

Process of democratization and de – colonization

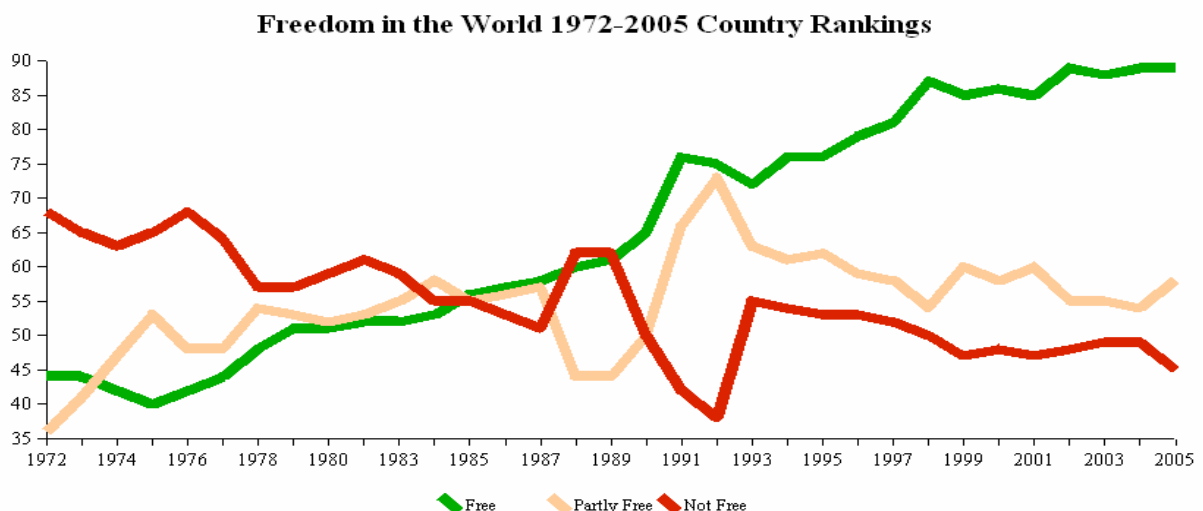
S. Huntington defines a ‘wave of democratization’ simply as “*a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period*”. He identifies three waves of democratization:

- a long slow wave from 1828 to 1926
- second post-WWII wave, from 1943–1964
- third, in the mid-1980s, when the pace of global democratic expansion accelerated markedly, to the point where as of 1996 there were somewhere between 76 and 117 democracies (depending on how they are counted).

Significantly, each of the first two waves ended with what a “reverse wave” of democratic breakdowns:

- first in 1922–42, gave rise to the expansionist fascist regimes that brought on the Second World War.
- and the second in 1961–75, which occurred during the peak of the Cold War and witnessed a number of regional conflicts and civil wars in which (in contrast to the current period) some established democracies fought directly or through surrogates and vigorously backed certain anticommunist authoritarian regimes.

During each of these two reverse waves, some but not all of the newly established (or reestablished) democracies broke down. Overall, in each reverse wave, the number of democracies in the world decreased significantly but left more democracies in place than had existed prior to the start of the previous democratic wave.



Five changes in the world that paved the way for the latest wave of transitions to democracy (by S. Huntington):

- the deepening legitimacy problems of authoritarian governments unable to cope with military defeat and economic failure,
- the burgeoning economies of many countries, which have raised living standards, levels of education, and urbanization, while also raising civic expectations and the ability to express them,
- changes in religious institutions which have made them more prone to oppose governmental authoritarianism than defend the status quo,
- the push to promote human rights and democracy by external actors such as non-governmental organizations and the European Community,
- the "snowballing" or demonstration effects, enhanced by new international communications, of democratization in other countries.

Four general types of transitions are:

- transformations (as in Spain, India, Hungary, and Brazil) where the elites in power took the lead in bringing about democracy,
- replacements (as in East Germany, Portugal, Romania, and Argentina) where opposition groups took the lead in bringing about democracy,
- transplacements (as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bolivia, and Nicaragua) where democratization occurred from joint action by government and opposition groups,
- interventions (as in Grenada and Panama) where democratic institutions were imposed by an outside power.

Conditions that have favored or are favoring the consolidation of new democracies (by S. Huntington):

- the experience of a previous effort at democratization, even if it failed;
- a high level of economic development,
- a favorable international political environment, with outside assistance,
- early timing of the transition to democracy, relative to a worldwide "wave," indicating that the drive to democracy derived primarily from indigenous rather than outside influences,
- experience of a relatively peaceful rather than violent transition.

Defining *real* democracy

Some key features of effective democratic system are:

- Control of the state and its key decisions and allocations lies, in fact as well as in constitutional theory, with elected officials; in particular, the military is subordinate to the authority of elected civilian officials.
- Executive power is constrained, constitutionally and in fact, by the autonomous power of other government institutions (such as an independent judiciary, parliament, and other mechanisms of horizontal accountability).
- Not only are electoral outcomes uncertain, with a significant opposition vote and the presumption of party alternation in government over time, but no group that adheres to constitutional principles is denied the right to form a party and contest elections.
- Cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups are not prohibited (legally or in practice) from expressing their interests in the political process nor from using their language and culture.
- Beyond parties and intermittent elections, citizens have multiple ongoing channels and means for the expression and representation of their interests and values, including a diverse array of autonomous associations, movements, and groupings that they have the freedom to form and join.
- In addition to associational freedom and pluralism, there exist alternative sources of information (including independent media) to which citizens have (politically) unfettered access.
- Individuals also have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration, and petition.
- Citizens are politically equal under the law (even though they are invariably unequal in their political resources), and the above individual and group liberties are effectively protected by an independent, nondiscriminatory judiciary whose decisions are enforced and respected by other centers of power.
- The rule of law protects citizens from unjustified detention, exile, terror, torture, or undue interference in their personal lives not only by the state but by organized antistate forces as well.

Colonialism: *is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another.* It is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders by the establishment of either settler or exploitation colonies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled, displaced, or exterminated. Colonizing nations generally dominate the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial territory, and may also impose socio-cultural, religious, and linguistic structures on the indigenous population (see also cultural imperialism). It is essentially a system of direct political, economic, and cultural intervention and hegemony by a powerful country in a weaker one.

Though the word *colonialism* is often used interchangeably with imperialism, the latter is sometimes used more broadly as it covers control exercised informally (via influence) as well as formal military control or economic leverage.

Decolonisation: *the action of changing from colonial to independent status.* It is a political process, frequently involving violence. Typically, it is composed of dynamic cycle of pressure, negotiations and disturbances, resulting in suppression by the police and military forces, escalating into more violent revolts that lead to further negotiations until independence is granted. In extreme circumstances, there is a war of independence, sometimes following a revolution. Decolonization is rarely achieved through a single historical act, but rather progresses through one or more stages of emancipation, each of which can be offered or fought for: these can include:

- the introduction of elected representatives (advisory or voting; minority or majority or even exclusive),
- degrees of autonomy,
- self-rule.

Thus, the final phase of decolonisation may in fact concern little more than handing over responsibility for foreign relations and security, and soliciting de jure recognition for the new sovereignty. But, even following the recognition of statehood, a degree of continuity can be maintained through bilateral treaties between now equal governments involving practicalities such as military training, mutual protection pacts, or even a garrison and/or military bases.

Possible additional reading:

- Samuel P. Huntington, „*The Third Wave: Democratization In The Late Twentieth Century*”, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991