



Becoming a Better Informed Citizen & Voter

Week 1
Surveying Democracy

Information Cutoff Date:
January 2024

INSTRUCTOR: MICHAEL W. COLLIER

- ▶ First career as **U.S. Coast Guard officer**



- ▶ Second career in **Higher Education**



- ▶ Retired Activities:

- ▶ Instructor, Osher Institute, College of William & Mary
- ▶ Docent, Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA

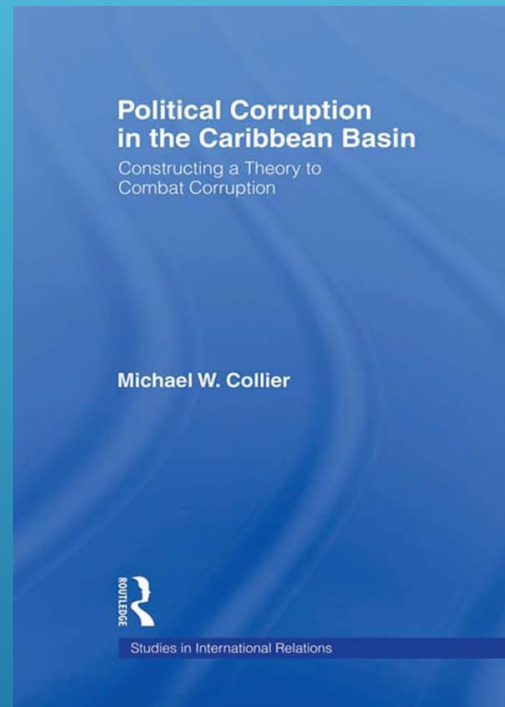


- ▶ Education:

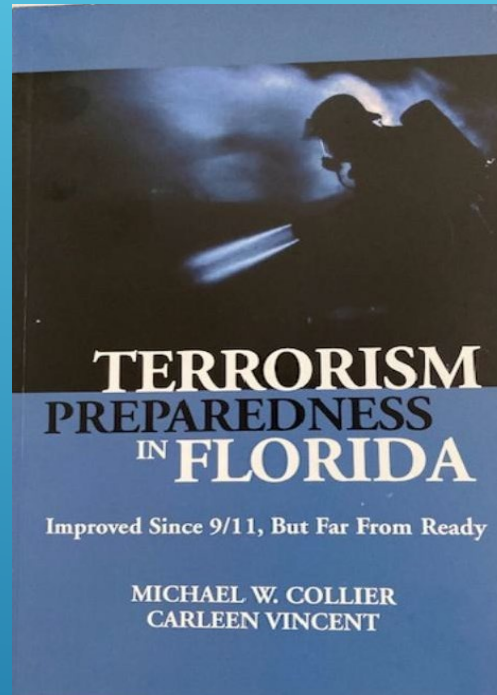
- ▶ BS, U.S. Coast Guard Academy
- ▶ MS of Strategic Intelligence, U.S. Defense Intelligence College
- ▶ Ph.D., International Relations (Foreign Policy and Security Studies), Florida International University



