The Theoretical Analysis of the Destruction and the Interim Rescue-Restoration of Democracy in the United States

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Abstract

This paper asserts that the global COVID-19 pandemic shock was instrumental in the interim rescue-restoration of representative democracy in the United States because it propelled the rational voters to the ballot box to repudiate the 45th President of the United States for mishandling the pandemic and for propagating conspiracy theories and disinformation. We utilize a quantitative linear equation to derive the democracy destruction coefficients and the democracy rescue-restoration coefficients to highlight the magnitude of the destruction and the rescue-restoration. In this era of digital technology where social media platforms have amplified the velocity of conspiracy theories and disinformation with infinite multiplier effects, the destruction to representative democracy still looms large in the United States because half of the voters will continue to willfully consume conspiracy theories and disinformation. Furthermore, there are aspiring candidates in the Republican Party, running for political offices at the local, state, and federal levels, who will adopt and strategically utilize the democracy destruction playbook that the 45th President embedded in their party in order to achieve ochlocratic autocracy.

Keywords: Destruction, Restoration, Representative Democracy, Ochlocratic Autocracy, Voters

1. Introduction

Today, the consensus among political pundits is that we are living in an era that would horrify the Founding Fathers of representative democracy in the United States because they thought the Constitution would be resolute enough to prevent the United States from being governed by demagogues or Machiavellians who can always propagate conspiracy theories and disinformation to feed the passionate mobs in their political parties. On January 6, 2021, the United States almost transitioned from representative democracy to ochlocratic autocracy because the passionate mobs from the Republican Party and 147 Congressional Republicans did not believe in the result of the 2020 presidential election. In other words, representative democracy in the United States was and is still at the precipice of destruction because the 45th President of the United States (POTUS) continued to peddle baseless conspiracy theories and disinformation to the passionate mobs in the Republic Party. These conspiracy theories and disinformation will continue to have lingering effects in different forms across the economic, political, and social institutions in the United States.

This paper complements the plethora of extant studies that have examined how strong democracies failed or collapsed around the world [Diskin *et al*. (2005), Levitsky and Ziblatt (2016a, 2016b, 2018)]. Some of these studies have argued that democracies do not die at the hands of military generals, contrary to what many people tend to believe, but at the hands of political leaders with autocratic impulses who are willing to give a free reign to mob rule.

For over the past two centuries, the predominant objective of the United States has been to promote and spread representative democracy around the world in which the free press would prevail in informing and educating the voting public. One can surmise that the Founding Fathers strongly believed that the free press, through the newspaper journalists, would promote great ideas and that citizens would take out time to read the complex and challenging political exchanges, which would allow reason and rationality to spread across the country. Contrary to the monopoly of local newspapers that existed in cities and towns for many centuries, nowadays, we have different media outlets from which voters now consume reckless conspiracy theories and disinformation. It is indisputable that conspiracy theories and disinformation existed in the political landscape for centuries, but had little or no effects then because there were no easy and effective transmission channels until now. In this era of digital technology, the internet and free social media platforms provide new avenues for the execution and operationalization of conspiracy theories and disinformation with infinite multiplier effects.

Given the degree of complicity and obsequiousness going on in the Republican Party, this paper asserts that the 45th POTUS, the Republican Party, and their passionate mobs took the United States' representative democracy to the precipice of destruction on January 6, 2021. Many political and legislative events after the Capitol Hill insurrection continued to show that Democrats and Republicans now have divergent views of representative democracy in the United States. Therefore, this raises important research questions: Who are the destroyers of democracy in the United States and who came to rescue it from further destruction? What lesson can political leaders in other western democracies learn from the destruction and interim rescue-restoration of democracy in the United States? This paper contributes to the literature by using theoretical framework to answer these critical questions in lieu of quantifiable data evidence. Many research scholars and political pundits have identified individual factors that can lead to the eventual demise of democracy, and as a contribution to the theoretical literature, this paper provides the conjunction of causal factors since "no single variable on its own is capable of predicting democracy collapse."

We show that political leaders, such as the 45th POTUS, who peddled outrageous conspiracy theories and disinformation in conjunction with voters who willfully consume these conspiracy theories and disinformation from different social media platforms expedited the destruction of democracy in the United States. Research scholars and political pundits may be surprised to know that the COVID-19 pandemic (external global shock), with its massive spreads and fatalities in the United States relative to other advanced countries, was an instrumental variable in the interim rescue-restoration of American democracy. The lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic propelled many of the 81,283,098 voters to the ballot box to repudiate the way the 45th POTUS handled the global pandemic. In other words, some of these voters saw the preventable massive spreads and fatalities, due to COVID-19 pandemic, as symptoms of leadership failure, which they could no longer condone. While the pandemic was ravaging across the country, the 45th POTUS used social media platforms to disseminate unsubstantiated conspiracy theories and disinformation, which convinced many of the 74,222,958 voters who voted for him because they strongly believed his false message that the COVID-19 was designed to blame his presidency.

Even though the 45th POTUS loss the popular votes by 7,060,140 votes, technically, if he had picked up the right mix of 65,012 votes: 10,457 from Arizona, 11,779 from Georgia, 20,682 from Wisconsin, and 22,091 from the Second Congressional District of Nebraska, he would had won the required 270 Electoral College votes outright. Alternatively, if the 45th POTUS had picked up Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin, the Electoral College would had been tied at 269 votes per candidate; and then, the House of Representatives would had decided the election since the Republicans would hold the majority of state delegations in the new 117th Congress, and they would had chosen the 45th POTUS to a second term. Logically, the net combination of 65,012 voters from Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, and Nebraska's Second Congressional District rescued representative democracy in the United States.

In addition, we argue and conclude that the lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic also compelled voters in the United States and people around the world to see the protests against societal injustices and police brutality in the United States. This may have also convinced and influenced many of the 81,283,098 voters that the country was heading in the wrong direction. Given the robust economic trends in the early first quarter of 2020 and the acquittal of the 45th POTUS from the first impeachment trial, one can easily surmise that the 45th POTUS would had won the 2020 presidential election if the global COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred.

More importantly, he would had been emboldened by the Republican Party to subvert and reverse the institutional pillars of representative democracy in order to transition to ochlocratic autocracy.

