

Chapter 3

What is Democratic Freedom?

Liberal democracy is the institutionalization of human rights--it is the most practical solution to the freedom of each being compatible with the freedom of all.

----This web site

Whatever freedoms you have cannot exist in a political vacuum. There must be some way of assuring and protecting your rights--your freedom, and government is the answer. Even libertarians generally accept this, although they are the most ardent proponents of the maximum freedom, and believe that while government is evil, it is necessary or inevitable.

But not just any government will do. It must be one that not only commands your obedience to its laws, but one that in its very organization embodies what being free means to you. This is democracy. As a concept, "democracy" has not only developed many meanings since its first use by the ancient Greeks, but also meanings once well-established have changed.

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You may define democracy by its inherent nature and by its empirical conditions. As to its nature, Aristotle defined democracy as rule by the people (Greek *demokratia*: *demos* meaning people + *-kratia*, *-cracy*, meaning rule or governing body) and this idea that in some way the people govern themselves is still the core sense of democracy. In the ancient Greek city states and the early Roman Republic democracy meant that people participated directly in governing and making policy. This was possible because of the small populations of these cities, hardly ever more than 10,000 people, and the exclusion of women and slaves from participation. Although limited to free males, this idea of the direct participation of the people in government was the central meaning of democracy up to modern times, and now is usually known as pure or direct democracy.



John Locke 1632–1704

Philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Immanuel Kant and John Locke, disliked direct democracy, although otherwise they favored freedom. For one thing, it was impractical for nations of millions of people, or even for cities of hundreds of thousands. Clearly, a representative system was necessary. For another, they felt that democracy, as so understood, was mob rule,

government by the ill informed who would simply use government to advantage them.

This distrust was evident in the eighty-five essays of *The Federalist Papers* (1787-1788) written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay on the proposed Constitution of The United States. They assumed that people behave to fulfill their self-interest and were generally selfish, making a direct democracy as a means to achieve justice and protect natural rights dangerous. Nonetheless, they believed strongly in the "consent of the governed," and argued for a republican form of government in which elected representatives would reflect popular will. This was a general view among the authors of the Constitution, who believed that by establishing a republic they would institutionalize the central ideas of their Declaration of Independence (1776):

. . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

Constitutionally, therefore, the founders of the United States established a republic, not a democracy--as political philosophers then defined democracy. A republic is based on the consent and will of the people, but through a buffer of elected representatives and indirect election, as by the President and Vice President of the United States whom an electoral college elects, with the electors chosen by the voters of each state and their number depending on the number of senators and representatives each state sends to Congress.

That the United States was created as a republic and that we now call it a democracy has caused considerable confusion. In the writings on my web site I refer to the United States as a democracy, and therefore have received well over a dozen e-mails informing me that it was not a democracy, but a republic. The problem is that in the Twentieth Century the understanding of democracy as the direct participation of



"The Signing of the Constitution of the United States" By Howard Chandler Christy, Courtesy Architect of the Capitol: Copyright 1985 United States Historical Society

citizens was transformed to mean any government in which the people elect their representatives. Democracy now generally means a republican or representation government.

With this contemporary understanding of the term democracy, what are its characteristics. One necessary and sufficient set of characteristics involves the electoral system through which people choose their representatives and leaders, and thus give their consent to be governed and communicate their interests. The manner in which democracies conduct their elections vary from one to another, but all share these characteristics: regular elections for high office, secret ballot, a franchise including nearly the whole adult population, and competitive elections.

Having a near-universal franchise is an entirely modern addition to the idea of democracy. Not long ago, governments that were called democratic excluded from the franchise all slaves and women, as did the United States through much of its history (former American black, male slaves got the right to vote after the Civil War; women did not get this right until 1920, when Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment), as well as all non-slave males who did not meet certain property or literacy requirements. We now consider it perverse to call democratic any country that so

restricts the vote, as did the apartheid regime in South Africa that limited voting to minority whites. Real competition in the elections is a key requirement. Many communist nations had all the electoral characteristics mentioned, periodically electing legislators hand picked by the Communist Party, and who simply rubber-stamped what the Party wanted. Competitive means that those running for office reflect different political beliefs and positions on the issues. If they do not, as in the communist nations, then the government is not democratic.

Table 3.1
Freedom = Liberal Democracy

Characteristics of Liberal Democracy

Electoral

secret ballot
regular elections for high office
competitive elections
near universal franchise

Human Rights

organize political parties/groups
open government
freedom of speech/free media
freedom of religion
freedom to form unions/businesses
fair trial/rule by law

Besides its electoral characteristics, one kind of democracy has characteristics, which while neither necessary nor sufficient for democracy to exist, are crucial to your freedom. These involve the recognition of certain human rights discussed in the previous chapter. One is the freedom to organize political groups or parties, even if they represent a small radical minority, and for the party to nominate their members to run for high office. Another right is that to an open, transparent, government, in particularly knowing how one's representatives voted and debated. Also there are the rights to freedom of speech, particularly the freedom of newspapers and other

communication media to criticize government policies and leaders; freedom of religion; and the freedom to form unions and organize businesses.

One of the most important of these rights is to a fair trial and rule by law. Above the state there must be a law that structures the government, elaborates the reciprocal rights and duties of government and the people, and which all governing officials and their policies must obey. This is a constitution, either as a single document as for the United States, or a set of documents, statutes, and traditions, as for Great Britain.

If a democracy recognizes these rights, we call it a *liberal democracy*. If it does not, if it has only the electoral characteristics, but suppresses freedom of speech, leaders put themselves above the law, representatives make and vote on policies in secret, then we can call it a *procedural*, or better, an *electoral democracy*.

For American readers particularly there is conceptual confusion over the term "liberal." In the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, political philosophers emphasized the root meaning of liberal, which is from the Latin *liberalis* for free man and the French *liber* for free. It stood for an emphasis on individual liberty--on the freedom of a people versus their government. A liberal slogan of the time was "the government that governs least governs best." It was hammered out in England's Glorious Revolution of 1688, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution, and articulated in the works of John Locke, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. This emphasis on freedom from government regulation and controls we now call classical liberalism, and presently are reflected best in political philosophy of American conservatives. Libertarians also trace their philosophy back to classical liberalism, but this is true only regarding the classical liberals emphasis on economic freedom and human rights. Classical liberals, but unlike modern libertarians and liberals, believed that the government had a strong moral role. Conservatives show their affinity for this moral role by their support for laws against dope, prostitution, and gambling

In modern times liberal has evolved to mean a belief that government is a tool to improve society and deal with the problems of poverty, discrimination, and monopolies, among others, and to improve public health, education, social security, the environment, and working conditions. There is no less an emphasis on human rights, a dedication which is shared by Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and modern liberals, but the liberal today no longer accepts minimum government, nor sees the government as the danger classical liberals perceived it.

