



# Democracy's CENTURY

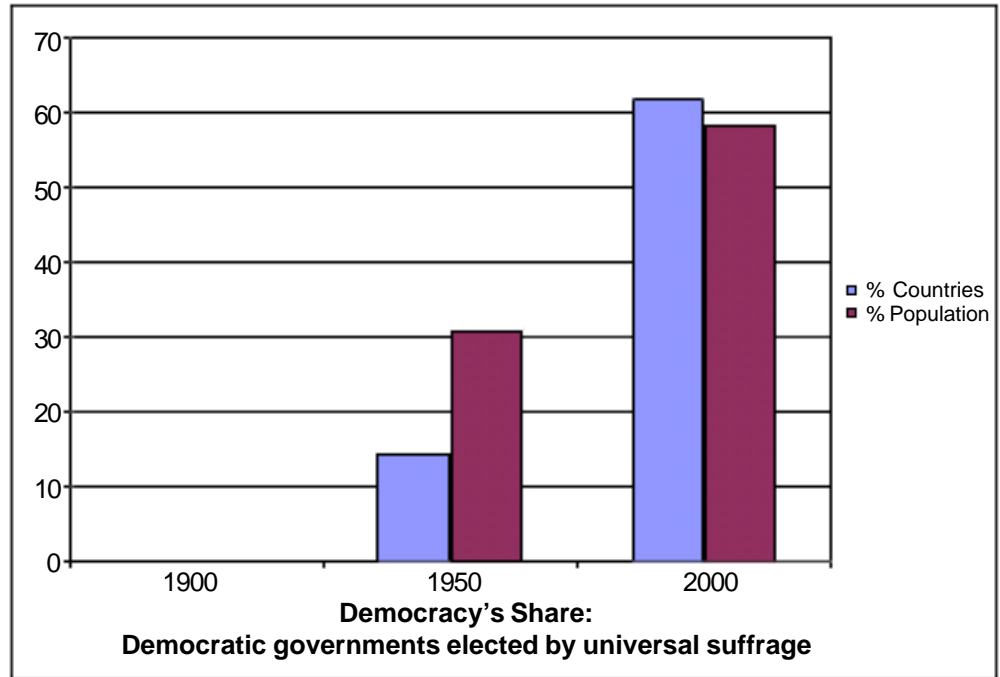
## A Survey of Global Political Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

This end-of-the-century project represents an institutional effort by Freedom House, the non-partisan organization that monitors political rights and civil liberties around the world, to assess trends in the political systems of the world over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Freedom House is well suited to this task. For over forty years, Freedom House has been issuing annual reports on the state of freedom in the world. Central to that work is the yearly study *Freedom in the World*. We have applied the same rigorous analytic standards employed in our surveys to the compilation of this study of the state of the world's political systems at the start of this century, in mid-century and at the 20<sup>th</sup> century's end.

*What this study is:* This study examines at three equidistant points in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the kinds of political systems that have governed the world. It divides countries on the basis of their political practices into the following:

- **Democracies:** These are political systems whose leaders are elected in competitive multi-party and multi-candidate processes in which opposition parties have a legitimate chance of attaining power or participating in power.
- **Restricted democratic practices:** These are primarily regimes in which a dominant ruling party controls the levers of power, including access to the media, and the electoral process in ways that preclude a meaningful challenge to its political hegemony. In the first half of the century, states with restricted democratic practices included countries which denied universal franchise to women, racial minorities, and the poor and landless.
- **Monarchies:** These are divided into



three groups: constitutional monarchies, in which a constitution delineates the powers of the monarch and in which some power may have devolved to elected legislatures and other bodies; traditional monarchies; and absolute monarchies, in which monarchic power was exercised in despotic fashion.

- **Authoritarian regimes:** These are typically one-party states and military dictatorships in which there are significant human rights violations.
- **Totalitarian regimes:** These are the one-party systems that establish effective control over most aspects of information, engage in propaganda, control civic life, and intrude into private life. Typically, these have been the Marxist-Leninist and national socialist regimes.
- **Colonial and imperial dependencies:** These are the territories that were un-

der the domination of the large imperial systems that predominated in the first half of the century.

