

Tanya Smith ([00:00:00](#)):

Welcome everybody. Nice to see a bit crowded here. Again. First I'd like to acknowledge that we're meeting on Ghana land and we respect the garner. People's ongoing connection with this land. We're here today to consider the challenge of building democracies in the 21st century. And to help us do this, we have four eminent authorities on different approaches to pursuing and ensuring democratic principles in various places in the world. We have Hillary Charlesworth, Joseph Cheng, Robin Jeffery, and Tim Lindsey. You have details about our speakers in your program booklets, but I remind you again, shortly of their particular areas of expertise as I introduced them one by one I'm Tanya Smith, I'm head of the cabinet office here in the South Australian government. And I'm very pleased to be facilitating today's session. What do we know about building democracies in the 21st century that we didn't know in the 1990s or the 1980s, the late 20th century?

Tanya Smith ([00:01:00](#)):

So the much vaunted triumph of capitalism and liberal democracies over the Soviet union in our own region, we saw the passing of concepts such as guided democracy and a growing preoccupation with the notion of failed states. People power get the collapse of autocratic regimes. And yet for reasons that Western governments are still trying to fathom the liberal democratic model was not necessarily the preferred alternative to those looking for liberation. We saw new approaches to power sharing emerge to resolve communal tensions, which offer new slant on the notion of representative democracy. And we saw arguably a further decline in the relative influence of legislatures compared with the powers of the executive branches of governments in the west related to that was the emergence of what some people call an elite popular divide and an interest in developments such as the internet to cut through or work around an alienating political system in order to achieve change.

Tanya Smith ([00:02:03](#)):

Have we got better now at knowing a good well-functioning democracy? When we see it, are we any better at understanding the ingredients of success? The United States failed attempt to trigger a blossoming of democracy in the middle east suggests not. And yet elsewhere, there is perhaps more hope how first speaker today is professor Hillary Charlesworth, who is among other things, the director of the center for international governance and justice at the Australian National University. She's done a lot of work in the era of building democracy in the wake of conflict and has particular expertise in the use of human rights law to underpin democratic institutions. Professor Charlesworth will speak for around 10 minutes. I will then introduce our other distinguished panelists in turn, who will also speak for around 10 minutes. We should then have a good half an hour or so at the end for questions afterwards, but for now, will you please join me in welcoming Hillary Charlesworth to the podium?

Speaker 2 ([00:03:08](#)):

[Inaudible]

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:03:08](#)):

Thanks, Tanya. I wanted to approach this topic from the perspective of an international lawyer, rather than as a country specialist, which you'll hear from the other panel members. I'm particularly interested in the way that there's been a recent renewal of interest in so-called democracy building as an international project, as something that the international community should be interested in. So it's worth recalling it's. It's something that we do think of as a feature of this new century, but it's worth recalling that there's actually a project with quite a long history. So for example, in 1919, the league of

nations, when it was first established set up a mandate system, and the mandate system was created for territories that were belonged to the vanquished paths after the first world war. And they were the vanquish powers Germany and so on were forced to hand over their colonial territories to this new international organization and article 22 of the league of covenants league of having the league of nations, covenant, sorry referred to the mandate system as for, and this is a quote from article 22, those people in territories, not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, that was the phrase used in 1919.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:04:32](#)):

And for those that the welfare of those people not yet able to stand on their own two feet was considered under the league of nations, covenant, a sacred trust of civilization. So those two ideas, the idea that there's people not yet able to stand on their own two feet, and there's a sacred trust of civilization in the international community. I want to argue still the features of democracy building today. The mandate system, as many of you will know, was then translated once the United nations was founded in 1945 into the so-called trust territory system, but it's still used those, those two notions as to the sort of countries that should be protected. Of course then in the early post post second world war years the, some of the democracy building was conducted outside international organizations. So the United States was heavily involved in building democracy in post-war Japan and Germany.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:05:30](#)):

And it wasn't really till the end of the cold war till the end of the 1980s that we see international organizations really playing a major role in democracy building 1989 is usually seen as the first flowering of the UN's involvement. And that was in Namibia in 1989 when that country, which of course had been a former German colonial power, then held by South Africa finally became independent. And during the 1990s, we've got the UN involved in places like Cambodia and Kosovo. Meanwhile, well, the UN sort of getting interested in democracy building, we can see some changes politically in particularly in the superpowers interests. So during the Clinton years some of the attempts by the Clinton administration to build democracy abroad were really very much derided by conservative forces and Condoleeza rice actually wrote a very well known article during the 1990s, very, very critical of the Clinton administration for being interested in building democracy.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:06:31](#)):

In other countries, she derided that as what was called social work. Whereas really the argument was that was social work, but what the United States should be interested in was much more sort of military power. But of course, that changed very dramatically after September 11. And what we see then was the Bush administration fairly quickly after September 11, moving to endorse the idea that one of the tasks of the superstar power was to build democracy. And this, the idea was that this was one answer to the threat of terrorism, was to build democracy in countries that didn't have it, and that this would alleviate if not totally eradicate the, the threat of terrorism. So the UN then at the same time has been going along its path. And I just want to briefly contrast two different ideas of democracy that have come onto the international stage one in the context of East Timor.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:07:29](#)):

And one in the context of Iraq obviously conducted by different organizations in his team, or the idea of democracy that was developed was developed very much by the United nations, working through the UN transitional transitional administration is, or right the rock, of course, it's the United States. So just

to look very briefly at what happened and in East Timor, that's been loudly praised in the literature and by the UN and by a number of countries as a wonderful model of democracy building. So the UN really in a lot of its publication says, well, we really did something terrific. In East Timor, we took a very war torn society and we developed democracy there, and it's now an independent country. The story, the real story, I think is a lot more complicated than that. And when we go back and look, what did the, and actually do from its presence in 99 till independence in 2002 how did it, how did conceive democracy there?

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:08:26](#)):

It's very striking that what the UN thought it was doing was really to bring Western political institutions and impose them in East Timor. So there was very little attention given to local forms of governance and how these might interact with Western forms of governance. So the idea of Western forms of governance was, well, if we can see three arms of government or judiciary and executive and the legislature, and if we can see free elections, then we're pretty that we've got a democracy, but as many people have pointed out and there's actually a lot of really interesting anthropological work on East Timor, really what the UN imposed in East Timor could be better described as, as a feudal democracy. So it really didn't, it came from above, it was imposed and it didn't mesh at all with existing structures there. So there was very little understanding of how traditional kinship religious and ceremonial power worked with an East Timor.

