

# EUReACT

REpresentation in the EU: ACTing Multilevel Democracy



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# Democracy in decline? A worldview

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# Is democracy so common?

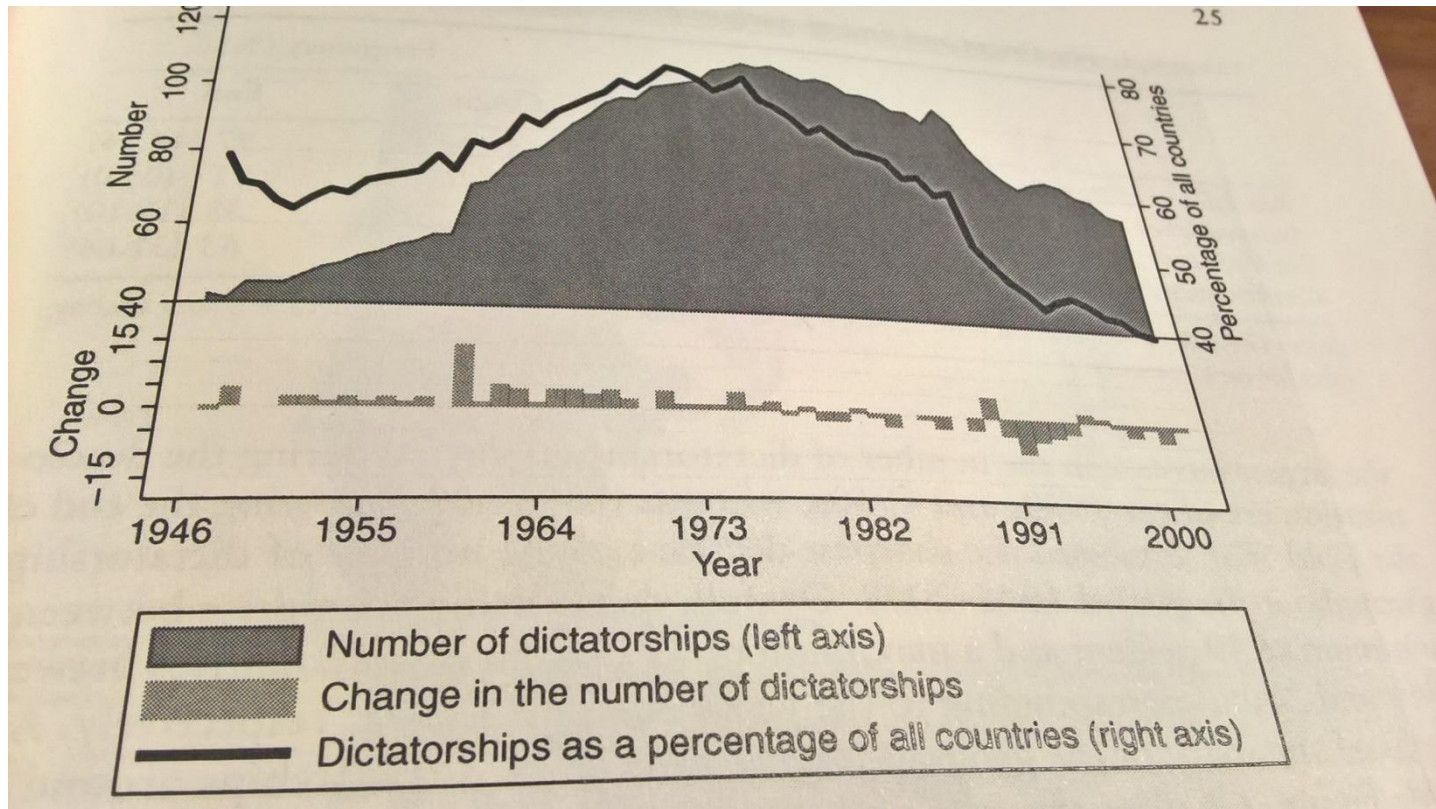
“One needs to remember that authoritarian regimes, of various persuasions, have been the norm in world history and democracy has been and remains exceptional. Hence the basic intellectual effort should be to explain why democracy has flowered in certain countries at certain times rather than, as is usually the case, to try to discover the reason for its absence from most countries most of the time”.