- **Protectorates:** These are countries that have by their own initiative sought the protection of a more powerful neighboring state or are under the temporary protection and jurisdiction of the international community.

In short, this study represents an attempt to assess the organizing principles by which countries are governed and how their leaders are selected.

*What this study is not:* This is not a study that seeks to replicate the work of Freedom House's annual Survey of Freedom. The Survey assesses not only the political system in a country, but also the country's human rights performance, civil society, economic freedoms, and rule of law.

## The Findings

Political scientists who point to the proliferation of democratically elected governments around the world since the mid-1970s refer to ours as the “democratic age.” But the data presented in this end-of-the-century report make clear that ours has not only been a century of bloody struggle between peoples and ideologies, but that it also has been a century of struggle for national sovereignty and for the individual’s democratic sovereignty within the state. In a very real sense, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has become the “Democratic Century.”

The findings herein are significant. They show a dramatic expansion of democratic governance over the course of the century. This political trend has been matched by significant economic progress associated with the expansion of market economies. Like economic progress, political progress has been uneven. But the general trends are hard to ignore. They reinforce the conclusion that humankind, in fits and starts, is rejecting oppression and opting for greater openness and freedom.

As depicted in the accompanying graphs and charts, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a significant expansion of democratically elected governments and a dramatic expansion in the number of sovereign states. In 1900, there were no states which could be judged as electoral democracies by the standard of universal suffrage for competitive multiparty elections. The U.S., Britain, and a handful of other countries possessed the most democratic systems, but their denial of voting rights to women, and in the case of the U.S. to black Americans meant that they were countries with restricted democratic practices. The states with restricted democratic practices were 25 in number and accounted for just 12.4 percent of the world population. In 1900 monarchies and empires predominated.

By 1950, the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism, the post-war momentum toward decolonization, and the post-war reconstruction of Europe and Japan resulted in an increase in the number of democratic states. At mid-century, there were 22 democracies account-

ing for 31 percent of the world population and a further 21 states with restricted democratic practices, accounting for 11.9 percent of the globe’s population.

By the close of our century liberal and electoral democracies clearly predominate, and have expanded significantly in the Third Wave, which has brought democracy to much of the post-Communist world and to Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa. Electoral democracies now represent 119 of the 192 existing countries and constitute 58.2 percent of the world’s population. At the same time liberal democracies— i.e. countries Freedom House regards as free and respectful of basic human rights and the rule of law—are 85 in number and represent 38 percent of the global population.

The growth of individual political autonomy (usually accompanied by a broader expansion of freedom) is reflected in the adoption of key post-World War II international documents, particularly the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. A growing global human rights and democratic consciousness is reflected in the expansion of democratic practices and in the extension of the democratic franchise to all parts of the world and to all major civilizations and religions. At the same time as the individual has gained greater sovereignty, so too have many formerly disenfranchised peoples and nations attained statehood. For the second major trend of the century is the prolifera-

tion of sovereign states. In 1900, there were 55 sovereign states, 80 in 1950 and today there are 192.

In 1900, of the 55 sovereign states, 13 were extensive empires, the largest of which were the British, the Russian, the French, the Austro-Hungarian, and the Ottoman. Thirty-three of today’s countries were parts of other states and 112 were under imperial and colonial rule.

Sovereignty, of course, is no guarantee of democracy. Nor is democracy an absolute guarantee of respect for human rights. But the three trends have generally progressed together in this century. Because democracy has expanded rapidly over the last 20 years, many new democracies are fragile and the gains could well be reversed.

And while our century’s clamor for democracy and freedom has not always been peaceful (regrettably, it has frequently met with brutal repression), it has contributed to the prospect of a more peaceful world. For history indicates that stable and established democracies rarely war with one another.