Furthermore, given the 6-3 Supreme Court ruling on July 1, 2021, many states are now emboldened to enact voters' suppression laws, especially in those battleground states, such as Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin, where the lawmakers can now nullify election results they do not like, the destruction and ultimate death of representative democracy in the United State is around the corner and may arrive as early as 2022 midterm elections or after the 2024 presidential election. According to research scholars and political pundits, democracy in the United States, in its current form, exists in an extremely toxic politically divided country engulfed in racial hatred along with the normalizations of domestic terrorisms perpetrated by political vigilantes. Prior to 2017, political leaders around the world adored the resilience and stability of American democracy, and for four years, they witnessed how the 45th POTUS used groundless conspiracy theories and disinformation, through social media platforms, to unravel American democracy. Therefore, the important lesson that political leaders in other western democracies learn is that they too can adopt the playbook of the 45th POTUS by using social media platforms to disseminate unfounded conspiracy theories and disinformation in order to achieve the destruction of their own democratic tenets and norms. Simply put, the United States provides a good signal to western democracies around the world that their democracies are very fragile, and that it can easily be destroyed by their political leaders if their objective is to achieve ochlocratic autocracy.

To put the arguments in this paper succinctly, we put the determinants of representative democracy in composite functional form because there are no quantifiable data with which one can statistically estimate the four years of destruction and the rescue-restoration of representative democracy in the United States. Therefore, we use the functional nonlinear equation to derive the *democracy destruction coefficients* and the *democracy rescue-restoration coefficients* in order to highlight the magnitude of the destruction and rescue-restoration. We conclude that American democracy survived the stress test, so far, because the global COVID-19 pandemic shock propelled the determined voters to the ballot box to repudiate the 45th POTUS thus the interim *democracy rescue-restoration coefficients* appeared to be a little stronger than the *democracy destruction coefficients*. Essentially, American democracy experienced four years of structural destruction under the 45th POTUS, and it may take another four or more years of structural rescue-restoration. However, the destruction of representative democracy in the United States still looms large because the era of digital technology has bolstered the velocity of conspiracy theories and disinformation with indeterminate lingering effects. Worse, there are many aspiring candidates, running for political offices at the local, state, and federal levels, who would adopt and use the democracy destruction playbook, which the 45th POTUS implanted in the Republican Party. Given, the overwhelming voter suppression laws already passed by the Republican Party across the country, which the Supreme Court recently upheld, the nullifications of elections and the purges of voters from gaining access to the ballot boxes could occur in 2022, 2024, and far beyond.

We organize the rest of this paper as follows. Section 2 provides the literature review of extant studies on how democracies die around the world. Section 3 discusses the challenges and the flaws embedded in representative democracy in the United States. Section 4 provides the theoretical framework where we examine the composite factors that can explain the destruction or restoration of representative democracy. Section 5 concludes with some political implications.

2. Literature Review

The debate about why and how democracies collapse, fail, die, or succeed is ongoing and unsettled because some western democracies, such as that of the United State and some countries in the European Union, are gradually unraveling. In other words, we are in the era of global democracy destruction contagion. Diskin *et al*. (2005) provided a study of why democracies collapse. They provided the reasons for democratic failure and success by identifying 11 variables (federalism, presidentialism, proportionality, constitutional weakness, cleavages, malfunctioning economy, unfavorable history, fragmentation, polarization, governmental instability, and foreign involvement), which they considered to be highly instrumental in either the collapse/failure or success of democracies. They classified these 11 variables into four major categories, and each variable in each category has its own hypothesis. According to Diskin *et al*. (2005), the first category consists of institutional variables, which includes federalism, presidentialism, proportionality, and constitutional weakness.

For example, in the case of presidentialism as one of the four institutional variables, they hypothesized that "presidential or semi-presidential regimes are more prone to democratic collapse than parliamentary ones."

The second category, which the authors classified as societal variables identified cleavages, malfunctioning economy, and unfavorable history. In the case of malfunctioning economy as one of the three societal variables, they hypothesized that "countries with weak or unstable economies are more prone to democratic collapse than those with stable economies." This line of argument about the relationship between democracy and economic performance or growth dominated the growth literature in the 1990s and early 2000s [Przeworski *et al*. (1996, 2000)]. The third category, which they classified as the mediating variables included fragmentation, polarization, and governmental instability. In the case of polarization as one of the three mediating variables, Diskin *et al*. (2005) hypothesized that "highly polarized party systems are more prone to democratic collapse than systems with low polarization." The hypothesis about polarization matches with that of fragmentation, which many political researchers have examined extensively for decades. The fourth category, which they called the extraneous variables, Diskin *et al*. (2005) identified foreign involvement as the single and important variable. The authors argued that foreign involvement "has rarely received any attention in the discussion of democratic stability, but which has proven to be essential," and they hypothesized that "countries experiencing serious levels of involvement by foreign forces are more prone to democratic collapse than those with low involvement."

To highlight the significance of these 11 variables, Diskin *et al*. (2005) used a sample of 30 cases of collapsed democracies and 32 cases of stable democracies in which they coded each variable as either positive or negative in their logistic regression to show which variables were more important and the extent to which each variable can predict why democracies collapsed. Diskin *et al*. (2005) found that all the variables, *except* federalism, are statistically significant in predicting the collapse of democracies with the five strongest variables being foreign involvement, unfavorable history, malfunctioning economy, cleavage, and governmental instability. The foreign involvement variable has the highest correlation coefficient and logistic prediction, however, the authors cautioned that no single variable is capable of predicting democratic collapse, and that the key to the demise of a democratic system is a combination of variables from the four categories.

The issue of foreign involvement in democratic stability did not gain much attention because western democracies were the ones involved in influencing the newly emerged and emerging democracies around the world. However, the environment of foreign involvement or influence changed since 2015, and it quickly gained attention during the 2016 presidential election in the United States as its main foreign adversary, Russia, interfered in the election outcomes. Tennis (2020) pointed out that after Russia's interference in the Brexit referendum and the 2016 United States presidential election, Russia became more emboldened and publicly interfered in the French presidential campaign in 2017.

According to Brooking's (2021) analysis of the unclassified report on Russian interference in presidential election released by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), "Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an extensive influence campaign in support of then-candidate Donald Trump, using overt propaganda, hacking, and clandestine social media manipulation to bolster Trump's chances while denigrating his opponent, Hillary Clinton." Furthermore, Brooking (2021) outlined four main areas, which the DNI report addressed. The first area addressed the Russian most significant operations in 2016 that involved the cultivating and harnessing of Trump allies through a third party, Wikileaks, which they used as the avenue to launch malicious information with the aim to steer the political discourse in the United States. In 2020, they adopted the 2016 template "by directly targeting prominent US persons and media conduits, feeding them hacked materials and nudging their actions."

