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Interventionism and Democratization

How the way we promote democracy is leading to its decline

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Abstract

Democracy promotion has been a major goal of the foreign policy initiatives of the world's leading countries and intergovernmental bodies since the fall of the Berlin wall. Despite this, in its most recent report the V-Dem Institute confirmed that after a decade of democratic decline, 2019 was the first year since 2001 where autocracies outnumber democracies. These two things are deeply interrelated by the philosophy of interventionism which has been at the core of numerous democratization policies while also contributing heavily to declining democratic standards, human rights abuses and a rise in authoritarianism. This thesis will reflect on the history of democratic rule and democracy promotion to better understand how we have arrived at this very concerning moment in political history. A historical analysis of a variety of case studies that touch upon multiple different iterations of democracy promotion through interventionism will highlight just how harmful these policies have been. The final chapter will look at the success of internal actors at spurring unprecedented levels of mobilization for democracy throughout the 2010s and how the international community can empower these movements with a collaborative approach to democracy building. Ultimately, this thesis advocates for the adoption of a more nuanced attitude towards democracy promotion that handles policy decisions on a case-by-case basis rather than the rigid universal interventionism we have seen thus far.

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List of Abbreviations

BLM	Black Lives Matter
COE	Council of Europe
EU	European Union
GIGA	German Institute of Global Area Studies
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
LON	League of Nations
MENA	Middle-East and North Africa
OWS	Occupy Wall Street
PiS	Peace and Justice Party
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

For almost all of human history the idea of living in a *democratic world* (i.e. a world where there are more active democracies than autocracies) would have been novel. Despite the important ideological influence of the American and French revolution in the late 18th century, democratic governances only began its expansion towards the end of the 20th century.¹ The fall of the iron curtain in 1989 and the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union a few years later were key factors in this shift.² Thus, the academic field of democracy studies is still very young, and political theory has been highly influenced, perhaps over-optimistically, by a few recent successes.

Following the end of the Second World War, the United States implemented the Marshall Plan, a 13-billion-dollar economic stimulus program, into Western Europe in hopes of sustaining democracy abroad and pushing back against Communist influence.³ Much to the displeasure of the Soviets, the Americans even went so far as to attach a mandate for free and democratic elections to their funds.⁴ With this carrot also came a stick in the shape of the Truman Doctrine which provided military assistance to countries resisting local communist political groups, particularly Greece and Turkey at the time.⁵ This set of the Cold War between the two ideological powerhouses and foreign intervention, through the form of either monetary support or militarized aid, was the primary method of combat. In the post-Cold War era, the United Nations shifted into its role as a peacekeeper and saw its budget and ground presence increase exponentially.⁶ Hence, it is clear that the early success the Americans had rebuilding war-torn Europe created a popular notion that foreign intervention could bring about a desired change in a country despite differences in cultures, politics and legal systems.

In hindsight, we can look back at many attempts at democratizing a nation and see how drastically these projects have failed. The enormous amounts of resources invested throughout

¹ Max Roser “Democracy - draft version” *Our World in Data* (2020) <<https://ourworldindata.org/democracy>> accessed on 5 April 2020.

² *ibid.*

³ Alexander D. Weissman, “Pivotal Politics—The Marshall Plan: A Turning Point in Foreign Aid and the Struggle for Democracy” (2013) 47 *Hist. Teach.* 111, 112.

⁴ *ibid* 114.

⁵ *ibid* 113.

⁶ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Press 2012) 381-382.

the Cold War by Americans, largely in attempts to create or protect democratic modes of governments, resulted primarily in dictatorships and large-scale human rights abuses. The United Nations, which stepped in to replace the United States on a global stage, has been alarmingly unsuccessful as well. Ultimately, a large array of approaches, from all over the political spectrum, including foreign aid, military intervention and seemingly everything in-between, have come short in delivering long-term results. Even more concerning is the fact that democratic governance is seemingly entering a period of global decline. Much of the democratization that took place following the collapse of the Soviet Union is slowly starting to become undone.⁷ Many of the African and Asian nations which seemed poised to lead the world into a new era of prosperity following the end of colonization have staggered economically and politically.⁸ And ambitious programs of democratization, namely the European Union, which were able to entice countries into adopting human rights protections and high electoral standards are facing destabilization and potential abandonment.⁹ All of this points towards the failure of interventionism, both, in practice and as a philosophy that has dominated international politics for the last few decades.

Research, both old and new, has continually pointed at interventionist based foreign policies as detrimental to human rights protections, despite the fact that they are often used as justification for such practices. Throughout this thesis, I will attempt to make the definitive case on interventionism as a failed ideology that has oftentimes weakened the democratic institutions it hopes to uplift. More so, I hope to challenge our contemporary understanding of what democracy is and offer a new perspective on how to protect and nurture it going forward.

METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

The foundation of this thesis is based on data provided by the V-Dem Institute, Freedom House and The Economist Intelligence Unit in their yearly reports on democracy and factors related to it. This quantifiable data will be used to complement historical and political analysis

⁷ Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat” (Highlights from Freedom House’s annual report on political rights and civil liberties 2019) 4.

⁸ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa* (London: Penguin Press 2009) 5.

⁹ Roger Eatwell & Matthew Goodwin, *National Populism. The Revolt against Liberal Democracy* (London: Pelican/Penguin Books 2018) 69-71.

the basis of which will be in secondary sources consisting of academic journal articles and scholarly books. As one of the most notable figures in democracy studies, Samuel P. Huntington's work, particularly his book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, will provide an important source of narrative for the first chapter. The second chapter will look at different case studies which encapsulate a handful of countries to demonstrate how different interventionist ideologies and practices have failed to spur democratic growth. It would be impractical to focus on too wide a quantity of cases, thus I have focused on certain key themes and countries that represent them. Finally, the third chapter will look towards internal factors, particularly civil resistance and protests movements, to see how they have affected democratic development. As well as some newer and more nuanced forms of democracy promotion that have both distinctive strengths and weaknesses. I will conclude by summing up the presented case studies and findings to emphasize that for democratic governance to expand the international community must abandon the popular interventionist ideology and focus on a more subtle and contextual approach.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

This thesis argues that methods of interventionism whether they are militarized, economic or diplomatic have failed to meaningfully enhance democracy for the long-term. Interventionist tactics have often led to the erasure of human rights protections, decline in democratic practices and institutions, as well as economic regression. Conversely, internal progress has been significantly more important towards efforts of democratization and codification of human rights protections but is often not enough on its own. There is still clearly an important role for the international community to play, one that is supportive and not invasive. Going forward, it will be essential for the international community to use individual assessments and specific methods to promote democratization and not rely on a single comprehensive approach. Nuance and individualization will be key to the policies that will be most effective at encouraging democratization.

CHAPTER I: THE CURRENT STATE OF DEMOCRACY (2020)

One of the most difficult, yet essential, parts of writing a paper of this nature is to provide a workable definition of what will meant by “democracy”. The term is often used to encompass either a culture, a type of government, individual responsibility or a combination of these factors. Throughout this section, I will provide a condensed history of democracy beginning with its early philosophical conception in Greek society, to the popular movements that formed our modern understanding of it and up until the major changes that have taken place in the last few months. This will be essential in understanding the important distinction between liberal democracy, electoral democracy and autocracy as well as how these systems intertwine with human rights standards and protections. Finally, I will present a full picture of contemporary changes in democracy by merging the political analysis of important thinkers with the analytical data of research institutions. This will provide data to support the political commentary that will be presented in a way that is uniquely able to fully capture these complexities.

1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY

To properly understand how we have arrived at the point where legitimately democratic states have outnumbered autocracies, and how this has reversed recently, it is essential to trace the history of popular rule and the various philosophical debates it has been central too. The political theorist Bernard Crick carefully documents its journey from Greek philosophy to American legislation.

Originating from a combination of the Greek word *Demos*, meaning the mob, and *Kratos*, meaning rule, the earliest conception of a popular rule was dismissed by Plato who feared ignorance could hinder those destined to lead from doing so.¹⁰ Later, his disciple Aristotle would share some modern optimism when he recontextualized elections as the rule of few under the consent of many.¹¹ Roman society would build upon this idea by offering an early iteration of the concept of citizenship: equality in front of the law regardless of ethnicity, religion or place of

¹⁰ Bernard Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002) 11.

¹¹ *ibid* 12.

birth.¹² Although it should be remembered that this equality was not a reality for the majority of inhabitants including women and enslaved people.¹³ For those who were indeed qualified citizens, there was an expectation of *virtue* roughly translating to the courage necessary to do whatever necessary to protect, honor and expand the empire.¹⁴ Already this early in the history of democracy emerged a notion of patriotism tied to membership of the state.

The following centuries saw the idea of democracy completely stagnate as monarchies became the dominant form of rule throughout Europe culminating with the suppression of parliaments throughout the 16th century.¹⁵ However, some religious groups, particularly English Levellers and Diggers, did have some success in advocating for the early adoption of “birthrights” or natural rights.¹⁶ The Wars of the Three Kingdoms or simply the British Civil Wars in the middle of the 17th century saw the British Isles embroiled into an extremely violent power struggle between the absolutist King Charles I and the struggling English parliament.¹⁷ One radical political group which would emerge from this turmoil was the Levellers who were highly influenced by Calvinistic Puritanism, a reformist ideology which had been born a 100 years earlier in an attempt to purify Christianity from the Church’s influence.¹⁸ This included a much stronger emphasis on individualism both in one’s belief in God and in a person’s inherent worth or value.¹⁹ It is in this very early belief individual’s dignity that made them advocate for religious tolerance and universal voting rights not only for the elite but, and for the first time, for the disenfranchised poor as well.²⁰ They based themselves on the unprecedented notion that there were inalienable natural rights that everyone was entitled to as members of the state.²¹ The Diggers, a fundamentalist deviation of Levellers, were much more Marxist in their approach which included the redistribution of land as a fundamental right.²² Although minor, this moment in history is important as the first notable shift in the language of rights from duties to

¹² *ibid* 30.

¹³ *ibid* 25, 34.

¹⁴ *ibid* 24.

¹⁵ *ibid* 33.

¹⁶ *ibid* 40.

¹⁷ *ibid*.

¹⁸ Andrew Bradstock, “The Levellers and Diggers” in Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell (eds), *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy: From Pre-history to Future Possibilities* (EUP 2015) 180.

¹⁹ *ibid*.

²⁰ *ibid* 181.

²¹ *ibid*.

²² *ibid* 183.

entitlements in Western Europe. This could be seen as an early precursor to the concept of human rights which would dominate political and legal discourse many hundreds of years later.

As mentioned in the introduction, the 18th century was a period of significant change in popular ideas of government and individual rights. The French Revolution, and the resulting short-lived experiment with political parties was spearheaded, ideologically speaking, by Enlightenment thinkers particularly Rousseau.²³ In his take on the *Social Contract*, Rousseau boldly proclaimed that “men is born free, and everywhere he is in chains” summarizing his argument that individuals form communities to ensure further self-preservation by sacrificing parts of their “natural liberty”.²⁴ He rejected Plato’s notion that some people are born to lead while others are meant for slavery, “if there are slaves by nature, it is because there have been slaves against nature” further solidifying his stance on the inherent and equal value between individuals.²⁵ Additionally, he argued that the “general will” of the population should be at the heart of the sovereign's decision-making process.²⁶ Thus, the law, and by extension, the government itself, would reflect the moral character of the society it governs.²⁷ In essence, historians have argued that Rousseau permanently changed the European political landscape by “for the first time provid[ing] a moral justification for Democracy.”²⁸ This was hugely influential on the leftist Jacobin club which sought to implement these principles into France’s new national identity.²⁹ Unfortunately, the Jacobin party was dangerously paranoid, obsessed with expansion and in a constant state of turbulence leading to its failure and Napoleon's dictatorial rise to power.³⁰ The ripples of the French Revolution are, however, responsible for widespread reform in Europe around the protection of free speech, something that is now considered an essential characteristic of a democratic society.³¹ While France’s revolution was important in legitimizing the ideas of enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau and hugely influential to the rest of Europe, it failed in the immediate because of the rise of Napoleon. Consequently, it was the American

²³ Crick (n 11) 52.

²⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract” in James Brophy & Co. (eds) *Perspectives from the Past: Primary Sources in Western Civilization* (First published 1762, W.W. Norton & Company LTD 2012) 245.

²⁵ *ibid* 246.

²⁶ *ibid.* 251.

²⁷ *ibid.* 251.

²⁸ Crick (n 11) 54.

²⁹ *ibid.* 52.

³⁰ *ibid.* 56.

³¹ *ibid.*

constitution that is more often seen as the birth of our modern understanding of the democratic nation state.³²

The American Revolution could not be considered a fight for democracy, however, there were definite democratic concerns at the heart of this movement.³³ Particularly, the feelings of disenfranchisement settlers had with their lack of representation in the British Parliament and the expensive tax burden they were forced to bear as a result. After having achieved independence, the new wealthy elites of American society sought to create the legal basis for a system of governance which would check the powers of the head of state while also cautiously limiting the involvement of everyday citizens.³⁴ Essentially, American elites were concerned in forming a government that would not interfere with their private property by either creating an unrestrained autocrat who could seize it or overly emboldening poor masses who could empower a redistribution agenda.

This culminated at the 1787 Philadelphia Convention with the drafting of the American Constitution, a document which not only prolonged slavery to the point of civil war but is also so convoluted it has never successfully been duplicated.³⁵ And though the American Constitution, in its original form, was only somewhat democratic by today's standards, it was importantly progressive in some of the ways it organized government. It incorporates elements of Federalism by giving separate duties to state and the central government; Republicanism by opting for a representational system rather than a direct democracy; and a clear separation of powers by dividing government into a judicial, legislative and executive branch.³⁶ These branches were designed to, theoretically, keep each other in check and prevent abuses of power from either side³⁷. More so, the legislative power was divided between a house of representatives, which elected members proportionally to a state's population, and a senate which awarded an equal amount of delegates to every state.³⁸ Many of the choices made in the original drafting could be attributed to the political influences of John Locke and others.

³² *ibid* 13.

³³ *ibid.* 42.

³⁴ Donald V. Weatherman, "U.S. Constitution", Salam Press Encyclopedia (Salem Press 2019).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ *ibid.*

Just as the French revolution was influenced by the writing of Francophones, the American Revolution was influenced by more moderate British enlightenment thinkers. Like Rousseau, Locke has his interpretation of the social contract where he similarly believed individuals to be inherently “free, equal, and independent” and that they formed societies to ensure “...a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it.”³⁹ In deciding to enter a society, individuals still retained certain inalienable or natural rights famously summarized as the preservation of “life, liberty, and estate.”⁴⁰ An “absolute monarch” would be ill-suited to govern such a “civil society” instead a government that regulates relationships between individuals through laws as a sort of “umpire” is ideal.⁴¹ Thus, emerged the basis for the formation of a Federal government which allowed for strong individual liberties to remain respected. One place where this influence is especially tangible is the second article which details the limitations and privileges the executive branch holds⁴². Locke advocated for a distinctive executive branch with a “prerogative” which would be held by a single magistrate or, typically, a prince.⁴³ The founders, hoping to avoid more monarchies, conceptualized a presidency with repeatable four-year terms. Locke also designated some of the powers the executive would hold such as the ability to veto laws and pardon sanctions when arguing “Ruler should have a power, in many cases, to mitigate the severity of the Law, and pardon some offenders: For the end of government being the preservation of all.”⁴⁴ While Locke provided for the ideological background of the constitutions he solemnly provided details on how his vision might be enforced, hence the founding fathers often found inspiration from their surroundings.

In this regard, very much credit should be given to the non-European influences of the American Constitution. In the years leading up to 1788, when the United States constitution was ratified, Europe offered a relatively small number of models to emulate for what a democratic government could look like in practice.⁴⁵ Thus, the founding fathers, especially Benjamin Franklin, looked towards the indigenous peoples that they had become familiar with through

³⁹ John Locke “Two Treatises on Government” in James Brophy & Co. (eds) *Perspectives from the Past: Primary Sources in Western Civilization* (First published 1689, W.W. Norton & Company LTD 2012) 155.

⁴⁰ *ibid* 154.

⁴¹ *ibid*.

⁴² Lori F. Brandt “Locke and the Constitution” (1988) 3 J. Am. Hist. 52, 53.

⁴³ *ibid* 52.

⁴⁴ *ibid* 53.

⁴⁵ Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* (New York: Ballantine Books 1988) 135.

trade for inspiration on the creation of a unifying federal system.⁴⁶ Particularly the Iroquois confederacy, a representative body of 5 nations with over 50 *sachems* (delegates), which was formed under an oral legal agreement called the *Kaianerekowa* or great law of peace.⁴⁷ This model had been advocated for as early as 1744 by chief Canasatego who found that the creation of such a unified body would facilitate trade and communication between indigenous peoples and settlers.⁴⁸ A few of the specific practices which came directly from the Iroquois confederacy are now synonymous with American democracy such as an impeachment process, caucuses, and the ability to admit new states directly as members instead of as colonies.⁴⁹ Other practices, which are also rooted in Indigenous traditions, have become standards of good government worldwide like the separation of civil and military authority.⁵⁰

Historically speaking the birth of the United States is significant in our timeline of democracy for three reasons. Broadly speaking, it broke free from the absolute monarchies that had become the norm and transformed the philosophical arguments for individualism into a workable government. More so, it signified a legitimate alternative to the autocrats that ruled most of the world, one in which everyday people were given tools to participate in the decision-making process. Secondly, this was the first implementation of a federalist model of government defined by an “agreed, legally regulated, and binding distribution of power.”⁵¹ This framework would, unlike the constitution itself, eventually be copied by some of the largest democracies in the world including India, Canada and Australia. Finally, following the Second World War this new American republic would fund and support many democratic nations abroad.

1.2 DEFINING DEMOCRACY

Democracy, both in concept and as a term itself, has gained a hegemonic hold on academic and mainstream political discourse. This despite the fact that there seems to be a lack of a clear, universally agreed upon understanding of what it is or means exactly. The Cambridge

⁴⁶ *ibid* 136-137.

⁴⁷ *ibid*.

⁴⁸ *ibid*.

⁴⁹ *ibid* 139-140.

⁵⁰ *ibid*.

⁵¹ Crick (n 11) 45.

dictionary offers two options when defining democracy, a reference to a system of governance “...based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves.”⁵² As well as, the acknowledgment of an ideological interpretation founded on a “belief in freedom and equality between people.”⁵³ The understanding of democracy as a system of power is what academics like Samuel P. Huntington, one of the forefront researchers on democratization as a social trend, consistently relied upon in their writing.⁵⁴ On the other hand, politicians like the former American president, George W. Bush, often made references to a culture of democracy that went beyond institutions and electoral systems. In a speech following his second inauguration he emphasized his commitment to overseeing the “growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture” clearly presenting democracy as an antidote to foreign Islamic jihadism that had become a central theme of his campaign.⁵⁵ A third option within public discourse is also apparent when looking at the slogan for the widely circulating *Washington Post*: “Democracy dies in darkness.” The phrase was popularized by investigative journalist Bob Woodward who explained it’s meaning as relating to the “...dangers of secrecy in government.”⁵⁶ Here, the *Washington Post* seemingly equates democracy with governmental accountability and transparency as well as an active duty to ensure it. Overall, various conceptual understandings of what democracy is, or should be, have continually clashed and shifted to inform the policies, particularly foreign policy, of some of the most influential governments over the last few decades.

Academics and philosophers alike have argued that the ambiguous and highly debated nature of democracy is not a flaw, but rather a feature. In 1956, W.B. Gallie coined the term “essentially contested concepts” to describe abstract and complex notions such as religion, social justice and democracy which all vaguely signify “some kind of valued achievement.”⁵⁷ These sorts of concepts have an ingrained openness which allows them to undergo “considerable

⁵² *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus* (4th edn, 2013)
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/democracy> accessed 12 March 2020.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Samuel P. Huntington “Democracy’s third wave” (1991) 2 J. Democr. 12, 13

⁵⁵ George W. Bush “Second Inaugural Address” (The Whitehouse, Washington, 20 January 2005).
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4460172> accessed on 15 March 2020.

⁵⁶ Farhi Paul “The Washington Post’s new slogan turns out to be an old saying” [24 February 2017] *Washington Post* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-washington-posts-new-slogan-turns-out-to-be-an-old-saying/2017/02/23/cb199cda-fa02-11e6-be05-1a3817ac21a5_story.html> accessed on 15 March 2020.

