KELLOGG INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Understanding Today,
Shaping Tomorrow

2024 Global Democracy Conference Summary Report

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A proposed Notre Dame Democracy Initiative will draw […] on considerable scholarly expertise […] and its status as one of the country's most trusted institutions of higher education. Both in an enhanced Washington, DC, office […] and on campus, Notre Dame should more consciously strive to become a forum for bipartisan conversations about a shared democratic future.

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Conference Resources

- Global Stage podcast series: "Voices from the GDC"
- GDC Panel videos
- GDC Policy Takeaways

About the Kellogg Institute

The Kellogg Institute for International Studies, part of the Keough School for Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, is an interdisciplinary community of scholars and students from across the university and around the globe that promotes research, provides educational opportunities, and builds partnerships throughout the world on the themes of global democracy and integral human development.

Conference Overview

A range of practitioners, scholars, and students convened at the University of Notre Dame's Hesburgh Center for International Studies in May 2024 to explore today's most pressing questions at the inaugural **Global Democracy Conference** (GDC), entitled "Understanding Today, Shaping Tomorrow." Hosted by the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, part of the Keough School of Global Affairs, the GDC provided a platform for a wide range of luminaries in the field of democracy to reflect on and discuss the complex nature of democratic erosion and opportunities for consolidation. Current trends make it imperative for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange ideas on how best to preserve democracy.

In his introductory remarks, Kellogg Institute Director Aníbal Pérez-Liñán articulated the multi-disciplinary goals of the inaugural GDC: elucidating the causal mechanisms behind political turmoil and democratic erosion based on theory and practice. He noted that scholars have focused on identifying causes of democratic backsliding but have been less effective in proposing solutions. Practitioners are often called to lead and communicate uncharted paths, but their work may benefit from rigorous scholarship and research. The GDC would serve as a space for scholars and practitioners to collaborate on finding solutions to democratic challenges.

The introductory remarks also included a recorded address from University of Notre Dame then president-elect Rev. Robert Dowd, CSC. A political scientist by training, Rev. Dowd emphasized the importance of democracy for advancing human rights, reminding the audience that the university's ten-year Strategic Framework includes a commitment to studying democratic governance in today's era of information overload, polarization, and denigration of institutions.

Conference panelists presented on topics from regional dynamics in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas to the development of artificial intelligence and the international diffusion of anti-democratic movements, to advances in measuring democracy, and the pernicious effects of inequality on regime stability and human development. Additionally, three distinguished keynote speakers – Juan Sebastián Chamorro (Nicaragua), Helena Carreiras (Portugal), and Luis Almagro (Uruguay) – enriched the conference by describing their decades-long service to democratic politics in the public sphere.

Keynote Speakers

Juan Sebastián Chamorro

Former Pre-Candidate for the Presidency of Nicaragua and Former Political Prisoner. Hewlett Visiting Fellow for Public Policy, Kellogg Institute

Former Nicaraguan presidential candidate Juan Sebastián Chamorro shared his personal experience of being detained and condemned to 13 years in prison – of which he served 611 days – for standing up for democratic values in his country and serving as an opposition leader to the regime of Daniel Ortega.

He highlighted the challenges facing democracy globally, particularly the rise of autocratic "strongmen" who manipulate laws and institutions to consolidate power. Populist autocrats exacerbate important social problems – such as lack of infrastructure, inflation, or personal safety – and justify their co-optation of power at the expense of democracy. Once in power, they use state resources to stifle opposition, target independent media, and manipulate elections. Elites play a significant role in shaping the fate of nations, either supporting democratic values or betraying them for personal gain. While it takes many people to put a dictator into power, it takes a very small group of people to keep an autocrat in power.

Chamorro also emphasized the importance of international justice, financial accountability, empirical research, and grassroots activism to denounce attacks against democracy. He concluded that protecting democracy requires vigilance and active participation from individuals who value freedom. Autocrats fear people's natural desire for freedom.

Helena Carreiras

Former Minister of Defense, Portugal

Helena Carreiras drew from her experience as Defense Minister to provide a fresh perspective on civil-military relations. In her keynote address, Carreiras argued that the military can in fact play a pivotal role in promoting democracy, partnering with other institutions such as universities or ministries of health to improve public trust and government performance.

Using the example of the Portuguese revolution (Carnation Revolution) in 1974, Carreiras posited that the military has leveraged respect for institutions even in transitions from authoritarian rule. Despite the negative image of the military for democratization, military institutions can be a great asset for democracy when commanders and rank-and-file members respect their limits and roles.

Carreiras described how the military today plays a key role in civil society through university partnerships, vaccine rollouts (such as those during the COVID-19 pandemic), and disaster response, fostering trust among citizens. Carreiras focused on the importance of understanding the power of narratives and stories in fostering good relationships between the military and civil society while also emphasizing the role of institutions in democratization.

Luis Almagro

Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS)

In his keynote address, Secretary Luis Almagro underscored the complex challenges facing democracy and human rights in the Americas, advocating for rationality, knowledge-based governance, and cooperation between countries and multilateral organizations to address these challenges effectively.

He reflected on the erosion of democracy in the region, noting the rise of dictatorships in countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Almagro observed that these regimes differ in their operations and origins but share a disregard for leftist ideals that at one point were at their roots. Almagro also criticized emotional and irrational politics and emphasized the need for knowledge-based dialogue and finding common ground. A key tool for this is the Inter-American Democratic Charter in the region, which should be leveraged by diplomats seeking to address autocratic behavior in Honduras, Nicaragua, or Venezuela. Finally, Almagro highlighted the uncertainty caused by democratic interruptions and the importance of respecting democratic processes and the will of the people, even if they make mistakes.

Celebrating the GDC's mission to foster collaborative relations between academic and practitioner institutions, at the end of his speech, Almagro signed a memorandum of understanding between the OAS and the Keough School of Global Affairs, represented by Marilyn Keough Dean Scott Appleby.

Panel Highlights

The GDC was organized around eight inter-disciplinary panels and three keynote addresses that touched upon the current State of the World, the development of New ideas and innovations, and the Path Forward for democracy. Interludes between all the panels offered a space for junior and senior researchers, academics and practitioners to continue the conversation in clusters.

The conference began with a **Keynote Address** from Juan Sebastián Chamorro, former pre-candidate for the presidency of Nicaragua and former political prisoner. The second day, a series of **four panels** analyzed the international dimensions of anti-democratic movements, the US election and consequences for democracy, artificial intelligence, and advances in measurement of democracy. At dinner, the second **Keynote Address** by Former Portuguese Minister of Defense, Helena Carreiras, expounded upon "The Role of the Military in Defense of Democracy: Insights from the Portuguese Experience."

