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# The problem with democracy aid

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The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large, solid red speech bubble is centered on the page, pointing downwards. The text "Plan of the talk" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font inside the speech bubble.

# Plan of the talk





## Three main challenges to democracy aid:

1. It is not working.
2. Support for democracy promotion is falling.
3. Democracy aid may even make things worse (if we do it badly)

→ So ... what can we do?

A red speech bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing downwards. The text "The context" is written in white, sans-serif font in the center of the bubble. The background features several thin, light gray concentric circles and dashed lines, creating a subtle pattern.

The context

# Institutions and Democratization in Africa

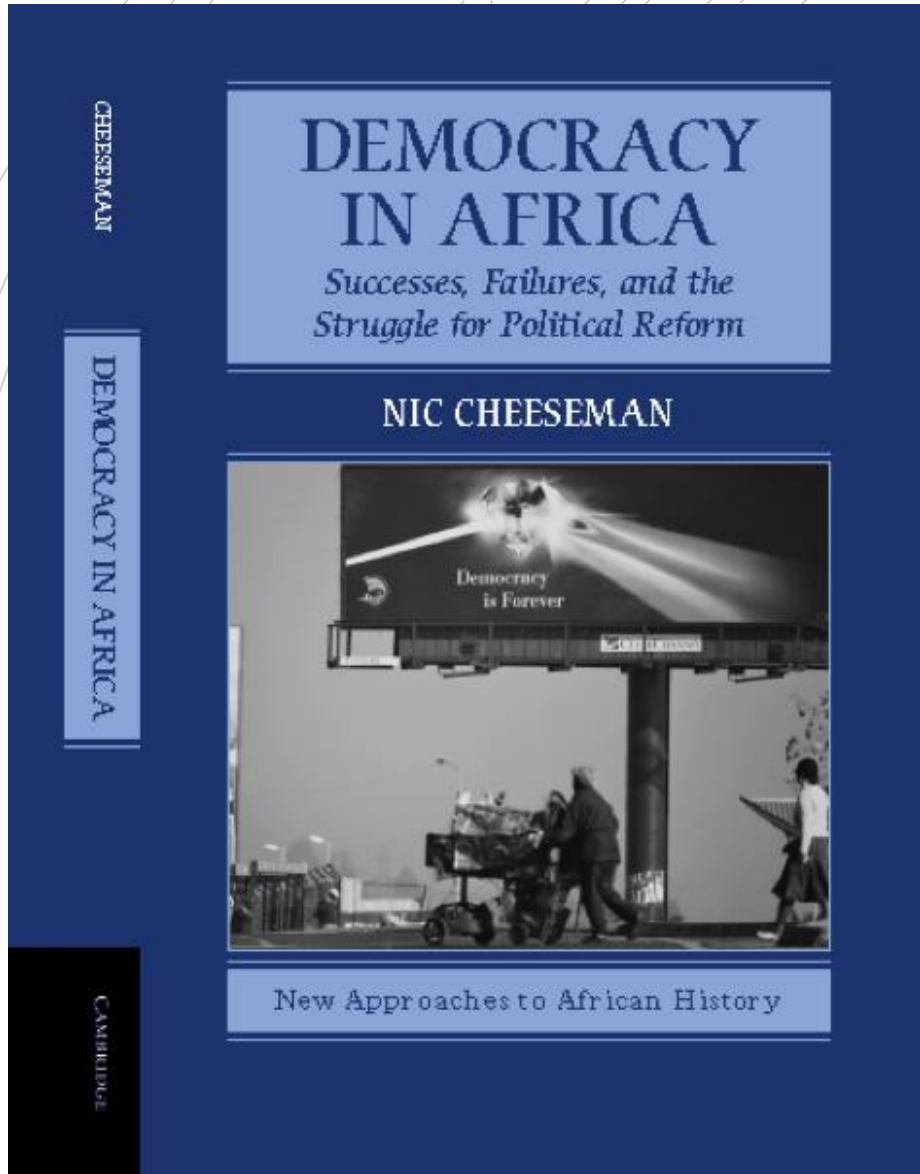
How the Rules of the Game Shape  
Political Developments



EDITED BY  
Nic Cheeseman

- Africa features a small number (5?) high quality democracies
- Most African states are “competitive-authoritarian”
- Great variation: term limits have institutionalised, but not everywhere
- 19 countries have had a transfer of power – less than half.