⁵⁷ W.B. Gallie “Essentially Contested Concepts” (1956) Vol. 56 Proc. Aristot. Soc. 167, 168.

modification in the light of changing circumstances.”⁵⁸ This is especially true for something as fluid as democracy which has, and continues too, change as societies, technologies and nations do.⁵⁹ Additionally, essentially contested concepts have, ordinarily, led to the creation of different groups based on specific interpretations such as differing religious sects or even the political spectrum where groups often advocate for what they believe to be most democratic (i.e. social democracy vs property rights).⁶⁰ Michael Spicer would later argue that the contested nature of the term democracy is an essential part of its political character.⁶¹ By acknowledging that the definition of democracy is a contentious subject it creates a healthy space for interaction and debate between opposing ideologies and thus pluralism within politics.⁶² Hence, as Spicer argues, the lack of cohesion amongst academics, politicians and elites, is “part of the very meaning of democracy itself.”⁶³ And while this may address some of our theoretical concerns over defining democracy, it would be wise to look at functions and characteristics as well.

It is essential for a thesis of this kind to set some parameters of what will be meant by democracy and democratization. Hence, it is perhaps best to understand democracy as a loosely defined form of administration which exhibits certain key characteristics. Meaning, it is better not to use absolutes when discussing democracy, is or is not, and instead use a spectrum of more or less. Thus moving away from more abstract notions of democracy into a practical understanding which reflects human rights and their enforcement. From a historical perspective, the timeline presented above already showcases how certain events have tied specific rights to our modern understanding of democracy. From the religious freedom advocated by the English Levellers to the freedom of speech central to the French Revolution and protection of civil liberties set out in the American Constitution. More importantly, all three of these movements fundamentally opposed the notion of a “divine right to rule” and were enshrined in a philosophy of inherent equality between men. However, modern political theorists now include many more characteristics in what is considered a democratic state.

⁵⁸ *ibid* 172.

⁵⁹ *ibid*.

⁶⁰ *ibid* 168.

⁶¹ Michael W. Spicer “What Do We Mean by Democracy? Reflections on an Essentially Contested Concept and Its Relationship to Politics and Public Administration” (2018) 51 *Adm. Soc* 724, 730.

⁶² *ibid* 734.

⁶³ *ibid* 736.

At the core of any democratic system, there must be regular, open and free elections that should genuinely affect who will hold political power.⁶⁴ Elections are important not only as a key institution of any democratic regime but also because the act of regularly voting can contribute to the creation of a culture of participation and foster a greater appreciation for civil liberties.⁶⁵ More so, the elections themselves should act as a bridge between the agency of the population and the agenda of the state moving forward meaning that the results must matter. This is a key distinction between an actual democracy and an electoral authoritarian regime like Belarus or Russia where illegitimate elections are held to validate false leadership and “signal the incumbent's strength.”⁶⁶ Nor should a truly democratic election lead to a situation like Myanmar where, despite the Aung San Suu Kyi led NLD's landslide victory in 2015, the military continues its control of the majority of the country.⁶⁷ For academic purposes, elections are also important as one of the only quantifiable sources of data that can be used to determine participation rates, inclusion of minority groups and the legitimacy of the results.

There is also a distinction to be made between an electoral democracy that holds open and free elections and a Liberal democracy that also incorporates a fundamental Rule of Law.⁶⁸ The latter is a broad concept which incorporates equality between citizens, accountability of those in power and independence of the judiciary.⁶⁹ Contrary to pragmatic or positivist interpretations of rule of law, a democratic understanding is defined by Esquit as being “grounded on the values of trust and inclusion as well as individual freedom and collective security⁷⁰.” Thus, one of the pillars of this is clearly written laws which are both general and consistent while applying equally to even the most powerful and important of public figures.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century” (Oklahoma: University Press 1991) 9.

⁶⁵ Daniela Donno “Elections and Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes” (July 2013) Vol. 57 No. 3 Am. J. Political Sci. 703, 709.

⁶⁶ *ibid* 705.

⁶⁷ Zoltan Barany, “Where Myanmar went wrong” [May/June 2018] *Foreign Affairs* <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/burma-myanmar/2018-04-16/where-myanmar-went-wrong>> accessed on May 6th 2020.

⁶⁸ V-Dem Institute, “Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018” (University of Gothenburg) 19.

⁶⁹ Raul Cordenillo & Kristen Sample, “Introduction” in Raul Cordenillo & Kristen Sample (Eds) *Rule of Law and Constitution Building: The Role of Regional Organizations* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2014) 1.

⁷⁰ Stephen L. Esquith, “Toward a Democratic Rule of Law: East and West” (June 1999) 27 *Political Theory* 334, 335.

⁷¹ *ibid*.

The liability imposed on the executive is essential to the protection of democratic institutions and the prevention of internal corruption.⁷² Likewise, Rule of Law is also a key component of most secular constitutions as well as regional bodies such as the European Union, African Union and Organization of American States.⁷³ This is because having a reliable set of laws fosters trade between states which feel confident that disputes can be settled in a legally neutral way.⁷⁴ More so, states are more comfortable trading with one another when they are confident that corruption and personal enrichment are unlikely.⁷⁵

Minority protection is also a fundamental element of Rule of Law to prevent what the French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville called the “the tyranny of the majority.”⁷⁶ Meaning that there should always be institutional systems, such as the separation of powers, judicial review and independent courts, which ensure that the political majority can be challenged.⁷⁷ More recently, this has translated into the protection of religious, ethnic and sexual minorities as they have often faced additional societal and legal difficulties. The European Union has adopted minority protections as an indispensable condition for membership since the early 1990s.⁷⁸ Since then the European Union and Council have also done extensive work both legislatively, like the criminalization of racialized cybercrimes, and through case law to ensure that minority rights are codified and enforced.⁷⁹ A report published by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe in 2018 on Rule of Law and democracy advocated for the creation of independent equality bodies with a mandate to combat inequality and prevent discrimination.⁸⁰ Thus, for a majority of Liberal democracies, and the strongest amongst them, rule of law is a key pillar of continued democratic development. Despite the importance of the Rule of Law, it can oftentimes find itself in contention with another important pillar of liberal democracy namely civil liberties.

⁷² *ibid* 336.

⁷³ Cordenillo & Sample (n 69) 2.

⁷⁴ *ibid* 67.

⁷⁵ *ibid* 75.

⁷⁶ Esquith (n 70) 336.

⁷⁷ *ibid*.

⁷⁸ Petra Roter “Minority Rights in the Context of the EU Enlargement: a Decade Later” (2014) 73 *Treatises Doc. J. Ethn. Stud.* 5, 9.

⁷⁹ Thorbjørn Jagland, *State of Democracy, Human Rights and Rule of Law: Role of Institutions*, Threat to Institutions (128th Session of the Committee of Ministers, 18 May 2018) 85, 89.

⁸⁰ *ibid* 91.

A relatively anodyne measurement of democracy should be the respect and implementation of civil liberties which, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, include the right to self-determination, family, liberty and security amongst others. This is seemingly a largely agreed-upon list as it has been ratified by 173 member-states of the United Nations. However, Huntington summarized the dilemma with civil liberties best when saying “democratization involves the removal of state constraints on individual behavior, a loosening of social inhibitions, and uncertainty and confusion about standards of morality.”⁸¹ Not only does increased liberty lead to behaviors that a government may find undesirable on a personal or aesthetic level, such as the 1992 ban on chewing gum in Singapore, but it also facilitates political dissent and publicized dissatisfaction. This is often seen, as in the case of China, as “a challenge to its political power” which could threaten economic development.⁸² However, a study done for the World Bank Economic Review in 1997 found that civil unrest, such as strikes and protests, did correlate positively with better project development.⁸³ This is because it creates a heightened sense of accountability hence a more efficient government.⁸⁴ Regardless, the level of civil liberties permitted are highly subjective even amongst similar countries.⁸⁵

In attempting to design a definition that is not too rigid, this thesis has designated three pillars of liberal democracy which will be used to evaluate governments and states. The first is the most practical and also the most widespread; elections that are open and free should be the cornerstone of any modern day government. More so, elections must sustainably affect who is in power and their political agenda. Secondly, the Rule of Law is essential in creating accountability, equality and a fair disbursement of power. The judiciary should also aim to diminish inequalities between citizens and encourage the empowerment of those vulnerable to disenfranchisement. Finally, governments should guarantee and actively protect civil liberties and only aim to restrict them when it would be justifiable within a democratic society. These pillars should be unambiguous enough to use as a threshold for good democratic governance.

⁸¹ Samuel Huntington “Democracy for the Long Haul” (1997) Vo. 7, No. 2 J. Democr. 3, 7.

⁸² Merle Goldman, “Human Rights in the People's Republic of China” (Fall 1983) Vol. 112, No. 4 Dædalus 111, 124 & 135.

⁸³ Jonathan Isham, Daniel Kaufmann & Lant H. Pritchett, “Civil Liberties, Democracy, and the Performance of Government Projects” (1997) 11 World Bank Econ Rev 219, 235.

⁸⁴ *ibid* 237.

⁸⁵ V-Dem Institute, *Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018* (n 68) 20.

The next section will look at how these characteristics emerged from waves of democratization and significant political transformation which transpired across the world.

1.3 WAVES OF DEMOCRACY

Samuel P. Huntington is one of the founding academics within the field of democracy studies and his arguments on democratization offer a good opportunity to combine the historical analysis and political theory we have covered thus far. His seminal 1991 book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* attempted to make sense of the movement of nation-states towards and away from democracy. Admittedly his work, both here and later on in *The Clash of Civilization*, has been correctly criticized for what Edward Said called an Orientalist depiction of history.⁸⁶ The notion that Islam, Confucianism and Eastern nations are incompatible with democracy is explored in great depth before Huntington admits that “cultures historically are dynamic” or essentially that nothing is for certain.⁸⁷ To dedicate such time and legitimacy to these overly simplified ideas only to then briefly brush them aside seems irresponsible for an author of his caliber. Nonetheless, his contributions are important as many of his observations will provide a basis to further explore political trends and movements.

Huntington distinguished three broad periods of “transition from non-democratic to democratic regimes” which he conceptualized as waves of democracy.⁸⁸ These waves were always, almost immediately, followed by a smaller reverse wave where many newly liberalized states would falter back to autocracy.⁸⁹ They also, generally, followed a shift in the hierarchy of world powers and correlated with the ending or beginning of a large scale conflict. Nevertheless, many variables and factors specific to a country's context are often equally, if not more, responsible for these transitions as well.⁹⁰ The first wave was the largest of the three and began in 1828 lasting approximately a hundred years.⁹¹ This period includes the establishment of the United States of America and was followed by the democratization of several European states, a

⁸⁶ Edward W. Said “The Clash of Ignorance” [October 22 2001] *The Nation*

<<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/clash-ignorance/>> accessed May 18th, 2020

⁸⁷ Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (n 64) 298, 299, 310.

⁸⁸ *ibid* 15.

⁸⁹ *ibid*.

⁹⁰ *ibid* 38.

⁹¹ *ibid* 16.

majority of which would revert to autocratic forms of rule following the end of the First World War.⁹² By the end of the first reverse wave, from 1922 to 1942, only a dozen democracies remained, but for many states, the seeds of a new political system were planted.⁹³

The second wave came towards the end of the Second World War and lasted only until 1962 but was by far the largest single shift towards democracy in history.⁹⁴ The Marshall Plan allowed the United States to support the preservation of many weakened democracies in Western Europe while, simultaneously, democratizing the defeated Axis powers including West Germany, Italy, Japan and the colonized Korea.⁹⁵ However, The Cold War would soon stall any progress in this regard, but as it began to reach its end, democracies flourished once again.⁹⁶

Huntington dictates 1974 as the beginning of the third wave which would last until the publishing of his book in 1991. This wave included perhaps the largest variety of transitioning regimes from one-party systems and personal dictatorships to military regimes in Latin America and the racial oligarchy of South Africa.⁹⁷ More so, a vast majority of these countries had some previous experience with democracy, although from 1989 a handful of countries would democratize for the first time including Bulgaria, Taiwan, and Mexico.⁹⁸ In Europe, the fall of the Iron Curtain and slow dissolution of the Soviet Union left many communist regimes ideologically weakened and primed for large scale societal changes.⁹⁹ Civilian governments returned successively to Latin America starting in the late 1970s with Ecuador, Peru and Brazil before culminating with Argentina and Bolivia in the early 1980s.¹⁰⁰ The final phase of Portuguese and English decolonization also produced numerous small island nations that largely pivoted towards democratic rule.¹⁰¹ Minor progress in the liberalization of Africa was achieved, with the most significant achievement being the successful efforts to shrink the apartheid government in South Africa and increase non-white participation.¹⁰² Two important Asian

⁹² ibid 16-17.

⁹³ ibid 17.

⁹⁴ ibid 15.

⁹⁵ ibid 18.

⁹⁶ ibid. 21.

⁹⁷ ibid 41.

⁹⁸ ibid 44.

⁹⁹ ibid 100.

¹⁰⁰ ibid 22.

¹⁰¹ ibid 24.

¹⁰² ibid 25.

women, Corozone Aquino from the Philippines and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, played a crucial role in restoring democracy to their respective countries while the defeat of another, Indira Gandhi, signaled a return to democracy for India.¹⁰³ Huntington's book particularly focused on this last wave and the factors that contributed to it and have influenced the international political landscape.

Two important internal factors which facilitated the transition to democracy for many third wave countries was the faltering legitimacy of autocracies and unprecedented economic growth¹⁰⁴. These issues were deeply intertwined as the declining popularity of autocrats was usually tied to their inability to imitate the economic growth happening in major democracies.¹⁰⁵ Many Communist regimes had replaced failed and corrupt democracies under the guise that they would re-establish law and order, eliminate said corruption and bring about economic prosperity.¹⁰⁶ However, their inability to deliver economic and social reform delegitimize the autocrat based on their own standards and frustrated the politically influential business class.¹⁰⁷ A democracy is a self-renewing system; when a leader loses popularity or his legitimacy, they are replaced in an election.¹⁰⁸ This is not the case in a majority of autocracies where a single leader is tied to the entire system, thus for the illegitimate leader to be replaced the system must be as well. Other regimes were also victims of their economic success as growing middle classes in South Korea, Brazil and Peru played vital roles in their transitions while countries with smaller middle-classes struggled¹⁰⁹. Finally, major economic crises, particularly the oil hikes in 1973 and 1979, were the death blow for many authoritarian regimes that were unable to stop the incoming recession.¹¹⁰ Many regimes even worsened their economic situation by pursuing shortsighted policies and absorbing astounding amounts of new debt effectively creating a political crisis¹¹¹. These internal struggles were often aggravated by the pressure of external actors and institutions.

¹⁰³ *ibid* 23.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid* 45.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid* 48.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid* 50.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid* 68.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid* 50.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid* 68.

¹¹⁰ *ibid* 51.

¹¹¹ *ibid*.

Throughout the 1970s many external actors adopted aggressive democracy-orientated foreign policy goals which, Huntington argues, hastened the process of democratization for many countries¹¹². Under the Carter administration, the United-States became decidedly more focused on human rights abuses and protections overseas.¹¹³ This included democracy promotion through the form of economic sanctions, strategic withdrawals of foreign aid and even military support when necessary.¹¹⁴ These efforts were particularly focused on Latin America where the administration “...helped to create some space for political opposition in the hemisphere.”¹¹⁵ In Europe, The newly formed European community provided economic incentives for liberalization while the Soviet Union, under Mikhail Gorbachev, withdrew military support for Eastern bloc.¹¹⁶ Although Gorbachev had not intended to be the Union’s last leader, his pro-Europe stance and reform policies were huge factors in the rapid liberalization across Eastern Europe including, briefly, Russia.¹¹⁷ Additionally, the Helsinki Accords, a non-binding declaration aiming to reconcile East and West relations, had Communist regimes openly validating human rights standards and Western principles.¹¹⁸ This made them vulnerable to legitimate international criticism and armed reformers the tools necessary to dismantle their governments from within.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, many international actors tried to smoothen the transition to democracy, while religious institutions often adopted a more meditative role.

Religion also played a crucial role in many transitions particularly the politicization of the Vatican and Catholic Church in the late 1970s.¹²⁰ This began with the Second Vatican Council which met from 1962 until 1965 and brought new emphasis towards the legitimacy of collegial action and social change.¹²¹ Historically, the Church had been ambivalent towards, if

¹¹² *ibid* 86.

¹¹³ *ibid* 92.

¹¹⁴ *ibid* 93-94.

¹¹⁵ Ricard R. Fagen “The Carter Administration and Latin America: Business as Usual?” [1978] *Foreign Affairs* <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1979-02-01/carter-administration-and-latin-america-business-usual>> accessed on May 16th 2020.

¹¹⁶ Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (n 64) 99.

¹¹⁷ Norman Weiß, “Origin and Further Development” in Stefanie Schmahl & Marten Breuer (eds) *The Council of Europe: Its Law and Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017) 18.

¹¹⁸ Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (n 64) 90.

¹¹⁹ *ibid* 91.

¹²⁰ *ibid*. 77.

¹²¹ *ibid*. 78.

not accepting of, authoritarian governments who were not anti-religious Marxist.¹²² The ascension of Pope John Paul II in 1979 built upon the momentum created during Vatican II and firmly repositioned the Church in opposition to authoritarianism everywhere.¹²³ Many bishops and churches would follow his lead in adopting key roles as critics, adversaries or mediators when necessary.¹²⁴ The Pope himself was of Polish background and played a pivotal role in galvanizing the movement towards democracy in his home state as well as being the first to recognize its post-independence.¹²⁵

What Huntington failed to predict was that 1991 would by no means be the peak of democratization nor the effective end of a third wave. By the time Huntington had published his findings, the world contained only 67 true democracies according to data collected by the V-Dem Institute in collaboration with the University of Gothenburg.¹²⁶ 10 years later this number would expand to 88 and an additional 1 billion people that lived under a democratic regime¹²⁷. This growth was fueled by the emergence of a new concept within international law which included a new role for the United Nation (UN), one that its founders could have never envisioned, peacekeeping.¹²⁸ As the Cold War reached its inevitable end the security council, led by the United States, pushed for an increase in UN peacekeeping initiative in order to preserve the “a new world order.”¹²⁹ There was a fear that failed states could threaten international stability by causing “large refugee flows, massive famine, or [...] allowing anti-Western terrorist groups a haven.”¹³⁰ Hence, the United Nations budget swelled from 230 million in 1987 to 3.6 billion in 1994 and consequently, the number of blue helmets rose from 10 000 to 70 000 during the same period.¹³¹ While there were only 3 peacekeeping missions in the 1970s, and none until 1988, there were 37 throughout the 1990s.¹³² Even though among these missions were 3 monumental failures in Somalia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia, this momentum continued into

¹²² *ibid.* 79.

¹²³ *ibid.* 83.

¹²⁴ *ibid.* 84.

¹²⁵ Jo Renee Formicola “The Political Legacy of Pope John Paul II” (Spring 2005) 47 *J. Church State* 235, 239.

¹²⁶ Roser (n 1).

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Mazower (n 6) 381.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 382.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *ibid.*

the 2000s. And while the number of recognized democracies worldwide has continued to increase marginally, we are currently in what NGOs and research centers have called a period of global decline. In its 2019 report, Freedom House announced the 14 consecutive years of democratic decline drawing eerie comparisons to Huntington's theory of a third reverse wave.¹³³ In the next section, we will look at how democracy continued to rise before entering a slump in 2004 and how these factors have remained relevant.

1.4 DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

The primary source of information that was examined for this section was the yearly reports conducted by Freedom House, an American organization founded in 1941 which assesses the status of civil liberties and democracy worldwide. As well as, the V-Dem Institute at the Swedish University of Gothenburg which offers a large and varied database of socio-political changes since 1789. Additionally, the slightly more commercial Democracy Index published yearly by the United-Kingdom based *Economist* was examined to ensure a variety of sources and perspectives were presented.

Naturally, any study which attempts to quantify elements of democracy like “political culture” or “electoral process” will be subject to disagreement and bias. For example, the aforementioned Democracy Index lowered Canada's score on civil liberties in 2019 because of “Holocaust denial, hate speech and libel laws” which they claimed negatively affected it's “strong tradition of support for freedom of speech.”¹³⁴ This reflects a very specific view of freedom of speech more akin to the political cultures of the United Kingdom and the United States where standards of free speech are high and protective of hate speech.¹³⁵ Conversely, Canada and many European democracies have strong hate speech laws, especially regarding holocaust denial, which they find essential to protecting their own political culture and democracy.¹³⁶ Thus, it is clear that even when trying to be objective a study on democracy will

¹³³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 11.