On the second day, another series of **four panels** discussed the current trajectory of democracy in Latin America, the influence of inequality on human development, Africa and the return of the military coup, and the path forward for defending democracy. The concluding **Keynote Address** was given by Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro.

This section summarizes some key points of discussion and recommended action items generated by each panel, organized by three thematic groupings: State of the World, New Ideas, and Path Forward.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

The US Election and its Consequences for Democracy

The November election will shape democracy in the US and abroad. What are the possible scenarios for US democracy in the aftermath of the election? How can foreign policy change over the next four years, and what are the implications for democrats worldwide?

Speakers discussed the current threats to US democracy, including the erosion of democratic norms, escalation of political violence, and autocratic takeover of a major political party. Panelists also reflected on the importance of independent professional election administrators and the role of the courts in protecting democracy.

Anne Thompson
Chief Environmental Affairs Correspondent, NBC News (Chair)

David Campbell
Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy and Director, Notre Dame Democracy Initiative, University of Notre Dame

Christina Wolbrecht
Professor of Political Science and C. Robert and Margaret Hanley Family Director of the Washington Program, University of Notre Dame

Frank Langfitt
Global Democracy Correspondent, National Public Radio (NPR)

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

WIN, LOSE, OR TAMPER

Election tampering and the refusal to accept election outcomes have many on edge. Campbell reminded the audience that "election denial" is not a new phenomenon in the US, citing the 1960 US presidential election. However, panelists noted that not only have allies of former President Donald Trump claimed that the 2020 election was stolen, they are mobilizing hundreds of thousands of election observers with dubious credentials to pressure the 2024 ballot validation process. Wolbrecht traced this to a long campaign on the ideological right to hollow out state election administrations and even intimidate volunteers at polling stations. Langfitt's journalistic experiences on the ground in Wisconsin echoed this reality: "there is a town that lost its 4th election commissioner in three years," he remarked. Unfortunately, academics and citizens struggle to counteract these

trends, afraid they may appear politically biased – "nobody wants to have their names in the papers," Wolbrecht expressed. The challenges for running fair and secure elections are compounded by funding issues, and panelists were doubtful of the ability of courts to fix these deeply political problems.

CIVICS 101

Wolbrecht reminded the audience that US founding father James Madison believed overlapping social group memberships would prevent overly heated competition in democracy – but at the time, only 5% of citizens had the right to vote. Since then, the debate over "real Americans" and contestation over who belongs in politics has been a recurring theme in US elections and one tied to political violence. Thompson underlined the need for basic respect for people

with different opinions, lamenting the decline of civics education in US schools: "Restrictions on state teachers have produced a chilling effect," she concluded. Audience member Jennifer McCoy noted that the youth vote in the 2024 US elections is unclear, particularly in comparison to prior elections where many voted for the left. According to Campbell, young people may be more progressive on specific policy issues, however, he worried that growing up in an era when democratic norms are being questioned will erode their full appreciation of democracy.

THE WORLD IS WATCHING

Panelists agreed that US democracy's global reputation is on the line in the 2024 election. Langfitt relayed concerns from foreign correspondence around authoritarian tendencies in the US since 2016 and referred to a general decline in the country's reputation given unnecessary wars and economic crises. He contrasted the admiration of Chinese citizens for US democracy during the 1990s with their perplexity during the 2010s around political polarization and militarism. Echoing these concerns, Thompson recalled how universal horror around the insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, was slowly normalized among political actors, reflecting a departure from shared reality and a susceptibility to disinformation. During the debate around Brexit in the UK, for example, there was partisan press but also agreement around facts. In the US context after January 6th, this has not occurred.

Action Items

- **Strengthen election administration by increasing funding and professional staffing.** Political representatives and state administrators should maintain a commitment to democratic values and institutions by investing in the electoral process at all levels. Stronger normative commitments to elections should be grounded in a long-term vision of democracy for future generations.

- **Encourage civic education in schools on how to have respectful political discussions.** Research shows that confronting students with real-world issues in the classroom is the most effective form of civic education. Educators and civil society leaders should encourage critical thinking and civility inside and outside the classroom.

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

HISTORIC GAINS, UNSETTLING STAGNATION

Despite significant qualitative improvements in democracy over the last two generations in Latin America, over the past 25 years there has been a trend of stagnation and negative changes. Mainwaring argued that Latin America today is far more democratic than at any other time in history. Moreover, there are no longer abrupt oscillations between authoritarian and democratic regimes in the region as there was before the third wave of democratization. However, democratic stagnation and even some transitions towards authoritarianism in countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, state collapse in Haiti, and a modest decay of democracy in countries like Mexico and Brazil raise concerns about the future. Hunter added that social policy has expanded dramatically under democracy in Latin America, and countries have moved away from patrimonial relations to more robust welfare provision: "income transfers, non-contributory pensions, and basic health care – these things are not seen as benefits anymore; they are seen as rights." The decline in infant mortality through targeted interventions in healthcare, vaccinations, access to clean drinking water, and nutrition has taken place across most democracies, except for Venezuela. However, significant security challenges in Latin America and high homicide rates have fueled the tendency for right-wing populists such as Nayib Bukele in El Salvador or Daniel Noboa in Ecuador to gain support amid security crises.

Guerrero drew from his experience with the OAS, noting that despite challenges like the pandemic and social polarization, there is still a belief in the region around the importance of holding elections. Guatemala provides an example of a positive development in consensus-building around the electoral process. At the same time growing inequality and poverty in some countries, particularly Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela – and, acutely, Haiti – fundamentally threatens the democratic process. This is compounded by polarization and dissatisfaction with the political system, driving people toward populist and authoritarian leaders.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

Four Decades of Democracy in Latin America

Benjamin García-Holgado
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations, University of Delaware (Chair)

Scott Mainwaring
Eugene P. and Helen Conley Professor of Political Science; faculty fellow and former Director of the Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame

Wendy Hunter
Professor of Government, University of Texas at Austin, and Kellogg Institute Advisory Board member

Francisco Guerrero
Secretary for Strengthening Democracy, OAS

Four decades after a wave of democratization transformed Latin America, new challenges like organized crime and migration test the strength of democratic institutions. What is the current trajectory of democracy in Latin America? What are the "bright spots" in the region? What are the lessons of Latin America for troubled democracies elsewhere?