In addition, Brooking (2021) discussed the second area of the DNI report that addressed Iran's interference attempts, which grew notably more aggressive during the 2020 presidential election, and initially, it was erroneously misattributed to Russia. However, with respect to Iran's interference, the report did conclude that "most of these influence activities were essentially benign, focused on repackaging Iranian state propaganda for foreign audiences rather than attacking elections or undermining rival political systems." The third issue addressed in the report was China's determination that direct election interference was not worth the risk because of the concern that such a move would backfire, especially since information conflict escalated over whom to blame for COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of the ongoing tariffs-restricted trade wars between both countries. The fourth and most important issue addressed in the report dealt with the fact that the Trump administration officials misrepresented the nature of influence activities around the 2020 election.

This was a manifestation of the baseless conspiracy theories and disinformation intended to mislead the American people. Brooking (2021) concluded that it will be difficult to imagine a future presidential "election that will not be haunted by fears of foreign interference."

With respect to the institutional variables, which Diskin *et al*. (2005) pointed out, it is important to note that the emphasis on institutional variables or institutional hypothesis is not new with respect to the political debate and its linkage to economic growth over the past four decades. For example, many scholars viewed institutional variables from the dimension of economic growth [Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2001)]; and there are many empirical studies over the past two decades that provided evidence in support of the institutions hypothesis [see Knack and Keefer (1995), Przeworski *et al*. (2000), Rodrik *et al*. (2002), Kaufman and Kraay (2002), Acemoglu *et al*. (2005), Rodrik and Wacziarg (2005), Persson and Tabellini (2006)]. From these studies, strong and effective institutions exist in strong democracies; therefore, the collapse of democracies in western countries did not grab much attention until now.

In Levitsky and Ziblatt's (2018) recent book about how democracies die, they laid out the important roles that the elected autocratic leaders play in the death of democracies in developed and less developed countries. They argued that democracies do not die at the "hands of generals," but at the hands of elected leaders who subvert the basic process with which they gained political power. They also argued that if "the political parties, organized citizens, democratic norms do not defend the constitutions, or unwritten rules of toleration and restraint, institutions alone are not enough to rein in elected autocrats." In support of their assertion, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) cited countries such as Hungary, Venezuela, Ecuador, Georgia, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, and many others where their elected would-be autocratic leaders undermined democratic institutions and constitutions. In addition, they argued that other nominally democratic institutions remain in place where people continue to vote in rigged elections.

According to Ziblatt, the most crucial variable in predicting the success of a democratic transition is the self-confidence of the incumbent elites or leaders. If they feel able to compete under democratic conditions, they will accept democracy. If they do not, they will not. Studies by Dorf (2016), Smith (2018), Alberta (2019), Greenberg (2020), and Acemoglu (2020) argued and concluded that American democracy unraveled under President Trump. This assertion is also consistent with and corroborated by Levitsky and Ziblatt's (2018) recent assertion that "Institutions alone are not enough to rein in elected autocrats" and that the Constitution of the United States is "only a piece of paper," which "is not self-enforcing." In well-functioning democracies, such as the United States, the rule of law provides the necessary constitutional guardrails for the three co-equal branches of government.

Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) view the Constitution or the rule of law as not self-enforcing. Simply put, presidential leaderships in collusion with leaders of other co-equal branches matter because they govern these institutions, and they can invoke law and order politics to manipulate both the Constitution and the rule of law for their self-interests at the demise of representative democracy. Given the governance structure in the United State, any POTUS endowed with democratic ideals would be guided by the rule of law in building and strengthening the institutions rather than invoke law and order to undermine the rule of law in which the goal is to subvert the institutional pillars of American democracy. In some countries where ambitious would-be autocrats ascend to power, their objective is to cause political chaos and confusion.

According to Smith (2018), would-be autocrats tend to invoke law and order because they are driven by social dominance orientation or authoritarianism. In the process, would-be autocrats use law and order politics to undermine the rule of law, and ultimately subvert the institutional constraints because their aim is to achieve autocratic power or become president-for-life. These reasons are consonant with Levitsky and Ziblatt's (2018) argument that when established parties opportunistically invite "extremists outsiders," such as the 45th POTUS, into their ranks, they imperil democracy in that once a would-be autocrat makes it to power, democracy faces a survival test as autocratic presidential leaders will subvert democratic institutions that would constrain them. In addition, they pointed out that "Without robust norms, constitutional checks and balances do not serve as the bulwarks of democracy we imagine it to be. Instead, institutions become political weapons, wielded forcefully by those who control them against those who do not. This is how elected autocrats subvert democracy – packing and 'weaponizing' the courts and other neutral agencies, buying off the media and private sector (or bullying them into silence), and rewriting the rules of politics to permanently disadvantage their rivals."

3. The Challenges and Flaws Embedded in Representative Democracy

Worldwide, political scientists and legal experts now agree that democracy is fragile, regardless of whether it is in the advanced countries or less developed countries. The extent of the fragility of democracy depends on its foundation and the legal guardrails installed to correct its imperfect foundation. Representative democracy in the United States is wrought with many challenges and flaws, which research scholars have discussed hesitantly, but we need to reopen the debate in this era of global democracy destruction contagion in which some established western democracies are transitioning to ochlocratic autocracy around the world.

It is now obvious that there are many challenges to representative democracy in the United States, and that one of the greatest challenges is the "Electoral College" process, which Article II of the Constitution and the 12th Amendment referred to as the "Number of Electors." In the Constitution, the Number of Electors system was designed as a compromise between the elections of the President by a vote in Congress versus election of the President by a popular vote of all qualified citizens of the United States. According to Article II of the Constitution,

> "Each State shall appoint, in a Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector."

According to the United States National Archives and Record Administration (USNARA), there have been more than 700 proposals, more than on any other legislative subject, introduced in Congress to reform or eliminate the Electoral College system over the past two centuries. These many proposals are recognitions of the challenges and flaws inherent in the Electoral College system. The major challenge is that such amendment to the Constitution must be proposed by two-thirds majority in both Houses of Congress and then ratified by three-fourths of the States. The flaws embedded in the Electoral College system manifested in 1824, 1876, 1888, 2000, and 2016 when it produced five Republican Presidents who did not win the popular votes nationwide, and yet, these presidential candidates won the presidency through the Electoral College system. Over the years, this system has led to the division of the United States into blue and red states because the overarching strategy of each presidential candidate is to attain the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency. This explains why presidential candidates are strategic in reaching out to voters in certain states and not in every state because winning the popular votes by millions, which occurred in 2016, does not guarantee the presidency over the Electoral College votes of 270.