In "liberal" democracy, however, it is the root definition of liberal that is meant, and

not its modern sense. A liberal democracy then means that a people rule themselves through periodic elections of their highest leaders in which nearly all adults can participate, for which offices they are eligible, and under the rule of law which guarantees them certain human rights.

In sum, then, democracy now means a republican form of government,

which may be only electorally representative in its characteristics, or also liberal. Table 3.1, above, summarizes these two kinds of democracies.

Table 3.2
Electoral and Liberal Democracy
<u>Characteristics of Electoral Democracy</u>
secret ballot
regular elections for high office
competitive elections
near universal franchise
<u>Characteristics of Liberal Democracy</u>
An electoral democracy
Plus:
freedom to organize political parties/groups
open government
freedom of speech/free media
freedom of religion
freedom to form unions and businesses
fair trial/rule by law

So far, all I have given you about democracy is concepts and abstractions, which may roughly connect to your experience. It is time for an example that well illustrates the nature and working of liberal democracy. Such is the impeachment and trial of William Jefferson Clinton, the President of the United States, in 1998 to 1999.

The Clinton impeachment was a deeply divisive, partisan political battle, and most Americans developed strong opinions supporting or opposing it. After all, this was a

matter of whether the nationally elected President of the United States would be fired. As I will review events leading up to the impeachment and the impeachment itself, my only interest is in what Clinton's presidency says about liberal democracy, not in arguing for or against the President, the impeachment, or his two campaigns for the office.

To begin at the beginning, Clinton was born in Hope, Arkansas, in 1946, a few months after his father died. When he was two years old, he lived with his grandparents in Hope while his mother studied nursing in New Orleans. Two years later his mother married a car salesman, and Clinton joined the new family. His stepfather was hardly a good role model for the young boy: he physically mistreated Clinton's mother and was an alcoholic.



Baby Clinton



Boy Clinton

While Clinton was fourteen, he joined a youth program to learn about government, and as a delegate was part of a group that went to Washington, D.C. While there, President John F. Kennedy invited the group to meet with him in the White House. This was an unforgettable experience for teenage Clinton, who was very much impressed by Kennedy. He even shook his hand; more important for the future was the fact that the experience decided young Clinton on politics as a profession and sparked his ambition to be president.

Clinton was an excellent student, and much involved in student politics. He completed high school, got a degree in international affairs from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and won a two-year Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University in England. On his return to the United States he attended Yale Law School and received his law degree in 1973. During this whole period, from the time he attended Georgetown to getting his law degree, he tried to learn politics firsthand. He worked in the office of Senator William Fulbright of Arkansas, and in the presidential campaign of Senator George McGovern in 1972. He also took part in demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

Note several things about Clinton's rise so far. One is that his humble beginnings did

not prevent him from actually meeting and shaking hands with the President of the United States--not only the highest office of the country, but also the most powerful in the world. Second, he could obtain work in the office of an American senator and take part in the law making of America's highest legislative body. In addition, without fear of retribution or any negative consequences, he was also able to help Senator McGovern wage his election campaign to defeat that of the incumbent, President Richard M. Nixon.



Clinton meets President Kennedy

Most revealing about liberal democracy, Clinton felt free to join public demonstrations, even in England, against a war his country was conducting. As exemplified in the first chapter by Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Burma, and China, in many parts of the world this could get you arrested, tortured, and even executed by the regime on your return to your country, as well as it retaliating against your family and even killing them. In some other countries, this would cause your harassment by authorities, and possibly the end of any possibility of future political office. But living in a liberal democracy, Clinton had nothing to fear from a secret police. He could learn the art of politics from personal experience and prepare himself for running for political office, while also exercising his right to public protest.

After receiving his law degree, Clinton worked on the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, and then in 1974 the University of Arkansas appointed him to their Law School faculty. In this year he began his formal political career by running for Congress as a Democrat, and lost. But in 1976, he decided that he would be more successful if he worked up from a lower rung on the political ladder, and was successful campaigning for the office of the Attorney General of Arkansas. He then used this position to run for the highest state office, and at age thirty-two, the people of Arkansas elected him Governor.

However, he had yet to learn the democratic limits of this high office. Because of his reform policies, along with a tax he had imposed, Arkansans kicked Clinton out of office in the 1980 elections. Yet, he had learned well how to manage democratic politics. After Clinton showed public remorse for his "mistakes" in office (and after running a carefully calculated campaign), Arkansans returned him to the governorship in 1982. They also reelected him three more times.

To Clinton this was all preparation to run for president. He had passed up the opportunity to do so in 1988 because of rumors about his womanizing, but in 1992, he felt that he stood a good chance of being nominated by the Democratic Party. Much stronger candidates for the nomination had refused to run, believing that the huge popularity of President George Bush

resulting from his victory in the 1990-1991 Gulf War made his reelection to the presidency certain. Clinton thought, however, he could stress poor economic conditions, the "Reagan-Bush deficit," and the need for change. And to the surprise of many who did not see him as a national figure, he did win the nomination. Then, with the motto, "It's the economy, stupid," he won the presidential election with 43 percent of the vote. Both sides to this election used their freedom of speech to the maximum, with Clinton's opponents focusing on his womanizing, his taking part in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations while in England, and his alleged draft dodging along with a subsequent cover-up.

What is also noteworthy about this election is that out of nowhere, a very rich business executive, H. Ross Perot, was able to capture public attention as an independent, even running ahead of President Bush and Governor Clinton in popularity at one point in the campaign. He finally got 19 percent of the presidential vote. Had he not made several missteps in his campaign and been politically inexperienced, he might have even won the three-way election.

Since democratic campaigns are a running test of a candidate's character, experience, strength, and capacity for office, those who try to run for the highest offices without prior political experience seldom succeed. Nonetheless, sometimes they do, as did Jesse Ventura, a professional wrestler, actor, and talk show host, who on less than \$400,000 won a three-way election campaign for governor of Minnesota. In liberal democratic elections, outsiders are a constant threat to established parties and candidates, as it should be when the consent of the governed rules.



Chief Justice William Rehnquist administers the oath of office to President Bill Clinton 1993

Who you elect is a matter of your perception and interest; how well off you are in your job and income; and your judgment about the candidate's character and promises. And you are free to exercise your judgment, no matter how biased, anywhere along the campaign trail, whether in voting for the candidates in caucuses or party conventions, or in voting for the final nominee, or in running yourself as a party nominee or an independent.