Ghassan Salamé (1994: 4)

# Huntington's waves of democratization

| Wave                | Period    | Countries  |
|---------------------|-----------|--|
| First long wave     | 1828-1926 | Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, parts of Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe                            |
| First reverse wave  | 1922-1942 | Central and Eastern Europe, parts of Latin America   |
| Second (short) wave | 1943-1962 | Countries liberated/occupied by the Western Allies, parts of the former European colonies, and Latin America                             |
| Second reverse wave | 1958-1975 | Former colonies and parts of Latin America   |
| Third wave          | 1974-1999 | Southern Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the former communist countries (the Middle East as the only major exception) |

# The decline of authoritarian rule between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s



# Why did democracy flourish?

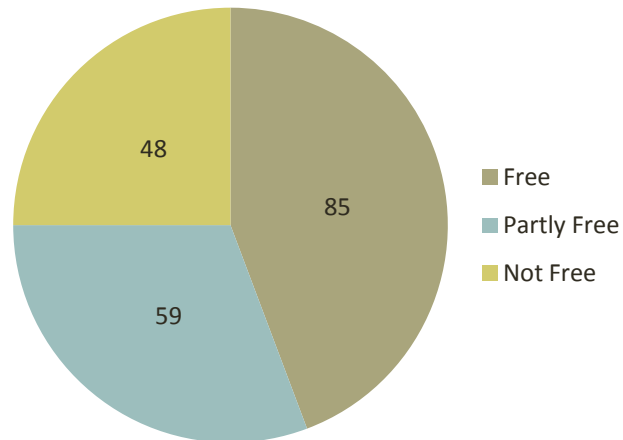
“The apparent number of choices that countries face in determining how they will organize themselves politically and economically has been diminishing over time [..] What is emerging victorious, in other words, is not so much liberal practices, as the liberal *idea*”.

Francis Fukuyama (1992: 45)

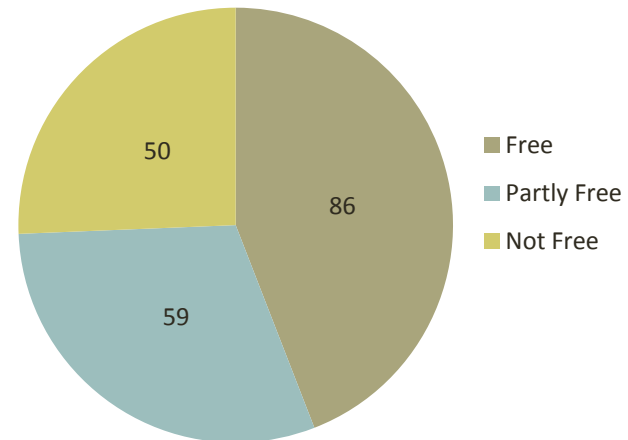
- In interwar Europe there were five different ideological models
  - Fascism
  - Communism
  - Catholicism (corporatist and integralist movement)
  - Authoritarian constitutional monarchy
  - Liberal democracy

