

Fourth General Assembly

Protecting the Integrity of Democratic Elections



Forum: The Fourth General Assembly

Issue: Protecting the Integrity of Democratic Elections

Student Officer: Nina Soetenhorst

Position: Deputy president

Introduction

Across the globe, there are some countries where the population, that is eligible for voting, does not choose their head of state and their head of government; Saudi Arabia, Vatican city, Brunei, Swaziland and Oman, which are all absolute monarchies. In those countries their head of state is one and the same person as their head of government. Qatar is also an absolute monarchy, but said positions are currently occupied by two different people. All other existing countries do organize elections, so their citizens are able to vote on their head of state and on their head of government.

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) was founded in 2005 as a United Nations General Fund by the UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan to create more democracy around the world. It supports and funds projects, which each last around two years. Those projects almost always try to empower civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations. Since its creation, the UNDEF has funded and shown support for over 900 projects in more than 130 countries.

Definition of Key Terms

Absolute monarchy

A system of government which is a monarchy where one person - usually a king or a queen - who is not chosen by the citizens of that state has the ultimate authority to run the nation, while not being constrained by laws or checked by authorities. It is also known as absolutism.

Constitutional monarchy

A system of government where a king or a queen is the official head of state. However, their power is limited by the constitution. A significant number of monarchies were previously absolute monarchies, but after the French Revolution, which happened at the end of the eighteenth century, it became more common for those countries to become constitutional monarchies. The monarchs do not have



much real power in this sort of system, as the legislative branch is the government. In this system, it is easier for elections to be organized to vote on the legislative branch of that nation.

Democracy

A system of government in which the citizens of one nation can cast a vote to elect their government. It supports the idea that the people can replace their government, if it is not performing the way the government is supposed to perform, through peaceful transfers of power instead of through a violent uprising or a revolution. Democracy is also widely known under the meaning: rule by the people.

People who support democracy want a say in how they're governed. Democratic nations usually have stronger economies. They also tend to be less corrupt, because free and fair elections and their systems' check and impose accountability on their leaders. They make it possible for citizens to know where they stand, because the rules of the road are set up to apply to everyone.

Autocratic government

A form of government where one seemingly strong leader has absolute legal and political power in all matters of the state and over the citizens and makes all decisions by themselves, without being held back by laws or checked by authorities. The person who holds the power is called an autocrat. A monarch ruling a nation as an absolute monarchy, is also called an autocracy.

Decolonisation

A process where a nation, which was originally colonized by a foreign country, wants and eventually receives independence from that foreign rule and is able to organize elections and govern their nation without help from another state.

Colonisation

A process where a nation establishes control over foreign territories for the sole purpose of exploitation.

General Overview

First democracies

The Western world sees the ancient Greeks as the first people to have created a democracy. One of the first known democracies originated in Athens, which developed around the fifth century B.C.E. It



was direct, instead of representative. Every free male who was 20 years of age or older and was born in Athens was considered to be a citizen and was by law required to take part. If they failed to fulfill their duty, they would be fined.

This democracy had multiple branches: The Ecclesia, all citizens would meet on a hill nearby the city thirty to forty times a year to discuss how the city could be run better; the Boule, each year five-hundred men were chosen from all citizens, who actively had to serve in the government for one year. During that time, they were responsible for making legislations and enforcing laws. When a new law was proposed, every citizen would receive the opportunity to vote on it.

Why people think that democracy is needed

A lot of people believe that having a democracy is incredibly important. They believe that it helps to maintain law and order through the concept of power sharing. It may also provide equal rights among citizens based on religion and sex. Democracy might also enhance the ability of the people to make decisions. The dignity of the individual is able to increase and it may also create an environment where it is easy to deal with arguments and disagreements as well as the ability to correct mistakes. It also supports the idea that everyone should have the same opportunity to influence the decisions that might affect people in society. It is also widely believed that democracy creates more freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and the right to information. Democratic countries also seem better governed and they seem to grow faster.

Different kinds of party system

There are multiple political party systems that states implement to govern their country.

One party system

This is a political party system where a country is ruled either by law or in practice by one political party, meaning that one political party exists and all other kinds of parties are made illegal. Some countries do have multiple parties, but only one can have political power by law. This is called a one-party dominant state.