During President Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign, economic conditions were good, and Clinton and his supporters ran an excellent public relations and political campaign against Republican Senator Robert Dole and independent candidate Perot. Fearing a voter backlash over excessive negative campaigning, and misreading that the public already was upset by several scandals surrounding Clinton and his White House, Republicans did not capitalize on them. Near the end of the campaign, public opinion polls made clear that these scandals would play little role in the coming election, making Dole cry out in frustration, "Where's the outrage?" Moreover, Republicans made some disastrous political mistakes, the worst of which was to allow Clinton and his supporters to establish in the public mind that the Republican-dominated House of Representatives had shut down the government in an argument with the President over the budget. They also allowed the Democrats to convince the public that the Republicans had no compassion for working families, children, and the elderly. Clinton easily won reelection in 1996 with 49 percent of the vote.

While the Clinton story gives us insight into the nature of liberal democratic elections and the public's participation in, and determination of, who governs them, it is President Clinton's second term that provides a key understanding of this kind of government. These would be tumultuous and most historic years for the country. Even in his first term, President Clinton's opponents forced him to respond to allegations of wrongdoing committed while he was Governor of Arkansas, involving investments that he and the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, had made in the Whitewater Development Corporation, an Arkansas real estate development firm. Revelations and questions about this, and associated affairs having to do with a savings and loans firm, Madison Guaranty, eventually led to an official federal investigation by an Independent Counsel, Robert Fiske.

Because of the Nixon Watergate scandal, Congress had established this office of Independent Counsel. Presumably the Independent Counsel would be free from the assumed conflict of interest a Justice Department would have in investigating the President or members of his cabinet, since the President appointed the top people at Justice. Besides the Fiske investigation, the House and Senate Banking committees also held hearings on the Whitewater affair.

Notice that democratic leaders cannot escape the law, even regarding what they might have done before being elected or appointed to office. Prosecutors may investigate their past and present activities, force them to testify before a grand jury, indict them, and even bring them to trial. This contributes to what keeps democracies limited, which is their checks and balances system. This means that the executive leaders, legislature, and courts are in constant competition against each other for power and influence, and watch each other for opportunities to gain advantage or weaken one another. This balancing is particularly true when there are political parties close in power. If, as during all but two years of the Clinton presidency, the opposing party controls the legislature, it acts as an ever-vigilant watchdog over the executive. Scandals play a major role in this, and provide the opposition with ammunition to weaken their opponents. This would become particularly clear in the later impeachment of the President. All this contributes to keeping democratic leaders responsible, prudent, and limited in their power.

However, where one political party dominates a state, controls the legislature, executive, and courts, and has a sympathetic media, then there usually will be political corruption. When there is a strong opposition party to exploit the corruption of the governing party for electoral gain, incumbents will be more careful about obeying the letter and spirit of the law. Moreover, when democratic states have a dominant party controlling all government bodies, with only a weak opposition to appeal to public outrage over high taxes and government intervention, they tend toward Big Government. Such, for example, has been the case with Hawaii, which Democrats have wholly governed in the last four decades with hardly any meaningful Republican opposition.

Clinton did not have it so easy. He has always faced a strong Republican Party, and in all but two of the years of his two terms, they controlled both the House and Senate.

As mentioned, there were several scandals involving the President and his White House during his first term. Although these did not prevent his reelection, they helped create a dominant view among conservatives that he and his administration were politically corrupt, and that he was engaged in a systematic abuse of power. The first White House scandal occurred when his aides suddenly fired seven long-term employees of the White House travel office in 1993. This firing was done in a rush, with unjustified and later disproved accusations of fraud made against the White House employees, and the FBI used to investigate them. Apparently, these accusations and the investigation were only an excuse to cover the wish to replace them with Clinton friends and supporters. The First Lady officially denied any involvement in this, although there was evidence to the contrary. Because of the possibility that she was lying and that the presidential aides had misused the FBI, Attorney General

Reno requested that a three-judge panel appoint Independent Council to investigate. This turned out to be Republican Kenneth Starr, a name that in a few years would become almost as well-known as President Clinton's. Judge Starr had served in President Reagan's Justice Department, had been a federal judge, and had served as Solicitor General under President Bush. A three-judge panel had already appointed him to replace Independent Counsel Fiske in the investigation of Whitewater. Years later, he would clear both the President and First Lady of indictable wrongdoing in this.

Another scandal involved the apparent suicide of the Clinton's close friend and Deputy White House Counsel, Vince Foster, who had handled the Clinton's taxes and Whitewater matters. Upon his suicide, Clinton's aides removed files from Foster's office before it police could search and seal it. This raised the question about a serious cover-up of Whitewater wrongdoing. As though Independent Counsel Starr did not have enough to investigate, the three-judge panel also asked him to determine whether Foster's death was a suicide and whether White House aides illegally removed files from his office. In his report to Congress on his investigation, Starr affirmed that Foster had committed suicide and that the President and First Lady had not carried on a cover-up.

Yet, another scandal was the discovery that the White House had requested from the FBI, and had been holding without official justification, as many as a thousand secret FBI files, many on top Republicans and opponents. Controversy, especially in 1996, swirled around how the White House used these files and who was responsible for this. A three-judge panel also turned the matter over to Independent Counsel Starr to investigate. The result was that after several years he cleared the President and First Lady of any responsibility for this matter. Nonetheless, that these files were under White House control and that aides possibly exploited them in their campaign against President Clinton's opponents helped feed the outrage that later would lead to Clinton's impeachment.

Further scandals intensified the feeling among conservatives that the White House was politically corrupt, but the one that finally led to impeachment involved Paula Jones, a former clerk in the Arkansas State government. Encouraged and surrounded by President Clinton's opponents (called "Clinton-haters" by President Clinton's supporters), she alleged that while he was the Governor of Arkansas in 1991, one of his State Troopers invited her up to the governor's hotel room, and that when she was alone in the room with the governor, he dropped his pants and asked her for oral sex. The White House and Clinton supporters responded aggressively to these charges, and tried to undermine her credibility. James Carville, a Democrat political

consultant credited with guiding Clinton's presidential election campaign to victory in 1992, and his chief defender against all accusations of abuse of power, called Jones "Arkansas trailer trash."

Angered by the personal attacks on her, she filed a civil suit of sexual harassment against President Clinton, and demanded \$700,000 and a personal apology. Working through his lawyers, Clinton appealed the suit, and asked for a delay until after his term was over. But the Supreme Court ruled that the suit should go ahead. After more legal twists and turns and appeals, including Paula Jones upping her demand to a million dollars, President Clinton settled the case in 1999 by sending her a check for \$850,000, and with no apology.