Tracking Polity in the Twentieth Century						
	Sovereign States and Colonial Units			Population (millions)		
	2000	1950	1900	2000	1950	1900
<b>DEM</b>	119 (62.0%)	22 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3,438.3 (58.2%)	743.2 (31.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>RDP</b>	16 (8.3%)	21 (13.6%)	25 (19.2%)	297.6 (5.0%)	285.9 (11.9%)	206.6 (12.4%)
<b>CM</b>	0 (0.0%)	9 (5.8%)	19 (14.6%)	0 (0.0%)	77.9 (3.2%)	299.3 (17.9%)
<b>TM</b>	10 (5.2%)	4 (2.6%)	6 (4.6%)	58.2 (1.0%)	16.4 (0.7%)	22.5 (1.3%)
<b>AM</b>	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.3%)	5 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	12.5 (0.5%)	610.0 (36.6%)
<b>AR</b>	40 (20.8%)	10 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1,968.9 (33.3%)	122.0 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>TOT</b>	5 (2.6%)	12 (7.8%)	0 (0.0%)	141.9 (2.4%)	816.7 (34.1%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>C</b>	0 (0.0%)	43 (27.9%)	55 (42.3%)	0 (0.0%)	118.4 (4.9%)	503.1 (30.2%)
<b>P</b>	2 (1.0%)	31 (20.1%)	20 (15.4%)	4.8 (0.1%)	203.3 (8.5%)	26.5 (1.6%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	192 (100.0%)	154 (100.0%)	130 (100.0%)	5,909.6 (100.0%)	2,396.3 (100.0%)	1,668.0 (100.0%)
DEM = Democracy RDP = Restricted Democratic Practice CM = Constitutional Monarchy TM = Traditional Monarchy AM = Absolute Monarchy AR = Authoritarian Regime TOT = Totalitarian Regime C = Colonial Dependency P = Protectorate						

## Methodology

The data for the political typology of the world in 1900 and 1950 have been assembled by Freedom House researcher Jason Muse and reviewed by Freedom House's senior staff. The data for the year 2000 are the product of Freedom House's annual Survey of Freedom, a major institutional research effort.

The findings were reviewed by a team of scholars that consisted of Professor Orlando Patterson of Harvard University; Professor Seymour Martin Lipset and Professor Francis Fukuyama, both of George Mason University; Dr. Fareed Zakaria, the Managing Editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine; and Dr. Marc Plattner, co-director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies and the editor of the *Journal of Democracy*. Adrian Karatnycky, President of Freedom House and Arch Puddington, the Vice President for Research also took part in the review of the data.

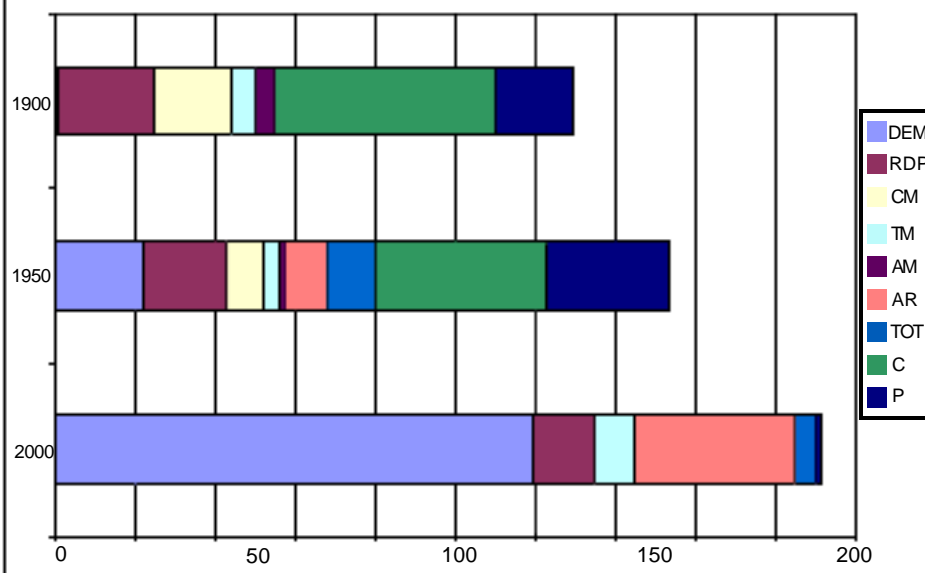
The underlying data on individual countries at each fifty-year interval can be received by contacting us at [fh@freedomhouse.org](mailto:fh@freedomhouse.org) or by phone: 212-514-8040. This report will be published with an accompanying essay by Prof. Orlando Patterson, John Cowles Professor at Harvard University in our forthcoming volume, *Freedom in the World: 1999-2000*. The report is also available on our website ([www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)).