How do we solve a problem like elections?

- Initial optimism about elections has eroded.
- “Mission creep” to parties and social norms and values.
- Democracy aid increasingly risks being controversial.

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1. Why is democracy  
aid not working?



Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas

**How**

**To**

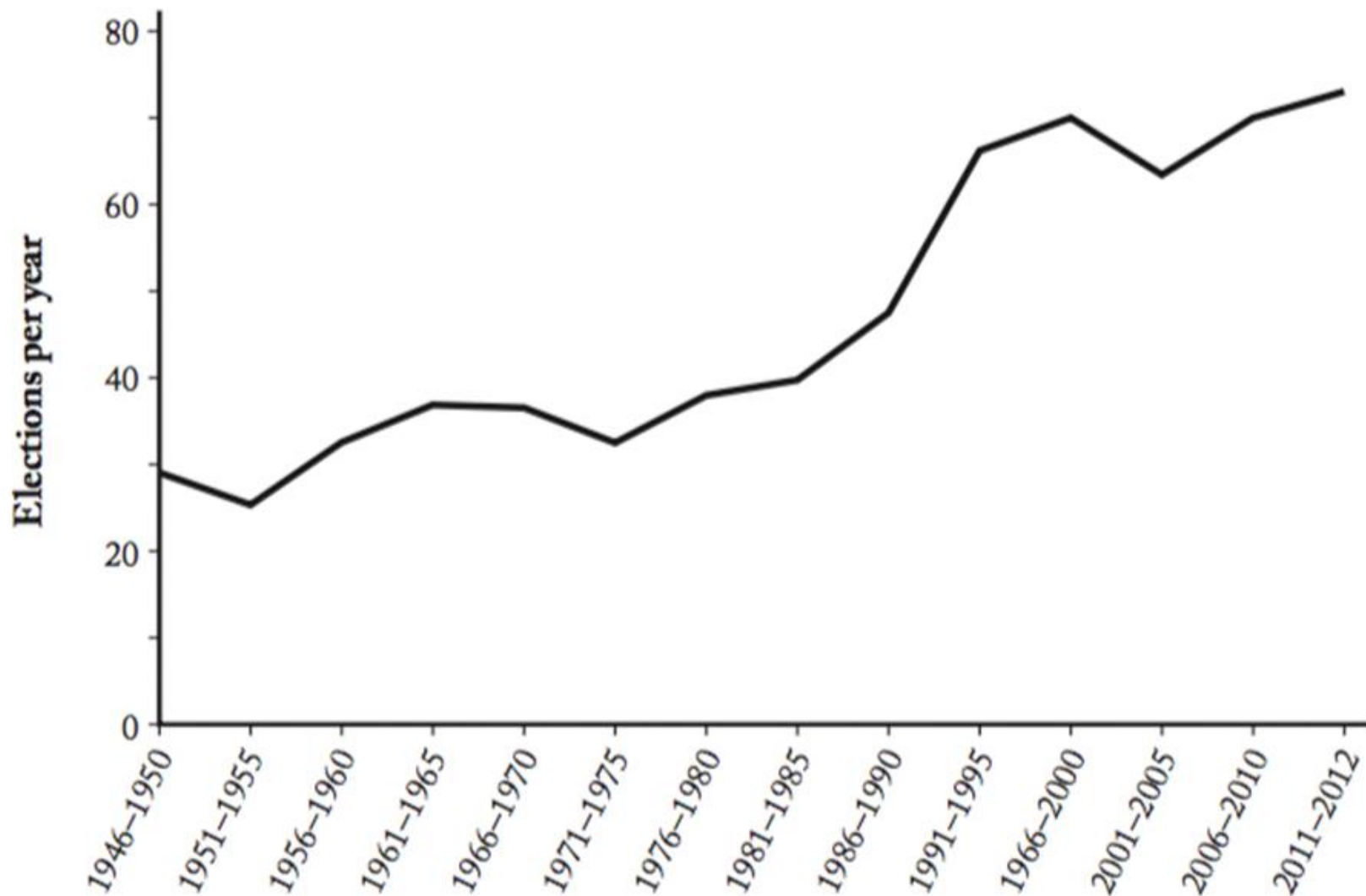
**Rig**

**An**

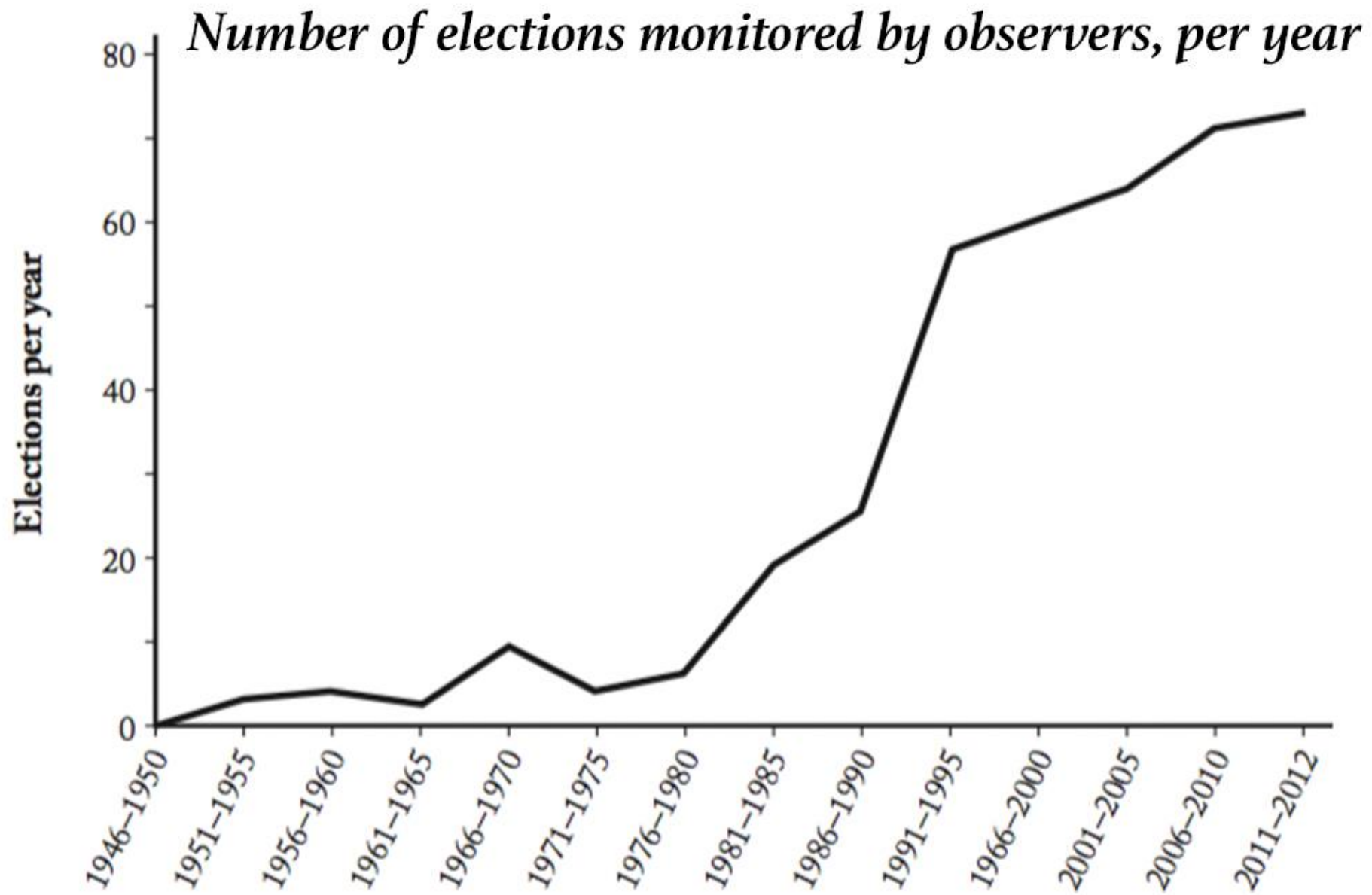
**Election**

- i.** We have run out of easy cases.
- ii.** Change can be triggered from outside, but consolidation comes from within.
- iii.** Authoritarians are learning, and directly undermining aid.
- iv.** Democracy as a hegemonic ideal is under threat.

