Divisive Mobilization and Democratic Collapse: Why Does Democratization Fail?

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Abstract. Democratic collapse refers to the regression of a democratic regime, meaning that the democratic system of a country is no longer stable. This phenomenon is usually caused by divisive mobilization or political conflicts, which are the consequences of the lack of certain social, economic or political conditions. Through qualitative research, this paper examines the previous political philosophy theories on democratic conditions and finds that previous theories often focus on citizens' sense of political participation. Later, this paper reviews the evolution of the definition of democracy in the history of political thought and concludes that democracy not only requires procedural elections and open and transparent policy-making, but also requires a certain degree of power check and balance to avoid the destruction of the democratic system by malicious rift mobilization. And this kind of check and balance requires the spirit of compromise of political participants. Finally, this paper conducts a comparative historical analysis of the democratization processes of Egypt and South Africa. This paper concludes that the stability of a country's democratic system depends on a culture that mixes obedience consciousness and political apathy, rather than just on citizens' sense of political participation.

Keywords: divisive mobilization, democracy, democratization, political culture, political conflict.

1. Introduction

On September 19, 2006, the Thai army launched a military coup while Prime Minister Thaksin was attending a United Nations conference in the United States, overthrowing Thailand's democratic regime. This is another time in Thai history that the democratic regime has been overthrown by a military coup. BBC reported that this was Thailand's first military coup in 15 years, but the country had had 17 military coups from 1932 to 1991 [1]. Such news is not rare. In fact, since modern times, democracy has always had a bumpy fate. Political scholar Samuel Huntington pointed out that so far humanity has experienced three waves of democratization and two waves of democratic reflux [2]. Whether it is a developed country like Germany or France involved in the first wave of transformation, or a developing country like Nigeria and Chile in the third wave of transformation, almost all countries have all experienced democratic collapse in history.

The democratic collapse refers to a country's regime regressing from a democratic regime to a non-democratic regime (such as an authoritarian regime or a totalitarian regime). This change means that the distribution of political power in a country has shifted from competition to monopoly, meaning that people no longer have the right to political participation and that the election of political leaders and the formulation of policies are no longer determined by elections and voting. It is often accompanied by major disasters such as civil war, massacre, and even world war, ultimately affecting the fates of millions or even hundreds of millions of people [3].

Since the 20th century, scholars from various countries have conducted countless studies on democratization and democratic collapse. Generally speaking, people believe that the fundamental reason for democratic collapse is that democratic systems cannot be stabilized in a certain country, and this instability is caused by the absence of certain social, economic or political conditions in that country. Research on the conditions of democracy tends to focus on political culture. This perspective holds that the people of a society must possess a certain culture suitable for democratic systems; otherwise, democracy will decline. This research tradition traces back to Alexis de Tocqueville. In "Democracy in America", Tocqueville points out that the stability of American democracy stems

from the township autonomy tradition of the Anglo-American colonists who went to the New World (especially in New England). Residents generally pursued and actively participated in township autonomy. This township autonomy cultivated people's sense of democratic participation and self-management ability. On this basis, states were formed successively, and finally the federation appeared [4]. In Tocqueville's view, an important component of democratic culture is a sense of participation. Only when the people of a country have a passion to participate in public affairs can democracy be stabilized. Otherwise, people would very likely transfer their freedom and rights to Leviathan, ultimately leading to an authoritarian regime.

Inheriting Tocqueville's thought, almost all contemporary studies of democratic culture emphasize the sense of political participation. Ronald Inglehart proposed the theory of "postmodern culture." This culture can be regarded as a "culture of self-expression", which emphasizes individual autonomy and choice. In Inglehart's view, industrial economy emphasizes assembly lines, discipline, collectivity, and uniformity, while the economy in the post-industrial era requires individual creativity, initiative, and desire for expression. When people are accustomed to shaping their own destinies and social destinies through individual choices, democracy is likely to emerge and be stabilized [5]. Similarly, in "Making Democracy Work", Putnam emphasizes the theory of "social capital". Social capital refers to the habit of citizens of a country to spontaneously form social organizations. It contains elements such as trust and norms. This helps to cultivate citizens' sense of participation, spirit of negotiation, and sense of social responsibility, thus providing lubricant for the operation of democracy [6].

