



SchwartzReport

Humanity's precognition: Climate change and the decline of democracy

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Since 1972 when I was appointed by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird to the Secretary of Defense-MIT Study Group on Innovation, Technology, and the Future, I have been studying what is happening in the news, looking for trends that are shaping the future. In 1991 I began publishing online the daily Schwartzreport, and since 2005 I have been researching these papers for each issue of *Explore* in both of which I track trends that are shaping our future. Even longer, since the late 1960s, I have been an experimentalist studying the nature of consciousness, particularly non-physiologically based, nonlocal consciousness. I go into this bit of bio because these parallel paths in my life have made me recognize a trend that media, politicians, and most people neither mention or even notice: a precognition that is shaping humanity's future.

Let me begin with the United States. If you look at the *Project 2025* book, several of whose authors now hold high positions in the current administration, it is easy to see this is the blueprint now guiding the United States. This is a book about creating an authoritarian system of governance in the United States supported by oligarchs and eliminating things like the Department of Education and the EPA, and you can see this happening. It is a book that lays out how the United States becomes a christofascist authoritarian government ruled by an authoritarian President surrounded by oligarchs. It is not the democracy the Founders envisioned or that the country has been for its previous 250 year history. And yet a slim majority of American voters chose this man as our President, and that is the point I want to make. If one looks around the world, it becomes clear this decision to become a nation governed by an authoritarian heading a kind of pseudo-democracy hasn't just happened in the United States. You see this going on throughout the world. For example, it is what has happened in Israel, Hungary, and Turkey. You can see a right wing governance attempting to emerge in Germany. You see it in the collapse of the Macron government in France. You saw it attempted in the nations of Georgia and South Korea. Throughout the

world true democracies are disappearing. Look at the chart below (Fig. 1)

The Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden is one of the few scholarly institutions that has been studying this explicit trend, and their findings I find notable and revealing. Staffan I. Linberg, the institute's director reports, "A democratic decline has taken place globally, and an increasing number of people are living in closed autocracies... The level of democracy enjoyed by the average world citizen in 2022 is back to 1986 levels. This means that 72 percent of the world's population, 5.7 billion people, today live under authoritarian rule."¹

Why is this happening? As the chart shows, for decades after World War II democracies increased, until there were more democracies than authoritarian governments. But beginning about 20 years ago, in 2005, the trend began to go the other way and has now reached the point where the number of democracies and non-democracies is essentially the same. Why?

The answer, I think, is that people began to become afraid. Something happened that is causing fear in humanity all over the world. A kind of unconscious gut feeling, a precognition we call it in consciousness research, the unconscious conviction that something is happening or is going to happen that is dreadful, harmful, and scary.

What is it? Although this transition is usually discussed in terms of economics and politics, I think those are manifestations, not the cause.

I think the evidence is telling us it is climate change. In the mid-19th century the scientific community began to recognize that something was going on in our atmosphere that affected the environment of Earth. In 1824, Joseph Fourier calculated for the first time that an Earth-sized planet, at our distance from the Sun, ought to be much colder.² He suggested something in the atmosphere must be acting like an insulating blanket. In 1861, Irish physicist and chemist John Tyndall gave a lecture which was published in the *London, Edinburgh, and Dublin Philosophical*

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Magazines and Journal of Science “On the absorption and radiation of heat by gases and vapours, and on the physical connexion of radiation, absorption, and conduction.” His paper demonstrated the link between Earth’s atmosphere and its temperature.³ But it wasn’t until 1938 that British engineer and amateur meteorologist Guy Callender made the connection between climate and CO₂ showing that global temperatures had risen 0.54°F (0.3 °C) over the previous half century and that this had occurred because of carbon dioxide emissions from industry, primarily from burning fossil fuels.⁴ Far from accepting what came to be known initially as the Callendar Effect (we know it today as global warming), the conclusions in his paper set off a great controversy and were rejected by most scientists. It wasn’t until almost two decades later, in 1956, when Canadian physicist Gilbert Plass working at Michigan State University in East Lansing doing research sponsored by the U.S. Office of Naval Research, published a paper in *Tellus*, “The Carbon Dioxide Theory of Climate Change”, that the argument in science mostly, although still not entirely, ended.⁵ But that was just in the science community. Few in the general public paid any attention or knew about any of this.