### THE FATE OF EMPIRES

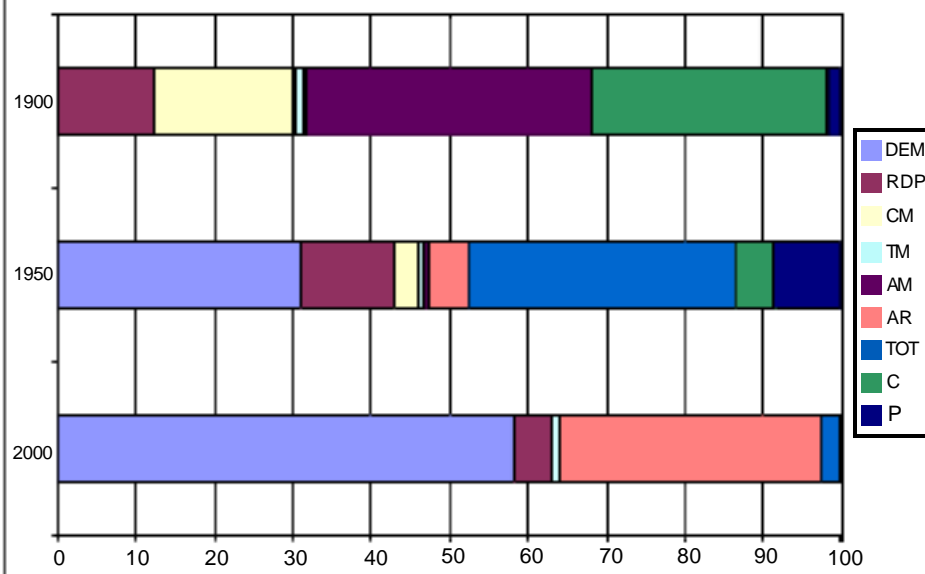
(Number of today's countries under imperial rule in 1900 and their Freedom House ratings in 2000)

	Free	Partly Free	Not Free
<i>Austro-Hungarian Empire</i>	2	3	0
<i>Belgian Empire</i>	0	0	1
<i>British Empire</i>	17	14	7
<i>Chinese Empire</i>	1	0	0
<i>Dutch Empire</i>	0	2	0
<i>French Empire</i>	2	6	10
<i>German Empire</i>	5	1	4
<i>Italian Empire</i>	0	1	1
<i>Japanese Empire</i>	2	0	1
<i>Ottoman Empire</i>	2	3	5
<i>Portuguese Empire</i>	3	2	1
<i>Russian Empire</i>	5	5	5
<i>Spanish Empire</i>	0	0	1

