



# Assaulted: Democracy Is Dying As Technocrats Watch

The elite Foreign Policy reveals that a) democracy has been under assault by Technocrats and b) Technocrats are watching as Democracy withers. This further confirms the battle between Technocracy and world governments. A second article is included from the New York Times that echoes the same story. It notes that “Support for autocratic alternatives is rising.” This is the most dangerous trend imaginable, because it shows that Technocracy is winning the war. □ TN Editor

On Nov. 29, three weeks after Donald Trump’s victory in the U.S. presidential election, the following chart, showing a precipitous decline in support for democracy around the world, went viral after [appearing](#) in the *New York Times*:

Plenty of public argument ensued about the validity of the underlying data. But there was hardly any comprehension among experts about why moral support for democracy might be eroding — in part, because there’s good reason to think that experts are themselves to blame. This is most obvious in the case of Trump, who devoted a large share of his presidential campaign not just to attacking democratic norms but also to attacking the technocratic experts who have come to symbolize

democracy in the United States.

I have no sympathy for Trump's repulsive disregard for facts, truth, and legitimate expertise. Yet he was canny in identifying how both parties' technocratic mindset — their approaching every problem with a five-point plan designed to produce evidence-based deliverables — had left democracy vulnerable. Trump knew that if he waged a war on democratic values, the technocrats who now monopolize the country's political elite would be incapable of fighting back.

Technocrats have always shown little interest in fights over fundamental values. Their work proceeds from the assumption that everyone — or at least all the people who truly matter — already share the same enlightened commitment to democratic values. The only debate they are concerned about is over evidence on “what works” among policy inputs to produce the desired measurable outputs, like higher wages and GDP, less poverty, less crime and terrorism, or less war.

The problem occurs when some people turn out not to share those enlightened values and insist on challenging them. Technocrats, in these situations, don't know what to say because they can't rely on evidence to make their case. So when technocrats are all we have to defend democracy, fights over fundamental values become embarrassingly one-sided.

Hillary Clinton was the perfect case in point, a politician so technocratic that she even embarrassed other technocrats. Her campaign website listed bullet-point plans to solve 41 different measurable problems, each one containing multiple sub-plans to solve multiple sub-problems. There was even a plan to protect the interests of dogs, cats, and horses. She almost reached the level of that *reductio ad absurdum* of global technocracy, the widely ridiculed [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) with their 17 goals and 169 targets.

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# How Stable Are Democracies? 'Warning Signs Are Flashing Red'

Amanda Taub, New York Times, Nov. 29, 2016

Yascha Mounk is used to being the most pessimistic person in the room. Mr. Mounk, a lecturer in government at Harvard, has spent the past few years challenging one of the bedrock assumptions of Western politics: that once a country becomes a liberal democracy, it will stay that way.

His research suggests something quite different: that liberal democracies around the world may be at serious risk of decline.

Mr. Mounk's interest in the topic began rather unusually. In 2014, he published a book, "[Stranger in My Own Country](#)." It started as a memoir of his experiences growing up as a Jew in Germany, but became a broader investigation of how contemporary European nations were struggling to construct new, multicultural national identities.

He concluded that the effort was not going very well. A populist backlash was rising. But was that just a new kind of politics, or a symptom of something deeper?

To answer that question, Mr. Mounk teamed up with Roberto Stefan Foa, a political scientist at the University of Melbourne in Australia. They have since gathered and crunched data on the strength of liberal democracies.

Their conclusion, to be published in the January issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, is that democracies are not as secure as people may think. Right now, Mr. Mounk said in an interview, "the warning signs are flashing red."

## Early signs of decline

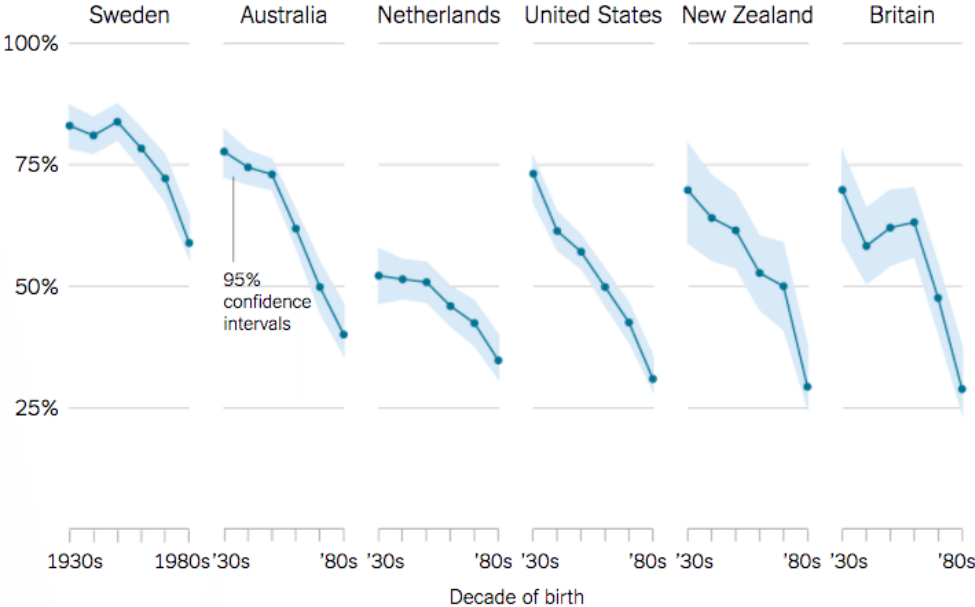
Political scientists have a theory called "democratic consolidation," which holds that once countries develop democratic institutions, a robust civil society and a certain level of wealth, their democracy is secure.

