

Democracy for All?

V-DEM ANNUAL DEMOCRACY REPORT 2018



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V-DEM ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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V-Dem is a unique approach to measuring democracy – historical, multidimensional, nuanced, and disaggregated – employing state-of-the-art methodology.

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) produces the largest global dataset on democracy with some 19 million data for 201 countries from 1789 to 2017. Involving over 3,000 scholars and other country experts,

V-Dem measures hundreds of different attributes of democracy. V-Dem enables new ways to study the nature, causes, and consequences of democracy embracing its multiple meanings.

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A Word from the Team

We are pleased to present our second Annual Democracy Report. We are proud and delighted to count you among our readers, and we hope that you find the report interesting, timely, and useful.

In the 2018 Democracy Report we find that global levels of democracy are still close to an all-time high. However, even though the electoral aspects of democracy have improved in many countries in recent years, freedom of expression, media, and civil society are under threat in other parts of the world. The report identifies disquieting trends in several key countries, such as Brazil, India, Poland, Russia, Turkey, and the United States.

The V-Dem project is a global collaboration headquartered at the V-Dem Institute, Department of Political Science, Gothenburg University. While more than 3,000 scholars and experts constitute the global V-Dem team, the Institute is run by us - a team of 19 people. In addition to our aim of producing cutting edge research, we work all year round employing unique, state of the art techniques to provide you and other users with global data of the highest possible quality.

Over the past year, we have focused on improving and expanding the vast V-Dem dataset even further – culminating in the release of version 8. For the very first time, data from 'Historical V-Dem' is integrated – expanding the coverage to 228 years from 1789 to 2017. We are excited that the dataset now includes more than 200 political units and over 450 indicators and indices of democracy.

Team spirit and a collaborative nature are key elements of V-Dem and the Institute. It permeates all the work we do and all parts of the team, from the Principal Investigators – Michael Coppedge,

John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I Lindberg, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jan Teorell – and the core group of scholars who are Project Managers, to the global network of Country Experts, Country Coordinators and Regional Managers. We work with some 3,000 individuals from almost all the countries in the world in order to assemble the 19 million data points in the V-Dem datasets. Without our truly experienced and knowledgeable experts providing nuanced, precise, and local expertise, V-Dem would not exist today. We would like to extend a big thank you to our Country Experts, Country Coordinators and Regional Managers!

Even though V-Dem is an academic mission at heart, we always strive to be relevant to the “real world”. Over the past years, we have had the opportunity to collaborate and engage with many international organizations, governments, and NGOs, ranging from the World Bank, to the Swedish government, organizations like Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and grassroots groups in Nepal. With our V-Dem Regional Centers around the globe that we are so proud of, our outreach activities continue to grow. We look forward to another year of fruitful collaboration with our partners around the world.

We also hope that you will also find the series of working papers, thematic briefs, country briefs, and policy briefs available on the website (www.v-dem.net) helpful to support of democracy in practice.

We would like to thank everyone who has made, and continues to make, the V-Dem journey possible.

*Sincerely,
The V-Dem Institute Team*



Executive summary





The focus of the V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018 is “Democracy for All?” for two reasons.

FIRST, CITIZENS – not just the territorial unit in which they live – are central to democracy. In addition to the conventional averages across countries, we therefore analyze liberal and electoral democracy across the world weighted by the size of each country’s population. This metric captures better how many people in the world enjoy democratic rights and freedoms.



SECOND, EVEN IN DEMOCRACIES, some groups – women, social groups, and the poor – are systematically disadvantaged from access to political power. We therefore analyze political exclusion by gender, social groups, and socio-economic status.

The key findings are as follows.



Global levels of democracy remain high, but autocratization – the decline of democratic attributes – affects 2.5 billion people and is gaining momentum

-  Democracy is still in good standing across the world. Global levels of democracy remain close to their all-time high.
-  For the first time since 1979, the number of countries backsliding (24) on democracy is again the same as the number of countries advancing.
-  Autocratization is now manifesting in a number of large countries including Brazil, India, Russia, Turkey, and the United States.
-  Autocratization affects one third of the world’s population, or some 2.5 billion people. This represents a massive reduction in the global protection of rights and freedoms.

Multiparty elections continue to improve, but are at risk of losing their meaning

-  Core electoral aspects of democracy continue to improve in many countries.
-  Aspects of democracy that make elections truly meaningful are in decline. Media autonomy, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, and the rule of law have undergone the greatest declines among democracy metrics in recent years. This trend affects both autocracies and democracies.

Despite gradual advances, inclusion remains an illusion

-  Liberal democracies are systematically better than other political regimes at ensuring the *de facto* ability of all citizens to influence the political process – including women, various social groups, and individuals with different socio-economic status.
-  Even in democracies, however, some groups – women, minorities and the poor – are systematically disadvantaged in their access to political power. Political exclusion reduces the scope of liberal and electoral democratic rights and freedoms.

Global average levels of inclusion of women and minority social groups remain stable

- ↑ Global average levels of inclusion of women and minority social groups remain stable.
- ↑ Several countries have continued to advance in terms of inclusion for women.
- ↓ Only 15 percent of the world's population, or 1.1 billion people, live in a society where political power is distributed at least somewhat equally by gender.
- ↓ Half a billion people live in countries with higher levels of exclusion of minority social groups than ten years ago.

Political exclusion due to socio-economic status is making the rich even more powerful

- ↓ Exclusion due to socio-economic status has continuously become more severe since the 1970s. Intensified political exclusion now affect poorer groups in countries home to one-quarter of the world's population, or almost 2 billion people.
- ↓ Only six countries registered a higher level of inclusiveness in the distribution of political power by socio-economic status between 2007 and 2017, while 14 nations declined significantly. The countries with the greatest backsliding are Burundi, Mauritania, Iraq, Yemen, and Panama.
- ↓ Insufficient access to healthcare or education limits the ability for political participation for an increasing share of the population in 16 and 15 countries respectively, while only five (health) and four (education) countries improved.

V-DEM IN NUMBERS

5 Indices for Democracy Ideals

- **Electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian democracy and their component indices**
- **47 mid-level indices and**
- **350+ specific indicators**

A Vast International Collaboration

- **6 Principal Investigators and 14 Project Managers**
- **V-Dem Institute with 17 staff**
- **30 Regional Managers, 170 Country Coordinators**
- **3,000 Country Experts from 177 countries**

Dataset Version 8

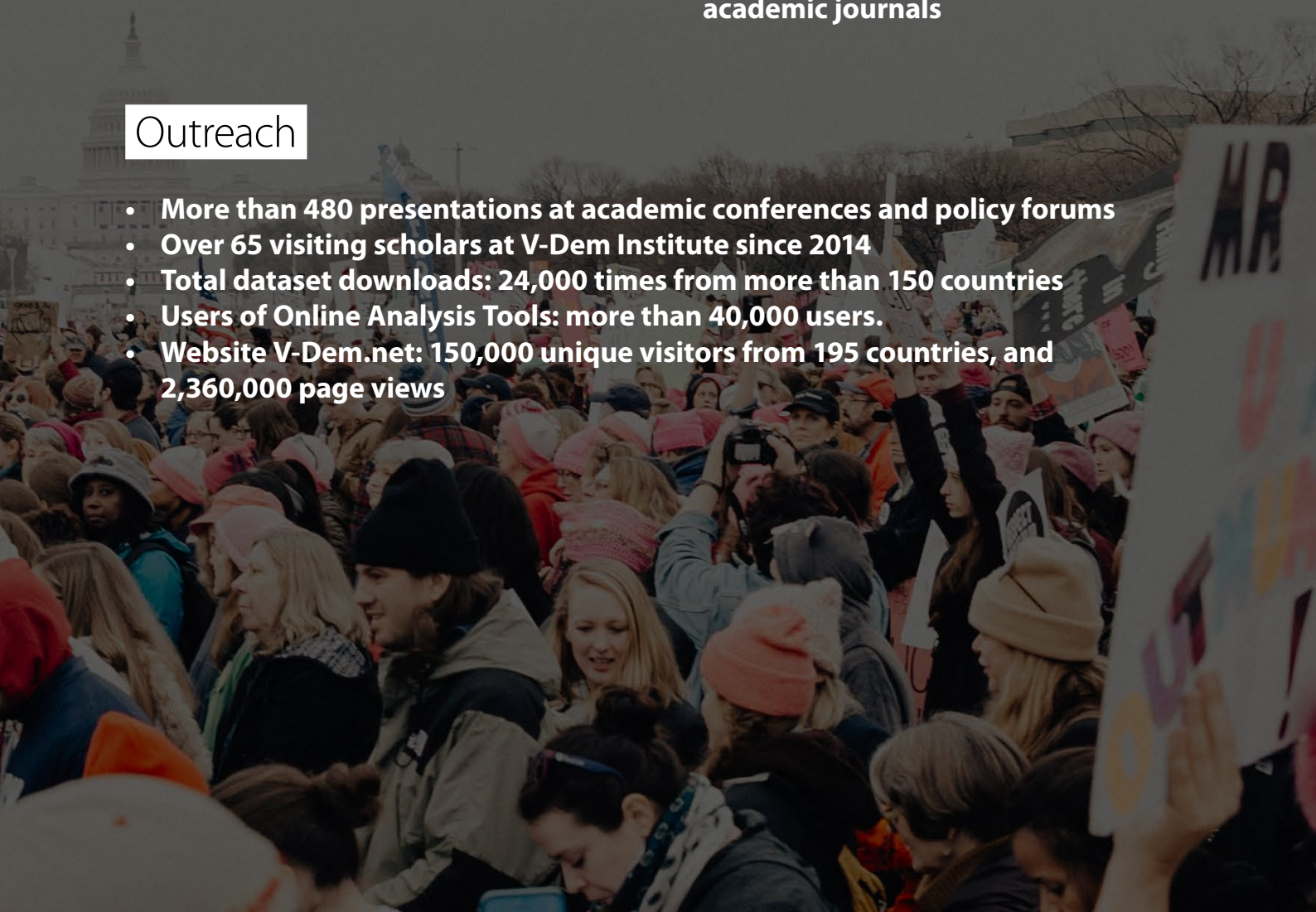
- **201 countries with a yearly coverage: 1789-2017**
- **12 new indices**
- **19 million data points**

Publications

- **66 V-Dem Working Papers**
- **26 Country Briefs/Reports**
- **15 Briefing Papers**
- **23 papers published in academic journals**

Outreach

- **More than 480 presentations at academic conferences and policy forums**
- **Over 65 visiting scholars at V-Dem Institute since 2014**
- **Total dataset downloads: 24,000 times from more than 150 countries**
- **Users of Online Analysis Tools: more than 40,000 users.**
- **Website V-Dem.net: 150,000 unique visitors from 195 countries, and 2,360,000 page views**



V-Dem Methodology: Aggregating Expert Assessments

Laura Maxwell, Kyle L. Marquardt and Anna Lührmann

V-DEM HAS DEVELOPED innovative methods for aggregating expert judgments in a way that produces valid and reliable estimates of difficult-to-observe concepts. This aspect of the project is critical because many key features of democracy are not directly observable. For example, it is easy to observe and code whether or not a legislature has the legal right to investigate the executive when it engages in corruption. However, assessing the extent to which the legislature actually does so requires the evaluation of experts with extensive conceptual and case knowledge.

In general, expert-coded data raise concerns regarding comparability across time and space. Rating complex concepts requires judgment, which may vary across experts and cases. Moreover, because even equally knowledgeable experts may disagree, it is imperative to report measurement error to the user. We address these issues using both cutting-edge theory and methods, resulting in valid estimates of concepts relating to democracy.

We have recruited over 3,000 country experts to provide their judgment on different concepts and cases. These experts come from almost every country in the world, which allows us to leverage the opinions of experts from a diverse set of backgrounds. We typically gather data from five experts for each observation, which enables us to statistically account for both uncertainty about estimates and potential biases that experts may evince, using a custom-built Bayesian measurement model.

We ask our experts very detailed questions about specific concepts. In addition to being of interest in their own right, experts are better suited to the task of coding specific concepts rather than broader concepts such as “democracy.” Box M.1 provides the V-Dem question on academic freedom as an example.

As Box 1 makes clear, we endeavor to both make our questions clear to experts and craft response categories that are not overly open to interpretation. However, we cannot ensure that two experts understand descriptions such as ‘somewhat respected’ in a uniform way (a response of “2” in Box M.1)—even when ‘somewhat’ is accompanied by a carefully formulated description. Put simply, one expert’s ‘somewhat’ may be another expert’s ‘weakly’ (a response of “1” in Box M.1), even if they perceive the same level of freedom of expression in a particular country. Of equal importance, all experts code more than one indicator over time, and their level of expertise may vary, making them more or less reliable in different cases.

Box M1. Question: Is there academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression related to political issues?

Responses:

- 0: Not respected by public authorities. Censorship and intimidation are frequent. Academic activities and cultural expressions are severely restricted or controlled by the government.
- 1: Weakly respected by public authorities. Academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression are practiced occasionally, but direct criticism of the government is mostly met with repression.
- 2: Somewhat respected by public authorities. Academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression are practiced routinely, but strong criticism of the government is sometimes met with repression.
- 3: Mostly respected by public authorities. There are few limitations on academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression, and resulting sanctions tend to be infrequent and soft.
- 4: Fully respected by public authorities. There are no restrictions on academic freedom or cultural expression.

Pemstein et al. (2018) have developed a Bayesian Item-Response Theory (IRT) estimation strategy that accounts for many of these concerns, while also providing estimates of remaining random measurement error. We use this strategy to convert the ordinal responses experts provide into continuous estimates of the concepts being measured. The basic logic behind these models is that an unobserved latent trait exists, but we are only able to see imperfect manifestations of this trait. By taking all of these manifest items (in our case, expert ratings) together, we are able to provide an estimate of the trait. In the dataset, we present the user with a best estimate of the value for an observation (*the point estimate*), as well as an estimate of uncertainty (*the credible regions*, a Bayesian corollary of confidence intervals).

The IRT models we use allow for the possibility that experts have different thresholds for their ratings. These thresholds are estimated based on patterns in the data, and then incorporated into the final latent estimate. In this way, we are able to correct for the previously-discussed concern that one expert’s “somewhat” may be another expert’s “weakly” (a concept known as Differential Item Functioning). Apart from experts holding different thresholds for each category, we also allow for their reliability (in IRT terminology, their “discrimination parameter”) to idiosyncratically vary in the IRT models, based on the degree to which they agree with other experts. Experts with higher reliability have a greater influence on

concept estimation, accounting for the concern that not all experts are equally expert on all concepts and cases.

To facilitate cross-country comparability, we have encouraged country experts to code multiple countries using two techniques. We refer to the first as **bridge coding**, in which an expert codes the same set of questions for the same time period as the original country they coded. This form of coding is particularly useful when the two countries have divergent regime histories because experts are then more likely to code the full range of the ordinal question scale, providing us with more information as to where an expert's thresholds are. By extension, this information also provides us with a better sense of the thresholds of her colleagues who only coded one of the countries she coded. The second technique is **lateral coding**. This has the purpose of gaining a great deal of information regarding an individual expert's thresholds by asking her to code many different cases that utilize a wide variety of other experts. By comparing her codings to those of many other experts, we are able to gain a greater sense of how she systematically diverges from experts who code other cases; conversely, we also gain information on how those other experts diverge from her. Both of these techniques provide us with more precise and cross-nationally comparable concept estimates.

Finally, we employ **anchoring vignettes** to further improve the estimates of expert-level parameters and thus the concepts we measure. Anchoring vignettes are descriptions of hypothetical cases that provide all the necessary information to answer a given question. Since there is no contextual information in the vignettes, they provide a great deal of information about how individual experts understand the scale itself. Furthermore, since all experts can code the same set of vignettes, they provide insight into how experts systematically diverge from each other in their coding. Incorporating information from vignettes into the model thus provides us with further cross-national comparability in the concept estimates, as well as more precision in the estimates themselves. The output of the IRT models is an interval-level point estimate of the latent trait that typically varies from -5 to 5, along with the credible

regions. These estimates are the best to use for statistical analysis. However, they are difficult for some users to interpret in substantive terms (what does -1.23 mean with regard to the original scale?). We therefore also provide interval-level point estimates that have been linearly transformed back to the original coding scale that experts use to code each case. These estimates typically run from 0 to 4, and users can refer to the V-Dem codebook to substantively interpret them. Finally, we also provide ordinal versions of each variable. Each of the latter two is also accompanied by credible regions.

Box M.2. Key Terms.

Point Estimate: A best estimate of a concept's value.

Confidence Intervals: Credible regions for which the upper and lower bounds represent a range of probable values for a point estimate. These bounds are based on the interval in which the measurement model places 68 percent of the probability mass for each score, which is generally approximately equivalent to the upper and lower bounds of one standard deviation from the median.

Significant Differences or Changes: When the upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals for two point estimates do not overlap, we are confident that the difference between them is real and not a result of measurement error.

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- Pemstein, Daniel, Kyle L. Marquardt, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Joshua Krusell, and Farhad Miri. 2018. "The V-Dem Measurement Model: Latent Variable Analysis for Cross-National and Cross-Temporal Expert-Coded Data." *University of Gothenburg, Varieties of Democracy Institute: Working Paper No. 21*, 3d edition.
- Pemstein, Daniel, Eitan Tzelgov and Yi-ting Wang. 2015. "Evaluating and Improving Item Response Theory Models for Cross-National Expert Surveys." *University of Gothenburg, Varieties of Democracy Institute: Working Paper No. 1*.

TABLE M.1: VERSIONS OF THE V-DEM INDICATORS.

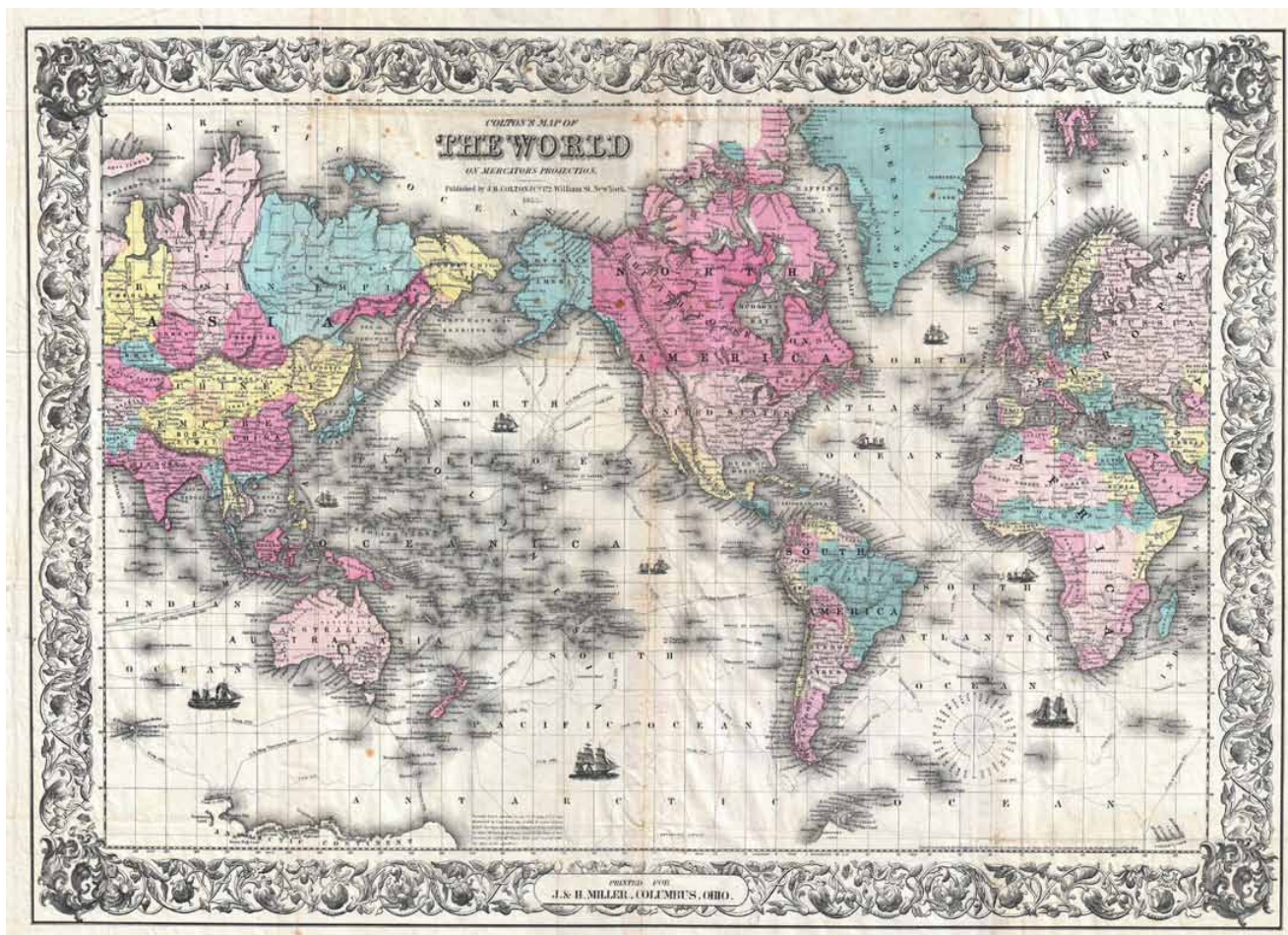
SUFFIX	SCALE	DESCRIPTION	RECOMMENDED USE
None	Interval	Original output of the V-Dem measurement model	Regression analysis
_osp	Interval	Linearized transformation of the measurement model output on the original scale	Substantive interpretation of graphs and data
_ord	Ordinal	Most likely ordinal value taking uncertainty estimates into account	Substantive interpretation of graphs and data
_codelow / _codehigh	Interval	One Standard deviation above (_codehigh) and below (_codelow) the point estimate	Evaluating differences over time within units
_sd	Interval	Standard deviation of the interval estimate	Creating confidence intervals based on user needs



First Release of Historical V-Dem

This year, for the very first time, we release the Historical V-Dem data. The Historical V-Dem project is a unique data collection effort coding numerous indicators of democracy and other institutional features dating from the French Revolution and continuing all the way through to the early twentieth century, covering 91 polities. By including Historical V-Dem, around 200 of the V-Dem indicators extend as far back as 1789.

Carl Henrik Knutsen, Moa Olin and Jan Teorell



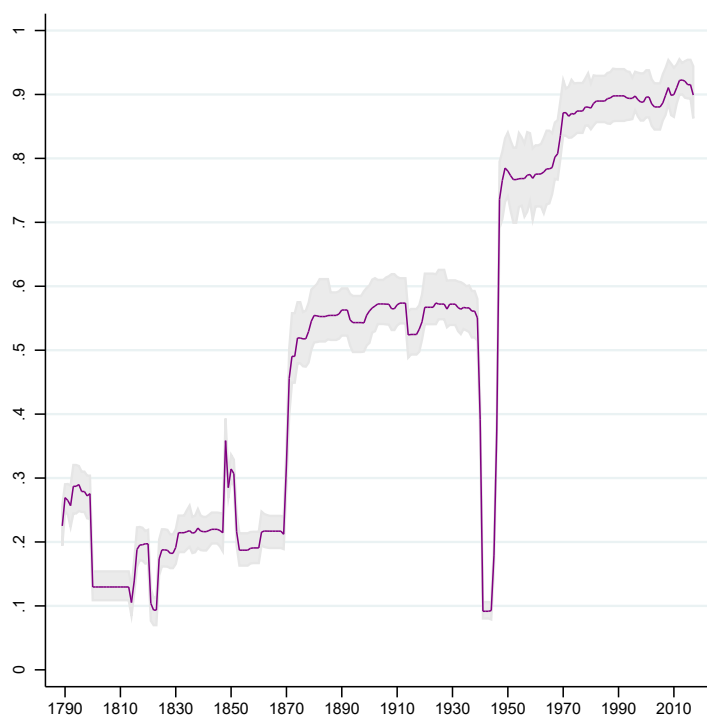
Covers 91 polities from 1789

The Historical V-Dem sample includes 14 polities from Africa and the Middle East, 21 from the Americas, 14 from Asia and the Pacific, and 42 from Europe. Altogether 91 polities are covered, although coverage is somewhat lower for most indicators. The integration of Historical V-Dem in the V-Dem dataset means that many countries have data coverage on numerous V-Dem indicators from 1789 to the present. These include all major countries with continuous lineage as independent states from the 18th or 19th centuries, but also some major colonies such as India and Indonesia that are covered for the full time period. Historical V-Dem also contains several additional historical polities that have ceased to exist, for example Bavaria and the Two Sicilies.

New indicators

In addition to extending existing V-Dem indicators and indices – such as V-Dem’s Electoral Democracy Index; see Figure H.1 – Historical V-Dem introduces 70 new indicators. These include both indicators coded by country experts and many indicators coded by research assistants. The new indicators pertain to various institutional features, some of which were particularly relevant for 19th century polities. For example, as the 19th century was an era of state building, Historical V-Dem includes new indicators focusing on the state and features of bureaucracy, as well as indicators on the support coalitions of political regimes.

FIGURE H.1: ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (EDI) IN FRANCE SINCE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1789-2017.



The creation of historical V-Dem/Methodology

The Historical V-Dem project started in 2013 and has since acquired significant human and financial support. A number of research assistants from several universities have been involved in coding indicators that did not require the attention of country experts. In addition, one or sometimes two highly qualified country experts were identified and recruited to code each polity for indicators of a more evaluative nature. The ideal Historical V-Dem country expert has an accomplished academic record of working on the political history of the country, identifiable competencies in a broad range of political-institutional features and comparative knowledge of other countries. The historical country experts conducted their coding through the V-Dem web-platform, which was customized for Historical V-Dem's purposes. The country expert coding started in December 2015 and is still ongoing to improve the coverage for some countries.

For the V-Dem dataset, released in April this year, the Historical V-Dem data is merged with existing V-Dem indicators. Hence, many of the V-Dem indicators now extend back to 1789. In order to ensure comparability of the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem scores, and that the data from 1789 to 2017 constitute consistent time series, several measures have been taken. To indicate one example, Historical V-Dem experts always code twenty years of history from the 20th century, thus providing "coding overlap" with other V-Dem experts. These measures provide valuable pieces of information,

which are leveraged by the V-Dem measurement model that, to the extent it is possible, minimizes coder error and addresses issues of comparability across countries and over time.

The Historical V-Dem team

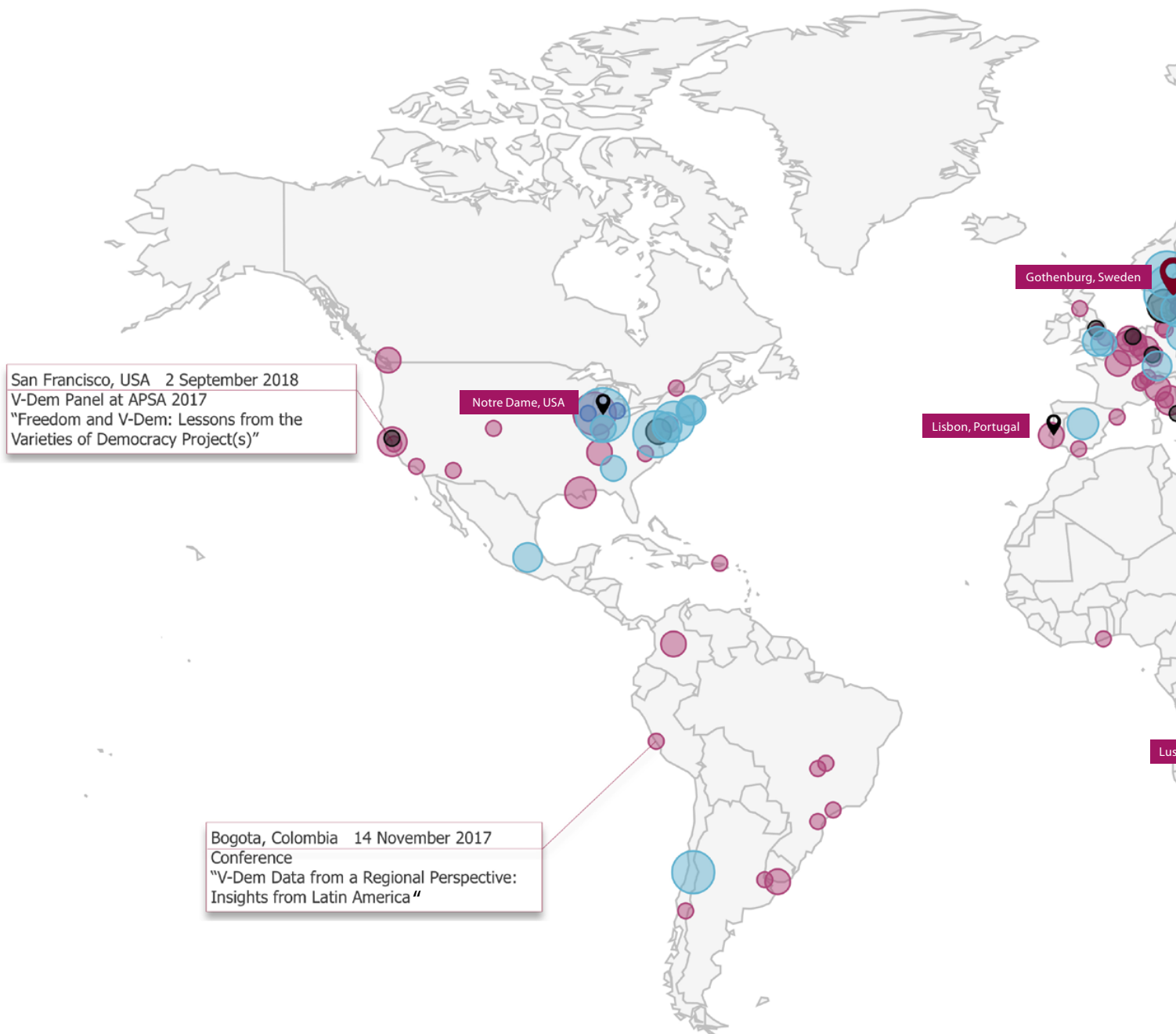
The Historical V-Dem project is managed from Lund University in Sweden and the University of Oslo in Norway. The project works in collaboration with the V-Dem Institute at Gothenburg University, Aarhus University, Boston University, Harvard University, and the University of Texas at Austin. Jan Teorell (Lund University) and Carl Henrik Knutsen (University of Oslo) are the principal investigators on the project.