Paula Jones

Notice first that no matter how powerful the President is, no matter how much support he has, a lowly citizen can sue him in court. But as important, despite the power the President has, the sources of the White House at his disposal, his small army of lawyers, his broad support in the media, and his popularity, the courts can force the President to defend himself in court according to the law. Keep in mind that in military terms he was the most powerful head of any country in the world. Moreover, he, his lawyers, and his supporters, used the major media that were on his side, every technical legal device ever written into the law, and any possible wayward interpretation of the law, to claim that Jones had no right to sue him. This is to be expected from any high official caught in such a sexual scandal. The absolutely critical point here is not what Clinton and all did, but that it all was to no avail. In a liberal democracy the law rules. In this case, no matter his twists and turns, the law came down against the President of the United States and on the side of this unknown clerk from Arkansas.

While this suit was in process, Clinton began an eighteen-month affair in the White House and his Oval Office with 22-year-old Monica Lewinsky, a White House intern. Although President Clinton disputes that he had sexual relations with Lewinsky, she did give him oral sex, a fact later proved by a DNA test of the semen on a blue dress she wore during one of these meetings.

Lewinsky confided details of this affair to a friend, Linda Tripp, who began to secretly tape their telephone conversations. Tripp later explained that she did this because Lewinsky had asked her to lie in a deposition for which Trip had been



President Clinton hugging Lewinsky

subpoenaed
in the
Jones
suit.
Jones
lawyers
were
trying to
show that
what
allegedly
happened
to Jones



Monica Lewinsky

was but a pattern of sexual misconduct by President Clinton, and had subpoenaed Lewinsky, who told Tripp she would lie to protect her lover. Tripp had worked in the White House, and there had seen Kathleen Willey, a White House volunteer, shortly after Willey left an Oval Office appointment with Clinton in 1993. Willey told Tripp that Clinton had kissed and fondled her, and therefore Tripp was important to the Jones defense; but if she told the truth in the deposition, she believed, the White House would try to ruin her credibility.

After she gathered twenty hours of tapes of Lewinsky, she turned them over to Independent Counsel Starr, whose investigative load was already heavy. Judge Starr took this information to Attorney General Janet Reno, who then asked the three-judge panel responsible for appointing independent counsels to appoint Judge Starr to investigate the Lewinsky affair. There is nothing in the law against sexual affairs in the White House, but the President might have broken several laws on other matters, including possible sexual harassment of Lewinsky, asking her to lie in court, and bribing her to keep quiet.

By decision of the Supreme Court, President Clinton also had to give a pretrial deposition in the Jones suit, with all of it being videotaped. In January of 1998, with Jones sitting across from him, Jones's lawyers then questioned him for six hours. He had no idea that they knew about his affair with Lewinsky, and was quite surprised when they brought it up. Given a broad definition of sexual relations, approved by the judge sitting in on the deposition, President Clinton denied under oath that he had sexual relations as so defined with Lewinsky, and claimed that he did not remember ever being alone with her in the White House.

Within days, news of the Lewinsky affair and the deposition swept the country. For weeks commentators, analysts, and politicians of all flavors discussed, argued,

dissected the news. Some top commentators thought President Clinton would have to resign within week or so. The media exploited the slightest rumor, and bit players in the scandal, no matter how remotely involved, had their fifteen minutes of fame before television cameras. No two lawyers seemed to agree on the law covering this affair or possible impeachment, and sometimes directly contradicted each other. It seemed that the law was a mess. But the law allows interpretation, and often the expertise of different lawyers differs. All this is subject to partisanship, and nothing arouses partisan passions more in a democracy than a dispute over whether the head of government should resign or the people should fire him.

Meanwhile, President Clinton denied to his supporters and White House staff that there was any sex involved with Lewinsky. And, of course, Clinton's defenders, especially those in the major media, tried to muddle the investigation by constantly claiming this was an investigation of sex, rather than of perjury or abuse of power. Within days Clinton tried to defend himself and on television, wagging his finger, made his now famous declaration that we all have seen a thousand times: "But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time--never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people."



President Clinton's speech to the nation: "I did not have sexual relations...."

In July the Independent Counsel finally gave Monica Lewinsky full immunity for testifying against President Clinton, and she gave him her blue dress with President Clinton's semen stains. Before Judge Starr's Grand Jury she provided details about her sexual relations with President Clinton, but also claimed that he had not asked her to lie, or to keep quiet about their relationship.

Shortly thereafter, President Clinton also had to answer questions before the Grand Jury. Independent Counsel Starr did this by a closed-circuit television hookup to the White House, which he also videotaped. President Clinton answered many questions on the Lewinsky affair and information she had provided, but would not answer any questions about sex. However, after President Clinton finished his testimony, he went on national television and admitted an "inappropriate relationship" with Lewinsky

and that his comments and silence had given a "false impression." Then, in lieu of an apology, he said: "I deeply regret that."

In September 1998, Independent Counsel Starr gave his report on this scandal to the House of Representatives, as required by law. It was, in effect, a 453-page indictment of President Clinton, listing eleven allegedly impeachable offenses. The House almost immediately released the full report to the public, along with thousands of pages of evidence soon thereafter. Within days, the House Judiciary Committee also made public the full videotape of President Clinton's testimony before the Grand Jury.



Judge Kenneth Starr

This openness well illustrates the transparency of a liberal democracy. Opponents or proponents will disclose all that is politically important, including dirty laundry, about some politician, legislation, or policy. This is a crucial role of the opposition, and the reason why having a strong opposition is a basic ingredient of liberal democracy. They want to embarrass and weaken the party in power so that they can turn into law their favored legislation and win the next election. Even supposedly secret testimony, conversations, and reports are exposed this way--as is a mass of trivia. Surely, partisans on all sides will spin whatever is disclosed to show its best or worst side. But it is public, and people are free to make of it what they will.

The public release of the Starr Report, as it became known, was a serious blow to President Clinton's prestige and changed a partisan political conflict into a super-charged political fight over President Clinton's future. Over a hundred newspaper editorials eventually called for his resignation; he was publicly mocked; television and the Internet covered the affair day and night; cartoonists never had it so good; late night comedians made constant fun of him; and Clinton joke after joke made the rounds through e-mail and the Internet.

Political humor and jokes play an important function in a democracy. Although meant to be funny, they express public dismay and point to what high behavior about officials is of special concern. In a democracy it is better for a politician to be criticized by professors of political science than have well-known comedians earn their popularity at his expense.