This panel delved into various challenges facing democracy in Latin America, taking a long-term historical view of the region's experience with regime transition and consolidation. Panelists focused on the influence of organized crime, the role of citizens and social movements, the state of the political left, and the persistence of electoral institutions after the Third Wave of democracy.

Action Items

- **Support OAS programs that strengthen electoral institutions in the region.** Programs benefit from active civil society organizations and citizen engagement. University involvement and academic research around electoral institutions can contribute to program effectiveness.

- **Promote community policing and youth leadership for addressing security challenges to democracy.** This may entail building cross-cutting neighborhood community centers, with members from all social classes, that can break self-reinforcing cycles of privatizing security in response to public insecurity.

- **Combat organized crime in Latin America with international partnerships.** The example of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) provides insight into how third-party actors can disrupt the nexus between criminal groups, political actors, and police corruption in weak institutional environments. Experiences from abroad provide models for the role of national militaries, law enforcement, and civilian oversight.

CASCADING EFFECTS OF CRIME

Panelists also highlighted the threats to democracy posed by criminal organizations, both through direct violation of rights and by creating conditions where citizens may support authoritarian leaders in exchange for improved security. Mainwaring called this second outcome the "Bukele scenario". Hunter pointed out that Latin America contains 8% of the global population but accounts for nearly half of the international homicide rate. This affects people of all social classes, but disproportionately those without resources to protect themselves. She cautioned against viewing El Salvador's approach to combating criminal organizations as a model, as it is fraught with allegations of systematic human rights abuses and does not address the international dimensions to criminality. She pointed instead to the success in Guatemala under Bernardo Arévalo's leadership, which has produced a decrease in crime rates. More broadly, Hunter noted the increasing presence of military and police personnel in political office, indicating a trend towards emphasizing law and order in politics. Similarly, Mainwaring agreed that many military candidates have authoritarian and anti-institutional backgrounds. Additionally, he emphasized the elevated risk of paramilitary groups emerging in response to these criminal organizations and the potential for state violations of rights in response to public security threats. Guerrero cautioned that the Church and the military are re-gaining political relevance as governance actors due to perceived failures of civilian leadership. Guerrero also emphasized the destabilizing effects of forced political migration caused by the presence of criminal groups.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Mainwaring and Hunter reflected on the prospects of Latin American democracy in the 1980s, and the unforeseen trends that have emerged since then. Mainwaring emphasized that nobody had expected democratization to be as durable as it was. Many expected democracy to hinge on economic performance, but the case of Argentina proves this to be false. Instead, processes like human rights prosecutions have provided democratic stability. However, while most expectations at the beginning of the 2000s were high for democratic consolidation in the region, evidence has pointed toward underperformance. Hunter noted the unforeseen combination of social media and evangelical networks in politics. Contemporary politicians draw on these networks but, as diffuse forms of mass support, they cannot provide guidance for economic, social, or political issues. Institutions are required for this. Moreover, youth movements today are beginning to lean right, contrary to expectations based on their role in transitions to democracy decades before.

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> **The self-reinforcing dynamic is the upper class seducing themselves and not being part of public institutions. We know that when that happens, public institutions deteriorate.**
>
> WENDY HUNTER

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

Africa and the Return of the Military Coup

In the last four years, there have been eight military coups on the African continent. What explains the rapid increase of junta rule after nearly two decades of multiparty elections in many of these countries? In what ways are these coups and their relationship to broader governance trajectories very different? How are populations reacting to the new era of military rule?

This panel highlighted the historical, political, and economic factors contributing to the recurrence of military coups in Africa. Panelists identified presidents' abuse of term limits as a common catalyst for coups, in addition to poor government performance. They emphasized the decline of democracy promotion worldwide, especially Western countries who have elected to prop up corrupt leaders to fight extremism or migration instead of improving citizens' democratic engagement.

Jaimie Bleck
Associate Professor of Political Science; Senior Research Advisor, Ford Program, Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame (Chair)

Joseph Asunka
Chief Executive Officer, Afrobarometer

Rachel Beatty Riedl
John S. Knight Professor of International Studies, Department of Government, and Director, Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University

Naunihal Singh
Associate Professor of National Security Affairs, US Naval War College

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS, MILITARY RESPONSES

Panelists identified key differences between military coups in Africa today relative to prior eras. Drawing from recent Afrobarometer surveys, Asunka pointed to presidents' manipulation of term limits or rigged elections, more than economic issues, to citizens' support for military action against executives. Citizen grievances have shifted from employment, health, and education to crime and insecurity. In the aftermath of the failed War on Terror, recent coups are also characterized by anti-Western sentiment and ejection of francophone or American forces from many countries. Another startling trend in recent coups is youth support for military intervention. In these contexts, the military becomes the most trusted institution, more than the president or legislators. However, "celebrations in the streets are more about the intervention than military rule," noted Asunka. Riedl pointed out that courts have also built up citizen trust.

While many coups occurring now are reminiscent of those in the past, they are still very different across cases. Singh concluded that the precedent of military coups erodes resistance towards coups themselves in many countries.

GOVERNANCE EXPOSED

Governance deficits and weak state administrative capacity increase the frequency and violence of recent coups in Africa. Asunka argued that militaries in power provide ineffective leadership, and often "delude themselves" about their real capacity to govern. Singh described a typical pro-democratic narrative from military juntas ("we acted to preserve democracy") but rather than temporarily correct

the situation, juntas extend their projects into the longer-term. In reality, military juntas are more unstable than they appear from the outside. Panelists further detailed the composition of military groups in Africa. Unlike in other regions like Latin America, militaries do not map onto social divisions in the countries. Rather than class divisions, Singh noted that African militaries are extensively connected to society, as well as to business and family structures. This lack of social distance tends to dominate civilian governments as well.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Panelists concurred that the international context around African military coups has become more problematic. Singh argued that the combination of a permissive international environment and the declining legitimacy of democratic governments due to poor performance raises the incentives and support for military interventions. On the one hand, the US has rolled back democracy promotion efforts around the region, and China has stepped in. According to Singh, the US State Department is lacking African expertise, and contacts with the region are not routine. Unfortunately, in this way Western countries inadvertently undermine democracy in Africa when they prop up corrupt leaders who claim to fight insurgency or extremism. Riedl argued moreover that unipolar diplomacy by the US–forcing African countries to avoid doing business with countries like China or Russia– has corrosive effects. Instead, it is more productive to recognize "the heterogeneity on the continent while partnering more carefully around domestic needs rather than a globalized lens" in order to produce more effective partnerships. On the other hand, regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are now crucial actors in managing transitions and supporting democracy. However, as Singh pointed out, whereas the OAS is much more active in condemning Latin American countries that break democratic norms, the AU has been more tolerant. Regional organizations can also lead transitional justice processes, which can reduce the repetitive cycle of coups.