¹³⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index 2019: A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest” (The Economist 2019) 42.

¹³⁵ Kent Greenawalt, “Free Speech in the United States and Canada” (1992) 55 *Law & Contemp. Probs* 5, 19.

¹³⁶ Dan Bilefsky “EU adopts measure outlawing Holocaust denial” *The New York Times* (Brussels, April 19 2007) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/19/world/europe/19iht-eu.4.5359640.html>> Retrieved May 30 2020.

be shaped by the author's philosophy and beliefs. Recent research conducted on Freedom House confirmed this when it found hidden biases towards an American centric interpretation of democracy in their reports.¹³⁷ Thus, “ratings favor countries that are aligned with the United States” in terms of governmental structure and political culture.¹³⁸ Nonetheless, these are still the same sources of information used by other academic institutions as well as governmental institutions.¹³⁹ Additionally, while being conscious of the internal biases that exist they still function as useful analytical tools for examining historical and political shifts. What is of interest here is not the ranking of countries per se, but rather larger changes at the international level.

In appropriating Huntington’s vocabulary, it could be said that the third wave ended in 2004, where scholars agree democracy peaked and has gradually declined since then especially within the last 7 years.¹⁴⁰ This decrease is especially pronounced when taking population into account; since 2010 the amount of people living in an “autocratizing” state has increased significantly.¹⁴¹ Roughly 57% of the world's population lives in some form of autocratic government, 25% in the most restrictive closed autocracies, while only 14% live under a government that meets the criteria of liberal democracy.¹⁴² This has been part of a very recent trend of larger countries autocratizing rapidly when looking at the seven countries that make up half of the world's population (China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil and Nigeria)¹⁴³ all but Nigeria ranked worst on V-Dem’s liberal democracy scale in 2018 then they did in 2008.¹⁴⁴ In the case of India, America and Brazil, which had once been beacons of democracy in their respective regions, the decline has been severe as both the judiciary and free media have faced relentless attacks¹⁴⁵. Without the traditional leaders of democracy championing

¹³⁷ Sarah Sunn Bush, “The Politics of Rating Freedom: Ideological Affinity, Private Authority, and the Freedom in the World Ratings” (2017) 15 *Perspectives on Politics* 711, 724.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ V-Dem Institute, *Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018* (n 68) 18.

¹⁴¹ V-Dem Institute, “Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020” (University of Gothenburg) 13.

¹⁴² V-Dem Institute, “Democracy Facing Global Challenges: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2019” (University of Gothenburg) 14.

¹⁴³ Conrad Hackett, “Which 7 countries hold half the world’s population?” [July 11 2018] *Pew Research Center* <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/11/world-population-day/>> accessed June 9th 2020.

¹⁴⁴ V-Dem Institute, *Democracy for All? V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018* (n 68) 11-12.

¹⁴⁵ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 9, 19.

it abroad, “core democratic norms” are faltering as some politicians have begun skirting term limits, hollowing elections and internally suppressing dissenting voices¹⁴⁶.

The Democracy Index has recorded a continued decline in almost all of its categories in the last 10 years.¹⁴⁷ Civil liberties have depreciated the most in Latin America, Eastern and Western Europe as freedom of speech and religious freedom are increasingly “being restricted by both state and non-state actors.”¹⁴⁸ This also correlates to the inadequate treatment of migrants, particularly refugees, which has become commonplace in some of the most developed European democracies.¹⁴⁹ The Electoral process and pluralism remain weak in most of the world's developing markets including Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA (Middle-East and North Africa).¹⁵⁰ A disturbing trend of government sanctioned ethnic cleansing has also emerged recently highlighted by the attacks on the Rohingya by the Myanmar army, the mass detention and secularization of Uighur Muslims in China, as well as the displacement and killing of Kurds in Syria.¹⁵¹ The functioning of government has also reduced practically everywhere as corruption continues in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe while “dysfunction, insufficient transparency and a lack of accountability” plague many developed democracies in North America and Western Europe.¹⁵² Thus, it is clear that the 3 pillars of liberal democracy have all suffered immensely as there are 11 fewer democracies today than there were 10 years ago.¹⁵³ The only marginal improvement has been in political participation although the Economist attributes this increase to the frustration many have with the consistent inequity within the political system.¹⁵⁴ An Example of this could be the vast increase of Muslim-Americans running for elected office in 2018, nearly ten times more than in 2016, many of whom states that they were galvanized by the Islamophobic rhetoric of the Trump presidency.¹⁵⁵ Overall, every metric

¹⁴⁶ *ibid* 4-5.

¹⁴⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit (n 141) 6.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid* 7.

¹⁴⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 5.

¹⁵⁰ The Economist Intelligence Unit (n 141) 7.

¹⁵¹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 7.

¹⁵² *ibid* 8.

¹⁵³ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 13.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid* 8.

¹⁵⁵ Wajahat Ali, “The Muslims Are Coming” [October 30 2018] *The New York Times* <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/30/opinion/election-muslim-candidates-politics.html>> accessed on June 11 2020.

available has shown a downwards trend for democratic development worldwide, and more than 60% of the countries which had liberalized after 1988 have regressed either partially or completely.¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately, this downwards trend did not end in the last year, rather a different kind of milestone was achieved.

2019 marked the first year, since 2001, that the world had more active autocratic governments than democratic ones, effectively ending the short-lived period of democratic dominance.¹⁵⁷ This made it the worst year for democracy since 2006 despite having the most protests since 2014¹⁵⁸. Pro-democracy mobilization took place in 34 territories, the most ever recorded, and touched on a wide array of issues and policies.¹⁵⁹ In Latin America, massive protests erupted over electoral fraud in Bolivia and Venezuela while similar demonstrations against corruption took place in Chile, Colombia and Ecuador.¹⁶⁰ The MENA region saw protest rise over dissatisfaction with economic stagnation and governmental inefficiency in Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Sudan¹⁶¹. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen some success in the last decade with significant improvements in the smaller nations of Madagascar, Gambia and Botswana¹⁶² but protests still emerged over the lack of political and economic progress facing most Africans¹⁶³. South Sudan hosted one of the largest and most notable non-violent resistance movements of the last year which successfully led to the dismissal of the oppressive President Omar al-Bashir¹⁶⁴. However, the most prominent protest movement in 2019 was surely the Hong Kong protest which saw massive support as “Almost two million citizens took to the streets on a single weekend in a territory of seven million people.”¹⁶⁵ This began as a public demonstration against an extradition bill but quickly morphed back into the movement for democratic reform which had begun in 2014.¹⁶⁶ Ultimately, while many of the protests were reactionary towards an

¹⁵⁶ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 2.

¹⁵⁷ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 9.

¹⁵⁸ The Economist Intelligence Unit (n 141) 15.

¹⁵⁹ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 22.

¹⁶⁰ The Economist Intelligence Unit (n 141) 9.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 23.

¹⁶³ The Economist Intelligence Unit (n 141) 9.

¹⁶⁴ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 22.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

obvious worldwide decline in democratic standards, their ability to bring about internal reform should be noted when thinking of the future of democracy.

CHAPTER II: THE EFFECTS OF INTERVENTIONISM ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

The goal of this section is to offer a sort of tour of the world approach to looking at how interventionism has manifested itself in different ways across a variety of cultures, governmental systems and regions. Ultimately, through both case studies and political analysis, it will become evident that through multiple iterations interventionism has been detrimental to democratic development and consequently human rights. The first section will examine intergovernmental organizations by looking closely at the European Union (EU), a very progressive political project which united many of the continent's biggest economies. While the union has often been considered an important force for social justice and democracy promotion, its foundation has been shaken recently by a number of crises. I will look closely at how it has handled these events as well as how EU policy and structure is being used to delegitimize the national politics of its members.

The second section will look at Sub-Saharan Africa and how the legacy of colonialism followed by the aid politics of the Cold War severely halted the economic and democratic growth of the region. I will look towards the East African Somalian peninsula to examine how two countries, which received contrasting amounts of support from the outside world, have grown distinctive political systems.

Finally, I will look at intervention in relation to regime change by examining the fundamental failures of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Sanctions as a tool of democratization, and the effect of American hostility on Iran and North Korea. I choose the latter two countries because they have been dominant topics of foreign policy for the last decade, especially under the Trump administration, and both demonstrate how attempts at promoting liberalization can fuel militant authoritarianism.

2.1 INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ILLIBERALISM

The increasingly globalized nature of economics and politics in our world has led to the emergence of intergovernmental organizations which David Owen classifies as either multilateral institutions like the IMF or regional organizations like the EU.¹⁶⁷ The latter often gives countries the opportunities to form more impactful political alliances and collaborate economically in mutually beneficial ways.¹⁶⁸ The first of these sorts of organizations was the League of Nation (LON) founded in 1919, but it did not garner the support of major world powers like the Americans and, initially, the Soviets.¹⁶⁹ Ultimately, its failure to prevent the Second World War created the desire for a new and more inclusive organization that would promote human rights, thus the United Nation was founded in 1945.¹⁷⁰ However, while the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being written and debated, there also emerged an increasing desire for some sort of pan-European alliance.¹⁷¹ The primary goal of such an alliance would be to secure peace in the region and establish the common control of natural resources like ore, gold and steel so neither nation could monopolize them like before.¹⁷² Additionally, the rise of the Americans and Soviets created the need to combine European political influence into a strong, globalized economy that could continue to compete as a dominant world power.¹⁷³ This idea found support in the Americans, who wanted to establish strong allies to push back against Communism, as well as the British Prime Minister Churchill who urged the creation of a "United States of Europe."¹⁷⁴ Churchill was correct in stressing urgency as soon the Cold War would politically divide the Western and Eastern sides of the continent thus preventing the formation of

¹⁶⁷ David Owen, "Democracy" in Richard Bellamy, Andrew Mason (eds.) *Political concepts* (Manchester: University Press 2003) 115.

¹⁶⁸ Vivien Schmidt "The Impact of European Integration on National Democracies: Democracy at the Increasing Risk in the Eurozone Crisis" in BBVA (eds.) *The Search for Europe: Contrasting Approaches* (Barcelona: La Fábrica 2016) 5.

¹⁶⁹ Weiß (n 124) 3.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* 4.

¹⁷² *ibid.* 5.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.* 6.

such an organization.¹⁷⁵ However, in Western Europe, the Council of Europe (COE) would emerge as a test-case and precedent setter for such a concept.¹⁷⁶

The COE was conceptualized by its 10 founding members at the 1948 congress of Hague and formalized a year later with the ratification of the Treaty of London.¹⁷⁷ By 1950 the European Convention on Human Rights would be adopted, setting the tone for the next 40 years of the organization as it would focus extensively on standards for democracy, human rights monitoring and respect for rule of law.¹⁷⁸ In fact, by 1992, and partially in response to its expansion into Eastern Europe, these values became the explicit criteria for membership within the council.¹⁷⁹ Despite its namesake, the COE was also forward-thinking in extending membership to non-European states that could be important strategic allies like Turkey and Iceland in 1950 or the central Asian states throughout the 2000s.¹⁸⁰ The organization has now grown to 47 member states and has continued to innovate especially in regards to the protection of minority rights and anti-racist initiatives.¹⁸¹

The COE set the groundwork for the emergence of a more ambitious, and by many regards the most successful, intergovernmental agency: the European Union. Founded in 1993, the EU is both an economic and political coalition with 27 members that enjoy greater mobility between their borders.¹⁸² The EU has largely adopted the COE's mandate on pursuing the protection of human rights with the creation of the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2007 and the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights 2009.¹⁸³ Like the COE, the EU has a similar set of requirements for obtaining membership referred to as the Copenhagen criteria which Norman Weiß describes as the “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities.”¹⁸⁴ In the 1990s and early 2000s, the economic advantages tied to EU membership became a major factor in the democratic consolidation taking

¹⁷⁵ *ibid* 6, 15.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid* 6.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid* 13. The 10 founding members were Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid* 16.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid* 18.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid* 15.

¹⁸¹ *ibid* 17, 19.

¹⁸² Tyler Biscontin, “European Union (EU)”, Salam Press Encyclopedia (Salem Press 2019).

¹⁸³ *ibid* 22.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid* 20.

place in many countries including Spain, Turkey and East Germany.¹⁸⁵ Consequently, these countries adopted human rights standards into their legislation including important transitional justice measures such as reparations to victims and inquiry commissions.¹⁸⁶ This emphasis on a human rights framework has translated to strong democratic institutions and culture as V-Dem considers 17 EU members, 18 if counting the closely affiliated Norway, among the 37 countries that currently meet the requirements of liberal democracy.¹⁸⁷ Overall, it may seem as though the EU has been overwhelmingly successful as a globalized effort to enforce high democratic standards, but in recent times the union has suffered some enormous setbacks.

The refugee crisis was perhaps the first blow to the EU's legitimacy as it showcases the organization's inability to craft a united policy-based approach to a large scale problem while also fueling the early rise of far-right populists. The origins of the EU's migration policy were refined in the Dublin II Regulations of 2003 which stipulated that "asylum seekers should apply for asylum in the first country of entry to the EU."¹⁸⁸ This put strenuous amounts of pressure on the union's border states like Italy, Greece and Bulgaria which consequently led them to adopting extremely restrictive migration policies and high rates of rejection for asylum requests.¹⁸⁹ This worsened when the refugee crisis, which began in 2011, saw huge waves of migrants coming to Europe and created an urgent need for more resources.¹⁹⁰ The EU attempted to address this through the European Asylum Support Office which was tasked with promoting a common asylum system and distributing over three billion Euros in funds from 2014 to 2020.¹⁹¹ However, Eastern European states of the Visegrad cooperation remained hostile towards migrants and refused to implement resettlement policies because of cultural, historical and political factors that are not necessary to delve into here.¹⁹² On the other hand, Western EU members, particularly Germany, also chose to forego the EU's policies often in order to adopt a more welcoming

¹⁸⁵ Anja Mihr, "Regime Consolidation through Transitional Justice in Europe: The Cases of Germany, Spain and Turkey" (2017) 11 Int. J. Transitional Justice 113, 114.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 26.

¹⁸⁸ Radka Havlova and Kristyna Tamchynova, "The Uncertain Role of the EU Countries in the Syrian Refugee Crisis" (2016) 18 Insight Turk. 85, 86.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid* 86, 90. Per Eurostat statistics, in 2015 Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Latvia, Hungary and Poland recorded first instance rejection rates above 80%.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid* 89.

¹⁹¹ *ibid* 90.

¹⁹² *ibid* 91. The members of the Visegrad cooperation are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

approach.¹⁹³ Ultimately, the Union has failed to get its members to buy into a cohesive approach on migration as most states prefer to, and are more efficient, when pursuing an individual approach.¹⁹⁴ The external difficulties in having EU members cooperate on a common problem have been reflected internally as governments struggle with a rise of nationalistic populism and Euroscepticism.

Over the last decade, the voter-share for anti-establishment parties on both the left and right has consistently increased within the EU, especially as emerging right-wing movements attack the integrity of intergovernmental organizations.¹⁹⁵ Far-right parties have been successful in galvanized support by presenting themselves as the democratic alternative to the elitist authoritarianism of the EU.¹⁹⁶ In response to the refugee crisis, which has seen Muslim refugees relocated to Europe, these parties articulate a need to protect “European values” by “reclaim national sovereignty from distant transnational organizations like the EU.”¹⁹⁷ Moreover, while these parties relentlessly attack pillars of liberal democracy like media freedom and civil society, they do embrace direct democracy as a means to reach their goals.¹⁹⁸ Particularly the use of referendums where emotionally poignant disinformation campaigns can lead to deeply illiberal results that have lasting damage on democracy and human rights.¹⁹⁹ These populist tactics were successfully used by right-wing parties in the United Kingdom, led by the current Prime Minister Boris Johnson, to execute an exit from the EU putting in doubt its future status as a world power.²⁰⁰

Michael Cox considered the effectiveness of these populist strategies as a direct response to the failures of globalization and decreasing living standards in many Western nations.²⁰¹ Economic growth in the last decade has been most concentrated in developing nations like China

¹⁹³ *ibid* 91

¹⁹⁴ *ibid* 100-101.

¹⁹⁵ Yascha Mounk, *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2018) 34, 45-46.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid* 51.

¹⁹⁷ Eatwell and Goodwin (n 10) 69.

¹⁹⁸ Mounk (n 195) 50.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid* 52.

²⁰⁰ Steve Bloomfield “How the Brexit Election Was Reduced to Trivia” *Foreign Affairs* [December 9 2019] <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-kingdom/2019-12-09/how-brexit-election-was-reduced-trivia>> accessed July 3 2020.

²⁰¹ Michael Cox, “The rise of populism and the crisis of globalisation: Brexit, Trump and beyond” (2017) Vol. 27 *Irish Political Stud.* 9, 14.

and India which have seen enormous increases in their GDP partially at the expense of the middle-class.²⁰² Automation and cheaply made goods from foreign nations with poor labor laws have impoverished the working class of many Western democracies resulting in the stagnation of middle-class wealth while simultaneously a small group of elites is disproportionately enriched.²⁰³ This has created resentment towards free trade and consequently antipathy against the EU which has largely become representational of the failures of globalization.²⁰⁴ Far-Right parties often merge this frustration over economic stagnation with ethno-nationalism to create toxic rhetoric that fuels resentment for refugees, minorities and attacks on independent institutions like universities and media.²⁰⁵ As much as the Western European nations have had to struggle with right-wing nationalist politics, their democratic institutions have remained resilient for the most part.²⁰⁶ The same cannot be said of certain Eastern European countries which has faced considerable deterioration of its institutions and practices.

Democratic decline, or “autocratization”, has been especially prevalent in Eastern Europe including amongst EU members and allies. According to the methodology of the V-Dem Institute, five Eastern European EU members have lost their status as liberal democracies in the last 10 years: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia.²⁰⁷ Additionally, four of the ten countries that have regressed the most rapidly in the last decade were closely affiliated with the EU, the previously mentioned Poland and Hungary which is now considered the organization's first non-democratic regime, as well as Serbia and Turkey who have been longtime candidates for membership.²⁰⁸ These countries have seen space for media and civil society wane as judicial independence and civil rights have diminished.²⁰⁹ The most shocking of these declines have been the EU members who have transformed into illiberal regimes while continuing to benefit from their membership.

Hungary’s 2010 parliamentary election delivered a majority for Victor Orban and his socially conservative Fidesz party effectively beginning what would be a long process of

²⁰² *ibid* 13.

²⁰³ *ibid* 36-37.

²⁰⁴ *ibid* 17.

²⁰⁵ *ibid* 45.

²⁰⁶ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 14.

²⁰⁷ *ibid* 26.

²⁰⁸ *ibid* 16.

²⁰⁹ *ibid* 22.

democratic dismantling.²¹⁰ Orban's first goal was to change the constitution and compromise the independence of the judiciary by eliminating "important checks on the ruling majority."²¹¹ In the 2015 Polish election, the Peace and Justice Party (PiS) obtained a slight parliamentary majority, after left-wing parties failed to form a coalition, and began enacting a similar agenda as Fidesz.²¹² Both parties hinged their legitimacy on similar populist narratives of freeing their countries from "Brussels' dictatorship" and maintaining ethnical homogeneity by resisting the EU's refugee resettlement plan.²¹³

Of the two, Hungary has autocratized the most, effectively transforming itself into what Markowski calls a "mafia state" where executive power is centralized around its leader Orban who acts more like a dictator than an actual prime minister.²¹⁴ Hungarian political elites are continually enriching themselves through corruption highlighted by a New York Times investigation in 2019 which found that EU farming subsidies are routinely misappropriated.²¹⁵ The government leases large sections of farmland to Fidesz loyalists and close associates at abysmally low prices which qualifies them for lucrative subsidies worth millions.²¹⁶ While this is also happening in fellow EU members Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, it is much worse in Hungary where "Mr. Orban's government has auctioned off thousands of acres of state land to his family members and close associates, including one childhood friend who has become one of the richest men in the country [...]."²¹⁷ Additionally, because the subsidies are administered by the government, farmers who speak up run the risk of losing access to these grants.²¹⁸ The EU has no legal jurisdiction or political instruments to interfere with the agricultural practices of a

²¹⁰ Julia Gabriel "Hungary: A Country Report Based on Data 1918-2012" (September 2016) No. 12 V-Dem Country Report Series 1, 6.