What saved President Clinton was the loyalty of Democrats, who circled Party wagons around him, and a politically astute offensive by the President and White

House aides. Judge Starr became a target of constant demonizing attacks, as by the accusations that he was "sex crazed, and a extreme right wing zealot"; and by legal action against him, as for leaking Grand Jury testimony (later dismissed by the courts). While polls gave the President a job rating above 60 percent, that of Judge Starr's was in the 20s. Other opponents, such as Linda Tripp, were no less demonized. President Clinton's supporters were vehement--"It's only about sex, and nobody's business," "President Clinton told the truth; this is a conspiracy of Clinton haters," and so on. It was all, the First Lady claimed, a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Meanwhile, the other side claimed that "Clinton always lies, and is deceitful," "what he did in the Oval Office is a disgrace to the presidency; he has systematically abused power" while in office, and so on. President Clinton's previous scandals were revisited, and Arkansas State Troopers were even brought out of obscurity to be interviewed regarding their claims of helping him in his sexual escapades while Governor.

And the President's supporters made a concerted effort to uncover sexual affairs of major Republican supporters of impeachment in the House, perhaps for revenge, but surely to show that "everyone does it." They forced Speaker-designate Bob Livingston to confess to an extramarital affair and resign, even as the full House was to begin their deliberations on the articles of impeachment. They also made public a decades-old affair by Representative Henry Hyde, Chairman of the very House Judiciary Committee to consider the President's impeachment.



Representative
Henry Hyde

When the Republican-controlled Judiciary Committee began consideration of a resolution calling for a formal impeachment inquiry, the fight was now formally joined and in deadly earnest, but still constrained by the Constitution and House rules. This began the long, complex political process for removing President Clinton from office. Other than wartime, this legal process of removing a democratically elected chief executive in midterm is the most dramatic theater people in democracies experience. Everyone soon knows almost everything public and private about the cast of characters; the acting is superb; the speeches and exhortations moving; and the appeals to mind and heart well studied. Each day is a new scene, the plot is clear, and only the end is in doubt.

A successful impeachment by the House is like an indictment brought by a prosecutor before a court. It describes the particulars of an alleged wrongdoing. Then before a

judge a court holds the trial on the indictment, with both prosecutors and defense lawyers presenting evidence and arguments. For impeachment, the court is the Senate.

The Constitution specifies "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors" as the grounds for impeachment, but what high crimes and misdemeanors are is subject to considerable legal interpretation. Only a majority vote of the House is enough to approve articles of impeachment, and this had only happened once before, in 1868 against President Andrew Johnson. Impeachment was also considered in 1974 when the House Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon, but before the full House could debate them the audiotapes on President Nixon's conversations in the Oval Office were released. They were the "smoking gun" evidence that he had participated in the cover-up of the Watergate affair; soon his support collapsed in the House, and he resigned.

Once the House votes on impeachment, the Senate holds a trial on the impeachment articles, as noted. All senators sit as the jury, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presides over the trial. The senators hear witnesses and can ask them questions, and at the end of the trial, they vote regarding removal of the President. Two-thirds of the Senators must approve removal for it to occur. Were this to happen, the Chief Justice would swear in the vice-president as the new president. The Senate vote on Andrew Johnson's removal was one vote short of two-thirds.

The House Judiciary Committee reported to the full House on its recommendation to investigate the impeachment of President Clinton, and in October 1998, the Republican House voted to conduct this investigation. Hearings by the House Judiciary Committee on impeachment began soon afterwards and were fully televised. A variety of witnesses gave testimony before the committee, including Independent Council Starr. He came down hard on President Clinton, claiming he intentionally deceived. Opposition to impeachment came from a variety of sources, most of them claiming that what Clinton did was not impeachable, though morally reprehensible. Many legal and constitutional scholars argued that his behavior did not meet the Constitutional basis for impeachment. Some argued that yes, he lied in his civil deposition, and yes, the Independent Counsel can (and some said should) indict him for this after he left office, but that it was not an impeachable offense. Chairman Hyde also sent President Clinton eighty-one questions to answer in place of direct testimony.

At the end of the hearings, the Republican members presented the committee with four articles of impeachment, claiming that the President committed perjury before

the Grand Jury, perjury in the Jones case, obstruction of justice in the Jones case; and provided false responses to the eighty-one questions. The Committee approved the articles on December 11 and 12. All Republicans voted for three of the articles, all but one voted for a fourth; no Democrat voted for any. The Committee then passed the approved articles to the full House for debate and a final vote.

This American drama did not paralyze international relations and foreign adversaries, in particularly Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq against whom an American-led coalition fought the 1990 Gulf War. Possibly seeing a weakened President, Saddam refused to allow any further weapons inspections by the UN in his country, inspections he had agreed to when he was defeated in the Gulf War. Coincidentally or not, President Clinton launched air strikes against Iraq in retaliation just when the full House scheduled the opening debate on his impeachment. Republicans questioned the timing of this, and the Democrats demanded that the House put off considering impeachment until the President ended military action. But the Republicans were in control, and the continuing raids did no more than delay House proceedings for a day.

On December 18, the full House began an acrimonious debate on the impeachment of President Clinton. The next day, the House passed 228 to 206 the first Article of impeachment, perjury before Independent Counsel Starr's grand jury. It also passed the Third Article, obstruction of justice related to the Jones case,



House Democrats briefly walk out of House Chambers to protest Republicans blocking a vote on impeachment

with the vote of 221-212. The other two articles failed to pass. It was now up to the Senate to determine whether these two articles were enough to remove the President

from office.

The Senate trial began on January 7, 1999, and was televised throughout. As dictated by the Constitution, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William H. Rehnquist, presided over the trial, and the trial started with a reading of the charges. Then the Chief Justice swore in the Senators, and each signed an oath book promising to do "impartial justice," going one at a time to the front of the chamber to do so. There was 55 Republican and 45 Democratic Senators. If all Republicans voted for removal, 12 Democrats would have to join them to get the 67 votes required.



Thirteen Republican House members, headed by Chairman Henry Hyde, prosecuted the case for removal. In sum, they accused President Clinton of "willful, premeditated, deliberate corruption of the nation's system of justice through perjury and obstruction of justice." Charles Ruff, main White House Counsel, led President Clinton's defense with a team of seven lawyers. Their main argument was that the Republicans provided no more than "an unsubstantiated, circumstantial case that does not meet

the constitutional standard to remove the President from office."