In conclusion, past political theorists believe that the foundation of democratic realization lies in the people's sense of political participation. Because the essence of democracy lies in political participation and political competition, it cannot exist without people's passion for political participation. However, this paper believes that the sense of political participation is not sufficient to maintain the operation of democracy. In fact, people in many countries have the passion to participate, but these countries have suffered from democratic collapse. In Thailand, people often stage protests for the formulation of certain policies. People from almost all social strata will participate, but Thailand's democratic regime is constantly overthrown and rebuilt, and multiple regimes cannot be consolidated. During the Arab Spring, the Egyptian people elected the Morsi government with 51% of the votes through democratic elections, but the country's democratic regime was eventually destroyed by the military government [7]. Thus, the sense of participation is only a necessary condition for democratic stability, not a sufficient condition. In fact, people in many countries have this sense of participation, but democracy has without exception fallen into regression. For this kind of regression, this article will propose the concept of "divisive mobilization" to explain it. The "divisive mobilization" refers to the phenomenon where intense political conflicts break out because people have different interest or ideals due to differences in class, race, and religious beliefs. When each group has strong political electoral or competitive advantages, inevitably, one side will break the rules and finally lead to the return of an authoritarian regime. Obviously, in a country where the conditions for divisive mobilization are sufficient, the political participation consciousness of the people is inversely proportional to the stability of democracy.

2. The Potential for Democratic Regimes to Self-Destruction: Divisive Mobilization

In order to discuss the issue of democracy, the first step should be to clarify the definition of democracy. In the history of political thought, there have been at least three definitions of democracy. The definition is that people are masters of the country. In "Politics", Aristotle distinguishes three types of regimes: one-person rule, that is, monarchy; rule by a few, that is, aristocracy; and rule by the majority, that is, democracy. [8] Therefore, democracy can also be regarded as the rule by the majority. This kind of definition of democracy is often called a essential definition, that is, the essence of democracy is the rule of the people.

However, this substantive definition has many problems. First, what is “the people”? What kind of people who meet certain standards can be called “the people” and citizens with the right to participate in politics? In ancient Greece, although the democratic system was implemented, only adult male citizens (except slaves) of the city-state of Athens were regarded as citizens who could participate in politics. Second, how do the people rule? Do the people pass a certain bill by direct voting, or elect a representative to help exercise political power? Is this representative directly appointed by the people or appointed by the parliament? These are all questions that this definition cannot answer.

Therefore, the definition of democracy has evolved to version 2.0. The definition of version 2.0 is not substantive but formal. It does not focus on whether the essence is really the rule of the people, but whether it conforms to a series of forms. In "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy", Joseph Schumpeter classifies the forms of democracy into two categories, political competition and political participation [9]. The former refers to the fact that political elites or ordinary people need to carry out a series of competitions in order to obtain power, and the latter refers to the fact that people need to participate in political activities and play a series of roles in elections and policy making. Only a system that operates in accordance with this form is a true democracy. However, the definition of version 2.0 still has a series of defects, such as being unable to respond to the problem of the deterioration of democracy. As Giovanni Sartori described in "A New Theory of Democracy", since the end of World War II, almost no regime in the world has declared itself an enemy of democracy, but has called itself a democratic regime [10]. Most countries almost all have political competition and political participation, but these two forms are often absent and cannot be implemented, and cannot truly achieve equal and transparent elections and participation. For example, in many countries, those in power will suppress opposition parties, interfere with press freedom, forbid the dissemination of negative information about themselves, strictly control various speeches, and achieve their political goals by means of money bribery and buying votes. There practices suggest a decline of democracy.

Finally, democracy has evolved into version 3.0, that is, liberal democracy. This view of democracy believes that democracy must be combined with the rule of law to be a true democracy. The rule of law requires both ordinary people and those in power to abide by the law. The power of the domain groups should be strictly limited, so as to ensure the equality, openness and transparency of elections and policy making. The research on democracy in this article is mainly based on version 3.0. Although many countries have achieved democratization, in fact, they have not restricted power, thus falling into the democratic collapse, or democratic decline [11].