Tanya Smith ([00:09:29](#)):

And for example, one interesting thing that the UN tried to do in his team, always, they felt well, if we had, we just can't have one party elections, we need one party and we need an opposition without a lot of understanding that the idea of a peaceful political opposition is Timor with something that had almost no, no tradition at all. And didn't mesh at all with what was going on. The other striking thing about what the, you entered in his team, all was great paucity of contact with the local people. They seem to have identified very early on local elites that they were willing to work with. This of course, included people like good smell. And there was very little connection at the local level. They have a sort of really striking thing about what democracy in his team or with the way that the UN itself was managed in an extraordinarily hierarchical fashion.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:10:21](#)):

So the secretary general special representative in East Timor was the latest Sergio Vieira de Mello. The leading UN official, who of course was tragically killed in Iraq in 2003. But the way that the UN mission worked in East Timor was very much with the word of the Vieira de Mello just passed down. It was a very hierarchical system of governance. So it seemed very curious that you had the UN present in East Timor modeling and extraordinarily hierarchical system of governance, but telling these Timorese do, as we say, not, not as we do you must have a different form of democracy. So the form of governance introduced by anti it was completely at odds with the form of governance. It itself was modeling just in very briefly to touch on the idea of democracy that is animated. Primarily the United States as democracy builder in Iraq.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:11:14](#)):

I was very struck early on in, after the invasion of Iraq when there was looting when there was tremendous chaos I heard Donald Rumsfeld on the radio saying when somebody said, well, you're a bit alarmed by what's happening. You've gone to build democracy in Iraq, and yet we have complete chaos,

the looting of the Iraq museum, and so on he just said, oh, no we, Americans are very deeply familiar with this. This just reminds me of the early days of our founding fathers back in the 18th century. Yes, there was a lot of fighting before we got our own democracy. And as George packer has noted, he said, Rumsfeld looked upon anarchy in Iraq and saw the early stages of democracy was a complete misreading of what was going on, but what's very striking.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:12:02](#)):

Now, Donald Rumsfeld also, I should add, came up with a wonderful idea of the tsunami theory of democracy. He said, if we create a democracy in Iraq, this will inevitably spread just like a tsunami out in the middle east and bring democracy generally, when we look at what's actually going on today that seems such an extraordinary misreading of the situation, but really what, what does seem to be, what's the, what's the idea of democracy in Iraq, from what we can tell, and this there's very little sort of clear statements about this, the version of democracy that the United States has thought it was introducing in Iraq made elections the separation of powers and free market that defining elements of democracy there. And again, it was very striking that this version of democracy was imposed by the coalition provisional authority in a completely undemocratic way.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:12:57](#)):

So we have that dissonance between the version of democracy in the way that it's introduced. I just want to end then with I think four general observations, one can make from an international perspective about the whole democracy building project. First of all what's very clear in a whole range of situations, including this Australia's own attempt to build democracy in the Solomon Islands. In this typically there's a soaring rate of unemployment of local populations in the democracy building era. That's a very striking thing that happens when the international community gets involved in building democracy. Secondly, I think we can see that democracy building tends to advantage existing elites and can reinforce, for example, the marginalization of women in public life. That's a really striking feature of all the experiments. The modern experiments of democracy building is the marginalization of women. Third democracy building is typically viewed as a project of nurturing, internationally oriented elites who can administer locally, but we're also very sympathetic to integrating the country into the global economics groups, particularly the Britain institutions.

Hillary Charlesworth ([00:14:12](#)):

And finally, I think linkage of democracy, building to the war against terrorism has very much limited the horizons of democracy builders. And now there is much, much more emphasis given to increasing military and police forces then to ensuring public participation in government. So I think we've got to have a much broader debate on what democracy means. I think intimate international democracy building has been really focusing very much on events, such as elections and not so much focusing on relationships and processes. So the overall effect of our modern democracy building has to consolidate existing social orders and really to reduce the prospect of political and social change through redistribution of sources.

Speaker 2 ([00:15:09](#)):

[Inaudible]

Tanya Smith ([00:15:09](#)):

Thank you very much, professor Charlesworth I'd like now to introduce Joseph Cheng, who is professor of political science and coordinator of the contemporary China research project from the city university of Hong Kong. Joseph Cheng is editor of the journal of comparative Asian development, and he's published widely on political development in China and Hong Kong, Chinese foreign policy and local government in Southern China. Professor chin has been heavily involved in the pro democracy movement in Hong Kong. And in 2006, he was one of the inaugural recipients of the distinguished alumni awards from Flinders university here in Adelaide. So I'd like to welcome him back to Adelaide and invite him to come to the podium, offering his perspectives on the struggle for democracy in China.

Joseph Cheng ([00:16:07](#)):

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, once again, I would like to register my gratitude for my education at fenders and for a number of years of happy postgraduate student knives in Adelaide. I would like to follow the first speaker's footsteps who talk about the essence of democracy if I may. So label it after the so-called footway fourth wave of democratization, most countries in today's world do have established some kind of democratic systems in Asia, which I know a little bit better, even Mongolia has democratic systems dove. Hong Kong has yet to establish one. The important of course, importance of course, is civil society, civil society development. And this means that in this century, everybody has to work very hard. Even in countries with strong democratic traditions. You look at Japan from 1955 to 1993, that the liberal democratic party was in power. People were happy with this triumph by rate of bureaucracy, political party of DP, plus the business community, delivering an economic miracle to the people.

Joseph Cheng ([00:17:44](#)):

People didn't didn't

Joseph Cheng ([00:17:46](#)):

Challenge the government except the, also this party and the Japan come to this party and they will more or less engaged in opposition without any constructive dialogue with the establishment. India of course enjoyed democracy, right from the days of independence. But before 1977, when the change of government took place again, the ruling Congress party had a, from grabs a power, a high proportion of the people remained illiteration. They only recognize the cow as a symbol of the boat. They were under tremendous influence of Nan owners. That wasn't exactly democracy. Again, you turn to Singapore, you certainly has a democratic system in this constitution, but debate is discouraged. Opposition is not tolerated government ministers, confecting electoral districts, which voted for opposition candidates for denial of renovation funds for the public housing assets that is not democracy. The Bush administration now has a lot of grass over pushing for democracy in Palestine, facilitating hammers to come to power.

Joseph Cheng ([00:19:15](#)):

And so on. I guess we need to have a simple definition of democracy, according to one's ideas, according to one's own thinking, certainly I can offer some suggestions. We must expect that the rules are fair and the rules are binding on all parties concerned. They are accepted by all as legitimate. Then of course, the institutions must be strong and stronger than DDAs. The institutions should deliver seductive resolves so that people will not become cynical. Finally, there must be sufficient consensus within the community about the general objectives of the community in Taiwan. For example, you certainly have that Seabreeze problem when the controversy of independence and reunification has made politics so divisive, so that deliberations are no longer rational, meaningful.

Joseph Cheng ([00:20:30](#)):

The second point that I would like to make is that demo proceed demands participation, and is based on participation. And therefore he requires every one of us to think about our own responsibilities and duties instead of just blaming the politicians. And I think the most important thing is, do we get a sense of satisfaction out of political participation? I do believe that this is very important because as a political activist in Hong Kong, who worked pretty hard to have more than three decades without exceeding much without seeing anything, you, by me be a little bit tougher. You need a sense of participation. Democracy has this foundation in a certain idealism, a certain enthusiasm. So all of us need to retain the little bit of enthusiasm and idealism in order to make democracy work.

Joseph Cheng ([00:21:38](#)):

I, I have been observing say,

Joseph Cheng ([00:21:44](#)):

Hong Kong people, Singapore people, and even the east Asians in Australia, parents work very hard to give their children a good education. They make tremendous sacrifices to let the children having to have a good education, but they are seldom active in parents, teachers associations. And this is quite strange. I mean, they are concerned parents,

Joseph Cheng ([00:22:14](#)):

And yet they don't

Joseph Cheng ([00:22:16](#)):

Seem to accept them ocracy as a way of life. And they certainly do not do not derive satisfaction out of democratic participation. I am slightly optimistic in the future.