It was not until 23 June of 1988, when James Hansen, then Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City, testified before the U.S. Senate stating a greenhouse effect had been detected, indicating that the climate was in a process of change as a result of CO₂ and that “Coal is the single greatest threat to civilization and all life on our planet. . . the dirtiest trick that governments play on their citizens is that they are working for ‘clean coal.’ . . .The trains carrying coal to power plants are death trains. Coal-fired power plants are factories of death.”⁶ His words of warning were televised on C-Span and picked up by media all over the world. Hansen was dubbed the “father of global warming” and the public began to become broadly aware of the issue, although to this day there are politicians and segments of the public who still do not believe climate change is real.

I go into this history to make this point: note the concurrence of humanity moving away from democracy and into authoritarianism, and the public awareness of climate change.

Why did this happen? Just coincidence?

In order to understand what I believe the evidence is telling us, one has to recognize the current state of consciousness research, and how it has demonstrated the inadequacy of materialism. Not that it is wrong,

but that it is inadequate.⁷

Research in a growing range of disciplines, as I have reported in this journal and others as well, show that all living organisms have a measure of consciousness, and that consciousness is interdependent and interconnected.⁸ We, humanity, live in a matrix of consciousness. Who knew, for instance, that fungal networks can solve problems and make decisions.⁹ As Yu Fukasawa, an assistant professor in the graduate school of agricultural science at Tohoku University, and first author of the paper that reported this said, “You’d be surprised at just how much fungi are capable of. . . . They have memories, they learn, and they can make decisions. Quite frankly, the differences in how they solve problems compared to humans is mind-blowing.”¹⁰ (See Fig. 2)

But in terms of the point I am making, it is not that fungi solve problems; it is that they have a measure of consciousness. This fungal example is one dozens of papers on this issue of consciousness; papers from studies of Monarch butterflies, pussycats, gorillas, and octopuses. All of which research confirms the matrix of consciousness. Once one understands that, it changes one’s entire perception of reality. Now, let me make one more point about how this matrix works with humans before I get to my principal thesis.

Let me begin with explicitly nonlocal consciousness. Random number generators are devices that produce random numbers. That is their whole purpose. And yet the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory (PEAR) several decades ago discovered that individuals can, when they focus intentioned awareness on the random number generators, cause them to become non-random.¹¹ This protocol has subsequently been replicated over and over in laboratories all over the world. Twenty eight years ago, in 1997, a particularly brilliant consciousness researcher, Roger D. Nelson at PEAR, took those results and asked the implicit question: What happens when a whole bunch of people focus on something that has a high emotional content? Things like Princess Diana’s death, Nelson Mandela’s death or his funeral, the nuclear event at Fukushima, events which focus attention even though people don’t really say, oh, well, that’s what I’m thinking about or focused on, but that they do focus on emotionally. To find out, Nelson put random number generators all over the world, and this study is still running decades later, 24/7. Now known as The Global Consciousness Project, Nelson’s protocol has become an international, multi-laboratory

