

Democracy in peril: What can we do?

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Three questions

- 1 Is there really a crisis of democracy?
- 2 Is there an added risk to fundamental values in supersized polities like the United States?
- 3 What can public affairs schools do to protect fundamental values?

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Clarifying terms

- Not just democracy
 - A system of rule based on free and fair elections
- Related values:
 - Freedom of thought, expression, and association
 - Rule of law
 - Recognition of a person's human dignity
 - Protection against discrimination
- The fundamental human rights
 - Enumerated in the 1948 UDHR and elsewhere
- And academic freedom



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Aspects of the American crisis

- Political violence
- Contestation over voting rights
- Red/Blue polarization
- Degradation of discourse and the infosphere
- Influence of money in politics
- Dysfunctionality in federal government

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Evidence of crisis internationally

ANOTHER YEAR OF DECLINE FOR LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

- The global decline during the past 10 years is steep and continues in 2020, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.
- The level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2020 is down to levels last found around 1990.



Democracy was dealt a major blow in 2020. Almost 70% of countries covered by The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index recorded a decline in their overall score, as country after country locked down to protect lives from a novel coronavirus. The global average score fell to its lowest level since the index began in 2006.



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Hubris . . .

We are fortunate to be alive at this moment in history.
Never before has our nation enjoyed so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis and so few external threats. -- Bill Clinton, 2000

The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom -- **and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.** -- George W. Bush, September 2002

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by 2015 it should edge into the Partly Free category. Indeed, I will go further and predict that, should China's economy and the educational attainments of its population continue to grow as they have in recent years, the more than one-sixth of the world's people who live in China will by 2025 be citizens of a country correctly classed as belonging to the Free nations of the earth.

Rowen, Henry S. (2007). When Will the Chinese People Be Free? *Journal of Democracy* 18(3): 38-52.

democratization. We predict that China's socioeconomic liberalization process and its experimentation with local-level democracy will spill over to the national level so that China will make a transition to a liberal democracy within the next two decades.¹⁴

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 190-191.

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. . . And despair

Is There Something Wrong with Democracy?

Are Western Values Losing Their Sway?

Is this how democracy ends?

Is America a Failing State?

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Reality check #1

- Hubris was unjustified
- Most states are new and fragile
- Democracy is a relatively new form of governance
- Controlling political violence is a longstanding challenge in the United States
- **More** | <http://bit.ly/ConvJan>

THE CONVERSATION
What those mourning the fragility
of American democracy
get wrong

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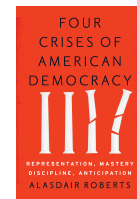
Reality check #2

- “Crises of democracy” are a recurrent phenomenon
 - 1910s, 1930s, 1970s
- Often associated with the collapse of a governing paradigm
- Search for a new paradigm is painful, slow, and necessary
- **More** | <https://amzn.to/3u4VMti>

The Crisis of Democracy

By James Reston

WASHINGTON, June 28—It is hard to travel in Europe these days, or even to live in Washington, without recognizing that liberal democracy is now in serious trouble in the world. We are living in a time of widespread doubt about the capacity of free societies to deal with the economic, political and philosophical problems of the age.



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End of the millennial paradigm

- The Reagan-Clinton consensus
- Repeated security shocks:
 - 9/11
 - Natural disasters
 - Financial crisis
 - Pandemic
- Improvisation: “Whatever it takes”
- Emergence of new paradigm
- **More** | <https://bit.ly/3u7NpNx>



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A different framing: The age of supersized polities

- India, 1.6 billion people by 2050
- China, 1.4 billion
- European Union, 440 million
- United States, 400 million
- Forty percent of planet will live in these four polities
- Each will have more people than British Empire at peak
- India, China will each exceed world population in 1880
- Median population of other 162 states: 12 million

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Can polities this large be governed?

- Problems of size, diversity, and complexity
- Powerful “centrifugal forces”
- Questions:
 - Can these “empire states” be kept intact?
 - Can they thrive?
 - Can they adapt to strains and shocks?
 - **Can they do this while respecting human rights?**
- John Stuart Mill, 1861:
 - “Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. [W]ithout fellow-feeling . . . representative government cannot exist.”

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Four governance strategies

- **China**
 - Unitary party state
 - “soft authoritarianism”
 - Repression in Xinjiang, Hong Kong
 - Justification: stability, harmonious society
- **India**
 - “Quasi-federal” system
 - Constitutional democracy
 - Recent shift to “electoral autocracy”
 - Rise of Hindutva nationalism
 - Erosion of civil liberties and checks on executive power
- **United States**
 - Federal system
 - Constitutional democracy
 - Controversies over civil and political rights
 - Gridlock at the center
- **European Union**
 - Highly decentralized
 - Limited democracy at the center
 - Mixed democratic models at country level
 - “Rule of law” problems in Poland, Hungary

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The American predicament: Cohesion and democracy

- Old formula: manage divisions through
 - “States’ rights” and differentiated citizenship
 - Limited role at center
 - Limited democracy at center: elite accommodation
- Mid-20th century trends:
 - Growing role of central government
 - Declining tolerance for differentiated citizenship
 - Intensifying and weakly regulated democratic competition
- The early 21st century predicament:
 - Resurgence of old divisions
 - Inability of the center to manage divisions
 - Will tradeoffs (rights, democracy) be necessary?

