today present in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

A second likely objection argues that these aren’t democratic failures. When looking at this list we see Hitler’s European conquest as the demise of the highest level democracies. This doesn’t constitute a failure of democracy. As anyone can readily attest, when the threat was removed, these nations readily returned to democratic governance. In addition, some of the cases above were clearly not democratic failure in the traditional sense. While democracy may have faltered, it clearly did not fail, objectors may say.

Here’s my defense. In thinking about Europe during WWII, one has only to ask: Were Danes living under democratic governance in 1940? What about the Dutch?
Norwegians? Of course they were not. They were living under the Third Reich, in conditions that could hardly be called democratic. This qualifies as a failure of democracy. It does, however, raise interesting questions about the stamina of the democratic ideal when trampled by external forces, a subject which could form the subject of another dissertation. It also highlights the ebb and flow of democracy as a palatable idea, as discussed in the second chapter of this work.

Another objection argues that some of the cases aren’t sufficient to constitute democratic failure. We could take the example of Finland, as an example, which some have argued is a case of resilient democracy, not of democratic failure.6 Let’s simply talk about this example in order to elucidate why it should be classified as a democratic failure. This is one of the more complex cases of democratic failure and requires a bit more historical background to make heads or tails of the situation, since it occurred in the years following a civil war in Finland, which began in 1918, that had also centered on anti-Communist sentiments. No discussion of the failure of democracy in Finland can make sense without a discussion of the Lapua movement. This movement, initially more nationalist and anti-communist in nature but turning to more extremist sentiments,7 confronted a Communist Youth Movement in late November 1929 and made a violent end to the meeting and resulting in a demand for the ban of all communist activities. The movement then spread nationwide and by 1930 the government outlawed all communist newspapers, called new elections in which the Communists could not take part, and passed anti-Communist laws that resulted in constitutional changes limiting the freedom

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7 This movement actually attempted an anti-government coup in 1932.
of the press.\textsuperscript{8} Thus began the democratic downturn. It was followed by a hotly contested presidential election in 1931, where the Lapua movement promised violence if their candidate was not elected, and were thus able to strong-arm their way into the presidency.\textsuperscript{9} But, their dominance did not prove long-lasting. In early 1932, an uprising occurred in a small town north of Helsinki and was quickly supported by the Lapua. The call was for a new patriotic government. The state responded quickly, the army, though divided, backed the government and the rebels surrendered as the movement failed to garner public support. In the wake of this violence, the Lapua movement was banned and support for parliament and rule of law was retained.\textsuperscript{10} Even so, another 13 years passed before the nation would return to the high level of democracy that it possessed before the Lapua movement’s initiative. Still, in 1944 Finland once again became a number 10 democracy and has remained one ever since.

While Finland’s experience was indeed one of a lesser extent of democratic failure, we can see from our brief history given that the impact was quite evident. It also serves to demonstrate the difference between high level democracy, and the lower variants. Even though Finland did not descend into abject autocracy, the decrease in quality of democracy is important to consider, and still meets the failure threshold.

Conclusion

High level democracies have been particularly vulnerable to en masse failure, as shown by their presence in the counterwaves. When high level democracy fails, it has


\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 119.
also failed dramatically. With few exceptions, the failure of high level democracy has been catastrophic as the polity pendulum swings far into autocracy. This trend is true of level 10 democracies, but even more so of high level democracies with less than perfect scores.

Recent trends have placed high level democracy at the forefront of polity type in the international system, but these less than perfect democracies still constitute a large portion of high level democracy’s forward progress. History would teach us that, just as these polities made rapid transitions to democracy, their demise can indeed up rapid as well.

Having tracked the trends of high level democratic decline, we will now turn our attention to the way dissonant democracies fare, to examine points of similarity and difference with their more institutionally coherent high level democracy counterparts.
CHAPTER V
WHEN DISSONANT DEMOCRACY FAILS

Having studied failure in democracies that are coherent, we now turn our attention to failure in dissonant democracies. What is a dissonant democracy? It is a political state of organization in which not all components mesh. That is to say, the aspects of democracy are disjointed and confused. There is dissonance in the system. An institutionally coherent democracy, operationally defined, consists of fully competitive political participation, where those in power are both elected and constrained.\(^1\) In institutionally incoherent democracies, at least one of these aspects is less than fully developed. In these dissonant democracies, elements clash. Internal cohesion is absent. An inherently competitive situation results, not between competing political actors but between incomplete democracy and incomplete autocracy. By definition, then, one would expect these incoherent democracies to be either transient or to experience a high level of conflict, whether violently expressed or otherwise. One aim of this chapter is to discover whether this expectation is realized.

Dissonant democracies have not been wholly ignored by scholars. Exercising a full range of philological creativity, scholars have variously referred to low and mid-level democracies as hybrid regimes,\(^2\) pseudo-democracies,\(^3\) semi-democracies,\(^4\) illiberal

\(^1\) Polity IV User's Manual, 14.
democracies and incomplete democracies. These variously labeled entities have not been entirely ignored as to their propensity to experience failure. In fact, dissonant democracies have been broadly described as unstable. Several scholars, in fact, have noted that coherence on either end of the spectrum, whether as a democracy or autocracy, is associated with stability. Studies have looked at newly formed dissonant democracies in terms of propensity for conflict, and of course, the more dominant question, at the obstacles to their consolidation. If one had to sum up what all these scholars conclude, we could safely assert broad agreement that dissonant democracies are problematic.

Our focus on dissonant democracies will center upon a division of the term. Our definition of a failure in democracy, namely a 3 point fall in the democracy score, creates 3 subcategories of democracy, high level democracy, mid-level democracy and low level democracy. In the highest tier, most elements of democracy are present with an utter absence of autocratic elements. When we descend into mid-level and low level democracies, however, the dissonance becomes obvious. Here, we find an incomplete democratization process in competition with remaining elements of autocracy.

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To consolidate the idea of mid-level and low level democracy, let’s look at some specific examples. The failure of mid-level democracy in Chile in 1973 has been much studied, because of the implication of external involvement. Even in the 1800s, Chile was moving towards democracy and enjoyed regular competitive elections for civilians, even in the midst of a civil war in 1891. After regressing to authoritarianism in 1924-32, democratic governance was re-instituted and remained stable until the Allende government, in the late 1960s, experienced “polarization, disorder and breakdown.”

With Pinochet’s military takeover, the opposition was ruthlessly oppressed and suppressed. Chile in the 1960s is a good example of mid-level democracy. It features regularized elections cycles, constraints on executive power, but with an autocratic undertow. The same could be said for other mid-level democracies that subsequently experienced failure, from the French democracy in 1851 which succumbed to the coup of Louis Napoleon, to Haiti’s difficulties with sustaining democracy in the 1990s with the ouster of Aristide.

In low level democracies, the accent falls more heavily on autocracy. Take, for example, the case of Cambodia in 1997. Wracked with instability and autocratic governance for years, in 1993 the United Nations organized elections, paving a slight pathway toward democracy. The 2 main political factions, also militarized, shared power until the approach of the next election, when only one would be in charge. Neither side

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was prepared to let go of power, so armed conflict was the result. This backdrop of conflict is echoed in many cases where barely expressed democracy is sucked under by complex social, economic, and political undercurrents.

These examples highlight the differences between the coherent democracies discussed in the previous chapter, and the dissonant democracies that will occupy our time in this one. This chapter will focus on discussing, comparatively and jointly, mid-level and low level dissonant democracy in terms of their context within the counterwaves, their durability and stability as well as their status as repeat offenders for the crime of democratic failure.

Geography of Dissonant Democratic Failure

Dissonant democracies' failures, when considered collectively, have encompassed a good portion of the globe in their scope. As can be seen in Figure 4, mid-level democratic failure has impacted most of South America, as well as large portions of Africa, Europe and the Middle East. South America, in particular, has been particularly impacted by this form of democratic failure, as nearly the entire land mass has experienced mid-level democratic failure at some point during the time under study. The portions of the globe that have been insulated from this type of democratic failure have largely done so because they have either remained autocratic, because they have maintained high level democracies, or because they have instituted democracy after the counterwaves and have thus largely escaped mid-level democratic failure.

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The broad geographical reach of mid-level democratic failure demonstrates 2 things. First of all, it shows the penetration of the democratic ideal in areas that were previously dismissed as hostile to democracy, either due to cultural or economic arguments, both of which abound. It also shows the historic vulnerability of democracy in those regions, raising questions about regional ability to sustain democracy once it has been instituted.

As can be seen in Figure 5, low level democratic failure was also a widespread phenomenon in this study, although the geographical impact lighted in different places. Some geographical similarity is shared with both types of dissonant democracy. The western portion of South America has been impacted by both mid and low level democratic failure, sharing this experience with France and certain portions of the Middle East and Africa. However, low level democratic failure brings Asia into the melee, and
area that had largely avoided the impact of mid-level democracy and thus escaped the experience of mid-level democratic failure as well.

The Counterwave and Dissonant Democracies

A primary task is to examine dissonant democracy in light of the counterwaves. To accomplish this, CW1 and CW2 will be examined comparatively, while also comparing the failures of dissonant democracy that have taken place outside the confines of the counterwaves. We will examine the way these democracies failed, the level to which external takeovers played a role, the average polity drop experienced when initially reaching failure threshold as well as when reaching the deepest point of failure.
Recovery of democracy by those in the counterwaves will also be discussed to provide points of comparison for the long-term toxicity of the counterwaves on dissonant democracies. This discussion will fold both types of dissonant democracies, mid-level and low level, into one, while discussing important differences as well.

**General description**

Some general description is in order when comparing the counterwaves, both to each other and to the failures that occurred outside the counterwaves. For dissonant democracies, 45% of all failures occurred within the counterwaves. This percentage, while somewhat lower than the percentage of high level democracies that failed during the counterwaves, is nonetheless significant, demonstrating the impact of dissonant democracy’s failure. It also points to the differences in the clustering of dissonant democratic failure.