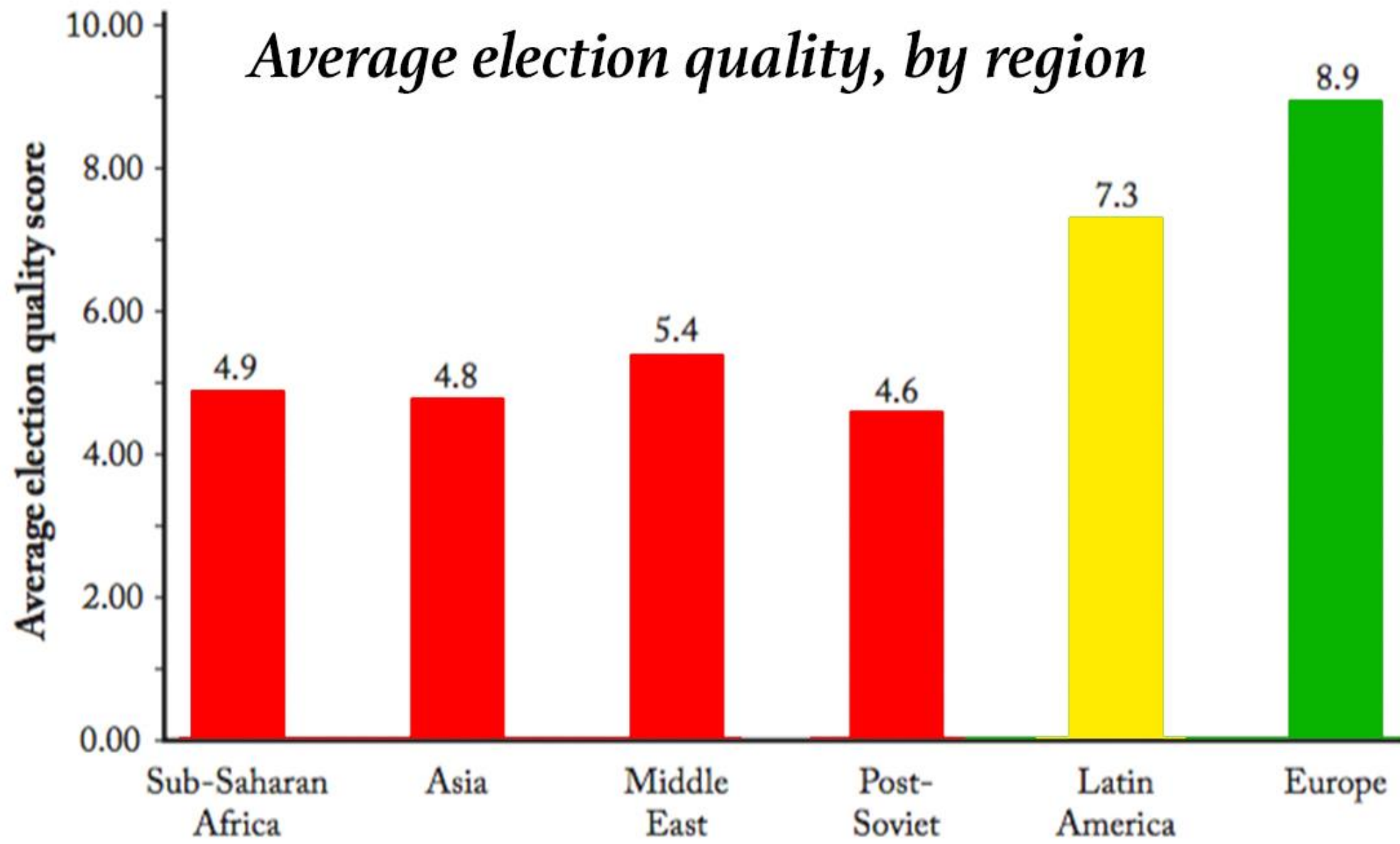
## *Number of national elections, per year*



*Source:* National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset.