As for the 20th century, the majority of the one-party states were run by the communist party, including the Soviet Union and multiple east-European countries, who were under the political influence of the Soviet Union.

On October 1st 2020, there are 8 registered states, which are ruled by one party:

- People's Republic of China
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)



- Vietnam
- Cuba
- Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
- Myanmar
- Laos

Two-party system

This is a political party system where two parties dominate the political landscape.

In a two-party system there is a primary choice between two parties, one being on the left side of the political aisle, one being on the right side, which might make it more difficult to choose between for the citizens who do not agree with either political party.

Multiple examples of countries with a two-party system are:

- USA
- UK
- Canada
- Republic of Korea

Multi party system

This is a political party system where more than two parties dominate the political landscape.

In a multiparty system, there are multiple parties spread over the ideological divide. Parties on the same side of the political aisle might offer similar programs, which makes it more difficult for the voters to differentiate between those specific parties.

Multiple examples of countries with a multi party system are:

- France
- The Netherlands
- Germany
- Spain

Debate on democracy

Over the course of history there has been a lot of criticism of democracy. Winston Churchill quotes:

“No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

The ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, believed that it was reckless to allow common men to vote. The vote of an expert has equal value as the vote of an incompetent in a democracy.



The Pew Research Center surveyed adults in 24 countries across the globe. Their report shows that the majority of surveyed citizens in each country think that a representative democracy is a somewhat or a very good form of government. 77% think that this is a good way to govern their nation.

But other findings suggested some dissatisfaction with a representative democracy. 59% of respondents showed discontent with how their democracy is working and 74% believe that their elected officials do not care what “people like them” might think. And over 80% of people surveyed in countries like the United States, Spain and Argentina believe that about their elected officials. Support for representative democracy has also dropped significantly in nearly a dozen countries since the question was last asked by Pew in 2017.

Meanwhile, support for an autocratic government has increased in eight of 22 countries since 2017, the report shows. In India, two-third of respondents said they were supportive of autocratic governments, while about half of Indonesian respondents said the same.

People on the ideological right are also more likely than those on the left to support an autocratic government, and support is also especially common among respondents with lower incomes and less education, Pew notes.

For a number of years, there has also been concern about the status of democracy, mostly in the more established democracies. Much of this is based on the decreasing levels of citizen participation at elections, which might indicate a lack of interest and involvement of the citizens. A low voter turnout can question the legitimacy of the so-called democratically elected governments. In some countries, the government was actually elected by a minority of the total registered voters.

Decolonisation

After foreign territories had been decolonised and had gained independence, they needed to establish and/or strengthen the institutions of a sovereign nation – like governments, laws, a military, schools, administrative systems, etc. The amount of self-rule and democracy allowed prior to independence, and assistance from the colonial power and/or international organizations after independence, varied greatly between the colonial powers, and between the individual colonies.

Since the creation of the United Nations, over 80 former colonies with 750 million people, which was nearly a third of the world population at the time, have gained independence and have organized elections to choose their leaders. Although, those countries did not create a good economic state for



progress, which has led them to rely on more developed nations even after proclaiming their liberation.

However, the wave of decolonisation started with the birth of the United Nations and it marked its first great success. As for today, there are 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining with less than 2 million people living there. Those territories are divided between the USA, the UK, New Zealand, Spain and France to govern them.

Major Parties Involved

Greece

Some of the oldest democracies originated from Greece, which inspired multiple other countries later on in history to also become democracies. The Western world sees the democracy in Athens as the first democracy, while it still is not sure if it was. Every male who was 20 years of age and was born in Athens was by law required to partake.

United Nations

The UN puts effort into promoting democratic governance, which is a key component of their prevention work. When institutions are not transparent and accountable, elections are not genuine, public freedoms and democratic space is restricted and decision-making is not participatory. Further, the legitimacy of governments is compromised, and there is an increase of polarization and exacerbation of tensions among groups.