In terms of general numbers, low level democracy was the dominant form of dissonant democracy until roughly 1960, when mid level democracy began a journey of ascendance. Both types of dissonant democracy suffered dramatic decline during the years of the second counterwave, but in the years following the CW2, when democracy was again in resurgence, mid-level democracy experienced the more significant rise. The rise and fall of the fortunes of dissonant democracy appears in even greater detail in Graph 6, which shows low level democracy’s initial dominance of dissonant democracy, until the gap narrows in the 1950s and low level democracy emerges from the second counterwave as very much the minor player.

We can also see dissonant democracy’s relationship with the counterwave. Low level democracy began a significant decline in the first counterwave, from which it has
never completely recovered. A player in the international system, especially from 1870-1930, by the end of the time studied, it represented a mere 5% share of the international system, down from its peak influence of 21% at the onset of WWI.

Mid-level democracy has quite a different trajectory, again as shown in Graph 6. Clearly the junior partner of dissonant democracy, it actually increased in share of the world democracy market during the first part of the counterwave, even as low level democracy continued its free-fall, before experiencing a sharp downturn in the latter years of CW2. Its sharp rise, beginning in the late 1970s, tracks closely with mean polity’s recovery from CW2.
Reaching failure threshold

One of the constants across time and space as far as mid-level democratic failures is the average time taken to reach failure threshold. Only 2 cases, Singapore and Syria, took more than a year and both took place within the second counterwave. In spite of these deviations, the average remains a year for those failure taking place inside the counterwaves as well as those taking place outside. This is a significant finding. No matter when the failures occurred, mid-level democracy has fallen rapidly. This is true in spite of the variance in the ways in which democratic failure occurs. Whether by means of a coup, a civil war, external takeover, or repression, the decrease in polity score has taken a nosedive in short order. The bit by bit retraction of democratic freedoms has been the historic exception not the rule. This, of course, furthers the conclusion reached in the previous chapter, where it was shown that high level democracies declined rapidly.

While rapid decline is nearly universally true of mid-level democracies, we find that more low level democracies have taken longer than a year to meet failure threshold. Eight low level democracies took at least 2 years to fail, with Guyana meeting failure threshold in 1980, 13 years after its initial decline. It seems somewhat counterintuitive that those with more democratic institutions, namely mid-level and high level democracies, fail quickly, while the most exceptions to this rule of rapid failure are found within the set where democracy is most weakly expressed.

While failure threshold was reached, in most cases, quickly both inside and outside the counterwaves, there are some comparative differences in the degree of negative change experienced when that failure threshold was first reached, as shown in Table 3 and Table 4.
For mid-level democracy the first counterwave featured a range of initial polity drops from that ranged from a 3 point one year drop in Portugal (Portugal went on to drop another 12 points subsequently) to a 16 point initial drop in Latvia. This gave the first counterwave the distinction of a higher level of mean change in a one year time frame, while the second counterwave and those failures occurring outside the counterwaves have very similar mean polity changes in the first year that the failure threshold is reached. We find the opposite for low level democracies. For them, the second counterwave meant the steeper average initial polity drop. Of significance, however, is that for both types of dissonant democratic failure the average initial change in polity was steeper within the counterwaves than it was outside of them.

When one moves, however, to examining the average change in polity when the peak failure is reached, for mid-level democratic failure the counterwaves emerge as being quite similar, while remaining distinct from the failures that occur outside the counterwaves. This phenomenon is illustrated in Table 5 and Table 6. Both counterwaves feature deepening failures. Not only do they go deeper, they go deeper into
the autocratic side by a drop of nearly 3 polity points, a drop that is the initial threshold for failure. This is significant. There is a less significant deepening with low level democratic failures. For the first counterwave, they average another 2 point drop, while deepening only slightly for the second counterwave. Meanwhile, low level democratic failures outside the counterwaves deepen the most dramatically. This is in keeping with our finding that those democratic failures tend to occur over a longer time span.

Table 5. Average peak drop in polity for mid-level failures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>AVERAGE DROP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside counterwaves</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Average peak drop in polity for low level failures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>AVERAGE DROP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterwave 2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside counterwaves</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes and recovery

Having taken a look at the average change in polity for dissonant democratic failures, it is interesting to compare the counterwaves in terms of those that never recover the level of democracy experienced before their failure.

For mid-level failures, as shown in Graph 7, the first counterwave is again quite distinctive. Only one nation state didn’t recover its peak level of democracy and that is a special case scenario since the nation state, Czechoslovakia, went out of existence. Czechoslovakia, as a unified entity, never regained the level of democracy that it had
mid dem no peak
recovery

lo dem no peak
recovery

mid dem no
recovery

lo dem no
recovery

HCW1
HCW2
Outside

Graph 7. Dissonant democratic failures that don't recover democracy.

enjoyed before its 1939 demise, but the 2 separate countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia now both have surpassed their unified predecessor’s level of democracy prior to the failure in 1939. If most mid-level democratic failures from the first counterwave regained, or surpassed, their initial peak levels of democracy, this directly contrasts with the second counterwave. Of course, the second counterwave was more recent that the first, so one is tempted to explain away this phenomenon simply as a matter of different amounts of time that have elapsed. After all, mid-level democratic failures haven’t had the same number of years to recover their peak level of democracy as those that failed in counterwave 1.

However, we see a stark contrast to low level democracies. While a higher percentage of CW1 low democratic failures did not recover peak level of democracy, a
scant 7% of CW2 low democratic failures don’t recover peak democracy, in spite of the fact that the second counterwave is more recent. While the difference between mid-level and low level democratic failures in the first counterwave is slight, the difference between these subsets in the second counterwave is dramatic. By way of comparison, it is also interesting to note the difference in recovery rate of peak democracy between those outside the counterwaves in mid-level and low level democratic failures. Twice as many mid-level democracies fail to recover peak democracy by 2006 than low level democracies. While we should be careful of pushing these numbers too far in anything but comparison between the 2 groups, it is noteworthy that twice as many mid-level democracies failed to recover peak level democracy as low level democracy failures.

What are the implications of these findings? On the one hand, it seems to reinforce the distinctive nature of each counterwave. They impacted different segments of democracy differently, with varying long term effects. One might easily postulate that low level democracy has a higher recovery rate of peak level democracy precisely because the bar is lower. Mid-level democracy, however, when it experiences failure has a longer way to climb back. This is perfectly true, and yet is interesting in its own right. It would seem, by this rationale, that previous experience with mid-level democracy does not inherently predispose a return to the status quo ante of peak democracy level prior to failure.

When looking at those who experienced democratic failure using the slightly more lenient lens of looking at their recovery of any level of democracy, that is a polity score of one or higher, we find that there are still nearly 30% of mid-level failures that

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13 It would, after all, be like comparing apples and oranges to infer recovery rate comparisons between the counterwaves and the outside, since the outside failures could have occurred as late as 2006.
never edge back into any form of democracy by 2006, in direct contrast to the first
counterwave. For low level democratic failure, we find very low percentages of low
level democracies with no recovery of democracy.

This leads us to look at the average recovery time for both peak democracy, and
any level of democracy for dissonant democracies that have experienced both failure and
recovery. As has already been discussed, there is very little difference in mid-level and
low level democracy when it comes to recovery of peak democracy and recovery of any
level of democracy. Those who recovered democracy, tended to do so dramatically, not
gradually.

The time span for recovery is remarkably similar, as can be seen in Graph 8. It is
interesting to note that the 14 cases of dissonant democratic failure that took place outside
the counterwave were able to recover some level of democracy in only 11 years, while it
took an average of 36 years for the members of the first counterwave to do the same. The
clustering of the recoveries points to some important differences in the world system that
have taken place across time in regards to the fostering of the democratic ideal. The
counterwaves have been impacted by the waves of democracy, suggesting a relationship
that would bear future investigation. Democratic failure did not subsist at low levels
sporadically across time, but was clustered in counterwaves. Similarly, recovery of
democracy happened at the same time that democracy was first adopted by nations for the
first time. This suggests a collective rise and fall of the democratic ideal that argues
strongly for an international component for both democratic failure and democratic
success, as is shown in this case by the recovery pattern of dissonant democracy.
Distinct mechanisms of failure

How do dissonant democracies fail? There are 4 basic options. Dissonant democracy fails, most frequently, via coups as shown by Graph 9 and Graph 10. The second biggest culprit is repression by the government, as it takes away democratic governance. A third, but less prevalent, option is takeover by an external force. Fourth, a country can devolve into civil war, in a way that renders democratic governance impossible as factions resort to bullets not ballots in their quest for power. While the mechanism of failure should not be equated with a causal pathway, it does provide insight into democracy’s vulnerability.
Graph 9. Mechanism of failure for mid-level democratic failures by time period.

Graph 10. Mechanism of failure for low level democratic failure by time period.
While coups represent the most common mechanism for undermining dissonant democracy, the extent to which this mechanism was used in the second counterwave, especially in mid-level democratic failures, points to some important distinctions for that time of history. In looking again at Graph 9 and Graph 10, it is evident that external takeovers are not a dominant mechanism of failure for dissonant democracy. This mechanism has its largest role in the first counterwave with mid-level democracies, while repression has its highest showing in the first counterwave for low level democratic failures. Revisiting the historical context bring some of these distinctive into broader relief.

The first counterwave occurred in the build up to World War II, the competing ideologies of fascism and communism exerted powerful antidemocratic force across the international system. Democracy seemed a dangerous undertaking, in many countries because it was feared a malleable tool for communism. During this time, as well, the realities of modernity and emerging nationalisms had great impact.

The second counterwave is inextricably linked with decolonization. In the aftermath of colonialism, identities that had been tacked on to unify nations under colonial rule disappeared. Traditions, oftentimes those that had been overtly oppressed, re-emerged as the question of identity again emerged. In the 1800s many were forced into the imposed identity of nationalism. After World War II, the imposition disintegrated. The remnants of the colonizers institutions were there, and were often times quite attractive, but the desire to own the government for oneself was there on the part of the national governments. What arose was a lack of consensus. The colonizers had cobbled together people who oftentimes had no shared identity. These cobbled
together pieces of nations had much work to do after gaining their independence...and the lack of consensus often led to the threat of anarchy, as the constructed nation states seemed to ready to break apart.

