

Rise of American Autocracy:
The Trump Administration's impact on American Democracy

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BACKGROUND: America serves as the global democratic superpower, but under Trump’s Presidency, the quality of our system of checks and balances has begun to deteriorate. This presentation aims to assess the administration and their policies to understand the threat that they pose to our democracy.

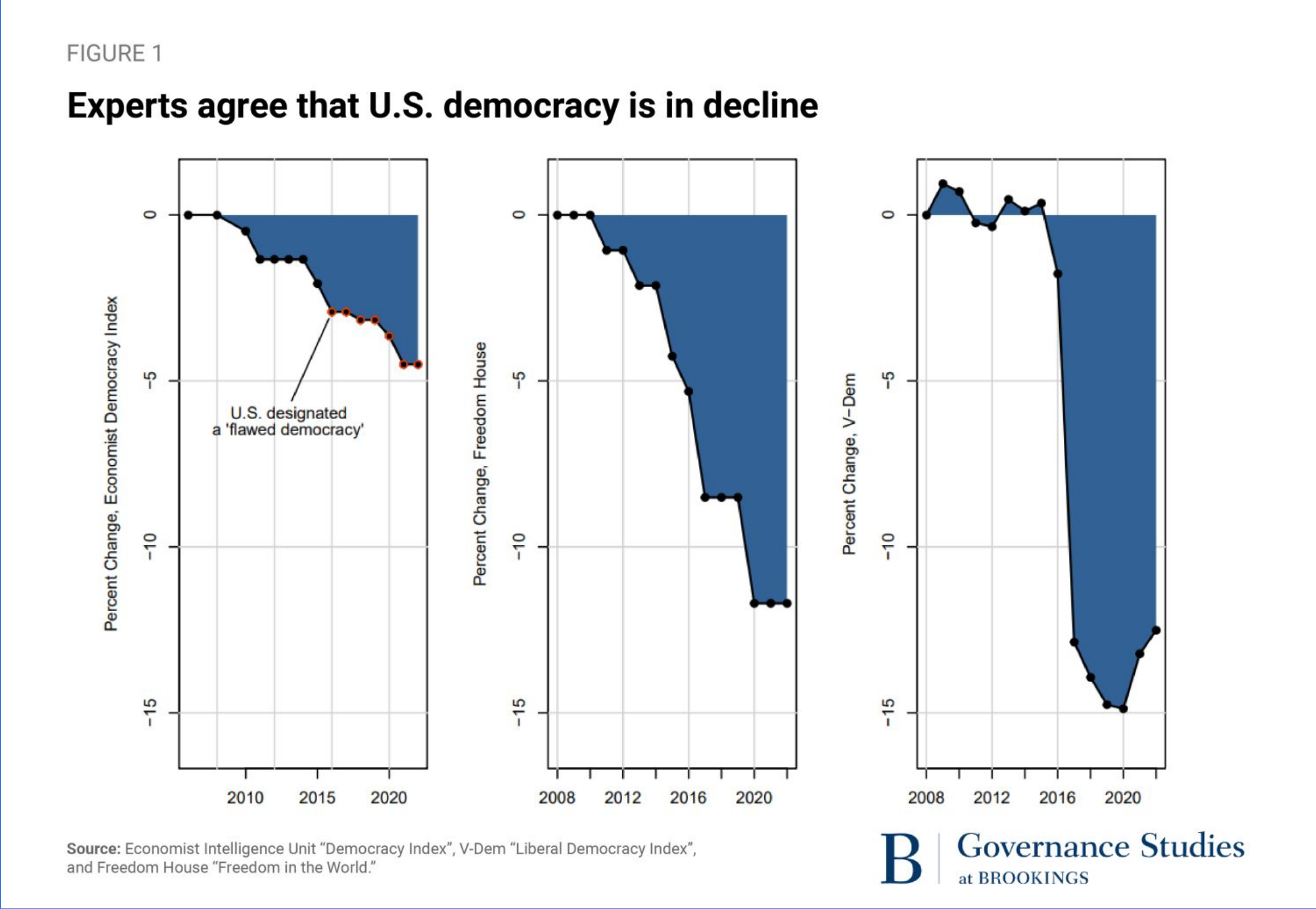
METHODS

- 1. Define Democratic Backsliding
- 2. Analyze other deteriorating democratic institutions
- 3. Compare them to the Trump administration, and observe connections between policies.
- 4. Assess the possibility of democratic backsliding in America