Action Items

- **Re-establish the democratic norm of condemning military coups.** Since 2010, international responses to military coups have become less critical, and as a result, coups have become more normalized. Multilateral condemnation, along with financial and diplomatic pressure, can reduce the legitimacy and strength of military juntas and strengthen democratic norms. Condemnation is even more pressing in a geopolitical context where authoritarian governments are gaining power.

- **Support the AU and judicial bodies to improve rule of law across African countries.** Collaborative actions at the continental level may include programs to strengthen national and regional judicial bodies. These entities can provide alternatives to militarized responses to democratic deficits. Programs may also encourage public engagement and education on the importance of democratic governance and the dangers of military coups.

- **Produce more knowledge around civil-military relations in Africa.** In contrast to other regions, African military officer corps are highly embedded in their societies, either through businesses or family. In order to better understand coup dynamics, more research around African military socialization processes and motivations should receive priority funding.

- **Invest in the State Department's Africa Bureau.** According to Singh, "the State Department's Africa Bureau is hugely understaffed," a symptom of a long-term structural bias toward the region. A more robust and knowledgeable staff would improve monitoring and evaluation of important international and regional interventions related to democratic governance in Africa.

NEW IDEAS

Understanding International Support for Anti-Democratic Movements

A. James McAdams
William M. Scholl Professor of International Affairs, University of Notre Dame (Chair)

Joshua Eisenman
Professor of Politics, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

María Isabel Puerta Riera
Adjunct Professor of Political Science, Valencia College; Research Fellow, GAPAC; Chair, LASA Section on Venezuela Studies (2022-2024); and Media Analyst, Ad Fontes

Oliver Stuenkel
Professor of International Relations, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV)

Steven Lloyd Wilson
Assistant Professor of Politics, Brandeis University; Project Manager, Varieties of Democracy Institute

Some undemocratic regimes seek to undermine democracy in other countries. Which countries act in this way? What forms of influence do they employ? Have they formed alliances, cooperating in targeting democratic countries? How effective are their efforts? How well have champions of democracy organized internationally to limit their influence?

This panel focused on the international threats to democracy in Latin America, including sustained disinformation efforts by Russia and China, as well as transnational right-wing alliances against liberal democracy. Speakers discussed the challenges of analyzing foreign influence in public debate, particularly through social media platforms, and the rise of micro-influences with significant impact on the narrative. The panel also reflected on China's future in the world, challenging the notion that it will revert to a reformist path after Xi Jinping's techno-totalitarian government.

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

DEMOCRACY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Steunkel began the panel discussion by offering a critique of labeling countries as either democratic or autocratic. This binary conceptualization alienates citizens from the Global South and feeds anti-democratic sentiment. Many citizens in countries like Brazil see the rise of China as a positive development that restrains US interventionist policies. Puerta Riera echoed this critical view, and added that Global South countries are more pragmatic than idealistic, having to deal with daily issues of hunger, deforestation, or health. McAdams found this critique perplexing, given Latin America's relatively extreme experiences of political conflict, military dictatorships, and democratization. However, turning to the Brazilian case, Steunkel argued that, "democracy is not a decisive factor when Brazil crafts its foreign policy … [and yet] nobody can accuse [Brazil] of not being 100% democratic." Foreign policy under Bolsonaro and Lula has entailed neutrality or even non-alignment with the US.

CHINESE TECHNO-TOTALITARIANISM

Eisenmann described three primary perspectives on China's relationship to the West and their implications for the country's democratization. First, the "mainstream" view advocates for traditional diplomacy with China. Second, the "containment" strategy advocates for more aggressive foreign policies to undermine the communist regime. Third, and most troubling for Eisenmann, is the "wait-and-see" approach in which either a liberalization or doubling-down of the communist regime could occur. This is hardly effective in combating the consolidation of a sophisticated techno-totalitarian state under Xi Jinping, which has set the stage for an even more autocratic successor.

DISINFORMATION FUELS THE FIRE

Panelists highlighted authoritarian states' online promotion of disinformation to deliberately obfuscate public discourse, for example during the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. Drawing on research from the Digital Society Project *(see Fig. 1)*, Wilson argued that China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are the most significant source of disinformation in a wide range of countries. The goal of foreign disinformation is not to convince any specific population of a particular argument, but rather to confuse and undermine trust in institutions or any source of information ("weaponized uncertainty"). Russian media has influenced the debate in Brazil around the Russian war in Ukraine, pushing a complicated narrative that the conflict is really driven by hostility from NATO countries.

Figure 1. Government dissemination of false information abroad
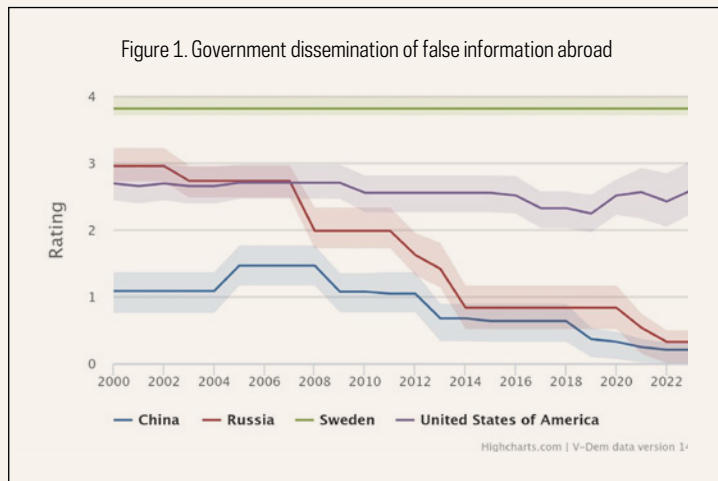
Action Items

- **Fund projects to analyze and counteract disinformation.** Disinformation monitoring requires more research; however data is hard to obtain and often expensive. Projects for counteracting disinformation should also cultivate a broader "marketplace of ideas," one that crowds out disinformation.

- **"Re-brand" the language of democracy to make it meaningful to the Global South.** The traditional democratic vs. autocratic debate seems to have lost meaning in Brazil and elsewhere. Stuenkel suggests promoting policies for free unrestrained public debate, minority rights, and open media, for example, and moving away from abstract calls for "freedom" or American glorification.

The Digital Society Project builds from Varieties of Democracy's expert-coded data measuring the intersection of the internet and politics between 2000 to the present day. This project revolves around 35 indicators, including the prevalence of foreign disinformation on social media platforms.