In other cases, the threat of anarchy brought about military intervention. While in a democracy the voters and the legislative branch of government are responsible for problem-solving in times of crisis, in these dissonant democracies the consensus was simply not there. This lack of consensus is a real difficulty for emerging democracies. The inability to build consensus multiplies the difficulty of the scenarios and situations. In the absence of this consensus, military “caretakers” often stepped in to provide a paternalistic guardianship of the nation state as a whole, purportedly creating the space in which democracy could breathe and grow. There are multiple difficulties with this mentality, but chief among them is that democracy can then get no practice at problem solving when the going gets really tough. Democracy, then, remains viable in the calm, but not in the storm. When economic downturns loom on the horizon, the military steps in. When social disorder threatens the fabric of the society, the military steps in. Democracy remains a child in the background who can only come out to play in sunny weather, with no chance to face stormy weather.

It is no coincidence that dissonant democracies face the most challenges as far as crisis management is concerned. The challenges faced in the multiple arenas of economic difficulty, national identity, factionalized political processes, need advanced help...but the countries that experience these challenges are the very ones that don’t have the means to deal with them. And so, they vacillate back and forth, dabbling in

democracy and then switching to authoritarianism, but never experiencing the stability that is so needed to get them through to the other side.

The Durability and Stability of Dissonant Democracy

There is a difference between stability and durability. Stability references the status quo, a lack of change. For the purposes of this study, durability looks at length of time spent within a category of democracy and is thus slightly more variable, since it accepts some vacillation within a narrow range. Of course, these 2 concepts are linked. When we mention one we think of the other, but this distinction remains an important one to keep in mind as we look at the durability of dissonant democracy.

Durability of dissonant democracy

As is the case in several of the other categories, there are some important differences in the durability of low level and mid-level democracies. For both types of dissonant democracy, I examined those that had a duration of 15 years or longer.

For low level democracy, 27 nations experienced low level democracy for 15 years or longer. The longest running low level democracy was nineteenth century Korea, which existed as a low level democracy for 110 years until annexed by Japan in 1910. In this case, the independence of the yangban class as it interacted with a comparatively weak and constrained emperor, ensured the viability of this system for years.\(^{15}\)

While the Korean case is rather unique, other nations also experienced low level democracy for significant periods of time, in a range of 16 to 79 years. Why, then, does

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low level democracy have such a reputation for a lack of longevity? Well, of the 27 nations that experienced durability as low level democracies, only 3 had start years after 1945. In fact, of all the long running low level democracies, only one is extant today. Of the rest of the durable low level democracies, 17 had their start dates in the 1800s. In fact, when looking at the durability of low level democracies, it is clear to see that low level democracy was much more viable before 1950 than it was after.

This is further evidence of the changing power of the democratic ideal. It is no longer enough to subsist at low level democracy. In fact low level democracy in recent years may know just enough to be dangerous. Like an ill-fated character, low level democracy knows enough to identify itself as liberating or somewhat democratic, but not enough to help it escape its situation. It may indeed suffer from raising expectations while failing to deliver.

Do the durable mid-level democracies follow the same track as low level ones? Is this kind of dissonant democracy also a remnant of the 1800s that no longer exists in any great force today? When making the jump up to mid-level democracy, we find more to contrast than to compare with low level democracy. They share similarities in incidence (102 incidences of low level democracy across time as compared to 117 incidences of mid-level democracy across time), and nearly the same number have endured for 15 years or more (27 low level democracies and 25 mid-level democracies). But here the similarities end. This is particularly true when comparing the subset of durable low and mid-level democracies.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16}This case is Malaysia, with its start year of 1969. Malaysia started as a level 10 democracy following independence, and has managed to hang on to at least a low level of democracy "against all odds" so to speak. This may have quite a bit to do with its highly institutionalized democratic framework at independence.}\]
While durable low level democracy belongs largely to the confines of the 1800s and early 1900s, durable mid-level democracy occurs more predominantly after 1945. In fact, while only 1 durable low level democracy was still extant at the end of the time under study, 8 of the 25 durable mid level democracies still existed in 2006. Mid-level democracy, along with high level democracy, has increased as a percentage of the international system, while low level democracy was almost extinct in 2006.

*Downward mobility within the broader context*

When talking about stability within a polity we really are most concerned with negative change. And, of course, it is more alarming (and less stable), when these negative changes are extreme. Are we really alarmed when an autocracy or lower level democracy precipitously changes into a high level democracy? No. Our only real concern when this occurs is whether an adequate foundation exists on which to build to prevent an equally wild downward swing.

What is the pathway for dissonant democratic failures, as situated within the broader context of dissonant democracy? To get at this question, let's look at the outcomes for mid-level and low level democracies. Falsely creating 2006 as the “end of history” allows us to get some idea of dissonant democracy’s function in the international system, especially in comparison with high level democracy. Is low level democracy mainly a bridge to high level democracy? Is it a playground for liberating autocracies that then sink back into old habits? Or, perhaps we can think of dissonant democracy as a sort of institutional learning center, where nation states enter the doors, before retreating back into autocracy, but will debut at a higher level if they attempt democracy again?
Of the nation states that have experienced low level democracy at some point within the time frame of this study (1800-2006), 31 have risen out of low level democracy to at least a temporarily higher state, while 61 have fallen back down into autocracy from low level democracy. Two nations went out of existence from low level democracy (Orange Free State and the United Provinces) and 8 nation states were low level democracies as of 2006. So, of the 102 nation states that have been, at least at some point, low level democracies, 60% have decreased into autocracy.

What about the next tier of dissonant democracies? How do mid-level democracies fare across time? One of the clearest divergences is in the fact that 32 nation states still exist as mid-level democracies, compared to only 8 of the low level democracies which can make this boast. This is of particular interest, since the 2 categories have similar numbers of constituents (102 for low level democracy and 117 for mid-level democracy). As far as splitting those that have decreased in polity, 44% have experienced negative change while roughly 30% have experienced positive change. The remaining 27% are those nation states that remained mid-level democracies in 2006.

Having looked at the durability for dissonant democracy, the time has come to compare this category with high level democracy. Since there is no higher category, no one can move up, but what happens to those who exist in this highest strata? This category of democracy had the most constituents of any type of democracy at the end of 2006, with 71 constituent nation states. There are 121 nation states that have experienced high level democracy at some point in the course of the study. Of these 121 political entities, 48 experienced enough of a downward swing as to no longer be a high level democracy. In addition, 2 states went out of existence, West Germany and
Czechoslovakia. We might say, however, that they’ve balanced each other out since West Germany assimilated the East Germans into high level democracy and both constituent nations of the former Czechoslovakia also exist as high level democracies. High level democracy, then, has proven the most durable of the types of democracy. This leaves us with further questions about dissonant democracy as a transitory state.

In order to more fully explore the question of dissonant democracy as a transitory state, we can work backward from those who have achieved high level democracy, to see what function the lower levels played in their journeys. Of the 71 nation states that were high level democracies at the end of this study’s timeline in 2006, 42 had been high level democracies for at least 15 years. In one sense, requiring these democracies to be present in 2006 is a rather low bar, since, as we have seen, high level democracy is the most prevalent form of democracy in 2006. In another sense, however, it seems only fair to compare the democratization trajectories of these current, high level democracies with durations of at least 15 years, with the trajectories of high level democratic failures.

There are several basic trajectories of “modern” persistent high level democracies, namely those that meet the requirement above. Their transition patterns were not at all what one might anticipate based on the transition literature. One might expect that nation states start out as autocracies, make some reforms, proceed to low level democracy, make some reforms, proceed to mid-level democracy, make some reforms, and then finally arrive at high level democracy, via a nice and stable process of gradual reform. In the entire dataset of those high level democracies that are both extant in 2006, and have been high level democracies for at least 15 years, only 2 nation states took this

route. Only Costa Rica and the United Kingdom started off as autocracies, then moved to low level democracy, before passing on to mid-level, and finally high level democracy.

The rest fall into 3 basic categories, which each deviate quite substantially from this expected outcome. In one group, we have the subset of somewhat gradual transition. In order to belong to this category, the nation state must have been either a mid-level or low level democracy for at least one year before transitioning to high level democracy. Of the 42 nations studied, 14 (including Costa Rica and the UK) meet this requirement, with 5 nations spending time as low level democracies prior to their transition and 7 nations spending time as mid-level democracies prior to their transition. The majority, however, fall outside this category. These nations either debut as high level democracies (the case for 7 of them), or transition to high level democracy directly from autocracy. Interestingly, autocracy is a more likely springboard for high level democracy than either low level democracy or mid-level democracy or even than both types of dissonant democracy combined. What might our conclusions imply for those nation states that are currently either mid-level or low level democracies?

Before we jump to the conclusion that dissonant democracies are bereft of value, let us look at the role they have played in democracies that have failed more than once. In doing so, perhaps we will discover a constructive purpose, not only for dissonant democracy, but also for the role of democratic failure.

Repeat Offenders

One indicator of instability is the issue of repeat offenders, those nation states that have experienced democratic failure more than one time. This indicates both a repeated
attempt to try democracy once it has failed, and a repeat failure of democracy the second
time. One question that might arise is to distinguish between outcomes for those who
failed only once and the repeat offenders. Let’s take a couple minutes to look at this
issue. The results for those nations that did not repeat democratic failure are quite mixed.
A majority of the countries did not repeat democratic failure because they never
recovered any form of democracy. For those that did recover democracy, Albania and
Armenia recovered mid-level democracy but did not manage progress to high level
democracy. That leaves only 3 success stories: Brazil, Germany and Latvia.

The vast majority of nations in this study failed at least twice, whether as a mid-
level democracy, a low level democracy, a high level democracy or one of each. In
addition, several of these nations experienced a deepening in autocracy during their
history before they ever instituted democracy. This means that their polity score
worsened by at least a 3 point drop at some point as an autocracy. It is interesting to note
that the nations that experienced deepening autocracy often went on to experience
democratic failure, a subject that will be examined in greater detail in the following
chapter.

