Introduction
When Democracy 'Goes Wrong'

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In March 2014, *The Economist* – a news weekly that enjoys a global circulation of over 1.4 million copies – ran a front cover that asked in stark scarlet, 'What's gone wrong with democracy?' The framing of the question was revealing in itself. The issue's eponymous essay was not a text that sought to debate whether democracy really had gone wrong; the answer to that seemed to be self-evident. Instead the writers sought to provide a retrospective diagnosis of democracy's difficulties. As they pointed out, it seemed remarkable to be undertaking such a task so early in the twenty-first century given that democracy had been touted by many as 'the most successful idea' of the twentieth.[1]

So are we facing a global crisis of democracy? Many would argue so.[2] The citizens of post-colonial and post-socialist states who had once pinned their hopes on 'democracy' increasingly appear to have lost faith in its emancipatory promise (Diamond 2008b). Longstanding democracies in North America and Western Europe are beleaguered by a sense of 'democratic malaise' among their citizens (Hay 2007; Kupchan 2012), and the 'post-democratic' encroachment of corporate interests into representative politics (Crouch 2004). Even among those who have campaigned most vociferously in the name of democracy – the networks behind the anti-globalisation and Occupy movements – there is now intense debate as to whether the moniker and practices of 'democracy' need to be left behind.

The present collection is an attempt to make sense of this moment. We asked scholars with a deep knowledge of settings in which democracy seemed to be losing momentum to contribute chapters exploring how and why this situation had come about, their brief being less to evaluate whether democracy actually had 'gone wrong' in any of these settings (although such judgements were by no means precluded), and rather to investigate who thought and felt it had: on what basis did those people reach such a judgement, what were the circumstances that precipitated it, and how did they act in response? We were interested to

see what, if anything, these different settings had in common and what factors divided them. Did it make any intellectual sense to talk of this phenomenon as a single 'global crisis of democracy', in the ways that the popular media and some academic commentary seemed to invite? If, as we suspected, it did not, then what could account for the fact that there had been such a wellspring of democratic distemper in the early years of the twenty-first century, and what was allowing a narrative of 'democracy having gone wrong' to coalesce and prove so compelling to so many people around the world?

At a more theoretical level, we were interested in using this material to develop a better understanding of how and why people become dissatisfied with the circumstances in which they live. Did discontent regarding democracy reflect 'fault-lines' (Agüero 1998) and structural tensions intrinsic to 'democracy' as both a principle and a practice? Or was it – as scholars such as Crouch (2004) and Kupchan (2012) suggest – a response to recent but problematic developments in the forms of statecraft that go by the name of 'democracy'? Both explanations seemed plausible. Yet although they could reveal the conditions of possibility under which feelings of democratic malaise might become likely, neither line of argument seemed to provide a convincing answer as to what led individuals or populations to cross a threshold dividing tacit acquiescence to a suboptimal situation and outright dissatisfaction with it. Nor could they explain why some subjects were prompted to abandon their democratic commitments altogether, while others felt compelled to 'reclaim' or 'reinvigorate' democracy. These are puzzles that clearly require an investigation into political subjectivities, and a consideration of how such subjectivities both affect and are affected by the broader systems in which they are embedded.

For readers concerned with understanding why the practices and principles of democracy are in flux, sometimes even proving intolerable and unsustainable, the contributions to this volume – which offer an overview of how citizens in a wide range of countries experience and express dissatisfaction with democracy – point towards two important conclusions. The first is that there is no – and can be no – easy master narrative to encompass and explain all these diverse experiences. Secondly, and following from this, the volume demonstrates that if accounts of political dissatisfaction are to have either intellectual credibility or practical value, they have to be grounded in the specificities of citizens' subjective experiences, with particular attention paid to the factors that structure their visions of how best to relate to themselves and others, as well as to ideas, objects and institutions. This involves thinking about citizens' own criteria for evaluating democracy on a much more intimate scale than is usual in political analysis, even as those criteria are themselves partially generated by the activities of capital and the state. The chapters in this book thus build on and move beyond the insights of the now-familiar structural and political-economy approaches to democracy and its discontents to shed a fresh light on the difficulties facing democracy in contemporary times.

For readers interested in the character of political subjectivity, the volume offers provocative case studies that illuminate the changing and sometimes

mercurial way in which the democratic is not only thought about, but also felt and experienced. The volume thus builds upon recent work in social and cultural studies that emphasises the role of the affective and the experiential as a driving feature of political life (e.g. Ahmed 2004; 2010; Berlant 2011; Crociani-Windland and Hogget 2012; Long 2013; Navaro-Yashin 2012). Our contribution to this literature comes in developing accounts of political subjectivity that not only recognise the importance of affective engagements with democracy – as ideal, institution, procedure and experience – but also seek to account for their character and force.

Democracy, Sociality and Subjectivity

What might people be talking about when they claim that democracy has 'gone wrong' or is something that they have 'lost faith in'? One way to approach this puzzle would be to ask: 'What is democracy?' This question, simple enough on the surface, has bitterly divided political thinkers, some of whom consider democracy's essence to be the hosting of elections that are free, fair and – perhaps – proportional (Powell 2000), or the state distribution of wealth, leisure and opportunities (Lenin 1965 [1919]); others of whom see it as a condition of egalitarian decision making, in which there should be no state present at all (Graeber 2007: 329–374). For the purposes of this volume, it is not our intent to advocate any one normative definition of 'democracy'. Instead we note, following Paley (2002: 473–479), that many different political forms can lay claim to being 'democracies'. Nevertheless, one particular heuristic has become globally hegemonic: the 'liberal democratic' system of statecraft, in which regular elections are held, such elections are free and fair, an established opposition exists to hold the government to account, there is a free press, an independent judiciary, and the state upholds the rule of law and displays a commitment to human rights. Certainly, in all of the cases discussed in this volume, this is at least part of what our informants have in mind when they refer to the failures and disappointments of 'democracy'.

A related, but less frequently posed question concerns what kind of analytic object democracy should be considered to be. Most writers using the term either consider it to be a technique of governance and/or a principle by which the body politic is constituted and political life ordered (as Agamben (2012) notes, many commentators conflate the two, even though they are analytically distinct). In this volume, though, we favour a more expansive definition that includes but also exceeds these familiar connotations. In the spirit of classic thinkers such as de Tocqueville (2003 [1835]), and Dewey (1988 [1939]) as well as more recent scholars of democracy, including Banerjee (2008) and Michelutti (2007), we prefer to think of democracy as a total way of life: a form of human sociality. This expansive definition is the one that affords the most accurate purchase on the multiple ways in which our informants might understand and experience 'democracy', and thus stands to give the most insight into contemporary varieties of democratic malaise.