Timeline of Key Events

Fifth century B.C.E. Development of one of the oldest democracies in Athens, Greece

July 13th 2024 Attempted assassination on former US president and presidential candidate Donald Trump. The shooter's motive is still unclear, but it is thought that it was for political disagreements. The attempted assassination may cause more violent radicalism. Although most people remain opposed to it in principle, polls have shown that support for political violence has risen in recent years, with over 20% of Americans believing it may be justified.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events



- Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, 9 April 2015, (A/HRC/RES/28/14)
- Human rights, democracy and the rule of law, 24 March 2017, (A/HRC/RES/34/41)
- Human rights, democracy and the rule of law, 21 March 2019, (A/HRC/RES/40/9)
- Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, 23 March 2021, (A/HRC/RES/46/4)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

For several years, the UN General Assembly and the former Commission on Human Rights, which was established in 1946 to promote the international legal branch that protects our fundamental human rights and freedoms, strived to draw attention to international human rights instruments, which support a common understanding of the principles and values of democracy. As a result, in 2000, the Commission recommended a series of legislative, institutional and practical measures to create more democracy around the world.

The European Commission funds a project called Democratic Efficacy and the Varieties of Populism in Europe (DEMOS), which is built on the assumption that populism is symptomatic of a disconnect between how democratic states operate and how citizens perceive their own aspirations, needs and identities within their nations political system.

Possible Solutions

Make sure that eligible voters can automatically register when they interact with government agencies, so the voter registration and participation rate can significantly increase.

- Make the election day a national holiday, which may remove barriers to voting with work schedules and other commitments.
- Allow voters to register on the same day as the election itself, so the participation rate increases.
- Create lesson plans for schools to prepare the nation's future voters to do good research on the campaign plans for the election and on how elections in their state are organized.



- Political parties may gain seats in proportion to the number of votes that they have received, which leads to a more representative government, reduces the dominance of major parties and it helps smaller parties gain representation.
- Confront and address the legacies of colonialism that may hinder democratic development.
- Promote campaign plans more to help voters critically evaluate information, which is crucial for making good decisions in an era of misinformation.
- Address economic inequalities in decolonised countries that can undermine democratic development.
- Authorities in decolonized countries can engage with international organizations, donors, and democratic countries to receive support for democratic development.

Bibliography

BYJU'S. "Which of the Following Countries Do Not Have a Democratic Form of Government?" *Byjus.com*, byjus.com/question-answer/which-of-the-following-countries-do-not-have-a-democratic-form-of-government-saudi-arabiaunited/.

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. "Democracy Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com." *Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*, 2023, www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/democracy#:~:text=democrac
[y-](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/democracy#:~:text=democrac).

Wikipedia Contributors. "Absolute Monarchy." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 Oct. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy.

Dictionary.com. "The Definition of Absolute Monarchy." *Www.dictionary.com*, 2019, www.dictionary.com/browse/absolute-monarchy.

Cambridge Dictionary. "Non-Democratic." *@CambridgeWords*, 30 Nov. 2022, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/non-democratic.

Times Of India. "Learning with the Times: 7 Nations Still under Absolute Monarchy." *The Times of India*, Times Of India, 9 Nov. 2008,



timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Learning-with-the-Times-7-nations-still-under-absolute-monarchy/articleshow/3692953.cms.

Wikipedia. "Athenian Democracy." *Wikipedia*, 20 Oct. 2020, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athenian_democracy#:~:text=Greek%20democracy%20created%20at%20Athens.

National Geographic Society. "Democracy (Ancient Greece) | National Geographic Society." *Education.nationalgeographic.org*, National Geographic, 19 Oct. 2023, education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/democracy-ancient-greece/.

Contributors to Wikimedia projects. "Democracy." *Wikipedia.org*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 23 Jan. 2008, simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_in_Athens.

"Why Do We Need Democracy? Give 5 Points." *Byjus.com*, byjus.com/question-answer/why-do-we-need-democracy-give-5-points/.

UN Academy. "Why Do We Need Democracy." *Unacademy*, unacademy.com/content/question-answer/gk/why-do-we-need-democracy/.

United Nations. "Democracy." *United Nations*, United Nations, 2021, www.un.org/en/global-issues/democracy.

United Nations Democracy Fund. "About UNDEF | United Nations Democracy Fund." *www.un.org*, www.un.org/democracyfund/about-undef.
[Mandate | OHCHR](#)

Wikipedia Simple English. "One-Party State." *Wikipedia*, 3 June 2024, simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-party_state#De_facto_one-party_states.

Frommer, Fred. "One-Party State | Definition, System, & Examples | Britannica." *Www.britannica.com*, 24 Feb. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/one-party-state.