Historical V-Dem is mainly funded through two large research grants from the Norwegian and Swedish Research Councils.

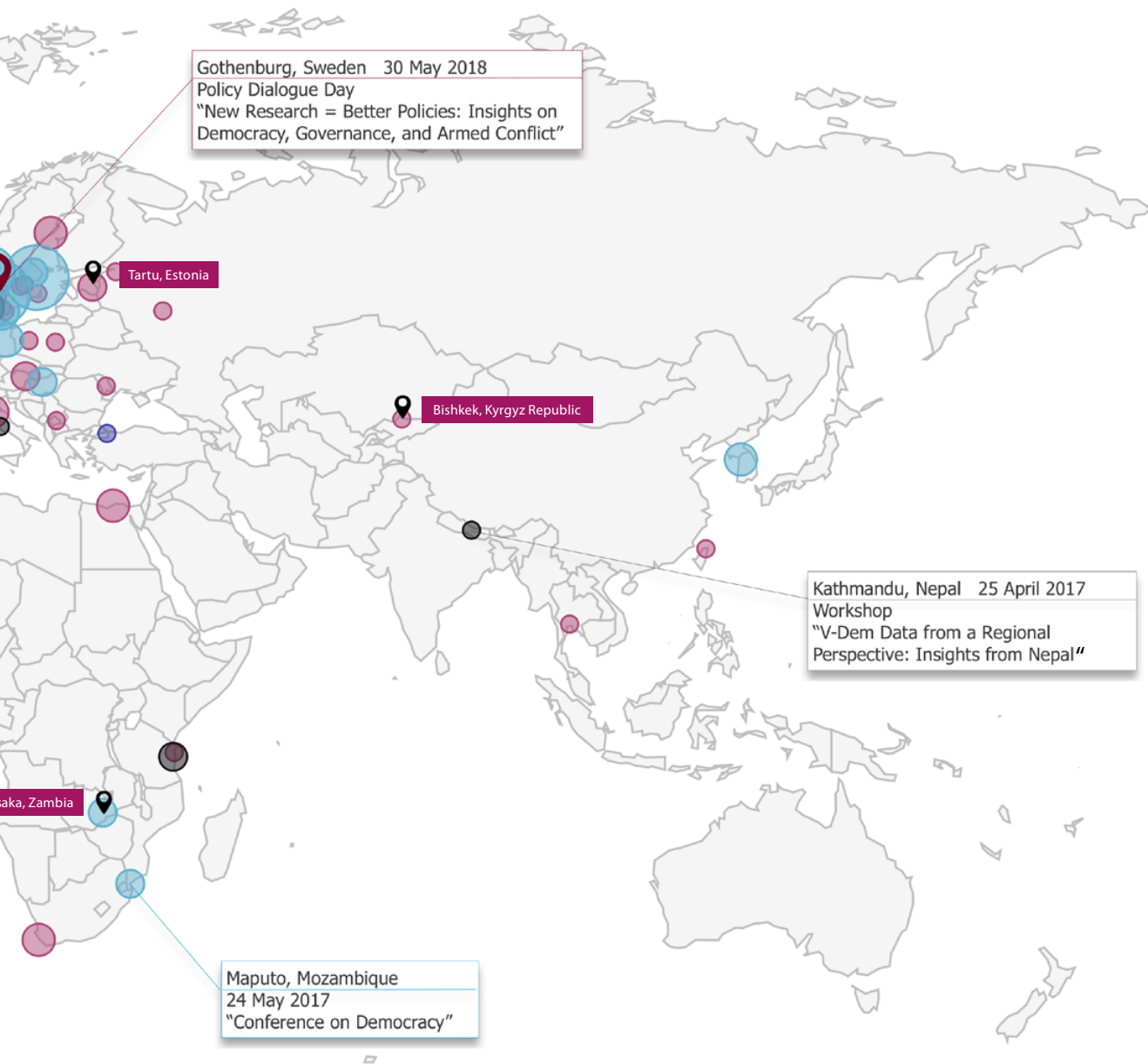
HISTORICAL V-DEM IN SHORT

- Extends existing V-Dem data back to 1789 and adds new indicators
- Includes around 250 indicators of democracy and other institutional features
- Covers 91 polities
- Releases data incorporated in the V-Dem V8 dataset

V-DEM COLLABORATIONS AND EVENTS



● Presentation ● Workshop ● Lecture ● Multiple Engagements



ments  V-Dem Headquarters  V-Dem Regional Centers

Section 1: State of the World 2017

– Liberal and Electoral Democracy

While the global level of democracy is not changing dramatically, and the majority of the world's population lives in a democracy, one third of the world's population – 2.5 billion people – live in countries with declining democratic traits. The most visible feature of democracy – elections – remains robust and is even improving in some places. Where backsliding occurs, it does so in more obscure ways, such as by undermining media freedom, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. With continued decline in these areas, the meaningfulness of elections may also become threatened.

Anna Lührmann, Valeriya Mechkova and Staffan I. Lindberg

HOW DEMOCRATIC is the world today? When addressing this question, most analyses report on the number or share of countries that are democratic, authoritarian, or change. Yet citizens—not just the territorial unit in which they live—are central to democracy. Bhutan's recent transition to democracy serving 800 000 people is laudable but 1.4 billion people still breathe under dictatorship in China. The recent significant declines in liberal democracy in India and the United States alone have affected some 1.6 billion people, while less than 1 million people benefited from the improvements in Bhutan and Vanuatu.

This first section of the *Democracy for All? Democracy Report 2018* analyzes the state of democracy in the world as of 2017. In view of this year's theme we introduce a new metric, in addition to conventional country average measures: levels of democracy weighted by the size of each country's population. These measures better reflect how many people in the world enjoy democratic rights and freedoms. Furthermore, countries with larger populations typically exert influence over neighbouring countries and in the interna-

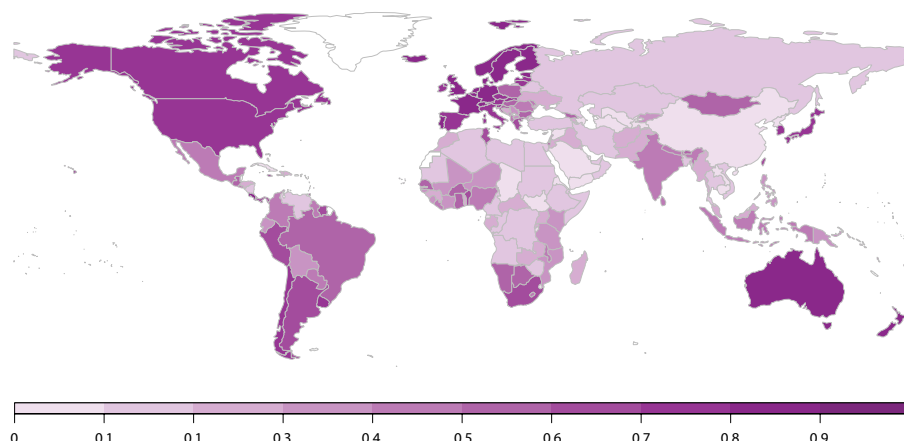
tional arena in ways that small countries do not. Our dual metric approach recognizes the importance of each state, but also each individual's rights.

Democracy in the World 2017

The state of the world in terms of liberal democracy 2017 is depicted in Figure 1.1. It is based on V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), where each quintile on the 0-1 scale has been given its own color-code. This is a broad stroke that does not take into account the confidence intervals around each country's point estimate. Liberal democracy is measured as the existence of electoral democracy in combination with three additional components: rule of law ensuring respect for civil liberties, and constraints on the executive by the judiciary, as well as by the legislature.¹

By this measure, as the world map shows, liberal democracy is by the end of 2017 still most well-established and remains relatively strong in portions of the Americas, Europe, Southern Africa, and South-East Asia. The exact ratings and changes over the last ten

FIGURE 1.1: THE STATE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN 2017.



1. The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index reflects both the liberal and electoral principles of democracy, each of which constitutes one half of the scores for the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI). V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) is the first systematic measure of the de facto existence of all institutions in Robert Dahl's (1971, 1989) famous articulation of "polyarchy" as electoral democracy. For details about the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of all V-Dem's democracy indices, see Coppedge et al. (2018b) and Pemstein et al. (2018).

years for all countries are found below in Figure 1.6, and the more detailed statistics across all varieties of democracy are in the Appendix. But what are the trends and main recent changes in the world?

A Global Trend of Autocratization – Except in Africa

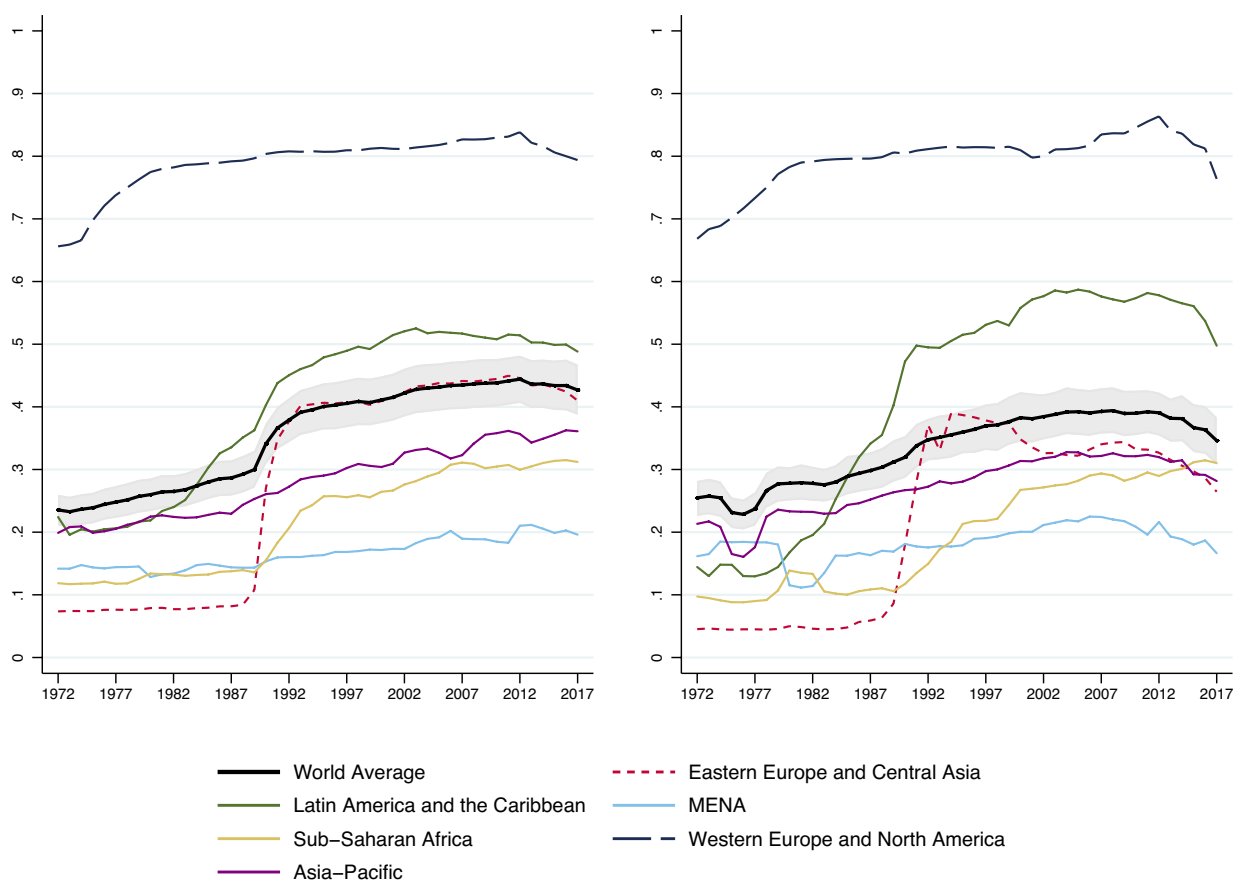
Figure 1 displays the average global level of liberal democracy, based on 178 countries in the world, from 1972 to 2017, accompanied by confidence intervals capturing the full range of uncertainty associated with the estimates.² It also depicts the average levels for each of the regions of the world. The left-hand panel is based on traditional averages across all countries. It captures the well-known “third wave” of democratization, which began with the 1974 overthrow of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in Portugal. Subsequent decades, characterized by the end of the Cold War and frequent pro-

tests across the Global South, saw a gradual but steady increase in liberal democracy until around the year 2005. Since then, levels of democracy have been relatively stable across the world.

Notably, however, there is a small decline, although this is within the confidence bounds, over the past few years. It is particularly noticeable for the three regions with the highest average levels of democracy: Western Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. Thus, the autocratization³ trend we are witnessing today seems to occur primarily in the more democratic regions of the world. Yet, that depiction conceals that some of the most populous countries are part of this autocratization trend.

Therefore, the right-hand panel in Figure 1.2 displays levels of democracy weighted by the size of each country’s population. Cal-

FIGURE 1.2: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES (RIGHT PANEL POPULATION-WEIGHTED).



2. Following Polity’s methodology, countries include semi-sovereign political units like Palestine. The number of countries in the dataset varies in the chosen period, from 157 in 1972 to 178 in 2017, dependent on the emergence of new countries and the dissolution of others. For a full account of the political units, see Coppedge et al. (2018d).

3. Autocratization naturally has a floor effect: in the extremely autocratic countries cannot become much worse, but in principle autocratization can affect countries at any level on the scale.

culating the averages in this manner allows us to understand the level of democracy that the average citizen in each region is living under. First, the levels of liberal democracy and its components are overall much lower when weighted by population. This reflects the fact that a number of small states score very high on the LDI, while countries like China with large populations, do not.

Second, the current reversal is *much* more pronounced when we take the size of the population into account. The population-weighted estimates show a particularly steep decline in the last few years, suggesting that recent trends in autocratization are affecting large portions of the global population. From this perspective, the global level of democracy peaked around 2004 and in terms of these point estimates, we now back to the global level of democracy recorded shortly after the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. The last six years has brought us back 25 years in time.⁴

In terms of the share of the population enjoying democratic rights and freedoms, Western Europe and North America are back to levels of liberal democracy last seen nearly 40 years ago, and Latin America some 25 years ago. These are, indeed, worrying findings. The only region that does seem to be relatively resilient to the current autocratization trend is sub-Saharan Africa, which in the popu-

lation-weighted metric even shows a small increase in the region's level of democracy.

A Growing Challenge

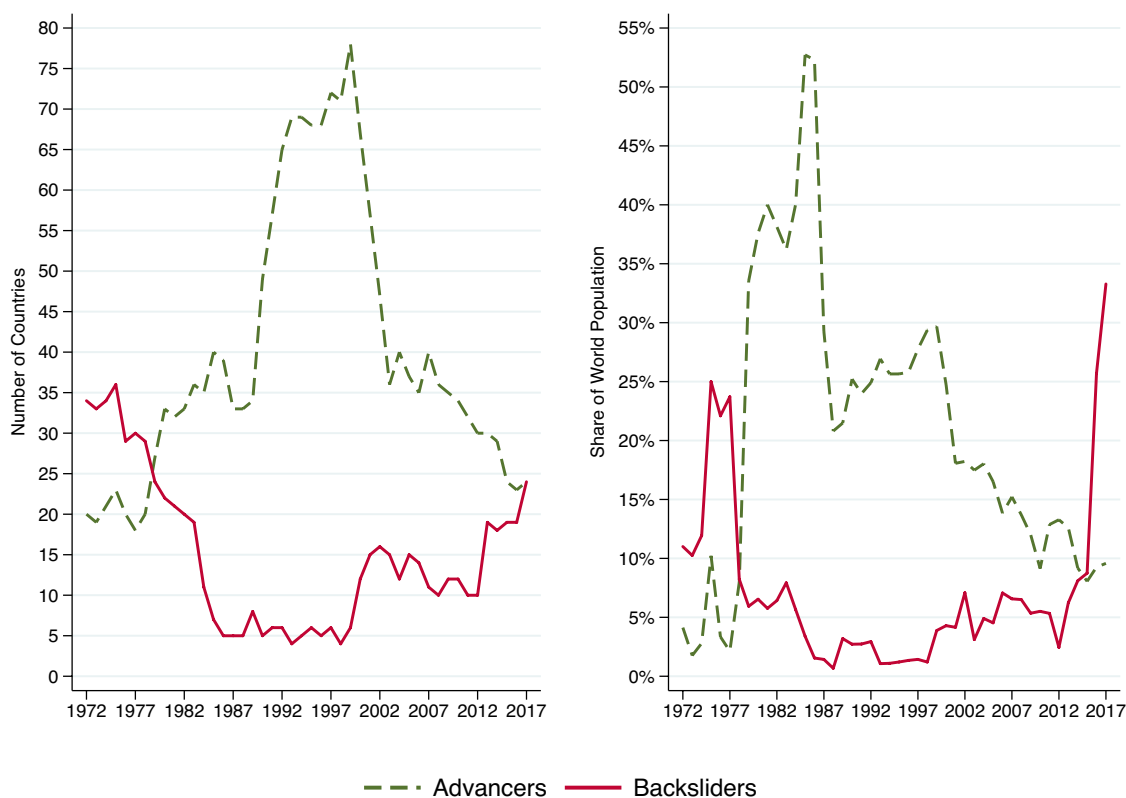
Another way to look at the global development of democracy is displayed in Figure 1.3.

The left-hand panel displays the number of countries experiencing significant change over the prior ten years in terms of the LDI, for each year since 1972. The right-hand panel depicts it weighted by population size.

We measure change by taking the difference of the score at time t and time t_{-10} . This ten-year measure is designed to capture both rapid and gradual change. We report only *significant* changes, by which we mean that the confidence intervals provided in the V-Dem data do not overlap.⁵ These confidence intervals can be relatively wide, meaning that our measure is conservative since it is more likely to err on the side of not reporting a change.

The dashed green line depicts the number of countries each year for which there was advancement on the LDI. The solid red line shows the number of countries that experienced backsliding. By

FIGURE 1.3: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ON LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (RIGHT PANEL POPULATION-WEIGHTED).



4. The confidence intervals, or highest posterior densities, that V-Dem brings along from all the baseline country-level indicators, indicate that with some amount of possibility, we could still be at 2012 levels of democracy in the world. At the same time, these also indicate, with the same probability, that we could possibly already have reversed back to 1978-levels of democracy. While taking the estimations of uncertainty seriously, we have chosen here, in this report, to focus on the point estimates that are the levels with the highest probability, for the sake of parsimony and to avoid making the text unnecessarily dense to digest (see methodology section at the beginning of this report).

5. See methodology section at the beginning of this report.

these measures, the height of the third wave occurred between 1993 and 1999 when over 70 countries made significant advances on the LDI each year, while only four to six countries were sliding back. In fact, this imbalance in favour of democratic advances over setbacks has persisted every year to varying degrees since 1978 – until 2017.

There is a clear downward trend in the number of countries making democratic advancements since at least 2008. Conversely, the number of countries registering significant change towards autocracy has *increased* since roughly around the turn of the century. Last year, the number of backsliding countries recorded is the same ($N=24$) as the number of countries making advancements. This has not occurred since 1979.

One aspect that makes this even more worrying is that the population living in the 24 countries backsliding on liberal democracy by 2017 outnumbers the population living in advancing countries. The share of the world population living in countries experiencing an advancement or decline over the same period depicted in the right-hand graph in Figure 1.3 testify to this.

During the last two years, there is a striking rise in the share of the world's population living in countries backsliding on democracy. By 2017, one third of the world's population – or 2.5 billion people – lived in countries that are part of a global autocratization trend. The countries with the largest population exhibiting decline in 2017 are:

FIGURE 1.4: SHARE OF POPULATION BY REGIME TYPE IN 2017.



6. This builds on the regime-classification by Lüthmann et al. (2018). While using V-Dem's data, this measure is not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee of V-Dem (only the main V-Dem democracy indices have such an endorsement).

India, the United States, Brazil, Russia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Turkey, Thailand, Ukraine and Poland. Thus, key countries across the democracy-autocracy spectrum are shrinking whatever democratic space was present. This is one important metric to capture what is actually happening: a much larger share of the world population is experiencing autocratization than the share experiencing democratization.

A Majority of the Population Still Live in Democracies

Until now, we have analysed trends based on significant changes along the spectrum that V-Dem's indices and indicators provide. Another important perspective is qualitative shifts from one type of regime to another, in particular when such transitions cross the democracy-autocracy divide. Despite evidence of a trend towards autocratization, a majority of the world's population (52 percent) still live in democracies, as Figure 1.4 shows⁶, but only 14 percent in the liberal variety. The largest share, 38 percent, of the world population, lives in the more limited form of electoral democracy. Nevertheless, these statistics show that for a majority of people the most common form of rule is still democracy.

The bar for being classified as an "electoral democracy" is reasonable but not exceedingly demanding: holding fairly free and fair multi-party party elections and an average score on V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) above 0.5, reflecting achievement of Dahl's institutional prerequisites of democracy to a reasonable extent.⁷ There were 56 electoral democracies in the world in 2017. Liberal democracies fulfil a more demanding notion of democracy that also includes the rule of law and horizontal constraints on the executive. Only 39 countries met this standard in 2017. In total 95 out of the 178 countries in the V-Dem dataset were classified as democracies in that year.

In electoral autocracies, elections are held and some political and civil liberties exist but their meaningfulness is undermined by government repression, censorship, and intimidation. Another 56 countries had this type of regime in 2017. Countries rated extremely low in terms of democracy, where the chief executive is not accountable to citizens, are classified as closed autocracies. We find 27 such countries in 2017.

7. Lüthmann et al. (2018).

Advancers and Backsliders

Where are citizens most likely to experience declines or advance in access to democracy, political rights, and civil liberties? Here we report the findings for all countries, focusing on states where there have been significant changes. We start with the regime perspective, in which countries are classified as liberal- and electoral democracies, or as electoral- and closed autocracies. We then look at more fine-grained changes along the V-Dem indices, focusing on significant changes over the last ten years, followed by a look at the alterations of the past two years.

Regime Breakdowns and Transitions to Democracy

Based on the *Regimes of the World* classification, Table A7 in the Appendix shows the status and changes in regime type between 2007 and 2017 for all 178 countries.⁸ Looking at changes over the past 10 years, 20 countries have slipped down one category. Among them we find four members of the EU lost the status as liberal democracy to become electoral democracies: Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia. But three other countries are also downgraded from liberal to electoral democracies: Israel, Mauritius, and South Africa.

Notably, eight democracies broke down over the past ten years and are now classified as electoral autocracies: Comoros, Honduras, Iraq, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, and Zambia. Four countries that used to be electoral democracies are now classified as closed: Palestine (West Bank), Syria, Yemen, and Uzbekistan.

Among the 17 countries that improved, six closed autocracies have advanced significantly: Nepal and Bhutan became electoral democracies, and Fiji, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Maldives electoral autocracies. Tunisia is the only country that transitioned from autocracy to become a liberal democracy, while eight additional countries advanced to become electoral democracies, including Guinea-Bissau, Moldova, and Malawi.

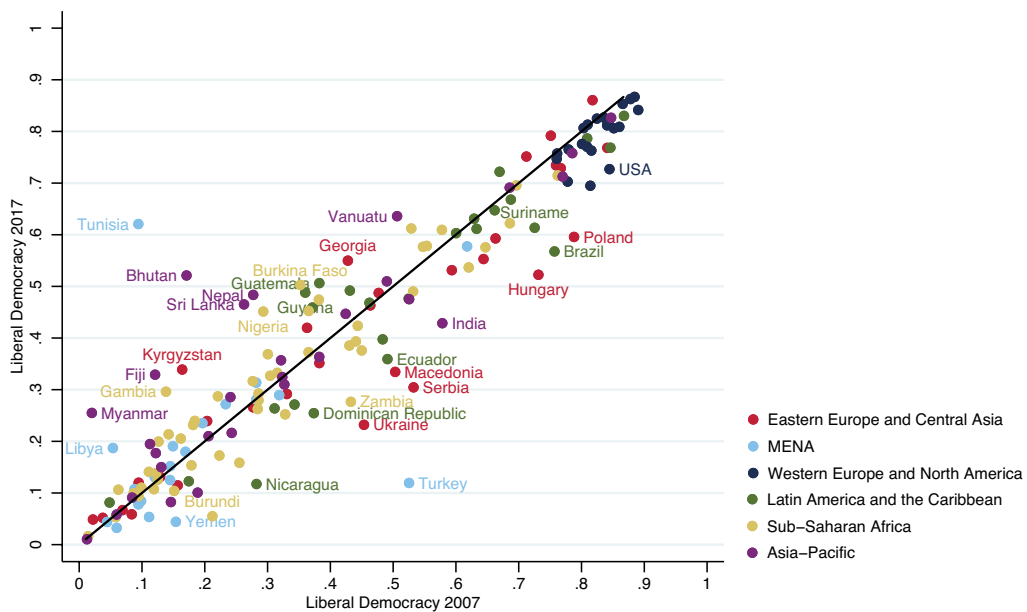
Countries with Significant Changes in the Past Ten Years

Figure 1.5 plots the changes taking place over the past ten years, comparing levels of liberal democracy in 2007 to levels in 2017 and the more fine-grained V-Dem index for liberal democracy. Labeled countries are those with significant changes over the past ten years.

There are also a number of countries with significant advances in various liberal-democratic traits over the past ten years (N=24). These countries have made significant improvements on the LDI but most of these are countries with rather small populations, save Nigeria.

Yet, a large number of countries register significant and substantive rates of autocratization. We find the world’s most populous democracies – the United States and India – as backsliders on democracy for the first time in the V-Dem data. They are thus joining other democracies we registered as backsliders already last year, such as Brazil, Hungary, Poland, and Suriname. Several world and regional powers are found among the backsliders, which gives additional cause for concern since diffusion is “no illusion.”⁹ In particular, the

FIGURE 1.5: CHANGES ON THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX, 2007-2017.



Note: Countries above the diagonal line have improved from 2007 to 2017. Countries below the diagonal line have declined. Only countries with significant changes are labeled.

8. Lührmann et al. (2018). 9. Coppedge (2018).

TABLE 1.1: MAIN ADVANCERS AND BACKSLIDERS, PAST TWO YEARS.

BACKSLIDERS			
	Change	LDI 2017	LDI 2015
Brazil	-0.19	0.57	0.76
Poland	-0.19	0.60	0.79
Turkey	-0.16	0.12	0.27
Croatia	-0.13	0.55	0.68
Romania	-0.12	0.49	0.61
United States	-0.12	0.73	0.85

ADVANCERS			
	Change	LDI 2017	LDI 2015
Burkina Faso	0.20	0.50	0.30
Gambia	0.19	0.30	0.11

Note: The table displays only countries with significant (without overlapping confidence intervals) and substantively relevant changes (more than 0.1 difference on the LDI scale).

United States' decline combined with an explicit denunciation of democracy as a foreign policy priority by the Trump administration does not bode well. Three emerging powers among the BRICS nations also register significant backsliding – Brazil, Russia and India. China remains at the end of the autocratic regime spectrum. Among the Eastern European countries, Poland and Hungary are key regional power players that are backsliding significantly.