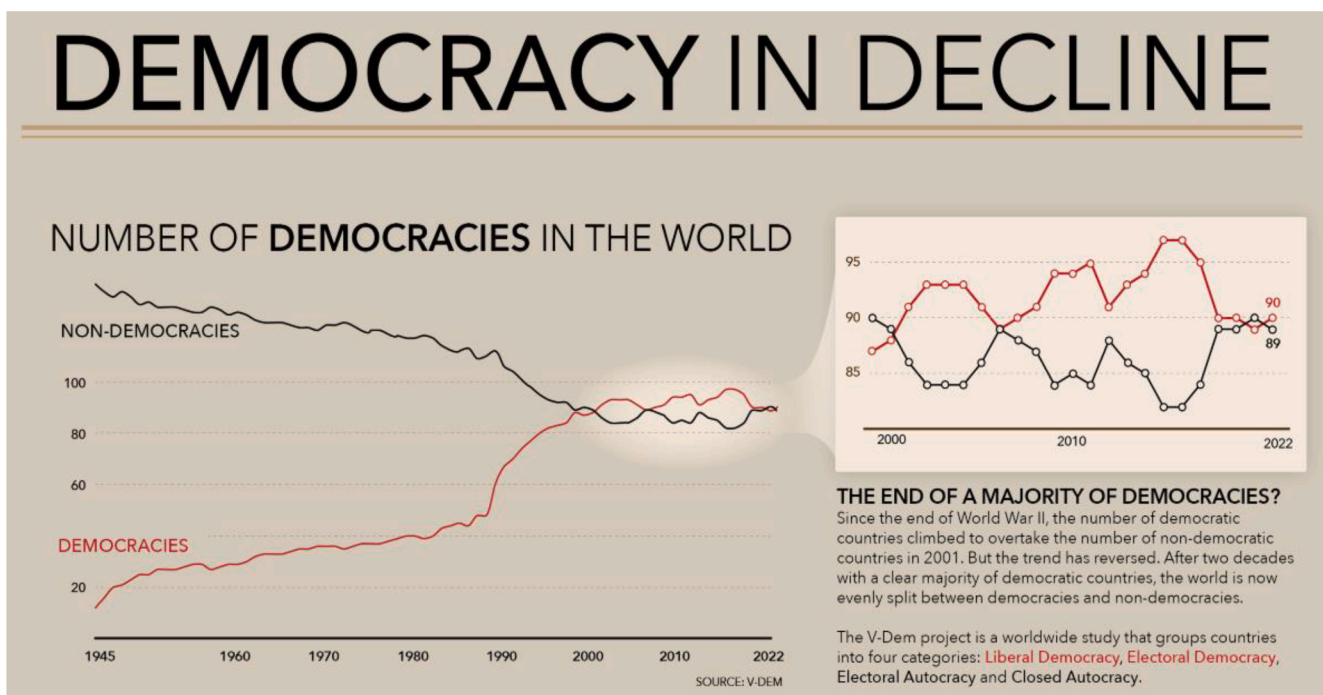


Fig. 1. Democracy in decline.

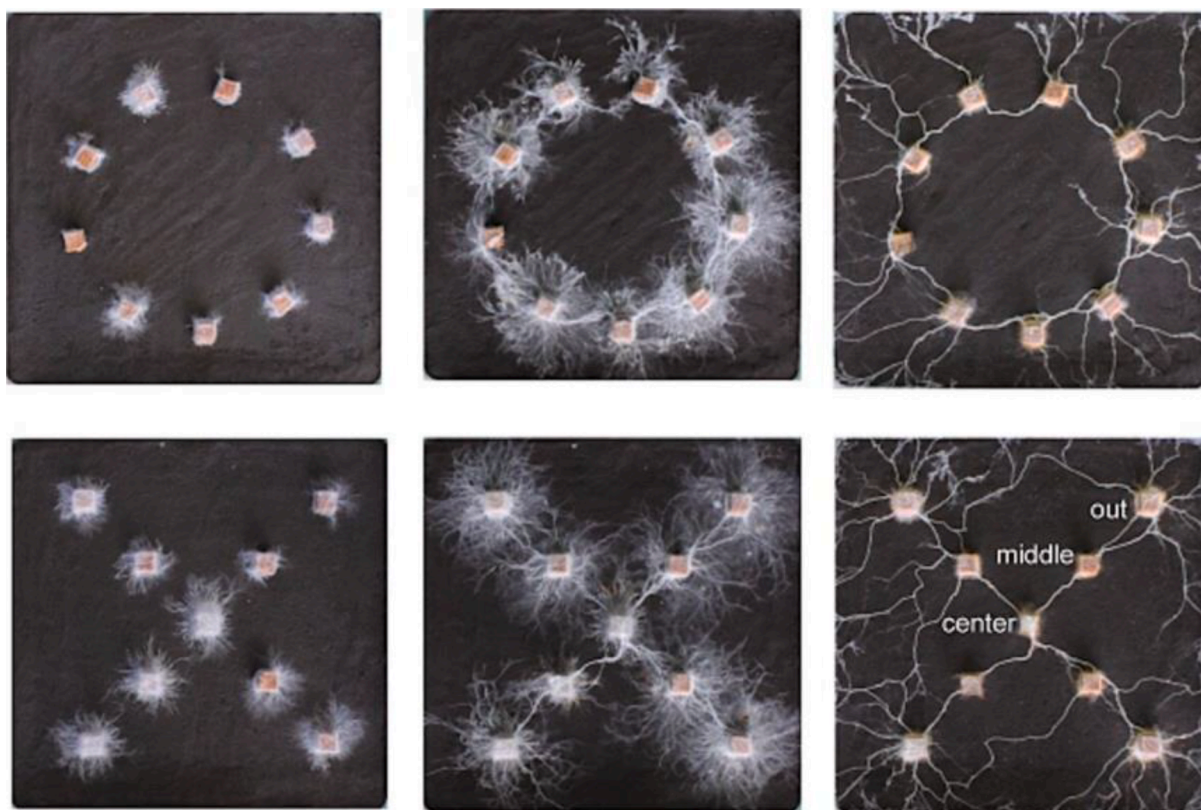


Fig. 2. Fungal mycelial networks connecting wood blocks arranged in circle (top) and across (bottom) shapes. Credit: Yu Fukasawa et al.

interdisciplinary collaboration studying collective consciousness.¹² It is one of the most fascinating studies ever done in consciousness research, and it has discovered that “coherent consciousness creates order in the world and that subtle interactions link us with each other and Earth itself.”¹³

