DAVID RUNCIMAN, *HOW DEMOCRACY ENDS,*
BASIC BOOKS, 2018, PP. 256.

Review by Răzvan-Samir Avram[*]

As the title suggests, this book is based on the premise that democracy as we know as a result of a sum of evolutionary processes is currently in a process of instability due to factors and elements that threaten to slowly but surely erode democracy until it enters into irrelevance and replaces it with totalitarianism.

The book is structured in 4 chapters, each analyzing a distinct cause that erodes the democratic process but also providing a contextualization in order to better understand the historical causes and the foundation of the problem.

The chapter entitled *Coup*? Begins with the probability of riots as historical factors that led to overturns of governments and regimes in the past, in this respect being given as an example the 30s. However, the author believes that future uprisings will not be caused by social or economic factors, offering three arguments: the level of violence has fallen, the high level of wealth and the fact that institutions have learned from the lessons of the past. However, the author identifies as the main cause of future uprisings a certain democratic setback that is beginning to emerge at the institutional level. Specifically, the author speaks of the fact that politicians are beginning to practice an executive aggrandizement that is the practice of a facade democracy. To these are added the rise of populism and the use of conspiracy theories, where there is an increase in support for populism due to the increase of social inequality.

The chapter entitled *Catastrophe* offers 3 possibilities that can bring about the end of civilization: the use of weapons of mass destruction, environmental degradation and the prospects of the slide toward totalitarianism. These scenarios are possible due to the inattention of the politicians who decide to address the real issue while climate change is considered too abstract to be addressed, a similar issue as in the case of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the author draws attention to the fact that civilization will be destroyed before democracy.

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In the chapter entitled *Technological takeover?* the author analyzes the relationship between state and machine from Hobbes's Levianthan. The basic idea of this chapter is that technology can help direct democracy. However, it is noted that technological development comes to support more totalitarian regimes where he offer as an example the universal credit system of China.

The last chapter is intended to offer alternatives in view of the perspective of the political system's malaitness. The first solution called pragmatic authoritarianism, a kind of enlightened despotism, proposing the advantage of totalitarianism as a quick solution of problems, but proposing measures in order to prevent the slide toward dictatorship.

The second solution is called epistocracy defined as the leadership of society by its best specialists in the fields of science in particular. However, the main vulnerability is that education does not prevent anyone from becoming a dictator.