Both sides presented their arguments and evidence in three days, and the senators had two more days to ask questions. As the trial progressed, Democrats and Republicans used one partisan maneuver after another, although with less bitterness than in the House debate. The Democrats tried unsuccessfully to dismiss the case, and both sides fought over whether there would be witnesses, how many witnesses there would be, and who they would be. They argued over whether the witnesses would give testimony in the Senate chamber or by deposition. Most important, this partisan struggle ended in a Senate vote not to hear Monica Lewinsky's testimony in person, as the Democrats wanted, but by video clips of a deposition she gave under questioning by House prosecutors. They also voted to question other witnesses by deposition.

Finally, on February 8, this twelve-month historic political crisis in American politics was almost at an end. Each side had three hours to present their closing arguments, then for three days the senators debated behind closed doors. And on February 12, in the Senate chamber and before television cameras, the Senate voted. All Democrats

and 10 Republicans voted President Clinton not guilty on alleged perjury, 55 to 45. On alleged obstruction of justice the vote was split, 50 to 50. President Clinton would remain in office.



You cannot isolate the House impeachment and this Senate trial from the national day-by-day, 24-hour discussion and debate over the fate of the

President. All this provided Representatives and Senators with an amazing input of knowledge, insights, legal opinions, and interpretations. In this way,

witnesses were almost redundant. Most important, as the impeachment approached conclusion in the House, and then as the Senate trial progressed, public opinion not only continued to support President Clinton, but his numbers actually improved. During Senate deliberations, some polls showed over 70 percent support of the President. Moreover, polls showed that the people wanted to get this over with as fast as possible; felt that the Republicans were unnecessarily delaying the proceedings; and intended to punish Republicans in the next election if they removed President Clinton. Generally, answers to specific questions in the polls showed that arguments supporting President Clinton persuaded more people than those demanding his removal. The Senators were, after all, politicians, and doubtless were influenced in their votes by all this. Indeed, David P. Schippers, Chief Investigative Counsel for the House Judiciary Committee for the impeachment, claimed in his book *Sell Out* that due to the overwhelming public support for Clinton, the Republican Senate leadership had decided against trying to fire Clinton, and had organized the trial to get it over with as soon as possible.

What does this vivid example of the nature and working of one democracy tell us about liberal democracy itself? It is self-government. It says what you have read about the Clinton campaigns, scandals, and his impeachment. Throughout the history of the Clinton Presidency, as an adult American you could have campaigned and voted for Clinton or his opposition in the Presidential elections of 1992 and 1996. You could also have campaigned and voted for the Representatives and Senators that voted on his impeachment and removal. Regarding his scandals and impeachment,



you could have made your voice heard by writing letters to the editors of newspapers, posting your opinions for or against him on the internet, or telephoning a radio talk show. You could have set up a web page to express your view or have done so through internet chat groups. You could have organized demonstrations or participated in them, built an organization to work for or against him, and contributed money to one side or the other.

Note also that there is a democratic culture involved. This dictates that compromise and negotiation will settle disputes with a tolerance for differences. If the conflict is profound and the stakes very high, if there is no solution other than one side will lose and the other side will win, then democratic procedures must be used that are within or dictated by the law. Such was the impeachment and trial of President Clinton. But consider. The President had vast public and secret resources at his disposal, such as the secret service, the FBI, and the CIA. As Commander-in-Chief of all American military forces, he had them at his command. Could he not have used this power, if he so desired, to have the Army surround Congress and the Supreme Court and dictate the outcome of their impeachment proceedings? That this was not even thought of by anyone in the media, that there was not the slightest rumor of this, that even his most extreme political enemies never thought this a possibility, shows the strength of this liberal democracy.

But still, consider. Say that the President did issue such orders. What would happen? There is no doubt about the answer: he would be disobeyed. His orders would have to go through the military Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense, and then down the command structure. The respect for the Constitution is so deeply ingrained in the military and those who are appointed to high office, democratic norms and customs so unconsciously held, that instead of obeying the President, his very attempt to use the military unconstitutionally would be reported to Congress and become an article of impeachment. Alternatively, suppose that he had secretly plotted with a group of generals or colonels to use their troops in a coup against the Constitution. If anything like this had been launched, it would have been soundly defeated for three reasons. First, this junta could only have been a very small group, and thus militarily outgunned. Second, even ordinary soldiers would not have obeyed the commands of their officers, because this would too clearly be an utterly monstrous and treasonous antidemocratic action. And third, even if this were successful, the people would rise up in rebellion against this totally antidemocratic usurpation of power.

One more example is the outcome of the year 2000 American presidential election. It is worthy of even more extended treatment than that I gave to Clinton's impeachment, but it was only concluded within two days of this writing. The

Democrat candidate, Vice President Albert Gore, got a majority of the national vote and came within a couple of hundred votes of winning Florida's electors, which would have given him the 270 electoral votes needed to become President. As it was, with Florida's slim margin giving the Republican candidate, Governor George Bush, its electoral votes, he won the presidency by only 271 electoral votes. Because of the importance of the Florida electors and the very slight margin of victory for Bush, Gore refused to concede the election and he, his supporters, and the Democratic Party waged a public relations and legal onslaught on the ballots cast in Florida, particularly in highly democrat counties. They argued that all the ballots had not been counted, the voting machines had malfunctioned, or that the ballots were too complex for many voters.



"I have decided to contest this inaccurate and incomplete election"



Judge Robert Burton recounting ballots in Palm Beach County, Florida

I need not go into the legal and political victories and defeats in this campaign to overturn the Bush's victory, except to note that we all learned a new vocabulary about machine ballots, including chads, pregnant chads, tri-chads, hanging chads, swinging chads, dimples, etc. Suffice to say that after two Florida Supreme Court victories for Vice President Gore and two United States Supreme Court decisions vacating or overturning them, Gore finally lost hope in getting the recount of ballots that he wanted. Over a month after the election, Gore finally and graciously conceded the election to Bush.

This was the closest election in American history. And yet, and this is the point to this example, in spite of the heated partisan rhetoric, the claims that the election had been stolen, there was no violence. There was no violent demonstrations, no riots, no necessity to call out the army, and no coup. The decision of the Supreme Court was accepted; law had triumphed over the desire for power. This is almost unbelievable, considering that this election was to determine who would be the most powerful leader in the world, and which economic and social policies would dominate the country. But it is the way liberal democracy

functions.

This type of government stands in sharp contrast to the alternatives, such as rule by a king, as in Saudi Arabia; dictator as in Sudan; the military, as in Burma; or an elite, as in China. It is inconceivable that any of these rulers would be questioned by a court, undergo examination by the people's representatives over some scandal, stand trial while in office, or stand aside and let some other person rule because of a court decision. It is not possible that in these countries or others like them you would be able to criticize or demonstrate against your rulers without serious and possibly lethal repercussions. The police or security forces might even arrest and torture you and your family if they find in your home papers, documents, letters, or e-mail that criticizes the government. It is not only likely, but does happen in such countries that when the people threaten the power of their dictators, the dictators use tanks and machine guns against them.