Joseph Cheng ([00:22:35](#)):

Yeah, the past decade we see hippies in the United States, former hippies of my generation of my age, returning to the churches. Of course they demand study more sophisticated sermons from the ministers. And I noticed that in places like Taiwan, well at UK to executives and so on, they also go to temples Buddhist temples that was temples in the weekends, not to ask about the fortunes or, or make offerings, but just to seek some quietness, some in the peace given the fact that family ties are weakening, careers are less secure. I think we all you're lonely and we all feel vulnerable given the deterioration in environment. I mean, defined in so many ways, a sense of companionship in fighting for democracy. It's probably one of the past rewards for participation. The third point I would like to take up is the means of communication because of internet, because of short messaging, et cetera, et cetera, into in April 2 0 5, there were

Joseph Cheng ([00:24:05](#)):

Quite a widespread

Joseph Cheng ([00:24:09](#)):

Anti-Japanese protests in China. You many Chinese cities. Yes.

Joseph Cheng ([00:24:14](#)):

There were two important features to notice. One is the mobilization of people without government sanctions, without use of any official medium. And the second feature was that a lot of young people

Joseph Cheng ([00:24:28](#)):

Top pop people, genuinely

Joseph Cheng ([00:24:31](#)):

Expected that the older gen generation has stronger feelings against Japanese, but obviously they were not in the generation of using mobile phones and, and various more than means of communication. So they will not mobilize. They, they, they, they, they were not in touch, so to speak. Whereas a lot of very young people who who know very, very little about Japan, top part, I'm sure as university teachers we find difficulties sometimes in communicating with our students who are supposed to be well educated. So communication is going to be a very, very serious challenge. Most of us may well engage in some kind of cost benefit analysis in calculating political participation Hong Kong people, for example, feel that the status quo isn't too bad while they certainly liked to, to have the Moxie they're unwilling to sacrifice for it. People in the United States have become fairies cynical so much so that even in presidential elections, the voter turnout rate is sometimes a little bit below 50% in city mayor elections. The voter turnout rate may well be 20% or less, which means if you can mobilize eight, 9% of the elect rate, you can be elected as mayor.

Joseph Cheng ([00:26:02](#)):

So that was fine. I kept emphasizing the sense of satisfaction from participation. I do believe that democracy is a universal value. I do believe it is punk of good life. It is in our pursuit for the ideal life for human dignity, for someone who do not enjoy democracy in a place where I live. I do want to tell you that Australians consider themselves very lucky. You may not be very happy your politicians, but you certainly have very strong political institutions. You have a strong foundation, and I believe that you are in a position to help at these in the Asia Pacific region. Thank you very much.

Speaker 2 ([00:27:12](#)):

[Inaudible]

Tanya Smith ([00:27:13](#)):

Thank you. We're now moving to South Asia. We have with us professor Jeffrey, who is currently director of the research school of Pacific and Asian studies at Australian national university. He was educated at the university of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and work there as a journalist before teaching school in Chandigarh in north India in the late sixties, he ultimately then completed a doctorate in Indian history at Sussex. He's written both about Punjab in the north of India and Kerala in the south, and has most recently worked on the Indian media. His current project is an account of India in the second half of the 20th century. Please welcome professor Robin Jeffrey

Speaker 2 ([00:28:03](#)):

[Inaudible].

Robin Jeffrey ([00:28:04](#)):

Thank you. Yeah. If you were on the web this morning and went into the Hindu newspaper, the great daily of mudras Chennai as the city is now known, you'd have found in the top stories, a headline. This is this morning. Sindu, it's wonderful that you can get the Hindu here at 4:30 AM, mudras time in Adelaide. It's about eight in the morning. So it's a wonderful thing. The web the headline is violence, Myers, MTC cooperative elections. And the story is that the housing co-op society of Chennai the that is the housing co-op society of the metropolitan transport corporation, the local bus line, local public transport network, which runs the housing co-op society. Their attempt to hold the elections for their board of governors ended in big dispute between two factions. The faction led by the C I T U the Confederation of Indian trade unions, the communist organization of trade unions, and the Federation of trade unions led by the ruling party in the state of tumble, not the DMK party.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:29:07](#)):

They ended up having a punch up over the elections. The police had to be called out. Traffic was stopped in the equivalent of north terrorists for half an hour on Saturday afternoon. And it would cause even more chaos in Chennai yesterday afternoon, that it would do in Adelaide. On a Saturday afternoon, traffic was held up while the police staged the mild Latty charge the report, doesn't say it was a mild Blatty charge. It may have been a full fledged, full blooded written two-toned latee latee charge, where they go in with their batons and clear people off the streets. The point of all that is, I guess, for our purposes, is that elections and electing is alive and very well in India. Indeed, the electoral process is flourishing. The question I suppose, that we're really supposed to be answering here is, is democracy flourishing in India?

Robin Jeffrey ([00:29:56](#)):

I've got various reasons for saying that electing is flourishing. There are a number of aspects of the Indian electoral system, which it seems to me are, are very, very healthy. Indeed. Those fall under headings like the laws under which it works, the mechanics of actually carrying out elections whenever they're required. And the participation rates Joseph was talking about participation participation in Indian elections is quite healthy. If I could take each of those briefly for a moment the laws under which Indian elections are carried out are very impressive. Indeed. It's it said not really with tongue in cheek, by Indians, that the next time the Americans hold in the election, they really should get the Indian chief electoral commissioner and to do it because he's been doing it for 60 years and has never had a hanging shard and his whole in the whole history of the office the the chief election commissioner, and then the is a bit of a figure.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:30:51](#)):

There are state election commissions because we have to remember, India is a Federation of 28 states with an overarching central government. The chief election commissioner is something of a public figure during his and it's used. It's been a man up until now, his tenure of office. He is, has considerable powers once an election is called to look after public administration in the areas in which elections are being held. He's also armed with really quite vigorously, yeah. Was on the disclosure of funds the disclosure of the interests of political participants. So the election laws and the manner in which Indian elections are carried out under the law is really very impressive. It seems to me, secondly, the mechanics of elections India since 1999 has used things called EVMS electronic voting machines. And there were more than a million of these little computerized boxes that go around the country.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:31:48](#)):

Whenever there's an election being used in polling booths. So every polling booth we'll have one or two of these. And as I say, there's more than a million of them. They're self-contained little computers, a little bit like I gather the old 1980s Commodore just a little box with some circuitry inside it, but they've now been used in dozens of Indian elections. The one that impresses me most, I think is the one that's just been held in the big Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. That's the great state in north India that lives like a loaf of sandwich bread across the bottom of the Himalayas from Delhi over to Eastern India contains about 180 million people. The elections for that state legislature that were held there in May were carried out over five weeks. There were six separate stages of voting and these electronic voting machines and the election commissioner and paramilitary police went round ups to ensure fair and effective voting.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:32:44](#)):

And on the whole, all the reports are that it was, there were not a lot of incidents of bias and most impressive of all. When it came time to count the ballots on the 8th of May, they had, there would have been more than 60 million votes recorded. Ups has a population of more than 180 million people bigger than Japan, more than 60 million votes were actually recorded a little over 50% of the electorate voted when they came to count the votes, they had the result within a vote five hours because they simply began to plug in these little electronic voting machines. They tabulated electronically, and the results were done. It's an amazing achievement. And they've been doing this now for eight or nine years. It's a tried and true process for conducting elections. I have a friend in Canada, who's an election officer in British Columbia. He says the Canadians still make little scratches on paper and it takes them days, even with the first past the post system to come up with winners in some areas.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:33:39](#)):