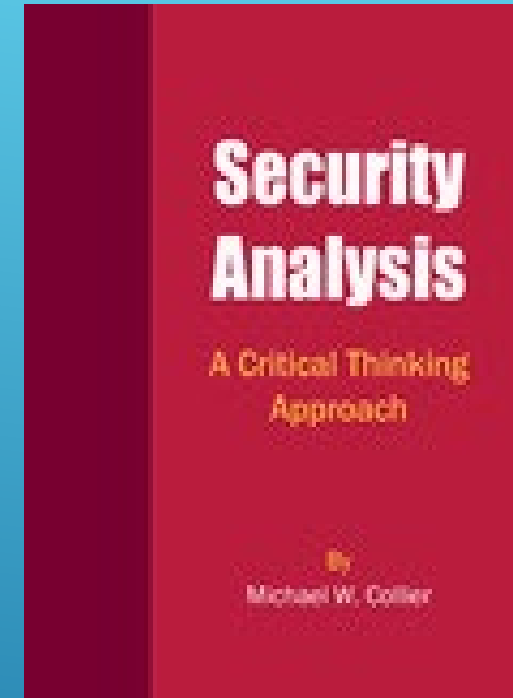
INSTRUCTOR'S PUBLISHED BOOKS



Routledge Press,
orig. 2005, Amazon
Kindle, paperback,
hardcover reprint,
2013



FIU, paperback
only, 2005



EKU Encompass, free
downloadable
ebook only, 2023

INSTRUCTOR'S FUTURE BOOK PROJECTS

**Critical Belief Analysis
for
Security Studies**

**Barnet D. Feingold
&
Michael W. Collier**

EKU Encompass, free
downloadable
ebook only, possible
Winter 2023-2024

**Brain Dead Nation:
How Civic
Education and
Critical Thinking
May Help Save
U.S. Democracy**

Michael W. Collier

Publisher not
selected, possible
Winter 2024-2025



This course may challenge your core beliefs on several issues. The intent is not for you to abandon your core beliefs, but to **think critically to understand the full context and differing perspectives on issues.** Students should be aware this course might cover material some find disturbing. Students who feel uncomfortable about hearing and discussing sensitive topics should see the instructor.

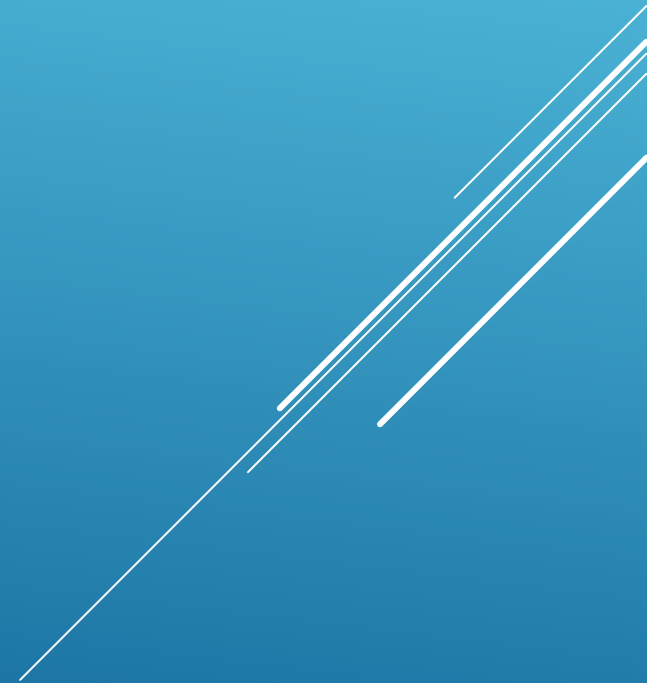
Becoming a Better Informed Citizen & Voter

- ▶ Week 1 – Surveying Democracy
 - ▶ Week 2 – Understanding Political Cultures
 - ▶ Week 3 – Assessing Information & Logic
 - ▶ Week 4 – Applying Critical Thinking
-
- ▶ Presentation slides posted on Osher Institute website



COURSE OVERVIEW

FIRST SOME KEY DEFINITIONS





BATTLE OF THE SYSTEMS



REPUBLIC VS. DEMOCRACY

	REPUBLIC	DEMOCRACY
Definition	A system of government where the power is held by the people through their elected representatives.	A system of government where the power is held by the people directly or through elected representatives.
Head of State	A president or a monarch	A president or a monarch
Elections	Elections are held to choose representatives who will make decisions on behalf of the people.	Elections are held to choose representatives and also to make direct decisions through referendums.
Majority Rule	Minority rights are protected, and decisions are made by elected representatives who are accountable to the people.	Majority rule is followed, and decisions are made by the majority of the people.
Examples	United States, France	Switzerland, India

Both
definitions
change by
source

Republic ≈
Representative
Democracy

Democracy ≈
Combination
of Direct and
Representative
Democracies



- ▶ Greek Founders: rule by the people
- ▶ More Modern: a system of government with regular, free and fair elections, in which all adult citizens have the right to vote and possess basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech and **association** Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics* (1989)