In this graph (see Fig. 1), they estimated the proliferation of government-backed disinformation campaigns across four countries. Lower ratings indicate more use of misinformation directed towards foreign countries.

NEW IDEAS

Measuring the State of Democracy

Any systematic assessment of the state of democracy requires reliable metrics. What are the new developments in this field? Despite great progress in this area, experts still debate whether "objective" or "subjective" measures are preferable. How are metrics used by practitioners? What information do regime types convey that continuous measures do not? Can subjective measures be extended to measure how democracy varies across subnational units within countries?

This panel presented some important difficulties in conceptualizing and measuring democracy, balancing standardized approaches for comparing across countries while using indicators that make sense at the local level. Speakers discussed the benefits and limitations of relying on different types of data, such as expert ratings, using randomized controlled trials, or observational data. They also explored the opportunities and challenges of measuring and evaluating democracy at the subnational level.

Luis Schiumerini
Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame (Chair)

Michael Coppedge
Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame

Brigitte Seim
Associate Professor of Public Policy, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Patrick McQuestion
PhD Student in Peace Studies and Political Science, University of Notre Dame

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

DEMOCRACY IN MIND

A standardized approach to measuring democracy is needed to be able to make cross-country comparisons. However, no two countries have the same democratic features, and no approach is perfect. Coppedge offered a general recommendation for measuring democracy: break it down into component parts such as degree of competition or levels of inclusivity. Democracy is also better measured using continuous scales rather than in categories because the latter cannot account for measurement error. The V-Dem project – entering its 10th year and with over 3,700 experts around the world – has taken this approach in creating liberal, deliberative, participatory, egalitarian, and electoral indices of democracy for all countries around the world. Subnational measures provide another pathway for improving our understanding of democracy. McQuestion presented initial findings of an inductive approach using V-Dem expert-based ratings at the municipal-level in Colombia to describe pockets of stronger or weaker democracy *(see Fig. 2)*. Additionally, Seim emphasized the collaborative possibilities for measuring democracy at the subregional
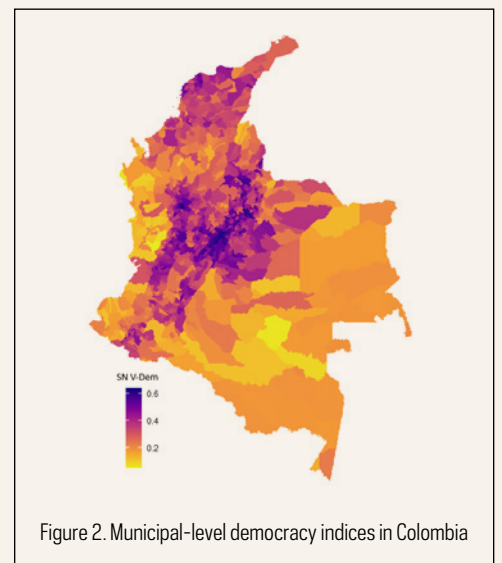

Figure 2. Municipal-level democracy indices in Colombia

Action Items

- **Foster academics' engagement with communications experts – including journalists – to share insights with the public on the state of democracy.** The sophisticated tools employed by academics do not always produce results easily accessible for the broader public. Journalists and advocates can build strategies for building public confidence in democracy.

- **Develop scholar-advocate partnerships for democracy-promotion program impact assessments.** Democracy promotion should balance academic theory and grounded experiences in order to mitigate biases and improve informative results. The partnership between the Digital Societies Project and the Consortium for Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) provides an innovative model that balances theoretical causal inference with grounded advocacy.

- **Further refine and validate new measures of subnational democracy.** Independent assessments of the provisional measures, such as those produced by the subnational V-Dem project, can be validated by experts in different countries. Anchoring subnational ratings to national V-Dem scores, for example, could improve the measures and provide a pipeline for replication in other contexts.

level within countries using questionnaires. Of course, relying on expert ratings of democracy has limitations like biases or disagreement about how certain events should impact scores. Additionally, expert-based continuous measures of democracy may work well for academics, but less so for the public, who are more inclined to think in terms of categories. However, the presenters agreed that combining multiple sources of data–subjective or not–is the best way to build robust measurements of democracy.

THEORY MEETS REALITY

The measurement issues around levels of democracy make it difficult to measure the impact of important democracy-promotion initiatives, such as the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) program. Without theoretical frameworks for envisioning the causal chains leading to better democratic outcomes, investments in democracy program assessments can be misguided. Drawing from her experience as a principal investigator for V-Dem's Digital Society Project, Seim described the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) which recently received an award from USAID to develop collaborative evaluations of "democracy support" programs around the world. These evaluations can test whether pro-democratic initiatives are effective for women and civil society, cross-party coalition formation, and safeguarding elections, among other trends. If the evaluations are successful, publicizing their positive impact can be a way for citizens to grasp why democracy is essential for their lives. Scholars participating in this type of effort can use theory to inform their methodological choices and pick the most useful ones for the task they are involved in. Seim noted that one central challenge is how to share results with the general public in a way that is understandable but at the same time does not lose the theoretical richness and complexity of academic understanding.

GROUNDING ANALYSIS

Measuring democracy at the subnational level continues to be an open frontier for scholarship. Coppedge pointed out that this is not without serious challenges, namely that there is no homogeneous system of government tiers from national to local – China, for example, has seven tiers of government. Moreover, these tiers are not always equivalent. McQuestion presented an approach to measurement of subnational democracy that combines publicly available observational data with expert scores from V-Dem. Expert knowledge is more resistant to misleading information (e.g., more newspapers do not always indicate a rich deliberative democracy) and can compensate for limitations in observational data. Conversely, observational data can compensate for gaps in expert knowledge of subnational dynamics. The construction of inter-subjective and empirically guided indicators provide a pathway for developing measures of more fine-grained dimensions of democracy.