²¹¹ *ibid* 7.

²¹² Radoslaw Markowski "Creating Authoritarian Clientelism: Poland after 2015" (2019) Vol. 11 Hague J. Rule Law 111, 112.

²¹³ Radoslaw Markowski "Populism and Nationalism in CEE: Two of a Perfect Pair?" in Alberto Martinelli (eds.) *When Populism Meets Nationalism: Reflections on Parties in Power* (Milan: Ledizioni 2018) 86. Eatwell and Goodwin (n 10) 77.

²¹⁴ *ibid* 88.

²¹⁵ Selam Gebrekidan, Matt Apuzzo and Benjamin Novak "The Money Farmers: How Oligarchs and Populists Milk the EU for Millions" *The New York Times* [November 3 2019]

<<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/03/world/europe/eu-farm-subsidy-hungary.html>> accessed July 4 2020.

²¹⁶ *ibid*.

²¹⁷ *ibid*.

²¹⁸ *ibid*.

member state and is thus left helplessly watching as it funds one of the continent's most corrupt leader.

Poland is marginally better, it ranks 64th in V-Dems Democracy index compared to Hungary at 84th, but its democratic decline under the PiS and its leader Mateusz Morawiecki has still been concerning.²¹⁹ Despite not having a majority large enough to change the constitution, as Fidesz did immediately after gaining power, PiS has used rampant nepotism to fill bureaucratic offices.²²⁰ In a scheme to take control of the judiciary, the party unconstitutionally reduced the retirement age for judges so that it could appoint loyalists and has “passed laws designed to curtail the [constitutional] tribunal’s authority and make it subservient to the current parliamentary majority.”²²¹ In spite of efforts by the EU to push back on such blatant attempts to debase the rule of law in the country, it has been largely unable to garner enough political support to do so.²²² Despite this, some optimism is warranted in the case of Poland as protestors, led by judges, took the streets to protest in over 160 cities in response to diminishing judicial independence.²²³ More so, unlike Hungary the country still has a strong electoral system and opposition at the municipal level, making it possible for it to slowly reverse its backsliding into autocracy.²²⁴

Initially, the EU was successful at supporting the democratization of numerous nations and enforcing strong institutional respect for human rights across the continent. However, we are now almost 30 years into this ambitious political experiment and it is beginning to come apart at the seams as countries drift further apart ideologically and citizens feel increasingly disillusioned by the benefits of free trade. Euroscepticism is now fueling dangerous and disruptive far-right parties across the continent which are a direct threat to the values that the EU embodies. More problematic has been the backsliding of Poland and Hungary, the latter of which is now a full-blown autocracy, as the EU finds itself funding, supporting and extending its benefits to two anti-democratic regimes. Overall, the United-Kingdom's messy departure from the union may

²¹⁹ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges–Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 31.

²²⁰ Markowski, *Populism and Nationalism in CEE: Two of a Perfect Pair* (n 213) 91.

²²¹ R. Daniel Kelemen “Poland's Constitutional Crisis” *Foreign Affairs* [August 25 2016] <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/poland/2016-08-25/polands-constitutional-crisis>> accessed July 4 2020.

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges–Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 22.

²²⁴ Markowski, *Populism and Nationalism in CEE: Two of a Perfect Pair* (n 213) 87.

ultimately signal its decline as a unified political force, let alone one that can promote human rights and democracy internationally. However, it is becoming increasingly legitimate to ask whether the EU and perhaps international organizations at large, have always been detrimental to democracy.

Many of the supposed progressive policies pushed by the EU were inherently prone to misuse and thus often had adverse effects later on. In the case of farm subsidies, Orban did not invent his scheme outright, it is a flaw inherent to the EU's farming subsidy program that had routinely been appropriated by corrupt officials and dubious entrepreneurs.²²⁵ However, what Orban and Fidesz have done, in the words of the former Hungarian agriculture minister, is to perfect this system of manipulation and self-enrichment.²²⁶ Similarly, the same transitional justice tools and policies adopted by Turkey in hopes of winning favor with the EU were later used by president Erdoğan to consolidate power around him.²²⁷ In structure, the EU has never been a democratic institution, Mounk refers to it as "Undemocratic Liberalism", as the only body with directly elected members, the European Parliament, has historically been inconsequential at the policy level.²²⁸ More so, throughout its existence, the EU has increasingly taken charge of policy decisions further alienating national governments and the citizens they represent from the process.²²⁹ Regulatory agencies, like the EU Commission and the European Central Bank, have also increasingly encroached on issues of national security, justice and sovereignty.²³⁰ Although the EU does frame its decisions in apolitical language, they often regard extremely politicized issues at a national level which governments can hardly provide feedback on.²³¹ This leaves citizens frustrated and disengaged as they turn towards anti-establishment parties while governments are, as Vivien Schmit explains, awkwardly stuck between "populism at the national level and from technocracy at the EU level."²³² This in turn leads to higher turnover rates, smaller majorities and long-delays in forming government or in the case of smaller countries, like Greece, hollowed out national democracies.²³³

²²⁵ *ibid.*

²²⁶ *ibid.*

²²⁷ Mihr (n 185) 14.

²²⁸ Schmidt (n 168) 6. Mounk (n 195) 36.

²²⁹ Schmidt (n 168) 10.

²³⁰ *ibid* 4.

²³¹ *ibid* 12.

²³² *ibid* 4.

²³³ *ibid* 5, 15.

Overall, this is not an argument in favor of abolishing the EU nor ousting its struggling Eastern European members like Poland and Hungary. The Union still enjoys popular support within its member states because of how it has supported human rights principles and economic prosperity, but it should be increasingly conscious of how it is actually affecting democracy nationally.²³⁴ After a number of poorly managed crises, The EU seemingly finds itself at a crossroads and how it decides to move forward as a unified body will decide its faith as an organization and proponent of human rights. Its problems appear to be structural at first glance, but there is also a philosophical question as to whether the Western states, which have enjoyed democracy for much longer, put too much pressure on the Eastern states to transform into perfect liberal democracies too quickly. A democratic system of governance is a complex organism, even more so when trying to reach the threshold of liberal democracy, and has historically required a long and tedious process of evolution before establishing unmovable democratic pillars. What is currently happening in Poland, Hungary and many other struggling Eastern European states could eventually be a blip on the road to a true democracy if the EU responds appropriately. Instead of labeling the EU's setback as an irredeemable failure, the Union and its policymakers should look towards how it can become a tool for positive change in weathering this storm of illiberalism.

2.2 FOREIGN AID AND COLONIALISM

Many defenders of interventionism have pointed towards foreign aid as an inherent good which, according to the president of the influential American think tank The Brookings Institute, helps “advance diplomatic and development priorities.”²³⁵ While there have been some important successes in reaching health objectives like reducing infant mortality, expensive projects aiming at reducing poverty and developing economies have overwhelmingly failed.²³⁶ Dambisa Moyo, an economist from Oxford University, has written extensively on the failures of development based aid in Africa. In the last 50 years, the equivalent of 1 trillion USD has been transferred to

²³⁴ Richard Wike and others “European Public Opinion three decades After the Fall of Communism” [October 14 2019] *The Pew Research Center* accessed on June 14 2020.

<<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/>>

²³⁵ John R. Allen, “US foreign aid is worth defending now more than ever” [September 4 2019] *The Brookings Institute* <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/09/04/us-foreign-aid-is-worth-defending-now-more-than-ever/>> accessed on June 14 2020.

²³⁶ Carol Graham & Michael O’Hanlon “Making Foreign Aid Work” (July/August 1997) 76 *Foreign Aff* 96, 96.

African governments yet the per capita income for the continent is only 1 USD a day making it by far the poorest region on earth.²³⁷ More so, while Asian countries have seen their economies grow and expand, Africa has stagnated seeing only increases in inequality as many Africans are poorer today than they were 20 years ago.²³⁸ To explain this it is important to look at how the Marshall plan succeeded in Europe and why similar methods have not in other regions.

Following the Second World War, the United States transferred billions of dollars into its West European allies in hopes of maintaining their democratic regimes. This approach was largely successful and created what Moyo calls a false notion that “investment capital was critical for economic growth.”²³⁹ This emerging economic ideology, along with the fear that the Soviet Union would install communist regimes across Africa, led to a similar approach being tried in the 1960s.²⁴⁰ The American and Soviet governments justified their presence in Africa by feigning concerns over security, but in reality, the continent quickly became an ideological battleground for the two titans.²⁴¹ The United States gave Ghana over 90 million USD without a proper oversight system in place while the Soviet Union single-handedly funded the atrocious Mengistu Haile Mariam regime in Ethiopia.²⁴² This carried over into the 1970s until the rising levels of poverty, income inequality and unemployment shifted aid from infrastructure-focused to poverty-focused.²⁴³ European countries would join as donors as well under the guidance of Robert McNamara, the president of the World Bank, who would drastically reshape aid in the next 10 years.²⁴⁴

The transfer of foreign money continued to flow generously throughout the late 1970s towards many Sub-Saharan African and Latin American countries who were “awash with Aid.”²⁴⁵ However, the aforementioned 1979 oil crisis drastically altered the world economy as interest rates rose in fear of inflation which made borrowing more expensive and debt

²³⁷ Moyo (n 9) 9.

²³⁸ *ibid.*

²³⁹ *ibid* 13.

²⁴⁰ *ibid* 14.

²⁴¹ Graham & Michael O’Hanlon (n 180).

²⁴² Moyo (n 9) 24.

²⁴³ *ibid* 16,17.

²⁴⁴ *ibid* 16.

²⁴⁵ *ibid* 17.

unsustainable.²⁴⁶ This was because the bank loans taken on by developing countries were primarily based on floating interest rates which adjusted to these new higher standards and almost immediately led to a worldwide recession coinciding with plummeting demand for their exports.²⁴⁷ By 1982, Mexico and 11 African countries informed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that they would no longer be able to meet their debt obligations to bank creditors creating an immediate threat to the “foundations of global financial stability,”²⁴⁸ The solution to this problem became a restructuring of debt, or what Moyo calls a “reincarnation of the aid model”, through the Structural Adjustment Facility which would lend money to defaulting nations so that they could repay what they owed.²⁴⁹ The IMF’s flow of aid increased from 8 billion USD in 1982 to 12 billion USD the following year, clearly encapsulating how much of a perpetual cycle of “renewed dependency” many developing nations had transformed into.²⁵⁰ At this point, it became clear that none of the billions of dollars pumped into Sub-Saharan Africa through aid had resulted in economic growth and yet another perspective on development would emerge.

The 1980s coincided with the emergence of Neoliberalism economic thought, popularized by Milton Friedman and the Chicago school of economics, which greatly influenced the foreign policies of American president Ronald Regan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.²⁵¹ The socialist model which many African states had emulated failed to bring about economic prosperity, thus liberalizing the economy and free-market orientated policies were seen as a natural next step.²⁵² This had seemingly worked well for the Asia Tigers who had significantly lowered poverty and encouraged high growth rates through “outwards orientation.”²⁵³ Thus, aid packages once again shifted from poverty orientated to “stabilization and structural adjustment packages” and money continued to flow with minimal transparency or conditionality attached.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁶ *ibid* 18.

²⁴⁷ *ibid* 19.

²⁴⁸ *ibid* 18.

²⁴⁹ *ibid* 19.

²⁵⁰ *ibid* 19, 21.

²⁵¹ *ibid* 20.

²⁵² *ibid*.

²⁵³ *Ibid*. The so-called Asian Tigers are South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

²⁵⁴ *ibid* 21.

This did little more than delay the inevitable as the combined debt of “emerging-market countries” surpassed 1 trillion USD by the end of the 1980s, effectively impoverishing them beyond recourse.²⁵⁵ Moyo notes that “Between 1987 and 89 debt was so great that it trumped incoming aid and resulted in a net reversal flow from poor to rich countries of about 15 billion a year.”²⁵⁶ The structural adjustment packages, like all the previous iterations of aid within the last 30 years, had undeniably failed to bring about economic development and the donors clearly bore some responsibility in this.²⁵⁷ Nic Cheeseman, a British author specializing in democracy, remarks that because the survival of African political regimes hinged on international donors, and not the approval of their citizens, there was no motive to offer high quality governance.²⁵⁸ Leaders who are economically reliant on tax revenue are more compliant with the needs of their citizens while those who pay taxes consistently are more demanding on their government.²⁵⁹ This is an important mechanism in creating a mutual relationship of legitimacy and accountability between the ruling party and the middle-class which could never exist in many African countries that seldom developed strong systems of taxation. More so, the lack of oversight accompanying these large loans left little incentive to follow through on development projects which is highlighted in a study conducted by the World Bank which found that 85% of aid money was used for a purpose other than what it was intended.²⁶⁰ Thus, it should be unsurprising that by 1990 Africa had the highest concentration of some of the world's most closed autocratic governments, many of which had ironically been financed by the largest democracies in the world.²⁶¹

The apparent failure of aid in Africa coincided with a wave of new optimism for democracy and the importance of good governance within the international community. Thus, the 1990s became the era of Western democracy as ultimate proof that “aid intervention could

²⁵⁵ *ibid* 22.

²⁵⁶ *ibid*.

²⁵⁷ Rita Abrahamsen, “Discourses of democracy, practices of autocracy: shifting meanings of democracy in the aid–authoritarianism nexus” in Tobias Hagmann and Filip Reyntjens (eds.) *Aid and authoritarianism in Africa Development without democracy* (London: Nordic Africa Institute & Zed Books 2016) 26.

²⁵⁸ Nic Cheeseman, *Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform* (Cambridge University Press 2015) 19.

²⁵⁹ *ibid*.

²⁶⁰ Moyo (n 9) 39.

²⁶¹ Roser (n 1).

work, would work, if only the political conditions were right.”²⁶² Indeed, this decade succeeded in liberalizing parts of Africa and producing more elections per se, but ultimately failed at bringing about any large-scale economic transformation or stability.²⁶³ One of the glaring issues with this approach was that it hastily tried to impose Western-style democracy in a region that had little experience with participatory politics in a hierarchical authority structure.²⁶⁴ In the pre-colonial period, most African communities were small and nomadic in nature making it nearly impossible for a large-scale system of governance, like those in Europe, to form.²⁶⁵ More so, as the world's superpowers began to colonize the continent they seldom created avenues for African's to become involved in national politics.²⁶⁶ French Senegal was somewhat of an exception in this case and this could serve to explain its uniquely strong democratic history, however, most colonizers only offered what Cheeseman calls “sham legislative bodies” and powerless “advisory councils.”²⁶⁷ Walls and Kibble also add that colonial states were primarily tasked with maintaining a dominant source of authority over their territories and thus never needed to “justify their existence in terms of meeting the needs of the majority of the population.”²⁶⁸ Hence, the African leaders that emerged during independence were unfamiliar with how to implement democracy and overwhelmingly chose to pursue models that resemble what they had experienced.²⁶⁹ Naturally, this was only possible with the political support and, more importantly, the financial support they received from states they allied themselves with.

Francis Fukuyama, an advisor to Reagan and proponent of neoliberalism, argued that the lack of a strong national identity was what kept many developing nations, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa, from modernizing.²⁷⁰ These national identities are not necessarily based on ethnic homogeneity, although he admits that it may help, but rather shared democratic values and experiences.²⁷¹ This kind of national identity is essential to a state's ability to modernize because

²⁶² Moyo (n 9) 24.

²⁶³ *ibid* 43.

²⁶⁴ Cheeseman (n 258) 17.

²⁶⁵ *ibid* 14.

²⁶⁶ *ibid* 27.

²⁶⁷ *ibid* 27-28.

²⁶⁸ Michael Walls and Steve Kibble, “Somaliland: progress, state and outsiders” (2011) 38 *Rev. Afr. Political Econ.* 335, 335.

²⁶⁹ *ibid* 14.

²⁷⁰ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2018) 125.

²⁷¹ *ibid* 127.

it facilitates economic development, discourages political cronyism and holds the government accountable in ways that international bodies are not able to.²⁷² While national identity is not the end-all of the problems Sub-Saharan Africa faces in modernizing, it is a major factor in why attempts to democratize have failed throughout the 1990s. African states had their borders artificially created by European diplomats during the “partition of Africa” with no regard for the input of the tribes, kingdoms and locals who inhabited the land already.²⁷³ Thus, geopolitical preferences led to the splitting and unifying of completely different, and sometimes even adversarial, groups into new fictitious countries.²⁷⁴ More so, divide-and-conquer tactics were used widely by colonial governments to intensify existing ethnic tensions and prevent collaboration between groups that could overthrow the government if united.²⁷⁵ Instead, tribalism was promoted as a way to create close-knit ethnic communities that would compete with each other for recognition and resources from the centralized government.²⁷⁶ Despite a brief period of pan-Africanism across the continent during decolonization, many Africans still identified more strongly with the ethnic groups that had been cultivated for over a hundred years.²⁷⁷ Consequently, Multi-party politics have often become dominated by sectarianism which has led to civil conflict and violent clashes between ethnic groups.

It should also be noted that the former one-party states of African were significantly more open and tolerant than their Eastern European or Latin American counterparts.²⁷⁸ Thus, while the implementation of elections may give the appearance of progress, it has often actually led to the opposite.²⁷⁹ In some cases, like in Kenya and Côte d’Ivoire, states that had enjoyed political stability for decades were engulfed into civil conflicts over disputes in electoral results.²⁸⁰ In other cases, like Cameroon and Togo, incumbents began allowing regular elections but continuing to repress civil and political rights, especially against political rivals.²⁸¹

²⁷² *ibid* 128.

²⁷³ Cheeseman (n 258) 22.

²⁷⁴ *ibid*.

²⁷⁵ *ibid* 23.

²⁷⁶ *ibid* 22.

²⁷⁷ *ibid*.

²⁷⁸ *ibid* 3.

²⁷⁹ *ibid* 27.

²⁸⁰ *ibid*.

²⁸¹ *ibid* 29.

Interventionism has shaped Sub-Saharan Africa, its politics and its economic status for over a century starting with aggressive colonization which created the modern African states and continuing through politically charged aid. The basis for aid efforts in Africa was the success of the Marshall Plan, but while aid towards Europe was finite and agreed upon, Africa has been suffocated by relentless cash flow.²⁸² Another important distinction is that these European countries already had many key public and private institutions necessary for modernization while Africa states had to juggle their emerging political identity, developing their economy and managing large amounts of capital gained through aid.²⁸³ These young states were not equipped to handle these large sums of money and, as Cheeseman notes, had African leaders been able to fail early on they likely would have developed stronger systems of domestic taxation, something that many of them still lack today.²⁸⁴ Even when presented with the opportunity to pivot onto something more constructive, world power chose to continue this ineffective approach.

The end of the Cold War in 1991 meant that the Soviet bloc would no longer support political regimes in Africa and in turn there was significantly less of a motive for Western blocs to do so as well.²⁸⁵ This was a perfect opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past and begin to plan an ending to aid in African in collaboration with African leaders and diplomats. Instead, Africa became subject to numerous public campaign and aid benefit projects often spearheaded by celebrities which replaced African intellectuals in the mainstream discussion over the continent's future, including at political forums like the G8 summit in 2005.²⁸⁶ Thus, given its history, it should be evident why countries that have rarely been recipients of aid, Botswana and South Africa for example, have become the most complete democratic countries on the continent.²⁸⁷

Financial aid continues to be an important issue in contemporary political discourse especially in regards to Sub-Saharan Africa where opinions diverge. Two notable changes have deeply affected the landscape of aid in the 2010s, neither of which has led to the progress of democratic standards. Firstly, as post-9/11 concerns over securitization and stability have risen in

²⁸² Moyo (N 9) 36.

²⁸³ *ibid* 37.

²⁸⁴ Cheeseman (n 258) 18.

²⁸⁵ Moyo (n 9) 25.

²⁸⁶ *ibid* 26-27.