MORE DEFINING DEMOCRACY



THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY

▶ Direct Democracy


- ▶ Stone Age group (clan/tribe) decision-making
- ▶ Greek City-State Governance (6th to 2nd Cent. BCE)
- ▶ Roman Republic Governance (509 to 27 BCE)

▶ Representative Democracy

- ▶ Later Roman Republic Governance

Both Greek and Roman experiments ended in return of autocracies



1. Patriotism (love of one's country)
2. Respect for the law
3. Honesty and trustworthiness
4. Courtesy and respect for the rights of others
5. An informed voter 
6. Participant in school and community **(Being Better Citizen)**
7. Responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance

Democratic Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

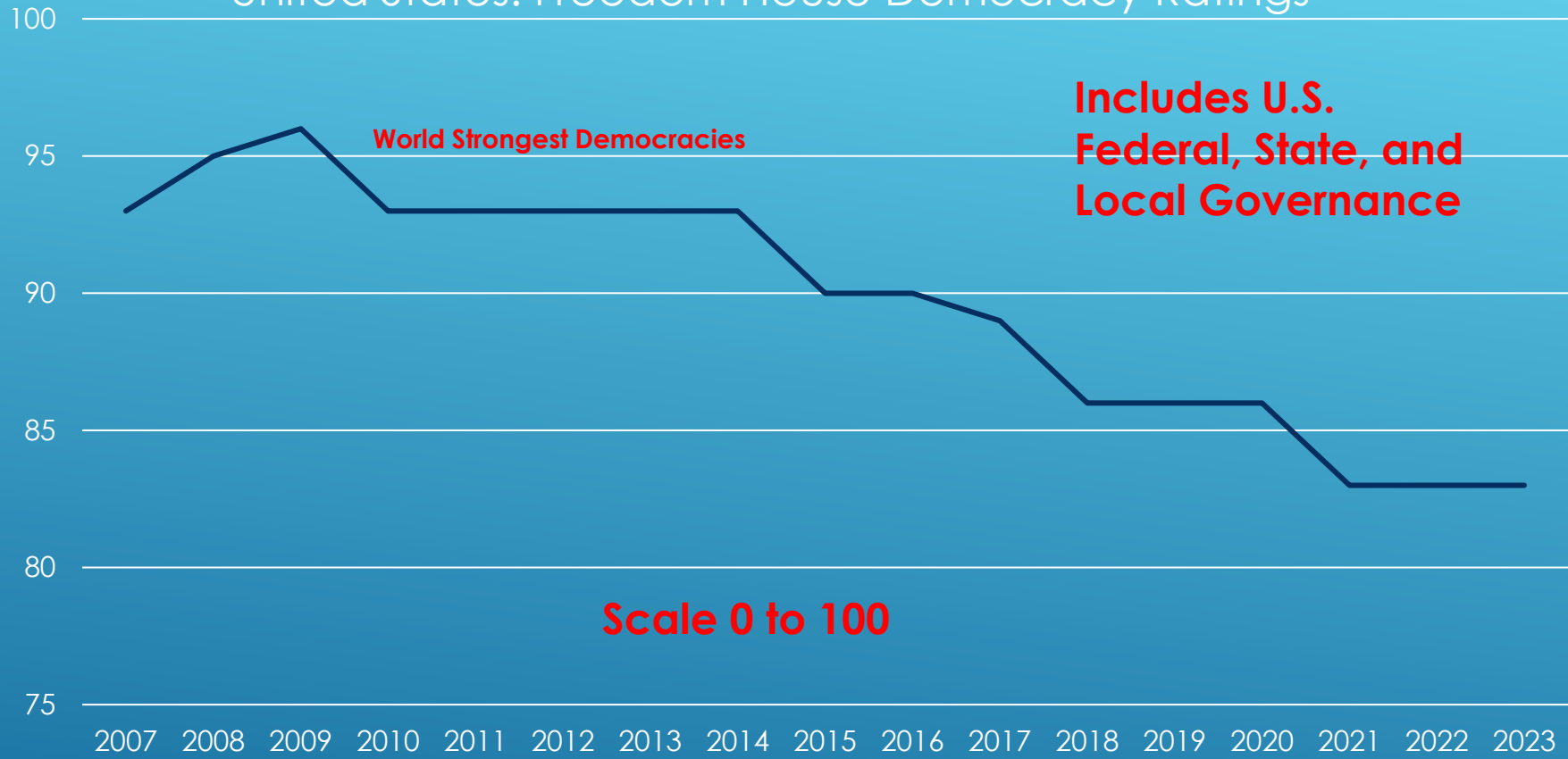
(As Taught in U.S. Elementary and Secondary Schools)