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

RESISTING INEQUALITY

Camilleri highlighted a fundamental belief shared by academics and policy-makers alike: democracies not only foster economic growth but also mitigate economic crises. From his experience at USAID's Democracy Delivers Initiative, Camilleri outlined a shift in their approach, focusing on designing development programs that facilitate democratic progress particularly in transitional moments, such as the Arab Spring or ethnic mobilizations behind democratic candidates. He warned against focusing on episodes of democratic backsliding alone, however, at the risk of losing sight of democratic "bright spots" where citizen activism and priorities are channeled successfully. Success stories, like Guatemala's indigenous communities rallying behind President Bernardo Arévalo, underscore the tangible benefits of democratic governance. Hofbauer described the Ford Foundation's multifaceted focus on poverty and democracy, which includes advocacy around ethnic, racial, and gender justice, technology and society, as well as developing civic spaces. She emphasized the critical role of safeguarding civic space in democracy, noting the challenges posed by increasing legal restrictions and targeted attacks on social justice leaders. Additionally, she observed that access to social media has democratized information but has also raised concern for greater transparency and robust fact-checking mechanisms. Without the check on "post-truth myths," the ability for journalism to provide accountability over political elites is undermined. Moreover, the information ecosystem has reinforced "silos" or echo chambers that negatively affect democratic civic engagement.

Huber noted that the relationship between human development, inequality, and democracy is not always linear, often involving protest votes and fragile party systems. While relative deprivation among citizens can lead to organized violent rebellion, more often than not, for democracies this translates into support for outsider candidates. Weak party systems are then at risk of further fragmentation under these conditions. In Latin America, inequality and poverty have dropped since the 1980s but have remained sufficiently high to produce support for populist candidates who can destabilize

NEW IDEAS

Inequality, Human Development and Democracy

Clark Gibson
Professor of Political Science and Director of the International Studies Program, University of California, San Diego (Chair)

Michael Camilleri
Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID

Helena Hofbauer Balmori
International Program Director for Civic Engagement and Government and Regional Director for Mexico and Central America, Ford Foundation

Evelyne Huber
Morehead Alumni Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

James Long
Professor of Political Science, Co-founder of the Political Economy Forum, University of Washington

State failure to promote human development, combined with growing inequality, appear to be at the root of the current crisis of democracy. Is that the case? If structural conditions change slowly, why have we seen a concurrent proliferation of populist leaders worldwide? How does the process of state building affect governance?

This panel reflected on elemental features for democratic governance to succeed, from grassroots organizing to international partnerships dedicated to equity and development. Panelists agreed that the gradual erosion of democratic values today are largely attributable to polarization and socioeconomic disparities, exacerbated by economic downturns and food insecurity. They underscored the pivotal role of partnerships among private and public institutions in fortifying democratic frameworks, and the imperative for robust fact-checking mechanisms within independent media landscapes.

Action Items

- **Facilitate regionally-tailored dialogues around sustainable development and democracy grounded in contextual realities.** Grounded dialogues foster learning and action networks dedicated to democracy, nurturing collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders in a particular geographic area.

- **Convene forums comprising leaders from donor nations and philanthropic entities to mobilize financial backing for democratic initiatives.** These forums can highlight more mundane "democratic bright spots" where emerging social movements drive policy outcomes or where leaders in positions of power elect to uphold democratic norms.

- **Emphasize sustained engagement with public institutions between electoral cycles to fortify democratic structures and practices.** The decline of established parties in some countries necessitates new forms of engagement with public institutions, such as deliberative democracy mechanisms or internships for young students. These opportunities should not be limited to electoral cycles, but rather to budgeting processes, policy design, or community outreach.

democratic regimes. Long also noted the correlation between food insecurity and decreased support for democracy, underlining the importance of addressing socio-economic factors.

STATE OF THE ART, ART OF THE STATE

Long emphasized the relationship between state-building, development, and democratic performance, stressing the importance of quality institutions and accountability. Democratic performance refers to the degree to which governments are delivering what citizens essentially want from democracy: representative and accountable leadership. For this reason, Long highlighted the significance of elections in Africa, where voters leverage the ballot to hold leaders accountable. He concluded that strong turnout suggests that support for democracy and mass politics are relatively strong today compared with the past. However, the lack of horizontal accountability on the executive has led to violent coups, campaign violence, electoral fraud, and incompetent electoral management bodies. In this sense, Long advocated for more studies on behavior of the judicial branch and constitutional reform in episodes of democratic backsliding. Huber pointed out that many arguments around institutions and political parties presume that citizens have the capacity for collective decision-making, but earlier scholarship during the third wave transitions – including canonical Kellogg Institute political scientists like Guillermo O'Donnell and Scott Mainwaring – questioned whether these conditions really existed.

POLARIZED POPULISM

Huber delved into the rise of populist leaders worldwide, attributing this trend to a combination of structural conditions and inherent flaws in the third wave of democracy. The root causes of democratic decline are states' failure to promote human development combined with growing inequality. However, the process of decline is an indirect one, working through relative deprivation and the fall of established parties that are required to form majority coalitions. These conditions pave the way for inexperienced politicians and populist figures to gain power, reducing the confidence in markets and their ability to address poverty, resulting in a "self-reinforcing negative cycle of failure." Hofbauer added that the realities of inequality, misinformation and weakening of the media, and the harassment of civil society have combined to produce toxic polarization, which in turn is exploited by populist leaders for their own benefit. Under these conditions, anti-system rhetoric energizes non-democratic social forces to mobilize against their "country in decline."

> "
> **Populations grow impatient, especially if they feel that the risks they took to up-end the old order have not yielded reforms that positively impacted their own lives.**
>
> **MICHAEL CAMILLERI**

PATH FORWARD

Artificial Intelligence and Democracy

New technologies have changed the ways in which political actors process information, communicate with voters, and solve conflicts. Can Artificial Intelligence pose a danger for democratic politics? How can we leverage new technologies to make our societies more democratic?

This panel raised important ethical and logistical questions around the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in public discourse. Speakers raised concerns around the potential for AI to exacerbate polarization and misinformation, especially given the absence of a clear regulatory framework. However, they also discussed the benefits that AI has had on improving efficiency and even deliberative and peaceful democracy.

Justin Kempf
Founder and Host, Democracy Paradox Podcast (Chair)

Giorleny Altamirano Rayo
Chief Data Scientist, US Department of State

Lisa Schirch
Richard G. Starmann, Sr. Professor of the Practice of Peace Studies, Kroc Institute for International Peace, University of Notre Dame

Dmitri Zaytsev
Associate Professor of the Practice of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences & Data Science, Lucy Family Institute for Data and Society, University of Notre Dame

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

WORLD-WIDE WEB OF DEMOCRACY

Schirch discussed how artificial intelligence (AI) can be integrated into digital public spheres to improve and cultivate pluralist democracy – the community notes on X/Twitter provide one example – as well as deliberative democracy, given its potential for iterative interaction and open comments or voting. Existing deliberative AI technology, such as Stanford University's Deliberative Polling applications or pol.is, can act as neutral facilitators of public inputs by finding common ground across masses of participants and incentivize constructive dialogue that can push back against polarization and populism around the world. She pointed to the case of Taiwan, whose former Digital Minister Audrey Tang used this technology to increase public participation and deliberation, and to counter disinformation from foreign actors such as China. Altamirano Rayo suggested that students and professionals interested

in developing AI in government visit AI.gov, and for organizations and universities to consider joining the Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute Consortium (AISIC).