By sociality, we mean the dynamic and interactive relational matrix into which an entity is created, through which it comes to have an effect in the world and through which, if it is sapient, it comes to know the world and find meaning and purpose within it (Long and Moore 2013: 2). Social scientists now recognise that all entities, human and non-human, exist in co-productive and dynamic matrices of relations; sociality is a property foundational to all of them. However, the character of that sociality is not always the same. What distinguishes human sociality in particular is its capacity to take many forms and its remarkable plasticity: human relations can be and have been organised in ways that range from egalitarian communes to intensely hierarchical court societies.

Each form of sociality distributes authority, access to resources and access to opportunities in particular ways: in other words, it constitutes a body politic. But that is not the limit of its 'political' effects. It also has a distinctive bearing on subjects' relations to themselves and to others, inflecting all aspects of social life. Classic liberal democracy, for example, is a form of sociality in which members can and do disagree publicly (Long 2006), where they periodically enjoy the thrill (or the burden) of evaluating what kind of person they would most like to be in authority over them (Simandjuntak 2009), and where individual citizens discipline themselves (and each other) to obey the law and fulfil their obligations towards the state (Cruikshank 1999). All these relations are part of and come to shape the same dynamic system – which is why we find it helpful to talk of democracy as a 'total way of life' rather than simply a political principle or administrative technique. But the totality of a way of life does not equate to its durability: like all forms of sociality, democracy is continually emergent, generated through the relations that comprise it, and as such inherently fragile and open to the possibility of change.

Importantly, though, this change is not just a result of external pressures: it frequently arises from within. This is why, as Long and Moore (2013) have argued, the variability and changeability of human sociality can only be satisfactorily explained if one subscribes to a strong notion of the human subject who is born into and made within a dynamic and malleable matrix of relations, but avowed of sufficient critical and imaginative faculties to imagine how that matrix might be otherwise and – if material circumstances allow – to choose whether to transform it. These faculties include the human capacity for virtuality (Moore 2012), the will or effort required to persist in or transform a particular mode of being (Povinelli 2012), and what Moore (2011: 16) has termed 'the ethical imagination': the forms and means through which individuals not only imagine relationships to themselves and to others but also, and crucially, adjudicate them.

One of the most important aspects of the ethical imagination is its multidimensional character. That is to say, it may involve the processes of rational deliberation and *askesis* that scholars inspired by Foucault have emphasised as a primary means by which human beings might attempt to open up (or shut down) alternative ways of being (Long and Moore 2013: 10–11). But it might also stem from forms of unknowing, the unconscious, fantasy, affect, and the

use and experience of the body (Moore 2011: 16). Typically, all of these elements are present to varying degrees (see e.g. Long 2012). It should also be emphasised that, because the ethically imaginative subject has been created through a long history of social relations within a specific dynamic matrix, the way in which that subject imagines their relationships to themselves and others will be shaped by that history. This includes the social imaginaries and ideologies to which they have been exposed, but also the emotional tonalities of the events they have previously experienced. The ethical imagination is not unconstrained. It is nevertheless an important site of cultural invention, calling new forms of social arrangement to mind and motivating the subject to move towards them to the extent that their circumstances allow (Moore 2011: 16–18).

People's perspectives towards and imaginative engagements with the kinds of people they would like to be or become, as well as with objects, ideas, institutions and procedures, are shaped by communal and individual efforts to create ongoing and sustainable infrastructures (both practical and affective) for daily living. And as Lauren Berlant (2011: 23–24) suggests, all attachments – including attachments to existing or aspirational forms of sociality – are 'optimistic' in that they provide a means and a reason for continuing to live and for wanting to be in the world. Three important points follow from this. The first is that self-other relations are foundational for the political at the formative levels and structures of the subject (see Moore 2011 and this volume). This is one of the many reasons why kinship ideas, idioms and experiences are so key for understanding forms of political identification and dissatisfaction, including subjective investments in democracy (see Borneman, Long, this volume; Herzfeld 1997). Secondly, human attachments to, and identifications with, their worlds are ambivalent because human behaviour is not just a matter of rational calculation and well worked-out ideas, but also about the role of affect, suggestion and sensation. Democracy, like any other form of human sociality, is partly set up in fantasy and constituted by and through strong ties of identification and ambivalence which may work in concert or in counterpoint with each other. This is key to understanding the tensions and ambiguities inherent in the nature of people's dissatisfactions with democracy explored in the case studies in this volume. Third, dissatisfaction and desire for political change are not necessarily liberatory, as evidenced in this volume by turns to theocracy, populism and authoritarian rule, but the fact of change – whether desired or actualised, structural or symbolic – is itself part of the human possibilities that make up the political, part of the strategies individuals use in imaging and living out their relations to themselves and to others (Moore 2011: 29).

Democratic Discontent: Re-setting the Agenda

It follows from the principles outlined above that any evaluation of 'democracy', any attempt to compare it with alternatives (theocracy, say, or autocracy, or

even a radically refashioned vision of what 'democracy' might be) is ultimately an assessment of the way a particular matrix of relations is organised. It is a reflection upon 'democracy' as a form of sociality, and as such is driven by the ethical imagination of the subject in question. In some cases, this is made very explicit – as when the Israeli politician Rehavam Ze'evi spoke of his aspirations to 'live in a democracy, in which all of its citizens are able to vote and be voted on; without two types of citizens, no masters and no slaves' (in Bat-Adam n.d.). Here 'democracy' was minimally associated with the principle of universal suffrage but, as Ze'evi acknowledged, this has implications for the entire way in which social relations are constituted. Indeed, as Wolin (1983: 3) notes, democracy has historically 'been the means by which the many have sought access to political power in the hope that it could be used to redress their economic and social lot', thereby exposing the illegitimacy of drawing sharp ontological distinctions between 'the political' and 'the social' (as found, for example, in the thought of Hannah Arendt), and highlighting that what is at stake in democracy (or any other form of 'political' organisation) is world-making in its broadest sense (Barthes 1972: 143). This has significant implications for investigating democratic malaise because it reminds us that for all that democracy is typically envisaged as a way of distributing power or rule (reflecting its etymological roots in the Greek *krátos*), dissatisfaction with it could have roots in *any* aspect of the entire form of sociality to which that distribution gives rise. Even the 'classic' features of liberal democracy (elections, the rule of law, the guarantee of political and social rights, etc.) are by necessity embedded within entire ways of life – *any* elements of which might be sources of pleasure or frustration, and *any* elements of which might be the triggers for a profound sense of democratic malaise. Identifying what those problematic elements are – and when and why they serve as lightning rods for specific citizens' discontent – is the empirical task at the heart of this volume.