RESULTS

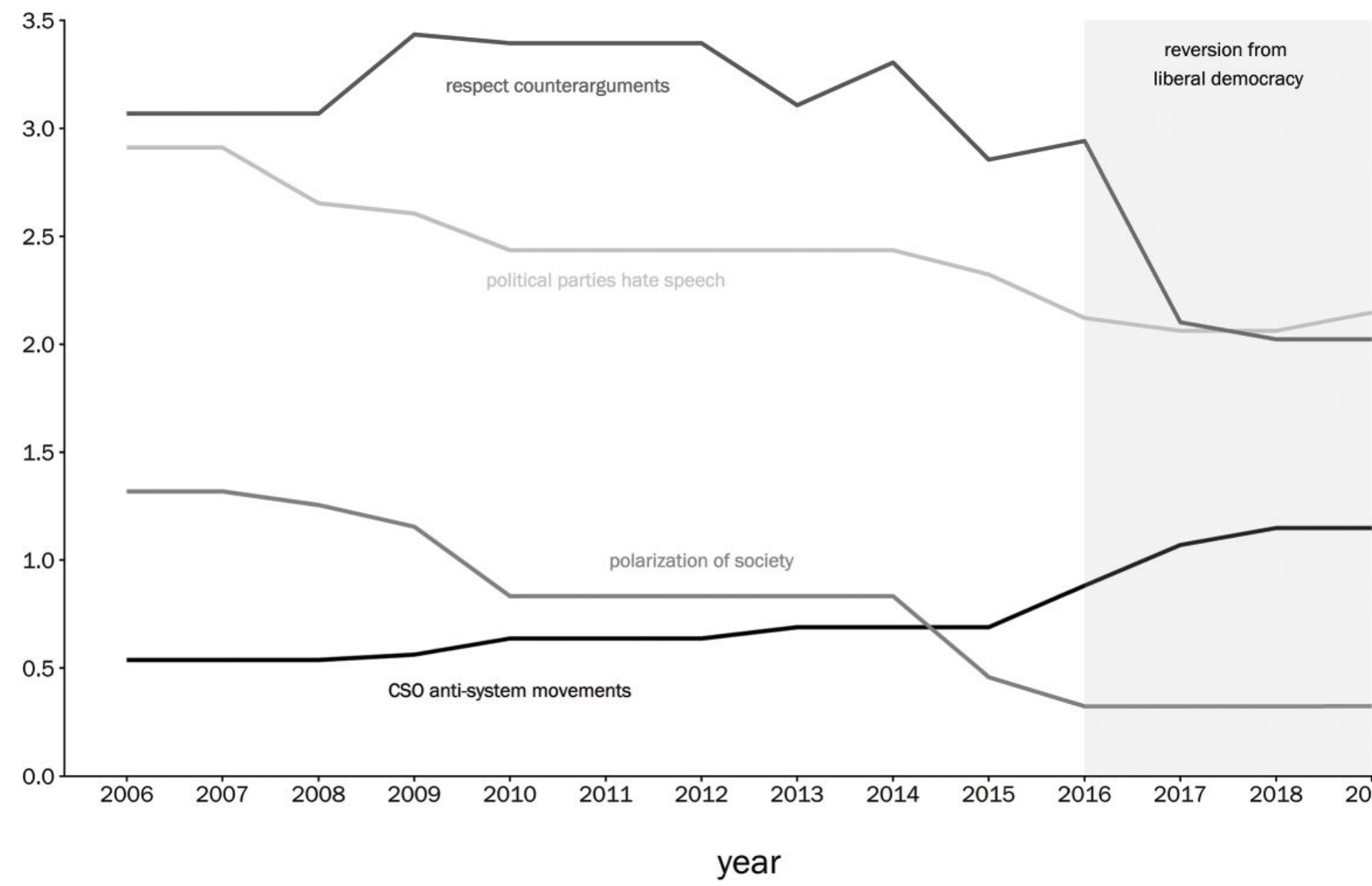
- Democracy in America has been decaying since 2010.
- A major drop occurred in 2016, the beginning of Trump’s first presidency.
- The policies of Trump resemble those of other modern authoritarian leaders including his approach to immigration, his extreme nationalism, and the expensive tariffs.
- His executive orders contribute to this authoritarian character: Dismantling the DOE, Firing thousands of government employees, etc.