For decades, global events seemed to support that idea. Data from Freedom House, a watchdog organization that measures democracy and freedom around the world, shows that the number of countries classified as “free” rose steadily from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s. Many Latin American countries transitioned from military rule to democracy; after the end of the Cold War, much of Eastern Europe followed suit. And longstanding liberal democracies in North America, Western Europe and Australia seemed more secure than ever.

But since 2005, Freedom House’s index has shown a decline in global freedom each year. Is that a statistical anomaly, a result of a few random events in a relatively short period of time? Or does it indicate a meaningful pattern?

Mr. Mounk and Mr. Foa developed a three-factor formula to answer that question. Mr. Mounk thinks of it as an early-warning system, and it works something like a medical test: a way to detect that a democracy is ill before it develops full-blown symptoms.

**Percentage of people who say it is “essential” to live in a democracy**



Source: Yascha Mounk and Roberto Stefan Foa, “The Signs of Democratic Deconsolidation,” *Journal of Democracy* | By The New York Times

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## **Smart Cities Flashback: ‘In The End, They will Destroy Democracy’**

Smart Cities are the crown jewels of Technocracy, and they will, by their very nature, destroy democracy and all other forms of government. Technocrats know this and thus are putting all their effort into building Smart Cities around the globe. The United Nations, of course, is the primary driver and catalyst for Smart Cities, thanks to its recent Habitat III conference and the New Urban Agenda. □ TN Editor

A woman drives to the outskirts of the city and steps directly on to a train; her electric car then drives itself off to park and recharge. A man has a heart attack in the street; the emergency services send a drone equipped with a defibrillator to arrive crucial minutes before an ambulance can. A family of flying maintenance robots lives atop an apartment block - able to autonomously repair cracks or leaks and clear leaves from the gutters.

Such utopian, urban visions help drive the “smart city” rhetoric that has, for the past decade or so, been promulgated most energetically by big technology, engineering and consulting companies. The movement is predicated on ubiquitous wireless broadband and the embedding of computerised sensors into the urban fabric, so that bike racks and lamp posts, CCTV and traffic lights, as well as geeky home appliances such as internet fridges and remote-controlled heating systems, become part of the so-called “internet of things” (the global market for which is now estimated at \$1.7tn). Better living through biochemistry gives way to a dream of better living through data. You can even take an [MSc in Smart Cities](#) at University College, London.

Yet there are dystopian critiques, too, of what this smart city vision might mean for the ordinary citizen. The phrase itself has sparked a rhetorical battle between techno-utopianists and postmodern flâneurs: should the city be an optimised panopticon, or a melting pot of cultures and ideas?

And what role will the citizen play? That of unpaid data-clerk, voluntarily contributing information to an urban database that is monetised by private companies? Is the city-dweller best visualised as a smoothly moving pixel, travelling to work, shops and home again, on a colourful 3D graphic display? Or is the citizen rightfully an unpredictable source of obstreperous demands and assertions of rights? “Why do smart cities offer only improvement?” [asks the architect Rem Koolhaas](#). “Where is the possibility of transgression?”

The smart city concept arguably dates back at least as far as the invention of automated traffic lights, which were first deployed in 1922 in Houston, Texas. Leo Hollis, author of [Cities Are Good For You](#), says the one unarguably positive achievement of smart city-style thinking in modern times is the train indicator boards on the London Underground. But in the last decade, thanks to the rise of ubiquitous internet connectivity and the miniaturisation of electronics in such now-common devices as RFID tags, the concept seems to have crystallised into an image of the city as a vast, efficient robot – a vision that originated, according to [Adam Greenfield](#) at [LSE Cities](#), with giant technology companies such as IBM, Cisco and Software AG, all of whom hoped to

profit from big municipal contracts.

“The notion of the smart city in its full contemporary form appears to have originated within these businesses,” Greenfield notes in his 2013 book *Against the Smart City*, “rather than with any party, group or individual recognised for their contributions to the theory or practice of urban planning.”

Whole new cities, such as [Songdo](#) in South Korea, have already been constructed according to this template. Its buildings have automatic climate control and computerised access; its roads and water, waste and electricity systems are dense with electronic sensors to enable the city’s brain to track and respond to the movement of residents. But such places retain an eerie and half-finished feel to visitors - which perhaps shouldn’t be surprising. According to Antony M Townsend, in his 2013 book [Smart Cities](#), Songdo was originally conceived as “a weapon for fighting trade wars”; the idea was “to entice multinationals to set up Asian operations at Songdo ... with lower taxes and less regulation”.

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