This allows us to develop a novel approach to the problem in hand. To date, most authors who have tried to account for feelings of dissatisfaction with democracy have focused their attention on the relations between citizens and either their leaders or their state's political institutions. These are of course often very important issues, featuring prominently in citizens' own accounts of why they feel as they do. But they are not the only relations that may be salient: democracy also leads to subjects having distinctive relationships with themselves, other citizens, and with the sense of a national or global world order in which they are embedded. Such relations may all have normative associations drawn from cultural imaginaries regarding how they ought to be conducted; they are also necessarily set up in unconscious fantasy (since one can never fully know oneself or another person, let alone distant global others to whom one nevertheless feels connected), and so have a complex emotional tonality that influences the way in which the subject responds to them (Moore 2007: 6–7). Since the ethical imagination is multidimensional, attention to *both* explicit ethical reflection and less readily articulated tonalities and feelings is vital for understanding why self-avowedly democratic forms of life might provoke its

disapproval. We need, in other words, to engage with subjectivity in its broadest sense. This does not mean studying individual subjectivities in isolation or ahistorically, but rather examining their relation to the broader social imaginaries of personhood and politics that circulate within any given place and time, as well as reflecting on how the specific histories of the democratic forms in which subjects are embedded may themselves come to affect the parameters by which 'democracy' is experienced and adjudicated.

The principles we have outlined here make for a deliberately broad and foundational model: one that can be used as a starting point for understanding all of the cases discussed in this volume and that therefore serves as a basis for comparison between them. In the sections that follow, we examine how our emphasis on subjectivity and the ethical imagination adds new layers to the three most widely touted explanations for citizen discontent with democratic socialities, namely that democracy contains inherent aggravating fault-lines, that it has 'failed to deliver', and/or that it has been intolerably adulterated by its entanglements with global capitalism.

The Inherent Tensions of Democracy

Because every political system is a mode of sociality, every political system is capable of attracting the critical attention of the subjects who inhabit it, and of being thought of otherwise. This is an inevitable corollary to the model of political subjectivity that we have outlined, and democracy is not exceptional in this regard. There are, nevertheless, certain structural features, broadly shared among the modes of sociality that call themselves democracies, that make it especially likely that the inhabitants of a democracy will have their ethical imaginations engaged in such a way as to reflect critically on the 'democratic ideal'. The points on which we focus here stand apart from the 'fault-lines' that emerge during the process of democratisation, which are often closely linked both to the legacies of the political systems that preceded democratisation and the manner of the latter's implementation (Agüero 1998; O'Donnell 1993: 1359–1360). We ask instead how the relational forms that a democracy necessitates place particular pressures and demands upon the subject, and whether institutional workings of a democratic polity contain inherent tensions, contradictions and 'fault-lines' that can – in certain circumstances – turn into potent sources of democratic malaise.

Most so-called democracies organise themselves – or at least legitimise themselves – with reference to the principle of popular sovereignty. Democracy is government in the name of the *demos*; of the people, by the people and for the people. The 'empowerment' that such a principle supposedly provides is often advocated as one of democracy's greatest strengths (see e.g. Fung 2006). Yet, because democracy locates sovereignty within individual citizens, it also by necessity makes the way in which that sovereignty is realised – and thus the subject's relationship to others and to 'the political' – stand out as an explicit

object of reflection and anxiety (see Hansen 2012). This is further compounded by democracy's promise that the subject has the capacity to change the political, should she wish. 'What am I for the political?' and 'What is the political for me?' are thus questions that continually recur for the inhabitant of a democratic system, unlike those living in more feudal or patrimonial systems, where, although such reflection is of course possible, the particular forms of political subjectivity involved deflect sustained reflection away from the constructed notion of the political.

As Brown (2012: 45–46) argues, popular sovereignty is an 'unfinished principle', offering no specific criteria as to how that rule should be made legitimately manifest: the concept of democracy in and of itself 'specifies neither *what* powers must be shared among us for the people's rule to be practised, *how* this rule is to be organised, nor by *which* institutions or supplemental conditions it is enabled or secured'. Thus, although democratic governance – which in the present day is almost always that of a state – typically seeks to claim its legitimacy through recourse to the principle of popular rule, its actual manifestation will always reflect the historically and geographically particular manner in which that principle has been 'finished'. This observation can help to explain the multiplicity of political forms that lay claim to being 'democracies', and the controversy that surrounds their entitlement to such a designation (Collier and Levitsky 1997). It also sheds important light on perceptions that democracy has 'gone wrong'. As David Nugent argues in his contribution to this volume, such claims may not in fact reflect a malfunction of the 'democratic' political system, but rather the inevitable slippage between the ideal of popular rule as citizens understand it and its instantiation in the practice of statecraft and the experience of social life.

Nugent illustrates his argument with reference to the classic 'liberal representative democracy' – a political form frequently touted as 'the best possible form of government' in both advanced and transitioning democracies (Diamond 1999: 2–7) – which he suggests is predisposed to generate a sense that democracy is in crisis or going wrong. He terms this phenomenon 'the democracy effect'. There are two dimensions to his analysis. Firstly, he identifies tensions embedded deep within the notion of liberal representative democracy: the very practice of electing a representative – while touted as being exemplary of popular rule – actually disempowers the citizen, who is forced to relinquish her sovereignty to a representative drawn from a limited pool of possibilities.[3] Benedict Anderson (1996: 14) described this as a 'domestication'. And yet, as Remmer (1995) notes, without some degree of citizen 'domestication', the state becomes so vulnerable to political buffeting that it is unlikely to survive. This generates a paradox at the heart of democratic nation states: popular sovereignty is both the bedrock of a democracy and yet also something that must be curtailed.

Secondly, Nugent notes that despite such contradictions, subjects are often affectively bound to and invested in the ideal of popular rule – a claim he illustrates with reference to the APRA movement in early twentieth-century Peru. The combination of attachment to an ideal, with its inherent inability to be fully

realised within a state, generates a sense of inadequacy surrounding the political. This is his 'democracy effect'. Subjective attachment to the idea of popular rule also makes it especially likely that this sense will be articulated through tropes which sustain the fantasy that popular sovereignty can and should be supported within the apparatus of a state society. Consequently, critique is based on an illusion of 'properly functioning democracy' elsewhere in space and time, fanning the flames of local dissatisfactions.