Countries with Significant Changes Over the Last Two Years

Some of the significant changes displayed in Figure 1.5 have occurred only recently. Table 1.1 presents a list of the countries significant changes have occurred over the last two years. For example, democratic backsliding in the United States has taken place primarily during these past two years. Turkey continues its descent into dictatorship with every passing year, but it has now comes close to hitting rock-bottom on the scale with a score of 0.12. Brazil, Croatia, Poland, and Romania are now at middling levels on the LDI after also suffering from significant declines over the last two years. In Poland, swift and far-reaching constitutional changes have reduced checks and balances, affecting in particular the judiciary.¹⁰ Similarly, the Romanian government has limited the rule of law and individual liberties – allegedly in order to curb corruption.¹¹

Both two cases of significant democratization over the past two years are from West Africa – Burkina Faso and the Gambia. In particular, the case of Burkina Faso is remarkable since it shows that autocratization can be rapidly reversed: In 2014 President Blaise Compaore, who had held power since 1987, attempted to modify the constitutional term limits but was ousted after massive protests. After a short period of uncertainty and military rule, the Burkinabe

people participated in peaceful and competitive multi-party elections in November, 2015. Burkina Faso's rating on the LDI has now reached an all-time high. Gambia's incumbent autocrat of 23 years, President Yahya Jammeh, lost the 2016 elections and eventually stepped down in the midst of ECOWAS's intervention in January 2017. It remains to be seen if the new Gambian government will facilitate a full transition to democracy.

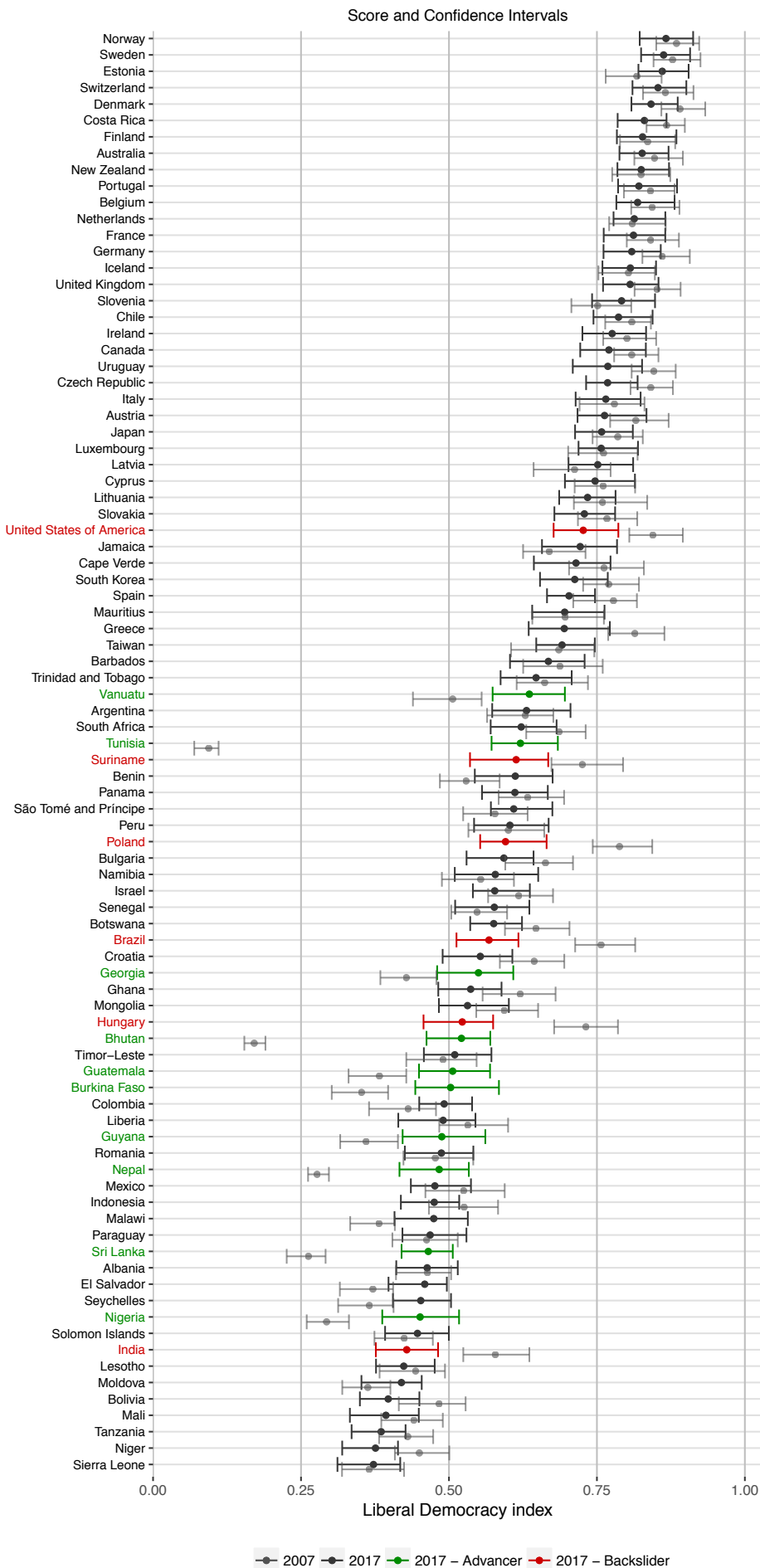
Last Ten Years – Overview of All Countries

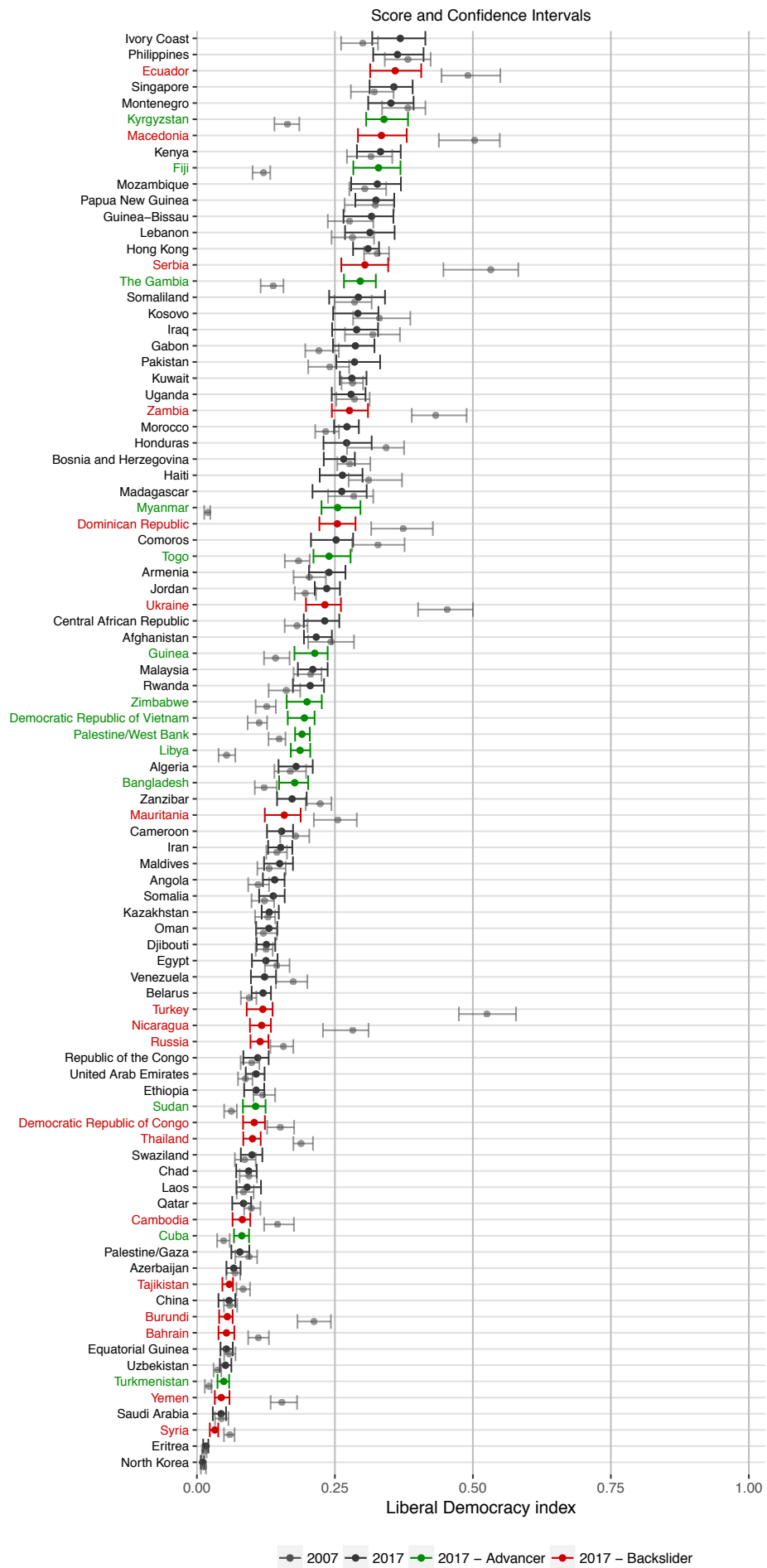
The last ten years' developments on the index of liberal democracy for all countries, and taking the confidence intervals into account, is provided in Figure 1.6. Here the reader finds every country among the 178 contemporary states V-Dem measures, and their status as of 2017 compared to 2007. Green country names and dots with confidence interval bars indicate significant advancers, while red names, dots, and bars designate the significant backsliders. The reader should note that a few of the latter are countries at the very lowest levels of democratic quality. They are simply extremely undemocratic in all respects with a high degree of certainty, and therefore very small substantive changes register as significant. But there are also some countries, presented in grey because the confidence intervals overlap, for which the substantive changes are large and those should be noted. Among these we find, for example, Greece with the LDI dropping by 0.12 points. However, this drop is not noted as significant, possibly because V-Dem experts disagree about what the economic crisis and subsequent political changes in Greece mean for the quality of democracy. On the other hand, V-Dem experts agree that media freedom has declined in Greece over the last ten years, reflecting the fact that both the Syriza government and its predecessor have taken measures undermining media pluralism.¹²

10. Rohac, Dalibor (2018).
11. Clark, David (2017).

12. OSF (2015).

FIGURE 1.6: COUNTRIES BY SCORE ON V-DEM'S LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI) 2017 AND 2007.





Which Aspects of Democracy Are at Risk?

Until now, the analysis has focused on the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), which captures both liberal and electoral aspects of democracy by joining the Liberal Component Index (LCI) and the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI). The nuanced nature of the V-Dem data makes it possible to discern unevenness in trends across these different traits, down to the level of specific indicators.

To help the reader follow this “drilling-down” into the various aspects of democracy, Figure 1.7 presents the conceptual structure of the LDI and EDI, their main- and subcomponents, and the individual indicators of those subcomponents.

The LDI has two main components: the EDI and the LCI. The liberal component (LCI) in turn has three sub-components, while the electoral (EDI) has five¹³, each measured by a series of indicators. The LDI pattern has already been discussed above and we start the analysis here at the next level in the conceptual scheme: the LDI and its components and the EDI and the three components of the liberal dimension.

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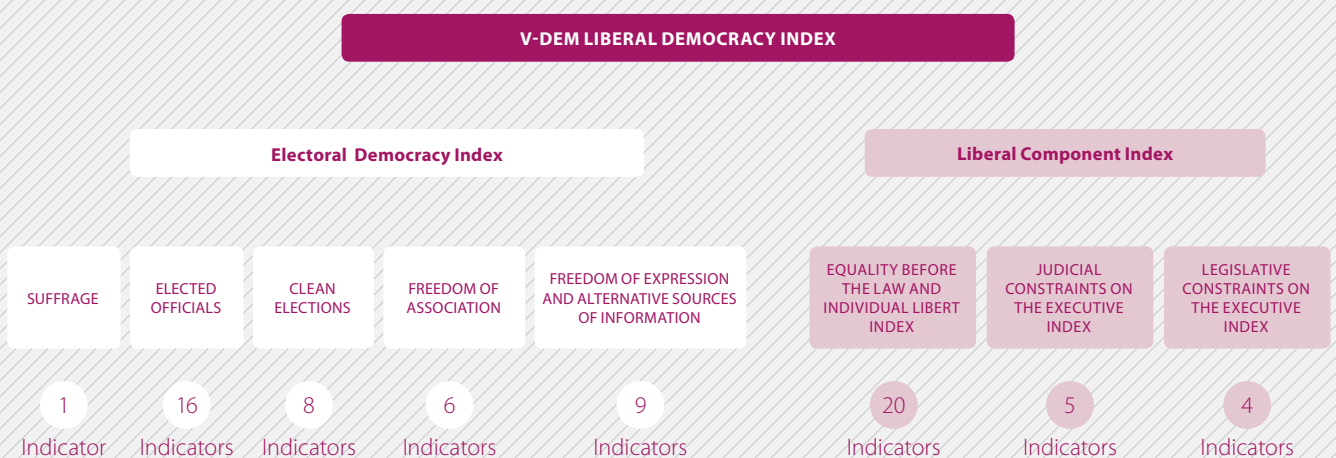
and its components and the EDI and the three components of the liberal dimension.

The left-hand graph in Figure 1.8 is again based on traditional averages across countries and it shows that the liberal subcomponents measuring judicial constraints on the executive and rule of law already had relatively high global average levels before the “third wave” of democratization.¹⁴ With the third wave starting in 1974, these improved further. At the same time, this period meant that the third subcomponent capturing the extent to which legislatures can also constrain the power of the executive, caught up to a significant extent. While rule of law seems to have clearly reached the highest average levels globally, it is also the subcomponent with the most measurable decline in recent years. The electoral democracy component was, and still is, at significantly lower levels.

When weighted by population size, as in the right-hand panel, the recent trend of autocratization is more pronounced, in ways similar to the regional comparisons in the previous section. It seems to affect all aspects to some extent but the electoral democracy measure (EDI) in particular, registers a steep downward curve after around 2010. It seems that a large portion of the downward trend in the overall levels of liberal democracy is in fact due to this autocratization in the electoral arena.

In order to analyze what aspects of the EDI are driving this change, Figure 1.9. drills down into developments amongst the constituent components of the EDI, from 1972 until 2017. As above, the

FIGURE 1.7: EXPLANATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY, AND THEIR COMPONENTS.



13. These capture all the institutional requisites of Dahl’s formulation of polyarchy. See Teorell et al. (2018).

14. See Figure A.2 in Appendix, which illustrates how they have developed over time and in different regions.

left-hand graph shows the levels of democracy averaged by country, while the right-hand graph depicts the levels of democracy weighted by the size of the population.

The straight averages across countries in the left-hand graph show that three out of the four subcomponents started with levels between 0.3 and 0.4. Suffrage was already in the early 1970s something of a non-issue. The elected officials index improves steadily throughout the period. The big boost in scores in 1992-93 registers in particular for freedom of expression and freedom of association, reaching around 0.7 before a small decline appears at the end of the time series for the latter and a much more marked, steeper decline in the former.

The improvements in the quality of elections (Clean Elections index) during the same period were much more modest in terms

of magnitude. However, during the 2000s, until the end of the series, the Clean Election Index is the only one for which we register a small, but steady, increase on its scores. In short, whatever small decline we find in the overall levels of electoral democracy on this unweighted metric are due to a small decline in more recent years on freedom of expression in particular. The right-hand, population weighted metric makes the autocratization trend more pronounced after around 2010. In particular, a shrinking space for freedom of expression is particularly obvious in the right-hand graph in Figure 1.9 after 2012. While the subcomponent measuring freedom of expression also takes a dip, and somewhat later, the electoral components seems to be hovering around a relatively constant level – or even increase as is the for the Elected Officials Index. Thus, the decline in the overall EDI measure is to a large degree due to autocratization in the form of reduction of freedom of expression and alternative sources of information.

FIGURE 1.8: TRENDS IN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY (LDI) AND ITS COMPONENTS, 1972-2017 (RIGHT-HAND, POPULATION WEIGHTED).

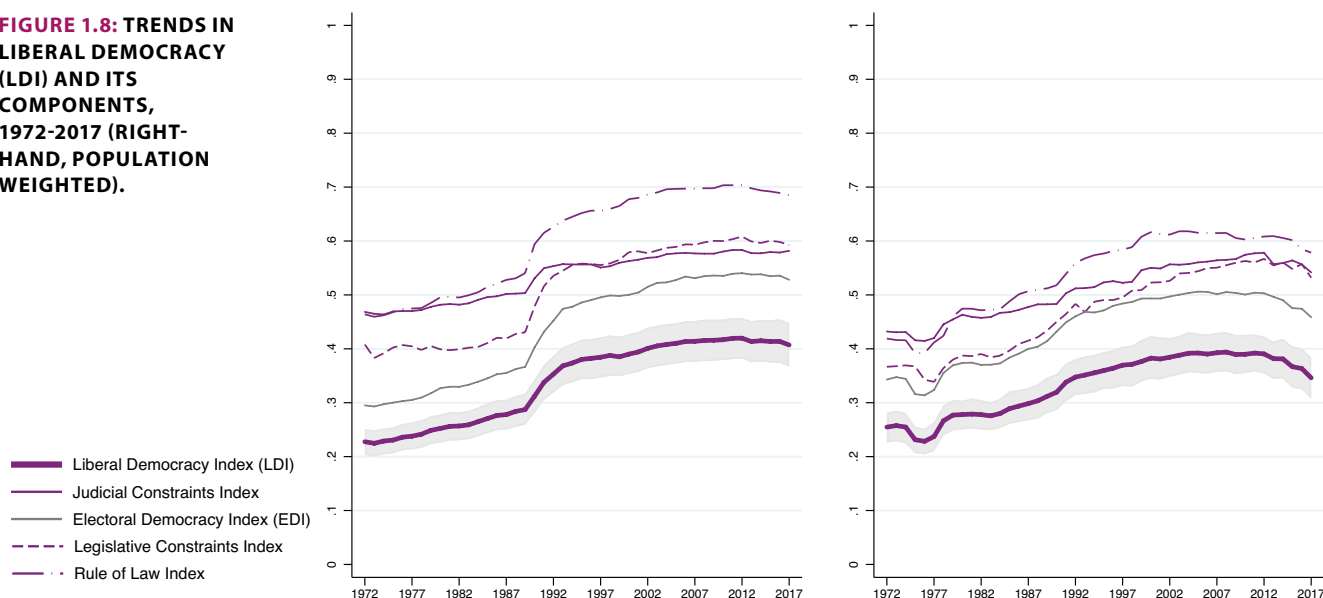
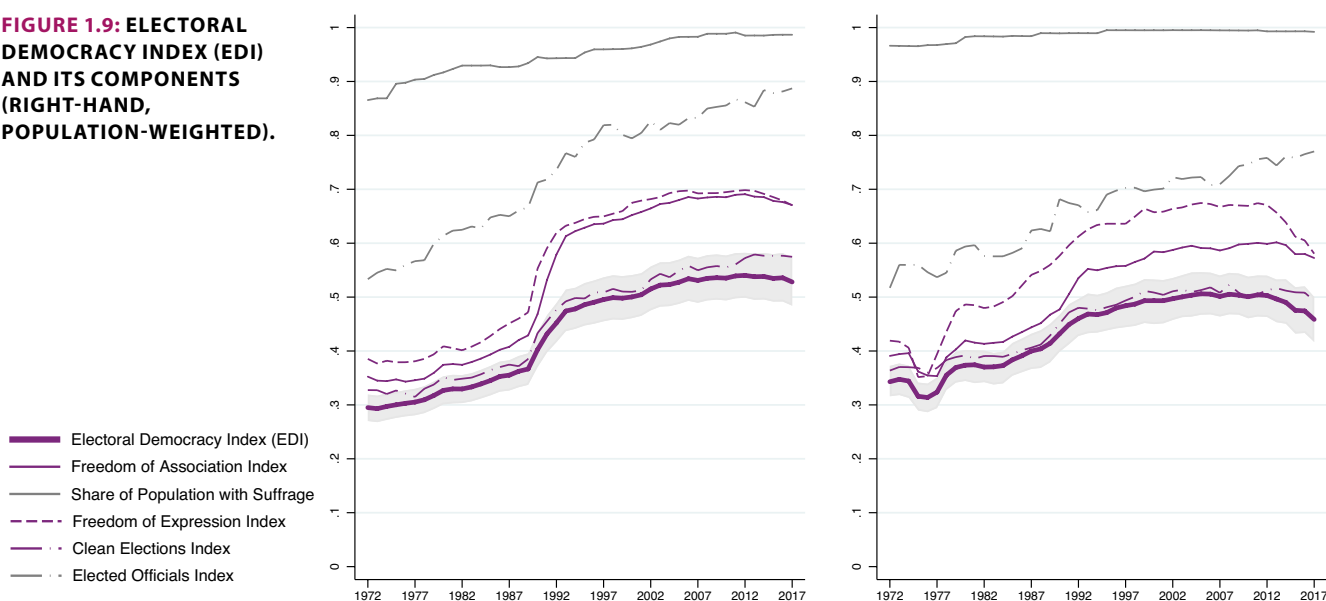


FIGURE 1.9: ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (EDI) AND ITS COMPONENTS (RIGHT-HAND, POPULATION-WEIGHTED).



Changes – by Components of Liberal and Electoral Democracy

Given the trends discussed above, there is a need to further dissect what has happened in the past ten years with the subcomponents of the liberal and electoral democracy aspects.

Figure 1.10 displays the number of countries that have improved or declined substantially on indices capturing the subcomponents of the LCI and the EDI. For subcomponent indices appearing above the diagonal line, more countries have improved than have declined, and the reverse is true for those appearing below the diagonal line. Figure A2 in the online appendix specifies which countries have changed on these indices, as well as on additional aspects of democracy.

Disaggregating the subcomponents reveals additional information about the ongoing autocratization trend. In particular, it demonstrates why it is so hard to detect. Key characteristics of democracy, such as the Clean Election Index (capturing how free and fair elections are), and the index measuring the extent to which elected officials are actually vested with power on a national level (Elected Officials Index), have improved significantly in a large number of countries over the last ten years, while declining in only a few. Such trends give the appearance of robust democracy, particularly to outsiders or when taken on the aggregate level.

Figure 1.10 also show that despite advances in the electoral facets of democracy, less visible changes in rights, freedoms, and the rule of law are undermining democracy. These important aspects of democracy are in significant decline in many countries, while

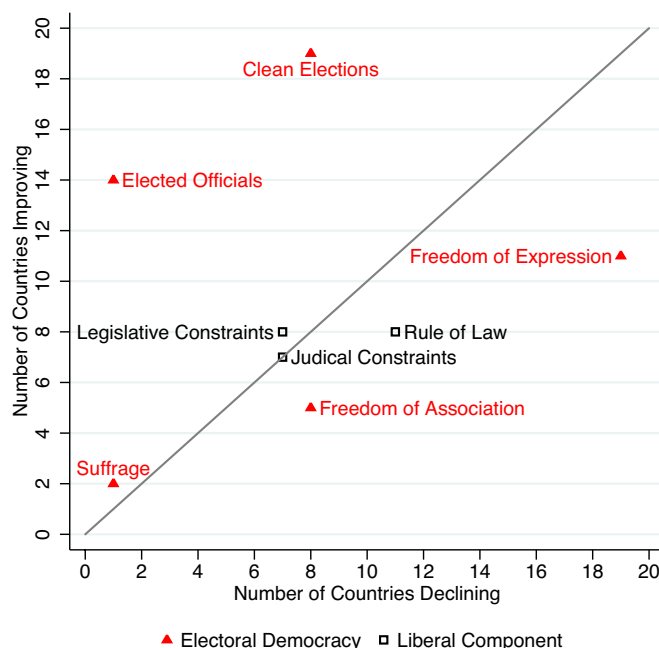
improving in only a few. In particular, this concerns the subcomponent measuring freedom of expression and alternative sources of information that has been affected negatively in 19 countries over the last ten years, while improving in only eleven. The subcomponents measuring rule of law and freedom of association also register more backsliders than advancers.

Since these are key institutional requisites of electoral democracy, as Dahl once argued,¹⁵ we pursue the disaggregation further to the most precise level of analysis: the individual indicators. Figure 1.11 shows the same type of graph as Figure 1.10, comparing 2007 to 2017, but displays now the 25 specific indicators that constitute the components of the EDI. For ease of use, we have coded indicators by components.¹⁶

All indicators measuring the freedom of expression and alternative sources of information component, are found below the diagonal line. All indicators measuring electoral aspects in the index for clean elections are either above or very close to the line. In particular, two of the most fundamental indicators related to elections – the extent to which the elections were multiparty in practice and national officials are subject to elections -- record more countries improving than declining. The freedom of association indicators are mostly close to the line with two exceptions found below the line that both measure the extent to which civil society can operate freely from government interference or repression, and one above the line that measures an electoral characteristic.

Figure 1.11 thus gives a precise picture of how the current trend of autocratization is unfolding, and how some ruling elites go about

FIGURE 1.10: BY COMPONENTS OF LIBERAL AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, 2007-2017.



15. Dahl (1971, 1989).

16. The Elected Officials index (v2x_elecoeff) is an index that is constructed from 16 factual indicators that are conditional on each other in a complex formula. See Teorell et al. (2018) for details.

17. For instance, Bermeo (2016) argues that contemporary backsliding is not characterized by the disappearance of electoral regimes but by more clandestine strategies such as manipulations of the media.

pursuing undemocratic agendas. It corroborates findings in some of the earlier research on backsliding but provides much greater detail.¹⁷ The institutions surrounding elections that are emblematic of democracy typically remain in good standing or even improve. Elections are very visible events that attract attention, not only from national groups but also from international media, multi-lateral organizations, and other watch-dog institutions. Changes in electoral institutions and practices also tend to be more verifiable than many other aspects of democracy, and there are normally a number of processes available to conduct such verification.

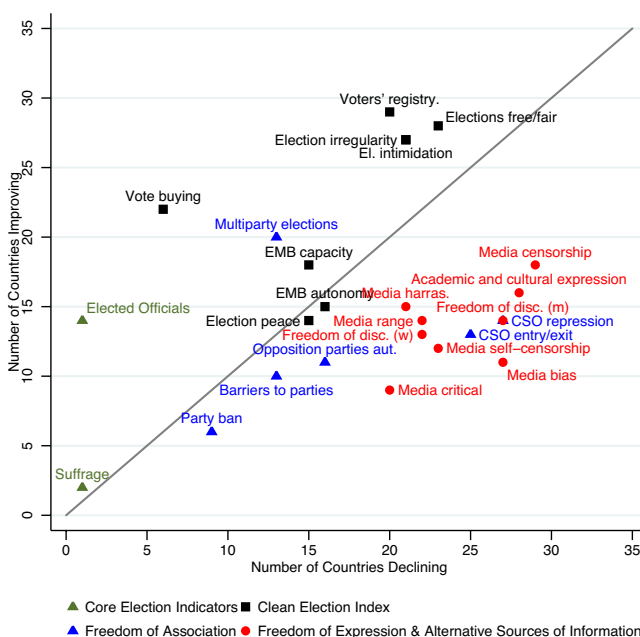
By contrast, we find that the most negative developments occur in ways that are less conspicuous violations. Government censorship of the media and harassment of journalists can occur gradually by relatively obscure means such as inducements, intimidations, and co-optation. These tactics lead naturally to increasing levels of self-censorship and fewer explicit criticisms of the government expressed in the media. The predictable result is a narrower range of political perspectives in the public sphere, as well as a general decline in the freedom of expression. Correspondingly, leaders can incrementally constrain the permitted space for autonomous academia, civil society organizations, and cultural institutions to impair their abilities to function as pro-democratic actors, while carving out an increasing level of acceptance for such measures.

While elections typically occur once every four or five years, these rights, freedoms, and the rule of law are either maintained or compromised on an everyday basis. Each step can appear relatively insignificant. The effects add up and are now apparent in Figure 1.11. Critically, the rights and institutions being diminished are the ones that make electoral processes meaningful and fully democratic. This is a worrisome set of developments, posing a clear challenge to the future of democracy.

The pattern of backsliding in the most populous democracy – India – exemplifies this trend. We discuss it more in detail at the end of this section. In India, the infringements on media freedom and the civil society activities of democracy following the election of a Hindu-nationalist government have started to undermine the longest-standing and most populous democracy in the Global South. Yet, the main indicators of the core electoral aspects of democracy do not show significant decline. It remains to be seen if this trend will be reversed in the coming years or if India will descend further into the authoritarian regime spectrum – as during their authoritarian interlude from 1975–77.

Following the election of Donald Trump, the United States is now significantly less democratic in 2017 than it was in 2007 but the pattern is slightly different. The backsliding is mainly found in the liberal components of democracy. Measures of effective oversight and use of the legislature's power to investigate the executive, opposi-

FIGURE 1.11: BY INDICATORS OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES 2007-2017.



tion party oversight, compliance with the judiciary, and executive respect for the constitution have all declined. Thus, the V-Dem data testifies that the principal issue testing the resiliency of American democracy concerns the role of Congress in holding the executive responsible for following the constitution and adhering to the law. At the same time, we also register some significant negative changes in the overall fairness of elections, freedom of discussion, and the range of political perspectives in the media.