And we all know what the Australian senators like, or those of us who have ever voted in it or voted erroneously or voted invalidly as some of us have. So the mechanics of Indian elections, I think are very impressive. The third element is participation. The Indian state takes upon itself. The duty of enrolling its citizens. Unlike I believe the United most states in the United States of America, where the citizen has to get the citizens self to an office at a particular time to get themselves on the role. The Indian state goes out looking for its citizens just as the Australian states does and says, come on, you're a citizen. You're on the rolls, no compulsory voting, but nevertheless, the state makes the effort to enroll people. Voter turnout, as I've said, is notably high. The normally between 50 and 60% of the enrolled voters vote, there's no compulsory voting, of course.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:34:31](#)):

And as I say, it's first past the post voting, but turnout is, is really quite strong. Given those conditions, given the conditions that in Uttar Pradesh in the May state elections, they're close to half the electorate was illiterate. Nevertheless, the electorate vote that election in a UOP was impressive for another reason, which I'll return to a little bit later, but what it did was returned a political party with an absolute majority in its own, right, for the first time in more than 20 years, but much more important that party is led by a woman and it's led by a woman. Who's an untouchable, she's a woman in her early fifties. She had three short spells as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. Previously this time she's one in her own, right? She's built a political party from an untouchable base, but now taking in groups from other social classes and CAS, they've won a majority.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:35:23](#)):

Now she's going to have to deliver on that majority because she's awakened huge expectations, but it is a mark of the changing system. The idea that this state that gave in the Joel Harlow, Nehru and ended a Gandy could within three generations throw up a woman and an untouchable as its chief minister is a very remarkable example. It seems to me of social change. I'd give one other example of the enthusiasm Joseph talked about, whether you get a sense of satisfaction from the election, the election process. Two years ago, I went to a conference in, in China and there were some Chinese media people and some Indian media people comparing notes on how they did it. And one of the Indians worked for Murdoch star news in India. Indeed. He was the managing director of the big news channel. He brought some DVDs of some events they'd done in westbound gall during the local government elections.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:36:15](#)):

And during those local government elections star news had hired a football field and said, well, we've got all the politicians for the, these particular constituencies coming to speak. You, the public are welcome to come along too. And they filled the football field, 20,000 people, roving Mike's candidates on a platform live television. And it was a little ripper from a TV ratings. Point of view. People loved it. This was live shouting, back and forth. Shaking of this very, very tense. The local police were very, very upset. The first couple of nights they had the TV. People had to Sue them and quiet them down and say, no, no nobody's been beaten up yet, but it's a, the police were saying we could have a riot here. This was going live on the satellite. Eventually they, they held these things. Anyway, the Indian newsman showed these to the Chinese colleagues in Shanghai and the Chinese colleagues just couldn't believe it.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:37:05](#)):

They just wanted to turn away. It was almost as if you were exhibiting pornography, because it seems so chaotic. There was a sense that if this is democracy, God, we don't need it. You know, this is, this is just, this is terrible. This is not taking anybody anywhere, but elections are everywhere in India. They're embedded. Now. It seems to me in, in the, in popular culture, the cricket associations of India have the most intensely fought elections. The elections for the cricket control board of west Bengal held about 18 months ago were fiercely contested with millions of dollars, changing hands on both sides with the state government, putting up its own candidate against a local capitalists, the local capitalist one much to the chagrin of the state government and the chief minister. So elections, I think are alive and well in India, whether in fact democracy is alive and well, of course is another matter.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:37:58](#)):

The conventional critique of Indian democracy is this, that elections. Aren't really democracy. That the process of elections is a rule that the poor are manipulated, that all the legal and economic rules are in the hands of the corrupt and the powerful and the strong men and the poor in any case, don't really understand what democracy is all about. It's just, it's just a, Tamasha just a big sort of show, a big game. And in this system, in any case, when it does produce an elected government cannot produce a government that can sustain economic and wipe. The tear has Gandy said from every eye that this system simply cannot deliver on the goods. And ultimately it will live in chaos. And in tears, this kind of system produces governments. That can't the way Chinese governments and the people's Republic can governments that can't make the hard economic decisions.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:38:56](#)):

Well I think there are two responses to that. Critique w the first of them is this, that India, as we now understand it, as a state cannot exist except as a Federation and a democracy, as soon as India ceases to

be federal, as soon as somebody tries to run India, say by a military dictatorship from Delhi, which no one is suggesting any general in the Indian army would be so Daffy at the moment as to even contemplate. But if anyone did think of a dictatorship run from Delhi, the country will begin to fragment very seriously. Similarly, if India were not a democracy, it couldn't handle the diversity of 1822 official languages of 28 states. And many of us would argue there should be about 65 states, but 28 at the moment, it wouldn't be able to candle the diversity of religion, of cast of language that make the place what it is.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:39:51](#)):

And yet still give it a unity of which most Indians are very proud. So democracy, even this electoral democracy that I've been describing is an essential part for the sustenance of the modern Indian state. If we think that's a good thing, then democracy is an essential element of that. And the two have a symbiotic relationship. The second is that the system even though system that one can criticize so easily, the system throws up surprises. It threw up surprises in Kerala, down in the Southwest. That's the little cord on the lower left-hand corner of India, which used to have a, still does have a lot of communists. A lot of Christians, a lot of Muslims Kerala threw up surprises 50 years ago in 1957 and elected the first communist government in India. And since then, it's been roughly alternating every five years between a communist led coalition and a right-wing led coalition, communists are winning at the moment they they're in power.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:40:49](#)):

So the system throws up surprises. The second surprise of course, is the one that was thrown up in UOP only two months ago when my [inaudible] the name of the untouchable chief minister and her BSP party won an absolute majority in this large assembly of more than 400 seats, much to the surprise of the pollsters and all the political pundits. It's something that we need to watch that government of my, of RT, because the critique of Indian government of course, is that it can't make the hard decisions. It can't deliver the goods to the vast majority of people whose expectations are awakened increasingly now in the age of modern media, when most Indians probably go home now, even poor people to a place where there's likely to a television set, where TV brings into most living rooms every night and living rooms are the rooms where people live, not necessarily the lounge rooms that we may think of, but the rooms in which people live pictures of how the wealthy live and how the powerful carry off and those pictures, I think awakened aspirations that my Avanti in party are going to have to satisfy.

Robin Jeffrey ([00:41:53](#)):

And I would like to think that she realizes that too, and that she will have both the political power, the political muscle and the political vision to begin to fulfill them. In that case, we might be able to talk about Indian democracy as well as Indian electioneering.

Speaker 2 ([00:42:23](#)):

[Inaudible]

Tanya Smith ([00:42:24](#)):

Thank you, Robin Jeffrey. Now we staying in Asia, but we're changing our focus a little bit. Professor Tim Lindsay is going to speak to us next. He's the director of the Asian law center and the faculty of law at the university of Melbourne. He's also deputy director of the center for the study of contemporary Islam. Tim is an internationally recognized specialist in Indonesian law and society. He's also worked

over as a consultant on law reform in Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia, and here in Australia, Tim is currently working on a new book on Islamic laws in Indonesia. Please welcome Tim to the podium. Thank you. I'm just being momentarily disorganized.

Tim Lindsey ([00:43:07](#)):

I've been asked to look briefly at Indonesia as a case study of democratization. And this may surprise you Indonesia, as an example of democracy for most Australians, the old cliches that applied for so long under Suharto's still apply. Indonesia is still imagined as a military dictatorship where a brutal, aggressive military regime bent on territorial expansion and eager to eradicate minority ethnic groups, rules by force over a coward and compliance population. But I come bearing good news today. Indonesia is indeed a democracy. It has been so for about eight years, not only that, but it has what is probably the freest most open and most vibrant democratic electoral process in the whole of Southeast Asia. In fact, I don't think there's any question that that is now the case. So some of our assumptions about what happens in our giant Northern neighbor may need some revision.