²⁸⁷ *ibid* 144.

importance as, especially in the context of the American War on Terror, priorities in regards to financial aid have shifted.²⁸⁸ Countries willing to serve the national security interest of donors have become some of the biggest recipients of aid and military training, despite their record on human rights.²⁸⁹ This is a sort of return to the Cold War era of politicized aid as Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda have been able to completely ignore expectations of democratization due to their strategic importance.²⁹⁰ Western donors have recast their interest away from poverty-related and politically inclined goals towards focusing on groups they deem susceptible to radicalization, particularly young Muslims in “fragile and conflict-affected countries.”²⁹¹ Rita Abrahamsen, a researcher at the Center of International Policy Studies, notes that even in more democratically inclined countries like Kenya this has resulted in discriminatory practices towards Muslims, especially ethnic Somalis, such as “widespread police abuse, arbitrary arrests, forced encampment, as well as the deportation [...]”²⁹² This has created a perverse motive for states to pursue conflict, As Rwanda has done in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to guarantee further funding from concerned donors.²⁹³

Secondly, for their own part, African leaders have looked towards new partners to develop economic partnerships, including with the likes of India, Russia, Turkey and China.²⁹⁴ Much to the perpetuation of the West, China has been aggressively pursuing African states to create new relationships in trade and mutual investment.²⁹⁵ Moyo notes that this has been enticing to African leaders who are desperately seeking “capital quality that funds investment, jobs [...]”²⁹⁶ More so, China’s investment, especially under 2013’s One Belt One Road initiative, has been generous and free of typical safeguards such as “financial sustainability requirements,

²⁸⁸ Abrahamsen (n 257) 31.

²⁸⁹ *ibid* 34.

²⁹⁰ *ibid*. 32, 37.

²⁹¹ *ibid* 36.

²⁹² *ibid* 37.

²⁹³ Zoë Marriage, “Aid to Rwanda: unstoppable rock, immovable post” in Tobias Hagmann and Filip Reyntjens (eds.) *Aid and authoritarianism in Africa Development without democracy* (London: Nordic Africa Institute & Zed Books 2016) 57.

²⁹⁴ Moyo (n 9) 99.

²⁹⁵ *ibid* 104.

²⁹⁶ *ibid* 111.

environmental assessment reports, and anti-corruption controls.”²⁹⁷ However, even this new form of financial cooperation has quickly become unappealing to developing countries which, Christopher Balding from Fulbright University of Vietnam, notes has “governments borrow Chinese money to pay Chinese companies to build infrastructure at above-market prices.”²⁹⁸ The lack of safeguards has also served to facilitate corruption and reckless debt accumulation, much to the displeasure of citizens who have begun pushing back against these projects.²⁹⁹ Overall, foreign aid has continued its legacy as an external hindrance to the development of economic growth, democratic institutions and human rights protections.

2.3 CASE STUDY: SOMALILAND AND SOMALIA

The East Africa peninsula often referred to as the Horn of Africa is by far the region most devoid of a democratic culture, institutions and practices.³⁰⁰ The region has long been dominated by authoritarian strongmen who have used their geographical proximity to an important trade route to remain in power.³⁰¹ This is especially true for Djibouti, Eritrea and, up until recently, Sudan which remains in a fragile transitional state after protests in 2019 led to the ousting of its long-time president Al-Bashir.³⁰² Ethiopia and its regional rival Eritrea, sometimes referred to as the North Korea of Africa, has had two of the most authoritarian governments on the continent resulting in massive human rights abuses.³⁰³ However, mass protests in 2016 demanding political reform led to the appointment of Ethiopian Prime-Minister Abiy Ahmed who won the Nobel Peace prize in 2019 for his efforts in thawing the frozen relationships with Eritrea and the mass

²⁹⁷ Christopher Balding “Why Democracies Are Turning Against Belt and Road” *Foreign Affairs* [October 24 2018] <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-24/why-democracies-are-turning-against-belt-and-road>> accessed on June 22 2020.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰⁰ Michael Woldemariam “Can Ethiopia's Reforms Succeed?” *Foreign Affairs* [September 10 2018] <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-africa/2018-09-10/can-ethiopias-reforms-succeed>> accessed on June 23 2020.

³⁰¹ *ibid.*

³⁰² Declan Walsh “Concerns of a Coup Stir in Sudan as Capital Braces for a Virus Lockdown” *New York Times* [April 17 2020] <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/world/africa/Sudan-coup-coronavirus.html>> accessed June 23 2020.

³⁰³ Simon Marks “Protests in Ethiopia Threaten to Mar Image of Its Nobel-Winning Leader” *New York Times* [October 23 2019] <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/23/world/africa/ethiopia-protest-abiy.html>> accessed June 23 2020.

release of political prisoners.³⁰⁴ However, critics have remained cautious in their optimism as the same political party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, still remains in power.³⁰⁵ Although this may come as a surprise to many, the only true source of consistent and stable democratic rule in the region has come from the Somalian Peninsula, particularly the unrecognized and self-autonomous Somaliland.³⁰⁶

Somaliland is a former British protectorate which declared its independence from Somalia in 1991 after being unified with the then Italian colony in 1960.³⁰⁷ Initially, the international community viewed this as a succession movement the likes of which could galvanize similar attempts across the continent.³⁰⁸ Thus, Somaliland has received no international recognition and is excluded from membership to intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations and the African Union although it is a formal member of the Unrecognized Nations & Peoples Organization.³⁰⁹ Despite an acknowledgment from the African Union in 2005 that "Somaliland's search for recognition is historically unique and self-justified in African political history", it has remained a de facto state invisible to much of the outside world.³¹⁰ Yet the resource-poor state has built a highly respectable, locally driven electoral system which includes an executive presidency, an elected parliament and a chamber of clan elders called the *Guurti*.³¹¹ More so, the democratic system in place has proven itself robust enough to maintain peace during transitions of power after closely contested elections and the unexpected death of president Engel in 2002.³¹²

Since the death of former president Engel, Somaliland has had six direct elections including three presidential elections, two council elections and a single parliamentary election.³¹³ While there has been an issue in establishing regular election cycles that are not

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Woldemariam (n 300).

³⁰⁶ *ibid.*

³⁰⁷ Rakiya Omar and Saeed Mohamoud, "Where There Has Been Conflict but No Intervention" (January 2016) 5 PRISM 84, 85.

³⁰⁸ Scott Pegg and Micheal Walls, "Back on Track? Somalia After its 2017 Presidential Election" (April 2018) 117 Afr. Aff. 326, 327.

³⁰⁹ The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, "Member Profile: Somaliland" (Brussels: UNPO Advocacy Office 2017).

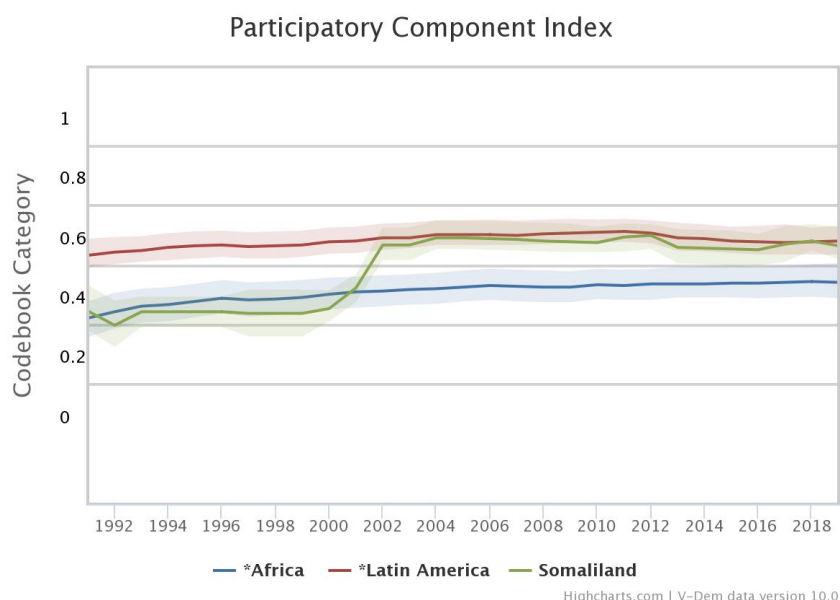
³¹⁰ Pegg and Walls, *Back on Track? Somalia After its 2017 Presidential Election* (n 308).

³¹¹ Omar and Mohamoud (n 307) 87.

³¹² Pegg and Walls, *Back on Track? Somalia After its 2017 Presidential Election* (n 308) 328.

³¹³ *ibid* 327.

delayed, especially within the *Guurti* which still holds many of the same members that were elected in the late 1990s, the elections themselves have met high standards imposed by the international community.³¹⁴ The most recent presidential election in 2017 was found to be “peaceful, festive and orderly” by election observers and earned praise for its use of an “iris-based biometric voter registration system.”³¹⁵ In its 2020 report, V-Dem ranks Somaliland 114th on its Liberal Democracy Index with a score 0.265 which is slightly below the African average, but much higher than Somalia which ranks 152nd with a score of 0.102.³¹⁶ What is more impressive is that on the Participatory Component Index Somaliland ranks 76th with a score of 0.567 which is drastically above the African and Eastern European averages and more in line with the typical Latin American country.³¹⁷ What makes these numbers especially impressive is that Somaliland’s road to independence has been chaotic and brimming with obstacles.



The defeat and occupation of Egypt by British forces in 1882 left a power vacuum in the Eastern African region which the French, Italian, Ethiopians and the aforementioned British were eager to fill.³¹⁸ The three European powers needed to establish ports by the Gulf of Aden to

³¹⁴ *ibid* 328.

³¹⁵ *ibid* 331, 333.

³¹⁶ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 31.

³¹⁷ *ibid* 30. The Participatory Component Index aggregates multiple factors including the participation of civil society, electoral demographics, both local and national elections to determine its score.

³¹⁸ Jama Mohamed, “Policies and Nationalism in the Decolonization of Somaliland, 1954-1960” (2002) 117 *Engl. Hist. Rev.* 1177, 1178.

facilitate the transfer of resources and thus the French and British established their own protectorates, now in present-day Djibouti and Somaliland respectively, in 1885.³¹⁹ Italy had already purchased a port in present-day Eritrea by 1882 and would establish its own protectorate in Somalia, now present-day Somalia, seven years later.³²⁰ After a temporary period of coexistence the Italians, under the fascist Mussolini regime, decided to act upon their empire-building ambitions and invaded Ethiopia in 1935.³²¹ Five years later, they would also successfully invade British Somaliland briefly culminating in almost total hegemony over the Horn of Africa before the British counter-invasion of 1941.³²²

Now that the majority of the Somali territories fell under British administration, policy makers were faced with the dilemma of what to do with them.³²³ They considered the creation of a “greater Somaliland” composed of all of the conquered territories, but empire-building had become politically unpopular amongst world powers and consequently by 1942 they restored Ethiopian sovereignty.³²⁴ The former Italian colony of Somalia was placed under the United Nations Trusteeship and Italian administration for a period of 10 years before being granted independence in June 1960.³²⁵ However, the faith of Somaliland was less certain as an assessment conducted by the British in 1949 determined that the small territory was unlikely to build a viable economy if granted independence and should remain under their rule for the foreseeable future.³²⁶ This sentiment would be reiterated in 1954 and 1956 before changing circumstances led to a reverse in policy in 1958 under the stipulation that Somaliland would form a union with Somalia upon being granted independence in 1960.³²⁷ These changing circumstances were fueled by both internal developments, such as the rise of Somali nationalism, and external political motives.³²⁸

³¹⁹ *ibid.*

³²⁰ *ibid.*

³²¹ Mohamed (n 317) 1181.

³²² *ibid.*

³²³ *ibid.*

³²⁴ *ibid* 1182.

³²⁵ *ibid.*

³²⁶ *ibid* 1177.

³²⁷ *ibid* 1201.

³²⁸ *ibid* 1178.

At the heart of rising Somali nationalism and dissatisfaction with British rule was a border dispute with neighboring Ethiopia.³²⁹ The Ethiopians had used their alliance with the Americans as leverage to make the British agree to the terms of the 1954 Anglo-Ethiopian treaty which gave them significant land concessions in what was previously considered Somaliland territory.³³⁰ The Somalis had an already established tribal authority over the area and argued that this was a direct violation of the Anglo-Somali treaty signed in 1885 upon the establishment of the protectorate.³³¹ Despite efforts from the Somaliland authorities to lay a legal challenge to the Ethiopians, including an unsuccessful attempt to be heard at the United Nations General Assembly, the British were unwilling and largely unable to resolve this lingering issue.³³² Clashes within the disputed zone became frequent as the Ethiopian authorities tried to establish their jurisdiction and closed an existing elementary school while alleging disruptive behavior by the Somali tribal police.³³³ Frustration over this situation drove support for an emerging political party, the National United Front for Retaining Reserve Area and Haud, which campaigned for independence and closer association with Somalia.³³⁴ The British were becoming increasingly uncertain about their ability to stabilize the protectorate, especially after Somalia would gain its independence in 1960, however, they also desperately wanted to maintain their strategic interest in the region.³³⁵

Economic concerns were not the only reasons that the British were wary of letting Somaliland establish itself as an independent republic, rather there was a fear that it could fall under the sphere of Egyptian and Soviet influence.³³⁶ Jama Mohamed notes that in light of the increasing tensions with Ethiopia, the only feasible solution available for British was to unite the protectorate with the larger Somalia to ensure the “new country would remain within the Western sphere of influence [...]”.³³⁷ This is what ultimately led to the creation of modern-day

³²⁹ *ibid.*

³³⁰ *ibid* 1184.

³³¹ *ibid* 1185.

³³² *ibid* 1186.

³³³ *ibid* 1190-91.

³³⁴ *ibid* 1195.

³³⁵ *ibid* 1198.

³³⁶ *ibid* 1194.

³³⁷ *ibid* 1198.

Somalia and why the Somaliland government has always stated that its independence is not a secession, but rather the dissolution of a failed union.³³⁸

The history of Somalia since the unification of 1960 is marred by political corruption and ethnic violence particularly because of the Cold War politics discussed above.³³⁹ The disputed land between Ethiopia and Somaliland once again came into play in 1977 when the dictatorial General Said Barre invaded the region in hopes of finally uniting the territories.³⁴⁰ The Soviets, which had allied themselves with both countries, chose to support the Ethiopian government and sent troops to repel the Somali army.³⁴¹ In response, General Barre sought the assistance of Americans who generously funded and armed him even as he began violently cracking down on internal dissent.³⁴² Resistance movements were primarily dominated by members of the Isaaq tribe, both nationally and internationally, which had also been the dominant tribe group in former British Somaliland.³⁴³ By 1987, the Barre regime began a violent campaign of state-sponsored genocide towards the Isaaq tribe which culminated with the aerial bombing of Hargeisa, now the capital city of Somaliland, and an estimated 200 000 people killed by 1989.³⁴⁴ In 2018, Somaliland's foreign minister, Saad Ali Shire, cautiously spoke on the issue saying "The US was not directly involved in the inhuman treatment of the people of Somaliland, but, like many other allies of the regime then, of course their hand was there."³⁴⁵ These acts of genocidal violence created widespread support for the creation of a new Somaliland in the Northern part of Somalia where members of the Isaaq clan primarily resided.³⁴⁶ Shortly after the civil war reached its heights and Barre was ousted in 1991, Somaliland declared its independence which Mohammed Ingiriis argues "in part as a result of the trauma suffered under the state terror, which served a legitimization process for the Somaliland project."³⁴⁷ Meaning that the violence

³³⁸ Pegg and Walls, *Back on Track? Somalia After its 2017 Presidential Election* (n 308) 327.

³³⁹ Walls and Kibble, *Somaliland: progress, state and outsiders* (n 268) 336.

³⁴⁰ Ismail Einashe and Matt Kennard "In the Valley of Death: Somaliland's Forgotten Genocide" *The Nation* [October 22 2018] <<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/in-the-valley-of-death-somalilands-forgotten-genocide/>> accessed on June 28 2020.

³⁴¹ *ibid.*

³⁴² Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, "'We Swallowed the State as the State Swallowed Us': The Genesis, Genealogies, and Geographies of Genocides in Somalia" (2016) 9 *Afr. Secur. Rev.* 237, 239.

³⁴³ *ibid.* 241.

³⁴⁴ *ibid.* 243.

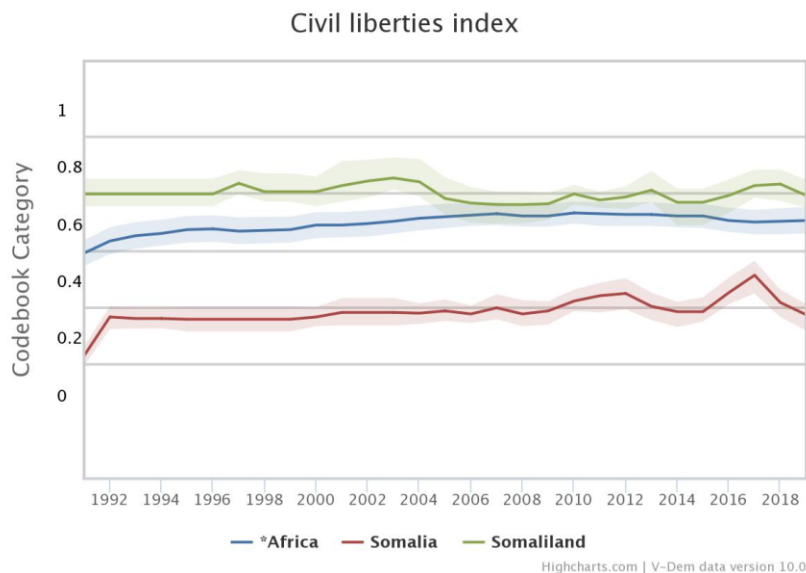
³⁴⁵ Einashe and Kennard (n 340).

³⁴⁶ Ingiriis, *"We Swallowed the State as the State Swallowed Us": The Genesis, Genealogies, and Geographies of Genocides in Somalia* (n 342) 249.

³⁴⁷ *ibid.*

perpetrated by the Barre regime, particularly towards the Isaaq clan, created the justification necessary to seek out an alternative arrangement of government, and thus Somaliland was reborn.

It is clear that the Somalian peninsula could have been just another example of how colonialism, Cold War politics and unfiltered monetary aid have led to widespread violence and human rights abuses. However, what makes this area interesting is to examine is how both states have developed since their unofficial separation, especially in the 2000s when civil violence waned. While Somaliland had independently developed a strong democratic culture and institutions with little acknowledgment from the outside world, Somalia consistently ranked as one of the 10 worst countries in regard to civil and political liberties by Freedom House.³⁴⁸ More so, in V-Dem's 2020 report it ranked amongst the bottom 20% on its Liberal Democracy Index with a particularly abysmal ranking of 169th (among 179 countries and territories) on the Egalitarian Democracy Index.³⁴⁹ A huge, if not the sole, factor in the dichotomy between the political growths of the two Somali states is the role foreign actors have played. In the case of Somalia, the United States, neighboring East African countries and Islamic extremist groups have all had vested interest in the governance, or lack thereof, of the country.



³⁴⁸ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 15.

³⁴⁹ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 31. The Egalitarian index takes into account factors such as access to justice, power distribution between social groups, educational and health equality, and gender dynamics.

Investigative journalist and former special adviser for humanitarian and NGO affairs office, Ronan Farrow, details how geopolitical interests dominated the United States goals in Somalia in his book *War on Peace*. Particularly their efforts to dismantle the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a network of 97 Sharia courts initially funded and armed by Eritrea, which emerged in the late 2000s as the only alternative to feuding warlords with enough political and social power to unite the country.³⁵⁰ Despite their ultra-conservatism, the courts were hardly prone to extremism and well-liked by the business community for providing centralized power and government structure to Somalia.³⁵¹ However, the United States feared that an Islamic regime would turn Somali society into a breeding ground for the emerging Al-Shabaab terrorist group.³⁵² In 2004, the CIA began a double-headed approach to eliminate the courts by funding and arming warlords, which they perceived to be secular, while also blocking the deployment of UN peacekeepers through diplomatic channels.³⁵³ Conversely, the ICU defeated the highly unpopular warlords and reached the peak of their popularity and power in 2006.³⁵⁴ In response, the Americans encouraged the Ethiopians to invade with the extensive support of the US Airforce, Navy and Special Forces.³⁵⁵ The ICU was overwhelmingly defeated, but as moderate leaders fled to neighboring states, hard-liners including Al-Shabaab leadership stayed and galvanized support.³⁵⁶ Farrow notes that animosity towards the Ethiopian forces fueled Al-Shabaab's transformation "from a fringe element with limited influence to a tactically relevant outfit [...]."³⁵⁷ Ultimately, American efforts to dissuade Islamist groups from rising to power created the circumstances necessary to empower one of the continent's most dangerous extremist groups and destroy the closest thing that Somalia had to a fully functioning government.