Different Patterns of Autocratization

Another important finding in the annual Democracy Report 2018 is that there are different patterns of decline in the more democratic countries compared to the less democratic ones. V-Dem is the first dataset to capture not only liberal and electoral aspects of democracy, but also to measure the egalitarian, participatory and deliberative components of democracy. The figure below depicts that breadth and provides an overview of which subcomponents across all the varieties of democracy that register significant changes – without overlapping confidence intervals – over the last ten years, comparing scores from 2007 to 2017. Countries are sorted, first by Regimes of the World-type, and second, within each category, on how many aspects have changed, from many to few, based on the summary scores in the right-most columns. The tinted colors indicate cases in which the index did not change, but one or more of its constitutive indicators did.

The figure enables comparison across categories, from liberal- and electoral democracy to electoral- and closed autocracies, with regard to the number of changes that occurred in each and whether such changes represented advances or backsliding. One can also

18. The picture is only slightly different when looking at the regime categories based on countries' status in 2007: one third of countries that qualified as liberal democracy in 2007 experienced significant changes by 2017, compared to 58 percent of electoral democracies, 64 percent of electoral autocracies and 71 percent of closed autocracies.

compare within categories to see if countries tended to advance or backslide and in which aspects of democracy these changes registered. The figure also provides column summary scores, making it easy to identify the subcomponents of the different varieties affected the most, and the least, by positive or negative developments over the past ten years, from 2007 to 2017.

Our first observation is that volatility – the number of aspects that are improving or declining – is overall lower in both democratic regime categories, than in the two autocratic ones. Democratic countries tend to be more stable. One third of all liberal democracies record some significant changes, and the same is true for about half of all electoral democracies. Conversely, some change is registered in two thirds of countries in the electoral- and closed autocratic regime categories.¹⁸

Second, there are only nine countries that have changed significantly in more than five areas of democracy during the last ten years. These include developments in Tunisia, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Libya, as well as drastic deteriorations in Burundi, Yemen, Turkey, Venezuela and Thailand. Somalia also exhibits a high level of volatility as the textbook example of a fragile state.

Most other countries have changed significantly only with regards to one or two selected aspects, whereas most components are stable. For instance, in the United States it is mainly the legislative constraints on the executive that have weakened significantly along with the quality of public reasoning. In Greece the main negative developments are in the area of freedom of expression and local elections, and so on. In sum, most democratic change, whether positive or negative, is gradual and affecting only an area or two at a time, even in this medium-term, ten-year perspective.

A third observation that stands out is that not a single democracy – neither in the liberal nor in the electoral category – has recorded significant decline in the purely electoral aspects of democracy or in freedom of association. These highly visible and symbolically important aspects are not affected by the current global trend of autocratization. Rather, positive changes tend to be found in these aspects. Among *liberal democracies* most declines are found in the quality of public debates – namely in the United States, Albania and Ghana – and freedom of expression (Greece and Spain). Additionally, legislative constraints on the executive are evidently under stress in the United States, as is the rule of law in Australia.

In *electoral democracies* the picture is similar, with five countries declining in terms of freedom of expression and four on public deliberation. Judicial constraints on the executive have declined significantly in Poland, Haiti, Macedonia and Suriname, whereas legislative constraints on the executive have improved significantly in Bhutan and Peru.

In short, decline among democracies take place in areas that are less visible and that can be derailed significantly before the threat to democracy becomes obvious to the extent that other countries and international bodies react. At the same time, degeneration of the democratic quality in such areas threatens to undermine the viability and meaningfulness of core institutions, such as elections and freedom of association.

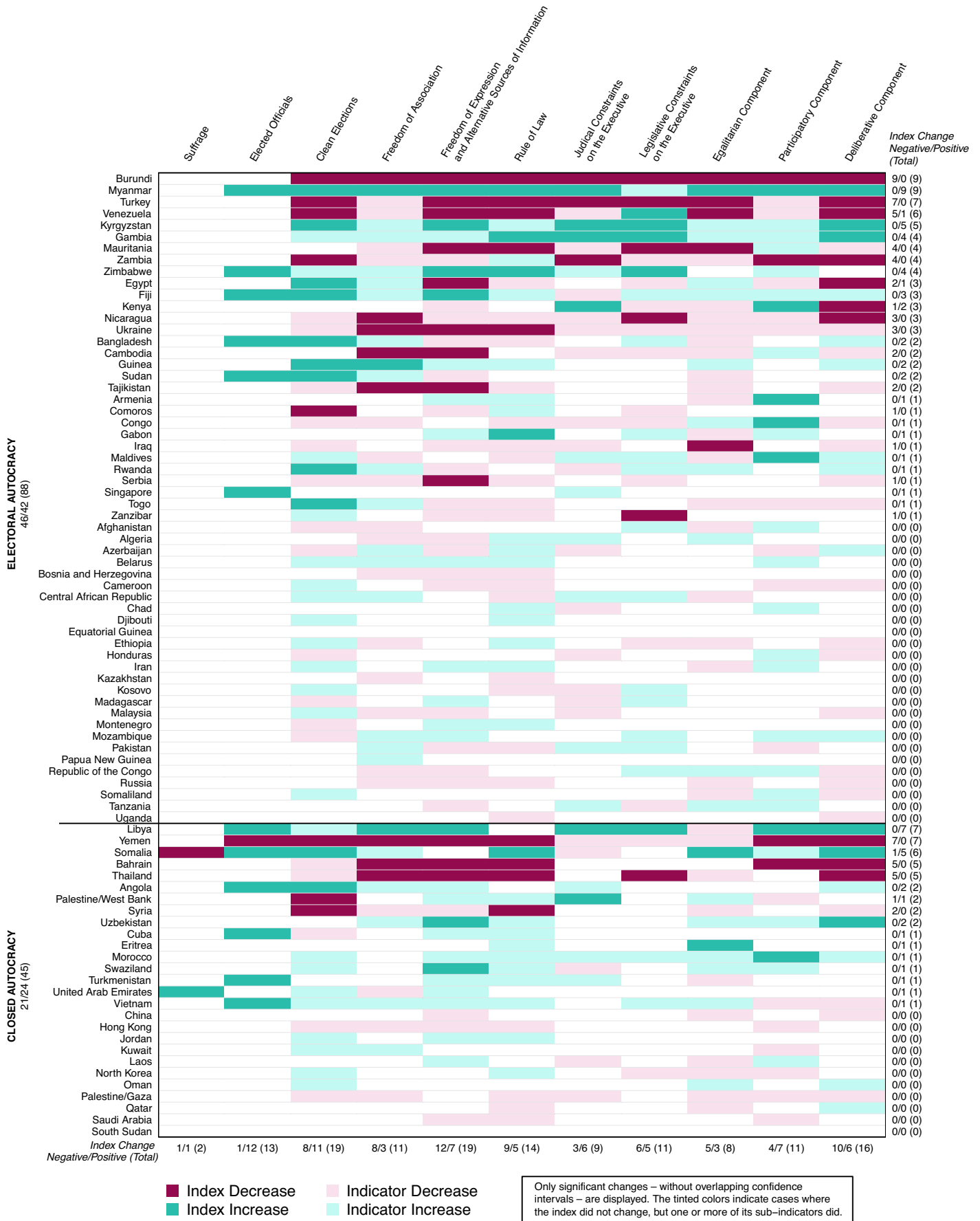
In *electoral autocracies* patterns of autocratization reflect a much more direct, widespread attack on core democratic institutions and freedoms. Freedom of expression and the quality of public debate are on a downward trajectory in many countries, and this is also true for freedom of association and the liberal subcomponents of democracy. In five countries elections are now significantly less free and fair than ten years ago – Burundi, Turkey, Venezuela, Zambia, and Comoros.

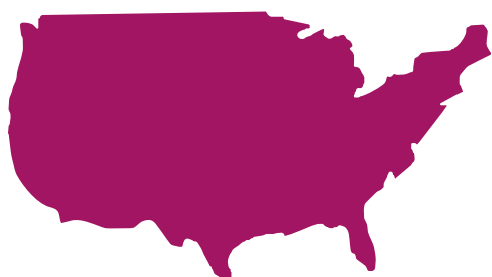
Among the 56 countries that are classified as electoral autocracies in 2017, seven of them had qualified as electoral *democracies* in 2007 – Turkey, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Serbia, Comoros, Honduras and Iraq. Hence, these are countries that we can now, unfortunately, identify as instances of democratic breakdown. Yet, we should also note that there are five countries in this regime category with significant improvements in several areas, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Fiji, and Gambia. However, on balance there are still many more countries with more negative changes than positive, in this regime category. The trend of autocratization in the world seems to affect electoral autocracies considerably.

Even in *closed autocracies*, some rulers seem to make an attempt at improving the outlook of (mainly legislative) elections, as indicated by the seven countries with positive significant changes on subcomponents related to elections. This further illustrates the current trends in the world. Even in countries with among the most authoritarian political systems, rulers try to improve their image by making the symbolic elections look a little more democratic. We also note that in Uzbekistan, freedom of expression and quality of deliberation have improved slightly - but remain at very low levels.

Among the more substantial changes, we note that in Yemen, Bahrain, and Thailand even the very limited freedom of expression and association is under attack, and the rule of law and quality of deliberation have also declined. However, in this regime category the numbers have to be interpreted with care. The confidence intervals tend to be much narrower for countries in this regime category than for countries in the other categories. This is simply because the V-Dem country experts tend to have a high degree of agreement that the situation in closed autocracies scores extremely low on most indicators. Thus, with tight confidence intervals around point estimates, even small changes become significant, but they are not always substantially noteworthy.

FIGURE 1.12B: TEN-YEAR CHANGES IN SUB-COMPONENTS OF DEMOCRACY BY COUNTRY.





UNITED STATES

Liberal Democracy under Stress

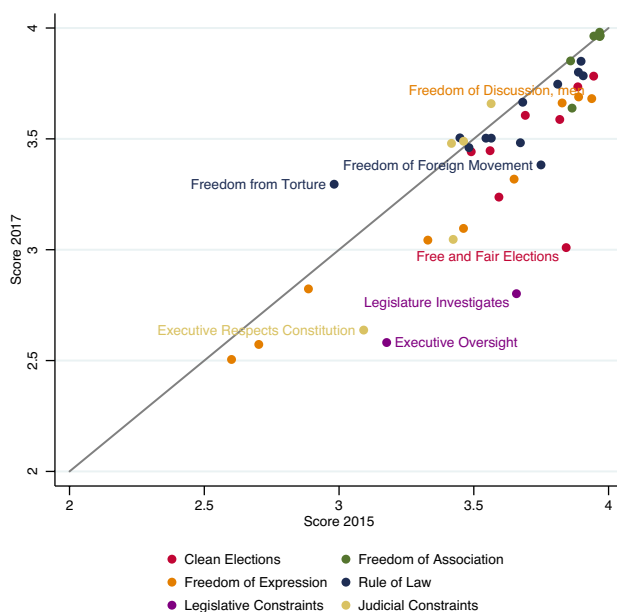


Matthew C. Wilson

The United States' ranking on the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index fell from seven in 2015 to 31 in 2017. There is clear evidence of autocratization on several indicators. The lower quality of liberal democracy stems primarily from weakening constraints on the executive.

V-Dem data indicate that the United States is significantly less democratic in 2017 than it was in previous years. We can attribute this decrease to changes that have occurred in the last two years—specifically, to weakening executive constraints. Figure 1.13 shows how indicators have changed between 2015 and 2017; labeled variables are those that significantly changed in the past two years. Indicators that fall to below the diagonal line have decreased since 2015, while positive changes are above the line. Notably, the greatest number of declines—as well as the declines of greatest magnitude—have occurred for indicators of legislative constraints. This includes the extent to which opposition parties exercise oversight, investigatory functions, and the likelihood that Congress or another body would investigate the executive and render an unfavorable decision

Figure 1.13. Aspects of Liberal Democracy in the United States, 2015 and 2017.



in the presence of unconstitutional activities. The U.S. ratings are also plunging for the extent to which the executive branch respect the constitution, which is one indicator of judicial constraints on the executive.

The negative changes associated with executive respect for the constitution and legislative constraints are congruent with the untempered behavior of the current president and the unwillingness of the GOP—which controls the legislative branch—to censor him. Some of President Trump's actions in 2017 that exemplify this trend include legally questionable immigration bans, executive orders to withhold federal money from sanctuary cities, expanding the scope of the presidential pardon, diplomacy by social media, and potential violations of the Emoluments Clause. Despite the Trump administration's actions, U.S. legislators appear either unable or unwilling to take formal actions to prevent them.

Party loyalties and increased polarization between Democrats and Republicans have undermined congressional oversight functions as Republican leaders so far double down in support of the president. This was made apparent by the House Intelligence Committee investigation over possible collusion between the president and Russia, which House Democrats argued was prematurely ended and shelved. Its conclusion in 2018 illustrated the weakness of opposition party oversight and the decreased likelihood of Congress investigating and rendering an unfavorable decision against the executive.

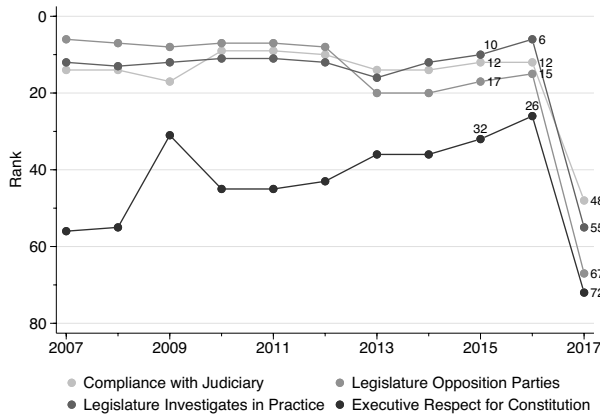
The other main component of liberal democracy, which the V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index measures, shows the United States falling from 8th place in 2015 to rank 32 out of 178 countries in 2017. This decline is largely due to significant decreases in the freedom of discussion and in the fairness of elections in the past two years.

Across the last decade, significant declines have also registered in election intimidation and the range of media perspectives provided. Changes in the indicators reflect allegations of election meddling and unlawful election practices in the 2016 election, as well as the acuteness of citizen antipathy toward opposing political views. Electoral integrity in the United States has been negatively affected by partisan disagreements over voting procedures and attempts to control

or suppress voting, as exemplified by challenges to voter ID laws and gerrymandering practices that were put before federal courts in 2017 and 2018.

Party polarization has also resulted in a noticeable lack of confidence among Americans in the media; declarations that particular outlets constitute 'fake news' likely exacerbates this lack of confidence. The change in values of the overall Electoral Democracy Index is not significant, however, suggesting

Figure 1.14. United States ranking on select indicators, 2007-2017.



that the integrity of electoral democracy in the United States has remained robust despite these threats to election quality and the expression of alternative views.

Democratic backsliding in the United States is thus largely confined to constraints on the executive. Figure 1.14 compares the U.S. to other countries by ranking it on opposition party oversight, legislative investigation, and executive respect for the constitution, all of which have significantly decreased in the last two years. The figure also shows how the U.S. ranks on compliance with the judiciary, which is significantly lower in 2017 than it was ten years ago. For the indicators of executive constraints on which the United States shows significant decreases, it has fallen below the upper quartile of highest-ranking countries.

In summary, the V-Dem data shows evidence that there has been a significant democratic backsliding in the United States which is attributable to weakening constraints on the executive. Electoral democracy remains fairly strong in the United States and there is little change in freedoms and the rule of law. The biggest issues testing the resiliency of American democracy concern the ability of Congress and the courts to hold the executive responsible to the constitution.



INDIA

The Decline of Democracy in India

The most populous democracy in the world, India, is at risk. Its level of democracy has declined significantly over the last decade. The disquieting trend particularly concerns freedom of speech and alternative sources of information, civil society, the rule of law, and some electoral aspects.

Much of these changes have taken place after the Bharatiya Janata Party won the parliamentary elections in 2014 and its

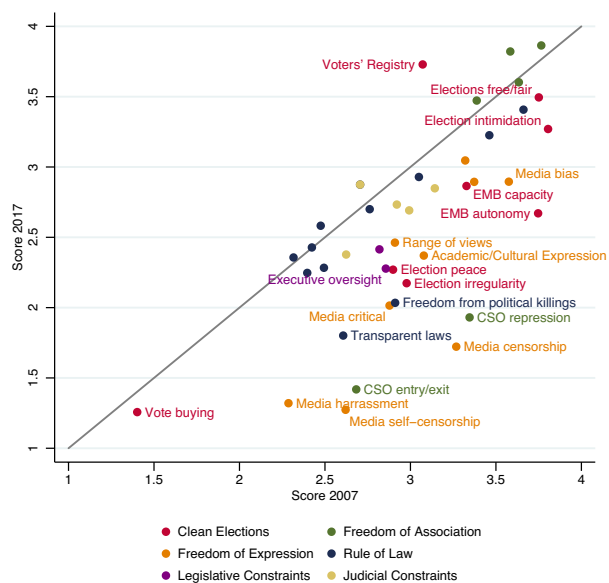


Shreeya Pillai

leader, the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi assumed office. Described as a hard-line Hindu Nationalist, he and his party ran on a campaign promise to revitalise India's slumping economy.

However, multiple indicators in the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index show that this pursuit has come at the expense of a reduction in the overall quality of India's democracy. Figure 1.15 depicts all indicators, with the score for 2007 on

Figure 1.15. Aspects of Liberal Democracy in India, 2007 and 2017.



the horizontal axis and the score for 2017 on the vertical axis. Indicators that are below the diagonal line have declined and indicators above the line have improved in this ten-year period. Only indicators with significant changes are labelled. Only one indicator – for the quality of the voters' registry – has improved. *All* others have either stayed the same or declined over the last ten years, and the latter include no fewer than 19 indicators. Several of them measures aspects of how free and fair the elections are, a couple taps into freedom of association but the greatest number are indicators of freedom of expression and alternative sources of information. These are key institutional prerequisites of electoral democracy according to the famous democracy theorist Robert A. Dahl (1971). We therefore discuss them in the context of India in some further detail.

Freedom of Expression and Alternative Sources of Information in India

While there are about 12,000 newspapers circulating in India today, the media is increasingly being censored. Several newly introduced or more harshly enforced laws hinder free speech and encourage censorship. For example, India's law on defamation contains prison sentences of up to two years and is used to silence critical journalists at an increasing rate.¹ Moreover, sedition laws that were upheld by the courts in 2016 even allow harsh punishment of people accused of inciting "dissatisfaction" – disloyalty and all feelings on enmity – towards the government.² Its existence serves as a deterrent and encourages self-censorship.

Harassment of journalists is also on the rise. Many journalists have been murdered or threatened for reporting critically on the actions of the ruling party. Three journalists were killed in March 2018 alone.³ For example, the editor Gauri Lankesh, who was a known feminist and critic of the caste system as well as of the Hindu nationalists, was shot dead in September

2017.⁴ A hard line Hindu nationalist was arrested in connection to her murder but no sentence has been handed down.⁵

The sharp decline in the V-Dem indicators on Freedom of Expression – in particular self-censorship and media harassment – reflect the increasingly adverse environment for members of the media.

Freedom of Association and Civil Society

The autocratization-process in India has also led to a partial closing of the space for civil society. The government increasingly restricts the entry and exit of civil society organizations by using a law on foreign funding for NGOs, the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA). As of 2017, 20,000 CSOs – mainly working on human rights and environmental issues – have lost their licenses. After that only 13,000 CSOs remain to continue working unconstrained.⁶ Three UN special rapporteurs have urged Prime Minister Modi to repeal the FCRA, claiming it is progressively used more to "silence organisations involved in advocating civil, political, economic, social, environmental or cultural priorities, which may differ from those backed by the government."⁷ A noticeably large drop in the V-Dem indicators on the ease of entry and exit, and the level of repression of civil society organizations in India, reflects the current challenges.

These above also illustrate that law enforcement is gradually becoming less predictable, and that the state fails to effectively protect its citizens from politically motivated killings. A decline in the respective V-Dem indicators reflects these adverse changes. Other liberal aspects of democracy – such as legislative and executive oversight – remain at a constant, but relatively modest level.

Elections in India

Elections in Asia's oldest democracy have remained free and fair and open to multi-party competition. Nevertheless, several indicators capturing how clean elections are, have declined. In particular, intimidation and violence have increased at polling stations. Party agents intimidate, harass and bribe voters, in effect preventing them from casting their votes freely. Electoral violence includes deadly attacks against polling officials and voters on their way to polling stations.

1. Human Rights Watch (2017).
2. Reporters Without Borders (2017); The Constitution of India (2017).
3. Reporters Without Borders (2017).
4. Reporters Without Borders (2017).
5. The Guardian (2018).
6. Human Rights Watch (2017).
7. The Guardian (2016).
8. Foreign Policy (2013).
9. The New York Times (2014).

Section 2: Inclusion is an Illusion

Political exclusion is undermining the relevance of democratic rights and freedoms. After 40 years of mostly steady growth, several egalitarian aspects of democracy are now on the decline and this trend affects about 2 billion people in the world. As a result, only one-in-seven people now lives in a society where political power is distributed at least somewhat equally by gender and socio-economic status. The rich have gained significantly more power in countries that are home to one-fourth of the world's population over the past decade. Among different regime types, only liberal democracies tend to provide consistent safe-guards for its citizens against exclusion based on structural inequalities.

EVEN WHERE DEMOCRACY is advancing, social complexity and competition often produce inequalities that advantage some groups over others.¹ Such inequalities affect the extent to which groups can participate meaningfully in the political process.² Thus, democracy risks becoming less legitimate and effective,³ threatening also the survival or further advancement of democracy.⁴ Political inequality and exclusion are also associated with poverty⁵ and violent conflict.⁶ When exclusion of various groups is severe, democracy is undermined as a viable system of rule. It is therefore important to consider not only changes in the liberal and electoral facets of democracy, but also the degree to which the countries in the world attain the principles of equality and inclusion.

Political inclusion here refers to the ability of all individuals and groups to influence the political process.⁷ Whereas liberal conceptions of democracy tend to emphasize institutional guarantees of rights and freedoms in addition to the rule of law, democratic inclusion emphasizes *de facto* use of rights and access to power across societal groups.⁸ Even Dahl's influential discussion of the prerequisites for polyarchy – the basis for the V-Dem's understanding of electoral democracy – calls for a system in which "preferences [ought to be] weighted *equally* in government."⁹ Based on that insight, this section focuses on political inclusion.

The V-Dem Egalitarian Index

The V-Dem Egalitarian Component Index captures whether material and immaterial inequalities fundamentally constrain citizens' actual exercise of formal rights and liberties.¹⁰ The measure encompasses to what extent differences in socio-economic status, gender, and social group (such as caste, ethnicity, language, race, region, religion, or some combination thereof) affect the protection of civil liberties (Equal Protection Index), access to political power

(Equal Access Index), and access to resources such as education and health care to the extent that individuals' political efficaciousness is derailed (Equal Distribution of Resources Index). A detailed description of the measure and a table with country scores can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 2.1 shows the global trends in the egalitarian indices from 1972 to 2017. What is striking in this graph is that after 40 years of mostly steady growth, levels of equality have been worsening again over the past five years, slightly less so for Equal Access to Power.

When weighted by population (right-hand panel), the egalitarian indices paint a more pessimistic picture. First, the growth in index scores prior to 2010 seen in the unweighted measures (left-hand panel) disappears, turning into a decline. The level recorded in 2017 is lower than in 1972 for all of the indices. This is because large countries such as China have remained politically unequal or have seen growing economic inequality. But it tells us that the positive development of decreasing inequality displayed in the first graph is eradicated when we take the size of population into account, and that the positive developments have therefore affected countries with a small fraction of the world's population. Notably, for a large proportion of the world's population, the Equal Access to Power Index has declined substantially in the past five years to a degree similar to, or even greater than, the Equal Protection Index. Political exclusion is in this perspective on the rise.

Regime Types and Patterns of Inclusion

Figure 2.2 compares levels of Egalitarian Component Index across regime categories in 2017.¹¹ Countries labelled above the box are over-performers for their regime type, while countries below it are under-performers. The line in the box plot indicates the median level of inclusion for all countries in that category.

1. Young (2000). 2. For an overview of the relationship between inequality and participation, see Sigman and Lindberg (2018). 3. Dahl (1971). 4. Boix (2011); Houle (2009); Svobik (2008). 5. Acemoglu and Robinson (2013). 6. Cederman et al. (2010). 7. c.f. World Bank (2013). 8. This focus on *de facto* inclusion is central to V-Dem's principle of egalitarian democracy, see Sigman and Lindberg (2018). 9. Dahl (1971) our emphasis. 10. Sigman and Lindberg (2018). 11. This builds on the regime-classification by Lüthmann et al. (2018; see also section 1 of this report). While using V-Dem's data, this measure is not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee of V-Dem (only the main V-Dem democracy indices have such an endorsement).

FIGURE 2.1: GLOBAL TRENDS IN EGALITARIAN INDICES, 1972-2017 (RIGHT-HAND WEIGHTED BY POPULATION).

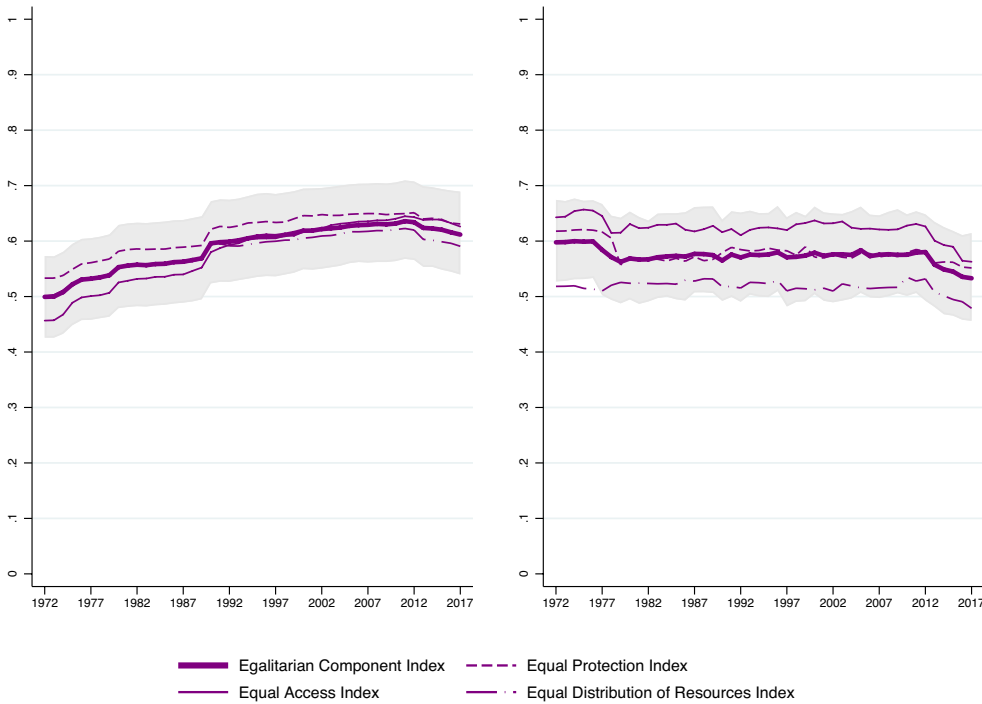
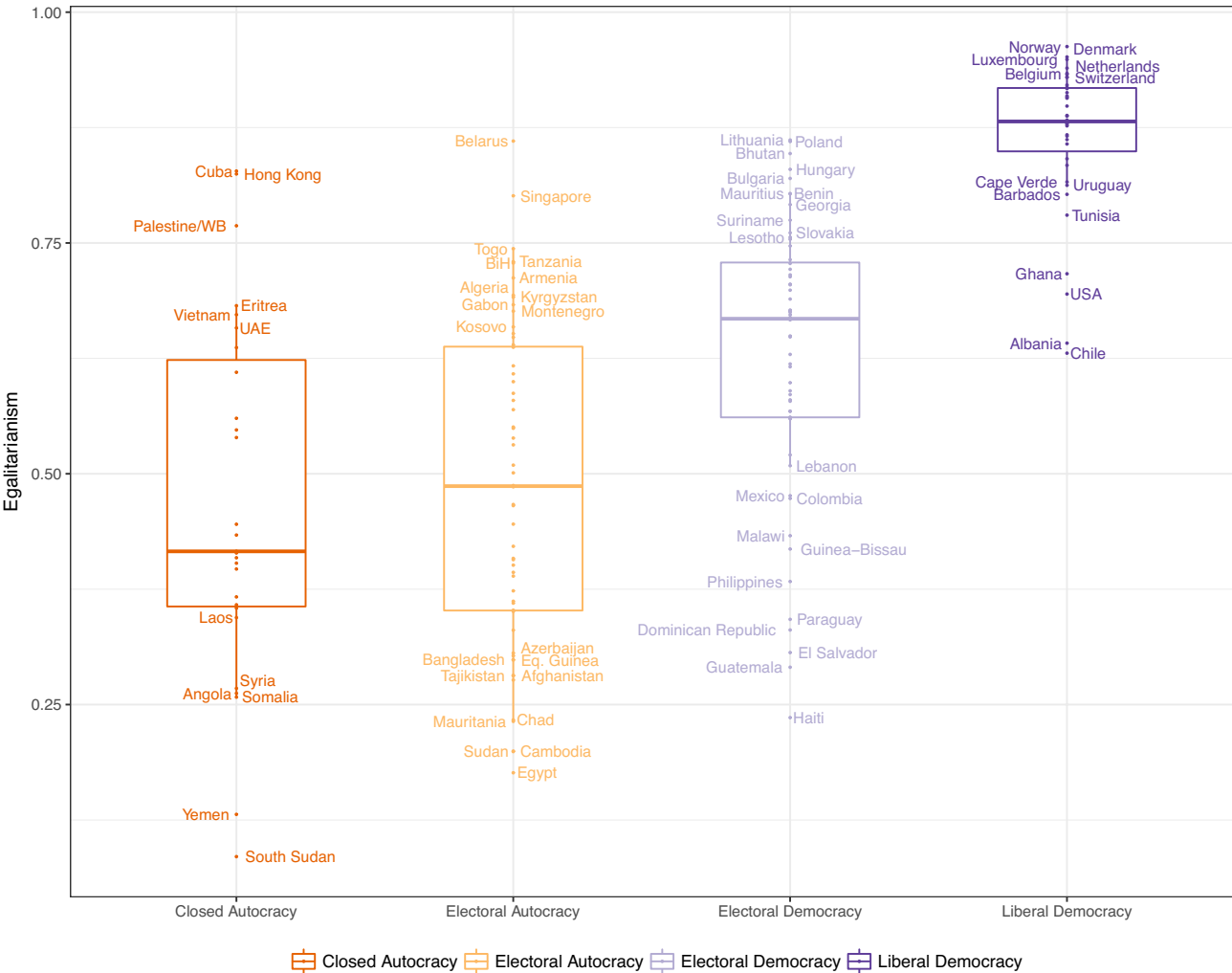


FIGURE 2.2: LEVEL OF DE FACTO POLITICALLY EQUALITY ACROSS REGIME TYPES, 2017.