Tim Lindsey ([00:44:04](#)):

Certainly this view of Indonesia is not one you read frequently in the newspapers, and I'm not saying that this is a perfect functioning democratic model, but I am saying it's a very vibrant and robust one in August, 2002 Indonesia's popular assembly completed the fourth of a set of constitutional amendments that began in 1999. These reinvented Suharto's repressive authoritarian, bureaucratic new order by then become very old as a vaguely American style democracy set in a decentralized quasi Federation power had been stripped out from the presidency and delegated down in part to the national legislature and in part down to district municipalities, the elections now at the national provincial local and even village level and even a direct election for the head of state, see some can manage it. Oops, my politics just popped out then.

Tim Lindsey ([00:45:08](#)):

Post-Its who Harteau democratization reforms. Weren't just about elections. Thank you Robin, for raising this issue for me. So kindly in fact, a lot of what Robin said about India, we just could have added an own leisure on the end, and we'd be pretty much there. The issues the national assembly decided over the six years from 1999 to 2004, went to the very heart of the modern Indonesian state, including would Indonesia become an Islamic state, a question that has been raised on at least four major occasions and considered by national assemblies in Indonesia, since independence in 1945, the decision was no almost unanimously. Would it become a formal Federation again, no unanimously with the effect that the word Federation has described sometimes as the Indonesian F-word, wouldn't it in Indonesia split up no most decided lead. No, and it's very unlikely that it will. Would the military retain a formal role in politics? No, they wouldn't. And they were removed from the legislature. Would human rights be guaranteed and protected? Yes. And Indonesia inserted the universal declaration of human rights, almost intact into chapter 10 of the new amended constitution. Of course, there's a big step between passing a law and implementing it. But in terms of legal reform, at least the commitment was made by these legislators, which is the stage I'm discussing at the moment.

Tim Lindsey ([00:46:37](#)):

Few at that time, believed that Indonesia's politicians famous for infighting and horse trading could resolve debates like these debates that had polarized their nation. And it caused civil wars collapse of governments, cous since independence in 1945. In fact, not only was a majority reach on all of these

difficult issues, but in the end, the almost 700 members of the assembly decided most of these questions unanimously, even if on some occasions, it took days and nights continually of debate to do so since then a new generation of Indonesian politicians, or be it with some Suharto era survivors. In fact, quite a few have had to address other equally old and equally difficult issues. What will be the territorial limits of the Republic? What will be the status of Archie and Papa? How can the consistent, competent, and fair judicial system necessary to make other reforms work being created?

Tim Lindsey ([00:47:39](#)):

And it still hasn't been with perhaps the honorable exception of the constitutional court, which is unlike all the other courts in Indonesia, not only functional, but probably one of the best courts in Southeast Asia constitutional courts in Southeast Asian region. How far can the military be stripped of its privileges? Its human rights abuses curtailed and its impunity removed in short. How could the new politicians unravel the pervasive system of institutionalized failure and corruption inherited from Suharto and deliberately created by Suharto and his system. And the fact of the elections that I've mentioned means that these politicians have been driven in much of what they have sought to do by civil society, which has blossomed since 1998 in a way very rarely seen in any country from zero to hero as an Indonesian activist said to me, or as they also say like mold in the rainy season, I think I like zero to hero better. You get the message. Anyway, this is this blossoming of civil societies, especially true of NGOs and of a very diverse free, and sometimes quite rabid media. Indonesia now has without question the freest media in Southeast Asia and perhaps in east Asia, something that is not entirely pleasing to the new breed of politicians all the

Joseph Cheng ([00:49:12](#)):

Time. The result

Tim Lindsey ([00:49:14](#)):

Is a much broader public understanding in Indonesia, the importance of political and legal change and institutional reform than at any time since the 1950s political debate in Indonesia is now very open sustained plural, often subtle and frequently colorful politicians are under extraordinary scrutiny. Of course, that doesn't guarantee they behave themselves all the time. It doesn't anywhere, but they are under great scrutiny. Of course, none of these massive process of change has been easy or completely successful. None of it has been completely successful. In fact, it has been slow difficult and very, very messy Indonesia was released from the massive IMF program of assistance that Suharto was forced to sign up to in 1997 or eight, but Western investment has never returned to pre-crisis levels because business knows that reform has still got a long way to go. Of course it does. It's much easier to oppose into agitate than it is to organize and govern the opposition movements that have now come into government have not found the task of running the nation of 240 million, 17,000, every major religion and so forth, particularly any easier than the authoritarian governments before them rhetorically, at least the broad principles of a more just and democratic system and are broadly agreed upon, but much of the essential detail for implementing these principles, instrumentally and institutionally is still missing.

Tim Lindsey ([00:50:47](#)):

Again, a nod to India. One consequence of this is that the new democratic politics in Indonesia gets a very bad press because there is a press now and it's actually politics. So we get an impression of absolute dysfunction when what is really happening is very significant dramatic reform. It's just that it

can be talked about, and this is not uncommon in postal authoritarian states when the freedom to criticize becomes available and where the simple rules of dictatorship are replaced by the complexities and uncertainties of choice. Suddenly the authoritarianism that people fear when it was there can take on a static cue. It is, for example, often said in Indonesia that depending on politic political interests, that is political power games, dominate policy and lawmaking displacing, genuine concern for the nation's welfare, but it is unlikely really that politics in Indonesia is any more subject to these failings and in any other emergent democratic system or even some of the more established ones.

Tim Lindsey ([00:51:54](#)):

And of course, most well-developed democratic systems remain played by into party squabbles and parliamentary power plays the reasons why gamesmanship have come so quickly to mark Indonesia's new democratic political system run deeper than mere political cupidity. They're rational responses to the nature of Indonesian society, to the expression of that society in a democratic system. First take the extraordinary religious ethnic and social diversity of Indonesia. This means that virtually any aspect of any policy will be challenged by some group within the population. Even the fundamental question of whether Indonesia should be a secular state, which is overwhelmingly accepted by Indonesian society and by all politicians at all political parties with only a few exceptions is hotly disputed by marginal militant Islamist groups, sometimes with bombs. Likewise, there is still no consensus on what authority regions should have in the center should have. Secondly, while every key aspect of policy is liable to challenge by some group common or diversity ensures that no single group has sufficient electoral support to get a clear majority.

Tim Lindsey ([00:53:05](#)):

The majority of this necessary for its policies to dominate the result is a very diverse political system socially and politically in which coalitions shift and change with Barilla, bewildering speed as parliamentary groups, Jostle for numbers necessary to make laws. This pattern is not new and it's not unique to Indonesia, but it has been a key aspect of Indonesian political politics since 1945. And despite 32 years of being set on by the oppressive Suharto regime, one factor that has remained constant is this plurality commune or political loyalties in a highly religiously, ethnically, and economically diverse society that have remained basically the same despite being left-wing right-wing democratic authoritarian. Gotcha.