The American Bar Association also recognized the flaws and thus criticized the Electoral College system as "archaic" and "ambiguous." Similarly, legal experts as well as the voting public favored abolishing the Electoral College system even back in the 1980s before it produced two more Republican Presidents who did not win the popular votes in the first two decades of the 21st century: one in 2000 and another one in 2016. The awareness of this particular flaw in representative democracy in the United States raises some conjectural questions. Could the flaws embedded in the Electoral system in representative democracy have stayed long in the Constitution if the five Presidents produced through the system had been Democrats instead of Republicans? What is the essence of majority rule in democracy if the popular majority votes had been supplanted five times by the Electoral College system since 1824? Would there had been domestic political terrorists insurrection on January 6, 2021 if presidents are simply elected by majority votes and thus no need for certification of Electoral College votes? What happened to the peaceful transfer of power, a well-recognized political norm in the United States, when the 45th POTUS lost the popular majority votes by over 7 million votes and lost the Electoral College by 74 votes, and yet refused to concede to the peaceful transfer of power to the 46th POTUS?

Another challenge to representative democracy is embedded in the legislative processes in both Houses of Congress. The *filibuster* in the Senate and the *disappearing quorum* in the House of Representative have significantly stymied legislations in Congress. The filibuster was the major legislative tool used in the 1950s by Senators from the Southern States to block the passage of legislations aimed at granting voting rights to minorities. In the 21st century, the filibuster has created extreme *political division* among Democrats and Republicans in Congress and the intense *racial hatred* between members of both political parties and this has culminated in Republicans threatening Democrats in Congress and across the country.

Next, the partisan interpretations of the rule of law by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) continued to pose big challenges to representative democracy. Many legal scholars and political pundits have documented some of the worst SCOTUS' decisions since its establishment on September 24, 1789.[1] According to Rosenthal (2015) and Sullivan, Esq (2015), the first among the worst in the 19th century was the *Dred Scott v. Sanford* in 1857 in which the SCOTUS ruled that African Americans, whether free men or slaves, could not be considered as American citizens because they are considered to be "parable of horribles" that would appear if Dred Scott were recognized as an American citizen. The SCOTUS' failure to protect civil rights is not new. Rosenthal (2015) and Sullivan, Esq (2015) also pointed out that in 1883, the SCOTUS struck down the Civil Rights Act of 1875 on the ground that the 13th and 14th Amendments do not allow Congress to prevent non-governmental racial discrimination. Furthermore, SCOTUS's ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 upheld state segregation laws in what was then known as "separate but equal."

There were many SCOTUS' ruling in the 20th century that were considered in the worst category when viewed from human and civil rights perspectives. In the *Hammer v. Dagenhart* of 1918, the SCOTUS ruled that Congress could not ban child labor in interstate commerce, which meant only states could decide whether children were kept out of mines and factories. In the case of *Korematsu v. United States* in 1944, SCOTUS upheld the internment of Japanese Americans, premised on the need to protect the United States against internal espionage, and this further confirmed and bolstered racial discrimination. The *Bowers v. Hardwick* case in 1986 was another discriminatory case in which the SCOTUS upheld a discriminatory Georgia sodomy statute that criminalized sexually active gay and lesbian relationships.

Even in the 21st century, SCOTUS' challenge to representative democracy still remains indisputable if viewed objectively. According to many legal scholars, history would record the ruling of the SCOTUS to halt the 2000 Florida recount in the presidential election as the partisan judicial incursion into the democratic process of presidential election. Prior to this ruling, some legal experts still subscribed to the myth that the SCOTUS is an independent and impartial arbiter of the law. The SCOTUS based its intervention and ruling on the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause in the manual recounts that the Florida Court ordered in *Bush v. Gore*. The stopping of the recount in favor of the 43rd POTUS did immeasurable damage to the democratic process from different dimensions. The 2020 presidential election recount in Arizona in May-June 2021 while the 46th POTUS is already in the White House shows the inherent flaws and hypocrisy in the SCOTUS' ruling in 2000. This raises some conjectural questions: Why allow the recount in Arizona, which other states may copy under the same 14th Amendment's equal protection clause? If the current occupant in the White House were to be a Republican, would the SCOTUS have invoked the same clause if Democrats engaged in fraudulent and dubious recounts?

Another challenge to representative democracy in the United States is the influence of big corporations and powerful interest groups on politics. Over the past 40 years, the SCOTUS has radically expanded the constitutional rights for big corporations, and they were further emboldened by the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling. In a 5-4 ruling, the SCOTUS granted corporations First Amendment rights, which meant that corporate political spending was considered as protected speech. Indisputably, big corporations and powerful interest groups have unbridled control over Congress; therefore, this was an impactful decision because it has unleashed a wave of consequences on representative democracy in the United States. Most notably, this has caused significant erosion in public's trust with respect to the integrity of representative democracy in the United States, and the deluge of big money has drowned members of Congress from both political parties at the expense of the voters. Simply put, corporations matter and not the voters.

The SCOTUS also made another significant decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* on June 25, 2013 when it gutted out Section 4(b) of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Section 4(b) of the Civil Rights Act required certain states and localities with a history of discrimination against minority voters to get preclearance on changes from the federal government before those changes go into effect. Section 4(b) was considered to be the bedrock of the Voting Rights because it was designed to block discriminatory voting policies before they harmed minority voters. In a 5-4 ruling, the SCOTUS ruled that Section 4(b) was unconstitutional because "the coverage formula was based on data over 40 years old, making it no longer responsive to current needs and therefore an impermissible burden on the constitutional principles of federalism and equal sovereignty of the states" [Ang (2019)].

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[1] Rosenthal (2015) and Sullivan, Esq (2015) provided more detailed discussions on SCOTUS's rulings that many legal scholars considered to have undermined the rule of law and shredded the Constitution of the United States.

The SCOTUS's ruling was also based on their opinion that Section 4(b) was a "racial entitlement," that "things have changed dramatically," that the Voting Rights Act has increased registration rates and voter turnout in covered jurisdictions to parity level thus blatantly discriminatory evasions of federal decrees are rare, and that "minority candidates hold office at unprecedented levels." In another voting rights case, *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, the SCOTUS, in a 6-3 decision on July 1, 2021, ruled that Arizona's stricter voting rules do not violate the Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and do not discriminate against minority voters. This overturned an earlier ruling from the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco that ruled the Arizona voting law disproportionately restricts voting access to African Americans, Latino, and Native American voters.

According to the studies by White (2016), Rhodes (2017), Newkirk II (2018), Hakim and Wines (2018), Ang (2019), Lockhart (2019), Levine and Rao (2020), Cantori and Pons (2020), and Feder and Miller (2020), the SCOTUS's ruling since 2013 has emboldened many Southern states and other states to implement stricter voting rules aimed at preventing minority voters and that this may have upended representative democracy in the United States.

