

# Crisis of Democracy

## Straight Talk from the Frontline

dag.tanneberg@wzb.eu

December 17, 2015



- 1 Why we should talk about this
- 2 Negotiating terms
- 3 Physical integrity violations in established democracies
- 4 Wrap-up

# Is crisis the latest thing?

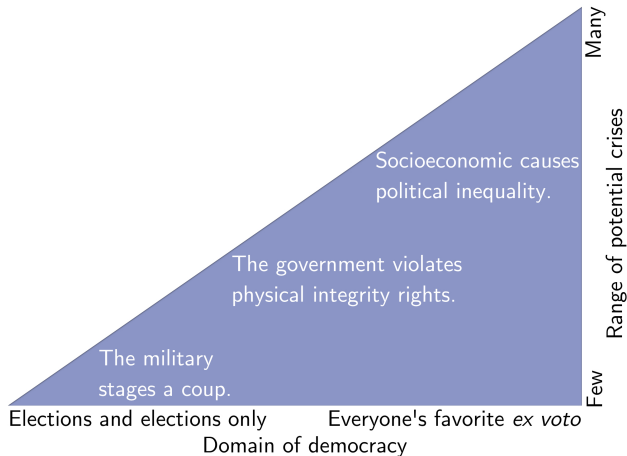
“In an age of widespread secondary school and university education, the pervasiveness of the mass media, and the displacement of manual labor by clerical and professional employees, [the rise of value-oriented intellectuals; D.T.] constitutes a challenge to democratic government which is [. . .] as serious as those posed in the past by aristocratic cliques, fascist movements, and communist parties.”

Michel Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Joji Watanuki (1975): *The Crisis of Democracy*, New York University Press: New York, p. 7.

# Some often raised concerns

- 1 Functional failure of democracy
  - legalized torture and extra-judicial killings
- 2 Negative externalities of economic markets
  - socioeconomic translates into political inequality
- 3 Rise of anti-democratic forces
  - right-wing populism in Europe and the US

# Balancing democracy and crisis



# Lessons learned on terminology

## **Content conditions scope**

The more things go into democracy the more observations may qualify as crises.

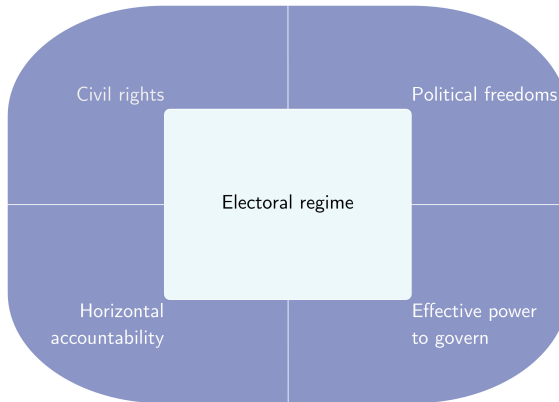
## **Scope changes texture**

As the domain of democracy increases, the range of crisis shifts from acute, short-term disruptions to latent, long-term decline.

# Research questions

- 1 Do established democracies violate human rights?
- 2 Why do established democracies violate human rights?
- 3 What institutions prevent violent government behavior?

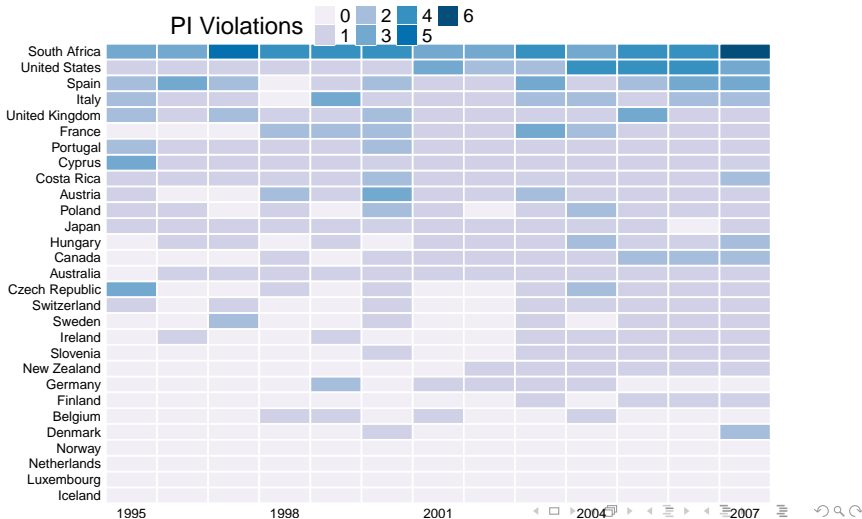
# Embedded democracy at a glance



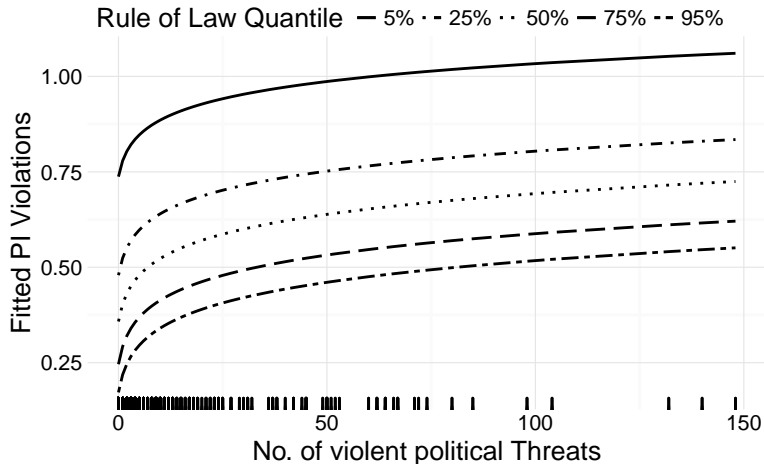
Wolfgang Merkel (2004): Embedded and Defective Democracies, in: Democratization, 11(5), pp. 33-58, 37.



# Established democracies violate physical integrity.



# Horizontal accountability does not constrain.



# Wrap-up

- 1 The crisis of democracy has been a topic for decades, and it touches on real world concerns.
- 2 What we call democracy changes systematically what we call crisis.
- 3 There may be grain of truth to the debate as established democracies do not live up to their own standards.