

Research Assessment #3

Date: 1/6/2021

Subject: “The Global State of Democracy 2021 Report: Building Resilience in a Pandemic Era”

APA Citation:

“The Global State of Democracy Report - Global Launch.” *YouTube*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 22 Nov. 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zfQ5aIW0Yk>. Accessed 6 Jan. 2022.

“THE GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY 2021 Building Resilience in a Pandemic Era.” *Www.IDEA.int*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Nov. 2021, https://www.idea.int/gsod/sites/default/files/2021-11/the-global-state-of-democracy-2021_1.pdf.

Assessment:

For the next few assessments I decided to start looking at an annual report I recently found that is conducted by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, or IDEA. This assessment will focus mainly on the background and focus of the actual IDEA organization that conducts the yearly reports.

The IDEA is an intergovernmental organization that is dedicated to the protection and advancement of democracy and democratic ideologies across the globe. It was founded in Stockholm, Sweden in 1995 and its membership spans dozens of countries across the world including but not limited to Sweden, South Africa, Australia, India, and many more. The organization compiles research data from its different state members to compare and contrast the current state of different democratic governments and to see what are the causes of potential shifts in thinking or actions taken by governments around the world. The IDEA works closely with the European Union, United Nations, and National/ Subnational governments. Their main focuses currently are the enforcement of fair electoral practices, the inclusion of recently alienated groups in the electoral process, inclusive constitution making and governance, and upholding UN sustainable development goals.

Some of the IDEA's research comes in the form of annual reports that act as updates for its members and others around the world. One of these reports is the annual Global State of Democracy. The report starts out by outlining the different criteria or data they use to make accurate conclusions about how democracy is shifting in the world. For the last few years the report focused heavily on smaller third world countries as well as the effects on climate change and different country's responses have highlighted their democratic shortcomings. But this year's report focused heavily on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and how global shutdowns impacted government's ability to efficiently work with and for their citizens. This led to the United States being a very large focus of this year's report because the mix of inefficient Covid response, false information, damaging voting regulations, human rights legislation, and civil unrest set the country further down on the democracy scale. The IDEA now classifies the United

States as a backsliding democracy. This means that institutions that were meant to uphold democracy in the country are beginning to fail and fall apart, which is leading to a rise in authoritarianism within the United States government. Authoritarianism is a form of government that enforces a strict obedience to authority and laws at the expense of personal freedoms. Some countries that follow an authoritarian style of government are North Korea, Yemen, and Chad. While the United States were a heavy focus, the report touches on dozens of countries around the world and the overall conclusion was that there has been an overwhelming wave of authoritarian ideas flooding governments around the world. The IDEA also includes a list of potential “fixes” or paths governments could take to help curb the rise of authoritarianism but this would mean an overhaul of revised legislation that is very unlikely to occur in any visible time frame.