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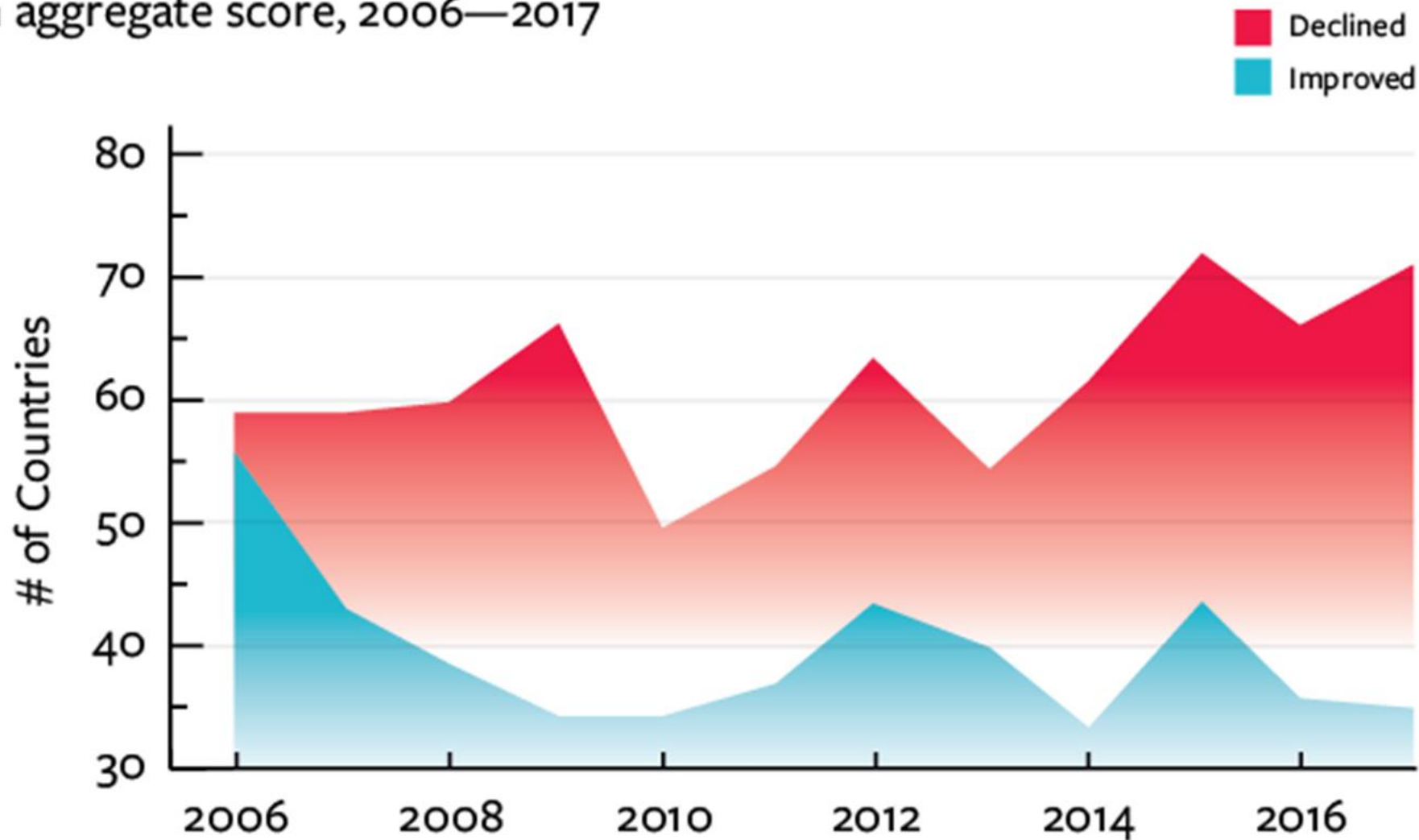


*Source:* Election Integrity Project. A score of 10 is a “perfect” election.