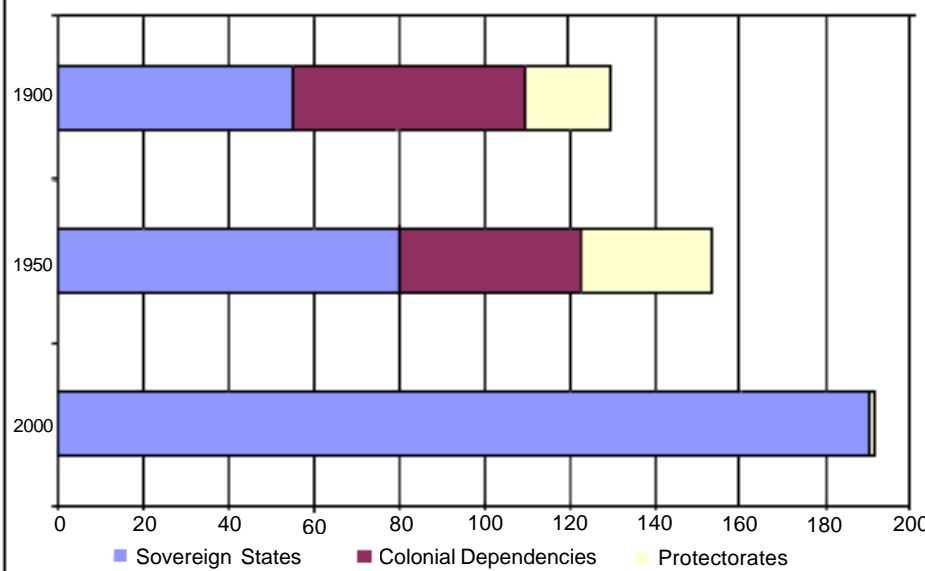
### Tracking Polity by Sovereign States



### Tracking Polity by Percent of World Population



### Tracking Sovereignty



Country	2000	1950	1900
Afghanistan	TOT	TM	TM
Albania	DEM	TOT	E
Algeria	AR	C	C
Andorra	DEM	P	P
Angola	AR	C	P
Antigua and Barbuda	RDP	C	C
Argentina	DEM	AR	RDP
Armenia	DEM	TOT	E
Australia	DEM	DEM	C
Austria	DEM	P	CM
Azerbaijan	AR	TOT	E
Bahamas	DEM	C	C
Bahrain	TM	P	P
Bangladesh	DEM	RDP	C
Barbados	DEM	C	C
Belarus	AR	TOT	E
Belgium	DEM	DEM	CM
Belize	DEM	C	C
Benin	DEM	C	C
Bhutan	TM	TM	P
Bolivia	DEM	RDP	RDP
Bosnia-Herzegovina	P	TOT	E
Botswana	DEM	C	C
Brazil	DEM	AR	RDP
Brunei	TM	P	P
Bulgaria	DEM	TOT	E
Burkina Faso	AR	C	C
Burma	AR	RDP	C
Burundi	AR	P	C
Cambodia	RDP	C	C
Cameroon	RDP	P	C
Canada	DEM	DEM	RDP
Cape Verde	DEM	C	C
Central African Republic	DEM	C	C
Chad	RDP	C	C
Chile	DEM	DEM	RDP
China	AR	TOT	AM
Colombia	DEM	RDP	RDP
Comoros	RDP	C	P
Congo (Brazzaville)	AR	C	C
Congo (Kinshasa)	AR	C	C
Costa Rica	DEM	RDP	RDP
Cote D'Ivoire	AR	C	C
Croatia	DEM	TOT	E
Cuba	TOT	RDP	P
Cyprus (G)	DEM	C	P
Czech Republic	DEM	TOT	E
Denmark	DEM	DEM	CM
Djibouti	DEM	C	C
Dominica	DEM	C	C
Dominican Republic	DEM	RDP	RDP
East Timor	P	C	C
Ecuador	DEM	DEM	RDP
Egypt	RDP	CM	C
El Salvador	DEM	RDP	RDP
Equatorial Guinea	AR	C	C
Eritrea	AR	P	C
Estonia	DEM	TOT	E
Ethiopia	AR	CM	P
Fiji	DEM	C	C
Finland	DEM	DEM	E
France	DEM	DEM	RDP
Gabon	AR	C	C
DEM = Democracy RDP = Restricted Democratic Practice CM = Constitutional Monarchy			

