

Far from being the necessary result of a moral evolution of humankind, democracy is something uncertain and improbable and must never be taken for granted. It is an always fragile conquest that needs to be defended as well as deepened. There is no threshold of democracy that once reached will guarantee its continued existence. Democracy is in peril not only when there is insufficient consensus and allegiance to the values it embodies, but also when its agonistic dynamic is hindered by an apparent excess of consensus, which usually masks a disquieting apathy. It is also endangered by the growing marginalization of entire groups whose status as an 'underclass' practically puts them outside the political community.

(The Return of the Political. CHANTAL MOUFFE)

Discussion Questions:

1. According to the Mouffe, when is democracy in danger?
2. What makes for a strong democracy?
3. How can a democracy be maintained if it is so fragile?
4. What are the main challenges facing democracies today?
5. How can international assistance best help emergent democracies?