- ▶ NBC News Poll (November 2022) found “Threats to Democracy” as biggest worry (23%) of U.S. mid-term Congressional voters
- ▶ A 2018 survey found two-thirds of existing U.S. citizens could not pass the United States Citizenship Test (65 years old and older – 79% passed, 45 years old and younger – 19% passed)
- ▶ NGO Freedom House’s annual “Freedom in the World” report indicates a decrease in ratings of “U.S. Democracy” since 2009 (See next slide)



WHY THE WORRIES OVER U.S DEMOCRACY?

United States: Freedom House Democracy Ratings



— United States: Freedom House Democracy Ratings

Ratings include assessments of civil liberties and political rights based on 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- ▶ William the Conqueror (1028-1087 CE) called aristocratic meetings of selected nobles, knights, and senior clergy to advise him on governing his kingdom—England, Wales, & Normandy.
- ▶ English King John I (1166-1216) signed the 1215 Magna Carta establishing a number of rights applying to English nobles and stipulated the king would periodically summon into service an advisory group known as the Great Council of nobles and senior clergy—dubbed The Parliament in 1236
- ▶ English King Edward III (1312-1377) in 1341 separated the Parliament into two houses—the House of Lords for nobility and the House of Commons for commoners (knights, lords, & others called to Parliament by the king). Edward III allowed Parliament a larger role in governing England.
- ▶ English King Charles I (1600-1649) precipitated the English Civil Wars (1642-1660) between the Cavaliers (Royal supporters) and the Roundheads (Parliamentarian supporters) that changed English governance forever.



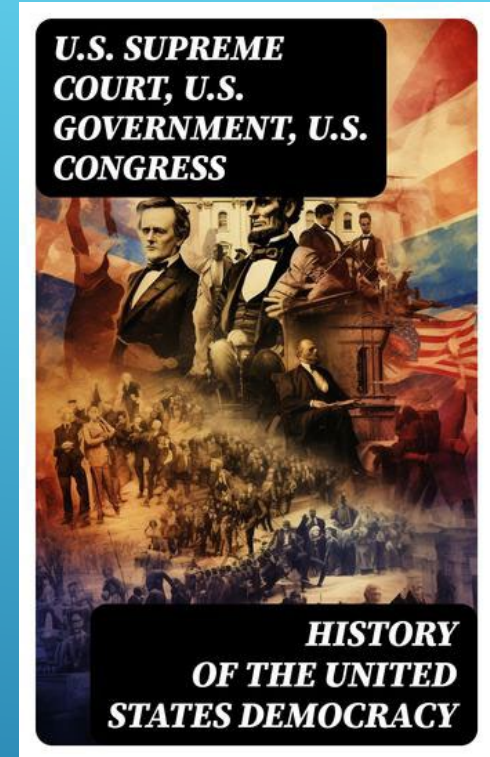
Nobles:

- Duke/Duchess
- Marquis/Marchioness
- Earl (Count non-UK)/Countess
- Vice-Count/Vice-Countess
- Baron/Baroness

- Commoner Social Ranks:** Baronets, Knights, Lords, Esquires, Gentlemen

EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH GOVERNANCE

- From 1607 to 1776 – Colonists were governed under British Colonial Rule including king appointed governors, and local king appointed councils, plus locally elected legislatures and county officials.
- In March 1781, during the Revolutionary War, the 13 colonies (later states) began governing under the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union—this form of governance was a significant failure and was replaced in June 1788 by the new U.S. Constitution.
- The U.S. Constitution was ratified in June 1788 and remains (as amended) still in effect today. This was the first document establishing a hybrid of direct and representative democracy (republicanism) with a central (federal) governing structure and with members individual states holding more limited sovereignty.



EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN GOVERNANCE

- ▶ 1786 Annapolis Convention (Alexander Hamilton organizer)
- ▶ 1787 Philadelphia Convention (aka Constitutional Convention)
- ▶ 55 representatives from 12 states (Rhode Island did not attend) – many of the most learned and experienced men in USA
 - ▶ George Washington (VA) elected Convention President.
 - ▶ James Madison (VA) kept the Convention Minutes, drafted Bill of Rights
 - ▶ Alexander Hamilton (NY) was behind the scenes instigator
 - ▶ Gouverneur Morris (PA) head of committee drafting final Constitution
 - ▶ Notably missing were John Adams (MA) and Thomas Jefferson (VA), Confederation ministers to GB (Adams) and France (Jefferson)

DRAFTING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

IDEAS ON GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Many of the Philadelphia representatives were lawyers (some educated in English universities). All were experienced in British Colonial Rule and the disaster of decentralized governance under the Articles of Confederation
- ▶ Some were ex-state governors or had served in the Confederation Congress. Most had direct governing or military experience at the colonial, state, or Confederation levels.
- ▶ Many were familiar with European Political Philosophy, including:
 - ▶ Englishman Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)—basis for legitimate government including need for a strong central government
 - ▶ Englishman John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government* (1689)—considered father of modern political liberalism—included (among other ideas) sharing of power between executive & legislature, rule by consent of the people, citizen rights and responsibilities (and government responsibility to protect those rights), religious toleration, separation of church & state
 - ▶ Frenchman Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Law* (1748)—theory on the separation of powers
 - ▶ Genevan Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (1754) and *The Social Contract* (1762)—foundations of modern political and social thought—in particular the role of government in light of emerging commercial trade (industrial revolution)

ISSUES DISCUSSED IN PHILADELPHIA

- ▶ Separation of Power (Checks & Balances)
- ▶ Tyranny of the Majority
- ▶ Voting Rights
- ▶ No Peerage/Social Ranks
- ▶ Slavery
- ▶ Individual & State Rights
- ▶ Difficulty to Amend



ROAD TO RATIFICATION

Philadelphia Convention met from May 25, 1787 to Sept. 17, 1787. On Sept. 17 the draft U.S. Constitution was sent to the states for ratification.

The Convention minutes were kept secret until after James Madison's death in 1836.

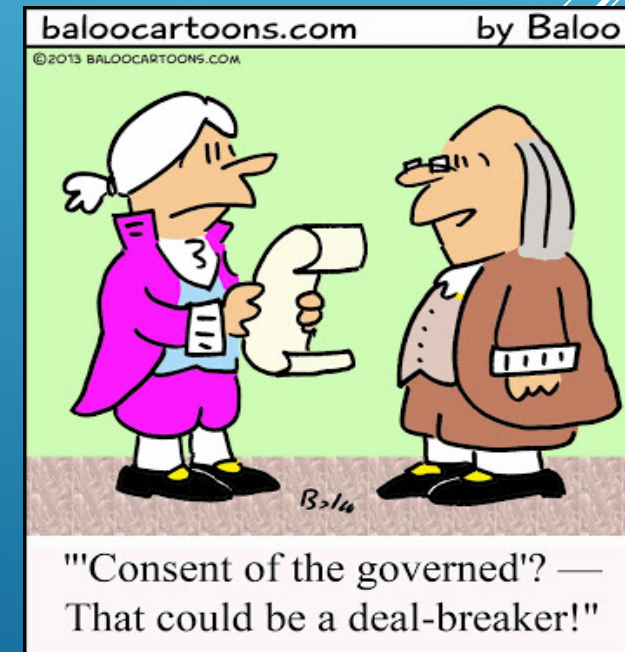
Ratification was not assured leading to the *Federalist Papers*, 85 newspaper articles explaining the meanings of ideas in the new Constitution and why they were adopted. The *Federalist Papers* were authored under the pseudonym "Publius"—who were actually Alexander Hamilton (NY), James Madison (VA), and John Jay (NY).