Tim Lindsey ([00:53:56](#)):

Okay. The proximity, the next election, which is now already dominating political activity in Indonesia means that politicians will be playing close attention to the expectations of common or groups as they jockey for a position in the leader. The election will not be fought for outright victory, but for marginal additional percentages that will give individual parties more leverage in coalition building already at the president's own coalition within the legislature has disintegrated. His vice-president is starting to move against the president will probably run against him. The natural result is that parties have little option, but to swap votes in return for political advantage, no surprise to anyone who's a student of Australian politics. This has the effect of not only tending to create simplistic ill-defined common or platforms of most parties, but leaving wide room for maneuver on specific issues so that a vote on any issue becomes unpredictable and backflips become the standard daily exercise of Indonesian politicians.

Tim Lindsey ([00:54:58](#)):

All that is certain in this atmosphere is first that it is unlikely to change at the next election or after, and second, that it is unlikely that any vote will be made entirely on its own merits. Again, what's new. The same is true here just by and all this. And despite the often stated argument that legal reform has failed in Indonesia, it's people have in the last four years developed considerable legislative experience, the blossoming of civil society and NGOs, the muzzling of the media means there is more capacity for awareness raising than ever before. And for understanding of the political process and for public debate commune or political groupings are unlikely to change, but in a hurry, but it may be possible through a gradual process of public debate in the legislature and outside it and mediated by institutions such as the new constitutional court to move slowly towards some sort of more sophisticated understanding about what politics should be like and how democracy is to run.

Tim Lindsey ([00:55:57](#)):

In fact, I think this process has begun. The democratic ideal is now clearly agreed on by almost all parties, including the military as being the necessary outcome. Even if there is little understanding or consensus on the detail of that democratic ideal, the end result of all this is a grindingly slow, messy, and an even process with each year's batch of wrought reforms being tested in the crucible of real politics and in the courts. But despite all this progress is being made, the new constitution has shortcomings, but it is an incomparably better document than what existed before. In fact, it's probably one of the better democratic constitutions in the region.

Tim Lindsey ([00:56:43](#)):

Historically few countries have ever been able to manage a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, purely through parliamentary debate without any constitutional commission, without any special external body, just horsetrading on the floor of parliament for four years. I don't think there's been more than one or two other countries that have ever achieved that. And that all was well for the future because to do it, the politicians arguing on the floor of the house had to either way privileges and powers to do so. And they did. What is your remarkable about the posts who had her transformation of Indonesia? Democratization is therefore not so much the morass of problems. It still faces and they are serious corruption in competence, poverty, institutional failure, continuing human rights, abuse, judicial inadequacy, not so much that that's not surprising at all. What is surprising is how far reform has actually come in such adverse circumstances, an economic collapse that was arguably the worst suffered by any country in the last century, the dismantling, not only of Suharto's repressive new order, but also of its elaborate system of administration.

Tim Lindsey ([00:57:59](#)):

And then we have the resurgence of terrorist groups of old regional secessionist movements, a series of horrific national disaster, natural disasters, SARS earthquakes, tsunamis floods, avian flu, a succession of gasoline, transport disasters, planes, ferries, buses, trains the task of reinventing any state system. So it works better, is always extraordinarily difficult. And Indonesia, it is inevitably slow and painful. That is not surprising. This suggests the conclusion that in a nation denied constitutional debate or even constitutional review of laws for the last four decades, perhaps the most difficult process Indonesia is perhaps the difficult process. Indonesia is enduring is a necessary way to build a national understanding of the issues and put some content into the vague rhetoric of reform rights and democracy that was shouted so loudly around the time of Suharto's fall because content is what it needs. So democracy democratization our region. What do we mean?

Tim Lindsey ([00:58:59](#)):

Our hopes are usually set far too high, our expectations to great of these developing countries with such limited resources and infrastructure professor Howard, Dick, who just happens to be from my university has put it quite nicely. The bolder response he said as in Europe, after world war two is to try and restore vitality skill and credibility to the domestic politics to allow society, to make political choices and political mistakes in the hope that it will muddle through in the very long run muddling through maybe the better strategy for searching and learning the shortest and least painful way to achieve the transition to democracy rather than enforcing it.

Speaker 2 ([00:59:57](#)):

[Inaudible]

Tanya Smith ([00:59:57](#)):

Thank you very much. Professor Tim Lindsey. Now we have around 30 minutes for questions. There are two microphones. One's located center of the hall here and there's one up on the balcony. Please make a way to the microphone. If you'd like to ask a question we've already got the queue forming. So if you'd like to direct your questions to one or more of the panelists, please do. So the gentlemen here

Speaker 6 ([01:00:25](#)):

To all the panel, please I have a problem. I traveled to Iran regularly and I talk to students about freedom and democracy and they cannot quite understand why the Western world has not accepted the Hamas government in Palestine. I try to explain by pointing out that American democracy is rather manifold as was indeed indicated by the, the speakers here. And I said, essentially, American democracy is predatory capitalism and had an mystic consumerism and students. They liked that. And then I said, yes, but it also comes with something else and that's military occupation and the example they said, no, they wouldn't didn't believe that. And I said, yes, if you look at Germany and Japan, they're still occupied to the state. For example, the airspace over Tokyo, the a hundred kilometers is controlled by America. And in, in Germany they still haven't got a peace treaty. Could you comment on that please? I would like to tackle that one.

Joseph Cheng ([01:01:36](#)):

I'm no expert on, on this issue, but I just have a go. Now I think the Hamas government has two things to offer one justice. It won elections because the previous government was so corrupt and you could appeal to the lottery. And of course it has some meaning to offer in a situation of poverty and desperation in offering certain broader sense of justice, which, which we certainly do not agree with the exercise of balance. But once I would like to interpret this in terms of values, in terms of what people are looking for in terms of what people we send, when you create a situation of poverty, desperation, injustice, you do give the hammers a very good chance of winning even by electro means

Tim Lindsey ([01:02:46](#)):

Comment apart from the fact that the question I probably should have been up on the stage just to point out that democracy is a many splendid thing. And if we look at the middle east, the two nations that have something that resembles the democracy in the sense that the position of the head of government could be won by an outsider or by any one of a number of candidates, if you go to Israel and ironically Iran is the two really only vaguely functioning democratic models in the area, not that

either perfect or complete, but at least there is some democratic process there more than many of the others.

Tanya Smith ([01:03:28](#)):

What I just perhaps add to those things that I think the, the comment raises the issue that has emerged very much over the last few years from instructional practices that having the threat of military force as a method to impose democracy, there's just such a fundamental and problematic contradiction. And it's clearly in the case of the United States you hope that somebody in their policy think tanks or within the government is realizing that that that's got so many contradictions built into it. It just has to collapse that it's clearly what we're seeing in the context of Iraq, the massive failure of really bringing democracy through the use of force, that it's an impossible situation and has led to something. I mean, the irony is of course that the seems that the United States in a sense in Iraq on gets a sense that just now very much like a nice strong man to appear very much like the person that they deposed. So I think that one just hopes that the lessons of that have been sort of read thoroughly by current and future administrations. Take a question from the balcony.

Speaker 6 ([01:04:44](#)):

My name is Peter Hunter. I have a question for Tim. He made references to Indonesia's performance in Southeast Asia. My question really is, is Australia a part of Southeast Asia? And if it is, should we apply to become south and

Tim Lindsey ([01:05:10](#)):

Well seeing nobody uses the term area on anymore, presumably south pup would be even stranger. Well I sincerely hope we are out of Southeast Asia. I think the view is that we would like to be seen as part of Southeast Asia, but the Southeast Asia very definitely doesn't see us as part of its region. No, I think for many Australians, the mental map of Australia is an island somewhere in the Atlantic, halfway between Europe and the United States. We sort of get vaguely surprised when we fly six or seven hours and find it's really quite hot and warm. You should've come to my talk before this it's exactly on that question. But the, the short answer is that the perception that most Australians have of themselves as an open tolerant racially racially tolerant multicultural societies is absolutely not the view that is held on Australia by most, not all, but most people in Southeast Asia.