Henrietta Moore's chapter identifies further tensions which, while arguably intrinsic to all democracies, are becoming especially visible in the context of the self-consciously 'plural' nation states that are so widespread today. Such polities are saturated by social imaginaries drawing strong taxonomic distinctions on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion and culture, and as a result, issues of representation and inclusion are particularly likely to stand out as matters of concern for the ethical imagination. This is especially true given that democratic states predominantly operate as 'pluralist democracies', in which citizens vote according to specific interests, and the spectre of marginalisation looms large for minorities. This can involve more than just economic marginalisation; the relegation of one's deeply held moral principles is also at stake. As Feldman (2012: 671–673) notes, the intrinsic ethical relativism of pluralist democracy marks a radical departure from the earlier model of 'republican democracy', in which the gratification of voters' desires was subordinated to the maintenance of virtue and an explicit pursuit of 'the common good', a shift that alarmed European émigré intellectuals such as Arendt, Strauss and Voegelin, who saw in it the potential for 'anti-democratic masses' to 'gain a power position in the state by legal means' as had previously happened in Nazi Germany (Voegelin 1941: 163–164). Even today, the rise of far-right parties scares liberals with the prospect that democracy might usher in resurgent totalitarianism, while controversial policies – from gay rights to welfare cuts to the United Kingdom's ban on fox-hunting – can chill voters with the realisation that democracy offers no guarantee of upholding their core moral principles, and that their voices will only carry so far in the public sphere.

Such developments may result in claims that 'democracy' – as a system designed to respect the voices of all its citizens – is broken and in need of 'Occupation' or a revitalising 'spring', as Moore documents among French anti-gay-marriage activists. They may also result in forms of passionate violence that, as she shows through the case study of Kenya, can themselves lead to a democracy being judged (by both its citizens and international observers) as 'failing' or 'in decline'. Moore shows that these seemingly diverse responses to contemporary democracy share at their core a common set of preoccupations – those of voice, belonging, authority and legitimacy. And yet to understand the form that a subject's response to feelings of dissatisfaction takes, such concerns must be studied alongside other matters that influence the ethical imagination. For the French activists, the feelings of 'betrayal' are heightened by their identification with the ideals of the French Republic, while Kenyan voters exerted great efforts to prevent violence in the wake of the

2013 election not because they had come to view democracy more positively, but because of their investment in being held in esteem by an imagined wider world. Her material thus demonstrates that the ways in which deep-rooted and shared anxieties about voice, belonging and authority are expressed should be understood in the context of the full range of imaginaries and identifications animating the ethical imagination.

In different ways, each of Moore's cases illustrates the difficulty of finding a way to secure the 'agonism of adversaries' that Mouffe (2000: 15–16) considers to be characteristic of a well-functioning democracy, while avoiding the alternative pitfalls of a consensus managerial state or the explosion of antagonisms that cannot be managed within the democratic process. Indeed, many new experimental political forms grapple precisely with how to achieve the forms of political agonism that appear so difficult to realise within the framework of the electoral state (see e.g. Frenzel 2011; Maeckelbergh, this volume). In terms of identifying factors that might precipitate democratic malaise, we can now add to the inherent tension that comes from the way a democracy domesticates its citizens democracy's simultaneous mandate and incapacity to allow all voices to be fully heard.

The structure of the electoral democratic process can also be a wellspring of democratic discontent. Firstly, as studies in both the United Kingdom (Koch 2016) and Bolivia (Grisaffi 2013) have shown, electoral campaigning often involves a highly personalised and affectively charged set of interactions, in which the voter comes to believe that the politician takes interest in the small-scale concerns that animate their lifeworlds, will care for them when in office, and may even allow them to influence policy via some form of 'direct politics'. Yet once elected, the politician faces so many demands from so many constituents (as well as lobby groups and corporate interests) that it is impossible to fulfil them all. This frequently results in voters feeling betrayed and disappointed. (Note once again the role that identification and desire play in this material.) Secondly, as Runciman (2013) has argued, the very quality that has led to democracy being such a durable political form – the adaptability and capacity to experiment afforded by regular elections – can lead to a sense that democratic governments lack clear direction and are simply 'muddling through' incipient crises, further stoking anxieties that democracy is not fit for purpose.

Indeed, outright satisfaction with democracy will always be unlikely given that the many goods it promises to realise for its citizens will of necessity be delivered at an uneven pace (Holston and Caldeira 1998); democracy is inherently disjunctive and can never be fully realised. While critique arising from this incompleteness might generate forward momentum and political innovation (Holston 2008: 310-311), it may also result in a profound sense of apathy, a crippling democratic malaise, or a turn to an altogether different form of government. To understand what makes the difference, then – and as both Nugent and Moore's contributions to this volume emphasise – we need to move beyond a generalising account of the fault-lines that run through democracy and combine this with a historically, ethnographically and individually specific analysis of the

affects and desires that underpin the ethical imagination's engagements with democratic sociality and political life.

Turning Points: The Affective Basis of Democratic Dissatisfaction

To explore this further, we begin with those cases in which citizens who had once seemed quite enthusiastic about the democratic ideal come to feel intensely dissatisfied with it: instances where what the subject thinks or feels is a desirable way to live has been rendered impossible or seriously compromised, resulting either in efforts to reformulate 'democracy' or a turn towards other modes of political organisation. This latter phenomenon, sometimes labelled 'democratic recession' or 'democratic rollback'[4] has been most widely investigated in the new, emerging or 'transitional' democracies associated with the late twentieth century's 'third wave' of democratisation – although, as we will discuss shortly, similar rhetoric is becoming increasingly widespread in societies where democratic statecraft has an older vintage. The key question that such material raises is why a turn away from democracy is taking place among populations where the idea once enjoyed a widespread currency. In this regard we are addressing a fundamentally different issue to that which arises in settings where populations have *always* been hostile to democracy – viewing it as immoral, dangerous or incompatible with local models of deliberative consensus – but have nevertheless had a democratic system of governance imposed (see e.g. Ferme 1998; Hickel 2015; West 2008). Rather, following Ahmad (2009), we place the emphasis of our enquiry on the processes through which 'incompatibilities with democracy' or feelings of dissatisfaction are socially produced within democratic forms of life.