# Freedom House

Freedom in the world: 2000



Freedom in the world: 2016



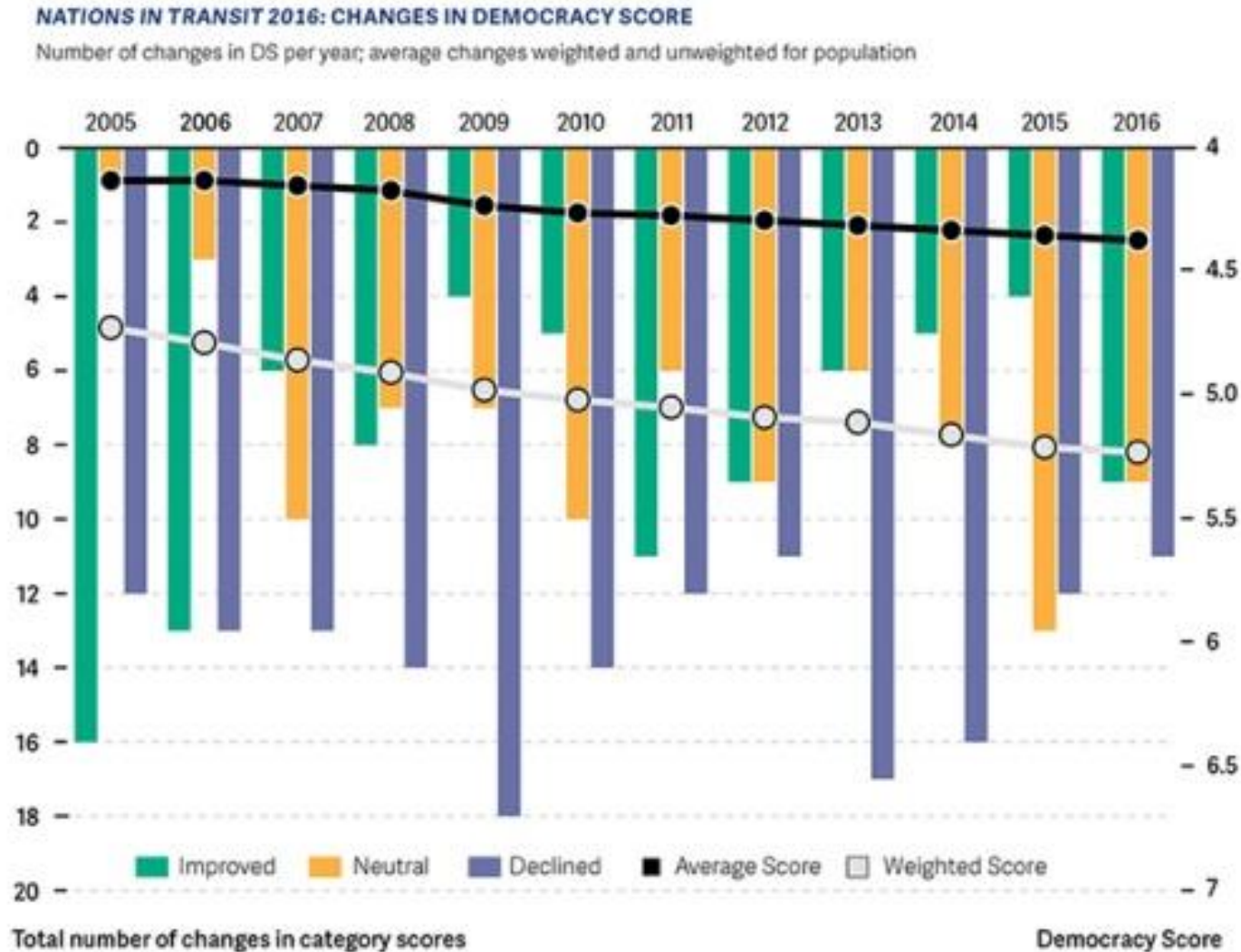
Civil Liberties and Political Rights from 1 to 7