Dissonant democratic failure has a very high percentage of repeat offenders, as
shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Of the entire subset of low level democracies, those
experiencing only one failure comprise 35% of the entire data set. If we look into this
further, we see that 8 of those that only experience 1 failure fall into autocracy, but don’t
re-emerge from it, so democratic failure is obviously not an option for them.
Figure 6. Mid-level democratic failures by number of times failed.

Figure 7. Low level democratic failures by number of times failed.
That leaves us with only 19% that experience democratic failure only once. For the entire dataset, including those who fail only once, the mean number of failures is 2.21.

Conclusion

Dissonant democracy, in many ways, continues the discovery process started in the previous chapter. Like high level democratic failures, mid-level and low level democracies are disproportionately represented within the counterwave time bands. Dissonant democracy also tends to fail quickly.

Dissonant democratic failure also further illuminates the distinctions between the 2 counterwave phenomena. These lower levels of democracy figured more prominently in the second downturn than in the first. Dissonant democracies also feature many repeat offenders, demonstrating the impact of mid-level and low level democracy on both durability and stability. It now remains to study the deepening of autocracy, to see whether democratic failure also shares commonalities with the worsening of autocratic rule.
CHAPTER VI

AUTOCRATIC DEEPENING

In 1973 Juan Linz published a book entitled *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. At the time, it seemed clear that this topic was one of importance since "at least half of humanity" lived under the influence of non-democracy. Whether totalitarian, authoritarian or sultanistic, all of the regimes included in the Linz study easily qualified as nondemocracies. During the time, studying autocracy seemed a good bread and butter undertaking for a scholar, an endeavor with strong possibilities for a steady stream of future publications. Linz used the following quote by Robert Dahl to summarize scholars' expectations for change in the coming decades: "As with a great many things, the safest bet about a country's regime a generation from now is that it will be somewhat different but not radically different from what it is today." The expectation was for a continuation of the same. In this case, the strength of non-democracy seemed sure, while the advance of democracy was not to be contemplated. One could equate the perceived likelihood of democratic advance to a swift conclusion to conflict in the midst of trench warfare.

Although non-democracy seemed completely "dug in" in 1973, a scant 3 years hence the third wave of democratization launched from the Iberian Peninsula, and dramatically changed the landscape of polities. In the updated introduction to the 2000 edition of his book, Linz admits "I certainly was wrong in my pessimism about the

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2 Ibid., 269.
possibility of peaceful, orderly, even formally constitutional transition from nondemocratic regimes to democracy."³

Given this seismic shift, then, should we study autocracies? Isn’t this particularly incongruent in a study on democratic failure? Autocracies, by definition, exclude the possibility of democratic failure. At first glance, a chapter on autocracy seems an unwelcome stranger in a study of democratic failure.

One justification for its inclusion is the literature on the legacy of an autocratic history on the quality of democracy post-transition. This view argues that autocracies leave an indelible stamp.

Lingering authoritarian legacies—even when they cannot per se cause authoritarian backlash—nevertheless present a long-term problem for the quality and consistency of postauthoritarian democratic regimes, both at the macrolevel of political and economic institutions' operations and at the microlevel of citizens' perceptions of democracy.⁴

Adding to this literature is a separate one tying centralized autocracy to state collapse. By this reasoning, the nation state’s unique projection of power into every aspect of civilian life, replacing the institutions of civil society, makes it more fragile in its rigidity. When it fails, the state falls apart completely.⁵ Failed states, particularly in the post 9/11 atmosphere, garner enough attention to merit further study of autocracy.⁶

In addition to these arguments for the importance of studying autocracy is the knowledge that while autocracies can’t be democratic failures, they can deepen. This chapter takes a look at the deepening of autocracy, and relates it to our study of

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democratic failure. After all, autocracy was the predominant form of governance globally, although in varying concentrations, for the first 100 years of the time under study. What we have done thus far for democracy, looking at the various levels of democracy and examining democratic failure in light of these considerations, we will now do for autocracy. Constraints on space necessitate brevity so our focus primarily rests on describing autocracy and how it has changed and evolved over the time under study, the status of autocracy as it existed in the counterwave time period, and, finally, the durability and stability of autocracy. Each of these sections, additionally, offers the ability to compare and contrast the state of autocracy with the state of democracy that has already been discussed. After all, as we can see from Figure 8, autocratic deepening has been just as global a phenomenon as democratic failure, and has also been toxic to the democratic ideal.
Perfect Autocracies

What do the institutions of a nation with a -10 score look like? "In mature form, autocracies sharply restrict or suppress competitive political participation. Their chief executives are chosen in a regularized process of selection within the political elite, and once in office they exercise power with few institutional constraints." Thus, mature democracies and mature autocracies are diametrically opposed.

When I look at autocracy, here's the logic to which I easily tend. Democracy is good. A level 10 democracy is the most well-consolidated democracy. Therefore, a level 10 is the best government. Autocracy is bad. A -10 is the most well-consolidated autocracy. Therefore, a -10 is the worst government.

Given this mindset, when I look at Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union or even at Kim's North Korea I expect to see perfect -10 regimes...after all, aren't these good historic examples of complete autocracy? And yet all these regimes missed the "perfect autocracy" designation by a point weighing in at -9. Polity doesn't code these as perfect autocracies, because while authority has been vested in one person, that one person was supported by an elite group, usually well-organized within a party structure. In fact, it is interesting to note that the regimes most often thought of as completely totalitarian, the perpetrators of some of the most stunning crimes against humanity, have what we might call "managed" autocracy. The fact that the bloodiest, most ruthless despots of the twentieth century in fact used a party structure to disperse their cruelty merely reinforces the power that underlies institutionalized government. The organizational advances that facilitate democratic governance of the nation state brings

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structure and efficiency to governmental rule can be used to structure tax programs, or to structure the dissemination of Jews to death camps.\(^8\)

Polity doesn’t measure evil. Polity does measure institutionalized value structures as related to the concentration of power. In democracies, there are more hands in the power pie. This is not to say the nation state itself is less powerful. In fact, the reach of the state in mature democracies is often quite extensive (directing and controlling large sectors of the economy and society), but the power institutions themselves have more voices and these voices compete before a constituency. In complete autocracies, the voice more closely approximates a monotone.

To give us a better idea of the scope encompassed by autocracy, let’s look at some of the generalities. As seen in Graph 11, while no nation entered the dataset in 1800 as a perfect democracy, twelve nation states entered the data set as perfect autocracies. The 1800s saw the birth of 7 additional perfect autocracies between the years of 1806-1816, but all 7 of these nations went out of existence well before 1900. The 1900s birthed 18 more perfect autocracies.

While 12 nations entered the data set as perfect autocracies, only 2 perfect autocracies, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, remained in 2006. Perfect autocracy is rarer at the end of the dataset than it was at the beginning. In some sense, we might consider the fate of these perfect autocracies as an ideal testing ground for the varying penetration and power of the democratic ideal. Table 7 shows the varying 2006 outcomes for those nation states that have at one time or another experienced ideal autocracies. While this is clearly a mixed bag, but it is interesting to note that only 34% of those who have

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Graph 11. Number of perfect autocracies, 1800-2006.

experienced perfect autocracy remain at any level of autocracy in 2006. This certainly reflects a broad shift away from antidemocratic ideals.

Table 7. Outcomes for perfect autocracies as of 2006

<table>
<thead>
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<th>HIDEM</th>
<th>MIDEM</th>
<th>LODEM</th>
<th>LOAUT</th>
<th>MIDAUT</th>
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But what of the rest of the scope of autocracy? If democracy in 2006 can encompass such disparate nations as Canada and Cambodia, Spain and Sierra Leone, it might serve us well to examine the varying levels of autocracy. We’ve already looked at “perfect” autocracy, but what does autocracy look like across the range from -10 to 0? What do the various levels of autocracy look like?

General Considerations

There is a great temptation, still present today, to view autocracy in a monolithic way. This temptation is particularly strong in macro studies which, like this one, lump. Lumping studies look at big picture trends, while ignoring some of the finer grain distinctions. These macro observations bring both reward and peril, and have sometimes been rightly critiqued for simply muddying the water, instead of bringing clarity.

To combat this, finer grain distinctions are in order, even when they are necessarily still broad in scope. Linz in his seminal work on autocratic regimes, created broad typologies based on his perception of regime characteristics. This is entirely plausible and beneficial. Totalitarian regimes differ from authoritarian ones by the extent to which they “completely organize political life and society” often while using terror and ideology as weapons of choice.9 In turn, sultanistic regimes, those non-democratic regimes that root their legitimacy in traditional monarchy, are also distinct. And, both of these entities are different from Linz’s definition of an authoritarian regime, which still maintains a distinction between the government and society.10

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10 Ibid., 10.
Since the focus of this study is on institutionalized power structures, I have chosen different distinctions, based on the presence and absence of institutional characteristics, as evidenced in the polity scores. In the division of the polity scale, those nation states with a polity score of 0 to -10 qualify as autocracies. Within this category, however, are 3 subcategories. As with democracies, the categories are: low level autocracy (0 to -3), mid level autocracy (-4 to -7), and high level autocracy (-8 to -10).

Creating the same categories for autocracy that we have created for democracy helps to determine if there are certain thresholds for an autocracy’s durability and stability. While it would be unwieldy to discuss all the autocracies that have existed across the data set, looking at a couple examples provides a mooring.

Without surprise, Singapore is classified as a low level autocracy. Defying all who link a high standard of living inextricably with high level democracy, the prosperous autocrats of this city-state have maintained the status quo as a low level autocracy ever since the move away from mid-level democracy in 1965. The country of Jordan is another contemporary example of a low level autocracy. The voice of moderation in a rather prickly neighborhood, Jordan has moderated the higher levels of autocracy of past years and now keeps autocracy to a fairly low thrum.