Now let me approach the issue of collective consciousness from an explicitly social local consciousness perspective. The Social Cognitive Network Academic Research (SCNAR) center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute has provided confirmation of this from a completely different perspective. While the GCP measures the matrix of consciousness from the nonlocal aspect of consciousness, SCNAR has looked at this same coherence of consciousness from a local consciousness perspective, and they discovered and reported, “To change the beliefs of an entire community, only 10 percent of the populations needs to become convinced of a new different opinion. At the tipping point, the idea can spread through social networks and alter behavior on a large scale.”¹⁴

A third proof of the power of collective consciousness has just been published by Dean Radin, Chief Scientist for the Institute of Noetic Science. He reported, “Meta-analyses of experiments investigating human behavioral and physiological reactions to unpredictable future events suggest the existence of a poorly understood ability to ‘feel the future’. Is this effect reflected in sentiment metrics based on social media posts? To find out, analysis of 13 years of daily Twitter sentiment data in 10 languages was examined two weeks prior to events assessed as significantly negative and unpredictable, including acts of terrorism, mass shootings, unexpected deaths of celebrities, etc.. Results of the analysis was statistically significant ($p = 0.001$), suggesting the existence of a form of collective presentiment.”¹⁵

Could this coherence of consciousness, both local and nonlocal, possibly be what is causing all this shift away from democracy to authoritarianism? To answer that question a third factor needs to be considered. Why do people become susceptible to authoritarianism and often become violent on behalf of an authoritarian when they become

socially frightened?

The answer to this question is, I think, to be found in the work of psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s¹⁶; work that was replicated with the same result years later in 2009 by Jerry M. Burger, a professor of psychology at Santa Clara University in California.¹⁷ I covered this issue in depth previously in these pages.¹⁸ So, I will simply quote myself here and refer the reader to that earlier recent paper. “The charismatic power of authoritarianism, is a manifestation of what I call beingness. Beingness cannot be quantified exactly, yet everyone who encounters it knows exactly what is meant, whether it is a religious leader, a politician, or a movie star. But when it goes beyond just charisma beingness can have an authority that crosses from the individual to the social generality. A psychological linkage develops between the charismatic individual and a cohort that expresses subordination because they see the leader as the personification of their psychological profiles.”¹⁹

We can look at the recent election and see a large number of us are clearly frightened about something. It gets discussed in the media as racism, and it is that. It also gets discussed as genderism, and it is that as well; there are a lot of different aspects to it. But what it really is, I want to suggest to you, is a precognition of something that is occurring and coming, that is fearful and is scary, and is causing a change in not only American society but societies all over the world.

And let us be clear. The future humanity is facing is scary. According to the latest report from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (UCN) 46,300 of Earth’s species are threatened with extinction; that is about 28% of the 157,190 species listed in the UCN’s Red List of species facing threat, which is accepted as the world’s leading authority on this issue²⁰ (See Fig. 3)

That evidence I suggest is telling us why democracies in many countries are decreasing, while authoritarianism is on the rise. Because when people get frightened, they want somebody to come forward and say, “I’m an authority, I know how to fix this, I’m going to fix it.” “You don’t need to be worried about it. I’ll take care of it. I’m going to take



Fig. 3. International Union for Conservation of Nature.

care of it. I know how to fix it.” But the choices that are being proposed by authoritarians don’t lead to good outcomes. They lead to the destruction of democracy. And the deterioration of the quality of life for the general public as measured by objectively verifiable social outcome data.²¹ Authoritarian governments have very little interest in social wellbeing, as an endless number of histories and current events show us. Authoritarians surrounded and supported by oligarchs are interested in power and greed.

You’ll notice that in the Project 2025 they don’t talk at all about climate change. And yet any research scientist who’s bothered to look into this even superficially knows that climate change is affecting our society in immeasurable ways. Sea rise is going to destroy coastal areas. It’s already getting to a point, for instance in Florida, where you can’t get home insurance because insurance companies don’t want to insure houses that are likely to be submerged or destroyed by water or hurricanes. Same thing is happening in California and North Carolina, but for a completely different reason. In that case, it is fire. Huge forest fires that burn whole towns. Insurance companies don’t want to insure those homes and businesses. So there are people not being able to get insurance and on and on. Think about it. You read about these catastrophes regularly in the news, you hear about them on TV. Things are happening as a result of what climate change is doing and they’re causing great fear. And I believe that what is driving these changes in our culture is the precognition of what’s happening, what’s going to happen to you, your children, your grandchildren.

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