"Two-Party System." *Wikipedia*, 12 July 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-party_system#Australia.

"The Nature of Party Categories in Two-Party and Multiparty Systems." *Political Psychology*, vol. 39, no. S1, Feb. 2018, pp. 279–304, <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12486>.

Hafez, Nasser. "Democratic Systems: Two Party v. Multi-Party." *Lebanon Law Review*, 6 June 2021, lebanonlawreview.org/democratic-systems-two-party-v-multi-party/.



- “Criticism of Democracy.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 2 Apr. 2019, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_democracy](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2024-02-28/report-growing-numbers-are-dissatisfied-with-democracy).
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2024-02-28/report-growing-numbers-are-dissatisfied-with-democracy>
- National Geographic Society. “Autocracy | National Geographic Society.” *Education.nationalgeographic.org*, 20 May 2022, education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/autocracy/.
- “Democracy.” *United Nations*, United Nations, 2021, www.un.org/en/global-issues/democracy.
- United Nations Human Rights Council. “OHCHR | HRC | Introduction.” *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/chr/commission-on-human-rights.
- European Research Executive Agency. “A New Push for Democracy - European Commission.” *Rea.ec.europa.eu*, 14 Sept. 2023, rea.ec.europa.eu/news/new-push-democracy-2023-09-14_en.
- European Commission. “Democratic Efficacy and the Varieties of Populism in Europe | DEMOS Project | Fact Sheet | H2020.” *CORDIS | European Commission*, cordis.europa.eu/project/id/822590.
- Wikipedia Simple English. “Decolonization.” *Wikipedia*, 20 July 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization#Nation-building.
- “United Nations Maintenance Page.” *Un.org*, 2017, www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en.
- Nations, United. “Decolonization.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization#:~:text=The%20wave%20of%20decolonization%2C%20which.
- Textbook. “What Is Decolonisation - Meaning, Scope, Causes & More | UPSC.” *Testbook*, testbook.com/ias-preparation/decolonisation#:~:text=Decolonization%20symbolized%20freedom%20and%20national.
- “Colonization.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 10 Oct. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonization.
- “About UNDEF | United Nations Democracy Fund.” *Www.un.org*, www.un.org/democracyfund/about-undef.



- “UNDEF Projects | Democracy Fund.” *W*www.un.org,
www.un.org/democracyfund/projects.
- Council of Europe. “Democracy.” *Council of Europe*, 2012,
www.coe.int/en/web/compass/democracy.
- European Commission. “Democracy.” *International-Partnerships.ec.europa.eu*,
international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/peace-and-governance/democracy_en.
- Roser, Max, et al. “Democracy.” *Our World in Data*, 2022,
ourworldindata.org/democracy.
<https://study.com/learn/lesson/absolute-monarchy-characteristics-examples.html#:~:text=Absolute%20monarchy%20is%20a%20system,monarchy%20is%20also%20called%20absolutism>.
- Wikipedia Simple English. “Absolute Monarchy.” *Wikipedia*, 4 Nov. 2020,
simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy.
- “Autocracy.” *Wikipedia*, 25 Oct. 2020, simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autocracy.
- “Constitutional Monarchy - Simple English Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.”
Wikipedia.org, 2011, simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy.
- Indiana University. “Why People Prefer Democracy: Comments on Congress: Hamilton’s Views: Programs: Center on Representative Government: Indiana University.” *Center on Representative Government*, 11 Sept. 2019,
corg.iu.edu/programs/hamilton-views/comments-on-congress/Why%20People%20Prefer%20Democracy.html.
- United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. “OHCHR | OHCHR and Democracy.” *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/en/democracy.
<https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/update-on-the-fbi-investigation-of-the-attempted-assassination-of-former-president-donald-trump>
- Rhodes, Christopher. “What the Trump Assassination Attempt Means for US Politics.” *Al Jazeera*, 14 July 2024,
www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/7/14/the-trump-assassination-attempt-a-race-reset-and-more-polarisation.
- Gendler, Alex. “How Will the Assassination Attempt against Trump Impact the Election?” *Voice of America*, 19 July 2024,



www.voanews.com/a/how-will-the-assassination-attempt-against-trump-impact-the-election-/7702990.html.