In general, democracies fare better in terms of egalitarianism than autocracies. Notably, almost all liberal democracies score higher on the Egalitarian Component Index than most autocracies, as well as a majority of electoral democracies. Liberal democracies tend to excel in achieving equal distribution of political power across structural inequalities. Hence, when countries backslide from liberal democracy, inclusion may be threatened.

Exceptions to this pattern are Albania, Chile, Ghana, and the United States – countries that are liberal democracies but stand out with noticeable low egalitarian scores. Among the liberal democracies, several Nordic and Western-European countries – Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, and Germany – have the highest levels of egalitarian democracy, as expected.

That said, there is a large amount of variation among countries classified as closed and electoral autocracies, as well as those classified as electoral democracies. Countries across regime categories score comparably on the egalitarian component. For example, closed autocracies such as Cuba and Hong Kong, electoral autocracies like Belarus and Singapore, and Benin, Bulgaria, and Hungary among electoral democracies have largely indistinguishable ratings.

At the other end of the spectrum, Guatemala and Haiti are both electoral democracies but register very similar levels on the egalitarian component index to electoral autocracies such as Afghanistan, Chad, and Tajikistan, as well as Angola, Syria and Somalia among the closed autocracies.

The most important take-away is that only liberal democracies seem to be able to safe-guard their citizens from gross inequalities in the protection of civil liberties, access to political power and the distribution of politically relevant resources, across gender, social groups, and socio-economic status.

Regional Trends

Trends in the Equal Distribution of Resources Index and the Equal Access to Power Index – two key aspects of the egalitarian component index – also vary considerably across regions (Figure 2.3). The levels have declined on both indices in Eastern Europe and Central Asia since the end of the Cold War. More recent declines on these indices are most evident in Latin America and Asia. Decline on the Equal Distribution of Resources Index also registers in Western Europe and North America, as well as in the MENA region. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region with continued upward trajectories, most definitely so on the Equal Access to Power Index.

Regional comparisons also show that the Equal Access to Power and Equal Distribution of Resources indices do not necessarily maintain similar levels within a single region, nor do they change in tandem. In the MENA region, for example, levels of Equal Distribution are considerably higher than levels of Equal Access. The opposite is true in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, where levels of Equal Access tend to be considerably higher than levels of Equal Distribution. These different regional configurations suggest that political inclusion (Equal Access) and socio-economic inclusion (Equal Distribution) are in fact distinct aspects of egalitarian democracy.

Additionally, it is clear that the two indices do not necessarily develop together at the same time in the same places. Particularly in the MENA region and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Equal Access to Power Index has improved in the last several years while the Equal Distribution of Resources Index remains stagnant. The improvements in the Equal Access to Power Index may reflect the fact that more countries have adopted gender quotas and power-sharing arrangements between social-groups. However, the distribution of power based socio-economic status has become less substantially equal in recent years. Furthermore, there is little evidence, to suggest that such improvements in access to power necessarily lead to

FIGURE 2.3: REGIONAL TRENDS IN EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES INDEX AND EQUAL ACCESS TO POWER INDEX.

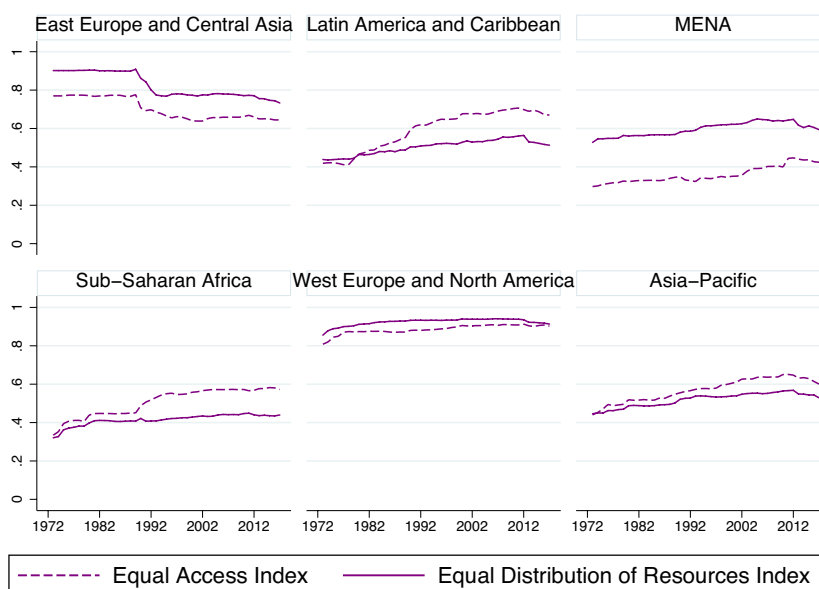
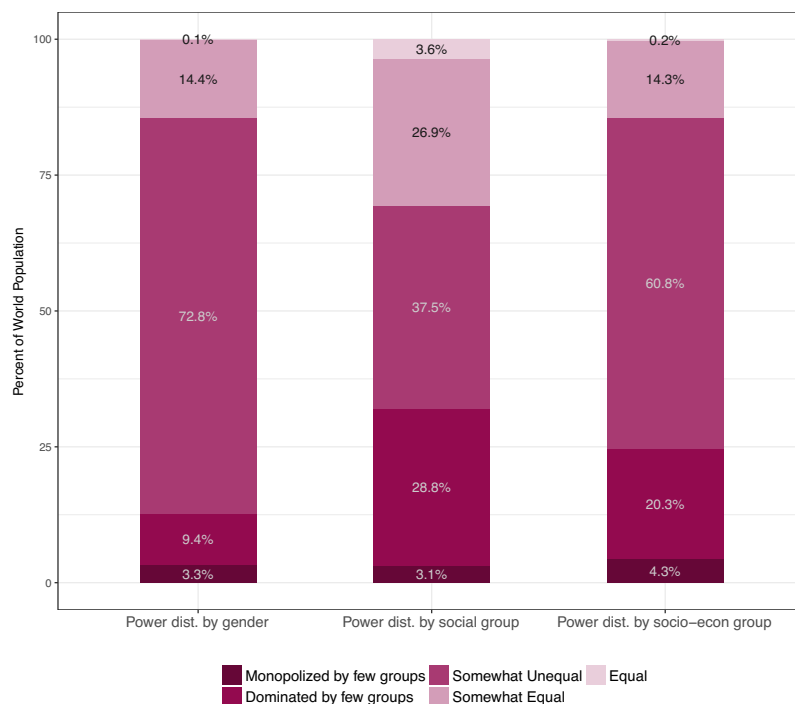


FIGURE 2.4: SHARE OF POPULATION BY DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL POWER, 2017.

changes in equal distribution of resources, such as in the provision of health and education.

In figure 2.3, we consider three cleavages of particular significance for power distribution in greater detail: gender, social group, and socio-economic position.

Power Distributions Are Mostly Unequal

Figure 2.4 provides a snapshot of all three of V-Dem's unique indicators measuring the distribution of political power by gender, social group, and socio-economic status in 2017.¹² Each indicator ranges from 0 (monopoly of power by one group) to 4 (roughly equal power distribution between groups).

The figure shows that only a very small proportion of the world's population has enjoyed more or less equal distribution of political power by gender, social group, and socioeconomic status. Almost no one lives in societies with equal power by gender, less than four percent of the population lives in countries where power is distributed evenly between social groups, and political equality by socio-economic status is also virtually non-existent.

Even for the lower bar, "somewhat equal" power distribution, it is not much better. Only 14 percent of the world population lives in countries achieving this standard for gender, 27 percent for social groups, and about 14 percent of citizens enjoy this regardless of socio-economic status.

The vast majority of the world's population lives in countries where

power distributions are somewhat unequal (61 percent for power distribution by social group, and 61 to 73 percent for power distributions by socio-economic status and gender). For each of the three categories, three to four percent of the population live in places where power distributions are completely monopolized by a dominant group.

This means that 5.5 billion people live in countries where women are discriminated against when it comes to political rights and freedoms. States that allow the less wealthy to be partly excluded from the political process account for 4.6 billion people today.

Figure 2.4 reveal that men and people in higher income groups tend to have a strong hold on political power in countries where 86 percent of the world population resides. Unequal distribution of power by social group, where one or more social groups have more political influence than others, affects some 69 percent of the population.

The overall situation is getting worse, not better. By 2017, one-fourth of the world's population – or almost 2 billion people – lived in countries where the rich have gained significantly more power compared to 2007. The growing inequalities are affecting massive amounts of people.

In the subsequent sections we continue to analyze the state of political inclusion. The next subsection 2.1 focuses on inclusion by gender, while 2.2 and 2.3 explore whether inequalities in social and socio-economic characteristics affect political inclusion. We highlight the global trends and discuss important changes in specific regions and countries.

12. V-Dem gave the following instructions to its expert coders: "Although political power cannot be directly observed, one can infer that groups possess power to the extent that they: (a) actively participate in politics (by voting, etc.), (b) are involved in civil society organizations, (c) secure representation in government, (d) are able to set the political agenda, (e) influence political decisions, and (f) influence the implementation of those decisions. Please consider all these factors when answering the following questions." V-Dem Codebook V8, p.184.

Section 2.1: Women's Inclusion and Access to Power

For the first time in about 70 years, the global level of women's political inclusion and empowerment is no longer advancing. At the same time, global gender equality is not in decline, which means that the recent trend of democratic backsliding is not affecting women disproportionately.

Sirianne Dahlum and Moa Olin

DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS are unevenly distributed between men and women in many places. Although women's political inclusion and equal access to power is prominent on the global agenda, as reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals¹ for example, many democracies (and autocracies) fail to include women on an equal footing with men in political processes. This subsection analyzes the extent to which democratic components such as elections, civil liberties, and civil society autonomy also apply to women.

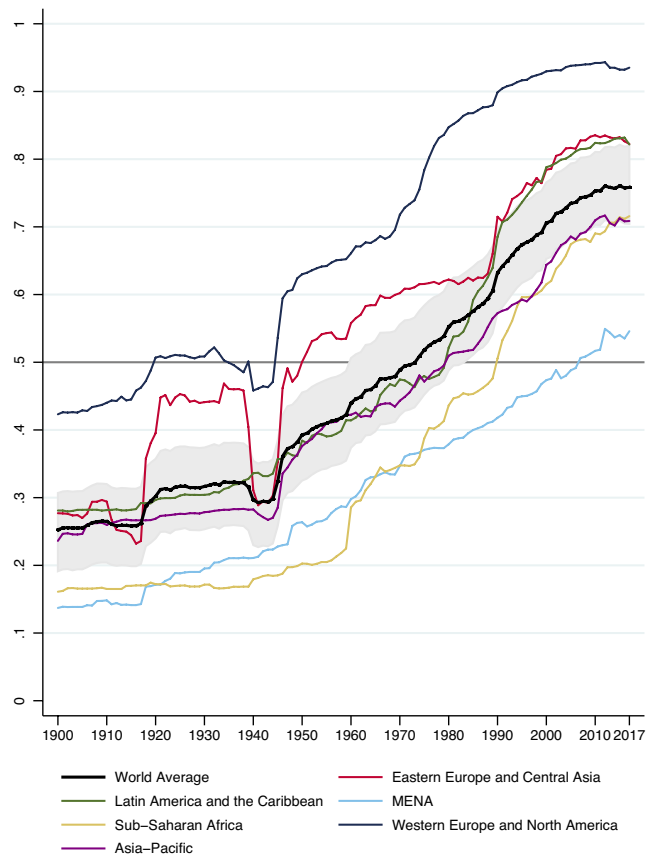
We first examine global and regional trends in the Women's Political Empowerment Index. Second, we look more closely at recent changes in women's empowerment, including differences between countries, and present lists with the top ten advancers and backsliders. We also examine which aspects of women's political empowerment have been most affected. Finally, we identify countries that have a "gender gap," in the sense that they underperform or over-perform on gender equality relative to their democracy level.

We find that although women's political empowerment has improved dramatically over the past century, stagnated set in over the last ten years. However, there is no evidence of a recent backsliding on political gender equality. Among the different components, women's political participation has changed the most over the past ten years, with many countries experiencing an increase. We also show that among the main under-performers on the gender gap are several countries in the Middle East, Japan, and India, while the over-performers are predominantly post-communist states.

Women's Political Empowerment Index

V-Dem's Women's Political Empowerment Index builds on a definition of women's political empowerment as "a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in social decision-making".² Women's political empowerment is a complex concept, and the index seeks to capture different aspects by building on three different sub-indices – Women's Civil Liberties Index, Women's Civil Society Participation Index, and Women's Political Participation Index. These three indices are weighted equally in the overall index. The Women's Civil Liberties Index includes indicators on freedom of domestic movement, freedom from forced labor, the right to private property, and access to justice. The Women's Civil Society Participation Index includes indicators on freedom of discussions on political issues, participation in civil society organizations, and representation among journalists. Finally, the Women's Political Participation Index includes indica-

FIGURE 2.5: REGIONAL AVERAGES IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT INDEX, 1900-2017.



1. UN (2015).

2. Sundström et al. (2015).

tors of women's share in the overall distribution of power, as well as the percentage of female legislators. All indices range from zero to one, where "0" represents a low degree of women's political empowerment, and "1" represents a high degree.

Global and Regional Trends

Figure 2.5 illustrates that the global level of women's political empowerment has advanced substantially since 1900, with most of that improvement occurring from the late 1940s until the mid-2000s. However, this gradual advancement of women's political empowerment stagnated, and levels have been relatively stable for the past ten years. At the same time, there is no evidence suggesting a backlash against women's political empowerment at the global level. Hence, although the first section of this Democracy Report 2018 shows evidence of democratic backsliding, this has not affected women disproportionately in a negative way.

All regions of the world experienced significant and gradual improvements in women's political empowerment from 1900 to 2017. Not surprisingly, Western Europe and North America show a higher level of political empowerment for women throughout the entire period. Western Europe and North America, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia while at different levels, developed very similar over time, albeit with slightly stronger swings in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe also had comparably high levels of women's political em-

powerment during the 1920s and 1930s, but dropped drastically during World War II, to recover again during the 1950s and 1960s.

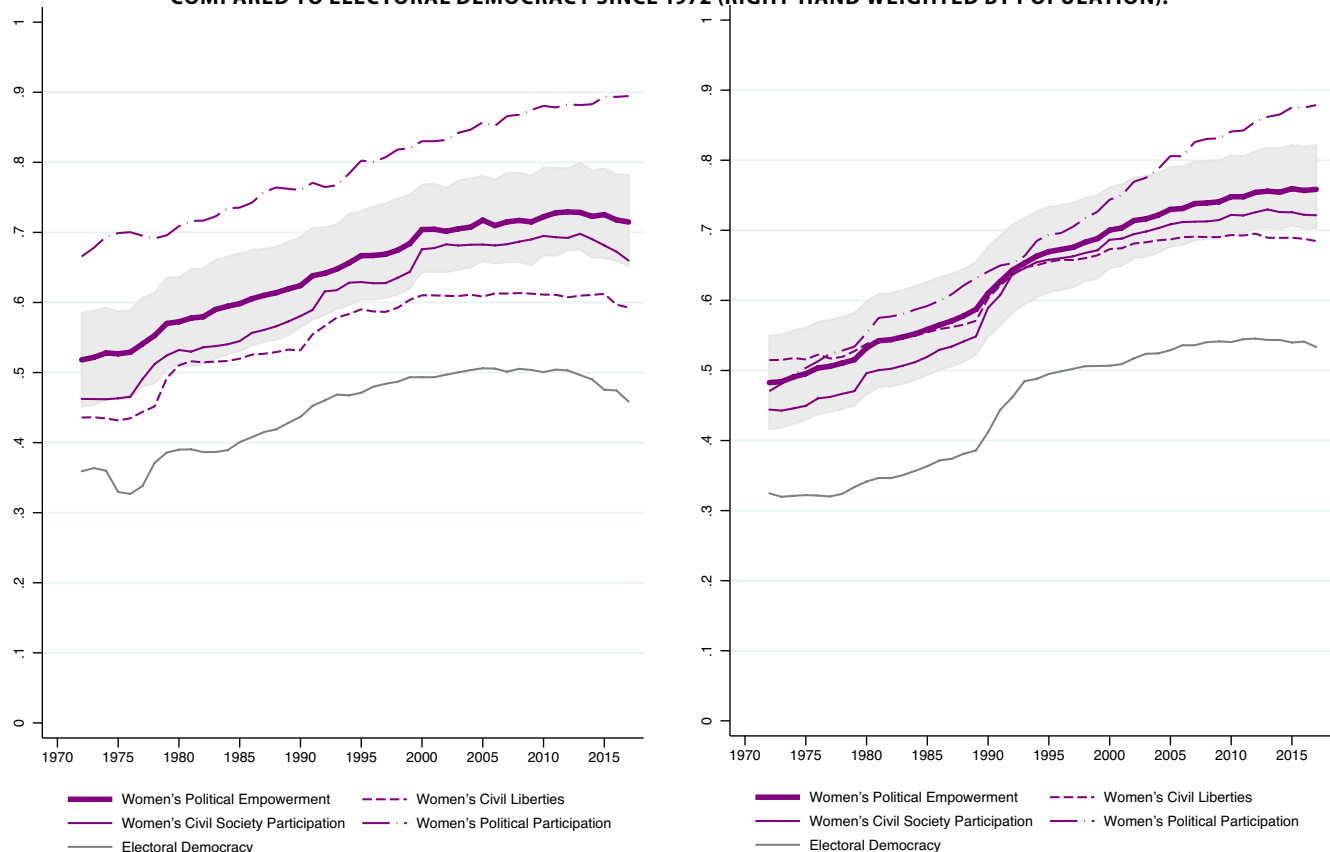
Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific also improved gradually and had levels of women's political empowerment hovering around the global average level until the late 1980s, when Latin America and the Caribbean improved substantially, and are today at the same level as Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The MENA region with the lowest level of women's political empowerment in the world throughout most of the period, still improved gradually over the last century, albeit at a somewhat slower pace than the rest of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa had approximately the same and low level of women's political empowerment as the MENA region until the 1970s, after which it picked up a steeper upward trajectory.

Which Aspects are Changing?

While Figure 2.5 illustrates developments in the aggregate Women's Political Empowerment Index, we also want to explore whether there are differences between the sub-components. For instance, is women's political participation improving more or less than women's civil liberties? In Figure 2.6, we compare the Women's Political Empowerment Index, its three sub-indices and the

FIGURE 2.6: GLOBAL AVERAGES OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT INDEX AND ITS SUB-INDICES COMPARED TO ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY SINCE 1972 (RIGHT-HAND WEIGHTED BY POPULATION).



Electoral Democracy Index, focusing on the more recent period, 1972-2017.

Overall, all three sub-indices have improved gradually since 1972 and among them the Women's Civil Liberties Index the most. While both that measure and Women's Civil Society Participation Index stabilized around 2000, Women's Political Participation Index continues to improve even during the recent years' global democratic backsliding.

When weighting country-states based on population, the improvements in women's political empowerment since 1973 appear somewhat more moderate (see Figure 2.6, right-hand side graph). Although also the population-weighted level of gender equality indicates a substantive improvement since 1970, this change may not be significant (as indicated by the confidence intervals). On the other hand, the population-weighted measures show little evidence of a downward trend in levels of women's civil society participation and civil liberties.

Disaggregating further, we also consider changes in all the different indicators that constitute the three subcomponent-indices of women's political empowerment. There is noteworthy variation between different indicators of women's political empowerment, which adds further nuance to the analysis.

The most striking finding in Figure 2.7 is the large group of countries that have improved their share of female to male journalists.

While two countries have experienced significant decline in share of female journalists, more than 24 countries have improved. Figure 2.7 also shows that there is some advancement on indicators such as share of female legislators, property rights for women, and power distributed by gender.

By contrast, many more countries register a decline (14) in their level of freedom from forced labor than nations advancing (5). Freedom of discussion for women has also declined overall, with around 22 countries experiencing significant decline on this indicator compared to only 13 registering an improvement. The latter development is in line with a general backsliding in democracy components related to elections and civil society – for both men and women – in many countries around the globe.

Regressing and Advancing Countries

While the graphs presented so far show developments at either the global or regional level, this section compares the recent trajectories of different countries. Figure 2.8 plots changes over the past ten years, comparing levels on Women's Political Empowerment Index in 2007 to levels in 2017. Labeled countries are those with significant changes.

Figure 2.8 confirms that the level of gender equality has been relatively stable over the past ten years. Only two countries have registered a significant decline in women's empowerment from 2007 to 2017 - the Maldives and Thailand. Meanwhile, eleven countries have improved their level of women's political empowerment, in-

FIGURE 2.7: BY INDICATORS OF WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REGISTERING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES.

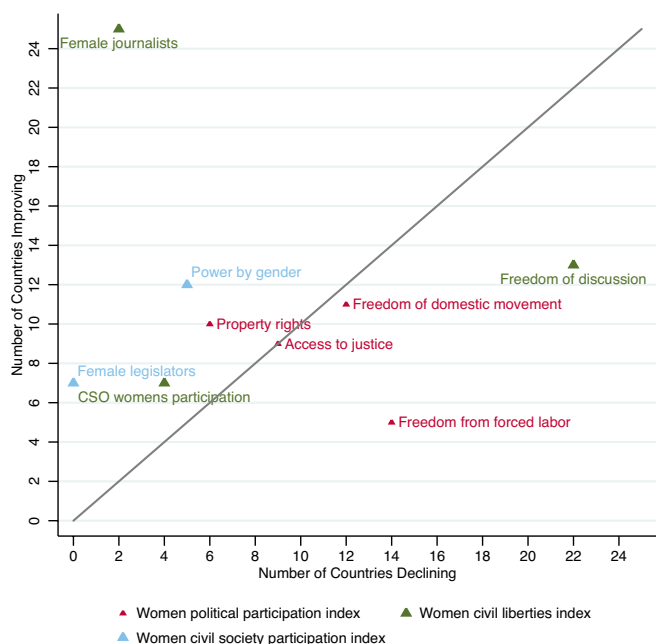


FIGURE 2.8: REGRESSING AND ADVANCING COUNTRIES, 2007-2017.

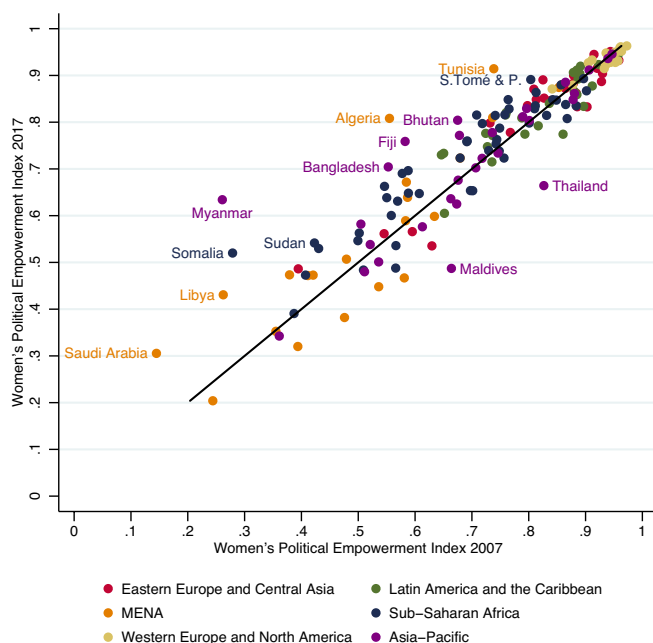
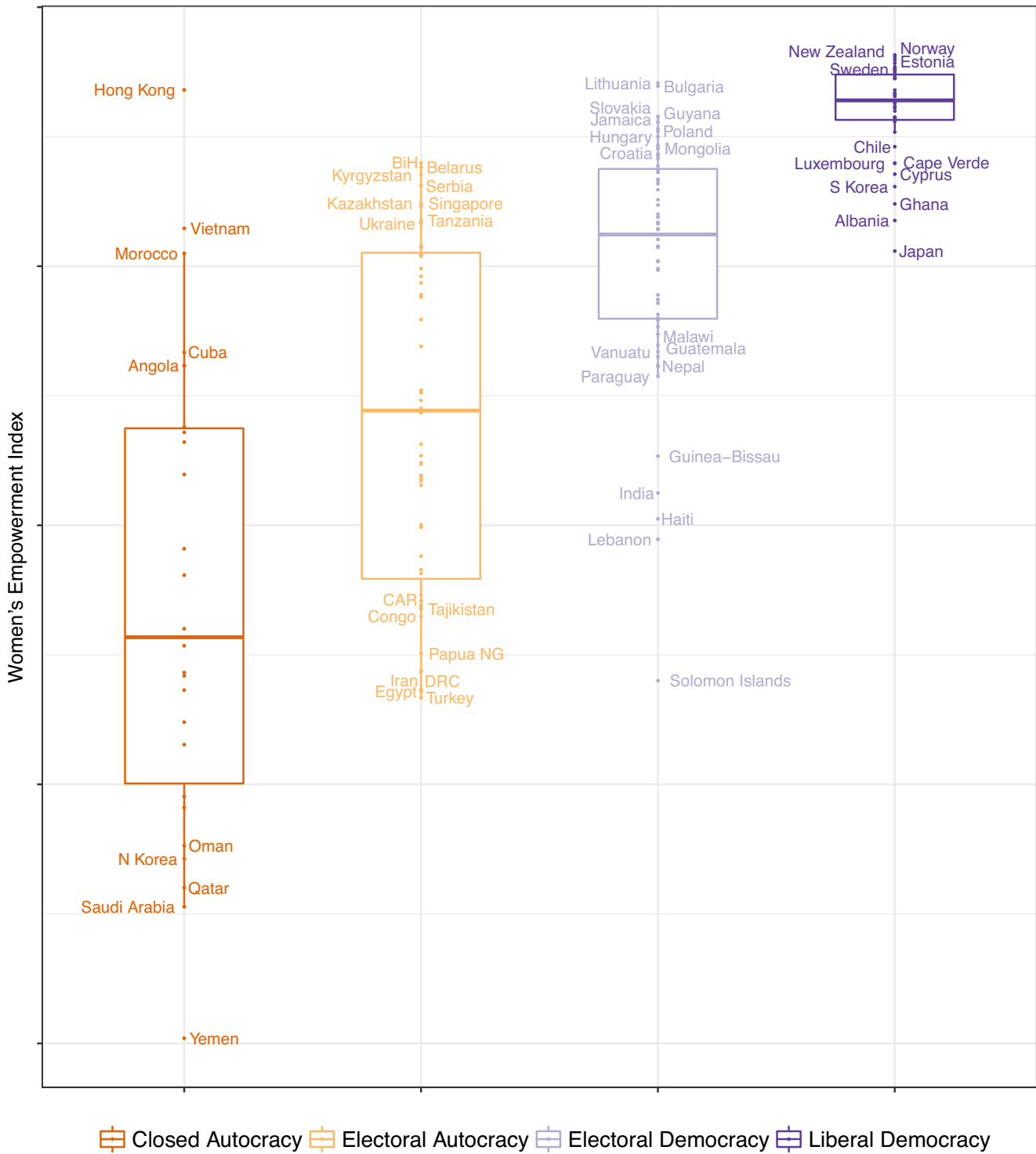


FIGURE 2.9: LEVEL OF WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT INDEX ACROSS REGIME TYPES, 2017.



cluding Algeria, Bhutan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Tunisia. Several of the advanced countries are in MENA, the region historically lagging behind the rest of the world when it comes to gender equality (and democracy).