SMART GOVERNMENT

Altamirano Rayo described her work with the State Department's Center for Analytics (CFA) to implement ethical AI for their databases, part of a multi-stage Enterprise Strategy for "Empowering Diplomacy through Responsible AI." Their objectives include leveraging secure AI infrastructure, fostering an AI-friendly work culture, ensuring AI is applied responsibly across the State Department, and innovating to enhance the work of diplomats and other officials. Altamirano Rayo described the basic benefits of using machine learning for fundamental State Department tasks, such as declassifying

diplomatic cables records, which have continued to grow by the millions in the digital age. They have also developed an internal department chatbot to support their more than 75,000 staff members and 270 diplomatic missions worldwide. More generally, panelists discussed the challenges of regulating AI use by states, particularly in complex geopolitical contexts. While AI can help synthesize large amounts of data and provide valuable insights, Zaytsev also noted the ethical implications of using AI in decision-making processes around social or political issues. Concerns around disinformation and national state actors producing it through AI raises questions about how to oversee algorithms that can verify information sources. Schirch and others noted that, while the State Department and other organizations are curating datasets for AI use, civil society actors are underrepresented in the conversation about AI and democracy. European governments are receiving support from programs like the UK's Policy Lab to facilitate deliberative technology like pol.is, remesh.ai, or jigsaw.ai into their policymaking processes.

MIND THE GAPS

Panelists and audience members identified a number of gaps between the academic and practitioner worlds with regard to understanding and utilizing AI. Zaytsev identified a gap existing between academic interests and public concern around AI and democracy, pointing to an opportunity for universities to innovate. Presenting results from a text analysis of Web of Science and mass media publications referring to AI and democracy, Zaytsev identified five major topics of common interest among academics and journalists: media manipulation, global threats to democracy, deliberative potential of technology, forecasting and historic parallels, and AI-driven solutions to policy issues. Some audience members asked about the "dark side" of AI, including human rights restrictions and the risk of censorship of information. The panelists acknowledged that there are many ongoing issues with AI that require regulatory frameworks, such as the 2023 AI Act implemented by the EU. Zaytsev warned, however, that there is also a risk of over-regulation at this stage, which would diminish opportunities for innovation. Altamirano Rayo underscored that AI is not going away because it is fundamentally driven by private companies. For this reason, the federal government has developed a shared certification program "to bring on as many social scientists, computer scientists, humanists that are interested in the AI space" to share their expertise and work in collaboration. Private companies can also be authorized to work with the federal government by applying to the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP).

Action Items

- **Encourage young people – students and professionals alike – to join the discussion on applied AI through the US federal government's hiring surge and underlined certification program.** More talent is needed to help onboard secure large language models, like those used by the State Department assisting diplomats around the world.

- **Join the effort to integrate AI into federal and local government.** The Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute Consortium (AISIC) offers an open application for organizations and universities to contribute to improving government use of AI. Governments can develop community forums or chatbot models to coach people on responding to affective polarization and help foster deliberative conversations.

- **Organize workshops bringing together academics and practitioners to learn about using deliberative technologies and AI.** As evidenced by the range of academic publications on AI and democracy, there is considerable potential to construct a more coherent concept of AI that can organize the many branches of interrogation. Collaborative AI research has the potential to create a safer, more depolarized tech industry.

> **"**
> **We now know our microbiome requires us to eat different kinds of bacteria to be healthy to stave off disease. In the same way, diversity and pluralism are healthy for democracy.**
>
> LISA SCHIRCH

PATH FORWARD

Defending Democracy

Aníbal Pérez Liñán
Director, Kellogg Institute for International Studies and Professor of Political Science and Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame (Chair)

Laura Gamboa
Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Utah

Jennifer McCoy
Professor of Political Science, Georgia State University; Former Inaugural Director of the Global Studies Institute and Director of the Carter Center's Americas Program

Zerxes Spencer
Director of Fellowship Programs, National Endowment for Democracy

Kurt Weyland
Mike Hogg Professor in Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin

What strategies are most effective to protect democracy from processes of autocratization? What are the lessons from successful experiences in Brazil, Poland, the United States, and other cases? What are the mistakes that democratic forces should avoid when confronting authoritarian populists?
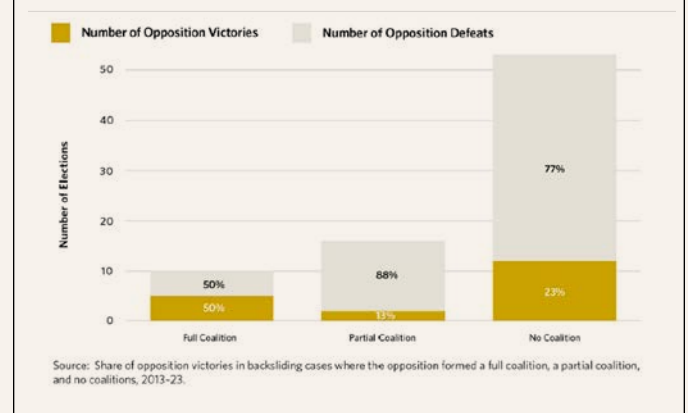
The final panel of the conference centered around strategies for protecting democracy against autocratic leaders, from institutional and electoral reforms to opposition coalitions and strategies to counter populist leaders. Speakers also discussed the structural conditions necessary for democracy to thrive, from inequality to majoritarian policies and international influences.

Discussion Points & Key Takeaways

OPPOSING FORCES

Panelists agreed that democratic erosion, not collapse, is a more pressing concern today for political parties and advocates. McCoy underlined that heightened regime uncertainty in backsliding democracies intensifies collective action dilemmas for opposition coalitions, whose electoral behavior is crucial. Polarized and poor media environments make it even more difficult for oppositions to coalesce and overcome autocratic incumbents. Examining 82 cases of backsliding democracies between 2013 and 2022, McCoy and colleagues found that instability and unpredictability undermined coalition-building, organization, and courageous leadership. However, when opposition parties did effectively coalesce early in the backsliding process, their odds of victory increased dramatically *(see Fig. 3)*.

Figure 3. Forming coalitions substantially increases opposition chance of victory

Source: Share of opposition victories in backsliding cases where the opposition formed a full coalition, a partial coalition, and no coalitions, 2013-23.