The required 9 states ratified the new Constitution by June 21, 1788, and President George Washington, his Cabinet, and the new U.S Congress took office in April 1789.



- ▶ Voting equality
- ▶ Politicization of federal courts
- ▶ Bias in favor of the wealthy
- ▶ Voting in U.S. territories
- ▶ Electoral college need?
- ▶ Income inequality
- ▶ Status of Native Americans
- ▶ Political violence

AFTER 200 YEARS—SOME MAJOR ISSUES STILL UNRESOLVED— NEED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS OR STRONG FOCUSED LAWS



MARBURY VS. MADISON (1803)

- ▶ Established principle of “judicial review.”
- ▶ Federal courts could rule whether acts passed or actions taken by Congress or the Presidency were constitutional or not.
- ▶ Single most important decision in U.S. Constitutional law.
- ▶ Established U.S. Constitution as law and not just structure of political ideals.
- ▶ Strengthened the Checks & Balances.

(Marbury Lost)



**TIME FOR A
10 MINUTE BREAK!**

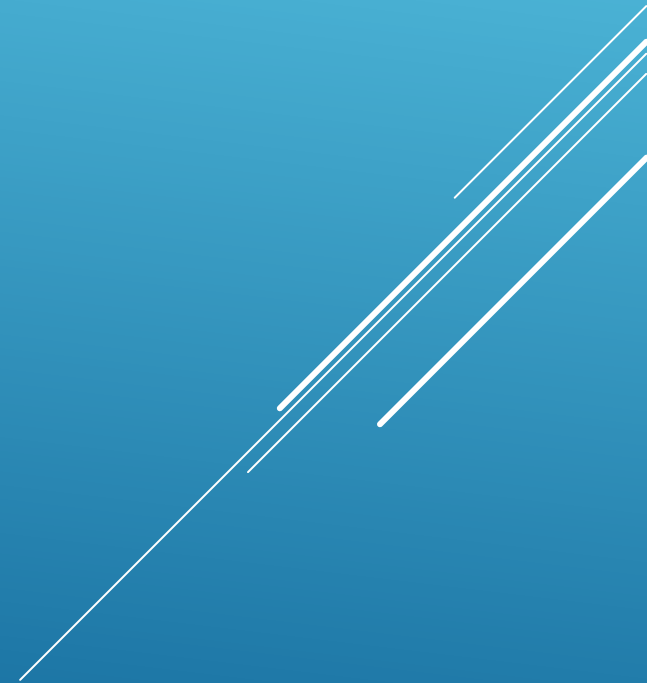
The image features a solid blue background with a gradient from light blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. On the right side, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines that create a sense of motion or a break in the design.

- ▶ Western Europe democracies evolved in the 1800s—all different. Many became Constitutional Monarchies with the Monarch being Head of State and an elected Parliament.
- ▶ As former-British colonies became independent (1800s-1900s) they generally accepted the British Westminster governing system with British monarch Head of State.
- ▶ As South American colonies of Spain and Portugal became independent (1800s-1900s) they accepted democratic Presidential systems modelled on U.S., but didn't get the whole Checks & Balances idea:
 - ▶ Presidents given total control of the justice systems from appointing judges, to their performance evaluations, to their removal.
 - ▶ Presidents could “rule by decree” meaning make laws without Congressional approval.
- ▶ Rest of world accepted democracy randomly but far from completely.



DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY WORLDWIDE

**WHAT DOES A STRONG DEMOCRACY
LOOK LIKE?**



- **Elected officials.** Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
- **Free and fair elections.** Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively unknown.
- **Inclusive suffrage.** Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
- **Right to run for office.** Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for suffrage.
- **Freedom of expression.** Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology.
- **Alternative information.** Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
- **Associational autonomy.** To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

Characteristics of Strongest Democracies (Polyarchy)

From Robert A. Dahl,
*Democracy and its
Critics* (1989)

Internal Forces nibble away at the formal and informal rules establishing the “Guardrails” for a Society