Over-performers and Under-performers

Figure 2.9 visualizes how countries perform in terms of women's political empowerment compared to other countries within the same regime category but also how regime categories tend to compare to each other.³ Countries positioned above the box perform better on gender equality than expected given their regime type, while countries positioned below are under-performers.

Four noteworthy patterns stand out. First, countries with a socialist or communist past tend to perform better on gender equality than other countries in the same regime category, probably reflecting the legacy of women's high degree of involvement in the labor market in those societies. This applies across both regions and regime types, from the closed autocracies of Hong Kong, Cuba and Vietnam, over electoral autocracies of Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kyrgyzstan, to the electoral democracies of Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Beyond the post-communist states, Nepal and Jamaica over-perform on gender among the electoral democracies.

Second, almost all of the under-performers in the group of closed autocracies are from the MENA region, including Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Given that many of them are harshly autocratic regimes, their underperformance on gender equality highlights just how poor women's conditions in these countries are. MENA countries also appear as under-performers on gender inclusion among electoral autocracies (Egypt and Turkey) and electoral democracies (Lebanon).

Third, two African countries – Rwanda and Tanzania – stand out as over-performers in gender inclusiveness among the electoral autocracies, reflecting their embrace of progressive gender policies in recent decades. For instance, gender quotas in the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide in 1994 guarantee that 30 percent of parliamentary seats are reserved for women. The government also implemented targeted policies encouraging girls' education and the appointment of women to leadership roles (e.g. government ministers and police chiefs). Today, around 60 percent of parliamentarians in Rwanda are women.

Finally, there is also some variation in gender inclusiveness within the group of liberal democracies. The Scandinavian countries score the highest, but these countries are also the most democratic among the full democracies, suggesting that they do not necessarily over-perform compared to their democracy level. When accounting for the level of democracy, Germany is the main over-performer in this group. Conversely,

Japan is the worst under-performer among liberal democracies. Its low score reflects its low proportion of female lawmakers and cabinet ministers, low female labor participation, and a large gender wage gap. In fact, Japan scores worse on gender inclusion than inclusive autocracies such as Hong Kong and Vietnam.

3. This categorization is based on the Regimes in the World regime classification - closed autocracy, electoral autocracy, electoral democracy, and liberal democracy (see Lüthmann et al. 2017).





Section 2.2: Inclusion of Social Groups

Since the third wave of democratization in the early 1970s, power distribution by social groups and social group equality in respect for civil liberties have advanced in all regions of the world. Yet, over the last five years and coinciding with the democratic decline reported in the first section of this year's Democracy Report, there is evidence of countries backsliding also in terms of inclusion of social groups. As a result, over half a billion people live in countries with higher levels of social exclusion than ten years ago.

Laura Maxwell and Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca

TO WHAT EXTENT do different social groups have access to power and enjoy the same levels of civil rights around the globe? In this section we examine political inclusion and the protection of rights for social groups. V-Dem defines social groups as being distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, or caste. The first indicator we use in the analysis below is "power distribution by social group." It evaluates the degree of *inclusion* in politics of all relevant social groups.¹ The second indicator is "social group equality in respect for civil liberties," which measures the extent to which civil liberties are equally *protected* for all social groups.² Both indicators range from zero to four. Zero corresponds to a complete absence of inclusion and protection, and a score of four indicates that these social groups are included and protected.

The inclusion and protection of social groups and democratization have improved in close association during the three waves of democratization. V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index is positively correlated with power distribution by social groups (correlation = 0.75) and the equal protection of civil liberties for all social groups (correlation = 0.63) from 1900 to today.

Distribution of Power by Social Group

Figure 2.10 presents the global development, as well as regional variation, of power distribution by social group from 1972 to 2017. The left-hand panel is based on unweighted country averages. This

metric shows an incremental but steady upturn in the global level of power distribution by social group, while there is significant regional variation.

Western Europe and North America, as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia, remain virtually unchanged in their level of power distribution by social group from the late seventies up until the past decade, when there is some variation. The level in Western Europe and North America declined from around 2012, and power has become slightly more monopolized also in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in more recent years.

By contrast, in Latin America, Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa there have been steady gains in the last decades. Considerable improvements ensued in Latin America and Asia-Pacific during the third wave of democratization. The most significant improvements are recorded in sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s, coinciding with massive improvements in South Africa after the end of Apartheid and the introduction of multi-party elections in a vast majority of countries across the continent. The MENA region lags behind others despite significant improvements in the period leading up to and during the Arab Spring.

The right-hand side of figure 2.10 shows the global and regional averages weighted by population. Compared to the simple coun-

1. Question: "Is political power distributed according to social groups?" Response options: "0: Political power is monopolized by one social group comprising a minority of the population. This monopoly is institutionalized, i.e., not subject to frequent change. 1: Political power is monopolized by several social groups comprising a minority of the population. This monopoly is institutionalized, i.e., not subject to frequent change. 2: Political power is monopolized by several social groups comprising a majority of the population. This monopoly is institutionalized, i.e., not subject to frequent change. 3: Either all social groups possess some political power, with some groups having more power than others; or different social groups alternate in power, with one group controlling much of the political power for a period of time, followed by another – but all significant groups have a turn at the seat of power. 4: All social groups have roughly equal political power or there are no strong ethnic, caste, linguistic, racial, religious, or regional differences to speak of. Social group characteristics are not relevant to politics." Source: Coppedge et al. 2018b, p184.

2. Question: "Do all social groups, as distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, or caste, enjoy the same level of civil liberties, or are some groups generally in a more favorable position?" Response options: "0: Members of some social groups enjoy much fewer civil liberties than the general population. 1: Members of some social groups enjoy substantially fewer civil liberties than the general population. 2: Members of some social groups enjoy moderately fewer civil liberties than the general population. 3: Members of some social groups enjoy slightly fewer civil liberties than the general population. 4: Members of all salient social groups enjoy the same level of civil liberties." Source: Coppedge et al. 2018b, p164.

FIGURE 2.10: POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL GROUP: DEVELOPMENTS BY REGION BETWEEN 1972 AND 2017. (RIGHT-HAND PANEL WEIGHED BY POPULATION)

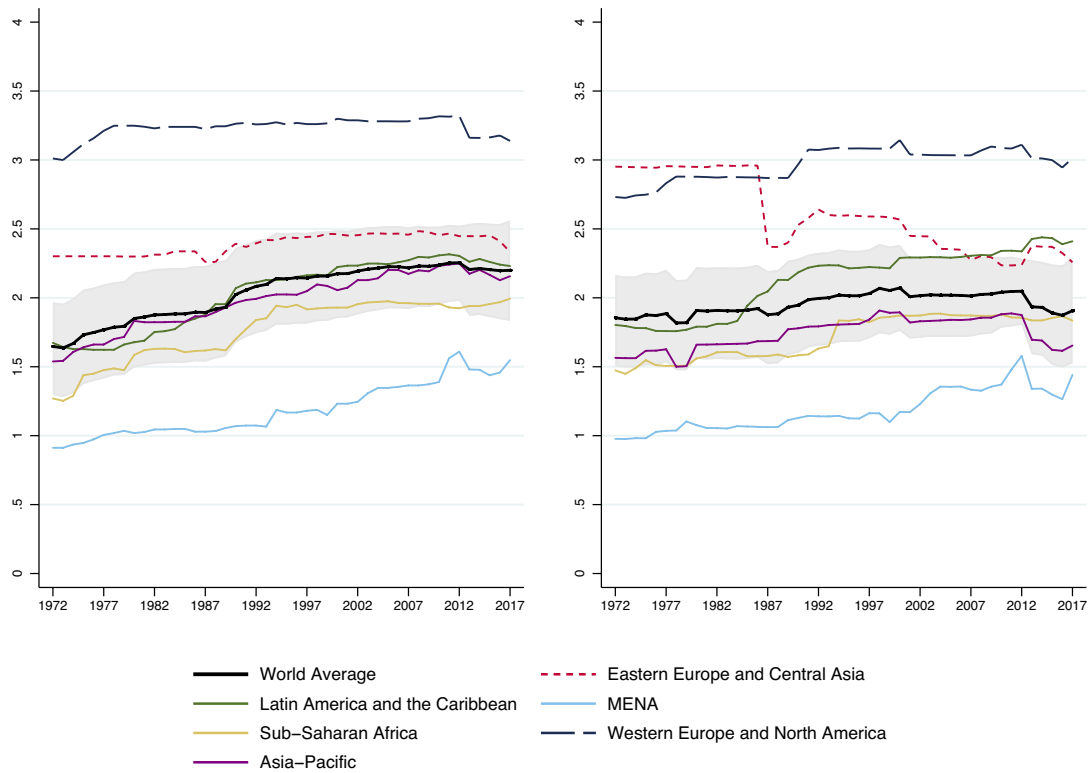
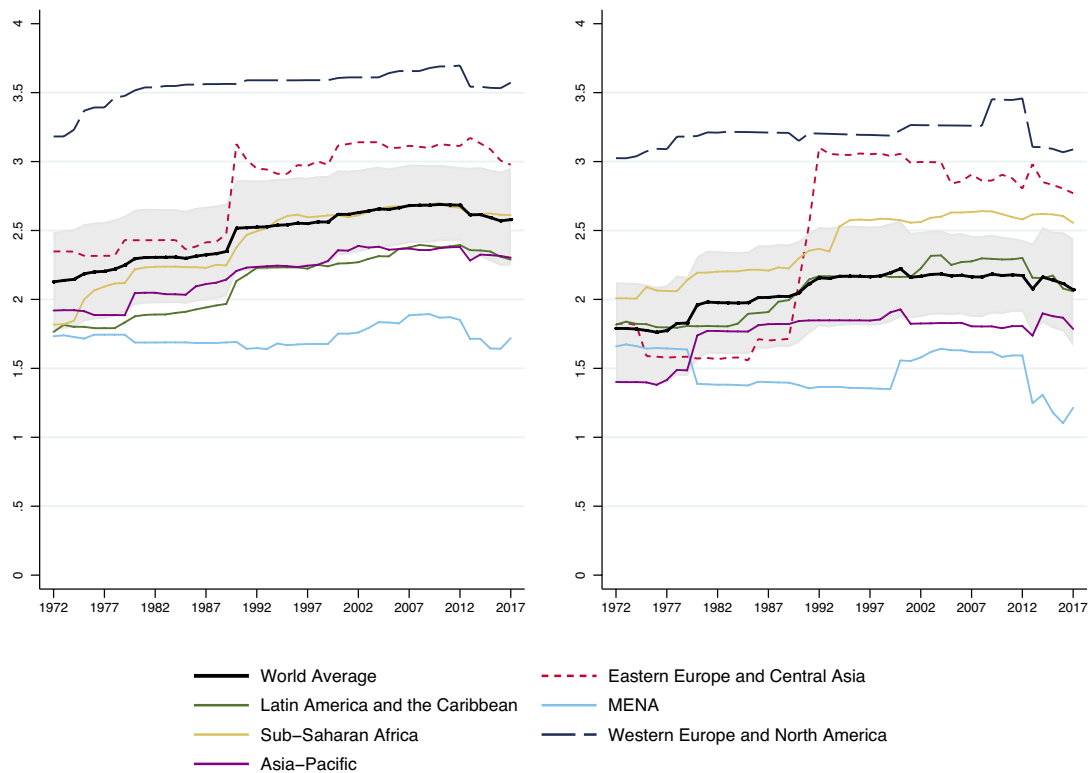


FIGURE 2.11: SOCIAL GROUP EQUALITY IN RESPECT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES: DEVELOPMENTS BY REGION BETWEEN 1972 AND 2017. (RIGHT-HAND PANEL WEIGHED BY POPULATION)



try averages, it shows more noticeable declines in levels of power distribution by social group for an increasing share of the world's population during the last five years.

The greatest difference when weighting by population is found in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. The largest country in the region drives the sudden drop in the late 1980s – Russia – followed by improving levels of power distribution by social group in Poland and Ukraine when they democratized. More exclusive politics dominates the region since then with worsening levels as a result, pushing the regional average back closer to the world mean.

Social Group Equality in Respect for Civil Liberties

Figure 2.11 depicts the global average and regional variation of social group equality in respect for civil liberties. The left-hand panel shows a gradual global increase from 1972 to 2012 and a slight negative trend in the last five years. The decline is more pronounced in Western Europe and North America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and MENA. While at different average levels, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia-Pacific follow the global trend closely and only very minor declines in the past five years.

Regional variation in declines in civil liberties for social groups become more apparent when population size is taken into account (right-hand panel in Figure 2.11). In Western Europe and North

America, the population-weighted averages are lower than the simple averages for every year displayed in this plot testifying that equality is higher in smaller countries on average. The recent declines in Western Europe and North America are also more pronounced when taking population into account, reflecting mainly the developments in the United States.

Interestingly, the situation seems to be the opposite in sub-Saharan Africa. When population weights are taken into account, average levels are higher throughout the period, and there is no decline in recent years. It seems that in this region, the larger and more populous countries are better on average than small countries in protecting social group equality in respect for civil liberties.

Finally, the MENA region appears more volatile when the size of populations are taken into account, closely following the trends of the large countries Iraq and Turkey, and more recently, the declines in Egypt.

Backsliding and Advancing Countries

Which countries have changed the most? Figure 2.12 details the specific countries in which power distribution by social group and social group equality in respect for civil liberties advanced or fell back between 2007 and 2017. Countries with labels above the line advanced while countries with labels below the line backslid significantly. For power distribution by social group (left-hand panel in

FIGURE 2.12: POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL GROUP (LEFT PANEL) AND CIVIL LIBERTIES BY SOCIAL GROUP (RIGHT PANEL): BACKSLIDING AND ADVANCING COUNTRIES BETWEEN 2007 AND 2017.

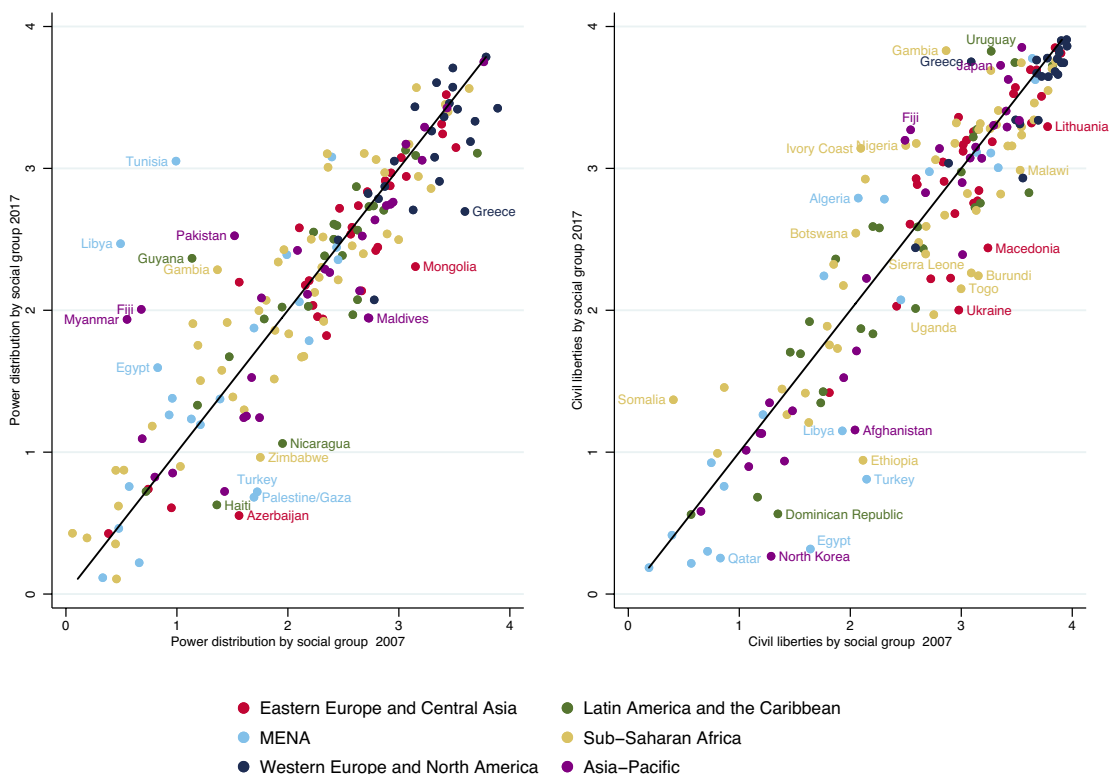


FIGURE 2.13: CHANGES IN POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL GROUP AND SOCIAL GROUP EQUALITY IN RESPECT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES, SELECTED COUNTRIES (2000-2017).

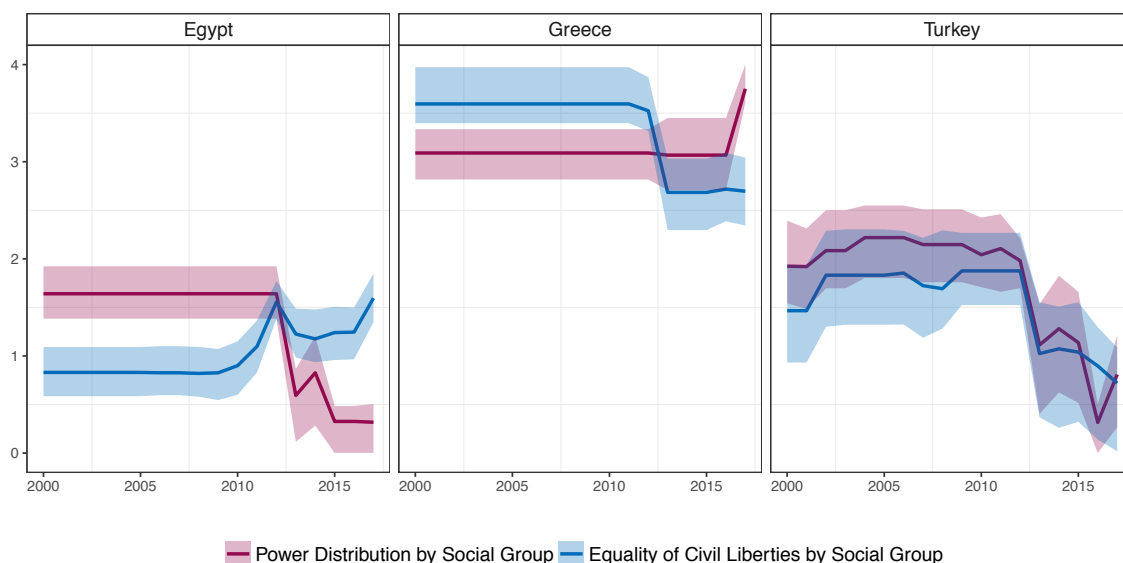


Figure 2.12), the number of advancers (eight) and backsliders (nine) is rather even. Most of the significant changes in either direction befell countries that had a highly unequal distribution of power in 2007 (below 2). Among them power distribution by social group improved significantly in for example the Gambia, Guyana, Libya, and Tunisia over the past ten years. Below the line, Haiti, Nicaragua, Turkey, and Zimbabwe are among the backsliders.

By contrast, more countries have regressed (16) than advanced (ten) on social group equality in respect for civil liberties (right-hand panel in Figure 2.12). The majority of the significant improvements occurred in countries with already decent levels of equality in 2007, while backsliders are found across the spectrum. The most pronounced improvements were accomplished in Gambia, Greece, Ivory Coast, and Uruguay. Backsliders include Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi and Sierra Leone, while the largest deteriorations occurred in Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, North Korea and Turkey.

What is driving the decline of power distribution by social group and social group equality in respect for civil liberties? In order to shed light on this question, we present two cases where power distribution by social group and protection have developed in opposite directions: Egypt and Greece. Furthermore, we discuss the dramatic upsurge of exclusionary politics in Turkey. Figure 2.13 presents the country trends.

During the Arab spring, citizens from diverse social groups in Egypt became more involved in politics, reflected by a substantial uptick in 2012 of power based on social groups shown in Figure 2.13. At the same time, social group equality in respect for civil liberties fell

substantially after 2012. This reflects disquieting developments following the November 2011 elections won by President Mohamed Morsi and Prime Minister Hisham Qandil forming a government largely from the Muslim Brotherhood, a period of autocratic excesses, protests, and then a new military overthrow lead by, now President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Across the Mediterranean in Greece, changes are in the opposite direction compared to Egypt: equality of respect for civil liberties improved while power distribution declined. Naturally, Greece started from a higher level than Egypt. The improvement of social group equality in respect for civil liberties in the past year coincides with the Greek government beginning to include refugee children into the school system, along with a long-awaited vote in parliament to begin the construction of an official mosque in Athens. However, as shown in Figure 2.13, Greece's rating on power distribution by social group declined significantly after 2012, amid the debt crisis, an influx of immigration and a parliamentary election. Nationalist parties like Golden Dawn and Independent Greeks, that are anti-immigrant and opposed to multiculturalism gained significant representation in parliament. This reflects a political climate increasingly hostile to immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Finally, Turkey plunges on both aspects after 2012, among many other things probably reflecting the crackdown on the Gezi Park protests, as well as an increase in detention of those that criticize Islam and the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as the increasingly harsh repression of social minorities including the Kurds.

Inclusive Democracies?

How does social inclusion relate to levels of democracy? In Figure 2.14 we examine the relationship between regime type³ and power distribution by social group in 2017. Countries labeled above the box are over-performers in their regime type category, while countries with labels below the box are under-performers. The line in the box plot indicates the median level of power distribution by social group across all countries in that category.

There is a clear relationship between regime type and the level of equality in the distribution of power by social group. Even so, within each regime type, there is substantial variation, especially among autocracies. As expected, liberal democracies tend to have higher scores on social group inclusion, compared to all other regime types. Exceptions to this pattern are Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Greece, and Latvia, which coincides with the presence of far-right populist parties or institutionalized separatist movements.

Among *electoral democracies*, we find the under-performers with the lowest power distribution by social group in Haiti, Guatemala and the Philippines, registering social inclusion scores lower than the average closed autocracy.

Among the *autocratic regimes*, many under-performing countries, such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, and Turkey have a history of ethnic conflict. There is also a pattern among the over-performers in these less democratic settings. Communist and post-communist/socialist societies such as Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cuba, Kosovo, Lithuania, Russia, Slovakia, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Zambia do well in terms of social group inclusion compared to other countries of their regime type.

Migration and Democracy: Minorities in the Making?

Today, 258 million people live outside of their country of birth and this represents a large recent increase – it is 49 percent more than in 2000.⁴ Thus, it is important to analyze the relationship also between migration and democracy. By combining the V-Dem's democracy data with bilateral migration stocks,⁵ we examine the relationship as of 2017.

Fig. 2.15 displays the regime type of sending and receiving countries by share of the migratory population. The left side of the figure depicts countries of origin by regime type and by the proportion of emigrants. The right side shows the destination countries by the same parameters.

By 2017, half of all the stock of migrants are from countries located on the autocratic side of the spectrum, one third left electoral de-

mocracies, and 19 percent immigrated from liberal democracies.

In terms of the destination countries, liberal democracies stand out as the modal destination for migrants. Liberal democracies collectively has been the destination for over half of the total stock of migrant population. Moreover, compared to the proportion of the total population that lives in liberal democracies (14 percent), the stock of migrant population disproportionately decide to migrate to the most free regime type, by far.

It is also notable that migrants leaving liberal democracies only in extremely rare cases destinies for less democratic countries. The flows from liberal democracies to any kind of autocracy almost never happens.

Even electoral democracies is a much less favored destination than liberal democracies, recipients of 13 percent of the stock of migrants. About half of that flow is from autocracies. A vast majority of migrants leaving electoral autocracies head for another democracy. Only a smaller share ends up in autocracies.

The exception to this overall pattern of pro-democratic favoritism among migrants, is people leaving electoral autocracies. A slim majority of them head for another autocracy, sometimes to the worse category of closed ones.

Combining the information about the sending and receiving countries, we find that by 2017, 45 percent of the migrant population moved to a country that is more democratic than their country of origin, with an additional 35 percent living in a country of the same regime type. Thus, only 20 percent of all immigrants have moved to a country of a more autocratic regime type than their country of origin.

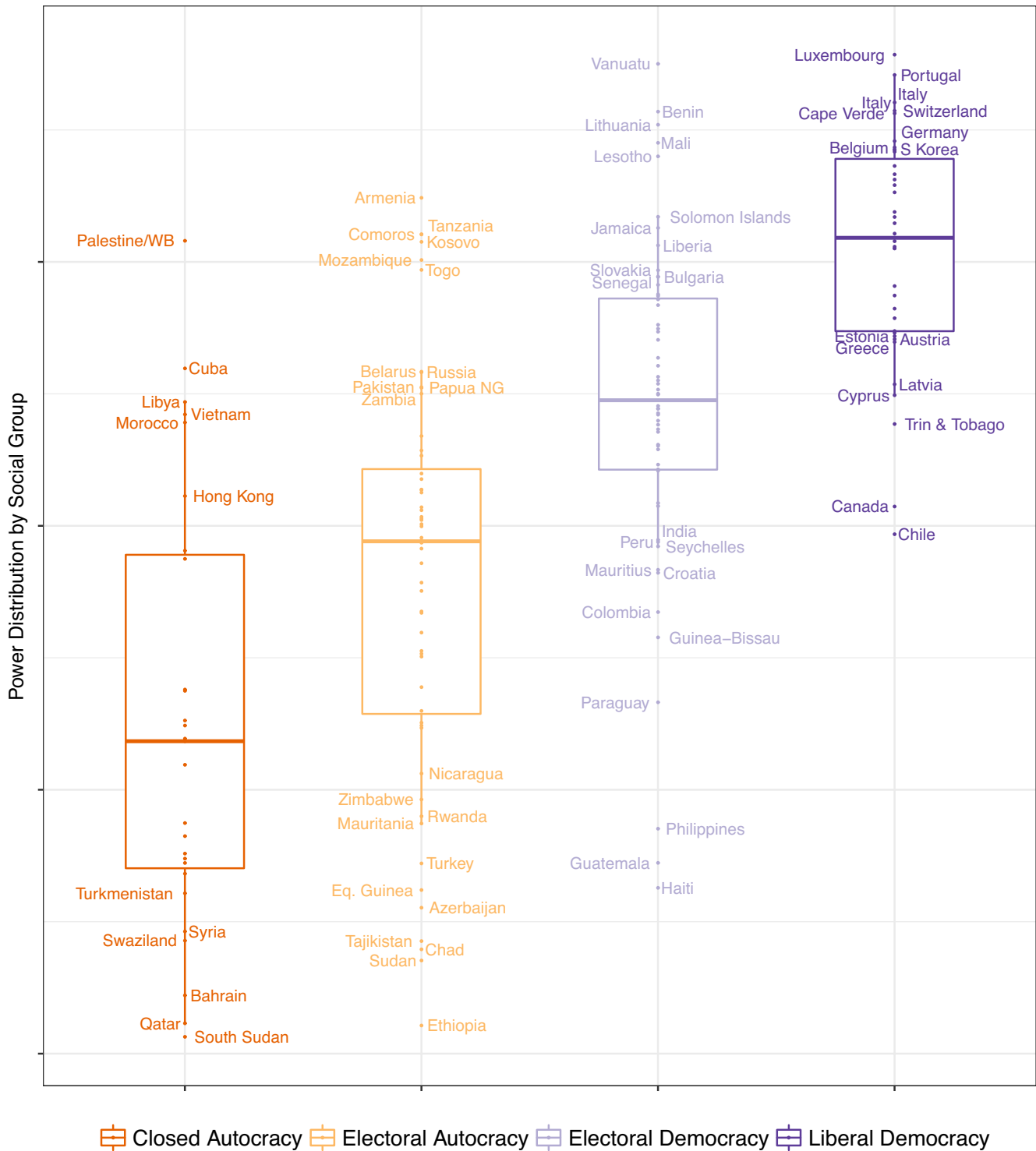
It is notable that more than 13 percent of the stock of migrant population still lives in closed autocracies, though in terms of proportions this is much less than the global population living in closed autocracies (25 percent).