Mid-level autocracy is another slice. From 1952-2004, Egypt was a mid-level autocracy, although it has since moderated to a low level one for the final 2 years under study. Cuba, too, is an example of a mid-level autocracy. In the years that immediately followed the revolution, it was a high level autocracy, but by 1961 it had settled into a durable mid-level autocratic state.
High level autocracy is the last subdivision of autocracy. Perfect autocracy has already been discussed. The other members of this group are those nation states score -8 or -9. Stalin's Russia, and Hitler's Germany have already been mentioned as members of the high autocracy club. Vichy France and Mussolini's Italy also qualify. In 2006, 9 nations made up this diminishing group.\textsuperscript{11} Five of these nations have been high level autocracies since inception, and 2 have always been -10 autocracies. These regimes, whether sultanistic, highly authoritarian or totalitarian, all share similar institutional power structures.

Just as democracies have fluctuated between different kinds of democracy, autocracies fluctuate between the varying levels of autocracy. This variance will be discussed in greater detail in the section of autocracy's durability, but I wanted to mention it here to guard against the idea of a monolithic, static "state of being" type of mindset. The subdivisions between the varying types of autocracy are helpful, but they are also fluid.

One of the goals of the study is to look at the varying levels of autocracy to discover the ways autocracy has changed across time in relation to democracy. Before looking the evidence as gathered, let's talk about some reasonable scenarios. First of all, autocracy could retreat when democracy is on the march. In the same way, we might expect that when autocracy is on the march, democracy retreats in a "tit for tat" scenario. Another scenario we might call polarization. When democracies get more democratic, autocracies in turn get more autocratic. Or, in a third scenario, there might be no discernible relationship between democracy and autocracy. They may just coexist with

\textsuperscript{11} These nations are: Bhutan, North Korea, Myanmar (Burma), Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
no relationship at all. These are 3 options to keep in mind as we explore autocratic
deepening, and possible relationships with democracy and democratic failure.

*Autocracy as ideology*

While democracy has a clear ideological component, the case of linking ideology
and autocracy is at times a bit murky. This is due, in part, to the broader variation in
arrangements of governance that live under the autocratic canopy. Present in autocracy’s
tent is communism, fascism, totalitarianism, sultanism, military dictatorship and even
other subtypes. The ideology behind autocracy has a much broader field to cover, as we
can see from this list. Perhaps this is the reason autocracy is sometimes viewed as less
ideological in nature.

Instead of being less ideological in nature, autocracy simply has a more varied
ideological background. For the purposes of this study, the 2 main variants have been
communism and fascism. These 2 systems of government have been diametrically
opposed to democracy, offering alternate visions of how to govern wisely and in the
name of the people, while not advocating specific governance for the people. Both of
these systems have exhibited extreme fervor in their ideological components. Karl
Loewenstein, writing in 1935, aptly described the messianic fervor of both systems of
thought:

> We are therefore on safe ground in assuming that modern dictatorships of
fascist or communist tinge are not only articles for home consumption but
religious, which, like all great spiritual movements of history, aspire to
transform the whole world gradually into one realm of autocratic rule;
while the suppression of democracy by autocracy will be but a means of
the transformation of the spiritual, political, and economic system of the
globe.¹²

Both systems of thought provided answers to the problems facing countries under more democratic governance. In cases where the distribution of wealth was stilted away from workers and toward owners communism offered a strongly ideological answer to this thorny problem.

The Soviet Union became the consummate example of union of communism and the state. As Robert Wesson has stated, writing at a time when the Soviet Union was still in existence:

> No society can be understood without reference to the image it draws of itself and its purposes; and this is emphatically true of the Soviet Union, which has forcefully and with extraordinary persistence asserted its ideological foundations and based its legitimacy upon a canon.\(^\text{13}\)

Of interesting note, when the Soviet Union crumbled, the ideology was defeated as well. This brings up an interesting point about the intersection of ideology and the legitimacy of a state as intertwined self-reinforcing mechanisms. When the ideology of the Soviet Union was challenged, the system crumbled as the legitimacy for rule no longer existed. Thoroughly discredited as an ideology, the remaining “communists” in the world are decidedly less committed to the foundational tenets of communism, namely a rejection of capitalism. It is easy to write communism off as a system of autocracy that is dead. This presumes, however, that it will never again rise. This is wrong-headed. Democracy will always face the challenge of balancing the equitable distribution of wealth with liberty and freedom. If she should fail to manage this balancing act, as she has failed in the past, I am willing to wager that some reincarnation of a tempered communist ideal will again surface.

If it is broadly accepted that communism is ideological in nature, fascism’s ideology is less clearly delineated. In contrast to democracy, fascism and communism are both “systems on which the survival of the individuals is guaranteed by the state.”

Sharing several characteristics of rule in common with communism, for example the cult of personality of the state leader, the state’s interference with the economy, and the inherent paternalism of the state leader as protector of the people, some have argued there is really little functional difference between communism and fascism.

While this may be true in practice, the underlying justification of rule is different. I readily acknowledge that fascism, unlike communism and even democracy, “does not rest on formal philosophical positions with claims to universal validity.” Fascism uses ideas differently, and has retained validity beyond communism for precisely these reasons. As Robert Paxton has noted:

There was no “Fascist Manifesto,” no founding fascist thinker. Although one can deduce from fascist language implicit Social Darwinist assumptions about human nature, the need for community and authority in human society, and the destiny of nations in history, fascism does not base its claims to validity on their truth.

Precisely because of this, fascist ideas have proven more long-lasting than their communist counterparts. Military dictatorships, sultanistic regimes, and other nationalistic regimes the world over find their roots here. Fascism is such a powerful ideology precisely because it is so fluid. There are no inconvertible truths that must be tended in order for legitimacy to reign. The underlying ideology for fascism lies in the

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16 Ibid.
fundamental assumption that governmental leadership is better equipped to make
decisions for the nation than the people themselves.

Democracy is particularly vulnerable following systemic disturbances. The lead
up to and aftermath of World War I, birthed fascism and nurtured communism, 2
ideologies that are fundamentally opposed to the democratic ideal. Fascism, in particular,
was birthed "not during a period of overriding growth but during one of prevailing
economic vicissitudes."\textsuperscript{17} The future is veiled, but the lessons of the ascendance of
autocratic ideology prove useful if democracy is to prevail.

Democracy's Never Never Land

In 2006, there were 29 extant nations born as autocracies that have never
transitioned. These never democracies consist of 5 that have always been high level
autocracies, 2 of them having always been perfect autocracies. There are an additional 17
nation states that went out of existence that had never experienced democratic transition.
Of the nations that no longer exist, most were incorporated into nation states that are
currently high level democracies, with Vietnam and Yemen as the notable exceptions.

Why should we be concerned about nations that have never experienced
democracy? Certainly the areas that have never experienced democracy are quite
instructive as to their resilience against the spread of democracy. In this sense, they
represent a real challenge to the democratic ideal. Figure 9 shows the stretch of these
never democracies. Scholars have noted the democratic ideal has not been imported by

\textsuperscript{17} Charles S. Maier, "Some Recent Studies of Fascism," \textit{The Journal of Modern History} 48, no.3
(September 1976): 521.
Figure 9. Nations never experiencing democracy.

some nation states, and even by some geographic regions. The focus has largely been on Islam’s resistance to democracy’s forward march, the map above demonstrates its lack of penetration in other locales as well. Not only has antidemocracy flourished in the Middle East, it has continued sustenance in Africa and Asia as well.

**Autocratic Deepening**

While as a whole, autocracy experienced a decline from the height of its influence in 1825, both counterwaves offered times of resurgence as democracies crossed over into autocratic territory. The relationship between autocratic deepening and the counterwaves is evident in Graph 12. This trend is most clearly visible in the second counterwave, as our previous discussions would lead us to expect. The first counterwave was populated, in part, by high level democracies that were conquered by Hitler. While
this clearly counted as a democratic failure, the external rule was not consolidated into autocratic institutions, as so counts as an interruption, a code that is not factored into the autocracy or democracy scores.

While failing democracies clearly account for a portion of autocracies’ advance during the counterwave years, there is also a relationship between the counterwaves and autocratic deepening. Autocracies sporadically experienced deepening in the 1850-1880 time band, but experienced a strong peak during both counterwaves as can be seen in Graph 13, where the rise of all types of autocracy is evident in CW1 (1922-1940) and in CW2 (1957-1977).
Graph 13. Autocracy Type as percentage of the world system, 1800-2006.

Graph 14. Percentage of autocracy and democracy versus the mean polity score.
In contrast to the first counterwave, however, the second one fed mid-level autocracy most vigorously, a trend that decreased at the onset of the third wave of democracy. Toward the end of the time period studied, we see a general amelioration of autocracy, as low level autocracy is on the rise while mid-level and high level autocracy are both in decline.

This relationship between autocratic deepening, democracy's advance and the counterwaves is even more compelling when looking at the average polity score in comparison with autocracy and democracy as percentages of the international system, as shown in Graph 14. The percentage of democracy in the system tracks to a stunning degree with the mean polity score, underlining the role of democracy's rise and fall as contributing to shifts in the mean polity score. We can see that, as expected, autocracy roughly rises in step with the counterwaves as well, even when considered as a whole.