Drawing extensively on the findings of longitudinal 'barometer surveys' that measure shifts in public opinion regarding democracy and its alternatives in particular nations and world regions,[5] authors in the 'democratic recession' school have forcefully argued that citizens turn against democratic ideals when faced with high levels of corruption, poor economic performance, and low levels of security – in other words, when they receive 'poor governance' (Diamond 2008a, 2008b; Fernandez and Kenzi 2006; Kurlantzick 2013; Önnudóttir and Harðarson 2011). This, the literature suggests, may be because the low quality of democratic governance leads citizens to look back on their previous experiences of authoritarian governance with nostalgic fondness (Chang et al. 2007: 74–75). Alternatively, the tremendous socio-economic success of relatively undemocratic, authoritarian regimes such as Singapore, Malaysia and China might enhance support for managerial strongman politicians who position themselves as national or regional 'CEOs' (ibid.: 78).

While this focus on governance in its broadest sense has been an important corrective to the assumption in many policy circles that free-market economic growth in and of itself was the ticket to democratic consolidation, there are questions that surround it as a generalisable thesis. Firstly, one might ask whether issues of governance are really the most fundamental factors that turn

citizens against democratic forms of statecraft (and the principles that underpin it), or simply the most readily reportable. Secondly, if problematic governance really is the issue at hand, a question remains as to why this should have become the key locus of subjective investment:

> Although people in countries with weak democratic governments naturally lament their governments' failings, they are also often aware, either through past experience in their own country or from knowledge of other countries, that authoritarian governments often do not perform well either. … The various ways democratic governments treat their citizens better than authoritarian governments do—such as repressing them less, allowing them to express themselves and take part in political life—also count for something. (Carothers 2009: 12)

Thus, if Diamond and his colleagues are correct, then *why* socio-economic performance and 'good governance' should have trumped the apparent pleasures of new freedoms stands out as an urgent question for analysis. Perhaps more urgent still is the question of how comprehensive a portrait is gained when one's analysis hinges on the assumption of a rational-choice political actor, picking and choosing political systems according to their costs and benefits (and seemingly equipped with accurate information in this regard). This is a premise that runs deep in both the democratic recession literature and Carothers' rejoinder to it. As such, while studies of democratic recession have told us a great deal about the form in which democratic malaise is publicly expressed – a vital issue if we are to understand its structural effects – an anthropological engagement with citizens' subjectivity has the potential to further illuminate the motivational dynamics that underpin it.

Nicholas Long's contribution to this volume does exactly that, using the insights afforded by person-centred ethnography to shed a fresh light on the growing levels of public distaste for democracy in Indonesia. Underneath a surface discourse of dissatisfaction with governance, he finds a host of much more personal issues that convince his informants that democracy is dangerous or bad. Each case can be understood by examining the subject's ethical imagination within the context of both personal and national history. For example, he shows how state policy, primary education and the favoured family forms that existed under Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime systematically pathologised the expression of individual desires among youth, giving rise to conflicted subjectivities that were at once attracted to democracy because of the capacity it afforded them to articulate their aspirations, yet also, contrary to Carothers's expectations, disgusted by these 'freer' and more 'selfish' versions of themselves. Some older Indonesians, by contrast, who had become used to imposing their views on others in their roles as heads of households, were drawn to democracy because it offered an opportunity to do exactly that in settings beyond the family home. When faced with the forms of agonism, disagreement and manipulation that characterise democratic politics, however, their identifications and sense of self became so threatened that they turned against democracy as a mode of sociality entirely.

In these cases it is psychodynamically motivated, affectively charged and only partially conscious desires regarding who one wants to be, and how one wants to share the world with others, that can account for both subjects' initial enthusiasms for democracy and their sharp turns away from it. While this demonstrates the importance of conducting an expansive enquiry into the dissatisfactions of democracy, Long also argues that even critiques that are *prima facie* focused on governance may be (partially) motivated by deeper psychodynamic concerns. Some of his informants lamented the failing economy and high levels of corruption even as they admitted that they knew that there had been improvements in these areas. Such 'enlightened false consciousness' (Sloterdijk 1988) hardly fits the democratic recession school's model of a rational-choice actor, but makes sense when the language of bad governance is understood as an 'idiom of distress' (Nichter 1981), or a fantasy that conceals deeper anxieties regarding the failure to live as one wants to in a world where the horizons of the good life have been shaped by the legacies of authoritarianism and the growth of consumerism.

John Borneman's chapter offers a complementary perspective to Long's by asking not just why citizens might turn away from democracy and its institutionalised opposition but also what circumstances encourage authoritarianism to flourish: a question he explores through a comparison of the former GDR and contemporary Syria. As with all the contributions in this volume, Borneman insists on the importance of studying political subjectivity in a richly historicised manner, noting that the inherited cultural context in which a form of sociality or political system is emplaced exerts a 'historical weight and influence' that can influence emergent outcomes. He identifies two factors that are of particular importance. The first is kinship, by which he refers less to the specificities of individual households and families (cf. Long, this volume) and more to the ways in which principles of descent, affiliation and alliance serve as a model of libidinal desires that come to endow meaning and grant cultural legitimacy to all social and political forms. The second factor is whether a society has any history of institutionalised opposition or turn-taking, itself something made considerably more likely by a commitment to the bilateral reckoning of kinship. East Germany, in which an initial democratic period quickly gave way to an authoritarian gerontocracy, did have such a heritage, which Borneman suggests may explain the democratic reflex that eventually led to the GDR's segue into a liberal democracy.

For Syria, Borneman notes that while the strong presence of the United States and various EU member states in Syria may have led to forms of identification prompting Syrians to aspire to a 'democratic' constitutional order, the uprisings themselves were not in fact lobbying for democracy as is often (but erroneously) assumed. Both the 'people' in whose name the protests took place and the 'freedom' and 'liberty' that they demanded were concepts couched in a psychologically compelling maternal register (*umma* and *al-hurriyah*, respectively), emphasising freedom from authoritarian repression, but in favour of a binding and connecting of the people in the name of 'community' that also precluded opposition. Taken together, both Borneman and Long's chapters show

the significance of an attention to affect, identification and psychodynamics – to subjectivity – in the study of political ideals and satisfactions, while also revealing the importance of grounding such affects in the historical and biographical contexts that give them their 'structured precision' (Hemmings 2005: 562).

The importance of understanding turning points through a focus on subjective identification is developed further in Jan-Jonathan Bock's chapter on emergent political subjectivities in a disaster-struck region of Italy. Bock notes that many people in the central Italian town of L'Aquila had not been especially reflective about democracy prior to the disasters, describing its role in their lives as that of an 'abstract concept'. Suspicion towards politicians and frustration with 'wasteful' local administrations may have been the norm, but there was often an implicit trust in the state as having a basic duty of care towards its citizens. Yet as events unfolded following a devastating earthquake, this faith in the state began to founder, leading voters to reconfigure the government's disaster management not as a caring interventionist response but a cynical management strategy. To the extent that Italian political life had previously been infused *either* with an ethics of clientelistic reciprocity *or* an ethics of trusting the experts, the Aquilani's understandings of the relations they had with leaders were now shattered. Bock understands this as a 'decision-event' – a moment where the matrix of relations in which one is embedded comes into sharp relief, and which elicits a need for subjects to reflect on whether to continue with the status quo or seek to transform it.