Finally, what poses the greatest challenge to representative democracy in the United States and other democracies around the world is the utilization of conspiracy theories and disinformation in this digital technology or internet era where accurate news, partially accurate news or total falsehoods can spread worldwide within minutes of simultaneous postings on different social media platforms such as Tweeter and Facebook. Analogous to the 4Ps in the concept of marketing mix, one can also show that there are four key factors that are involved in the spreading of conspiracy theories and disinformation [Gagaridis (2020)]. The first component consists of the *producers* (sellers) of conspiracy theories and disinformation. These producers are generally driven by their political self-interest when the objective is to subvert or destabilize democracies in order to achieve political power. The second is the *product* (false narratives) intended to influence and convince certain segment of the public. The third is the *platforms* (place) through which conspiracy theories and disinformation can spread to the intended audience. The fourth is the *public* (consumers) with almost half of the public being the target audience/consumers because they willfully consume conspiracy theories and disinformation without verifications based on political ideologies. Given the fundamental rights of freedom of expression in democratic societies, these key four Ps (*producers*, *product*, *platforms*, and *public*) in conspiracy theories and disinformation are difficult to control, especially if one considers the provision of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. In other words, there are considerable legal qualms, thus, democracies are deeply vulnerable to destruction.

4.   Theoretical Framework

This section concurs with Diskin *et al*. (2005) that "no single variable on its own is capable of predicting democratic collapse…but that the key to the demise of a democratic system is a combination of variables." Given that democracies rest on three intertwined economic, political, and social institutions, this section provides a different dimension with which to view the combined interactions between different variables from these institutions that can lead to the destruction of democracies. To put the destruction of democracy in the proper perspective, we express the combined interactions between the determinants in composite functional forms as:

$$DEM = f\,(CRL.IJE.SC,\ PL,\ TPS.DTN,\ EPS,\ VP) \qquad (1),$$
$$EPS(PL,\ PL.CO,\ PL.CTDIS.SMP,\ PL.FI), \qquad (2),$$
and
$$VP(SIP.NLD,\ PL.IPR,\ PL.CTDIS,\ PL.GPS) \qquad (3).$$

For equation (1), *DEM* captures democracy, *CRL.IJE.SC* is the Constitutional rule of law with impartial judicial interpretation and enforcement (*IJE*) by the Supreme Court (*SC*) without favoring the rich and powerful individuals, *PL* represents political leaders such as the POTUS and members of Congress, *TPS.DTN* represents the conjunction of the two political parties assumed to be embedded with the traditional democratic tenets and norms (*DTN*), *EPS* is the combination of all the economic, political, and social institutions in the United States, and *VP* represents the voting public. It is indisputable that the impartial judicial enforcement is paramount to the stability of representative democracy in the United States. As we pointed out earlier, the SCOTUS's gutted the Voting Rights Act in 2013 and in 2021, and this will put representative democracy on precipice of destruction. It is also important to note that the adherence (or non-adherence) to democratic tenets and norms are essential to the stability (or destruction/death) of democracy; and that economic, political, and social institutions in all democracies are governed by the constitutional rule of law when enforced by a strong impartial judicial system.

For example, the three co-equal branches (executive, judicial, and legislative) of government are parts and parcel of the political institutions. These three institutions interact to build a strong and stable democracy or facilitate the destruction/death of democracy.

For equation (2), *CO* represents Congressional oversights, *CTDIS* stands for the combination of conspiracy theories and disinformation, *SMP* captures social media platforms, *FI* represents foreign involvements; therefore, *PL.CO*, *PL.CTDIS.SMP*, and *PL.FI* capture the complex interactions between political leaders, such as the 45th POTUS, who are subject to Congressional oversights, use conspiracy theories and disinformation disseminated through various social media platforms, and invite and welcome foreign involvements in presidential elections. For equation (3), *SIP.NLD* represents societal injustices protests that intensified during the nationwide lockdown (*NLD*), *IPR* captures the incitements of violence at political rallies, *GPS* stands for the global COVID-19 pandemic shock; therefore, *PL.IPR*, *PL.CTDIS*, and *PL.GPS* and represent the conjunction of political leaders who engaged in the incitements of chaos at political rallies, peddled reckless conspiracy theories and disinformation to almost half of the voting public (their target consumers of *CTDIS*), and handled the global pandemic shock.

The focus is on the destruction and the rescue-restoration of representative democracy with the intent of answering the pertinent research question regarding the destroyers and the rescuers of representative democracy in the United States. To put the answer to the main question succinctly, we substitute equations (2) and (3) into equation (1) and rewrite it in conjunctional nonlinear form

as:

$$DEM = (CRL.IJE.SC)^{1-\theta} + (TPS.DTN)^{\alpha-\beta} + (EPS.PL)^{\sigma} + (EPS.PL.CO)^{-\eta}$$
$$+ (EPS.PL.CTDIS.SMP)^{-\Omega} + (EPS.PL.FI)^{-\lambda} + (VP.SIP)^{\tau-\delta}$$
$$+ (VP.PL.IPR)^{\psi-\phi} + (VP.PL.CTDIS)^{\gamma-\varphi} + (VP.PL.GPS)^{\pi-\Phi} \qquad (4).$$

Alternatively, we can rewrite equation (4) in linear form as:

$$DEM = 1-\theta(CRL.IJE.SC) + \alpha-\beta\,(TPS.DTN) - \sigma(EPS.PL) - \eta(EPS.PL.CO)$$
$$- \Omega(EPS.PL.CTDIS.SMP) - \lambda(EPS.PL.FI) + \tau-\delta\,(VP.SIP)$$
$$+ \psi-\phi(VP.PL.IPR) + \gamma-\varphi(VP.PL.CTDIS) + \pi-\Phi(VP.PL.GPS) \qquad (5).$$

Equations (4) and (5) show the degree to which democracy can be destroyed or stabilized based on the composite explanatory variables on the right-hand side of both equations. To comprehend the magnitude of the destruction of democracy, we partially differentiate *DEM* with respect to the composite explanatory variables on the right-hand side of equation (5) to yield:

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial SC} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial CRL} \cdot \frac{\partial CRL}{\partial IJE} \cdot \frac{\partial IJE}{\partial SC} = 1 - \theta \qquad (6),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial DTN} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial TPS} \cdot \frac{\partial TPS}{\partial DTN} = \alpha - \beta \qquad (7),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial PL} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial EPS} \cdot \frac{\partial EPS}{\partial PL} = -\sigma \qquad (8),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial CO} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial EPS} \cdot \frac{\partial EPS}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial CO} = -\eta \qquad (9),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial SMP} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial EPS} \cdot \frac{\partial EPS}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial CTDIS} \cdot \frac{\partial CTDIS}{\partial SMP} = -\Omega \qquad (10),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial FI} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial EPS} \cdot \frac{\partial EPS}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial FI} = -\lambda \qquad (11),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial SIP} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial VP} \cdot \frac{\partial VP}{\partial SIP} = \tau - \delta \qquad (12),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial IPR} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial VP} \cdot \frac{\partial VP}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial IPR} = \psi - \phi \qquad (13),$$

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial CTDIS} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial VP} \cdot \frac{\partial VP}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial CTDIS} = \gamma - \varphi \qquad (14),$$

and

$$\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial GPS} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial VP} \cdot \frac{\partial VP}{\partial PL} \cdot \frac{\partial PL}{\partial GPS} = \pi - \Phi \qquad (15).$$

For equation (6), we interpret $1-\theta$ as the coefficient showing the impact of the SCOTUS' partial and partisan interpretation of the constitutional rule of law on representative democracy in the United States. Traditionally, the rule of law with impartial judicial enforcement is sacrosanct, that is, $\frac{\partial DEM}{\partial SC} = \frac{\partial DEM}{\partial CRL} \cdot \frac{\partial CRL}{\partial IJE} \cdot \frac{\partial IJE}{\partial SC} = 1$; therefore, $-\theta$ is the degree to which the SCOTUS' worst rulings for almost two centuries undermined the rule of law, especially when interpreted to favor the Republican Party, big corporations, and special interest groups or lobbyists, particularly in 2000, 2010, 2013 and 2021 that we discussed earlier.

And for four years, the Department of Justice purposely interpreted the rule of law to exonerate the 45th POTUS and his allies. In essence, these partial partisan interpretations of the rule of law put representative democracy on the pathway to destruction. For equation (7), $\alpha - \beta$ is the coefficient measuring the effect of the two political parties in the United and their adherence or non-adherence to democratic tenets and norms. In an extremely divided America, α is the coefficient representing the Democratic Party that still believes and adheres to democratic tenets and norms, and $-\beta$ is the coefficient representing the Republican Party's view or non-adherence to democratic tenets and norms. For representative democracy to remain stable, $\alpha - \beta > 0$, and when the Republican Party deviates from all democratic tenets and norms so that they can maintain complete control of power over the three co-equal branches of government, one should expect $\alpha - \beta < 0$; therefore, the destruction of representative democracy is imminent.

For equations (8)-(11), $-\sigma$, $-\eta$, $-\Omega$, and $-\lambda$ are the coefficients measuring the destruction to representative democracy when the 45th POTUS subverted the dynamic economic, political, and social institutions of representative democracy ($-\sigma$), refused to comply with Congressional oversights while in office ($-\eta$), used conspiracy theories and disinformation through various social media platforms to disseminate false narratives about his political opponents ($-\Omega$), and openly invited and solicited unprecedented foreign involvements in America's presidential elections ($-\lambda$).

In summary, the coefficient $1 - \theta$ shows the extent to which the rule of law was undermined for the past two decades since the SCOTUS dragged itself into partisan politics; therefore, it can no longer be viewed as an independent and impartial arbiter of the law, especially since it stopped the Florida recount in December 2000, opened the deluge of corporate money into politics in 2010, and gutted Section 4(b) of the Civil Rights Act in 2013 and in 2021. The coefficient $\alpha - \beta$ shows how the Republican Party deviated from the democratic norms by disenfranchising minority voters in order to maintain complete control of power at the demise of representative democracy. More importantly, these four coefficients ($-\sigma$, $-\eta$, $-\Omega$, and $-\lambda$) show that the 45th POTUS with autocratic impulses almost destroyed representative democracy in the United States. Above all, we consider $1 - \theta$, $\alpha - \beta$, $-\sigma$, $-\eta$, $-\Omega$, and $-\lambda$ to be the *democracy destruction coefficients*; and that the destroyers of representative democracy associated to these coefficients are the SCOTUS (*SC*), weak and enabling Congressional oversights (*CO*) by the Republican Party, the 45th POTUS, conspiracy theories and disinformation (*CTDIS*), social media platforms (*SMP*), and foreign involvement (*FI*).

With respect to equations (12)-(15), the coefficients ($\tau - \delta$, $\psi - \phi$, $\gamma - \varphi$, and $\pi - \Phi$) show that voters are divided about the tenets of democracy just as the two political parties are divided in a divided America. For equation (12), the $\tau - \delta$ coefficient shows that democracy is strengthened (τ) when the rational voters engaged in peaceful protests to highlight and call for solutions to the economic and socio-political inequalities embedded in the system, and that democracy is fragile ($-\delta$) when many voters remain complicitly silent despite the glaring inequalities. In addition, the $\psi - \phi$ coefficient in equation (13) also depicts the division of the voting public into two groups. There were those who participated in political rallies where the main political message was about building and strengthening American democracy (ψ). In contrast, there were those who attended political rallies where they were primed to become domestic terrorists insurrectionists ready to subvert democracy ($-\phi$) based on the false premise of "Make America Great Again." Another important coefficient is $\gamma - \varphi$ in equation (14), which shows that the voting public consists of those nonbelievers in conspiracy theories and disinformation who defended democracy (γ) at the ballot boxes, and there were the believers in and consumers of *CTDIS* who were primed by the 45th POTUS to destroy democracy ($-\varphi$) at all costs if possible.

