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Research Foundation**

Cordially Invites you for a Public Talk on

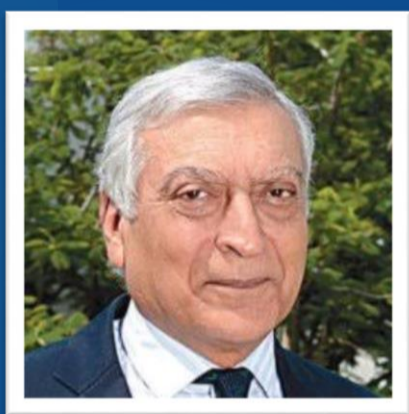
"How International Democracy Ratings Misrepresent India"

by



Prof Salvator Babones

Associate Professor, University of Sydney &
author 'Indian Democracy at 75: Who are the Barbarians at the Gate'



Amb Kanwal Sibal
Former Foreign Secretary
Will Preside



Shashi Shekhar Vempati
Former CEO, Prasar Bharati
Will Deliver Special Remarks

Dr Anirban Ganguly

Director, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation
& Member, NEC, BJP

Date: Wednesday, 9th November 2022 | Time: 6:00 PM
Venue: Lecture Hall 1 (Annexe), India International Centre,
Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi

Please join us for Tea at 5:30 PM
RSVP: 011-69047014, 9891312697, 9140824008

Speaker brief bio

Salvatore Babones is an associate professor at the University of Sydney and the author of the recent study of India's democracy rankings "Indian Democracy at 75: Who Are the Barbarians at the Gate?" He earned his MS (mathematical sciences) and PhD (sociology) from the Johns Hopkins University. His 2018 book *The New Authoritarianism: Trump, Populism, and the Tyranny of Experts* was named among the 'Best on Politics' by the *Wall Street Journal*.

How International Democracy Ratings Misrepresent India

Salvatore Babones

Despite a vibrant free press, a tenaciously independent judiciary, and 75 years of free and fair elections, India has somehow gained an international reputation as an authoritarian state bordering on fascism. The Economist Intelligence Unit considers India a "flawed democracy", Sweden's Varieties of Democracy Institute calls India an "electoral autocracy", and the Washington think tank Freedom House rates India as only "partially free". Major news organizations uncritically report such allegations, which have now become central to the global understandings of India.

But are these criticisms of Indian democracy actually correct? The stridently negative appraisals of Indian democracy published by the three major democracy rating organisations seem wildly disproportionate to the actual evidence marshalled to support them. In several instances, they smack of intentional deception. They are suffused with wanton speculation, misleading statistics, and uncritical reproductions of activist accusations. They are, in a word: wrong.

The international ratings of Indian democracy misrepresent India through many subterfuges. At the simplest level, they ascribe the democratic failings of an earlier era to the current government. More nefariously, they cite selective statistics when the very data sources on which they draw contain more comprehensive information that would paint a more positive picture. At their worst, they present numbers that have clearly been manipulated. Careful research can expose "how" India is misrepresented in these indices. The answers to the deeper question—"why?"—can only be surmised.