How the Policies of the Trump Administration has Negatively Impacted American Democracy



Polarization and Populism:

- Polarization contributes heavily to Trump's populist methods of gaining support
 - Demonizing the left and destabilizing public confidence in the election process
 - Contributing to a partisan government in which a far right agenda (Project 25) is accepted
 - Forced the GOP to accept his far right agenda to maintain support



Checks and Balances:

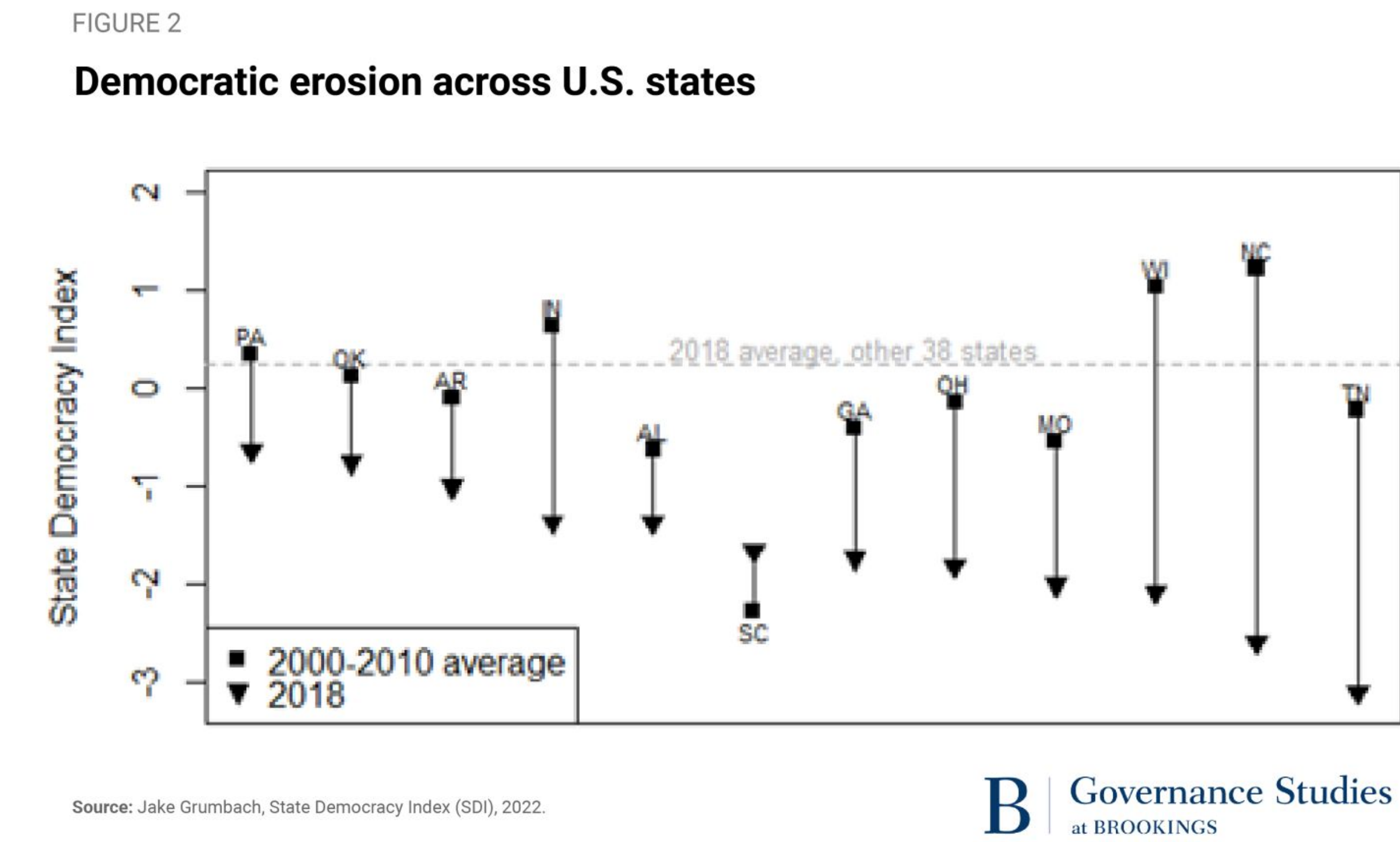
One of the defining features of a functional democracy is a reliable system of checks and balances to mediate power. Here's how the Trump administration has impacted ours:

- Trump has ignored numerous orders from the Judicial branch including deporting immigrants unlawfully.
- Establishment of DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) which has fired thousands of government employees and terminated numerous programs, many of which conflict with Trump’s agenda
- More lawsuits have been filed against the Trump administration within the first few months of Trump’s second term than against the Biden administration in all four years of his presidency.
- So far there have been no major outright defiances against the courts

REFERENCES

Haggard and Kaufman, Williamson, Iyengar, V-DEM

Democratic institutions have experienced a decline on the democracy index during Trump’s first term, and similar results are expected in the second term



Since the beginning of Trump’s second term, his willingness to exert authority and challenge the other forms of government has been defining his presidency