Despite the geographical, historical and ethnic similarities between the two Somali states, they have developed distinctively different political systems. Somaliland is a sort of darling for

³⁵⁰ Ronan Farrow, *War on Peace: The End of Diplomacy and the Decline of American Influence* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company 2018) 208.

³⁵¹ Mohamed Ingiriis, "Profiting from the failed state of Somalia: the violent political marketplace and insecurity in contemporary Mogadishu" (2020) Vol. 38 J. Contemp. Afr. Stud.

<<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02589001.2020.1774522>> accessed June 30 2020, 16. Article currently only available online, some publication elements may change once the journal is released in its entirety (i.e. page numbers will likely be different).

³⁵² Farrow (n 350) 209.

³⁵³ *ibid* 210, 214.

³⁵⁴ *ibid* 215.

³⁵⁵ *ibid* 217.

³⁵⁶ *ibid* 218.

³⁵⁷ *ibid*.

academics because it demonstrates that a nuanced and locally driven democratic system can emerge despite seemingly insurmountable circumstances. Somalia is precisely the sort of “focus of orchestrated worldwide pity” that Dambisa Moyo describes in her book as the international community has become so invested in fixing it that the people themselves have lost their agency.³⁵⁸ However, as much as it would be easy to look at the similarities between the two Somali states and lay the blame for their differences in development solely to the misguided efforts of the international community, this would be fundamentally dishonest. Somaliland is a smaller, internationally unrecognized, former British protectorate which is composed almost entirely of one clan group, the Isaaq tribe, and partially reborn in response to a government sanctioned genocide. Somalia is the significantly more diverse and richer former Italian protectorate which has been the pawn of global powers and, more recently, fundamentalist groups for much of its short history. These two countries have distinctively different histories, cultures and surely challenges, but what the smaller Somaliland has accomplished by itself should be a dire wake-up call to the international community and NGO networks that their efforts have been insultingly insufficient. Mohamed Ingiriis, a scholar specializing in Somali studies, notes that Somalia continues to function through an informal war economy where “conflict has become a permanent feature in Somali politics.” He lists two examples of how a consistent international presence in Somalia continues to exist at the expense of locals.

Firstly, it is common for NGOs and aid agencies, which are predominantly based in Mogadishu, to procure the services of a security company while in Somalia.³⁵⁹ However, the frequency in which these agencies visit the country, as well as the amounts they are willing to pay, has had a perverse effect on security.³⁶⁰ As the market for security companies has grown so has the presence of foreign-based agencies offering their services many of which are unregistered with the government.³⁶¹ Thus, these companies profit directly from insecurity within Somalia and count on it to continue their operation, this is what Ingiriis call the “commercialization of insecurity.”³⁶² These high levels of securitization were unheard even at the height of the civil conflict in the 1990s, however, they have become common now partially

³⁵⁸ Moyo (n 9) 26.

³⁵⁹ Ingiriis, *Profiting from the failed state of Somalia: the violent political marketplace and insecurity in contemporary Mogadishu* (n 351) 14.

³⁶⁰ *ibid.*

³⁶¹ *ibid.*

³⁶² *ibid* 15.

because foreign companies are incentivized to promote conflict or, at least, promote the damaging image of Somalia as unsafe and war-ridden.³⁶³ This has created tension with the local Somali population which is increasingly suspicious of the motives of these companies and if they are positively contributing to their future.³⁶⁴ As early as 1994 the New York Times foreign correspondent Michael Maren had noted that United-Nations peacekeepers were doing something similar by “rent[ing] houses, hir[ing] trucks and issu[ing] millions of dollars in contracts” to businessmen closely associated to the very same warlords they were hoping to see defeated.³⁶⁵ These backward practices of directly enriching those that benefit from instability has been a major obstacle in growing a legitimate economy.

Secondly, emergency relief aid, often containing food and medical supplies, has been key in fueling Somalia’s criminal economy.³⁶⁶ Seaport authorities, oftentimes in collaboration with corrupt government officials, have routinely been found stealing food shipments to re-sell at a profit on the market.³⁶⁷ An estimate of 80% of food aid does not reach its destination and leads directly to the enrichment of a handful of war entrepreneurs.³⁶⁸ This problem is not unique to Somalia, but what makes it particularly grave is that food aid has been misappropriated to fuel conflict for decades now without change. Dambisa Moyo notes that competition over control of food aid was a major factor in launching Somalia’s civil conflict in the first place.³⁶⁹ It is obvious many of the problems facing Somalia are worsened by the international community and their inability to change their tactics even when they are shown to be failing. Instead, the international community should take inspiration for how diaspora networks have functioned as an alternative to aid.

While I have correctly referred to Somaliland as unrecognized throughout this section, it does not mean that it is without monetary aid necessarily. Rather, support from the Somali diaspora has been crucial to the country's economy, but the key difference is that it does not go directly to the government to be misappropriated. It goes directly to that person’s family or, more

³⁶³ *ibid* 10, 14.

³⁶⁴ *ibid* 15.

³⁶⁵ Michael Maren “Leave Somalia Alone” The New York Times [July 6 1994]

<<https://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/06/opinion/leave-somalia-alone.html>> accessed July 1 2020.

³⁶⁶ Ingiriis, *Profiting from the failed state of Somalia: the violent political marketplace and insecurity in contemporary Mogadishu* (n 351) 12.

³⁶⁷ *ibid* 13.

³⁶⁸ *ibid*.

³⁶⁹ Moyo (n 9) 60.

importantly, it often goes towards investments into local initiatives and small businesses.³⁷⁰ A parallel can be observed in more rural parts of Somalia where supported locals have developed “water and electricity suppliers, banks, small industries, the *Hawala* transfer system, internet access, radio and television stations” without state intervention nor international help.³⁷¹ These types of small business often referred to as small and medium enterprises by economists, are crucial to economic development.³⁷² Moreover, in some of the world's strongest economies, like Japan, Ireland and Italy, they often account for well over half of all enterprises.³⁷³ Thus, developing them would likely directly correlate with stronger economic performance, a decrease in unemployment and political stability. It is these kinds of unorthodox methods of support, as well as a drastic reduction in their internal presence, that the world powers and the United Nations should consider if they truly want to encourage democratization.

2.4 Promoting Democracy through Regime Change

Some attempts to promote democracy towards other nations, especially those with highly authoritarian leaders in strategically important locations, have been more forceful in nature. This sort of foreign policy, which has “regime change” at its center, has become synonymous with the United States partially because of its Cold War politics, but more recently because of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁷⁴ The latter has been written about extensively and are by no means concluded, but it is worth re-examining them here for the sake of conclusively. President Bush publicly justified the Iraq war by claiming it would “constitute a first step towards a global democratic movement in the greater Middle East.”³⁷⁵ And despite its obvious shortcomings, many advocates still believe that military intervention can be a legitimate way to implement a democratic regime into a hostile environment and argue that the Iraqi and Afghani wars were failures because of a “mistake of implementation, not of the original concept itself [...]”³⁷⁶ David Beetham, a renowned democratic theorist, details two reasons why any form of democratization

³⁷⁰ Ingiriis, *Profiting from the failed state of Somalia: the violent political marketplace and insecurity in contemporary Mogadishu* (n 351) 7.

³⁷¹ *ibid.*

³⁷² Moyo (n 9) 125.

³⁷³ *ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Reza Simbar “Iran, Democracy and International Community” (June 2007) 14 J. Int. Area Stud. 55, 59.

³⁷⁵ Tariq Ramadan, *Islam and the Arab Awakening* (Oxford: University Press 2012) 9.

³⁷⁶ David Beetham “The contradictions of democratization by force: the case of Iraq” (2009) 16 Democratization 443, 445.

through military intervention is destined to fail. The first is that invasions not only disregard the need for certain preconditions for democracy to emerge successfully, but also involve the destruction of essential institutions.³⁷⁷ Holes left in “security, administration and politics” after the removal of a government are simply not easy to replace, yet essential for a proper transition into electoral politics.³⁷⁸ Moreover, many post-invasion societies, including both Iraq and Afghanistan, see major shifts in communal power which create resentment and increased tensions between ethnic and religious groups.³⁷⁹ This breed sectarianism and conflict within politics and consequently makes elections dangerously liable to cause civil violence.³⁸⁰

Secondly, as Huntington details in his analysis on democratization, many third wave countries only gained their appetite for democracy once their authoritarian regime lost its legitimacy.³⁸¹ Thus, a democratic government can only succeed when it is considered, internally, to be the legitimate manifestation of the “will of the people” replacing an illegitimate authoritarian regime.³⁸² This can hardly ever be the case when a system of governance is violently put in place by outside forces at the expense of the self-determination and sovereignty of its citizens.³⁸³ A government that is perceived as illegitimate will naturally be met with resistance, cynicism and fuel insecurity which in turn further erodes its legitimacy creating a “self-reinforcing cycle.”³⁸⁴ Overall, while Iraq and Afghanistan may have demonstrated certain characteristics that made democratization more difficult, it is the fundamental contradiction of a process of democratization through the violent implementation of outside forces that makes this sort of project inconceivable.³⁸⁵ Similar conclusions have been drawn when looking at the use of economic sanctions, a less militaristic but almost equally impactful form of retribution.

Sanctions have been used extensively, and remarkably unsuccessfully, on two of the United States’ biggest adversaries: Iran and North Korea. Both countries have little in common geographically and distinctively different economies, however, they do share equally unsettling

³⁷⁷ *ibid.* 447.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.* 448.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*

³⁸⁰ Scott Worden “Afghanistan & Iraq: Afghanistan - An Election Gone Awry” (2010) Vol. 21, No. 3 J. Democr. 11, 21.

³⁸¹ Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (n 64) 50.

³⁸² Beetham (n 376) 446, 448.

³⁸³ *ibid.* 446.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.* 447.

³⁸⁵ *ibid.* 448.

nuclear ambitions and strong cultural anti-American rhetoric.³⁸⁶ This, along with a well-documented history of massive human rights abuses, has made them two of the longest sanctioned countries in the world.³⁸⁷ And while these sanctions have had an obvious negative impact on their economies, they have failed to bring about an end to their resilient regimes.³⁸⁸ Research conducted by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) finds that sanctions can actually boost the legitimacy of an authoritarian regime and delay efforts of internal democratization.³⁸⁹ This is because sanction, when administered by a sender that is vastly different both politically and culturally, can easily be co-opted by a regime's narrative to justify its continued presence.³⁹⁰ This is precisely why Iran and North Korea invest tremendously in cultivating strong anti-American sentiments within their borders, allowing them to portray sanctions as acts of external intimidation.³⁹¹ This triggers a “rally-round-the-flag effect” where these regimes can rally domestic support in the face of a common foe and further legitimize themselves.³⁹² Internally, this also has negative repercussions because regimes almost always escalate repression when threatened by outside forces, normally on dissenting voices and opposition blocs, which leads to greater consolidation of power into the hands of few militaristic hardliners.³⁹³ While this has been the case in Iran, this is more difficult to confirm in North Korea as its internal politics are not as complex or transparent to outsiders.

American and North Korean relations have almost always been antagonistic especially in regards to the latter’s enthusiastic pursuit of nuclear weapons. North Korea first seemed to actively pursue nuclear arms in 1989 as a way to ensure its survival as it endured political and economic instability.³⁹⁴ Its two biggest allies, China and the declining Soviet Union, had opened relations with South Korea thus drastically diminishing their relationship with its Northern

³⁸⁶ Jaclyn McEachern “North Korea and Iran Drawing Comparative Lessons” (March 2011) US-Korea Institute at SAIS Working Paper Series, 11-12 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315100784>> accessed July 10 2020.

³⁸⁷ Julia Grauvogel and Christian von Soest “Claims to Legitimacy Matter: Why Sanctions Fail to Instigate Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes” (October 2013) German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Working Paper No. 235, 27-27 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12065>> accessed July 10 2020.

³⁸⁸ *ibid* 4.

³⁸⁹ *ibid* 16.

³⁹⁰ *ibid* 10, 15.

³⁹¹ *ibid* 16.

³⁹² *ibid* 18.

³⁹³ *ibid* 9.

³⁹⁴ Jiyoung Park “Why Targets of Economic Sanctions React Differently: Reference Point Effects on North Korea and Libya” (2017) 11 *Int. J. Confl. Violence* 1, 4.

counterpart.³⁹⁵ The loss of the Eastern Communist bloc following the end of the Cold War also left North Korea without any economic partners, putting it in a state of rapid decline.³⁹⁶ Given the recent history of American military presence in the region, a conflict that saw the United States nearly use its own nuclear weapons, the North Korean regime saw obtaining nuclear arms as not only a deterrent to potential invasion but also a bargaining chip that could be used to establish new economic relations.³⁹⁷ Throughout the early 1990s the United States, Japan and South Korea kept the same suffocating sanctions they had imposed during the Korean War yet the Americans did withdraw their nuclear weapons from the peninsula to ease tensions.³⁹⁸ The two countries remained in dialogue for several years before the North Koreans agreed to the terms of the 1994 Freeze Agreement which put a halt to their nuclear ambitions.³⁹⁹ This was widely considered a diplomatic success and a rare victory for the moderates of North Korea who followed it by pursuing an agenda of economic reform and diplomatic outreach.⁴⁰⁰

This agreement came to an end in 2002 when the United States accused North Korea of developing a program of Uranium enrichment and ended its supply of oil to the country while re-imposing sanctions.⁴⁰¹ Selig Harrison, a scholar who was part of the negotiating team that reached the 1994 agreement, disputes the Bush administration's claims arguing that this was likely a “worst-case scenario” used to justify the annulment of the current deal to seek a harsher framework.⁴⁰² Additionally, Washington had grown uncomfortable with Japan and South Korea’s reconciliation with the unpredictable Kim regime and feared that the “peninsula would increasingly be driven by the policy agendas of others.”⁴⁰³ This new 2004 nuclear agreement would be an opportunity to re-insert American influence over the region while outlining more precise and assertive limits to what North Korea could do.⁴⁰⁴ Nonetheless, this proved to be a failed gamble as North Korea in 2004 was not as vulnerable or unstable as it had been in 1994 partially because of its renewed alliance China but also because its new leader, Kim

³⁹⁵ *ibid* 6.

³⁹⁶ *ibid*.

³⁹⁷ Selig S. Harrison “The Missiles of North Korea: How Real a Threat?” (2000) 17 *World Policy J* 13, 15.

³⁹⁸ *ibid* 16.

³⁹⁹ *ibid*.

⁴⁰⁰ McEachern (n 386) 15.

⁴⁰¹ Selig S. Harrison, “Did North Korea Cheat?” (2005) 84 *Foreign Aff* 99, 107.

⁴⁰² *ibid* 100.

⁴⁰³ *ibid* 102.

⁴⁰⁴ Selig S. Harrison, “Ending the North Korean Nuclear Crisis: A Proposal by the Task Force on U.S. Korea Policy” (Fall 2005) Vol. 1 *North Korean Rev.* 101, 103.

Jong-Il, had constitutionally consolidated power.⁴⁰⁵ Instead, North Korea chose to continue on the path of nuclearization and lean into its ideological anti-American and militarized rhetoric, something that has magnified following the ascension of Kim Jong-Um. The grandson of the country's founder came to power in 2011 and immediately purged the government of moderates and oppositional voices as he “reportedly killed, imprisoned, or brought to heel the senior advisers he inherited.”⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, he has tightened and the regimes grasp over dissent through increased surveillance, continued the use of imprisonment camps and aggressively pushed forward the Nuclear weapons program.⁴⁰⁷

North Korea is now considered by the V-Dem institute to be the second most autocratic country in the world, surpassed only by Eritrea, and the home of some of the world’s most egregious and systematic human rights abuses.⁴⁰⁸ In spite of the effectiveness of sanctions at impoverishing and isolating the country, every new leader has only been more dictatorial than the last. More so, although the Americans had insisted that creating a new stronger nuclear framework was necessary, North Korea has only moved closer to obtaining Nuclear weapons in the last 15 years than it ever did while bound to the 1994 Freeze agreement. Pursuing diplomatic means with the country has become more difficult because the regime is bound to bureaucratic hard-liners who prioritize military capability and self-preservation over everything else. While Kim Jong-Un’s efforts to mend its relations with its southern neighbor and the United States clearly demonstrate the regime’s desperate need for financial investment, its reluctance to offer concession and recent destruction of the inter-Korean liaison office emphasize how deeply the regime is intertwined with its own radical orthodoxy.⁴⁰⁹ There are clear similarities with Iran here, although the Islamic Republic has shown more ideological flexibility at its center.

Iran’s 1979 revolution led to the creation of an Islamic government where executive power is concentrated in the hands of its religious Supreme Leader and a small group of

⁴⁰⁵ Park (n 394) 7.

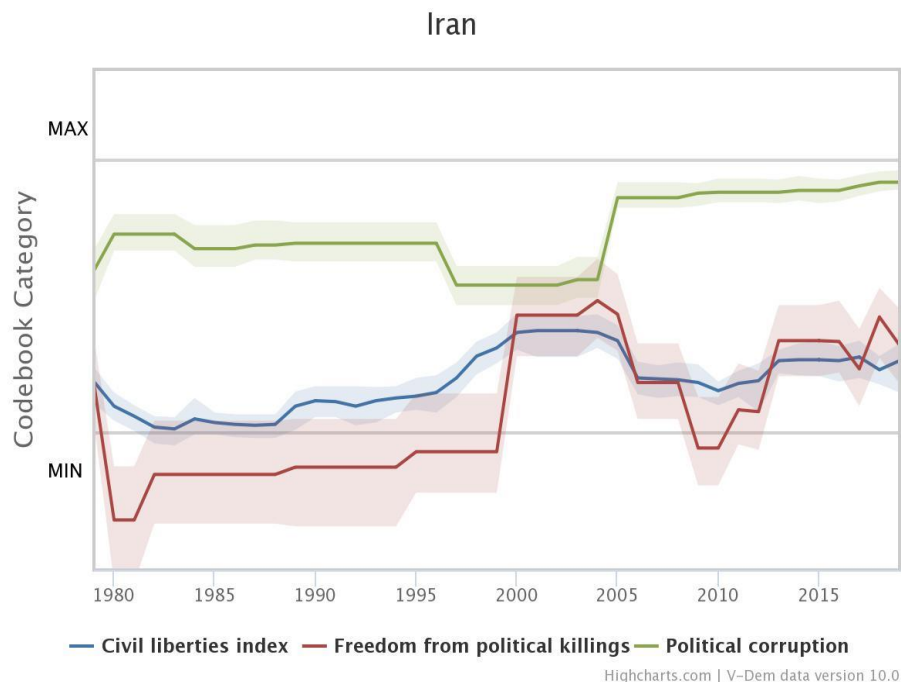
⁴⁰⁶ Andrew J. Nathan, Book Review: The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un (September/October 2019) 98 Foreign Aff 240, 240.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 25.

⁴⁰⁹ Anthony Kuhn “Kim Yo Jong, Sister Of North Korea's Ruler, Rises Through Ranks With Tough Rhetoric” [July 19 2020] NPR <<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/19/892257489/kim-yo-jong-sister-of-north-koreas-ruler-rises-through-ranks-with-tough-rhetoric>> accessed July 18 2020.

clerics.⁴¹⁰ This has made it one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world with a ranking of 141st on V-Dem's Democracy Index and an even worse ranking of 174th in the Participatory Component Index because of the religiously affiliated Guardian Council's ability to arbitrarily disqualify the candidacy of individuals.⁴¹¹ Despite these circumstances, half of the four presidential elections held since the amendment of the constitution have produced victories for moderate and reformist platforms.⁴¹² This included former president Mohammad Khatami (1997 - 2005) who made significant progress in reinforcing the functions of democratic institutions and current president Hassan Rouhani (2013 - ongoing) who sought to ease diplomatic tensions with the West.⁴¹³ This is demonstrated by the graph below which shows that political corruption and police killings significantly declined while civil and political liberties increased for the duration of Khatami presidency only to have the reverse happen during the following Conservative government.



⁴¹⁰ Caleb Harper "Iran: A Country Report Based on Data 1900 - 2012" (September 2016) No. 14 V-Dem Country Report Series 1, 7.

⁴¹¹ *ibid* 9. V-Dem Institute, Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020 (n 141) 31.

⁴¹² Harper (n 410) 8-9.

⁴¹³ *ibid*. Simbar (n 374) 60.