Furthering our examination of the relationship between autocratic deepening, democratic failures and the counterwaves, we see the consistent pattern of autocratic deepening preceding democratic failure. In other words, autocracies get worse before democracies fail. This relationship, shown in Graph 15, strengthens the argument that the study of autocratic deepenings has important implications for democratic failure. More research needs to be done in this area to determine the exact nature of the relationship, but autocratic deepening has clearly served as a bellwether for democratic failure in both of the counterwaves.
Autocracy and Durability

Among contemporary scholars who study democracy, and in particular democratic transitions, it has become increasingly unpopular to extol any virtues of autocracy. However, if any remnant of respect for autocratic institutions remains, it is in the arena of stability. Autocracies, if little else in today’s parlance, still retain relevance as stabilizers of society. When democracy gets messy and factionalized or grinds to a halt because of the inability to form consensus, autocracy steps in with cool assurance and cools, or extinguishes, flaring tempers and contention. In other words, autocracy knows how to do stability.\(^{18}\)

The durability and stability of autocracies are 2 different things. First of all, we have durability. A polity can be safely understood as being an autocracy when it has a polity score of -10 to 0. However, we often times see “interruptions” in the autocratic rule, just as we have interruptions in democratic rule. These interruptions come in a variety of forms, as has already been discussed, but they all interrupt regularized rule. In no sense can we look at these interruptions as a transition to democracy. Neither, however, can we say that organized autocratic rule is in place. It is in this sense that duration and stability are separate and important concepts that help us flesh out these differences. In many cases where autocracy “ends” it transitions to one of the interruption states. While we can’t refer to this as a continuance of autocracy, we can refer to this as a continuance of non-democracy. The bigger issue, of course, is that of stability. Non-democracy and autocracy have slightly different durations, but a transition from autocracy to one of these interruption states reflects a lack of stability. Non-democracy is durable in certain time periods of this study, but what is its stability? In other words, how often is the state of autocracy interrupted? Looking at the number of interruptions experienced in Graph 16 and how they have contributed to autocracy’s lack of durability, helps us to understand that autocracy is not the monolithic state of being that is often assumed. There are shades to autocracy just as there are shades to democracy. Some of these interruptions resulted in lesser autocracy, some of the interruptions resulted in deepened autocracy and many resulted in a continuity of the autocracy experienced before the interruption occurred.
Repeat offenders for autocratic deepening

At this point, it might serve as a good reminder to review the fact that in the larger polity dataset, there are 3 basic options: autocracy, democracy, and interruption. Some nations within the dataset started out as democracies and remained democracies for the length of the study. So too, some began as autocracies and remained autocracies for the length of the study. The vast majority experienced swings, both within democracy and autocracy and between the 2, often times also passing through “interruptions.”

We’ve already discussed repeat offenders in democratic failure. Now, we will do the same for autocracy. Our discussion serves 2 purposes. First, it continues to form our
ideas about autocracy’s stability and durability. Second, it offers points of comparison with democratic failure.

For the autocracies, the following nation states experience repeated autocratic deepening: Bolivia, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Hungary, Mexico, Paraguay, Romania, Thailand and Turkey. Bolivia experienced a total of 4 episodes of autocratic deepening, while El Salvador had 3. The rest of the nations had 2 bouts of autocratic deepening.

We might take a couple moments to note a few things about those nations that experienced more than one polity drop of 3 points in their autocracy score, a significant deepening of their autocracy on more than one occasion in their history. There are only 9 of these nations, and all of them went on subsequently, to become some level of democracy by 2006. Did repeat experience with deepening autocracy predispose these nations to less stable democracy? Well, 4 of the nations did not experience democratic failure and 5 of them did experience democratic failure. This looks like a less than robust argument for instability on one side of the polity scale indicating instability on the other side of the scale. In fact, it seems an argument that some nation states are able to leave their past behind them when they cross over into democracy. Closer examination, as is frequently true, reveals a more nuanced view. The 5 nations that have experienced at least one democratic failure in addition to their repeated polity drops, without exception, all had first born democracies before or during the counterwave years. If we look at the duration of these first born democracies, it further emphasizes the toxicity of the counterwave years to democracy. Bolivia first birthed democracy in 1880. This first attempt lasted until 1935, being sucked under in the first counterwave. Bulgaria’s democracy was born in 1918, just as the first counterwave was launching, and only
endured for a year. Paraguay's first democracy was also born during the first counterwave in 1937, but only lasted 3 years. Turkey first experimented with democracy in 1946, but experienced democratic failure during the second counterwave. Thailand's first attempt, during the second counterwave in 1969, only lasted 2 years before falling. In contrast, the 4 nations that have repeated polity drops, but have not experienced democratic failure, without exception, were all born after the end of the second counterwave. One could reasonably argue that, since these latest experiments in first time democracy came after the final counterwave, they have been born toward the end of the dataset and therefore have not had equal opportunity to fail. This is certainly true, but it should be pointed out that, with the exception of Bolivia (born well before the first counterwave in 1880, and succumbing to it after a duration of 56 years as a democracy), all the other countries' first attempts at democracy lasted between 1 and 8 years. Even with the very newest first born democracy with no democratic failure experience, a time span of 16 years has passed between the onset of democracy and the end of the study. The evidence, therefore, seems to point more in the direction of the toxicity of the counterwaves.

Repeated experiences with autocracy

While repeated autocratic polity drops are one way to measure instability on the autocratic side is to look at the number of countries that have only experienced autocracy for once in their history. Out of the 149 nation states that have, at one time or another, been autocracies, we find 73 experience autocracy only once. Of these, 28 were still autocracies at the end of the study and another 13 were countries that had gone out of existence. The remaining nations transitioned from autocracy to democracy, and while
they might have experienced variance in the degree of autocracy or the degree of
democracy, they did not cross the border back into autocracy after their democratization.
In terms of stability, it might also be interesting to note that of the 73 nation states that
only experienced autocracy one time, 56 experienced autocracy for more than 15 years.

*Autocratic deepening and democratic failure*

We’ve already examined the relationship between repeat polity drops and
democratic failure, but what of those nations that only experienced autocratic deepening
once. Is there any evidence linking autocratic deepening and democratic failure?

In fact, we find a very high number of nation states that have experienced polity
drops as autocracies also experience democratic failure. This, of course, presumes a
transition to democracy. Of the 52 nations that have experienced polity drop, 16
experienced democratic failure because they never transitioned to democracy.

The remaining 36 nations did make the transition to democracy. Of these, only 10
have no experience with democratic failure. When we look at these 10 democracies, with
a history of polity drop but with no history of subsequent democratic failure, we find that
9 out of 10 of these democracies were born after the end of the second counterwave. The
most mature of this group is El Salvador, born in 1984, while the youngest is Burundi’s
dissonant democracy, born in 2005. It remains to be seen, whether the lack of democratic
failure in these newer democracies is due to core differences in democracies born after
the counterwaves, versus the democratic path traveled by those pre-counterwave or
whether, in the more pessimistic view, these democracies have not yet existed long
enough to face the challenges that will bring about their downfall.
What, then, is the impact of a history of autocratic deepening upon democracies? Should we assume that the experience of a polity drop while an autocracy deepens the autocratic legacy when a nation transitions to democracy? For this to be the case, we would expect to find the polity drops occurring first, then a nation’s experience with democratic failure. If we further examine the subset of nations that have experienced both autocratic and democratic polity drops, we see that this is the case only some of the time. In fact, 8 of the 26 nations first experienced democratic failure and then experienced a polity drop as an autocracy.\(^{19}\) If anything, these cases seem to indicate a continued legacy for democratic failure, as injurious to the nation state. Or, one might simply conclude that the polity is equally prone to instability as an autocracy and a democracy. In this case, however, one would expect to see more equal numbers between autocratic polity drops and democratic failures...assuming the time spent at each was roughly equivalent. Instead, we do not observe this to be true. What then can we take away from this endeavor?

We can’t derive from this that autocratic polity drop is the precursor of democratic failure. While it highly correlated with the experience of democratic failure, there are many democratic failures that have no polity drops in their history. By contrast, as we have seen there are few nations that experience polity drop, but escape democratic failure, especially if the democracy was born before 1977.

\(^{19}\) It is good to bear in mind that democratic failure and autocratic deepening are different phenomenon. For example, if a democracy has a polity score of 6, then the following year dips to 0, and then down to -6, this is only recorded as a deepening of the democratic failure, and not as an occurrence of autocratic deepening.
**Democratic failure and repeated autocratic deepening**

Are democratic repeat offenders comprised mostly of those that have experienced at least one polity drop? Of the 34 nations that have repeatedly failed at democracy, only 29% have experienced an autocratic polity drop. We might also ask how many of the repeat offenders within the autocratic polity drop camp have then experienced democratic failure, an extremely fair question since all of the repeat autocratic deepening camp had experienced democracy by 2006? Five of the 9 nations that experienced multiple autocratic polity drops also experienced democratic failure, although only 2 nations, Turkey and Thailand, have the distinction of being repeat offenders for both autocratic polity drop and democratic failure.

**Conclusion**

What can we take away from our study of autocratic deepening? First of all, we know that autocracies get worse in a disproportionate way, during the counterwaves. This forwards our argument of the wide impact of the counterwaves, both geographically and in terms of polity type. The subtypes of autocracy have fluctuated across time. We also have discovered that autocratic deepening is more likely to take more than a year, as opposed to the shorter failure times for democracies. In addition, we have shown that autocracy, as a whole, has experienced more incidences of instability than has democracy. This holds true even when we account for autocracy's sway on the world for much of the nineteenth century. The broad shifts that have occurred in autocracy point to the larger picture of change in the international system and are a perfect segue into our
concluding chapter, where we will recap the main findings of our study in a comparative manner, while tying them to the ideas that form their roots.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The move to modernity inexorably linked new ideas and governance. With the onset of modernity, the days when bloodlines determined capacity to rule were limited. A fundamental paradigm shift in the ideas of legitimacy reigned. This post-Enlightenment move away from fundamental assumptions about the working of the universe carved a great divide in history. On the other side of this chasm, democracy and antidemocracy were both alive and well. Democracy approached the problem of how to replace the divine by locating it fundamentally in all people. The rule of the many, the downtrodden idea across previous centuries, began an inexorable ascendance. Institutions had evolved to mitigate democracy’s failings. Legislatures were elected, giving the masses a voice in rule without involving them in the daily particulars. Regularized elections cycles, rights for the opposition, freedom of expression and constraints upon authority all served to tame democracy’s “capricious” nature, making democracy safe for the world and ensuring a departure from mob rule. Rule by the many is undergirded by fundamental assumptions of the equality of men. Democracy, in moving away from the divine right of kings, crowned every person a ruler and a kingmaker.