All this being understood, so what? Are not there only a small number of democracies? Are there not even fewer liberal democracies like the United States, almost all being in Western Europe? In fact, is not my characterization of liberal democracy too Western, hardly fit for nations in Asia, South American, and Africa?



The answer is no to each of these questions. As listed in [Table 3.3](#), out of 192 nations in 1999, 120 were democratic and contained 58 percent of the world's people. This number of democracies is a sharp increase from the sixty-nine that existed in 1985, and well shows that the world is becoming increasingly democratic. Democracy is now the world's dominant form of government, and with the death of fascism through World War II, and of communism with the end of the Cold War, democracy has no real competitors for hearts and minds. Were you born today, the odds of you being born in a democracy are slightly greater than 50 percent.

As the [Table 3.3](#) shows, thirty-five of these democracies were only electoral, some so marginal as to make it a tossup whether we should call them democracies. All thirty-five, including Columbia, Turkey, Brazil, Ukraine, and Russia, restrict some of the basic rights against government that characterize a liberal democracy. An impeachment like that of President Clinton might still take place in most of them, but not with the same vigor, concern for the law, and intimate involvement of the public.

TABLE 3.3. Democracies and Nondemocracies in 1999*

Free Democracy		Partly Free		Not Free
Liberal		Electoral		
Andorra	Lithuania	Albania	Antigua/Barbuda	Afghanistan
Argentina	Luxembourg	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Algeria
Australia	Mali	Bangladesh	Bosnia-Herz.	Angola
Austria	Malta	Brazil	Burkina Faso	Bahrain
Bahamas	Marshall Is.	Central African Rep.	Comoros	Belarus
Barbados	Mauritius	Colombia	Côte d'Ivoire	Bhutan
Belgium	Micronesia	Croatia	East Timor	Brunei
Belize	Monaco	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Burma
Benin	Mongolia	Georgia	Gabon	Burundi
Bolivia	Namibia	Ghana	Jordan	Cambodia
Botswana	Nauru	Guatemala	Kuwait	Cameroon
Bulgaria	Netherlands	Guinea-Bissau	Lesotho	Chad
Canada	New Zealand	Haiti	Malaysia	China (PRC)
Cape Verde	Norway	Honduras	Mexico	Congo (Brazzaville)
Chile	Palau	Indonesia	Morocco	Congo (Kinshasa)
Costa Rica	Panama	Kyrgyz Republic	Peru	Cuba
Cyprus (G)	Papua New Guinea	Liberia	Senegal	Djibouti
Czech Rep.	Philippines	Macedonia	Singapore	Egypt
Denmark	Poland	Madagascar	Tanzania	Equatorial Guinea
Dominica	Portugal	Malawi	Togo	Eritrea
Dominican Rep.	Romania	Moldova	Tonga	The Gambia
Ecuador	St. Kitts and Nevis	Mozambique	Uganda	Guinea
El Salvador	St. Luda	Nepal	Yugoslavia	Iran
Estonia	St. Vincent/Grenadines	Nicaragua	Zambia	Iraq
Fiji	Samoa	Niger	Zimbabwe	Kazakhstan
Finland	San Marino	Nigeria		Kenya
France	São Tomé/Príncipe	Paraguay		Korea, North
Germany	Slovakia	Russia		Laos
Greece	Slovenia	Seychelles		Lebanon
Grenada	Solomon Islands	Sierra Leone		Libya
Guyana	South Africa	Sri Lanka		Maldives
Hungary	Spain	Suriname		Mauritania
Iceland	Sweden	Turkey		Oman
India	Switzerland	Ukraine		Pakistan
Ireland	Taiwan	Venezuela		Qatar
Israel	Thailand			Rwanda
Italy	Trinidad/Tobago			Saudi Arabia
Jamaica	Tuvalu			Somalia
Japan	United Kingdom			Sudan

Kiribati	United States		Swaziland
Korea, South	Uruguay		Syria
Latvia	Vanuatu		Tajikistan
Liechtenstein			Tunisia
			Turkmenistan
			United Arab Emirates
			Uzbekistan
			Vietnam
			Yemen

*Based on the Freedom House 1999-2000 Survey of freedom in the world (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/>)

In these countries your freedom of speech or religion or association may be under pressure or even compromised.

Just to mention some of their problems with human rights in these countries, in Columbia the courts tend to be corrupt, and extortion is common. Colombian drug lords have considerable influence, and may even have dictated some of the laws. Violence is endemic; all sides commit atrocities, including the murder of officials and activists.

In Turkey the military has undue influence, and security forces have often killed those suspected of terrorism or of supporting a Kurdish rebellion. The government limits freedom of speech. You may not, for example, insult government officials. Government organized groups, or sympathizers have attacked and threatened human rights activists. They may even be responsible for the murder of journalists and newspaper owners or their disappearance. Appeal to the highest court over politically sensitive judgments may be useless, and the courts themselves seem to be under military control.

In Brazil, the courts are weak also, and the government is riddled with corruption. Moreover, lawlessness is widespread and violence against women and children is common, while the police and courts do little about it. Ranchers in some areas are free to force rural laborers to work against their will. Indians are discriminated against, violence against them is common, and some of their leaders or supporters have been murdered.

In Ukraine government corruption is widespread as well, and bribery a way of getting or preventing government action. Consistently, political pressure on the courts and intervention in their process is common. Starting and running a business is often difficult, since you must compete with an in-group of present and former members of the political establishment. The government limits freedom of speech. You cannot, for example, attack the honor and dignity of the president.

And in Russia (see [map and statistics](#), and [world map](#)), the election of Vladimir Putin to be president showed that there is a regular and contested election system through which opponents may challenge the top leadership, and possibly replace them. Many political parties were active in the election, including the Communist Party. There is also a national parliament with representatives elected similarly in fair and competitive elections. The diverse political parties represented, such as Liberal Democrats, Agrarians, Communist Party, Democratic Choice, and Home-is Russia, well show how competitive the election was.