The question worthy of study is why some countries cannot fit the third definition of democracy. The fundamental reason is that democratic regimes have a potential for self-subversion. Democracy means political competition, which means that when a country conducts elections or formulates policies, it must respect the freedom of speech and electoral freedom of the people, but this kind of freedom may in turn become the culprit that subverts democracy. This is because freedom requires the diversification of speech and thought, and this kind of diversification is likely to lead to society being torn up, finally resulting in the collapse of a country due to political parties having different thoughts or interest demands. And this situation is the manifestation of divisive mobilization.

In "The Federalist Papers", James Madison, the fourth president of the United States, has actually conducted in-depth discussions on the issue of divisive mobilization:

A pure democratic regime... cannot stop the harm of factional struggles. In almost every case, the majority of people in the whole will feel a common emotion or interest. Contact and combination are the products of the form of government itself; nothing can stop the motive of sacrificing weak factions or odious individuals [12].

In Madison's view, democracy will not be able to effectively control factional struggles or party struggles, and it is easy to let this kind of factional struggle develop to an out-of-control extent. The Federalists believe that as long as there is a liberal regime, there will be party struggles. What they care about is not eliminating party struggles, but whether they can control the harm brought about by

party struggles, or not letting party struggles develop to an unmanageable situation. One of Madison's concerns is that a pure democratic system may intensify party struggle. He warns with concern:

Therefore, this democratic regime has become a way of turmoil and controversy, and is incompatible with personal safety or property rights, and often dies prematurely due to sudden death. Theoretical politicians who favor this kind of government mistakenly believe that if humans are completely equal in political rights, then they can be completely equal in property, opinions and emotions.

In Madison's view, a pure democratic regime is prone to fall into turmoil due to out-of-control struggles, and as a result, it is difficult to maintain itself. Therefore, in order to avoid the collapse of democracy brought about by divisive mobilization, society must have a kind of civic culture that can prevent it from collapsing.

The traditional democratic culture theory holds that the culture that helps to stabilize democracy should be political participation consciousness. This consciousness can prevent people from willingly transferring their rights to Leviathan, thus leading to an authoritarian regime. However, the defect of this theory is that it cannot solve the problem of divisive mobilization or political conflict caused by the freedom and pluralism in the democratic system. In a society with sufficient conditions for divisive mobilization, such as a country with a huge gap between the rich and the poor, diverse and fragmented races or religious beliefs, and sluggish economic development, the more passionate people are about political participation, the more likely they are to act extremely, and then the democratic system itself will be destroyed. For example, in Thailand, the Yellow Shirts and the Red Shirts have been in opposition due to economic interest conflicts. The two sides refuse to give in to each other in democratic elections. Once one side loses the election, they will launch a military coup and overthrow the rules of the democratic system.

Therefore, the civic culture of a country must combine political participation consciousness with other cultures that can restrain passion in order to avoid the collapse of democracy. From this perspective, democratic culture is essentially a mixed culture. The author believes that the culture that can restrain divisive mobilization should be a spirit of compromise. In other words, the people of a democratic society must have a certain sense of obedience and political apathy in order to avoid the tearing of society by vicious political conflicts. More specifically, participants in democratic politics must have a spirit of accepting defeat gracefully, be willing to compromise with competitors, and achieve rational communication and interaction. Only in this way can the democratic system be firmly established in a country.

3. Case Analysis: Democratic Transitions in Egypt and South Africa

The reasons for choosing Egypt and South Africa for comparative historical analysis are mainly twofold. First, Egypt and South Africa have extremely similar social conditions, that is, they both have conditions that give rise to divisive mobilization. Second, however, the democratization processes of Egypt and South Africa have taken completely different paths. The former returned to the high-pressure rule of the military government after a brief "Arab Spring," while the democratic regime of the latter has miraculously stabilized, although its governance effectiveness is not optimistic.The section headings are in boldface capital and lowercase letters. Second level headings are typed as part of the succeeding paragraph (like the subsection heading of this paragraph). All manuscripts must be in English, also the table and figure texts, otherwise we cannot publish your paper. Please keep a second copy of your manuscript in your office.

3.1. Egypt: From "Arab Spring" to "Arab Winter"

On December 18, 2010, a Tunisian peddler was mistreated by the police. Later, the peddler set himself on fire and the incident ended. This incident unexpectedly triggered large-scale political protests and ultimately led to the collapse of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia. Not only Tunisia, but this political movement also spread to many countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Therefore, this is regarded as a revolution triggered by the accidental death of a peddler. Egypt was also affected by this wave.