When reformists have been in power they have faced significant opposition from the Supreme Leader's office and his armed forces group the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) both in terms of bureaucratic obstruction and acts of physical violence and intimidation.⁴¹⁴ When Rouhani was re-elected in 2017 he made major pledges towards furthering democracy, thus indirectly weakening the supreme leader's grasp on power, and was met with threats of impeachment and the mass arrests of his allies, including his brother, under the pretense of corruption.⁴¹⁵ Additionally, external pressure, especially American sanctions on private companies that do business with or in Iran, has also undermined the efforts of reformists who are unable to bring about the economic prosperity they claimed would follow democratic reform.⁴¹⁶ As McEachern puts it: "While the ideologue can emphasize the moral foundation of their endeavors, the pragmatist is judged solely on the ends."⁴¹⁷ These "ends" have been difficult to produce as sanctions and the expensive external proxy conflicts funded by the IRGC have made the possibility of sustaining large scale reform programs non-existent.⁴¹⁸ Overall, progressive agendas are met with hostility from within the political establishment and from external actors simultaneously, making it difficult for democratization to take place. In Iran, a lot of the important progress made under the Khatami regime, including ameliorating relations with the Clinton administration, was undone by the following ultra-conservative Ahmadinejad presidency.⁴¹⁹ Similarly, improving relations between Iran and the United States during the Obama administration managed to give legitimacy and an important victory to Rouhani's moderate regime, only to be sabotaged by the following Republican presidency.

The hostility between the Iranian regime and American government has never been subtle, despite a brief period of reconciliation during the Obama administration, which culminated in an unprecedented nuclear deal, the Trump administration has renewed animosity between the two.⁴²⁰ In 2018, the United States pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which sought to monitor and reduce Iran's ability to

⁴¹⁴ McEachern (n 386) 16.

⁴¹⁵ Afshin Shahi and Ehsan Abdoh-Tabrizi "Iran's 2019–2020 Demonstrations: The Changing Dynamics of Political Protest in Iran" (2020) 51 *Asian Aff.* 1, 7.

⁴¹⁶ Simbar (n 374) 60.

⁴¹⁷ McEachern (n 386) 18.

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ Shahi and Abdoh-Tabrizi (n 415) 8. McEachern (n 386) 15.

⁴²⁰ Henry Rome "Iran Is Doing Just Fine" [November 5 2019] *Foreign Affairs* <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2019-11-05/iran-doing-just-fine>> accessed July 10 2020.

produce nuclear weapons in exchange for the lifting of economic trade barriers, and re-imposed sanctions under a new “maximum pressure” campaign.⁴²¹ This has not shaken the Iranian regime which remains economically stable and has continued to escalate proxy conflicts in retaliation.⁴²² Conversely, the burden of the sanctions was placed on the Iranian working class which saw the price of gasoline erupt abruptly and were met with striking violence when attempting to protest the rising cost of living.⁴²³ This reflected what the GIGA report concluded, “the fact that regimes increase repression when threatened – is by now well-established.”⁴²⁴ The American-Iranian journalist Farnaz Fassihi noted that such a violent clash between the government and citizens is a partial goal of these sanctions:

But all along there’s been also an unstated goal and policy, which is hoping that these punishing sanctions would pressure Iranians to rise up against the regime, to start pushing the government to have no choice but to come to the table and discuss a more comprehensive deal, because not only is it facing international pressure, but the sanctions are destabilizing the society in Iran as well.⁴²⁵

In this regard, Trump’s efforts have indeed succeeded in provoking confrontation as the 2019 protests are considered by scholars to be the “bloodiest recent chapter of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s history in terms of popular dissent.”⁴²⁶ Amnesty International's initial report estimated that around 400 protestors lost their lives in these clashes, but Reuter claims that this number is likely closer to 1500 due to the full-scale escalation of the conflict in the city of Bandar Mahshahr.⁴²⁷ More so, despite requests from the United Nations and World Health Organization, American sanctions have remained active during this period of widespread pandemic making medical supplies scarce in a health industry that is already severely underfunded.⁴²⁸ Like in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has chosen to pursue a policy of democracy at the expense of human rights while global powers stand by idly or participate

⁴²¹ *ibid.*

⁴²² *ibid.*

⁴²³ Shahi and Abdoh-Tabrizi (n 415) 1.

⁴²⁴ Grauvogel and Soest (n 387) 9.

⁴²⁵ Michael Barbaro and Natalie Kitroeff “A Deadly Crackdown in Iran” [December 3 2019] *The Daily* <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/podcasts/the-daily/iran-protests.html>> accessed July 13 2020.

⁴²⁶ Shahi and Abdoh-Tabrizi (n 415) 2.

⁴²⁷ *ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Masoud Behzadifar and others “Ensuring adequate health financing to prevent and control the COVID-19 in Iran” (2020) 19 *Int. J. Equity Health* 1, 2.

nonchalantly. While these policies claim to be in service of a larger goal, namely the implementation of a truly democratic government, this is neither happening nor does it justify the disproportionate violence poor Iranians face as a consequence.⁴²⁹

In response to the violent crackdown of the protests, the Iranian public seems to have become disillusioned with politics as low turnout rates in the 2020 parliamentary elections delivered massive victories for hard-liner Conservatives.⁴³⁰ Consequently, the parliament, which now holds an overwhelming majority for conservatives and loyalists, has pressured Rouhani for concessions leading him to seek support from China in a massive trade and military partnership.⁴³¹ As of writing this the full details of the agreement, and what its impact will be, are not entirely known, but what is certain is that American hostility has driven two powerful authoritarian regimes together in a way that neither advances democracy or ensures the protection of human rights. Overall, while there are more factors at play here than simply American sanctions, it is evident that the maximum pressure campaign weakens the opportunities for moderates to succeed while empowering militant conservatives thus pushing Iran further away from the prospect of real democracy.

This is not to say that the United States, or any other world power, should warmly embrace these regimes, but it is clear that a history of sanctions, diplomatic bluster and animosity has not led to the realization of a government that is friendlier or more democratic. Rather, it has only fueled both countries to aggressively seek nuclear weapons, invest in harmful proxy wars and form alliances with other autocrats. As Nic Cheeseman remarks, democratization is more likely when reform is less costly than repression would be.⁴³² Countries that can rely on natural resources as a continuous source of income, like oil in Iran, have a lower cost of repression because they do not need external financial support.⁴³³ Similarly, countries with weak or non-existent institutionalized political structures, like North Korea, also have low cost of repression as they are not held accountable through established means.⁴³⁴ For democratic reforms to take

⁴²⁹ Simbar (n 374) 63.

⁴³⁰ Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar “What Does the Iranian Election Tell Us?” (February 20 2020) *The New York Times* <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/opinion/iran-election.html>> July 14 2020.

⁴³¹ Farnaz Fassihi and Steven Lee Myers “Defying U.S., China and Iran Near Trade and Military Partnership” (July 11 2020) *The New York Times* <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/world/asia/china-iran-trade-military-deal.html?searchResultPosition=2>> July 14 2020.

⁴³² Cheeseman (n 258) 6.

⁴³³ *ibid* 9.

⁴³⁴ *ibid* 13.

place it must be beneficial to the leader of a regime, more so than repression, due to economic opportunities, internal pressure from opposition groups, a strategic need to improve on autonomous institutions or political values.⁴³⁵ Iran has the institutions that make it possible for it to genuinely democratize to take place while North Korea has the economic needs that make it desirable for it to open up, but for this to happen intervention must be replaced by more creative, nuanced and diplomatic methods.

⁴³⁵ *ibid* 12.

CHAPTER III: A NEW WAY FORWARD

After having analyzed a variety of case studies that demonstrate how interventionism has negatively affected the democratic development of numerous countries, if not regions, this section will look towards internal democratic development. While external factors have played an important role in encouraging democratic reform especially since the third wave, it has always been internal actors that are key to successful democratization. More so, in our increasingly globalized world, where free trade has made markets and trade routes deeply intertwined, it is internal factors that hold the most leverage in demanding political change. Economic pressure is harder to apply when countries have complex economized relationships with one another and aid is available from a number of sources eager to spread their political influence. Thus, it should be unsurprising that the last 20 years have seen popular protests movements as the main catalyst for liberalization and democratic reform. New technologies and social media have also enabled protests movements to have an unprecedented effect of diffusion which will be examined here starting with the Arab Spring.

Despite the rise of internal democratic movements, there is still room for external actors to promote democracy in ways that are less based on interventionist principles and more collaborative in nature. The second section will explore what kind of complementary role the international community can play going forward to support and empower mobilization for democracy. Since there is no consensus between academics and policy makers on what this new approach should be, I will present several options and highlight how they may work together.

3.1 PROTEST: PROVOKING INTERNAL DEMOCRATIZATION

Theories on democracy, such as those of Huntington explored in the first chapter, often accredit transitions away from autocracy to structural factors ranging from economics and natural resources to globalization and inequality.⁴³⁶ These factors were essential to the third wave of democratization and, as exemplified by the case studies above, are certainly still relevant today. However, one factor that is often under-reported or completely ignored is the agency of

⁴³⁶ Nam Kyu Kim and Alex M Kroeger “Conquering and coercing: Nonviolent anti-regime protests and the pathways to democracy” (2019) 56 J. Peace Res. 650, 651.

the population in legitimizing a system of rule or coercing change from within through mobilization.⁴³⁷ Protests have become one of the most important factors in both initiating regime change campaigns and also in determining the path a country will take after it has ousted its leader.⁴³⁸ While both violent and peaceful anti-regime protests undermine a ruling autocratic system, thus fueling a transition of power, research has shown that only the nonviolent ones encourage democratization.⁴³⁹ In fact, nonviolent movements were found to be twice as likely to reach full or partial success at implementing political reform as those that turn towards violence.⁴⁴⁰ This was exemplified during the Arab Spring where countries that remained peaceful and saw no intervention from their own or an international military, were more efficient at democratizing their institutions.⁴⁴¹ On the other hand, countries which exhibited violence early on or were subject to intervention by foreign forces achieved little and were more likely to fall into civil conflict.⁴⁴² However, despite its mixed results, the Arab Spring was an important event that would greatly influence civil resistance going forward.

The Arab Spring, a series of large-scale anti-government demonstrations across the MENA, was optimistically thought to be the beginning of a fourth wave of democracy in 2010.⁴⁴³ Scholars and policy makers were taken aback that this region that had been without any form of democracy since the emergence of military-led republics in the 1950s and 1960s suddenly erupted in peaceful, youth-led protests demanding drastic democratic reform and public accountability.⁴⁴⁴ This phenomenon began, and was most successful, in Tunisia where peaceful mobilization led to the ousting of long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and inspired a tide of emulation first in Egypt and then across 16 other countries.⁴⁴⁵ These protests were particularly unique in how they united people of different ethnicities, religious sects and political

⁴³⁷ *ibid* 15.

⁴³⁸ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 22.

⁴³⁹ Kim and Kroeger (n 436) 11.

⁴⁴⁰ Adam Roberts “The Fate of the Arab Spring: Ten Propositions” (2019) 12 *J. Arab. Islam. Stud.* 273, 278.

⁴⁴¹ *ibid* 288.

⁴⁴² *ibid*.

⁴⁴³ Laurel E. Miller and Jeffrey Martini, *Democratization in the Arab World: A Summary of Lessons from Around the Globe* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation 2013) 15.

⁴⁴⁴ Roberts (n 440) 285. P.R. Kumaraswamy “The Arab Spring” (2011) 38 *ICC Quarterly* 52, 55.

⁴⁴⁵ Kurt Weyland “Why Some Democracy Protests Do Diffuse” (2019) Vol. 63 No. 10 *J. Confl. Resolut.* 2390, 2393.

affiliation behind a simple, yet impactful demand for long-term change.⁴⁴⁶ Ultimately, the Arab Spring was not the beginning of a new mass movement towards democracy that many hoped it could be, only Tunisia has successfully democratized thus far; Egypt experienced a brief period of electoral politics before a coup in 2013 installed a new strongman similar to the one that had been ousted; Syria, Libya and Yemen fell into bloody civil wars which are still on-going; and those in between saw everything from reform to the welfare system in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Oman to the appointment of a new government by the Jordanian king and, more commonly, hardly any change at all.⁴⁴⁷ However, if the Arab Spring was a failure it was only in our expectations, the sheer lack of political institutions and the vested interest of outside forces would always make the consolidation of democracy in these post-protest societies extremely difficult.⁴⁴⁸ Although there has been some positive residue from the protests across the MENA, including notable increases in judicial and legislative constraints, its real success was in providing a model that would deeply influence civil resistance moving forward.⁴⁴⁹

Across scholarly works many predecessors are cited as a direct inspiration for how the Arab Spring manifested itself as a leaderless, youth led, peaceful set of demonstrations that relied on social media to raise awareness. Adam Roberts attributes the 2005 “Cedar revolution” in Lebanon, which saw campaigns of civil resistance lead to the long-awaited withdrawal of Syrian troops, as a precursor of the Arab Spring.⁴⁵⁰ The French philosopher Tariq Ramadan credits Srdja Popovic, a Serbian activist who was amongst the first to use text messages and the internet as political tools to drive out the authoritarian former president Slobodan Milošević in 2000.⁴⁵¹ After his success in Serbia, Popovic established a training center specializing in nonviolent mobilization, including proper planning and strategies to promote unity, which trained many young people who led protests during the Arab Spring.⁴⁵² This same training was given to the leaders of Georgia’s Rose Revolution in 2003 and Ukraine’s Orange Revolution in 2004, both movements that saw the successful ousting of a long-term ruler with authoritarian tendencies.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁶ Ramadan (n 375) 59.

⁴⁴⁷ Kumaraswamy (n 444) 60-61.

⁴⁴⁸ Roberts (n 440) 286.

⁴⁴⁹ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 19.

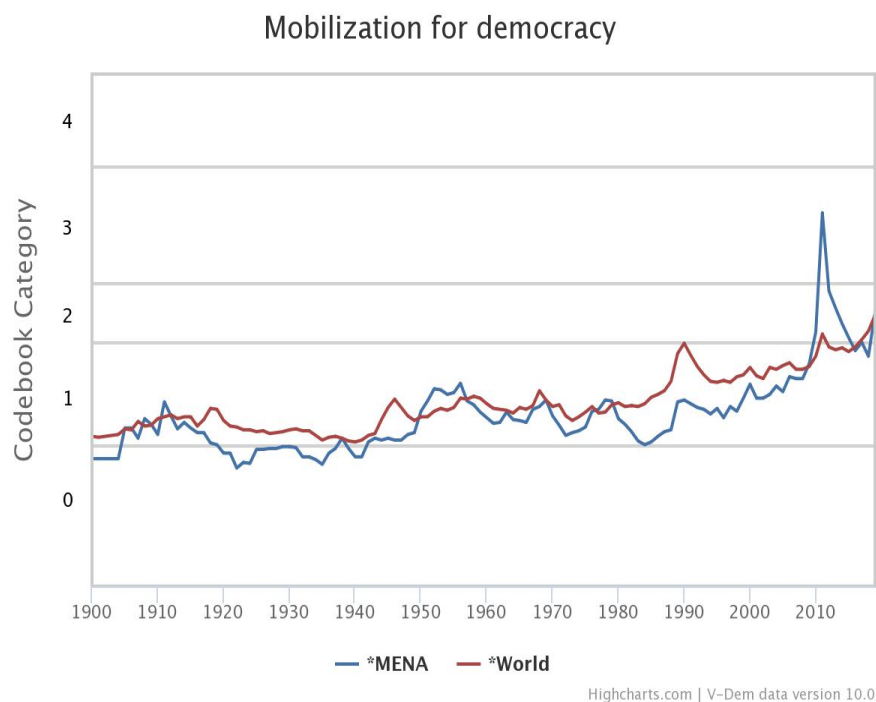
⁴⁵⁰ Ramadan (n 375) 6.

⁴⁵¹ *ibid* 10.

⁴⁵² *ibid* 11.

⁴⁵³ *ibid*.

However, what made the protest in the MENA different from their Eastern European counterparts was the advancement of social media which allowed the world to become deeply invested in its narratives and witness events as they were happening.⁴⁵⁴ This created an unprecedented element of diffusion that went beyond influencing neighboring states with similar demographics, but also very different movements in Europe and North America.⁴⁵⁵ Ultimately, the legacy of the Arab Spring is described by Ramadan as being that “entire peoples have come to realize that they had power to oust tyrants nonviolently, that dictatorship has nothing to do with some form of historical determinism.”⁴⁵⁶ In other words, the events of the Arab Spring were a global reminder that power lies in the hands of the people and peaceful mass mobilization can lead to systematic change. This is precisely why the decade after it began saw mobilization for democracy reach unparalleled heights across the world which peaked in 2019 but show no sign of slowing down.



A few months after the events of the Arab Spring had captured American audiences in 2011, the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement emerged in America largely inspired by the

⁴⁵⁴ ibid 45.

⁴⁵⁵ Perri Campbell “Occupy, Black Lives Matter and Suspended Mediation: Young People’s Battles for Recognition in/between Digital and Non-digital Spaces” (2017) 26 *Young* 145, 146.

⁴⁵⁶ ibid 142.

events in Egypt.⁴⁵⁷ OWS was a sit-in protest that began in Manhattan's financial district on the famous Wall Street which hosts offices for numerous multinational corporations, major banks and the New York Stock Exchange. The protests aimed to bring attention to income inequality and the role that the predatory practices of these corporations and banks played in causing the 2007 Global Financial Crisis.⁴⁵⁸ However, as the protest grew, both in size and popularity, they also began to incorporate issues more closely related to governance and democracy such as homelessness, political corruption and wage inequality.⁴⁵⁹ OWS was similar to the Arab Spring in that it spread through social media, had no centralized leadership and focused on easily understandable messages like its popular slogan “We are the 99%” which brought attention to the disproportionate amount of wealth, and hence political clout, held by 1% of the world's population.⁴⁶⁰ More so, the official website for OWS explicitly cited the nonviolent protests in the MENA as a source of inspiration in stating that “we are using the revolutionary Arab Spring tactic to achieve our ends and encourage the use of nonviolence to maximize the safety of all participants.”⁴⁶¹ The organizers of these demonstrations also paid homage to the Egyptian uprising by naming their first encampment “Tahrir Square” one of the main sites of protests in Cairo.⁴⁶² The OWS sit-ins came to an end shortly after they began due to a clampdown by the police, but not before mushrooming in major cities across the world and leaving a significant mark on left-wing political rhetoric in the West.⁴⁶³

A year later in 2012, another massively popular protests movement would be born on social media using the same techniques popularized by the Arab Spring and OWS sit-ins. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement arose from the frustration within the African American community at the murder of an unarmed black teenager named Trayvon Martin and the eventual acquittal of the white man that murdered him.⁴⁶⁴ Founded by three black women, BLM sought to challenge systematic racism while also creating inclusive spaces for queer and marginalized

⁴⁵⁷ *ibid* 146.

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid*.

⁴⁵⁹ *ibid*.

⁴⁶⁰ Michael Yates “‘We Are the 99%’: The Political Arithmetic of Revolt” (2013) 22 *New Labor Forum* 10, 11.

⁴⁶¹ Campbell (n 455).

⁴⁶² *ibid* 158.

⁴⁶³ *ibid* 150.

⁴⁶⁴ Alicia Garza “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement by Alicia Garza” [October 7 2014] *The Feminist Wire* <<https://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>> accessed July 24 2020.

voices.⁴⁶⁵ While the OWS movement had highlighted how income inequality corrupts and delegitimizes American, and essentially any country, democracy, the BLM organizers sought to do the same thing by highlighting racial inequalities. This is best stated by Manning Marable: “democracy is not simply ‘majority rule’, but effective state power in the hands of the masses.”⁴⁶⁶ However, the path BLM followed is distinctive from its predecessors for two reasons; firstly, it quickly morphed into “chapter-based national organization[s]” established in a variety of major cities, including some outside of the United States, which could provide “materials, [...] guidance and a framework for new activist.”⁴⁶⁷ Secondly, the movement's popularity was not instantaneous nor was it short-lived as it dealt with the on-going epidemic of racialized violence. Thus, its support often surges after a high profile case of police violence where its organizational branches can coordinate mobilization efforts.⁴⁶⁸ This manifested itself most recently in 2020 after a series of disturbing murders of African Americans, many of which were filmed and dispersed online, sparked worldwide outrage and some of the largest protests in American history.⁴⁶⁹ More so, the African American experience with police brutality has become a lens for those outside of the United States to understand the impact of systematic racism both at home and abroad.⁴⁷⁰ Many protests across the world which began as acts of solidarity eventually evolved into criticisms of institutionalized racism and police brutality perpetrated by their own governments.⁴⁷¹ It has become increasingly common for protests that emerge in response to a specific act or policy in one place to provoke similar action in far-away places such as the

⁴⁶⁵ *ibid.* The founding of BLM has been attributed to Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi.