Russia

Area	17,075,200 sq km; slightly less than 1.8 times the size of the US
Population	146,001,176 (July 2000 est.)
Ethnic groups	Russian 81.5%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 3%, Chuvash 1.2%, Bashkir 0.9%, Byelorussian 0.8%, Moldavian 0.7%, other 8.1%
Religions	Russian Orthodox, Muslim, other
Languages	Russian, other
Life expectation	67.19 years
Literacy	98%
Purchasing power parity	\$4,200 (1999 est.)
Government	electoral democracy
Freedom rating	partly free

However, government subsidies to newspapers, their ownership by those well connected to the government, along with local political pressures, compromise the independence of the press. The government also restricts religion. It legally favors only those religions that have existed for more than fifteen years and have nationally organized themselves. Moreover, the government recognizes only political parties that have at least 100 members and forbids parties that would use violence, seek independence for any Russian republic or territory, or promote hatred of ethnic, racial, or religious minorities. Of particular importance, presidential and legislative pressures influence the courts, and the treatment of prisoners before and after trials remain disgraceful. And the new FSB, the government's security arm that replaced the KGB, continues to exercise excessive power in domestic affairs. Corruption in government and business is pervasive, perhaps the worst among democracies. Mafia-like, criminal organizations seem to operate with impunity, and the protection of private property and the independence of businesses are spotty. People are free to move within the country, but they must register with the government within seven days of moving to a new local to work and live.

All this restricts and compromises basic human rights. In short, like the other countries mentioned above, Russia is not yet a liberal democracy. Nonetheless, aside from the serious human rights problems of these countries, as a citizen of any of them you still could vote regularly by secret ballot in competitive national elections. You could vote the top leadership out of power. This is why these countries are still democracies, although only electoral ones.



Eighty-five of the democracies listed in [Table 3.3](#) are liberal democracies. These comprise 44 percent of all countries and 39 percent of the world's population. This shows that the institutionalization of freedom in liberal democracy is not rare, nor is it limited to Western European states. Liberal democracies span the globe. Among them are Barbados and Jamaica in the Caribbean, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia in the Pacific, South Korea and Mongolia in Asia, Thailand and the Philippines in Southeast Asia, India in South Asia, Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, Israel in the Middle East, Botswana and Namibia in Southern Africa, Mali in Western Africa, Malta in the Mediterranean, Bulgaria and Hungary in Eastern Europe, and Cape Verde in the Atlantic. This variety of cultures, races, ethnicities, and geography should dispel the notion that liberal democracy is a peculiarly Western type government that the West is trying to push on the rest of the world.

Of course, freedom is an ideal, and even liberal democracies imperfectly fulfill it, although they do much better than other types of government. After all, with all their biases and prejudices, human beings govern liberal democracies; and voters are often poorly informed and sometimes demagogues mislead or exploit them. Sometimes and

more than you like, officials do step on your rights; and they pass laws and rules that in one way or another limit your freedoms. But when this happens, you have the power to do something about it. Your freedoms remain more than paper constitutions, political pronouncements, and strutting flag-waving. If you doubt this, consider again the impeachment of President Clinton. This impeachment and associated political fight could not have happened in the way it did unless citizens of this liberal democracy already had and could exercise the human rights defining their freedom.

Even in those democracies that were more or less socialist economic systems, such as in Denmark, Norway, India, and Israel, their governments protect these rights. Look at Sweden, for example, which sometimes is called "The People's Republic of Sweden," a play on what communist parties call their own nations, to depict Sweden's socialist policies.

Like the United Kingdom, Sweden (see [map and statistics](#), and [world map](#)) is a constitutional monarchy, with a democratically elected parliament. The people also elect its Prime Minister to Parliament, and he is usually the head of whichever party gets the most parliamentary seats. King Carl Gustaf XVI has no formal political power and only a ceremonial role. Sweden has an extensive and comprehensive national welfare and national health insurance system. Doctors work for the government and hospitals are government run, with health care covered by taxes. If you are sick or must stay home to take care of sick children, the government will make up for most of the income lost. Bear a child and get a year of government mandated leave from work with pay. You will also get government allowances for your child and support if your children continue their education after they are 16 years old. You and your employer also must contribute to your retirement benefits, which you receive when you are 65, and which is supplemented by added employee fees.

Sweden has an industrial policy that sees the government as necessarily involved in and in some ways directing the economy. There are stiff laws covering the hiring and rejection of job applicants; and if hired, their firing. Government closely regulates, subsidizes, and sets price ceilings on the purchase of a home or renting one; it strictly enforces regulations on home building. And it stimulates investment, and provides special tax benefits to steer businesses in the government-desired direction. Also, as part of its industrial policy, the Swedish government favors and encourages very strong unions, and large centralized business associations. This has led to the economic dominance of large corporations and unions.

Because of government welfare policies and involvement in the economy, people pay

EUROPE



Sweden

Area	449,964 sq km; slightly larger than California
Population	8,873,052 (July 2000 est.)
Ethnic groups	Swedes and Finnish and Lapp (Sami) minorities; foreign-born or first-generation immigrants: Finns, Yugoslavs, Danes, Norwegians, Greeks, Turks
Religions	Lutheran 87%, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist
Languages	Swedish; small Lapp- and Finnish-speaking minorities
Life expectation	79.58 years
Literacy	99% (1979 est.)
Purchasing power parity	\$20,700 (1999 est.); U.S. is \$33,900 (1999 est.)
Government	liberal democracy--constitutional monarchy
Freedom rating	free

over an average of 50 percent of their income in taxes, while businesses could pay as much as 65 percent. One measure of the cost of government regulation, and the opportunities people and businesses lose because of it, is that about 35 percent of all workers were working for government in 1992. An even better measure is that the government alone creates one-third of the market value of all Sweden's goods and services. Another third value results from government redistribution of income, such as by its national welfare policies and national health program mentioned previously. This shrinks the private economy's value to only a third of all Sweden's products and services. By contrast, this value is about two-thirds for the United States.

Regardless of Sweden's welfare statism and its reputation for socialist policies, as a liberal democracy the government protects your freedom--human rights--to speak out, protest, demonstrate, and organize against these policies, and vote out of power those who support them. As a Swede, you even would enjoy a fair amount of economic freedom. Among 123 countries whose economic freedom was ranked for 1999 by the Economic Freedom Network, Sweden ranks in economic freedom about 22 out of 111 nations, and the Network rates it with 8 out of 10 possible points. The United States is ranked 4, with 9.1 out of 10 points. In further comparison with the countries I described in Chapter 1, the Network ranks China 87, and places Burma at the bottom among all 111 countries in economic freedom. The Network did not rank Sudan or Saudi Arabia.

The case for democratic freedom is strong, as I have tried to show in this and the previous chapter. But I can make an even stronger case. In the following chapters, I will show that freedom is not only a human or natural right, certified by international agreements, and supported by moral reasoning, that it is not only a socially just metasolution to human diversity, but that it is also a moral good. This means that the social and political consequences of freedom are such as to make it a supreme value in itself.

NOTES

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