Finally, the $\pi - \Phi$ coefficient in equation (15) shows that some voters saw how the 45th POTUS mishandled the global COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the highest fatalities in the world, and this propelled many of these voters to the ballot boxes to repudiate the 45th POTUS in order to defend the sanctity of democracy (π). In contrast, almost half of the voters condoned and idolized how the 45th POTUS mishandled the global COVID-19 pandemic ($-\Phi$) because they bought into the endless false narratives that the pandemic was designed to blame his presidency. Overall, the τ, ψ, γ, and π coefficients show how the overwhelming majority of the rational voters came to rescue representative democracy from the precipice of destruction, despite the stricter voting laws in many states where the Republican Party controls the legislative bodies. Essentially, the rational voting public prevented representative democracy from dying at the ballot box. One can easily deduce that a variety of economic and socio-political issues propelled unprecedented voters' turnout in the 2020 presidential election.
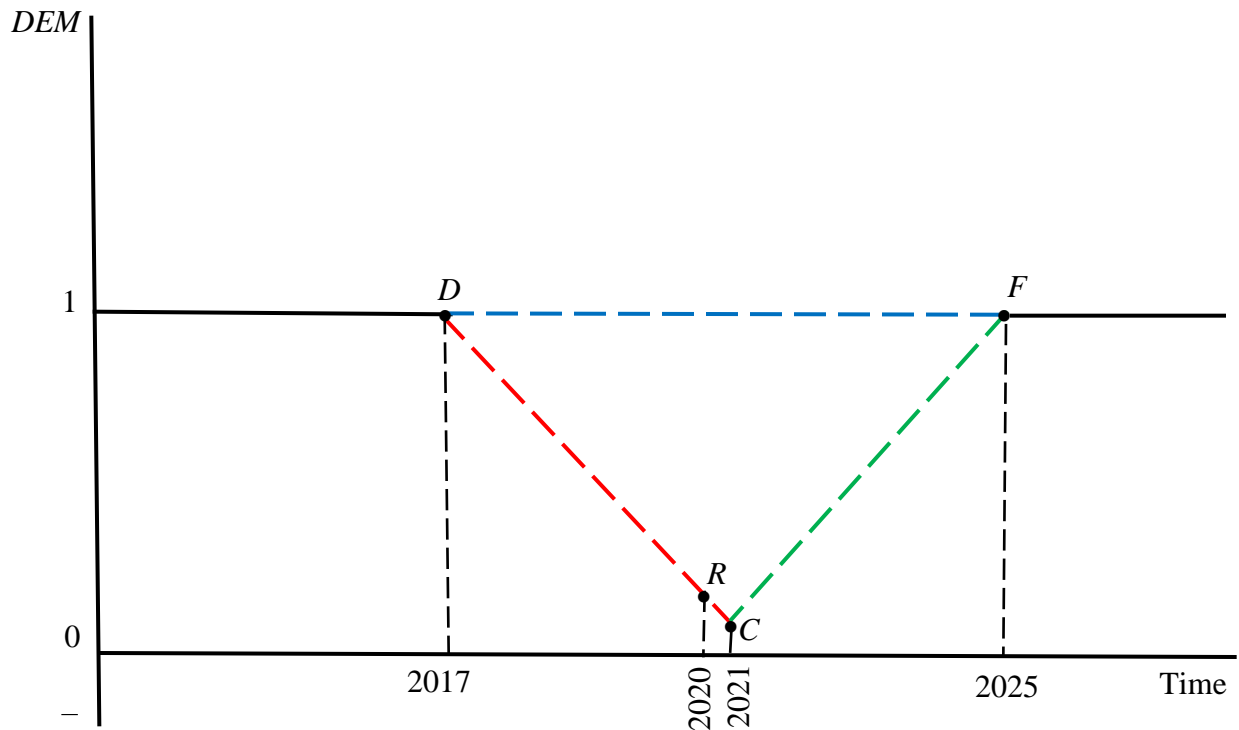
It is impossible to provide numerical data on the extent to which economic-political-social inequalities prompted protests in cities nationwide, which propelled many voters to the ballot box. Given the global health care crisis of 2020 and the damage to the economy even though the economy was robust in the early part of the first quarter, it was obvious that many voters could no longer condone political leaders such as the 45th POTUS who incited violent domestic insurrections at various political rallies, used conspiracy theories and disinformation to sow extreme political division and racial hatred, and who failed to control the preventable massive spreads and fatalities due to the global pandemic.

The main argument is that the rational voters rescued-restored representative democracy; therefore, one can interpret these coefficients to be $\tau - \delta > 0$, $\psi - \phi > 0$, $\gamma - \varphi > 0$, and $\pi - \Phi > 0$, which actually reflect and/or capture the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. Based on the voting data, we can surmise that $81{,}283{,}098 > 74{,}222{,}958$ voted to repudiate the 45th POTUS's handling of the nationwide societal protests against injustices from police brutality, his incitements of political violence and domestic terrorists insurrection at political rallies, his solicitations of foreign involvements, his endless use of conspiracy theories and disinformation, and his terrible mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic that claimed the lives of many Americans.

The main assertion is that if the COVID-19 pandemic had not caused the national and international lockdowns, which forced American voters to see the inhumane police brutality, the national and international protests against societal injustices would not had occurred; and perhaps, the combined 65,012 voters from Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, and the Second Congressional District of Nebraska would had voted to re-elect the 45th POTUS and thus magnifying the $-\Omega$ coefficient of destruction of democracy. In other words, if one assumes the absence of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the outcome of the 2020 presidential election would had been different. These coefficients could had been $\tau - \delta < 0$, $\psi - \phi < 0$, $\gamma - \varphi < 0$, and $\pi - \Phi < 0$, which means 46th POTUS would not had been elected because the outcome would had favored ($74{,}222{,}958 < 81{,}283{,}098$) the 45th POTUS to serve a second term in the White House. This would had resulted in the transition of representative democracy to apartheid democracy in the United States. Overall, we consider $\tau - \delta$, $\psi - \phi$, $\gamma - \varphi$, and $\pi - \Phi$ to be the *democracy rescue-restoration coefficients*.

Figure 1 provides a virtual explanation of the destruction to representative democracy in the United States since 2017 that we laid out and explained by all the equations above. A stable representative democracy is depicted by *DEM* = 1. When the 45th POTUS undermined democracy by subverting the rule of law, emboldened the Republican Party to jettison the conventional

Figure 1: Destruction and Rescue-Restoration of Representative Democracy

democratic tenets and norms by making voting almost impossible for minorities, subverted the three vital categories of institutions (EPS), disregarded Congressional oversights, used baseless conspiracy theories and disinformation disseminated through social media platforms, and invited and solicited foreign involvements in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, the *Dem* fell between 0 and 1, which we consider to be the democracy destruction zone that the United States experienced between January 20, 2017 and January 20, 2021 under the 45th POTUS.

The collapse or death of representative democracy would occur whenever *Dem* enters into the negative zone. In essence, the red dotted line *DRC* shows the level of destruction to *Dem* when it entered the democracy destruction zone where $0 < Dem \leq 1$ between 2017 and 2021 and headed in the direction of the death zone where $0 \geq Dem < 0$. It could have reached the collapse or death zone had the 45th POTUS won a second term in the 2020 presidential election or had the January 6, 2021 Capitol Hill domestic terrorists insurrectionists succeeded in overturning the election certification. Point *R* shows that *Dem* was rescued at the ballot box in November 2020, and line *RC* shows the further damage while *Dem* was in the democracy destruction zone until January 20th, 2021. The green dotted line *CF* shows that *Dem* is currently undergoing interim restoration, which may last until the 2024 presidential election and beyond.