Gamboa emphasized that opposition goals and strategies towards autocratic leaders have different consequences for regime outcomes. Extra-institutional strategies (such as protests) are a risky gamble, while institutional strategies with moderate goals, like electoral reforms to protect seats in Congress, tend to be more effective against

autocrats. Essentially, however, the effectiveness of these strategies depend on democratic starting points or the stage of the process, as well as domestic and international normative preferences for democracy. In this sense, autocrats are emboldened by international **inaction**, as shown in the case of Central America in recent years.

Weyland posited that backsliding occurs when power-hungry personalistic leaders exploit a constellation of institutional and conjunctural opportunities to destabilize opposition parties that are incapable of responding. Once in power, populists acting by the "will of the people" use the mechanisms of government in different ways. Combined with critical conjunctures, such as hydrocarbon windfalls or hyperinflation, autocrats gain enough momentum to sideline opponents and consolidate power. In Latin America, for example, autocrats have successfully overcome checks and balances during exceptional episodes of hyperinflation or insurgent threats to security. In one case, the opposition in Venezuela had limited options for containing President Chávez, who benefited from institutional instability and the global commodity boom-and-bust cycle.

The panelists debated whether opposition-based or populist-based explanations for backsliding were more convincing. Following the example of Venezuela, McCoy contended that opposition parties controlled half of the legislature, as well as military, police, and courts, at the time of Chávez's ascent. The institutional strength of the opposition, including support from the OAS, the EU, and the Carter Center, did not dissuade them from choosing a maximalist response and supporting a military coup. They had an opportunity to negotiate but the decision was not to. These contrasting interpretations of Venezuelan populism point to a broader puzzle around the boundaries between institutional and extra-institutional strategies for defending democracy.

CHECKING THE TEMPERATURE

Admittedly, defenders of democracy must grapple with the unfortunate reality that not all democracies are delivering all the time, and historically they have excluded important segments of the population. Here Weyland emphasized that addressing underlying conditions requires long-term changes, so democratic opposition parties and advocates must be pragmatic. Comparatively, Eastern Europe is more stable than Latin America due to institutional strength and legal frameworks. McCoy differentiated between the concerns

Action Items

- **Encourage university leadership to establish or expand fellowship programs for democracy advocates at risk.** Fellowships provide networking and learning opportunities that can enrich campus communities. Universities should work with flexible deadlines and sponsorship for democracy advocates at risk.

- **Invest in research related to party-based coalition building in struggling democracies at risk of backsliding.** With more knowledge of the collective action dilemmas surrounding coalitional behavior in countries with weaker institutions or potential conjunctures, scholars and activists can contribute to democracy promotion on the ground.

- **Highlight interventions that improve countries' structural conditions over the long term, such as strengthening institutions or reducing economic volatility.** In devising new curricula for sustainable development programs, such as those offered by the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, long-term interventions should not be replaced by short-term agency-oriented interventions that dominate international democracy support today.

around majoritarian abuses and those arising from anti-democratic rhetoric. In highly polarized contexts, the question should be: who is accusing whom of being a threat to democracy? Gamboa argued that the international setting influences leaders' incentives to maintain democracy.

SUPPORTING DEFENDERS AT RISK

The defense of democracy can also take place through universities and fellowship programs, where "democracy advocates at risk" can engage with faculty and students to enrich campus communities with firsthand knowledge. Spencer highlighted the importance of supporting human rights defenders in academic institutions. He described NED's Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow program, which since 2001 has provided unique opportunities for practitioners and scholars to exchange experiences, expand networks, and write about democratization worldwide. Additionally, Spencer emphasized that universities can provide a safe haven for defenders of democracy, offering access to resources such as libraries, vibrant campus communities, and visa support. The Kellogg Institute visiting fellowships and York University's Human Rights Defenders Hub connect defenders at risk with local students and departments as well as other global activists, bolstering their capacity to advance human rights causes. These programs can also include other forms of engagement, such as teaching appointments.

Thematic Analysis

Inequality and reduced access to justice produce dangerous reinforcing cycles of division.

Panels on African coups, Latin American democracy, Integral Human Development, and Democratic Backsliding underlined that insecurity, poverty, and low state capacity have provoked militarized responses, such as support for heavy-handed populists or even military coups. These factors can lead to a dangerous self-reinforcing cycle of social division between those that can afford private security and those that cannot. In these contexts, conjunctions such as resource windfalls or security threats can open the door for power-hungry populists to blame democratic institutions and opposition actors. In the case of US elections and military coups in Africa, courts can provide a principled alternative to militarized responses such as coups, but in highly politicized contexts, they are less effective in securing democratic processes, such as elections.

Genuine rather than artificial engagement creates grassroots support for democracy.

Across discussions of International disinformation, Military coups, US elections, Integral Human Development, and AI, participants described how contemporary autocratic politicians have been able to leverage anti-institutional sentiment, often through social media. In the Global South, anti-Western sentiment has been fueled by disinformation campaigns often carried out by Russian or Chinese forces. In the Global North, right-wing populists have catered to conspiratorial theories related to the electoral process, a fundamental tenet of democracy. Despite its democratizing effects, social media has undermined traditional media journalism that provides a necessary means of accountability on political elites. AI has provided a platform for public-private collaboration around deliberative democracy but, because there is no market solution or adequate regulatory framework at the moment, this technology has also unleashed new sources of disinformation and instability. Lessons drawn from specialists on Measuring democracy, International influences, African military coups, and Integral Human Development all agreed that more local, indigenous engagement on the ground around the concept of "democracy" is necessary to ground conversation, decolonize, reimagine, and inspire support for electoral processes, civil liberties, and rule of law.

Youth engagement and education are key to deliberative democracy.

As discussed in panels related to US elections and African military coups, while the predominance of democratic consolidation in the recent decades should be celebrated, the politics of democratic stagnation or backsliding has misled younger generations away from some fundamental democratic norms. The youth are exposed to highly charged identity-based politics in the US, for example, and may normalize confrontation over deliberation. In Africa, the youth have celebrated military intervention but have detested military rule. As panelists on measuring democracy, Integral Human Development, and democratic backsliding suggested, partnerships with business, philanthropies, universities, and other bilateral and multilateral donors provide a means to educate and grow. USAID and Ford Foundation have partnered in the past to bring together philanthropic organizations to raise funding for democracy promotion activities. NED and universities like Notre Dame have offered asylum to democratic advocates at risk. These experiences produce mutually beneficial results, enriching campus communities while providing opportunities for networking and scholarly production.

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