The Aquilani responded in a range of ways: some resigned themselves to mediatised democracy or succumbed to authoritarian nostalgia, while others embraced a more vigorous re-engagement with participation in democratic politics. Strikingly, though, what comes forward in Bock's material is the extent to which the motivation for such democratic re-engagement is not only a sense of betrayal by and disillusionment with the state as it currently exists, but also a sense of needing to do justice to the memory of deceased relatives, so that their deaths were not in vain. Once again, we can see how a motivation to rethink politics might stem not only from an intellectual deconstruction of the shortcomings of the present situation, but also intense personal affects (grief, bereavement, fury) that charge political life with personal meaning.

The Pain of Post-democracy

As we have argued, feelings that democracy has 'gone wrong' or should be abandoned can partly be accounted for if one attends to the ways in which ethical imaginations, driven by their own distinctive experiences and idealisations of self/other relations underpinning libidinal and affective investments in the political, engage with the contradictions and relations inherent to the project of democratic statecraft. Building on this, we now engage more closely with a growing body of scholarship on post-democracy that identifies systemic changes in democratic practice – on a widespread if not global scale

– that might in and of themselves dispose citizens to a sense of democratic malaise.

Such scholarship is most frequently concerned with the ways in which statecraft in so-called democracies has drifted away from the vibrant ideological clashing of adversaries – Mouffe's (2000) 'agonistic politics' – and towards a consensual managerialism and non-democratic paternalism that is authoritarian in all but name. Writing of the United Kingdom, Ramsay (2012: 223) traces this to the ascendancy of neoliberalism as a political-economic model that has been able to capture the political imaginations of both the Left and Right. The 'mutual ruin of the old political movements', Ramsay argues, 'has denuded mainstream politics of significantly different versions of society, and reduced competition between the [political] parties to point scoring over tax and spend, and the best technical mix of public and private service provision'. Such 'technicalisation of politics' (Ong 2006: 178) has led to a sense of apathy and disengagement among many citizens, who no longer feel that their voice makes a difference (Crouch 2004; Hay 2007), a disposition compounded by the increasingly limited efficacy of national policy making in a globalised world (Kupchan 2012).

For analysts such as Crouch (2004), Rancière (2006), and Wolin (2008), this situation demonstrates how principles that many imagine should be core to a democracy – such as popular participation and representation – have been eviscerated. The popular mandate no longer sets the policy agenda. This is a problem that extends beyond the mere fact of policy makers exercising decree powers (which, as noted earlier, may be an inevitable corollary of the state system) to incorporate the question of whose interests political decisions are calibrated to advance. Crouch (2004) suggests it is often the interests of global corporations, whose economic resources afford them a much greater capacity to influence political decision making than voters or civil society groups; a situation compounded by the fact that economic growth – and hence the flourishing of these businesses – is among the top priorities of many governments. As Stark (1998: 76) notes, such difficulties may be even more acute in the Global South, where the need to maintain an attractive climate for investment depends in turn upon developing policies that will be endorsed by major financial institutions and fund managers. Keane (2009), meanwhile, observes that politicians frequently construe the public interest according to how that public is represented by media outlets, identifying a further way in which the citizen-representative relationship is transformed by the activity of corporate interests.

Scholars within this tradition frequently make use of the term 'post-democracy', and such analyses are positioned very interestingly with regard to the question of democratic malaise, because as much as they seek to explain it, they also inhabit it and seek to instigate it in others so that change might take place and the hegemony of neoliberalism be shaken. To an extent, then, their own writings can be analysed within the framework of Nugent's 'democracy effect': a perspective which helps explain why many authors have found the term 'post-democracy' a helpful indictment of contemporary affairs, as opposed to available synonyms such as 'oligarchy', 'kleptocracy', or 'technocratic

managerialism'.[6] Highlighting the possibility that 'democracy' – to which many readers are affectively bound and which they may consider themselves to be comfortably inhabiting – has been superseded gives the notion of 'the post-democratic' considerable rhetorical force (Ward 2009: 73). It provokes outrage over the state we're in, while sustaining the illusion that there was once or could one day be a truly 'democratic' state of affairs (Crouch 2004: 7–9). However, while this opens the post-democracy literature to critique on the grounds that state governance can never be perfectly democratic, the malaise at the heart of these contemporary critiques cannot be fully accounted for by Nugent's 'democracy effect'. The anger and disappointment at their core stems not (just) from the fact that popular sovereignty is imperfectly realised: a bitter but inevitable truth. Rather, malaise stems from the substantive decline in the extent to which popular sovereignty has been realised in many contexts since at least the 1970s.

Many of the contributions to this volume do corroborate the claim that there has been a fundamental change in the operations of democratic statecraft over the past fifty years. Moreover, by presenting accounts of political life in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, they also provide an important update to the models of 'post-democracy' that were developed during a time of economic growth. This is perhaps most evident in the complementary analyses of the crises afflicting democracy in contemporary Europe provided in the chapters by Giorgos Katsambekis and Yannis Stavrakakis.

In his analysis of Greek statecraft, Katsambekis illustrates how the role of the popular mandate has not only been systematically displaced but ideologically denigrated through an anti-populist discourse, which sees the people as lacking 'qualification to rule' (Rancière 2011: 3) and thus inferior in their judgements to technocratic experts.[7] Such rhetoric has not only been used by Greek governments to disparage those who opposed austerity measures, whom they dubbed 'populist' and 'unpatriotic'; it was also used by European heads of state to force the Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou to cancel his planned referendum on the EU-IMF bail-out deal. This not only subverts the principle of representation but also, and perhaps even more crucially, sabotages the principle of opposition, which as Borneman (this volume) argues, is fundamental to the very concept of democracy. Unsurprisingly this situation has left some contemporary Greeks feeling torn between their attachments to democracy and their attachments to nationalism, others feeling outraged that democracy has been trammelled by the technocratic juggernaut of EU authoritarianism, and others still wondering what the role of democracy can or should be in their immediate future.