U.S. & State Constitutions



Refers to Federal, state, and local levels

Laws

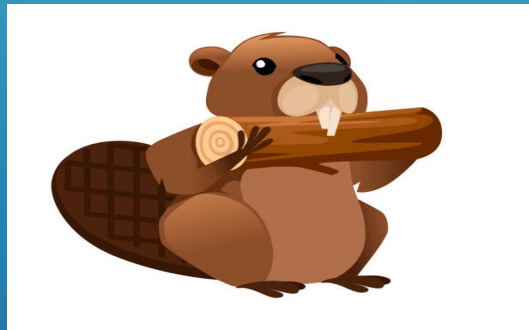
Regulations

Rules

Norms



Where “nibbling” usually starts



How Democracies Die

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (2019)

Rejection of (or weak commitment to) democratic rules of the game.

- **Rejecting the constitution or expressing a willingness to violate it.**
- **Suggesting a need for antidemocratic measures, such as cancelling elections, violating or suspending the constitution, banning certain organizations, or restricting basic political rights and civil liberties.**
- **Seeking to use (or endorse the use of) extra-constitutional means to change the government, such as military coups, violent insurrection, or mass protests aimed at forcing a change in government.**
- **Attempting to undermine the legitimacy of elections, for example, by refusing to accept credible electoral results.**

Broken General Norms Leading to Democratic Decline

**Denial of the
legitimacy of
political
opponents
(further
expanded later)**

- **Describing their opponents as subversive, or opposed to the existing constitutional order.**
- **Claiming their opponents constitute an existential threat, either to national security or to the prevailing way of life.**
- **Baselessly describing their opponents as criminals, whose supposed violation of the law (or potential to do so) disqualifies them from full participation in the political arena.**
- **Baselessly suggesting that their opponents are foreign agents, in that they are secretly working in alliance with (or in the employ of) a foreign government (usually a major enemy).**

Toleration or encouragement of violence.

- **Having any ties to armed gangs, terrorist groups, paramilitary forces, militias, guerillas, or other organizations that engage in illicit violence.**
- **They or their partisan allies sponsoring or encouraging mob attacks on opponents.**
- **Having tacitly endorsed violence by their supporters by refusing to unambiguously condemn or punish it.**
- **Praising (or refusing to condemn) other significant acts of political violence, either in the past or elsewhere in the world.**

Broken General Norms Leading to Democratic Decline (Cont.)

Readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including the media.

- Having supported laws or policies that restrict civil liberties, such as expanded libel or defamation laws, or laws restricting protest, criticism of the government, or certain civic and political organizations.
- Threatening to take legal or other punitive action (revenge) against critics in opposing parties, civil society, or the media.
- Praising the repressive measures taken by other governments, either in the past or elsewhere in the world.

Broken General Norms Leading to Democratic Decline (Cont.)

Most Pernicious

Failure to display mutual toleration of political opponents.

- Not accepting opponents have an equal right to exist, compete for power, and govern if they win elections.
- Treating opponents as treasonous or subversive.
- Failing to “agree to disagree” with opponents on policy and decision differences.
- Resorting to political violence or other measures against opponents.