However, despite migrating to relatively democratic countries, the political inclusion of migrants is not guaranteed. Almost 8 percent of migrants live in countries that have experienced significant backsliding in terms of social inclusion and protection over the past ten years.⁶

In addition to democracy, economic factors are naturally important for migration patterns. Countries with both higher levels of democracy and greater GDP per capita typically receive higher shares of migrants.⁷ European and North American countries – and the United States, Germany, and the UK in particular – are home to the

3. As defined by the Regimes of the World measure (Lührmann et al. 2018). 4. UN DESA (2017). 5. The UN bilateral migration dataset measures the stock of migrants between directed pairs of countries in 2017. The migrant population is defined as the collection of people "who change his or her country of usual residence" (UN DESA 2017). 6. This is nearly identical to the portion of the global population (7.5 percent) living in countries backsliding on these indicators. 7. We examined the relationship between the Electoral Democracy Index (V-Dem Data Set Version 8), GDP per Capita (World Bank) and Migration Population in 2017 (World Bank).

FIGURE 2.14: REGIME TYPE AND POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL GROUP.



largest proportions. Notably, among closed autocracies, there are several countries with highly developed economies – Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar – which are the country of destination for about two-thirds of those immigrants living in closed autocracies. These are predominantly economic migrants.

It is difficult to disentangle whether democracy or economic development are the most relevant pull-factors for mass migration because more democratic countries also tend to be richer. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that migrants tend to migrate from less to more democratic countries.

FIGURE 2.15: SHARE OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION BY REGIME TYPE FOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION, 2017.



Note: the numbers in parentheses on each side of the plot represent the percentage of the immigrant stock originating from or residing in that regime type, respectively.

Spotlight: Limited Freedom of Foreign Movement around The World

Many public authorities restrict the freedom of citizens to travel from and to the country, a practice that is often aggravated by severe punishment for transgressors and their families. Among the worst cases are North Korea, which has imposed restrictions on foreign movement since 1947, Eritrea, with tough restrictions

since 2002, and Sudan, which has implemented restrictions since 1989. Moreover, Laos, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Uzbekistan, South Sudan and Turkmenistan also restrict the freedom of movement of their citizens.



Section 2.3: Political Exclusion Based on Socio-Economic Inequality

Political and economic inequalities threaten to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of democracy (Dahl, 1971). This section shows that socio-economic inequalities are increasing in many parts of the world in ways that reinforce democratic backsliding. In particular, recent declines in health and educational equality, as well as the distribution of power by socio-economic status throughout the world, give cause for concern.

Valeriya Mechkova, Moa Olin and Rachel Sigman

THE POLITICS SURROUNDING socio-economic inequality are increasingly more palpable. Anti-elite rhetoric, large-scale populist movements, and nationalist backlashes to global economic integration are now commonplace in many countries. These developments put the future of democracy at risk when combined with undemocratic agendas pursued by political leaders.

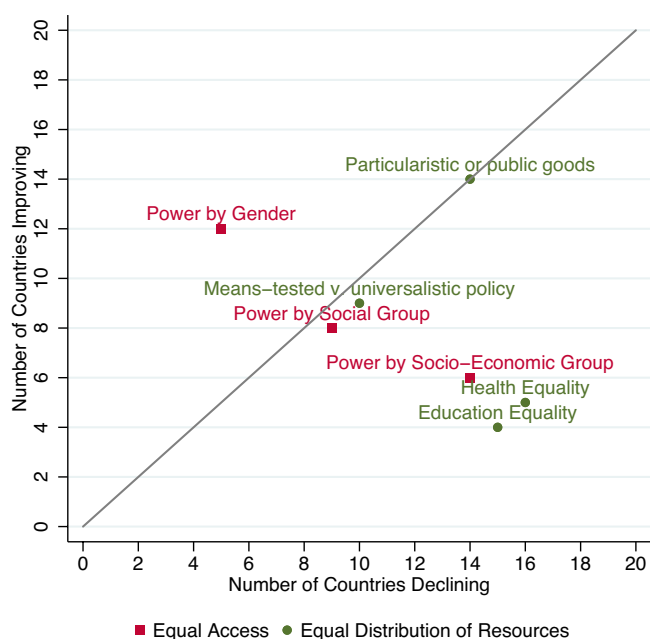
The liberal perspective, taking center stage in the first part of this report, emphasizes institutional guarantees of rights and freedoms of democracy, such as the right to vote and participate politically, freedom to express oneself, and legal protections for access to justice. However, the mere guarantee of rights and freedoms does not mean that all individuals are capable of exercising their rights and enjoy the freedoms equally. Lack of economic or social means can prevent people from doing so, and economic inequalities can make less wealthy individuals vulnerable to political domination.

In this section, we therefore focus on the ways that social and socio-economic inequalities augment current trends of democratic backsliding. We explore how inequalities in health, education, and the distribution of power by socio-economic group have changed in the last ten years. We find that such inequalities have worsened in recent years. This suggests that democracy is becoming less and less accessible to poor people across the world.

Which Aspects of Socio-Economic Inequality Have Changed the Most?

Figure 2.16 reports the number of countries that have advanced (above the diagonal line) or declined (below the diagonal line) over the last ten years on indicators of socio-economic inequality. The three indicators constituting V-Dem's Equal Access Index are in red

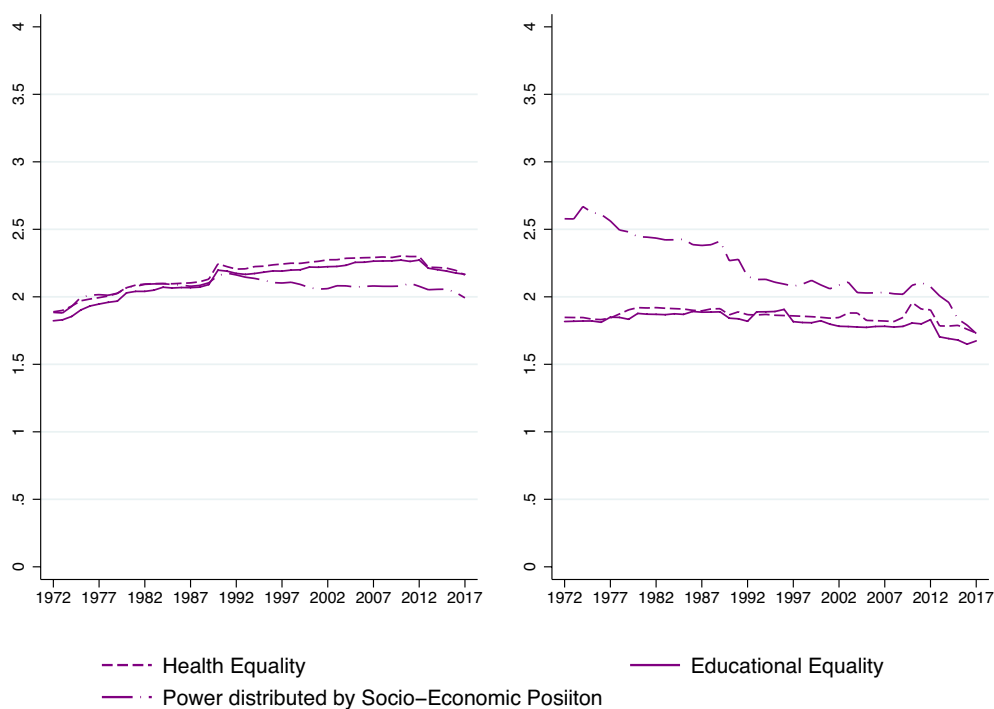
FIGURE 2.16: BY ASPECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, 2007-2017.



and the four indicators of the Equal Distribution of Resources Index are displayed in green.

The largest magnitude of backsliding has affected indicators measuring the share of the population whose political efficaciousness is undermined by educational and health inequalities, and the level of equality in terms of distribution of power by socio-economic group. This finding indicates that socio-economic inequalities is a grave concern in a growing number of countries.

FIGURE 2.17: GLOBAL TRENDS IN EDUCATION AND HEALTH EQUALITY, AND POWER DISTRIBUTED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION (RIGHT PANEL POPULATION-WEIGHTED).



The level of equal distribution of power by socio-economic status declined significantly in 14 countries, while the number of countries with positive changes is only six. The countries with the largest increases in inequality on this measure on the past ten years are Burundi, Iraq, Mauritania, Panama, and Yemen.

The countries registering the biggest improvements are all emerging from tumultuous periods of political instability: Egypt, Somalia and Tunisia. However, even after the upturns in recent years, the scores for Egypt and Somalia are still in the lower half on the scale reflecting a situation in which more wealthy people enjoy a dominant or very strong hold on political power.¹

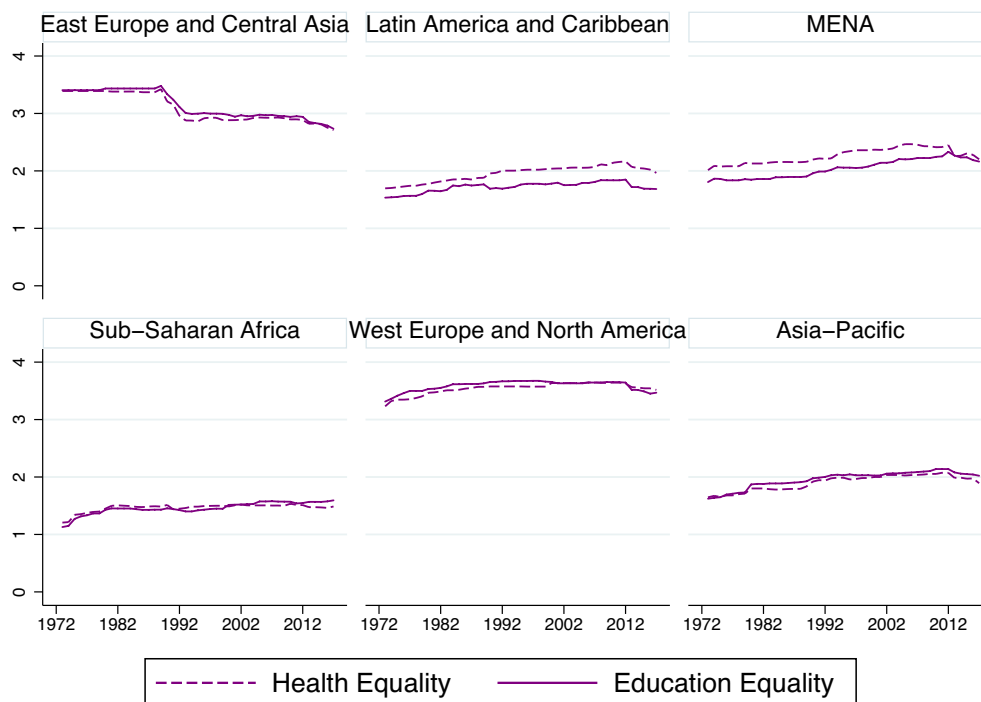
A matching concern is unequal access to healthcare and education that lead to inability to participate in political activities (such as voting and engagement in political parties). The level of equality in access to healthcare or to education declined significantly in 16 and 15 countries respectively, while progressing in only five (for health) and four (for education).

Figure 2.17, left-hand panel, shows unweighted global over-time developments for the same three indicators. By these measures, both education and health equality improved gradually but significantly from 1972 until the 1990s to then journey slightly downwards again in recent years. Despite the improvements, the global averages reach just above the middle of the scale, which corresponds to a situation in which the ability of ten to twenty-five percent of adult citizens to participate is impaired due to poor access to healthcare and education.

The scores on these two measures of equality are even lower when we look at the scores weighted by population (right-hand panel of Figure 2.17), and the declines in recent years are also more pronounced. In other words, equality tends to be better in smaller countries than in more populous ones, and the decline in recent years has affected larger countries more.

The dissimilarities between country average measures and the scores weighted by population are the largest for the indicator of power distribution by socio-economic position. The estimations

1. The scale on this indicator is from 0 to 4, where 0 stands for a virtual monopoly on political power by wealthy people, and 4 corresponds to more or less equally distributed power across economic groups (see Coppedge et al. 2018b, p. 184).

FIGURE 2.18: REGIONAL TRENDS IN EDUCATION AND HEALTH EQUALITY SINCE 1972.

weighted by population fall markedly between 1975 and 2017. This finding again indicates that more populous countries are becoming increasingly unequal, and that negative change is affecting a large share of the world's population.

In the next section, we explore these trends in greater detail by looking at which regions and countries are driving these changes.

Health and Education (In-)Equality

Figure 2.18 shows that health and education equality are, as of recently, declining in all regions, except sub-Saharan Africa where it has remained stable since the 1980s albeit at a very low level. Asia and the Pacific, the MENA region, and Latin America and the Caribbean also have comparatively low levels of health and education equality. Eastern Europe and Central Asia have a somewhat higher level than those other regions but also register the steepest sub-

TABLE 2.1: ALL COUNTRIES REGISTERING SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EDUCATION AND HEALTH EQUALITY, 2007-2017.

HEALTH EQUALITY				EDUCATION EQUALITY			
Ten-year losses		Ten-year gains		Ten-year losses		Ten-year gains	
Venezuela	-2.03	Swaziland	0.89	Syria	-1.21	Eritrea	1.25
Romania	-1.47	Namibia	0.85	Central African Republic	-1.02	Tanzania	0.98
Turkey	-1.31	Eritrea	0.61	Mauritania	-0.91	Saudi Arabia	0.96
Sri Lanka	-1.14	Oman	0.59	Afghanistan	-0.84	Rwanda	0.73
Iran	-1.01	Timor-Leste	0.58	Laos	-0.82		
Libya	-0.99			Ukraine	-0.78		
Mauritania	-0.97			Romania	-0.76		
Cambodia	-0.89			Spain	-0.71		
Burundi	-0.85			Bulgaria	-0.71		
Syria	-0.84			Maldives	-0.70		
Slovenia	-0.84			Brazil	-0.69		
Central African Republic	-0.76			Armenia	-0.57		
Iraq	-0.75			Haiti	-0.49		
Somaliland	-0.53			Sudan	-0.48		
Lithuania	-0.46			United States	-0.48		
Spain	-0.45						

stantive decline following the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. The highest and most stable levels of health and education equality are recorded for Western Europe and North America.

Table 2.1 lists all the countries with significant positive and negative changes in health and education equality over the past ten years. Of the 16 countries backsliding on health equality between 2007 and 2017, the decline in Venezuela is the worst. Following an economic inflation rate of 2,616 percent in 2017, millions of people suffered from severe shortages of food, medicine and healthcare.² Iran, Romania, Sri Lanka, and Turkey have also experienced severe declines in healthcare equality.

Educational equality declined significantly in four of the post-communist countries over the last ten years: Armenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine. Yet the biggest declines in education equality are found in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Laos, Mauritania and Syria. Only four countries – Eritrea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Tanzania register – positive changes.

In sum, global levels of inequality in terms of education and health make substantial portions of the world's population partly incapable of fully using their political rights and freedoms, even where these are institutionally guaranteed. Recent backsliding on health and education equality threaten to further undermine the possibility for individuals to fully exercise their rights and freedoms. Con-

versely, the countries registering improvements – such as Eritrea and Swaziland – are still found at the bottom end of the index because the gains were relatively small. These are also countries where such improvements mean little since there are few political rights and freedoms to begin with.

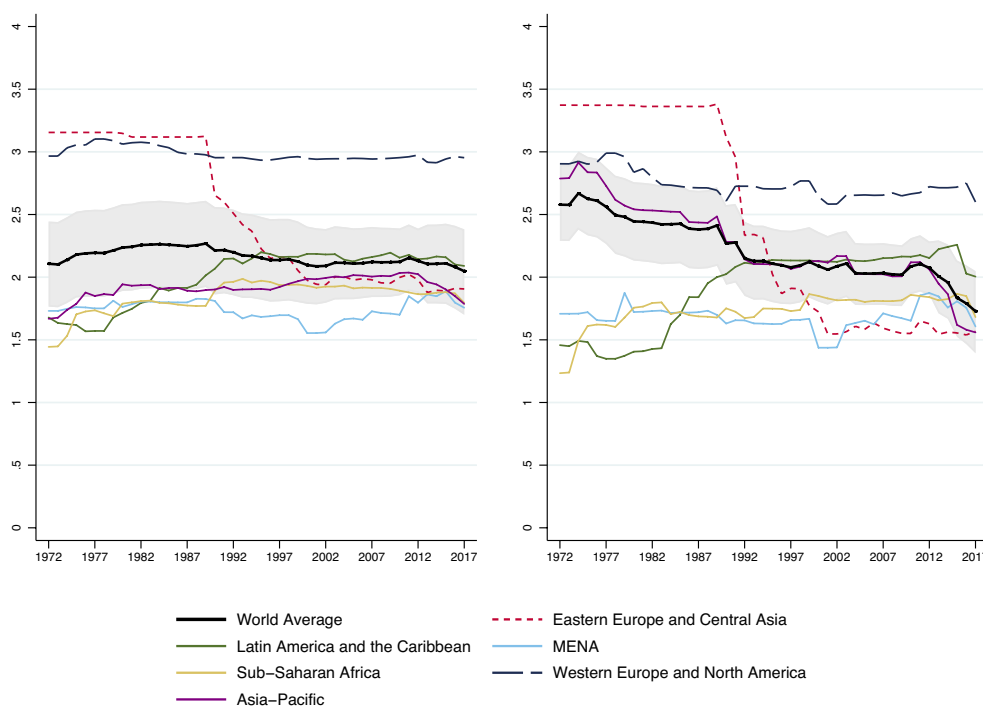
Power Distributed by Socio-Economic Position

While measures of health and educational equality help us to understand whether citizens are equally empowered to participate politically, V-Dem's measure of power distribution by socio-economic status measures the extent to which poorer groups in society can actually access positions of power or exert political influence.

Figure 2.19 illustrates the global average of power distribution by socio-economic status as well as the regional developments. While the unweighted global levels (left-hand panel) have remained comparable during the last decades, global levels weighted by population (right-hand panel) have decreased substantially since 1972. More and more people live in nations where the rich have much more access to political power than poorer people.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia, hence many post-communist countries, are driving much of this global decline in power distribution by socio-economic group, alongside a drastic decline is also evident in Asia-Pacific in recent years and smaller drops in other regions.

FIGURE 2.19: REGIONAL TRENDS IN POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION (RIGHT-HAND WEIGHTED BY POPULATION)



Notably for Western Europe and North America power distribution by socio-economic position only shows a decline in the population-weighted figure, which reflects a trend of less equal access to power in large countries like the United States.

Improvements during the 1980s and 1990s are clearly visible in Latin America and the Caribbean in particular when considering the population size of countries, but also a substantial drop the last few years.

Table 2.2 shows that substantially more countries register losses (14 countries) than gains (six countries) in access to power by socio-economic group over the past ten years. Burundi is the worst backslider on this metric. Other countries with a significant and substantial decline in power distribution by socio-economic status include Fiji, India, Iraq, Mauritania, Panama, and Yemen.

The only country over this period that transitioned from an autocracy to a liberal democracy – Tunisia – also saw the largest advance on power distribution by socio-economic group, but Egypt, Somalia, Venezuela, and Ecuador also register significant increases but also from quite low levels.

Are Democratic Countries More Socio-Economically Inclusive?

Figure 2.20 shows V-Dem's measure of power distribution by socio-economic position across regime types. There is a clear J-shaped relationship. The median scores for closed and electoral autocracies cluster at lower levels compared to those for electoral and liberal democracies and between the two latter liberal democracies score much higher than electoral. However, there is also substantial variation within all regime types.

Notably, liberal democracies tend to be rated at high levels on this indicator. Substantively, this means that economic stratification tends not to translate directly to very unequal political power in these countries. There are a few exceptions to this pattern, including Albania, Chile, Costa Rica, the United States, and Uruguay. They are liberal democracies but stand out with substantively lower scores on this indicator compared to other countries in the same category. In this group, liberal democracy is coupled with substantially more power accruing to the wealthier part of the population, and poorer citizens having real influence only over issues that do not matter much to wealthy people.

At the other end of the scale, the Nordic countries, alongside The Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Germany, have the highest levels of inclusion. In these liberal democracies, wealthy people tend not to have much more influence over political decisions than poorer segments of the population, according to the V-Dem country experts.

TABLE 2.2: ALL COUNTRIES REGISTERING SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES IN POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION.

Ten-year losses		Ten-year gains	
Burundi	-1.84	Tunisia	0.98
Mauritania	-1.47	Egypt	0.95
Iraq	-1.46	Somalia	0.81
Yemen	-1.10	Venezuela	0.74
Panama	-1.02	Ecuador	0.69
India	-0.85	Greece	0.57
Fiji	-0.82		
Iran	-0.82		
Burma/Myanmar	-0.71		
Mali	-0.63		
Bangladesh	-0.61		
Vanuatu	-0.60		
Pakistan	-0.58		
Turkmenistan	-0.43		

Among electoral democracies, Lithuania, Poland, and several countries from Latin America and the Caribbean – Bolivia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru and Suriname – stand out as over-performers in terms of this indicator of political equality, with scores similar to the average liberal democracy. Conversely, Guinea-Bissau is an outlier, with scores that match most closed and electoral autocracies, with a score indicating that wealthy people enjoy a dominant hold on power and even people of average income have little say.

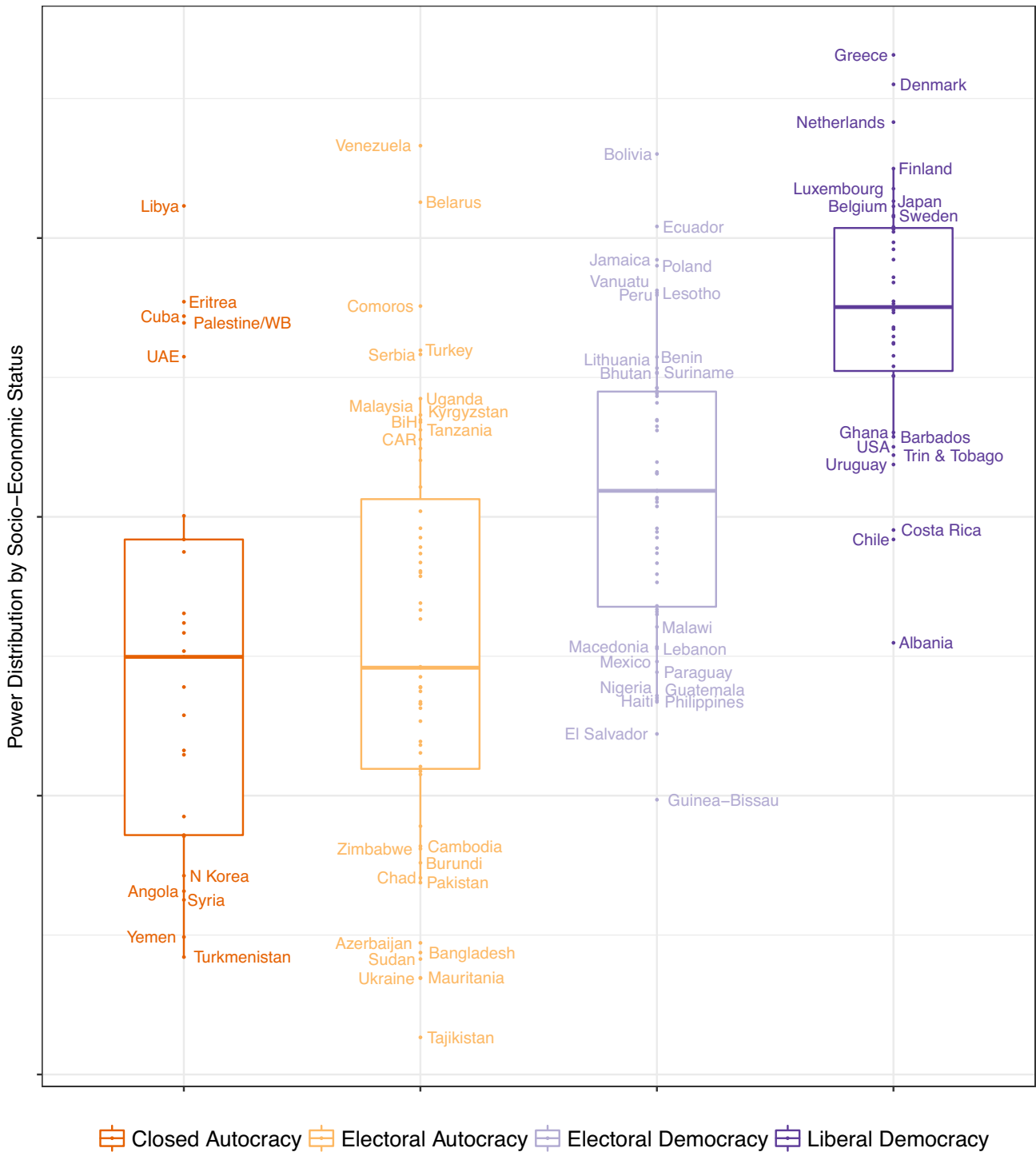
Some electoral autocracies are extreme over-performers (Belarus and Venezuela), and compare favorably even to many liberal democracies. Countries such as Bangladesh, Mauritania, Sudan, Tajikistan and Ukraine are on the opposite end of the spectrum. These countries have highly skewed distributions of political power based on socio-economic status, even compared to other electoral autocracies.

Several closed autocracies undergoing or coming out of recent conflicts are also under-performing with respect to egalitarianism: Angola, Syria and Yemen. Cuba and Libya score far higher on egalitarian democracy than the average in this category.

Some of the former Soviet Republics – Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine – are found at the bottom of the scoreboard in terms of levels of power distributed by wealth and are under-performers when compared to their level of democracy.

The key conclusion from this section is that while there are exceptions, liberal democracies tend to provide more or less equal possibilities for people of all income groups to access and influence politics.

FIGURE 2.20: POWER DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION ACROSS DIFFERENT REGIMES.



What do you use the V-Dem data for?

#1: Practitioners

Article 19

ARTICLE 19 joined with V-Dem to launch a unique, authoritative assessment of freedom of expression and information worldwide in November 2017. ARTICLE 19 has worked with V-Dem to select 32 indicators out of the 350 measured by V-Dem to provide a rich and multi-faceted view on the challenges facing freedom of expression and information globally. These indicators have been aggregated into five indices based on ARTICLE 19's assessment of the five defining elements of freedom of expression, as set out in our Expression Agenda strategy: Protection of Journalists and human rights defenders; Media Pluralism and Freedom; Civic Space; Transparency and Accountability; and Freedom of Expression in the Digital Age. With V-Dem's new approach to measuring democracy, the findings of our Expression Agenda (XpA) metric reveal the key threats facing freedom of expression and information, enabling us not only to target our advocacy more effectively, but to measure the impact of our work, as well as provide a lobbying tool for our partners around the world and **a reliable new source of insight for journalists, activists, and policymakers.**

Quinn McKew, Deputy Executive Director, Article 19



tributes and 16 sub-attributes of democracy and includes 98 indicators from 14 different sources. The partnership between the Varieties of Democracy Institute and IDEA has been essential for the development of the GSoD Indices. V-Dem data is one of the key data sources due to its **extensive coverage in terms of countries, years and indicators.** The development of the GSoD Indices was guided by Svend-Erik Skaaning, a PI from V-Dem, and our expert advisory board benefitted from the participation of many of the V-Dem experts. I hope that the collaboration between IDEA and V-Dem on this project can be a source of inspiration to others as to how the data can be used in different initiatives.

Mélida Jiménez, Acting Programme Manager, International IDEA

#2: Academics

Since 2016 we have been engaged in a knowledge transfer project, in which we aim to illustrate **the complex nature of democracy** using the insights gained from empirical research on democracy, most importantly those provided by the Varieties of Democracy project and the Democracy Barometer project. Using game development as an innovative teaching approach in higher education, we invited students to become actively involved in the process of designing a non-digital game about democracy. As a means to illustrate the empirical complexity and normative nature of different models of democracy, we drew on both the conceptual documentation as well as the data set of the Varieties of Democracy project. The set goal for the students was to develop a game prototype that includes both a cooperative element, in which players, acting together, need to ensure a minimum level of democracy (i.e. electoral democracy) to win the game; as well as a competitive element, such that each player should aim to maximize different aspects of democracy, striving to implement different models of democracy (majoritarian, consensus, liberal, deliberative, participa-



International IDEA

International IDEA (IDEA) launched its first Global State of Democracy report "Exploring Democracy's Resilience" in November 2017. The report was also accompanied by the release of "The Global State of Democracy Indices," which is IDEA's first comprehensive democracy measure. The first edition of the Global State of Democracy Indices (GSoD Indices) measures democracy across 5 at-

tive, or egalitarian). The course led to a two-year teaching project at the University of Zurich, and the development of game-based learning material.