While accounts of post-democracy are helpful for describing the structural eviscerations of representative democracy that have given rise to this state of affairs, there are several crucial dimensions of the situation they struggle to explain. Most notably, the insistence and zeal with which austerity policies are being applied in Greece (and elsewhere) stand sharply at odds with post-democratic theory's image of detached, rational managerialism; the 'expertocracy' that is stifling democracy and calling its future into question quite

evidently has a complex affective dynamics of its own. In his chapter, Yannis Stravrakakis demonstrates why, drawing on psychoanalysis and affect theory to show how Europe's current post-democratic tendencies are anchored in the distinctive subjectivities engendered by relations of consumer debt. Although democratisation is often read as a trajectory of electoralisation or the implementation of social and political rights, Stavrakakis observes that it could equally be understood as a genealogy of consumerism, where consumption has been progressively democratised through the increasing availability of credit. The consequences for subjectivity are profound since debt relations, and the sense of guilt they inspire, are highly individualising and moralising, such that problems are blamed on the personal failings of individual consumers (including oneself) rather than on the broader structures in which they are embedded. Stavrakakis explores how the elite consensus on austerity feeds on notions of personal and subjective failure and drives a sadistic desire to inflict punishment. Since the infliction of punishment itself performatively reiterates the illusion of blameworthiness, a vicious cycle is established that upholds the austerity agenda regardless of its merits and drawbacks as a policy and sustains the disregard of the popular mandate.

The current economic crisis in Europe has thus not only witnessed important transformations in the character of 'democratic' statecraft, it has also witnessed the emergence of new aspirations as local forms of the ethical imagination shift towards alternative forms of self/other relations, forms of sociality that might be preferable to existing political and social matrices. Although attachments to 'democracy' as a powerful signifier, charged with associations of 'the good' (Mason 1982: 32) have prompted some to seek its reinvigoration (see e.g. Bock, this volume), an increasing number of people seem willing to embrace entirely alternative conceptions of how political life might be organised. The public embrace of authoritarianism is part of this shift, but so, too, is an apparent surge in affection for 'benevolent' leaders without a popular mandate such as Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Francis – a trend that leads Freedland (2013) to conclude that democracy is 'looking fragile'. Alternatives to democracy have entered debate in popular culture. In the United Kingdom, the actor and comedian Russell Brand famously declared on the BBC news show *Newsnight* that he refused to vote, and subsequently published a monograph urging his readers to pursue a 'revolution' (Brand 2014). He emphasised that his unwillingness to even participate in an election stemmed from a refusal 'to be complicit in a system that persistently disempowered the underclass' and that he was instead 'looking elsewhere for alternatives that might be of service to humanity; alternative means, alternative political systems'.[8] Challenged as to what such an alternative might be, Brand admitted he had 'not invented it yet', but the interview became well enough known via social media for many to begin to argue it was indeed time for a new form of government; the romantic appeal of an undefined 'revolution' capturing the ethical imagination in a way that the tawdriness of pursuing change through the ballot box could not.

Marianne Maeckelbergh's chapter considers the painstaking efforts taken to create and implement a new political system by members of social movements such as 15M, Occupy, and the alter-globalisation movement. For many years, these groups have advocated a form of political practice known as 'horizontality', in which participants communally participate in decision making in ways that seek to avoid any form of hierarchy or domination. The principles of representation, and indeed the nation state structure, are rejected by this innovation. Liberal democracy's founding assumption of equality among all citizens is discarded in favour of a recognition of the ways in which difference and disadvantage can impact upon participation. The authoritarian correlates of the ideal of democratic consensus are surmounted by allowing multiple conflicting outcomes to be decided upon should parties be unable to agree. Clearly, this represents a thoroughly different way of ordering sociality to that which is hegemonically understood as 'democracy'.

Horizontality's proximity to the ideals of popular sovereignty, democratic agonism and 'Athenian' styles of politics has often led to it being championed as the reinvigoration of democracy, true democracy or 'direct democracy' (Graeber 2013; Rasza and Kurnik 2012). Yet Maeckelbergh notes that a growing number in the movement she has worked with reject this characterisation of their practice. For these figures, the ideal of 'democracy' has been so tainted by its associations with the state and, latterly, corporate capitalism, that horizontality should be pursued as the successor to democracy rather than its purification.

Her ethnography thus reveals a tension at the heart of the movement over how 'democratic' its participants should conceive, imagine and experience themselves and others to be. This is in part a tactical question engaging the reflexive and rational dimensions of participants' ethical imaginations, since positioning themselves against democracy affords scope to educate the public against democracy's shortcomings, yet deprives them of the positive moral valence that the term so readily invokes. But it is also an identificatory and affective issue, as the term 'democracy' increasingly elicits disgust or disdain, and yet foregoing the understanding of oneself as a democrat is not always easy. Indeed, it is precisely because of the term's affective hold on contemporary subjects that the terminological question stands out as a matter of tactical concern. What this reveals is that democracy is not just a label for certain forms of sociality, as a nominalist approach to democracy's multiple meanings might highlight. It is also, as a term – and as a psychological object – co-productive of those very forms of sociality. How readily the rhetoric of democracy can be dispensed with is consequently – as Maeckelbergh shows – dependent on the specific history of democracy in each country and – by extension – in the life of each community and individual within that country, and therefore a matter for detailed and particularist enquiry.

Conclusion: A Global Crisis of Democracy?

Taken together, the chapters in this volume reveal that we should exercise extreme caution before advancing the claim that we are facing a 'global crisis of democracy'. The cases do share certain factors in common. All are fundamentally concerned with the exercise of the ethical imagination, with human subjects reflecting upon the dynamic matrix of relations in which they are embedded and deciding that it in some way needs to change its character and/or its form. And all involve people either expressing dissatisfaction with or thinking beyond forms of liberal democratic statecraft that not only contain inherent contradictions, but have, under the most recent phase of globalisation, come to acquire distinct new authoritarian characteristics and have often become subject to the exigencies of extraterritorial actors. These trends in and of themselves could be seen as evidence of democracy being in worldwide crisis. Yet the chapters in this volume highlight the importance of paying attention to the specifics: the different time-depth of democratic social imaginaries, the historically contingent collective identities that are seen as being at the heart of 'democracy', and the differing ways in which factors such as kinship, consumerism and unforeseeable natural and economic disasters influence what stands out as a matter of concern for citizens as they reflect upon the political. Even when people are apparently responding to the same sets of problems or difficulties, what those challenges actually *mean* is fully embedded within a specific web of social and historical relations.