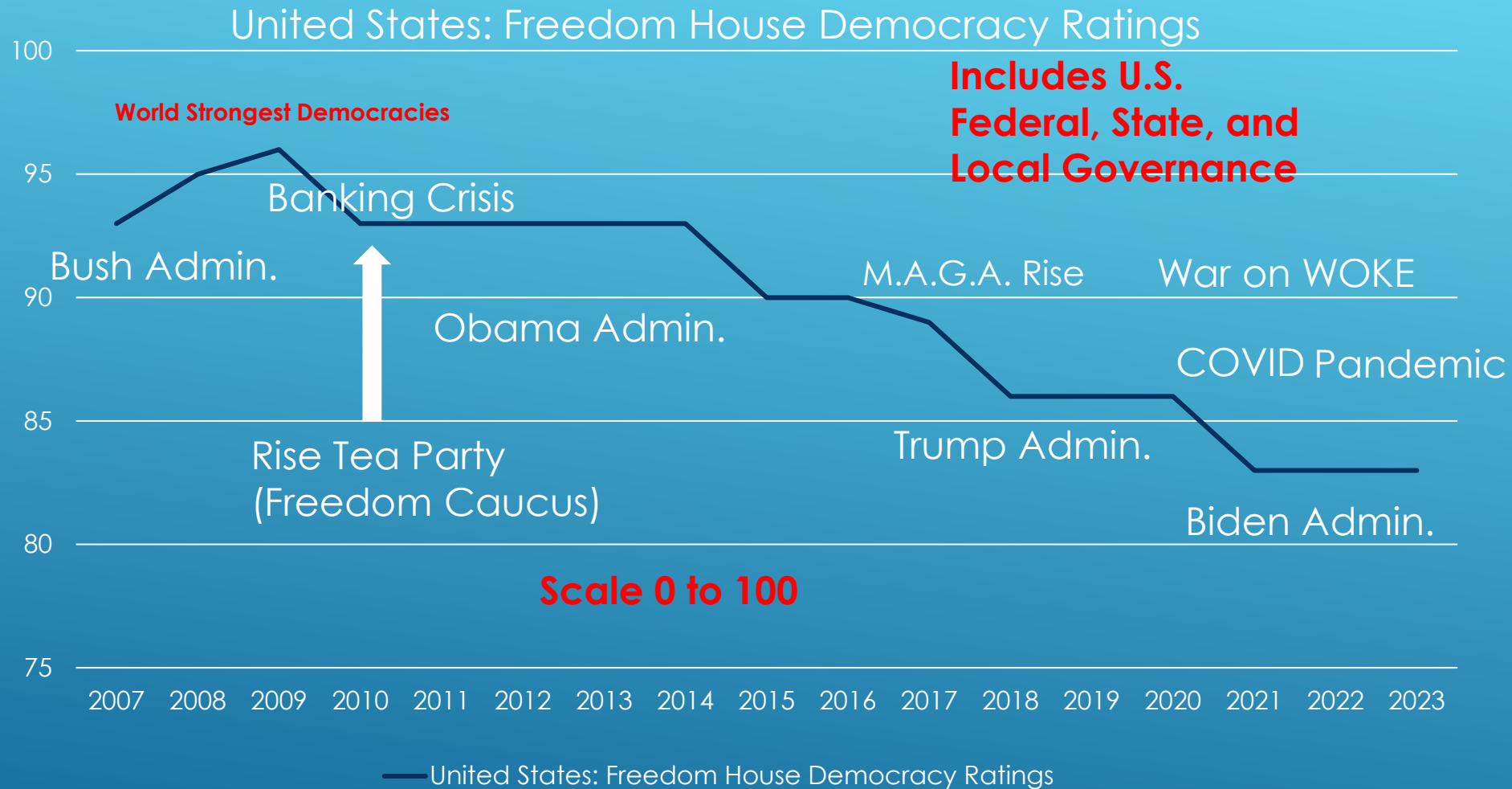
Broken General Norms Leading to Democratic Decline (Cont.)

Also Most Pernicious

Failure to offer institutional forbearance, meaning failure to display “patient self-control, restraint, and tolerance” concerning political opponents.

- Not acting within the rule of law when exchanging power to govern after elections.
- Instituting wide-scale bogus investigations and prosecutions of opposing political parties or politicians. (Only justified when formal guardrails (laws, regulations, etc.) were broken leading to likely legal action.)


Broken General Norms Leading to Democratic Decline (Cont.)



Ratings include assessments of civil liberties and political rights based on 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Selected World Country Political Cultures

	Egalitarian		Individualistic		Authoritarian
Selected World Country Political Cultures (2023)	Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, U.S. (2009—1 year)	Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, U.K. (2019), U.S. (2010)	Costa Rica, France, Georgia, Israel, India, Spain, U.K. (2023), U.S. (2020)	Hong Kong, Jamaica, Pakistan, Singapore, Tunisia, Turkey	Afghanistan, China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia


Scale 100 to 0

IN WEEK 2 WE REVIEW THE CHARACTERISTICS
OF DIFFERING POLITICAL CULTURES AND
HOW THEY AFFECT GOVERNANCE, IN
PARTICULAR THE STRENGTH OF
DEMOCRACIES