On January 25, 2011, large-scale anti-government demonstrations broke out in Egypt. The people demanded that President Mubarak, who had been in power for 30 years, step down and put forward demands for obtaining rights such as freedom and justice. Subsequently, the demonstrations spread rapidly, and protest waves emerged in many places across the country, putting huge pressure on the government. Finally, on February 11, Mubarak announced his resignation and transferred power to the military. Egypt entered a transitional period. Subsequently, Egypt held parliamentary elections, and Islamic forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood performed outstandingly in the elections. In June 2012, Egypt's first Muslim leader, Morsi, came to power.

Morsi's coming to power is undoubtedly a symbol of Egypt's democratization. He is the first democratically elected president in the Arab region and has important symbolic significance in the entire "Arab Spring." However, in less than a year, the Morsi government was overthrown. On July 3, 2013, Egyptian military leader Sisi ordered the arrest of Morsi. This move sparked a massive protest by Morsi's supporters, and then violent repression began. Within a day, more than 800 people were shot dead, and almost all activists of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested and imprisoned. In 2014, through a recognized fake election, Sisi was elected president with a high vote of 96%. Egypt's democratization ultimately collapsed.

On the surface, it seems that the military coup destroyed democratization. But in fact, the deep-seated reason for the collapse of Egypt's democratization lies in a kind of divisive mobilization. In fact, before the military intervened, street protests against the Morsi government had been going on for months. In June 2013, before Morsi stepped down, as many as 14 million people in Egypt had protested against the Morsi government. After the Morsi government was overthrown, a large number of Egyptian people spontaneously expressed their gratitude to the military. Therefore, the military's coup behavior was actually greatly supported by the people. It is not so much that the military overthrew the Morsi government as that the military and the people did this together.

This actually reflects the logic of divisive mobilization in Egypt's democratization. According to statistics, in the 2012 presidential election vote, Morsi's vote was 51.7%, while his opponent's vote was 48.7%. The numbers of the two are extremely close. This shows that it is the Egyptian people themselves who are torn apart, causing democracy to collapse.

Egypt's divisive mobilization is determined by social structure. Egypt is a Muslim country, and 90% of the population believes in Islam, but this population has always been divided into two major categories: political Islamism and political secularism. The former is more conservative and emphasizes the combination of politics and religion; while the latter is more secular and emphasizes the separation of politics and religion. In modern Egypt, there has always been a struggle between the political Islamist faction and the political secular faction. Before the Morsi government came to power, the political Islamist faction had been at a disadvantage. The Mubarak government is a typical political secular faction. However, the revolution in 2011 overthrew the military government, which created an opportunity for the political Islamist faction represented by the Morsi government. In the end, the Muslim Brotherhood behind Morsi successfully came to power through elections when other political organizations in Egypt had no time to organize forces.

Morsi came to power through fair and free elections and governed the country according to his own political ideas, but this undoubtedly violated the interest demands of the political secular faction. Within a year of the Morsi government being in power, due to concerns that Egypt would move towards a theocracy, the military demanded that Morsi push the army and dissolve the lower house, and later demanded that he withdraw from the executive meeting, and finally overthrew him through a coup.

To sum up, the collapse of democracy in Egypt is mainly due to the divisive mobilization between the political Islamist faction and the political secular faction. At the same time, the political secular faction lacks a sense of obedience and political apathy. They hope that their own thoughts can

dominate the operation of the country, but they do not respect elections and democracy, and do not accept defeat gracefully. They seize power through a series of party struggles. [13]

3.2. South Africa: The Tolerance of the Victor and the Patience of the Loser

Like Egypt, South Africa is also a country with sufficient conditions for divisive mobilization. First of all, racial conflict is a big problem. Before realizing democratic transformation, the contradiction between whites and blacks in South Africa was extremely acute, and the entire society was filled with pervasive violence. On the one hand, the white government implemented apartheid policies against blacks. On the other hand, blacks carried out various kidnappings and assassinations against the white regime in South Africa. White police and black people have also had many armed conflicts. Secondly, there are also astonishing economic divides in South Africa. Before realizing democratic transformation, South Africa had the highest Gini coefficient in the world, with a huge gap between the rich and the poor, and constant conflicts between the rich and the poor. However, South Africa's democratic regime has miraculously stabilized.