Nevertheless, a huge number of the people whose voices are captured in this volume persist in the belief that they inhabit a democratic predicament that is fundamentally shared not only by their countrymen, but by their counterparts around the world – demonstrating once again that the ethical imagination and self/other relations are foundational both for the political and for subjectivity. The flows of representations that Appadurai (1996) and others have argued to characterise the present age, transnational mass media flows being foremost among them, ensure that citizens are regularly exposed to images – often fleeting, fragmentary and incomplete – of other people's dissatisfaction with democracy, and find within these a sense of similarity. But such viewings are never straightforward, and despite the apparent sense of linkage to 'distant but familiar others' (Boellstorff 2005: 211), the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding remains high. Images are not the sources of objective knowledge that they first appear to be; they are 'fantasised point[s] of interconnection … that make the position of the individual and the nation intellectually and emotionally plausible within an imagined global space' (Moore 2011: 60).

This finds vivid illustration in a fieldwork episode from Indonesia. It was August 2011, and Nicholas Long had recently arrived in the Riau Islands Province to investigate local attitudes to democracy. Yet when he broached the subject, it was not Indonesian politics that was foremost in his informants' minds. The riots that had swept England that month – in which several people were killed and hundreds of businesses and homes were looted and set on fire

– attracted widespread coverage in the Indonesian media and was often met with horror and incomprehension. For many who had long been committed to the ideals of democracy and human rights, Western countries had been their source of inspiration, a model to be emulated. But as their news bulletins showed footage of riots and violent demonstrations in the 'developed' world that they had hoped their country would one day parallel, they began to wonder whether the problems Indonesia was having were not just caused by Indonesians' inexperience with democracy, or inability to implement it effectively. Perhaps they were inherent to democracy itself.

'I was so shocked to see the riots in the UK!' said Arifin, a Malay businessman friend of Long's as, they discussed the day's news in a Tanjung Pinang coffee shop. 'Even though you have been a democracy for hundreds of years! And your country is much richer than ours. How can it be that you are still having the same problems that we are?' Reflecting on the unrest that followed in the wake of the Greek debt crisis, another man at the table remarked that even though democracy had been invented in Ancient Greece, it had done nothing to secure the nation's socio-economic prosperity. He had heard that even Greek people were saying that they had had enough of it. Perhaps, he suggested, it was time that Indonesians looked for a more 'Indonesian' solution as to how to govern their country: something closer to Sukarno's authoritarian 'Guided Democracy', an Islamic state, or a feudal system of military rule.

This case shows how the fantasised interconnections of a shared global predicament can generate a sense of democracy's inevitable failure, and inflect the concept of democratisation with an affect of despondency. But they do so by eliding important differences between the various situations in hand. These Indonesian businessmen looked at the riots in London and Athens and saw anger at democracy's failures to provide socio-economic prosperity: an issue of particular concern to them. This was, of course, an ingredient of the rioting. But what they did not see was the anger at police brutality that triggered the rioting in both Britain and Greece, nor the bitter history of institutionalised racism and class inequality in Britain, nor the sense of deep democratic betrayal that came from the Liberal Democrats' *volte face* on tuition fees and the government's failure to adequately regulate the banking sector. They did not see the Greek public's anger at the ideological sadism of austerity measures, nor at the extent to which their country's policies were being determined by overseas powers. As such, and in a cruel twist of fate, anger at the way that democracy had been eviscerated and replaced with a rapacious, authoritarian state in Europe came to be taken as compelling evidence in favour of implementing a new brand of authoritarianism in Indonesia. The same process happens in reverse; while few Euro-Americans pay much attention to Indonesian democracy, the so-called 'Arab Winter' that saw political Islamists rise to power in elections across the Middle East has become interpreted by Euro-American cosmopolitans as a rejection or short-circuiting of the turn to democratisation that was the Arab Spring, and as sure-fire evidence that 'democracy is going through a difficult time' – to quote the article from *The Economist* with which this essay opened. This has

become the dominant narrative of Middle Eastern and North African politics, despite the fact that – as Borneman (this volume) shows – the protests at the heart of the 'Arab Spring' were always more concerned with rejecting existing authoritarianism than embracing Western-style democracy.

The disparate cases of democratic malaise that we discuss in this book thus cannot be understood in isolation because the nature of the ethical imagination, and the way selves imaginatively engage with others across distances of time and space, means that they are increasingly becoming evidence for and productive of each other. When a question such as 'What's Gone Wrong With Democracy?' is plastered across the cover of a respected news weekly, it creates the very crisis it announces, stoking it further with the juxtaposition of fundamentally incommensurable case studies that overwhelm the reader with their sheer volume and their shared grimness. Such a situation will likely intensify any disillusionment that citizens have regarding democracy. Given the potency of imaginative identifications and their potential consequences for political change around the world, the excitement of discovering similarities between contemporary engagements with democracy's troubles must be balanced with a sobering appreciation of their differences. It is precisely in that spirit that our present contribution is made.

Notes

1 http://www.economist.com/news/essays/21596796-democracy-was-most-successful-political-idea-20th-century-why-has-it-run-trouble-and-what-can-be-do (accessed 15 July 2014).

2 See for instance Diamond (2014), who warns we are on 'the brink' of one, Pavel (2010), who considers it 'obvious' that we are in one, and various other scholars, journalists and public intellectuals who have sought to call attention to its presence and its character (e.g. Kaldor in Šimečka et al. 2009; Thakur 2011; Žižek 2013).

3 When one considers that the field of candidates is typically drawn from a pre-existing elite political class, this situation only appears graver. It is compounded by voting mechanisms that may lead to parties or personalities with relatively low proportions of vote-share or seat-share nevertheless being declared the victor in an election.

4 While the scope of this term extends beyond an interest in citizens' attitudes to democracy (encompassing among other things the elite capture of democratic institutions and failures of the rule of law), the turn of public opinion away from democracy and towards more authoritarian alternatives is a central problematic in the literature.

5 See for example the work of Chang et al. (2007) on East and Southeast Asia, Fernandez and Kenzi (2006) on Africa, Lagos (2008) on Latin America, and Steves et al. (2011) on Europe.

6 'Post-democracy' has also been used by Hocking and Lewis (2007) and Rorty (2004), to describe the new forms of statecraft that have emerged to confront international terrorism and signal their deviation from the workings of a classic liberal democracy.

7 Concerns about poor vote quality have long dogged discussions of democracy (see Friedman 1998 for an overview). For an alternate perspective, see Oppenheimer and Edwards's (2012) argument that, however poor an individual voter's decision making

might be, popular sovereignty has systemic effects that lead to better quality governance and citizenship than less representative systems.

8 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YR4CseY9pk (accessed 25 July 2014).

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