1,0-2,5 Free

3,0-5,0 Partly Free

5,5-7,0 Not Free

# Is democracy declining in the world?



# How do countries become democratic?

- Modernization theory
- Social forces traditions
- Transitology literature

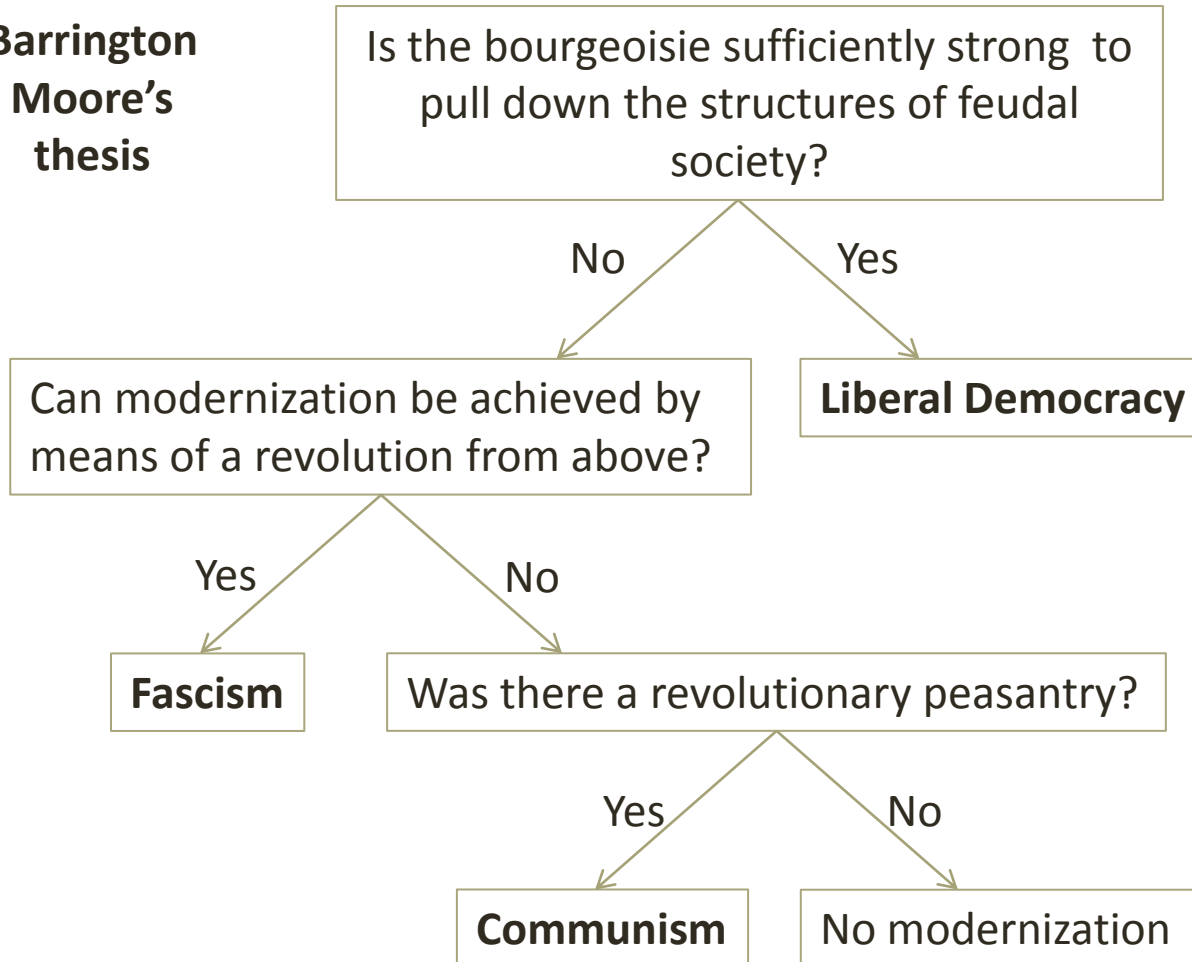


# Modernization Theory

- Lipset (1959) “Some Social Requisites of Democracy”
- Two groups of countries: European and English-speaking countries; Latin America countries
- Indices of economic development
  - Wealth (per capita income; thousands of people per doctors; people per motor vehicle; telephones, radio, and newspaper copies per 1,000 people)
  - Degree of Industrialization (percentage of males in agriculture; per capita energy consumed)
  - Degree of Education (percentage literate; primary, post-primary, and higher education enrolment per 1,000 people)
  - Level of Urbanization (per cent in cities over 20,000, 100,000, and in metropolitan areas)
- Przeworski and Limongi (1997)

# Social Forces Tradition

**Barrington  
Moore's  
thesis**



# Social Forces Tradition

Rueschemeyer, Stephan, and Stephan

Balance of class forces  
and class alliance

Transnational power  
relations

The autonomy of the  
state

- The working class is the most consistent force pushing for democracy
- Landed upper classes are the most anti-democratic force
- An alliance between industrial bourgeoisie and rural elites is threatening
- The middle classes play an ambiguous role
- Independent peasants were a pro-democracy force
  
- Geopolitical and economic dependence have a negative effect on democracy
  
- State apparatuses have to be neither too autonomous nor completely non-autonomous

# Transitology Literature

“We assert that there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners.”

O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 20)

- Actors' strategies and choices are crucial
- Great uncertainty
- A “maximin strategy”

# The main shortcomings of the transitology literature

- Overgeneralization
- No collective actors
- The relevance of the regime that is replaced

# A more nuanced interpretation

|        |        | Strategy   |            |
|--------|--------|------------|------------|
|        |        | Compromise | Coercion   |
| Agents | Elites | Pact       | Imposition |
|        | Masses | Reform     | Revolution |

Karl and Schmitter (1991)

# Signs of de-consolidation

- Citizens in all longstanding democracies are increasingly critical of liberal democracy and its institutions
- Support for strong leaders with an authoritarian posture
- Electoral successes for populist parties and leaders in different world regions

# Why is democracy in decline?

- Global economic crisis
- Perception that political institutions of the EU and the US are functioning poorly
- The vigour of authoritarian states on the international scene
- The success of China



# Thanks for your attention

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