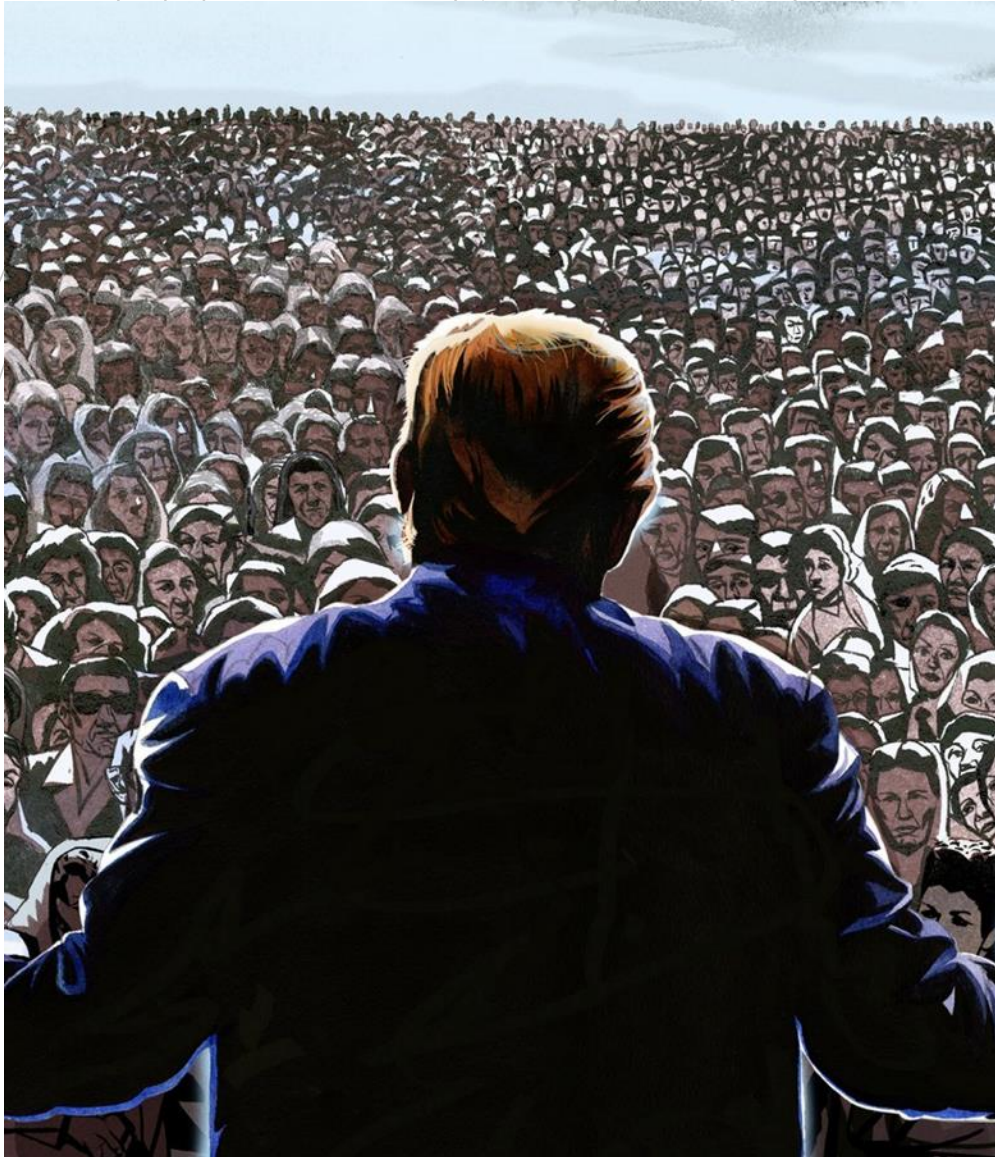
# Twelve Years of Decline

Number of countries that declined and improved in aggregate score, 2006—2017



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2. Why is support for  
democracy  
promotion falling?



- i.** Europe has been consumed with Brexit & the “migrant crisis”
- ii.** America has become more introverted and a worse role model
- iii.** Aid is being “securatised”
- iv.** China/Rwanda/Ethiopia provide compelling alternatives
- v.** African leaders are increasingly contesting its legitimacy

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### 3. The rise of technocratic solutions





- Initial emphasis on civil society groups, electoral commissions & NGOs
- Lack of progress, search for uncontroversial solutions & fetishization of technology shifts focus
- African elections are now the most expensive in the world.
- Falling investment in political and social structures

So what can  
we do?

- i.** Stay the course
- ii.** Get our own house in order
- iii.** Rebuild a global consensus
- iv.** Deliver aid through regional partnerships
- v.** Beware technocratic solutions

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'Stay in touch'. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

Stay in  
touch

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