Tim Lindsey ([01:06:15](#)):

And there was a great deal of mistrust of Australia as a potential white colonizing power, whether or not justified. And most of it is not justified. These perceptions are very real in Southeast Asia. And there's very little appreciation in Australia of how significantly that affects our ambition to be part of Southeast Asia. The sooner we do something about better presenting ourselves in Southeast Asia, the more likely it is that we can become part of it. But at the moment, I think we've most Southeast Asians would very definitely see us as still floating in the Atlantic. And that much we seem to have in common with

Speaker 2 ([01:06:54](#)):

Very blatantly put

Joseph Cheng ([01:06:56](#)):

Australia, New Zealand and India have been taking part in the east Asian summit. That is 10 us in countries, but China, Japan, South Korea, plus Australia, you will see them in India. I think this is a good start. This is a good beginning. At least Australia will make Asian games much more competitive. But more seriously Australia certainly will have a very important role to play in broadening the values of Asia to, to make issues such as human rights and democracy carry more weight in

Tim Lindsey ([01:07:40](#)):

This region. That's true. But I have to say that one of the problems that Australia has in dealing with this is that we generally do that by way of special pleading. We don't maintain sufficient engagement on the sort of broad issues, for example, death penalty until an Australian is involved. And that means that when we go to make representations at that point, it's special pleading about Australia. We don't engage in a universal way on these issues, such that the complaint about us citizens can be dealt with in the same way as a complaint about citizens of those countries. And we just haven't been effective in putting our values through as anything else, other than looking after our name, we need to change that there were some things that they might be, but so far in my view, we've been a miserable failure

Tanya Smith ([01:08:27](#)):

Following on from that I've always found it really extraordinary that a major foreign policy document, the Australia's white paper and front policy is called in the national interest. And I think that sums up a great problem in Australia that we would actually want to put all our foreign policy interests, but we only see them through the lens of our national interest. And I think that reflects I've recently been in Bogan Ville. And I was really struck there by how much resentment and criticism there is of Australia there. And we're very much, there's a, a contrast on between Australians and new Zealanders, very strongly. And there's a sense that New Zealand is, have got a lot of things, right. Especially in that part of the world. And the Australia has an still, there's a real resentment about the rhetoric used by our political leaders about those countries. So I think we've got to really start rethinking what foreign policy is for. And I would argue it's not just the national interest

Speaker 2 ([01:09:33](#)):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 6 ([01:09:33](#)):

And whose national interest democracy is an aspirational goal as we move to it in ways that ebb and flow. If we, if we continue to pretend that indigenous people didn't exist, we could say Australia has been granted from our forefathers quite advanced form of democracy. But I said, I wanted to ask you a comment on my perception that we are in an ebbing stage because of the overlay of plutocracy on our democracy. So we can talk about how other states democracies are going, but their states of being interfered by our democracies. My friend is a refugee from September 11th, 2019 73 from Chile where CIA sponsored coup over through a demotic democracy put in Pinochet. We're in a, we're in a state in Australia where you can go and hear one, one idea about song that seemed to sink from Sarah Madison and Clive Hamilton. Or you can hear from guide peers about how the climate policy has been overtaken and written by a greenhouse mafia. Our democracy depends on voice. We have a concentration of media in Australia. We, we are one paper state in south Australia. Democracy means voice as well. And voice here depends on money. Your interests depend on money and that is having a great effect here. And I wanted to get your comments about how we can sort out our own backyard.

Speaker 2 ([01:11:32](#)):

[Inaudible]

Tanya Smith ([01:11:32](#)):

Australian democracy.

Speaker 2 ([01:11:35](#)):

Yeah, well,

Tanya Smith ([01:11:36](#)):

I, I think I would my own views. I would, I would agree with that. And one of the things that I found striking in Australia's efforts at democracy building, for example, in the Solomon Islands to take another example that there's in the Solomon Islands, there's a very keen criticism of Australia's sort of practices and saying, well, you've arrived here in charge of Ramsey to bring democracy to this poor benighted country that canceled itself out. And and a lot of some nuns that I've spoken to keep it very clear sort of view of Australia and sort of say, how, how can you sort of talk about this as a real form of democracy too? And I think that in a way, a lot of the democracy building projects, one could make the same point about other major democracy builders. The United States takes up very flawed accounts of democracy.

Tanya Smith ([01:12:28](#)):

And I think that one way that we will, this is only indirectly respond to your point, but one way that I think we'd be a lot more successful if we are trying to build democracy in other countries is to be really honest about the flaws and the three real problems. And I'm always struck particularly by the position of women so that we will often go to other countries and say, ah, we'd sort of like to sort out, get a bit of equality for women, and we're going to do these things. And we think, well, if one just looks at what's going on in Australia, there are obviously real problems with representation of women in public life and corporate life and so on. And yet we go and just mouth, I think what essentially platitudes, which alienates people. So I think that one of the things we don't do enough is to acknowledge our own culture. We just assume other countries have got culture. What we've got is a sort of norm. So I think, I think that we have to in this whole enterprise as Australians, be very, very careful and acknowledge all the really significant problems that we have. So I, I just would take your point. I think

Joseph Cheng ([01:13:34](#)):

Even everybody became his own efforts, trying very hard and talking about one paper state in the days when the common 10 government control all the media in Taiwan before its democratization process, the opposition was very innovative in generating many, many radio stations at very low cost and they did play a very important role. So just a very small example of making one's own efforts

Tanya Smith ([01:14:10](#)):

Before I go to the next question. All right. I just to follow on from Hillary's comment there, I need to let people know that in south Australia, we have a specific target to have 50% of the membership of their parliament being female by 2014. So that's as a goal that everywhere we're on the way. But that is an interesting approach to trying to look at improving the representation in systems, but also talks to the issue of how you do engage a broader community in the political process, and to pick up some of the points that others have made about foot modes of communication and drawing on people's desire to

actually be, be part of a broader fellowship as at word, as a, as a motivation for becoming more involved. Our next question from the balcony place,

Speaker 6 ([01:15:05](#)):

Oh, this is a question for Tim. You spoke about Indonesia, rabid media and the flurry of NGO activity that's occurring in that country. You also talk about its problems with secessionism and with the differences amongst the peoples that inhabit that country. A lot of that sounds very familiar to what Russia was going through under the Yeltsin period, when you did see a lot of active media and you did see a lot of NGOs popping up that has now since come very far and done. And I'm just wondering whether you think that that sort of process will go on the same way in Indonesia, whether or not you think it will be viable a bit more stronger and kick on.

Tim Lindsey ([01:15:46](#)):

Yes. Thanks crystal ball gazing about Indonesia is a notoriously dangerous exercise. Friend of mine used to keep a file on predictions of the imminent fall of Suharto and stopped doing so when it occupied to cabinet two filing cabinet drawers, and it was getting on for 30 years around at which moment he then did in fact four, maybe there was a link. Look, I'd hate to be putting money on this, but my own feeling is that the democratic transition in Indonesia is about as strong transition as you could hope for. I don't see any possibility of it reverting to military rule in the next 10 or 20 years. I don't see the emergence of a strong man figure like a Putin in Russia. I don't see that happening. There are real similarities. I think between Indonesia and Russia, both sprawling archipelago nations, Russia is archipelago is on the land, but they are very similar in their expense and spread the ethnic diversity, religious diversity, the postal authoritarianism, the emergence of NGOs and civil society, postal authoritarianism, the nostalgia, all those sorts of very similar problems.