Country	2000	1950	1900
The Gambia	AR	C	C
Georgia	DEM	TOT	E
Germany	DEM	P/TOT	CM
Ghana	DEM	C	C
Greece	DEM	CM	CM
Grenada	DEM	C	C
Guatemala	DEM	RDP	RDP
Guinea	AR	C	C
Guinea-Bissau	DEM	C	C
Guyana	DEM	C	C
Haiti	DEM	AR	RDP
Honduras	DEM	RDP	RDP
Hungary	DEM	TOT	CM
Iceland	DEM	DEM	P
India	DEM	DEM	C
Indonesia	DEM	RDP	C
Iran	AR	CM	AM
Iraq	AR	CM	E
Ireland	DEM	DEM	CM
Israel	DEM	DEM	E
Italy	DEM	DEM	CM
Jamaica	DEM	C	C
Japan	DEM	P	CM
Jordan	RDP	CM	E
Kazakhstan	AR	TOT	E
Kenya	AR	C	C
Kiribati	DEM	C	P
Korea, North	TOT	TOT	C
Korea, South	DEM	P	C
Kuwait	TM	P	P
Kyrgyz Republic	DEM	TOT	E
Laos	TOT	C	C
Latvia	DEM	TOT	E
Lebanon	AR	RDP	E
Lesotho	RDP	C	C
Liberia	DEM	RDP	RDP
Libya	AR	P	E
Liechtenstein	DEM	RDP	CM
Lithuania	DEM	TOT	E
Luxembourg	DEM	CM	CM
Macedonia	DEM	TOT	E
Madagascar	DEM	C	C
Malawi	DEM	C	C
Malaysia	RDP	C	C
Maldives	AR	P	P
Mali	DEM	C	C
Malta	DEM	C	C
Marshall Islands	DEM	P	C
Mauritania	AR	C	C
Mauritius	AR	C	C
Mexico	RDP	RDP	RDP
Micronesia	DEM	P	C
Moldova	DEM	TOT	TM
Monaco	DEM	CM	CM
Mongolia	DEM	TOT	E
Morocco	TM	P	TM
Mozambique	DEM	C	C
Namibia	DEM	P	C
Nauru	DEM	P	C
Nepal	DEM	AM	TM
Netherlands	DEM	DEM	CM
New Zealand	DEM	DEM	C
Nicaragua	DEM	AR	RDP
Niger	DEM	C	C
TM = Traditional Monarchy AM = Absolute Monarchy AR = Authoritarian Regime			

Country	2000	1950	1900
Nigeria	DEM	C	C
Norway	DEM	DEM	CM
Oman	TM	TM	TM
Pakistan	AR	RDP	C
Palau	DEM	P	C
Panama	DEM	AR	RDP
Papua New Guinea	DEM	P	C
Paraguay	DEM	AR	RDP
Peru	AR	AR	RDP
Philippines	DEM	RDP	P
Poland	DEM	TOT	E
Portugal	DEM	AR	CM
Qatar	TM	P	P
Romania	DEM	TOT	TM
Russia	DEM	TOT	AM
Rwanda	AR	P	C
Saint Kitts and Nevis	DEM	C	C
Saint Lucia	DEM	C	C
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	DEM	C	C
Samoa	DEM	P	TM
San Marino	DEM	DEM	RDP
Sao Tome and Principe	DEM	C	C
Saudi Arabia	TM	AM	E
Senegal	RDP	C	C
Seychelles	DEM	C	C
Sierra Leone	DEM	C	C
Singapore	AR	C	C
Slovakia	DEM	TOT	E
Slovenia	DEM	TOT	E
Solomon Islands	DEM	P	P
Somalia	AR	C/P	C
South Africa	DEM	RDP	RDP
Spain	DEM	AR	CM
Sri Lanka	DEM	RDP	C
Sudan	AR	P	C
Suriname	DEM	C	C
Swaziland	TM	C	C
Sweden	DEM	DEM	CM
Switzerland	DEM	RDP	RDP
Syria	AR	RDP	E
Taiwan	DEM	RDP	E
Tajikistan	RDP	TOT	E
Tanzania	RDP	P	C
Thailand	DEM	CM	AM
Togo	DEM	P	C
Tonga	RDP	P	P
Trinidad and Tobago	DEM	C	C
Tunisia	AR	P	P
Turkey	DEM	DEM	AM
Turkmenistan	AR	TOT	E
Tuvalu	DEM	C	P
Uganda	AR	P	P
Ukraine	DEM	TOT	E
United Arab Emirates	TM	P	P
United Kingdom	DEM	DEM	CM
United States of America	DEM	DEM	RDP
Uruguay	DEM	DEM	RDP
Uzbekistan	AR	TOT	E
Vanuatu	DEM	P	P
Venezuela	DEM	AR	RDP
Vietnam	TOT	C	C
Yemen	RDP	TM	TM
Yugoslavia	AR	TOT	CM
Zambia	AR	C	C
Zimbabwe	RDP	C	C
TOT = Totalitarian Regime C= Colonial Dependency P = Protectorate E = Empire			

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