And yet, if democracy located the move away from divine rule in the equality of individuals, antidemocratic ideas also evolved with the onset of modernity. Some strains, such as communism, had clear ideological components, while the ideology of autocracy was more subtle in other variants, such as some branches of fascism. They are united, however, by their universal paternalism. Far from democracy’s advocacy for liberty and
equality, antidemocracy baldly proclaims, "Father knows best." While for communism this was to be a time delimited phase (one from which it never experientially escaped, whatever the ideology), the fact remains that all antidemocratic sentiment unites in its fundamental assumption that "the many" cannot govern themselves into a better existence. When democracy fails, paternalism invariably wins. The age old critiques of democracy as utopian and unstable and of "the many" as incompetent are recycled as democratic failure permeates the international system.

Much is explained by the varying historical context of CW1 compared to CW2. The first counterwave, 1922-1940, was a true battleground of ideas. Fascism, with its strongly centralized form of governance, was on the march, offering stability in an uncertain time. Communism, on the other hand, was often what sparked fascism's advance. Reacting against the purely revolutionary zeal of a fundamentally socially destabilizing ideology, fascism's stability seemed preferable to democracy's weakness, which after all allowed communists freedom of even vitriolic speech, especially in light of the post-conflict challenges of World War I and the economic depression that had gripped the world. The first counterwave occurred in the midst of great uncertainty at a time when democracy seemed not to know the right answers. Of course, Hitler's aggressive march across Europe, taking over high level democracies hand over fist, contributed a great deal. Still, the first counterwave went beyond Europe's borders, as Latin American democracies also took a nosedive toward fascism.

The second counterwave, 1957-1977, reflected more uncertainty in the international system, again in the context of competing ideologies. The conclusion of World War II set off a process whereby former colonies clamored for independence.
This was most pronounced in Africa and Southeast Asia. These newly independent colonies embarked on a struggle for national identity in a bipolar world. On one side were the colonizers of the West, on the other an upstart power with a new identity but a long history. Dividing the globe between them, these 2 poles held vastly different ideologies. The Soviet Union was evangelistic in it support of spreading communism. Gladly lending a hand in the inculcation of communism to the masses, the U.S.S.R. held newly independent nations in their tutelage, even when it did not absorb them entirely. On the other hand, the West (represented largely by the United States) took a different approach. Instead of supporting new democracies, the West committed to defending existing ones. The drawbridge was raised, and while those inside democracy’s castle were to be defended, it was not the time to sally forth and spread democracy. Ironically, democracy’s strongest governments believed some of the time honored critiques about her...namely, that democracy is an unstable and utopian entity in times of uncertainty. In other words, democracy is not for everybody at every time. Instead, autocrats with friendly dispositions toward Western interests were cultivated while democratic movements were squelched.\textsuperscript{1} The light of confidence in the democratic ideal burned dimly even in high level Western democracies during the second counterwave. Collectively, a defensive stance was taken as the threat of communism loomed large and Western nations seemed ill-equipped to deal with the challenge.

Summary of Findings

This work's primary intent has been to describe the macro level trends of democratic failure, a topic that has received scant attention. While others have described the challenges facing nations who commit to this process of moving toward democracy, the impact of backward movement resembles a little studied whirlpool. Its impact on the collective ship of state has not been adequately uncovered. This study, while not addressing all of the complexities, has put this water feature on the map. It has done so in 2 ways, by looking at the clustering of democratic failure across time as well as by examining democracy in different concentrations. In this final chapter, I will first summarize the main findings, discuss the implications of this work and then suggest directions of fruitful future research.

The counterwaves

The counterwave time periods, 1921-1940 (CW1) and 1957-1977 (CW2), were clusters of antidemocratic sentiment, times when the world system rejected the democratic ideal, instead being lulled by the siren song of autocracy. This is true of all polity types, as all levels of democracy experienced failure while autocracies deepened. Failures within the counterwaves were deep, occurred quickly, and more typically consisted of regime change as opposed to internal repression. The time that it took for the failures to occur was similar inside and outside the counterwaves, but the peak level of failure was steeper inside the counterwave than for failures that occurred outside the counterwaves.

The counterwaves were a widespread geographic phenomenon. This is especially true when looking at those nations that experienced negative polity change within the counterwave time bands, but holds true as well for those who reached failure threshold.
Looking at the global nature of the counterwaves again buttresses the argument that these are systemic phenomena. When looking at the percentages of total failures that occurred within the counterwaves, 61% of all high level democratic failures occurred within these time bands. At the other end of the spectrum are autocratic deepenings, with 40% of all autocratic deepenings occurring within the counterwave years. From high level democratic failure all the way down to autocratic deepening, a striking number of failures occurred within the counterwaves, justifying the statement that these time bands truly were the ebb of democracy’s flow.

When comparing the 2 counterwaves, there are important similarities and differences. The composition is strikingly similar, as far as universality of impact on all types of polities. The geography, however, is somewhat different. The epicenter for the first counterwave was Europe (19 failures), but antidemocratic sentiment reverberated to Latin America (14 failures), Africa (2 failures), and the Middle East (1 failure). In fact, of all the existent democracies in 1921 only 25% would avoid failure during the first counterwave. CW1 was particularly harsh for high level democracies. While no new high level democracies were born during the first counterwave, well over half the world’s high level democracies failed during this time band.

The epicenter for the second counterwave was Africa (27 failures), but its reach was more global. As new nation states had been born through the process of decolonization, the number of democracies in the world system rose as well. Democracy’s forward momentum foundered in the second counterwave, as democratic failure swept through Latin America (15 failures), Asia (15 failures), the Middle East (11 failures) and even Europe (7 failures). While the impact of the second counterwave was
not so catastrophic on democracy's birth rate, the taint still remained. Democracies were born during the counterwave, but they faced a future of failure more often than not.

Not only was the geography different for the counterwaves, there were distinctly different mechanisms of failure as well. The first counterwave featured a clear external component, with external takeovers being the highest of any time in history. In contrast, during the second counterwave coups were the clear dominant mechanism, across all types of democratic failure.

In addition, there were varying changes in autocracy. During the first counterwave, there was a spike in high level autocracy. Also of note, in evaluating the toxicity of the first counterwave to democracy, no high level democracies were born in this time band. In contrast, during the second counterwave, the spike occurred not in high level autocracy but in mid-level autocracy. High level democracies were born during this time span, although these nation states also seem tainted by their birth time since 61% of the high level democracies born during the second counterwave had failed by 2006. Both the degree of spike in autocracy and the birth rate of high level democracies point to the different impact of the second counterwave when compared to the first. In a real sense, the second counterwave appears to be less toxic to democracy than the first.

These points of contrast offer interesting implications. The first counterwave, at first glance, seems more toxic. In one sense, this is true when considering factors like the spike in high level autocracy and the complete lack of new high level democracies. What the second counterwave lacked in comparative depth, a minor distinction to be sure since the failures were still very deep, it made up for in breadth. One might add that the second
counterwave has also highlighted more intractable issues for democratic failure. While those nation states in the first counterwave are now strikingly democratic, those in the second counterwave still face significant challenges.

All of this analysis points to the distinctiveness of the counterwave time periods. They are times when democracies experienced failures and when autocracies deepened as well. They also offer compelling evidence that democratic failure, far from being an isolated internal event, has been tied to macro processes in the international system, a concept that deserves much more attention and in-depth analysis from scholars.

**Repeat offenders and durability**

The counterwaves feature democratic failure and autocratic deepening with a wide geographic scope. While the geographic epicenter shifted from Europe to Africa, a significant subset of nation states experienced a significant drop in polity score in both counterwaves. South America, significant portions of Europe, and Central America, were impacted by CW1 and CW2. Significant portions of these regions experienced failure multiple times.

Repeat offenders in democratic failure are not confined solely to the counterwave years. In looking through a wider lens at the issue of a nation’s repeated attempts at democratic governance, we find a stunning number impacted by repeated democratic failure. Of the 148 incidences of democratic failure from 1800-2006, 100 are incidences of democratic failure by repeat offenders. Of even more concern for democracy advocates, repeat offenders permeate every level of democracy. In other words, achieving high level democracy is no guarantee that a nation state will be freed from a history of repeated democratic failure. Greece, Pakistan, Lesotho, Turkey, and France
are just some of the examples of high level democracies that have experienced multiple
democratic failures.

To further demonstrate the dominance of repeated democratic failure, we can look
at the destiny of the 48 nation states that only experienced democratic failure once. Of
those 48, 15 did not repeat democratic failure because they never recovered any level of
democracy. For these nation states, democratic failure plunged them into autocracy from
which they had not emerged by 2006.

These overwhelmingly high numbers of nation states that fail, then recover
democracy, then fail again would seem to reinforce the historic concerns about
democracy's stability. Of great concern is the durability of mid-level and low level
democracy. Few are the historic cases of these lower concentrations of democracy
serving as temporary stopping off places on the road to high level democracies. Instead,
especially since the onset of CW2 in 1957, low level and mid-level democracies have
demonstrated an alarming lack of durability. Of course, not all democracies have
experienced failure. In particular, level 10 democracies have proven resilient to many
challenges. Mitigating this optimism, however, is the fact that only 5 non-Western, non-

island countries have reached this threshold.

Still, the overall durability of the very highest level democracy brings some
comfort to democracy advocates. In addition, democracies of all levels have historically
seen lower numbers of severe disturbances than their autocratic counterparts. When it
comes to external takeovers, civil wars, and the descent into failed states, autocracies
have outnumbered their democratic counterparts. However, democratic failures
experience a uniform volatility that is of great concern.
Fast and far

The findings for democratic failure vary across high level, mid-level and low level democracy, but some findings unite democratic failure in all its manifestations. These statements are true within the counterwave years, and outside of them as well. When they fail, democracies overwhelmingly fail fast and far. This statement is true for high level democratic failure, where a slow gradual decline was rare. Mid-level failures feature the most precipitous decline as a polity type, although all 3 concentrations of democracy failed an average of a year to a year and a half. This is in stark contrast to autocratic deepening, which took an average of twice as long to drop 3 polity points, as can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Average years taken to reach failure threshold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITY TYPE</th>
<th>YEARS TO FAILURE THRESHOLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Level Democracy</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Level Democracy</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Level Democracy</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocracy</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only do democracies of all concentrations fail quickly, they also fail deeply. As can be seen in Table 9, the average democratic failure for high level, mid-level and low level democracies was enough to take all types of democracy over into autocracy. Democratic failure, then, has not been prone to a slow erosion of democratic institutions. Across time and across polity type, democratic failure has been both precipitous and deep. This is true especially within the counterwaves, when the depth of the failures is deepest.
Table 9. Average depth of failure for all types of democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITY TYPE</th>
<th>DEPTH OF FAILURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Level Democracy</td>
<td>-13 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level Democracy</td>
<td>-9 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Level Democracy</td>
<td>-7 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mechanism of failure

Adding further to the understanding of democracy’s vulnerability is the mechanism of democratic failure. There are 4 basic ways that democratic failures occur: civil war, external takeover, internal repression and coup. Of course, the context to each of these occurrences is complex and would serve as a rich arena for further research.\(^2\)

Still, even from this cursory look, important similarities and differences emerge, as shown in Graph 17.