Tim Lindsey ([01:17:00](#)):

But Indonesia seems to have made a stronger commitment commitment to this multi-party process. And if you look at Russia with its ongoing problems with Chechnya Indonesia's church was RJ, and that has, I have no doubt about this. It has been resolved, not all aspects of it, but the conflict has been resolved in nutshell. Maybe that's one of the advantages of being a C archipelago rather than the land when you get tsunamis. Because ironically, that was a key factor that allowed our chair to be settled. But if we were to compare the two records beside each other, there's no doubt that Indonesia is doing better in terms of a transition to a more liberal democratic model. And Russia has. And I think all the indications are that it's very unlikely that we'll shift back very unlikely. Indeed. One of the reasons for that is that that when events have occurred that suggests military trying to reassert its rights. It, it creates huge, huge protests from right across society, not just civil society within government as well.

Tanya Smith ([01:18:14](#)):

Yeah, we have that 10 minutes left. We need to clear the venue at one 15 sharp, and I can see seven questions waiting so people could try and keep the questions and answers as concise as possible. It gives us quite a chance of getting through everybody. Who's waiting down here. Thank you

Speaker 6 ([01:18:31](#)):

A quick introductory comment. When listening to Tim, I couldn't help, but feel some envy for Indonesia in two senses that we ha they are have a large number of contesting political parties and apparently very large number of contesting newspapers and other media. So different from here. And I would have

thought so important to robust democracy. However, my question goes to something slightly different. In fact, builds on the immediately earlier question from the floor here, that is an aspect of our own democracy being under threat. In addition to the two issues mentioned, then namely the disengagement of the electorate and also the increasing ignorance of the electorate about real issues. In a previous conversation just before this, someone pointed out that in the UK 30% of the people who don't know whether the earth goes around the sun or vice versa, how can such an ignorant population have a, an effective democracy?

Tim Lindsey ([01:19:53](#)):

You mentioned, imagine. So at work, you mentioned thinking that the sun doesn't go around there. Yeah. Like my first use, I leave it to my friends, to on Australian arrangements of someone we should. But I would just say one thing that'd be to NBC Indonesia, particularly if you're arrested. There's some things we do pretty well because what we're talking about in Indonesia are two things. One is the establishment of an electoral democracy picking at Robbins critical distinction. I think it's absolutely essential electoral democracy, but without an institutional democracy, that's mature institutions in place, but most of them inadequate or failed what we, whatever we, we think about engagement and our lack of political parties and lack of media and all these concerns that are real concerns in Australia and so forth. We do have mature institutions, institutional democracy is established and strong here. And that is the very thing that is absent from so many developing countries. And frankly, giving elections to countries doesn't create fair and just systems of government because they don't provide scrutiny of the government. Once it's chosen, you need institutional democracy for that. And that is the struggle and the challenge that they face, which is why you can have fair and free electoral processes and the crap government, you know, this is the classic experience for places like East Timor, which has another place that doesn't like Australia. Very much

Joseph Cheng ([01:21:32](#)):

People, complacent. People do get lazy. And as I was saying, people do engage in simple cost, cost benefit analysis when things aren't too bad, when there's not much of a chance to change things, then they try very hard to improve one's own living standards by one's own efforts. These are obvious, dangerous and UC Greca dangerous say in the United States in Hong Kong, many of my friends, we, we shared a lot of ideas. When we attended universities, they became successful business executive businessmen. Then they think everything is quite all right. So it demands a self examination process. If you want democracy to do fly, it calls upon every one of us to ask what you can do constantly. This is hot

Speaker 2 ([01:22:42](#)):

[Inaudible]

Joseph Cheng ([01:22:42](#)):

Worth noting in that context, that in the last 20 years, untouchables in India have voted in larger proportion than the population, generally five or 6% more untouchables vote than the general population vote. An indication that the vote is highly valued by, by the poor indeed many people reply when asked. It's one of the things I have it's about my honor, my dignity.

Tanya Smith ([01:23:07](#)):

Well, so I just like to question, I don't know what figures the question it was drawing on, but the sense that we are less engaged now in Australia than before that there's been a lack of increasing lack of

interest. That's not what I observe. And of course we do have, we do have a fairly narrow media. I think that is an issue, but I, I don't think I'd sort of want to query the premise that generally people are, are less engaged. I must say, as a university teacher, that's not what I observed in students. And I find them critically engaged and really alive to many of the problems that we face. So I don't have that feeling really of pessimism about civil society. We have many more now, very active NGOs, and I'm always really humbled by the energy that people put into this. So I'd just like to query that that premise initially,

Speaker 6 ([01:24:00](#)):

Please. Yes. In human history, including the present, which do you think has been the most successful democracy and why in 10 seconds, if it's coming, I'll give you a call.

Joseph Cheng ([01:24:24](#)):

[Inaudible] The Scandinavian countries haven't done too badly. Why all countries high living standards whites equal distribution of income. And therefore people have time to think about politics, about helping the world and

Tanya Smith ([01:24:50](#)):

A lot more women in politics. The Nordics,

Tim Lindsey ([01:24:57](#)):

Interestingly talking about small countries here reminds us of the point that it's much easier to govern small countries in very, very big countries. And we often believe that over the equation,

Tanya Smith ([01:25:09](#)):

They're very quickly up in the balcony. Yes.

Speaker 6 ([01:25:12](#)):

I think it's probably accepted, but not articulated that building democracy is essentially a DIY project. You can't sort of look up at democratizer and the yellow pages to come in and do it for you. And it's the quality of the, of of the work that's done there that does it. But to me, the acid test, and this is summed up by comparing, comparing Indonesia and Palestine, the acid test, the success in democracy is the peaceful transfer of power from one group to another via the ballot.

Tim Lindsey ([01:25:45](#)):

Yes. And in Indonesia case, that's happened three times now. And I want the, the, the critical test was when that's so called hero democracy of the runway ahead, when impeached and removed from office ordered the, to dissolve the legislature and arrest all the legislators. So he could roll directly by decree. And the army said, no, and that was the moment at which, for me, you could say whatever their motivations, the transition of being completed. I just add also that I think everyone does agree that it is something you can't look up in the telephone book and call in someone to do democracy for you. But no one's told the IMF and the world bank

Speaker 2 ([01:26:37](#)):

[Inaudible].

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Tanya Smith ([01:26:39](#)):

I think we might just have to take one more. I'm afraid. My question

Speaker 6 ([01:26:44](#)):

Is a very quick one. What does the panel think about the reaction from the Australian and New Zealand governments to the most recent eruption in the south Pacific Navy on December the sixth, last year in Fiji. And would you might contrast their reaction to that military takeover with the one that happened just a few weeks before in Thailand, Fiji, smaller than Thailand. It's not a principal response putting, had it pretty clear.

Tanya Smith ([01:27:35](#)):

I think we need to wind up. It's been a very interesting discussion. Thank you very much to our panelists. We've covered the whole world. They've given us something to feel a little bit more positive about, especially in terms of Indonesia, Uttar, Pradesh. I'd asked you please to join me now and thanking you

Speaker 2 ([01:27:52](#)):

To that. [inaudible].