

# 1 PSAT Practice #3

## End of Power

Questions 10-18 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Moisés Naím, *The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What It Used to Be*. ©2013 by Moisés Naím.

The number of democracies in the world today is unprecedented. And remarkably, even the remaining autocratic countries are less authoritarian than  
Line before, with electoral systems gaining strength and  
5 people empowered by new forms of contestation that repressive rulers are poorly geared to suppress. Local crises and setbacks are real, but the global trend is strong: power continues to flow away from autocrats and become more fleeting and dispersed.

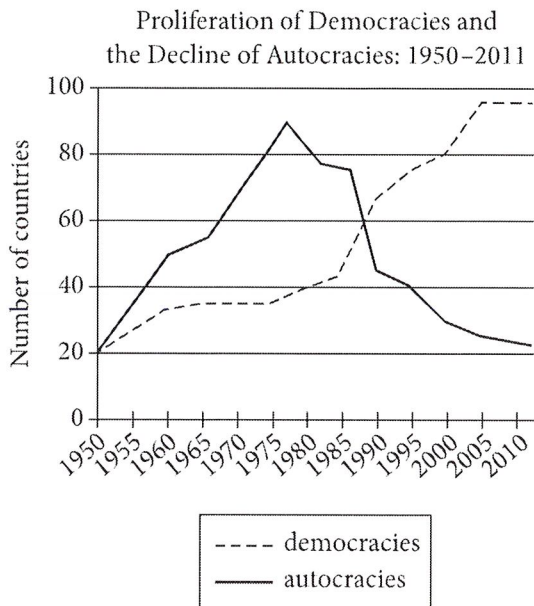
10 The data confirm this transformation: 1977 was the high-water mark of authoritarian rule, with 90 authoritarian countries. A respected source, Freedom House, assessed whether countries are electoral democracies, based on whether they hold  
15 elections that are regular, timely, open, and fair, even if certain other civic and political freedoms may be lacking. In 2011 it counted 117 of 193 surveyed countries as electoral democracies. Compare that with 1989, when only 69 of 167 countries made the  
20 grade. Put another way, the proportion of democracies in the world increased by just over half in only two decades.

What caused this global transformation?

Obviously local factors were at work, but scholar  
25 Samuel Huntington noted some big forces as well. Poor economic management by many authoritarian governments eroded their popular standing. A rising middle class demanded better public services, greater participation, and eventually more political freedom.  
30 Western governments and activists encouraged dissent and held out rewards for reform, such as membership in NATO or the EU or access to funds from international financial institutions. A newly activist Catholic Church under Pope John Paul II  
35 empowered opposition in Poland, El Salvador, and the Philippines. Above all, success beget success, a process accelerated by the new reach and speed of mass media. As news of democratic triumphs spread from country to country, greater access to media by  
40 increasingly literate populations encouraged emulation. In today's digital culture, the force of that factor has exploded.

There have been exceptions, of course—not just countries where democracy has yet to spread but  
45 others where it has experienced reversals. Larry Diamond, a leading scholar in this field, calls the stalling in recent years in countries like Russia, Venezuela, or Bangladesh a “democratic recession.” Yet against this is mounting evidence that public  
50 attitudes have shifted. In Latin America, for example, despite persistent poverty and inequality, and constant corruption scandals, opinion polls show greater confidence in civilian government than in the military.

55 Even autocracies are less autocratic today. According to one study of the world's democratic electoral systems, Brunei may be the only country where “electoral politics has failed to put down any meaningful roots at all.” With far fewer repressive  
60 regimes in the world, one might have expected the holdouts to be places where freedom and political competition are increasingly suppressed. But in fact the opposite is true. How? Elections are central to democracy but they are not the only indicator of  
65 political openness. Freedom of the press, civil liberties, checks and balances that limit the power of any single institution (including that of the head of state), and other measures convey a sense of a government's grip on society. And the data show that  
70 on average, even as the number of authoritarian regimes has gone down, the democracy scores of countries that remain politically closed have gone up. The sharpest improvement occurred in the early  
75 1990s, suggesting that the same forces that pushed so many countries into the democratic column at that time had profound liberalizing effects in the remaining nondemocratic countries as well.



Adapted from Monty G. Marshall, Keith Jagers, and Ted Robert Gurr. "Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2010," Polity IV Project.

10

Over the course of the passage, the main focus shifts from

- A) a discussion of the increase in democracies and political openness to an analysis of the causes of the increase.
- B) a claim that electoral democracies have become less politically open to a discussion of the effects of the decreased openness.
- C) an explanation of one set of data about a trend toward political openness to an explanation of a conflicting set of data.
- D) a positive portrayal of democracy to a strong denunciation of autocracy.

11

As used in line 20, “put” most nearly means

- A) imposed.
- B) placed.
- C) incited.
- D) stated.



12

As used in line 31, “held out” most nearly means

- A) resisted.
- B) awaited.
- C) avoided.
- D) offered.

13

Which choice best supports the claim that increased political openness is a widespread, global trend?

- A) Line 23 (“What . . . transformation”)
- B) Lines 26-27 (“Poor . . . standing”)
- C) Lines 41-42 (“In today’s . . . exploded”)
- D) Lines 56-59 (“According . . . all”)

14

The passage characterizes the state of political openness in autocratic regimes as unexpected in that

- A) instead of becoming more oppressive, autocracies are becoming more democratic.
- B) data indicate that the regimes are becoming less democratic, while opinion polls indicate that the public believes regimes are becoming more democratic.
- C) despite the recent, well-publicized trend toward democratization, there have been many local setbacks.
- D) in a reversal of the trend over the last decade, political openness in autocracies is on the decline.

15

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 18-22 (“Compare . . . decades”)
- B) Lines 46-50 (“Larry . . . shifted”)
- C) Lines 59-63 (“With far . . . true”)
- D) Lines 73-77 (“The sharpest . . . well”)

16

Which of the following is cited in the passage as an indicator of political openness?

- A) A strong head of state
- B) Freedom of the press
- C) Confidence in the military
- D) Presence of a digital culture

17

According to the graph, the number of autocracies in 1975 was less than the number of

- A) democracies in 1950.
- B) democracies in 1995.
- C) autocracies in 2011.
- D) democracies in 2011.

18

According to the graph, the number of democracies was roughly equal to the number of autocracies in which of the following ranges?

- A) 1975–1980
- B) 1985–1990
- C) 1995–2000
- D) 2005–2010