The dotted lines *DCF* show the V-shaped trajectory of representative democracy in the United States in this era of global democracy destruction contagion. The blue dotted line segment *DF* shows the *structural break years* in the stability of *Dem* that political pundits would never have predicted because the general assumption is that representative democracy in the United States is sacrosanct until the voters came to the realization of the political shock of the 2016 presidential election; and for four years, they witnessed the destruction of democracy. Given the intense racial hatred and extreme political division in the United States as manifested by the composition of the 117th Congress, it is difficult to predict whether *Dem* would regain full stability (*Dem* = 1) between now and 2024 and beyond or whether *Dem* would be back in the democracy destruction zone after the 2024 presidential election if the 46th POTUS were to be voted out of office. In other words, the red dotted democracy destruction line could start once again by January 20, 2025, with rapid decline, if any Republican who has copied and mastered the democracy destruction template embedded in their party wins the presidential election in 2024 and both Houses of Congress.

5. Conclusions and Political Implications

This **s**tudy provides a theoretical framework with which to examine the destruction and the interim rescue-restoration of representative democracy in the United States. This paper concurs with research scholars that the rule of law, strong institutions, democracy, and the constitution are not sacrosanct anywhere in the world because there are many power-hungry autocratic leaders who can subvert all democratic tenets and norms as well as the vital institutional pillars of representative democracy. In the past five years, the United States provided a good illustration of the fragility of the rule of law, institutional pillars of democracy, and the Constitution.

We assert that the Supreme Court's worst rulings since 1857 continued to contribute to undermining the rule of law and destroying democracy as manifested by its incursion into partisan politics in the 2000 presidential election recount in Florida and the interpretation of political donations as free speech protected under the First Amendment, which ultimately opened the floodgates to limitless personal and corporate donations into politics since 2010. Furthermore, the SCOTUS' gutting out of Section 4(b) of the Civil Rights Act in 2013 and then gutting most of what remains of the landmark Voting Rights Act by upholding Arizona voter restriction laws in a 6-3 ruling on July 1, 2021 may have ultimately upended democracy in the United States. Many states are now emboldened to pass stricter voting laws to disenfranchise minority voters who were instrumental in rescuing democracy at the ballot box in November 2020.

We also concur with research scholars who argued that the strong institutions, and the Constitution could not restrict the autocratic aspirations of the 45th POTUS during his four-year term in office. Given the complicity and obsequiousness of the Republican Party with the 45th POTUS, many in the party no longer believe in democratic tenets because they welcome foreign involvements in presidential elections. We strongly believe that if the 45th POTUS had won the 2020 presidential election, he would have eviscerated democracy and all the democratic norms. The contention is that the *global pandemic shock* propelled voters to the ballot box to repudiate the 45th POTUS for the gross mishandling the COVID-19 that resulted in spreads and preventable fatalities when compared with other advances countries. The COVID-19 compelled voters to rescue democracy when the rule of law, Congressional oversights, and the vital institutions failed.

Given the severity of the damage to representative democracy in the United States during the four-year term of the 45th POTUS, we conclude that American democracy survived the stress test, so far. For now, we consider the *democracy rescue-restoration coefficients* derived in the theoretical framework to be stronger than the *democracy destruction coefficients*. Based on the Capitol Hill domestic political terrorists insurrection of January 6, 2021, which was intended to turn representative democracy into ochlocracy, it is important to point out that democracy in the United States is currently under the political intensive care and also undergoing interim restoration under the 46th POTUS and the 117th Congress. Interpretatively, representative democracy went through four years of agonizing *structural destruction* in all its institutions, which may take four or more years of diligent *structural reconstruction* of the vital institutions to achieve the desired stability in democracy.

Furthermore, there are many aspiring presidential candidates who have adopted the democracy destruction playbook that the 45th POTUS implanted in the Republican Party, which other countries are also adopting as the template for governance. American democracy can still return to the democracy destruction zone in 2025 if voters reject the current 46th POTUS at the ballot box in 2024 and the Republic Party regains control of the White House, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. The Republican Party's voter suppression strategy nationwide is laying down the solid foundation to win the 2024 presidential election. It is obvious that the SCOTUS' decision in 2013 in which it gutted out Section 4(b) of the Civil Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder* has emboldened the Republican Party in this endeavor. The decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* in 2010 opened the floodgate of dark money into politics to nourish the power of the political party that no longer believes in democratic tenets and norm. Ultimately, the Republican Party will succeed with their voter suppression strategy and democracy in America may finally die at the ballot box and thereby usher in ochlocratic autocracy in 2025 and beyond.

Worldwide, other western democracies are copying the democracy destruction template, which the Republican Party has now fully embraced through voter suppression legislations nationwide.

As for the political implications, it is important for Americans to recognize that the January 6, 2021 Capitol Hill insurrection could be construed as one of the manifestations of the challenges and flaws embedded in representative democracy; therefore, the need to realize that history would repeat itself if they continue to ignore and fail to address the major challenges and flaws entrenched in representative democracy. Given that there have been more than 700 proposals, more than on any legislative proposal, introduced in Congress to reform the Electoral College system over the past two centuries, rational Americans need to tackle the issue of Electoral College system that produced five presidents (especially two in first two decades of the 21st century) that lost the direct popular votes. The 45th POTUS lost the direct popular votes by more than 7 million votes in the 2020 presidential election, yet, he was determined to explore the Electoral College votes through Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Wisconsin in order to nullify the results of the election in his favor. If this had been a simple popular majority democratic election, this would not have been an issue because the certification of the Electoral College votes would not have been necessary and thus impossible to contemplate the Capitol Hill terrorists insurrection intended to stop the election certification. Above all, Americans need to realize that digital technology and the easy access to various social media platforms have amplified the velocity of conspiracy theories and disinformation with infinite multiplier effects that are destructive to representative democracy. For instance, conspiracy theories and disinformation have succeeded in convincing nearly half of Americans not to believe in the health risks and the fatalities associated to COVID-19 pandemic, and the end result is that many of these believers in conspiracy theories and disinformation are also vaccine-hesitant. When political leaders continue to use unsubstantiated conspiracy theories and disinformation to convince almost half of the voting public not to trust scientists and medical experts about COVID-19 pandemic, and more importantly, not to trust the result of the 2020 presidential election, which is the renewal of representative democracy every four years, they put representative democracy in the United States on the precipice of destruction. In the end, the nationwide voter suppression laws will destroy democracy.

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