South Africa can overcome the curse of divisive mobilization because of a sense of obedience and political apathy, or a spirit of compromise. In South Africa's transformation, both the black people and the ANC as the victors, as well as the South African National Party as the loser, have practiced this democratic culture, that is, "the victor remains tolerant and the loser remains patient."

From the perspective of the tolerance of the victor, the victors of South Africa's transformation were Mandela, the ANC and the black people. After the general election, although the ANC won an absolute advantage, it did not move towards winner-takes-all. Its practices reflected tolerance in many aspects: First, power sharing. Through institutional designs such as federalism and administrative decentralization, a "power reserve" was delineated for the white minority. For example, in the Western Cape Province with a high concentration of whites and the KwaZulu-Natal Province where the Zulus live, different political parties gained an advantageous position after the election. In the new government, the South African National Party obtained the vice presidency and key cabinet positions, endowing it with the right to negotiate and even veto. Second, ensure property security. The ANC accepted the inclusion of property protection provisions in the constitution, eliminating the white people's fear of property redistribution. Third, emotional reconciliation. Mandela eliminated hostility and hatred through symbolic acts such as watching "white people's sports," visiting the widow of the architect of apartheid policy, and learning the language of white South Africans. The "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" even allowed evildoers to exchange confession for amnesty, achieving a balance in reconciliation.

Looking at the patience of the loser again. The loser of the transformation is De Klerk and the South African National Party he leads. After De Klerk came to power, he promoted the transformation. Although there were factors of being beset with difficulties at home and abroad, he successfully managed the transformation negotiation with Mandela's side. He organized a referendum within the white community to add weight to the negotiation and actively promoted various "power reserve" clauses to open up a safe zone for a smooth transition. After 1994, De Klerk led the National Party to participate in the government of national unity as vice president and assisted the ANC in governing, especially playing an important role in the economic field.

Finally, under the compromise and calm participation of both sides, South Africa's democracy has achieved stability. Although so far, the governance performance of South Africa's democratic system is not good, with high unemployment rate, large gap between the rich and the poor, low social security level, and very low per capita GDP, South Africa's democracy has achieved stability, and violent incidents are also gradually decreasing. For example, in Cape Town, South Africa, there were 30 large-scale protests or riots in the 1980s, but only 9 similar incidents occurred in the 10 years from 2000 to 2010.

The case of South Africa fully shows that the tolerance of the victor and the patience of the loser together constitute the key culture for stable democracy. This culture is not simply a sense of political participation, but contains a sense of obedience and political apathy, or a spirit of compromise and

tolerance. The tolerance of the victor avoids "majority tyranny" and prevents the expansion of social rifts; the patience of the loser avoids overturning the chessboard due to losing a game, creating conditions for a smooth transition of democratic transformation. Only when both sides maintain this culture can social tearing be effectively avoided and democracy be stabilized. [14]

4. Conclusion

The main point of this paper is that democratic culture is not only a culture about political participation consciousness, but a fusion of participation consciousness, obedience consciousness and spirit of compromise. In this paper, first of all, I analyzed the theories of democratic culture of political scholars from Tocqueville to Inglehart and Buchanan, and discovered the limitations of previous research, that is, regarding democratic culture only as a kind of participation consciousness, which cannot explain why democracy in countries with high enthusiasm for public participation cannot be stabilized. Secondly, I sorted out the previous political philosophy theories on democracy in three versions and concluded that the essence of democracy is political participation and political competition, and power should be strictly restricted to prevent democratic decline. The reason why the democratic transitions of many countries fail to reach the definition of liberal democracy lies in the problem of divisive mobilization, which means that any democratic system has a potential for self-subversion. Therefore, I found that only a democratic culture that simultaneously emphasizes obedience consciousness and spirit of compromise can overcome this inherent defect of democratic system. Finally, I conducted a comparative historical analysis of Egypt and South Africa, two countries with similar national conditions but different paths of democratization, further demonstrating and deepening my point.

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