⁴⁶⁶ Manning Marable, *How capitalism underdeveloped Black America* (First published 1983, Chicago: Haymarket Books 2015) 10.

⁴⁶⁷ Larry Buchanan and others “Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History” [July 3 2020] *The New York Times* <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>> accessed July 24 2020. Campbell (n 455).

⁴⁶⁸ Buchanan (467).

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ Jen Kirby “‘Black Lives Matter’ has become a global rallying cry against racism and police brutality” [June 12 2020] *Vox* <<https://www.vox.com/2020/6/12/21285244/black-lives-matter-global-protests-george-floyd-uk-belgium>> accessed July 24 2020.

⁴⁷¹ *ibid.* It has been far more challenging to find academic sources that discussed the BLM movement than it was for Arab Spring or OWS. This is partially because the events I am writing on here are very recent and still on-going but another reason was highlighted by Donna Hunter and Emily Polk in “Academic Responses to Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter” (Peace Review 28:4 2016) where they elaborate on how academics have been more neglectful in approaching and taking seriously the plight of BLM.

Women's March or the School Strike 4 Climate.⁴⁷² Because these movements deal with nuanced cultural issues that are systematic and more complex than the simple ousting of an unpopular political leader they have often been sidelined by politicization through partisan polarization. However, although this has probably lessened their impact in the short term, these newer kinds of movements will likely start to show their effect on politics and government more gradually over a longer period of time.

With all that being said, the last decade has presented a statistical dilemma as democracies have noticeably weakened and reduced in number while simultaneously mobilization for democracy has reached unparalleled heights. Numerous intertwining factors can serve to explain this paradox, the first being that these protests have often risen in response to autocratization and not preceded it. Such is the case in Poland where massive demonstrations for judicial independence have partially halted the PiS parties' efforts at consolidating power around its leader, but did not exist before such events took place.⁴⁷³ Secondly, while there has been a rise of movements that are increasingly successful at ousting dictators through nonviolent means, these movements are usually ill-equipped to deal with the aftermath of these situations. Armenia, Algeria and Sudan are all countries with similar profiles as those that saw uprisings during the Arab Spring and have used identical tactics to oust their respective autocrats within the last few years.⁴⁷⁴ Additionally, peaceful mobilization has also been essential to the regime change that took place in the Gambia, Malaysia, Bolivia and to a lesser extent in Ukraine and Zimbabwe.⁴⁷⁵ However, those that have followed the path of Tunisia are few as many countries struggled to establish democratic roots in a post-regime-change society due to ethnic tensions, a lack of institutional conditions or insufficient support from elites.⁴⁷⁶ While the growing track record of authoritarian strongmen being deposed through peaceful, civilian led protests is encouraging, it is rarely enough to ensure genuine democratic reform. This is where a potential new role for

⁴⁷² During my stay in Lithuania, I am proud that I was able to participate in the Women's March (or Feminism Strike as it was sometimes called on social media) in Vilnius on March 9th 2020. Another example of a movement born to address a specific situation in one country finding validity and support somewhere vastly different.

⁴⁷³ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 22.

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.* Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat* (n 8) 7.

⁴⁷⁵ Thomas Carothers "Dictators in Trouble" [February 6 2020] *Foreign Affairs* <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-02-06/dictators-trouble>> accessed July 28 2020.

⁴⁷⁶ Roberts (n 440) 286.

internal allies arises, not as those that forcibly begin the process of democratization but rather in helping the process continue once it has begun.

3.2 NEW METHODS OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

Scholars, politicians and activists are constantly looking towards newer progressive ways of promoting democracy particularly in ways that are less intrusive. Some economists have touted recent reforms to the IMF as the best way to turn financial aid into a tool that stimulates economic and political growth in low-income countries.⁴⁷⁷ Changes made to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust in 2010 aim to "bring about macroeconomic stabilization and structural reform as necessary in order to facilitate economic growth against the background of a sustainable balance of payments."⁴⁷⁸ This has been done primarily by incorporating structural conditionality into its borrowing system, meaning that a country must choose to implement certain policies to be eligible for loans, which are evaluated through performance criteria.⁴⁷⁹ In some cases, this has shown to make IMF funded projects significantly more likely to meet completion and stimulate positive economic advancement.⁴⁸⁰ However, the circumstances in which the IMF is actually able to encourage economic growth are particular, if a country's institutions are severely underdeveloped then loans will only exacerbate the problem by pumping money into a situation destined to fail and worsen as a consequence.⁴⁸¹ Conversely, a country with a moderately well-built economic framework has little to gain from loans centered on structural conditionality and is likely to stagnate because of them.⁴⁸² Countries that receive "relatively low level[s] of IMF financing" and are neither significantly poor nor well-developed have been the ones that have shown signs of progress, which is problematic because this encompasses only a small portion of loanee nations.⁴⁸³ More so, a somewhat recent study that found that members of the United Nations Security Council received 30% fewer conditions than non-members has put the legitimacy and sincerity of this practice into question.⁴⁸⁴ Many

⁴⁷⁷ Graham Bird & Dane Rowlands "The Effect of IMF Programmes on Economic Growth in Low Income Countries: An Empirical Analysis" (2017) 53 J Dev Stud 2179, 2192.

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid* 2180.

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid* 2182.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid* 2190-91.

⁴⁸¹ *ibid* 2181.

⁴⁸² *ibid*.

⁴⁸³ *ibid* 2190.

⁴⁸⁴ Axel Dreher, Jan-Egbert Sturm and James Raymond Vreeland "Politics and IMF

countries are increasingly looking towards China, Turkey, Brazil and Russia as loaners that are less prone to conditionality, but no more successful than the IMF in actually promoting democracy or prosperity.⁴⁸⁵ In the end, structural conditionality projects are, more often than not, ill-suited to encourage substantial political or economic development and thus not the ideal tool of democratization many economists had hoped for.

Election monitoring is another practice that emerged shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in order to promote democracy in newly independent states.⁴⁸⁶ The use of election observers continued to remain popular throughout the 1990s largely because the certification of an election by a monitoring body was tied to an enormous amount of benefits including foreign aid.⁴⁸⁷ Today, many countries still invite specialized monitoring bodies, sometimes even multiple organizations, to legitimize the results of an election and gain favor with the international community.⁴⁸⁸ For the most part, this has been regarded as a positive development that has helped in reducing electoral fraud, improving the quality of elections and reinforcing domestic confidence in the political process.⁴⁸⁹ However, increasing amounts of research show that while monitoring has diminished electoral fraud, it has led to more “pre-election manipulation” which can have significant spillover effects on judicial independence, administrative competence and long-term press freedom.⁴⁹⁰

Because election-day tactics like voter suppression are easily detectable to monitoring bodies and draw the ire of the international community, incumbents have moved towards larger systematic manipulation which is harder for observers to pinpoint and criticize.⁴⁹¹ This includes undermining the impartiality of Rule of Law by appointing loyalists and partisans to judicial institutions and courts.⁴⁹² In the short term, the goal of doing this is often to legally ban opponents from running in an election, but in the long-term this eliminates a judicial check on

Conditionality” (2015) 59 J. Confl. Resolut. 120, 122.

⁴⁸⁵ See section 2.2 Foreign Aid and Colonialism page 34.

⁴⁸⁶ Emily Beaulieu and Susan D. Hyde “In the Shadow of Democracy Promotion” (2009) 42 Comp. Political Stud. 392, 394.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid* 401.

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid* 393.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid*.

⁴⁹⁰ *ibid* 403. Alberto Simpser and Daniela Donno “Can International Election Monitoring Harm Governance?” (2012) 74 J. Politics 501, 503-505.

⁴⁹¹ Beaulieu and Hyde (n 486) 395.

⁴⁹² Simpser and Donno (n 490) 504.

executive power and puts the incumbent essentially above the law.⁴⁹³ On an administrative level, the practice of hiring individuals based on their loyalty and not skills or experience can significantly downgrade the ability of institutions to implement policy effectively, if at all.⁴⁹⁴ For example, voter registration lists that are purposefully falsified can have negative consequences on census data, civil registries and social services all of which are used to circulate welfare benefits and for resource allocation.⁴⁹⁵ Additionally, in the context of an election, independent media is often clamped down on while state-owned media is promoted to ensure a positive image of the incumbent to the general public.⁴⁹⁶ This eliminates an important pillar of domestic accountability as without journalistic watchdogs to monitor the government it can more easily pursue further corruption.⁴⁹⁷ Overall, while election monitoring does serve a purpose in holding transitional governments accountable, it also encourages cheating in ways that have severe long-term consequences that are not often considered. Election monitoring and structural conditionality are similar in that both ideas are positive steps towards a role for the international community in encouraging democratization in ways that are less intervention based. However, neither option is suitable as a universal solution to the issues that plague many developing democracies and can do more harm than good when executed widely without any consideration for contextual factors.

One area that has shown mild success and is worth noting here would be the use of soft pressure, either directly from a government or more often through an international organization, to encourage internal actors to adopt pro-democracy stances. International organizations in particular can be crucial in emboldening the demands of opposition groups and facilitating, when done correctly, the exit of an incumbent in a peaceful manner that takes no credit away from domestic movements.⁴⁹⁸ Multilateral efforts at promoting liberalization can shed the stigma of foreign “meddling” that is attached to more direct state action, such as sanctions, and offer a politically neutral ground to criticize the regime.⁴⁹⁹ However, their most efficient role can be as

⁴⁹³ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ *ibid* 505.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁸ Jon C. Pevehouse “Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization” (2002) 56 *Int. Organ.* 515, 542.

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid* 523.

an intermediary between a foreign government and both the business community and the army. Business elites are prone to support stability and thus have regularly been proponents against civil movements demanding radical structural change and supporters of military regimes because of their emphasis on maintaining the status quo.⁵⁰⁰ Conversely, if economic elites stand little chance of losing their financial security they are more likely to tolerate or even show support towards a change in regime, even at the expense of their political power.⁵⁰¹ International trade agreements and membership to regional organizations that stipulate consistent economic policies make democratization less costly for business elites and thus the conditions of liberalization more favorable.⁵⁰² More so, if the international community outlines its commitment to these agreements and a potential desire to increase economic partnerships with open democracies, the business community may even relish opportunities to see change.

Similarly, the role of the military can be the fundamental difference between a successful regime change and an escalation of violence into civil war. As Jon Pevehouse notes, relationships with international organizations can persuade “military officers away from their interest in domestic politics” through beneficial alliance partnerships which make the military less reliant on the support of autocrats in power.⁵⁰³ More so, socialization with military forces from democratic nations through joint missions can ingrain the doctrine of non-interference into domestic issues into the leadership structure of that military force.⁵⁰⁴ This makes it more likely that they adopt the view that “the role of the military is not to act as an internal police force, but rather to protect the state from outside forces.”⁵⁰⁵ This is especially relevant given the above discussion on the Arab Spring as the international community, led by the Americans, held an important role in dissuading both the Tunisian and Egyptian military from interfering in the democratic protests that took place in 2011.⁵⁰⁶ This was not widely known and likely would have remained that way were it not for Wiki Leaks which published many secret documents related to the close relationship between American, Tunisian and Egyptian military officials.⁵⁰⁷ These

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid* 525.

⁵⁰¹ *ibid*.

⁵⁰² *ibid* 526.

⁵⁰³ *ibid* 527.

⁵⁰⁴ *ibid*.

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid*.

⁵⁰⁶ Ramadan (n 375) 25, 28.

⁵⁰⁷ *ibid* 31.

documents showed that the American embassy had remained in close contact with the commander-in-chief of the Tunisian military throughout the protests and convinced him to “keep the army neutral” while also facilitating the exile of President Ben Ali.⁵⁰⁸ Similar circumstances, although the American relationship with the Egyptian army was not as clearly defined, led to the ousting of President Mubarak.⁵⁰⁹ In both cases, American support was key to enabling a transition towards electoral politics and successful democratization.

Ethically, there are legitimate concerns over one country's involvement in the domestic disputes of another especially when that country has an extensive history of dangerously self-interested intervention. The ends should not be used to justify the means but, with that being said, the case of Tunisia and early success in Egypt should largely be thought of as a positive use of diplomacy, relationship building and leadership to support transitional democracy in a way that empowers internal actors. Ultimately, the circumstances that began the Arab Spring were spontaneous, but the United States' decision to quickly and quietly use its status to aid in a nonviolent transfer of power is the kind of nuanced diplomacy that can save Democracy going forward.

3.3 THE NEED FOR A MORE NUANCED APPROACH

The V-Dem Institute declared 2020 to be the first year since 2001 where autocracies outnumbered democracies, continuing a decade long trend of democratic decline.⁵¹⁰ There can be no doubt that the failures of democracy promotion have been a major contributor to this problem as in most cases foreign policies based on initiating democratization have encouraged neither political nor economic growth. More so, the disastrous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were often justified by the Bush administration as projects of democratization, have created a negative stigma around democracy promotion as a tool of regime change.⁵¹¹ This narrative has been used by authoritarian strongmen to justify their consolidation of power and undermine local NGOs that do important human rights work.⁵¹² Despite this, the ongoing mobilization for democratic reform, which reached unprecedented heights in 2019, has shown that there is still a very real

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid* 26.

⁵⁰⁹ *ibid* 30.

⁵¹⁰ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 9.

⁵¹¹ Thomas Carothers “The Backlash against Democracy Promotion” (2006) 85 *Foreign Aff* 55, 64.

⁵¹² *ibid* 55.

demand for democracy and human rights even in the world's most repressive corners. While the intervention based policies of world powers have gone wrong thus far that does not mean that there is no longer a role for newer collaborative approaches to democracy building.

It is clear that for the current trend of democratic decline to be reversed there must be some drastic changes to the policy initiatives that have been tried so far. What this thesis should have made clear is that there never was a universal approach to encouraging democratic development, every country requires its own strategy specific to its contextual needs. To mention some examples from the second chapter, an unrecognized country like Somaliland would highly benefit from economic partnerships and business opportunities with the IMF to aid it in growing its middle-class. Conversely, Hungary's government reaps the financial benefits of its membership to the EU, but its civil societies and independent media are shrinking and in dire need of further support and funding. Interventionism can no longer be the rigid philosophical underpinning to the foreign policy agenda of so many countries hoping to facilitate democratization across the world. More room is needed for nuance and collaborative approaches that will show tolerance towards the sovereignty of a country and agency of its people while still enforcing high standards for human rights.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to reflect on the history of democratic rule and democracy promotion initiatives to better understand how we have arrived at this very concerning moment in political history. The urgency I felt while writing this paper only increased when the V-Dem Institute confirmed that 2019 had been the first year in over a decade where autocracies had outnumbered democracies. The problem that was highlighted throughout this thesis is one that has plagued the foreign policy of the world's leaders since democratization first emerged as a policy initiative: interventionism. The practice of intervening directly into the socio-political and economic affairs of another sovereign nation, often also while trying to secure some sort of trade or security advantage, has routinely failed at bettering a country's situation. Additionally, there is now an increasing stigma attached to projects done under the banner of democratization as they have become closely associated with unwanted regime change, conflict and the prioritization of outside interests. Overall, this thesis sought to make the definitive case that the interventionist ideology has failed to globally expand democracy and has historically been detrimental to it.

The first chapter traced the history of democracy from its earliest conception by the Greek philosopher Plato to the importance of the American constitution and the current state of democratic governance. Throughout this timeline, I highlighted certain moments that had an important impact in defining the characteristics of liberal democracy including the importance of the religious Levellers in England who emphasized natural rights, the French revolution that birthed our early conception of electoral politics, and the aforementioned American constitution which introduced federalism as an alternative to kingdoms as a system of governance. More so, in section established three loosely defined pillars of liberal democracy to clarify what standards a government must reach to be considered one. The first of these was holding regular elections that are both open, free and genuinely impact the outcome of who is in power and what their political agenda will be. Secondly, a fundamental respect for the Rule of Law which simply means that no individual, including the executive, is above the law and that judicial institutions are independent. Thirdly, a strong respect for civil liberties is essential for any genuinely democratic government and should also extend to the protection of marginalized ethnic, religious or sexual group identities. Finally, this chapter looked at the contemporary history of the third

wave of democracy and its rise to being the dominant form of governance in the early 2000s only to decline shortly after.

The second chapter looks closely at different iterations of interventionist strategies of democratization and how they have worsened the situations of the countries they aimed to uplift. The first case examined was the ambitious European Union which, unlike the other case studies in this section, has made significant progress in advancing democracy and human rights in Europe. However, a number of recent crises have shaken the organization and exposed some of its weaknesses, particularly as Eastern Europe struggles to keep up with the high standards imposed by its Western counterparts that have had significantly more time to develop their democratic culture. This has led directly to the illiberal governments of Poland and Hungary who enjoy the benefits of EU membership while transforming their states into authoritarian strongholds. Thus, it was argued that the EU's policies have not promoted long-term democratization and have significant weaknesses that should be addressed.

The second section focused on sub-Saharan Africa and how the legacy of colonialism and politicized aid has empowered autocrats who have decimated democratic institutions and violated human rights. A case study focused on the Somalian peninsula presented the dichotomy between the unrecognized nation of Somaliland which has developed a successful hybrid democracy and the impoverished Somalia which has stagnated largely due to the presence of foreign forces. Finally, an in-depth analysis was made of foreign policies that aim to invigorate regime change with a particular focus on the United States of America. This section touched briefly on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and their fundamental misunderstanding of the conditions needed to facilitate a democratic transition. As well as a more extensive look at the negative effect of sanctions and the further autocratization of Iran and North Korea in response to American pressure to democratize. Overall this section touched on a large variety of areas that hold very different demographics and have been subject to unique interventionist strategies that have all failed in their own ways. This showcased that no matter the strategy as long as it is based on principles of intervention it will likely lead to the deterioration of democratic institutions that uphold human rights.

The final chapter attempted to make sense of a statistical paradox that has emerged in the 2010s where democracy has declined rapidly while mobilization for democracy had reached unparalleled heights. This contradiction is best captured by the fact that the global share of

democracies has reduced by 5% since 2009 while the share of countries with pro-democracy protest has risen by 17% during the same period.⁵¹³ This chapter began by looking at the rise of social movements demanding democratic reform and social change like the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and the Black Lives Matter Movement that have all influenced one another. Nonviolent protests movements led by youth through social media have had success at ousting authoritarian leaders across the world in ways that foreign policies never could, clearly showing the importance of internal actors in the process of democratization. However, many of these movements struggle in the consolidation of democracy and stagnate or revert to authoritarianism. Thus, it is clear that there is still an important role for the international community to play in supporting democratization and explore several of the non-intrusive options that have emerged. This includes structural conditionality agreements attached to IMF loans, election monitoring and the use of soft power in building relationships with the military and business community to encourage pro-democracy stances. All of these methods are a step in the right direction and have occasionally been shown to be successful, but neither can work as a universal solution to the sheer variety and complexity of autocracies that exist today. Instead, I advocate for the adoption of a case-by-case approach which will use a mix of factors to promote human rights and democratic standards in countries in ways that are collaborative, nuanced and contextual.

To conclude, the field of democracy studies is still young and the mystery of successful democracy promotion continues to elude scholars and politicians alike.⁵¹⁴ Thus, this thesis would never be able to offer a simple, universal and practical solution to the complex problems democratization. Instead, I looked towards highlighting a fundamental philosophical issue in how governments orient their foreign policies and made the case that interventionism should be abandoned. Rather, the more effective solution would also be the one that requires more work, the adoption of specialized policies adapted to the specific needs and context targeted country. If there is hope in reversing the current trend in democratic decline, and there should be, it will be in using a more nuanced approach towards international relationship building.

⁵¹³ V-Dem Institute, *Autocratization Surges–Resistance Grows: V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2020* (n 141) 7.

⁵¹⁴ Milja Kurki “Democracy and Conceptual Contestability: Reconsidering Conceptions of Democracy in Democracy Promotion” (2010) *Int. Stud. Rev.* 362, 368.

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