If we look simply at high level democratic failures, we find the dominant mechanism of democratic failure is different for each time band considered. In the first counterwave, external takeovers predominate, echoing the historical context of Hitler’s march through Europe. During the second counterwave, coups are the dominant mechanism of failure. Again, this is shaped by the historical context of instability during the decolonization time span that took place within a bipolar world that was quite hostile to new democracies. Outside the counterwaves, internal repression becomes the leading mechanism for high level democratic failure. High level democracy, then, has had varying points of vulnerability depending on the historical context.

Dissonant democracy has more consistent vulnerabilities. For mid-level democracy, coups predominate regardless of time band. Low level democracy also shows real

\(^2\) It would be interesting to push the research in the direction of greater statistical analysis. This could be achieved simply by looking at multiple regressions that examine the relationship of legislative deadlock
vulnerability to coups as the dominant mechanism of failure during the second counterwave, as is true of both high level democratic failure and mid level democratic failure for this same time period. Outside of CW2, low level democratic failure is split almost evenly between coups and internal repression.

One further point, regarding the mechanisms of failure, is the concentration of civil war. While civil war is not a dominant mechanism of democratic failure at any point of time, it does occur in greater concentrations at certain times. For example, in the first counterwave more than 10% of mid level democratic failures were due to civil war.

and propensity to move toward democratic failure via each of the mechanisms. There are, of course, many other independent variables that could be considered.
For the second counterwave, this is true of high level democracies. Outside the counterwaves, low level democracies are the most prone to civil war. These varying mechanisms point to certain characteristics of democracy’s vulnerability, a topic which leads us to ponder the implications of all the findings in this study.

Implications

There have been significant changes in the world system from the beginning of the study in 1800, until its end in 2006. As shown in Graph 18, the dominant polity types have shifted dramatically over the course of the time studied. In 1800, high level
autocracy was the dominant polity type, with mid level autocracy close behind. High and mid-level democracy was non-existent, and low level democracy was the choice of governance for less than 10% of the nation states in the world system. In direct contrast, in the year 2006, over 40% of the nation states in the world system are some type of democracy, with high level democracy as the dominant share. High and low level autocracy has faded into near oblivion. Of greater concern, however, to democracy advocates is the utter resilience of mid-level autocracy across the entire time span under study. While high level autocracy has decreased its market share dramatically, mid-level autocracy remains stubbornly viable.

It is clear that democracy’s victory is far from complete. The majority of nation states in the world system still live under some sort of autocracy, while only roughly a quarter of all nation states experience high level democracy. This study also implies the tenuous nature of democracy’s gains. Democracy’s rapid and deep failures, both within the counterwave years and outside these time bands, countenance caution.

This study has also highlighted the importance of studying democratic failure at the macro level of analysis. Without analysis at the systemic level, clusters of democratic failure and autocratic deepening are impossible to recognize. The toxicity of these time bands to democracy is impossible to detect if democratic failure is analyzed solely by a case study approach.

In addition, while much has been made in the case study approach to democratic failure of the complexities of the internal political environment, little attention has focused on the impact of the international environment. The counterwaves suggest system wide disturbances in the power of the democratic ideal. The impact of
fluctuations in the international economic environment, the role of conflict and post-

conflict rebuilding efforts, and the arena of state-building are just a few fruitful arenas to

examine more closely in future academic examinations of the counterwave phenomena

and democratic failure in general. With the descriptive work of this study completed, a

next step could begin the work of looking for correlations. Key to all of this is the

interaction of the international system, the nation state, and local actors.

Certainly democratic failure is usually intimately tied to the internal environment

of a nation state, but even this is not universal. As we have seen in the case of external

takeovers, democratic failure can occur simply with an external takeover. While the

viability of externally “imposed” democracy has been a controversial topic, who would

argue that democratic failure can only happen with internal elements? Hitler put such

arguments to rest with some finality.

Even in a world with Hitler safely dead, important changes have occurred that

point to a greater role for forces external to the nation state. The world in which we live

is different in some fundamental ways. There are at least 3 important ways that life in the

twenty first century is different.

First of all, the speed of life is different. Information is relayed with lightning

speed, on news outlets, via the internet, and through instant messages. In this age of

information transference, will there also be a more easily transferred political agenda?

Will the instability in one nation have greater spillage across borders and even across

continents? If democracy fails in one state, will another state be less likely to attempt

reform? If democracy breaks out in one nation will a neighboring autocratic nation take

repressive steps to shore up its rule, in a sort of anticipatory reaction?
The second point, then, is that events occur before an audience. Now, more than ever, the concept of a global stage is reality. In some sense, since democracy's victory with the fall of the Soviet Union, this has largely worked to constrain behavior. In the post-Tiananmen Square world, we've seen peaceful transitions where in the past military force would have been a more likely scenario, such as in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia.3

This is likely due to the third point, which is that democracy now has normative power in the international system. While democracy has not dominated all nation states, in some sense even dictators feel constrained to pay it lip service, in a way that never occurred in the past.

What do we do with these differences? Do we, then, discount the idea of antidemocratic clusters as something consigned to the past? Is democracy's victory so permanent that we need not concern ourselves with democratic decline as rapid and steep? Will democracy as a force in the international system mitigate against precipitous democratic failures? There is certainly no evidence of this in the cases of more recent democratic failures, such as Thailand, Fiji, Nepal and Guinea-Bissau. There may, however, be an argument that the democratic norm has had a mitigating effect on those nation states that are more constrained by the international system, such as Venezuela and Russia, who have indeed experienced a slower decline in polity scores.

As the democratic ideal has so forcefully demonstrated, norms are not static in the international system. If the dramatic transitions of 1989-1991 demonstrated anything they demonstrated that norms can change rapidly. There are big players, especially

3 Unfortunately, as of this writing, democracy is far from certain in either of these examples. If anything, they seem likely to serve as future case studies for democratic failure.
Russia and China, in the international system whose commitment to democratic governance flies in the face of the democratic norm. China especially, if it manages to overcome the challenges of the remnants of its state economy, could be poised to offer an alternative to high level democracy.

This, of course, takes us back to the idea that ideas matter. Whether you think of them as causative agents of change, or merely as indicators of the convergence of forces already at work, ideas serve as signposts signaling change. The counterwave years were times of uncertainty and of the competition of conflicting ideas. During the first counterwave, democracy retreated to fascism in the fight against communism. In the second counterwave, democracy opted for a containment policy. While the traditional way to view this is a containment of communism, in reality this was also a containment of democracy. In the face of an external threat, democracy saved itself in the countries where it already thrived, but refused to do battle with antidemocratic ideas elsewhere, all in the name of self-preservation.

In an increasingly complex world, where does that leave us in our thoughts about democratic failure? Count me with the group of scholars who study political structure but aver prophecy, an inherently risky business. Few are proven correct, many are proven wrong. Alexis de Tocqueville, in the early nineteenth century, predicted the rise of the United States and Russia as 2 superpowers that would be fundamentally different in nature yet “marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.”

We admire Tocqueville’s prescience. On the other hand, Nikita Khrushchev published an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1959 predicting the triumph of socialism as practiced in the

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4 As quoted in Arendt Lipjhart’s *World Politics: The Writings of Theorists and Practitioners, Classical and Modern* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), 432.
Soviet Union as the system of governance that “will be victorious on the globe which will offer the nations greater opportunities for improving their material and spiritual life.” As I venture where angels fear to tread, I hope to be a Tocqueville and not a Khrushchev. Regardless of the dangers, some words contemplating the future direction of democracy and democratic failure are in order.

The euphoria that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, has itself collapsed. While optimism about reshaping the globe has fallen flat, confidence in autocracy and managed governance has re-emerged. How will democracy respond to new challenges and evolutions? In the past, when hope has been low in the international system, democracy has suffered. Navigating the waters full of the shipwrecks of post-conflict time periods has been especially difficult for democracy. Scholars have now broadly concluded that the third wave of democracy is over.\(^5\) Meanwhile, democratic governance has not proven to be the panacea to either poverty in Africa or the key to political stability in that region. In spite of the gains made by democracy in Latin America, grave concerns remain about democracy’s viability in that region as well.\(^6\) Post-Soviet states have inherited problems that democracy has not been able to entirely resolve.\(^7\) Significant portions of the globe remain under the sway of autocracy, especially in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It is unclear, with the loss of the democratization momentum, that autocracy will retreat in the near future, but with the increasingly

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complex world democracy inhabits there is reason for concern about a third counterwave. This is particularly troubling, since recent studies have linked the concept of diffusion not only to democracy, but also to democratic failure.\textsuperscript{8} I hope this assessment will prove to be unduly grim. Whatever democracy's future, it will certainly be informed by the failures in democracy's past.


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While in Japan, Sonja pursued her academic interest in Asia, obtaining a certificate in East Asian Studies from the University of Maryland in 2000. That same year, upon returning to the States, she was accepted into the graduate program of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies program at the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied until her husband was once again transferred to Portsmouth, Virginia. It was at this time she gained admittance to the Graduate Program in International Studies at Old Dominion University, finishing her master’s degree in 2005. In 2006 she was awarded the University Dissertation Fellowship to propel her to completion of her PhD, a promise she fulfilled in December, 2008.