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How can public affairs schools promote democracy?

- Schools should commit to the promotion of human rights and academic freedom
- Accrediting organizations should commit to the promotion of human rights and academic freedom
- Curriculum should address human rights
- Schools and accrediting organizations should have explicit policy about speaking out on human rights

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Role of accrediting bodies

- NASPAA: “a global organization . . . setting the global standard in public service education”
- Mostly US programs, but increasing number from other countries
 - UMass Amherst and Boston are members
- NASPAA uses standards to accredit programs
 - UMB is an accredited program
- NASPAA also makes statements about public policy controversies

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What do NASPAA standards require?

2. Public Service Values

The mission, governance, and curriculum of an eligible program shall demonstrably emphasize public service values. Values are important and enduring beliefs, ideals and principles shared by members of a community about what is good and desirable and what is not. Public service values consist of the values that should guide public and nonprofit professionals. NASPAA's public service values are consistent with globally recognized sustainable development goals to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. NASPAA's public service values include, but are not limited to: pursuing the public interest with accountability and transparency; serving professionally with competence, efficiency, and objectivity; acting ethically so as to uphold the public trust; cultivating global, regional, and local awareness; and promoting participation and inclusiveness by demonstrating respect, equity, and fairness in dealings with members of society, stakeholders, and fellow public servants. NASPAA expects an accreditable program to define the boundaries of the public service values it emphasizes, be they procedural or substantive, as the basis for distinguishing itself from other professional degree programs.

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What isn't mentioned in the NASPAA standards?

- Democracy
- Human rights
- Rule of law
- Academic freedom

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Countries with NASPAA-accredited programs

Country	EIU Democracy Index 2021	V-Dem Report 2021
China	Authoritarian	Closed Autocracy
Egypt	Authoritarian	Electoral Autocracy
Qatar	Authoritarian	Closed Autocracy
Venezuela	Authoritarian	Electoral Autocracy
Vietnam	Authoritarian	Closed Autocracy
Colombia	Flawed democracy	Electoral Democracy
USA	Flawed democracy	Liberal Democracy
New Zealand	Full democracy	Liberal Democracy
South Korea	Full democracy	Liberal Democracy

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Recent NASPAA statements

- Black Lives Matter: June 11, 2020
 - “We stand for human dignity and social justice for all”
- OMB ban on “Critical Race Theory”: October 12, 2020
 - “as public service scholars of common purpose: democratic governance, representation and equality”
- Schedule F political appointees: October 30, 2020
 - “uphold the principles of merit on which American democracy has long depended”
- Insurrection, January 8, 2021
 - “a shared commitment to the US Constitution and democratic governance”

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What NASPAA doesn't discuss

CHINA 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

The People's Republic of China is an authoritarian state in which the Chinese Communist Party is the paramount authority. Communist Party members hold

Genocide and crimes against humanity occurred during the year against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes were continuing and include: the arbitrary imprisonment

Authorities in Xinjiang continued to disappear or detain Uyghur academics and intellectuals. Some prominent officials and academics were charged with being “two-faced” a euphemism referring to members of minority groups serving state

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July 31, 2020

With Security Law as a Cudgel, Beijing Cracks Down on Hong Kong

Now those hopes have been dashed. [Brushing aside international criticism and sanctions](#), the [Chinese government](#) has used the letter and spirit of the law to crush Hong Kong's pro-democracy opposition with surprising ferocity.

In the last week alone, the authorities have [ousted a tenured law professor](#) at the University of Hong Kong who has been a key figure in the city's democracy movement, and arrested [four young activists](#) on suspicion that they expressed support online for independence. They have also barred a dozen candidates from running for the legislature, using opposition to the security law as new ground for disqualification.

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Xi joins Marx and Mao as required course at China's top colleges

October 4, 2020 09:30 JST

BEIJING -- China has instituted classes at elite universities that teach the philosophy of President Xi Jinping, a move that follows a crackdown on intellectuals who have spoken out against the Chinese Communist Party power structure.

China Update No. 7/2019 (March 22 – April 4, 2019)

Prominent Tsinghua law professor suspended after criticizing Xi Jinping

Prestigious Tsinghua University has reportedly suspended a prominent law professor who last summer warned of deepening repression under state and party leader Xi Jinping. According to media reports, the university put Xu Zhangrun under investigation and suspended him from all teaching and research activities.

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Time: 2020-12-09 17:43 Source: Study Times Editor: Wang Xiaolei

Learn deeply and thoroughly understand Xi Jinping's thoughts on the rule of law, accelerate the promotion of comprehensive rule of law

Chen Yixin, Secretary-General of the Central Political and Legal Committee and Deputy Director of the Office of the Central Committee for the Rule of Law

guarantee the rule of law The people live and work in peace and contentment. Adhere to the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics as the only correct path, proceed from China's national conditions and reality, follow the path of rule of law that suits oneself, never copy other countries' models and practices, and never follow the so-called "constitutional government" and "three powers" in the West. , "Judicial independence" approach.

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A better approach

- Recognize that this is the critical moment
- Speak up for human rights and academic freedom
 - Curriculum
 - Accreditation standards
 - Public statements
- Continue a practice of engagement with scholars and practitioners from non-democratic systems

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