

# Democracy

The electoral road to breakdown is dangerously deceptive. With a classic coup d'état ... the death of a democracy is immediate and evident to all. The presidential palace burns. The president is killed, imprisoned, or shipped off into exile. The constitution is suspended or scrapped. On the electoral road, none of these things happen. There are no tanks in the streets. Constitutions and other nominally democratic institutions remain in place. People still vote. Elected autocrats maintain a veneer of democracy while eviscerating its substance.

**Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt,**  
*How Democracies Die*