Dr. Saskia Ruth, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Dr. Rebecca Welge, Freelance Trainer & Demokrative and Robert Lovell, Instructional Game Designer

University of Alabama

Undergraduate students on my courses on Democratization and African politics at the University of Alabama have increasingly relied on **V-Dem's online data analysis tools for depicting cross-time and cross-country variations** in democracy. For instance, during fall 2017, students conducted a group presentation on democratic trends in Latin America and used V-Dem's electoral democracy index (variable graph) to depict democratic changes across Latin America in general, as well as in the individual countries of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela and Honduras between 1990 and 2017. In the same semester, students on my African politics course made use of the clean elections index to explore trends in election quality over time for countries in Southern Africa. Although I expose students to several expert-based sources for measuring democracy, students seem to prefer V-Dem, in part because the



project includes a wide array of democracy-related indicators, but also because of the relative ease with which students can manipulate data and generate graphs for presentations and research papers.

Nicholas Kerr, Assistant Professor, University of Alabama

#3: Students

Experience with V-Dem data as a student

As a student enrolled on the Political Science Master's Program at the University of Gothenburg, I chose to take the "V-Dem-course." It was an intensive two months, which consisted of producing papers and attending weekly seminars. Not only did we get an in-depth understanding of the theory behind V-Dem, but we were also introduced to the dataset and online analysis tools. The opportunity to use the V-Dem dataset, and particularly the online analysis tools, during the V-Dem course, opened up **new possibilities for producing interesting and trustworthy research material quickly**. What was also beneficial was that the data considers almost all countries across a very long period of time. I used V-Dem data in a

paper in which I compare democratic development in South Africa and Tunisia. Later on, I used an aggregated index made by V-Dem called "Women's political empowerment" in order to test whether the number of women in the workforce in a country is positively correlated with women's political empowerment. However, to be honest, what I maybe liked the most is that the analysis online tool produces really good looking graphs!

Tove Wikelhult, Program Coordinator, the QoG Institute



#4: Museums

The Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg

In the exhibition "Crossroads" at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, the audience can explore the Motion Charts provided by V-Dem. This enables them to explore how the relationship between two variables changes over time. For the average visitor to the museum the tool is quite complicated to fully comprehend, however, **it enlightens the audience as to the complexity of democracy**. The data serves as a good starting point for exploration and ongoing discussions for visiting schools and other groups. An extension of the work to include the principles of democracy is found in the interactive exhibition "demokrativäven" (A weave of Democracy) where visitors can choose their "must-have" democratic principle that together with others creates a weave of Democracy.

Lina Malm, Exhibition producer, Museum of World Culture





Political Regimes and Institutions: Change and Measurement

Multiple Measurements, Elusive Agreement, and Unstable Outcomes in the Study of Regime Change.

2018 | *Journal of Politics*. 80:2, 736-741

"This comprehensive analysis of regime change indicators reveals that problems of conceptualization and measurement are major reasons why current quantitative research fails to draw compelling conclusions that foster cumulative knowledge. The article first proposes the distinction between two forms of regime change—rupture and reform—and discusses the specific conceptual and measurement challenges scholars encounter yet largely fail to address when studying either form of change. Second, the article shows that agreement between indicators of regime change is low and driven by focal points such as elections and coups, suggesting that such measures often reflect notable events instead of regime change per se. This implies that indicator choice determines the set of cases for causal inference. Finally, a robustness check of nine articles on regime change published in top journals demonstrates that findings are often not robust to alternative indicators, implying that indicator choice influences the results of quantitative studies."



Hans Lueders



Ellen Lust

Regimes of the World (RoW): Opening New Avenues for the Comparative Study of Political Regimes

2018 | *Politics and Governance* 6(1): 60-77.

"Classifying political regimes has never been more difficult. Most contemporary regimes hold de-jure multiparty elections with universal suffrage. In some countries, elections ensure that political rulers are—at least somewhat—accountable to the electorate whereas in others they are a mere window dressing exercise for authoritarian politics. Hence, regime types need to be distinguished based on the de-facto implementation of democratic institutions and processes. Using V-Dem data, we propose with Regimes of the World (RoW) such an operationalization of four important regime types—closed and electoral autocracies; electoral and liberal democracies—with vast coverage (almost all countries from 1900 to 2016). We also contribute a solution to a fundamental weakness of extant typologies: The unknown extent of misclassification due to uncertainty from measurement error. V-Dem's measures of uncertainty (Bayesian highest posterior densities) allow us to be the first to provide a regime typology that distinguishes cases clas-

sified with a high degree of certainty from those with "upper" and "lower" bounds in each category. Finally, a comparison of disagreements with extant datasets (7%–12% of the country-years), demonstrates that the RoW classification is more conservative, classifying regimes with electoral manipulation and infringements of the political freedoms more frequently as electoral autocracies, suggesting that it better captures the opaqueness of contemporary autocracies."



Anna Lührmann



Marcus Tannerberg



Staffan I. Lindberg

A General Theory of Power Concentration: Demographic Influences on Political Organization

Forthcoming 2018 | *European Political Science Review*.

"Why is the exercise of political power highly concentrated in some polities and widely dispersed in others? We argue that one persistent causal factor is demographic. Populous polities are characterized by less concentrated structures of authority. To explain this relationship we invoke two mechanisms: efficiency and trust. The theory is demonstrated with a wide variety of empirical measures and in two settings: (1) cross-country analyses including most sovereign states and extending back to the 19th century and (2) within-country analyses focused on states, counties, and localities in the United States."



John Gerring



Matthew Maguire



Jillian Jaeger

Beyond Democracy-Dictatorship Measures: A New Framework Capturing Executive Bases of Power, 1789-2016

Forthcoming | *Perspectives on Politics*.

"This paper attempts to integrate the literatures on authoritarian regime types and democratic forms of government. We propose a theoretical framework of five dimensions of executive appointment and dismissal that can be applied in both more democratic and more authoritarian regimes: the hereditary, military, ruling party, direct election and confidence dimensions, respectively. Relying on the Varieties of Democracy data, we provide measures of these five dimensions for 3,937 individual heads of state and 2,874 heads of government from 192 countries across the globe from 1789 to the present. After presenting descriptive evidence of their prevalence, variation and relationship to extant regime typologies, a set of exploratory probes gauge the extent to which the five dimensions can predict levels of repression, corruption, and executive survival, controlling for aspects of democracy. This leads to generation of a set of original hypotheses that we hope can serve as building blocks for explanatory theory. We conclude by discussing some limitations of these novel data."



Jan Teorell



Staffan I. Lindberg

Measuring Subnational Democracy: Toward Improved Regime Typologies and Theories of Regime Change

2018 | *Democratization* 25(1): 19-37.

"Social scientists and practitioners have been limited in their work by the paucity of data about subnational institutions and practices. Such data could help scholars refine regime typologies, improve theories of democratization and regime change, better understand subnational democracy, and illuminate issues of development, conflict, and governance. They could also enable democracy and development advocates to design more effective programs and officials to create better policies. This paper addresses the lack of data by introducing 22 subnational measures from a new dataset, Varieties of Democracy. Validity tests demonstrate that the measures' strengths outweigh their weaknesses. The measures excel in covering all subnational levels for most countries, capturing different elements of subnational elections, and including a variety of dimensions of elections and civil liberties. The measures also offer unmatched global and temporal coverage. The paper demonstrates how these strengths can provide scholars and practitioners with the benefits described above."



Kelly M. McMann

How Much Democratic Backsliding?

2017 | *Journal of Democracy* 28(4): 162-169..

"Democracy is facing challenges across the world, yet suggestions of a global crisis are not warranted. Based on data from the largest democracy database ever compiled, the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), we find that the number of democracies worldwide declined slightly from 100 in 2011 to 97 today, and 16 countries transitioned to democracy over the last ten years, including Tunisia, Nepal, and Nigeria. However, there is a fair degree of volatility. In 2013 alone, five countries transitioned to democracy but nine went the other way. Worrisome trends include gradual erosion of freedom of expression and association in several countries, among them Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Brazil."



Valeriya Mechkova



Anna Lührmann



Staffan I. Lindberg

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The role of political Institutions for policy outcomes: Environmental sustainability, peace and growth

Democratization in Conflict Studies: How Conceptualization Affects Operationalization and Testing Outcomes

2017 | *International Interactions* 43(6): 941-966.

"Using the debate over democratization and conflict, we demonstrate how the connection between conceptualization and operationalization can play a decisive role in testing falsifiable hypotheses. We discuss seven different operationalizations of regime change based on three different conceptualizations of democracy. Although we find high correlations between different measures of democracy, when they are used to capture regime change, the correlations drop precipitously. In multivariate estimations of the effect of regime change on a range of conflict variables, we generate widely disparate results, providing no consistent support that democratization affects conflict. We thus demonstrate that decisions about conceptualization and subsequent operationalization have decisive impact on the inference we produce. In contrast, our controls for the effect of institutionalized democracy consistently show a negative relationship between joint democracy and conflict. Finally, autocratic regime change seems to be more robustly correlated with a range of conflict behaviors than heretofore recognized in this literature."



Michael Bernhard



Ömer Faruk Örsün



Reşat Bayer

Do Political Institutions Moderate the GDP-CO2 Relationship?

2018 | *Ecological Economics* 145: 441-450.

"Empirical studies of the relationship between GDP per capita and country-level CO2 emissions tend to focus on the direct effect of per capita GDP growth, rarely taking political institutions into consideration. This paper introduces theoretical

insights from environmental political science research, which suggests that CO2 emission models would gain explanatory leverage if moderators gauging political institutions were considered. We test these theories by estimating the potentially moderating effects of democracy, corruption, number of veto points and players, and civil society activity. We find that the per capita CO2 elasticity of GDP becomes non-monotonic and diminishing as GDP per capita increases in countries with democratic non-corrupt governments and high civil society participation. The moderating impact of this political-institutional configuration is relatively small, suggesting only limited support for theories in environmental political science. However, the results are robust and add an important specification to the studies in environmental economics that find positive and monotonic GDP-CO2 relationship: the adverse effect of GDP per capita on CO2 emissions is not profound in rich well-governed countries with active civil societies."



Ole Martin Læg Reid



Marina Povitkina

'Gimme Shelter': The Role of Democracy and Institutional Quality in Disaster Preparedness

2017 | *Political Research Quarterly* 70(4): 833-847.

"Natural disasters cause suffering for millions of people around the globe every year, and as climate change unfolds, the likelihood of natural catastrophes is increasing. While weather shocks such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods are beyond our control, the governments' capacity to protect populations largely determines the degree of human suffering in disasters. Democracies, with freedom of speech, broad public participation, and representation, are believed to protect their populations better than nondemocratic regimes. However, democratic institutions are insufficient for securing protection from disasters in contexts of corruption, poor planning, and public administration incompetence. We argue that the effect of democracy on the extent of human suffering in disasters is contingent on the ability of governments to implement their tasks or the quality of implementing institutions. We test this interaction hypothesis using time-series cross-sectional data from the Varieties of Democracy project, the Quality of Government dataset, and the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters. The results show that more democracy is associated with fewer people being affected by natural disasters only in

settings where institutional quality is high. When institutional quality is low, more people seem to suffer in democracies than in authoritarian states.”



Tove Ahlbom



Marina Povitkina

Party Strength and Economic Growth

2018 | *World Politics* 70(2): 275-320.

“While a large literature suggests an important role for political parties in development, this article is the first attempt to layout and test a comprehensive theory connecting parties to economic growth. The authors argue that strong parties broaden the constituencies to which policymakers respond and help politicians solve coordination problems. These features help to ensure better economic management, public services, and political stability. And this, in turn, enhances economic growth. Drawing on a novel measure of party strength from the Varieties of Democracy data set, the authors test this theory on data drawn from more than 150 countries observed annually from 1901–2010. They identify a sizeable effect that is robust to various specifications, estimators, and samples. The effect operates in both democracies and autocracies, and is fairly stable across regions and time periods.”



Fernando Bizzarro



John Gerring



Carl-Henrik Knutsen



Allen Hicken



Michael Bernhard



Svend-Erik Skaaning



Michael Coppedge



Staffan I. Lindberg

Economic Development and Democracy: An Electoral Connection

2018 | *European Journal of Political Research*

“Scholars continue to debate whether economic development affects regime type. We argue that a clear relationship exists between development and the electoral component of democracy, but not – or at least less so – between development and other components of broader understandings of democracy. This is so because development enhances the power resources of citizens and elections provide a focal point for collective action. The theory is tested with two new datasets – Varieties of Democracy and Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy – that allow us to disaggregate the concept of democracy into meso- and micro-level indicators. Results of these tests corroborate the theory: only election-centered indicators are robustly associated with economic development. This may help to account for apparent inconsistencies across extant studies and shed light on the mechanisms at work in a much-studied relationship. Further analysis shows that development affects electoral democracy by reducing electoral fraud, election violence, and vote buying.”



Carl-Henrik Knutsen



John Gerring



Svend-Erik Skaaning



Jan Teorell



Michael Coppedge



Staffan I. Lindberg

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Elections: At the Core of Democracy

Public trust in manipulated elections: The role of election administration and media freedom

2017 | *Electoral Studies* 50: 50-67.

"As multiparty elections have become a global norm, scholars and policy experts regard public trust in elections as vital for regime legitimacy. However, very few cross-national studies have examined the consequences of electoral manipulation, including the manipulation of election administration and the media, on citizens' trust in elections. This paper addresses this gap by exploring how autonomy of election management bodies (EMBs) and media freedom individually and conjointly shape citizens' trust in elections. Citizens are more likely to express confidence in elections when EMBs display de-facto autonomy, and less likely to do so when mass media disseminate information independent of government control. Additionally, we suggest that EMB autonomy may not have a positive effect on public trust in elections if media freedom is low. Empirical findings based on recent survey data on public trust in 47 elections and expert data on de-facto EMB autonomy and media freedom support our hypotheses."



Nicholas Kerr



Anna Lührmann

importance for democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, the post-communist region, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. For the Middle East and North Africa, the relationship is weaker and less robust. Finally, the results suggest that reiterated sequences of multiparty elections are associated with improvements to liberal and deliberative components of democracy more so than egalitarian components."



Amanda B. Edgell



Valeriya Mechkova



David Altman



Michael Bernhard



Staffan I. Lindberg

When and where do elections matter? A global test of the democratization by elections hypothesis, 1900–2010

2017 | *Democratization* 25(3): 422-444.

"Successive multiparty elections in sub-Saharan Africa are associated with incremental democratization. Yet tests in other regions are less than encouraging. Non-significant findings on Latin America and post-communist Eurasia, as well as conceptual criticism regarding the theory's application in the contemporary Middle East, suggest that this may be a case of African exceptionalism. This article moves these debates forward by posing a comprehensive, global set of tests on the democratizing effect of elections. We seek to establish the scope conditions of the argument geographically, temporally, and substantively. Although we find a correlation between reiterated multiparty elections and improvements in the liberal-democratic components of electoral regimes globally since 1900, the relationship is only substantial in the period since the onset of the third wave of democracy. Experiences with iterated multiparty elections have substantive

Strong States, Weak Elections? How State Capacity in Authoritarian Regimes Conditions the Democratizing Power of Elections

2017 | *International Political Science Review* 39(1): 49-66.

"State capacity may be a crucial factor conditioning the democratizing power of elections in authoritarian regimes. This paper develops a two-phase theory considers the different effects of state capacity on turnover in elections and democratic change after elections. In regimes with limited state capacity, manipulating elections and repressing opposition is more difficult than in regimes with extensive state capacity, rendering turnover in elections more likely in weak states. However, if the new incumbent has limited capacity to deliver public services and make policy changes after coming to power, sustainable democratic change is unlikely. Hence, state capacity is hypothesized to have a negative effect on turnover, but a positive effect on democratic change. These hypotheses are confirmed in a sample of 460 elections in 110 authoritarian regimes taking place in the period 1974 to 2012

using the Varieties of Democracy dataset. The findings suggest a need to revisit strong-state-first theories of democratization.”



Carolien van Ham



Brigitte Seim

When guardians matter most. Exploring the conditions under which EMB institutional design affects election integrity

2015 | *Irish Political Studies* 30(4): 454-481.

“Problems with election fraud and election integrity are of increasing interest in both established and transitional democracies. In many transitional democracies, independent electoral management bodies (EMBs) have been championed as a key institutional reform measure to successfully strengthen election integrity. However, empirical findings regarding the impact of EMB institutional design on election integrity are mixed. While regional studies have found a positive impact of independent EMBs on election integrity in Latin America and Africa, global comparative studies appear to show that EMB institutional design is either negatively, or only very weakly related to election integrity. In this paper, we examine the effects of EMB institutional design on election integrity using the new Varieties of Democracy dataset and data from the International IDEA. We find that the mixed findings on EMB institutional design are due to the differences between transitional and established democracies on the one hand, and regimes with low and high quality of government on the other. The paper concludes with a reflection on results and a discussion of implications of these findings for the debate on electoral reform in Ireland.”



Carolien van Ham



Staffan I. Lindberg

From Sticks to Carrots: Electoral Manipulation in Africa, 1986–2012

2015 | *Government and Opposition* 50(2): 521-548.

“Over 90 per cent of the world’s states currently select their national leaders through multiparty elections. However, in Africa the quality of elections still varies widely, ranging from elections plagued by violence and fraud to elections that are relatively ‘free and fair’. Yet, little is known about trade-offs between different strategies of electoral manipulation and

the differences between incumbent and opposition actors’ strategies. We theorize that choices for specific types of manipulation are driven by available resources and cost considerations for both incumbents and opposition actors, and are mutually responsive. We also suggest that costs of manipulative strategies are shaped by the level of democratization. We test our hypotheses on a time series, cross-sectional data set with observations for 286 African elections from 1986 to 2012. We find that democratization makes ‘cheap’ forms of electoral manipulation available to incumbents such as intimidation and manipulating electoral administration less viable, thus leading to increases in vote buying. The future of democracy in Africa thus promises elections where the administration of elections becomes better and better but at the same time vote buying will increase. Not all things go together, at least not all the time. The future of democracy in Africa will mean more money in politics, more patronage and more clientelistic offers thrown around, at least in the short to medium term.”



Carolien van Ham



Staffan I. Lindberg

United Nations’ Electoral Assistance: More than a Fig Leaf?

2018 | *International Political Science Review*.

“Between 2007 and 2014 the UN assisted more than one third of all national elections worldwide. Its experts routinely provide substantial technical advice on election management, logistical support such as the procurement of ballot papers and financial assistance. However, it remains doubtful if and under which conditions such assistance contributes to free and fair elections or has a positive long-term impact on democratization. This study assesses the impact of UN Electoral Assistance (UNEA) in Sudan, Nigeria and Libya. It finds that such assistance contributed to election quality in the presence of regime elites prioritizing electoral credibility in Nigeria (2011) and Libya (2012). In Nigeria, it seems plausible that UNEA had a medium-term impact on democratization. However, if regime elites undermine electoral freedom and fairness - as in Sudan (2010) - such positive effects are unlikely. Furthermore, in such contexts, the involvement of the UN may legitimize authoritarian practices.”



Anna Lührmann



Measuring Democracy: The V-Dem Methodology and Indices

Making Embedded Knowledge Transparent: How the V-Dem Dataset Opens New Vistas in Civil Society Research

2017 | *Perspectives on Politics* 15(2): 342-360.

"We show how the V-Dem data opens new possibilities for studying civil society in comparative politics. We explain how V-Dem was able to extract embedded expert knowledge to create a novel set of civil society indicators for 173 countries from 1900 to the present. This data overcomes shortcomings in the basis on which inference has been made about civil society in the past by avoiding problems of sample bias that make generalization difficult or tentative. We begin with a discussion of the reemergence of civil society as a central concept in comparative politics. We then turn to the shortcomings of the existing data and discuss how the V-Dem data can overcome them. We introduce the new data, highlighting two new indices—the core civil society index (CCSI) and the civil society participation index (CSPi)—and explain how the individual indicators and the indices were created. We then demonstrate how the CCSI uses embedded expert knowledge to capture the development of civil society on the national level in Venezuela, Ghana, and Russia. We close by using the new indices to examine the dispute over whether post-communist civil society is "weak." Time-series cross-sectional analysis using 2,999 country-year observations between 1989 and 2012 fails to find that post-communist civil society is substantially different from other regions, but that there are major differences between the post-Soviet subsample and other post-communist countries both in relation to other regions and each other."



Michael Bernhard



Dong-Joon Jung



Eitan Tzelgov



Michael Coppedge



Staffan I. Lindberg

The Potential of Direct Democracy: A Global Measure (1900-2014)

2017 | *Social Indicators Research* 133(3): 1207-1227.

"To what extent is direct democracy achieved in current polities? To answer this question, I develop an index, Direct Democracy Practice Potential, which is applied to 200 polities worldwide. This index results from the aggregation of the scores of four types of mechanisms of direct democracy: popular initiatives, popular referendums, obligatory referendums, and authorities' plebiscites. This index measures: (1) how easy it is to initiate and approve each type of popular vote, and (2) how consequential that vote is (if approved). Ease of initiation is measured by: (a) the existence of a direct democracy process, (b) the number of signatures needed, and (c) time limits to collect signatures. Ease of approval is measured by quorums pertaining to: (a) participation, (b) approval, (c) supermajority, and (d) district majority. Regarding how consequential the vote is, it considers its decisiveness (whether the decision is binding), and the threat capability of citizen-initiated mechanisms of direct democracy as measured by the frequency with which direct popular votes have been used and approved in the past. Finally, the study tests the validity of the new measure, discussing its strengths and limitations."



David Altman

Going Historical: Measuring Democraticness before the Age of Mass Democracy

2016 | *International Political Science Review* 37(5): 679-689.

"Most studies of democratic developments are limited to the period after World War II. However, political regimes varied according to different aspects of democracy long before the establishment of modern liberal mass democracies. We come down strongly in favor of collecting disaggregate and fine-grained historical data on democratic features. Based on a distinction between competition, participation, and constraints on the executive, we discuss previous attempts at historical measurement and address the specific challenges that pertain to scoring political regimes in, first, the "long 19th century" and, second, medieval and early modern Europe."

**Eitan Tzelgov****Michael Coppedge****Staffan I. Lindberg**

Ordinal Versions of V-Dem's Indices: When Interval Measures Are Not Useful for Classification, Description, and Sequencing Analysis Purposes

2016 | *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 8(2): 76–111.

"In the wake of the Cold War democracy has gained the status of a mantra. The transition to democracy and its consolidation remain key issues in global development today. Yet, uncertainty persists over why some countries become and remain democratic and others do not. One of the obstacles to advancement in the field of democratization studies is the absence of a wide-ranging database that tracks multifarious aspects of countries' institutional histories. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) provides a new set of 350 indicators of various facets of democracy, 34 indices of various components building off these indicators, and five main democracy indices. All indices are interval ranging from 0 to 1. Based on a conceptual discussion of the nature of the concept of "democracy," this article makes the argument that for many descriptive purposes, as well as a series of important analytical endeavors, interval indices are not particularly useful (despite their many important advantages). Indices like all the ones V-Dem produces are thus in need of ordinal versions allowing for survival analyses, classification of regime categories, understanding and explaining successful transitions to democracy, breakdown of democratic regimes, as well as for the emerging area of sequence analysis. This article then advances a set of coding rules that transforms the existing, original V-Dem indices to ordinal indices with three, four and five levels respectively. Users can determine which level of distinction is most useful for the research project, or the task of descriptive representation at hand. For the democracy indices that V-Dem supplies at the highest level of aggregation, the paper also suggests a classification of the levels into varying regime types."

**Staffan I. Lindberg**

Measuring High Level Democratic Principles Using the V-Dem Data

2016 | *International Political Science Review* 37(5): 580–593.

"While the definition of extended conceptions of democracy has been widely discussed, the measurement of these constructs has not attracted similar attention. In this article we present new measures of polyarchy, liberal democracy, deliberative democracy, egalitarian democracy, and participatory democracy that cover most polities in the period 1900 to 2013. These indices are based on data from a large number of indicators collected through the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project. We present and discuss the theoretical considerations and the concrete formula underlying the aggregation of indicators and components into high level measures of democracy. In addition, we show how these measures reflect variations in quality of democracy, given the respective ideals, in 2012. In the conclusion scholars are encouraged to make use of the rich dataset made available by V-Dem."

**Michael Coppedge****Staffan I. Lindberg****Svend-Erik Skaaning****Jan Teorell**

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Democracy for All: Inclusion in Political Decision Making

Women's rights in democratic transitions: A global sequence analysis, 1900–2012

2017 | *European Journal of Political Research* 56(4): 735–756.

"What determines countries' successful transition to democracy? This article explores the impact of granting civil rights in authoritarian regimes and especially the gendered aspect of this process. It argues that both men's and women's liberal rights are essential conditions for democratisation to take place: providing both women and men rights reduces an inequality that affects half of the population, thus increasing the costs of repression and enabling the formation of women's organising – historically important to spark protests in initial phases of democratisation. This argument is tested empirically using data that cover 173 countries over the years 1900–2012 and contain more nuanced measures than commonly used. Through novel sequence analysis methods, the results suggest that in order to gain electoral democracy a country first needs to furnish civil liberties to both women and men."



Yi-ting Wang



Patrik Lindenfors



Aksel Sundström



Fredrik Jansson



Pamela Paxton



Staffan I. Lindberg

Women's political empowerment: A new global index, 1900–2012

2017 | *World Development* 94: 321–335.

"The political empowerment of women is a societal process crucial to development and progress. The V-Dem women's political empowerment index (WPEI) provides information about women's civil liberties, civil society participation, and political participation globally. Spanning from 1900 to 2012, three dimensions of empowerment, and over 170 countries, it is among the most comprehensive measures of women's empowerment available. This paper presents a conceptualization of women's political empowerment and provides an overview of the construction of the index and operationalization of its three sub-dimensions: Women's civil liberties, civil society participation, and political participation. Compared to other indices measuring women's empowerment, such as the GDI, the GEM, the GII, and the CIRI data on human rights, the V-Dem index allows more precise measurement and is superior in temporal scope and coverage of countries of the Global South. The paper demonstrates the benefits of this new index and its sub-dimensions through several empirical illustrations."



Aksel Sundström



Pamela P. Paxton



Yi-ting Wang



Staffan I. Lindberg

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Publications on Our Website:
www.v-dem.net

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This Publication Mainly Builds on the Following Key References

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Appendix 1: Liberal Democracy Index

The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) captures both liberal and electoral aspects of democracy based on the 71 indicators included in the Liberal Component Index (LCI) and the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI). The EDI reflects a relatively ambitious idea of electoral democracy where a number of institutional features guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of association and freedom of expression (see Appendix 2). The LCI goes even further and captures the limits placed on governments in terms of two key aspects: The protection of individual liberties; and the checks and balances between institutions (see Appendix 3).

FIGURE A1.1: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

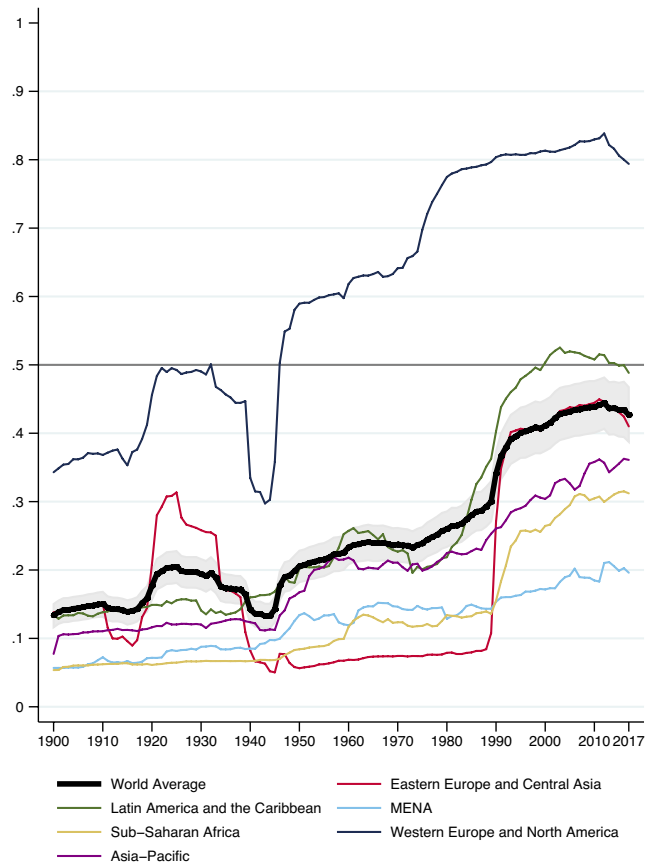
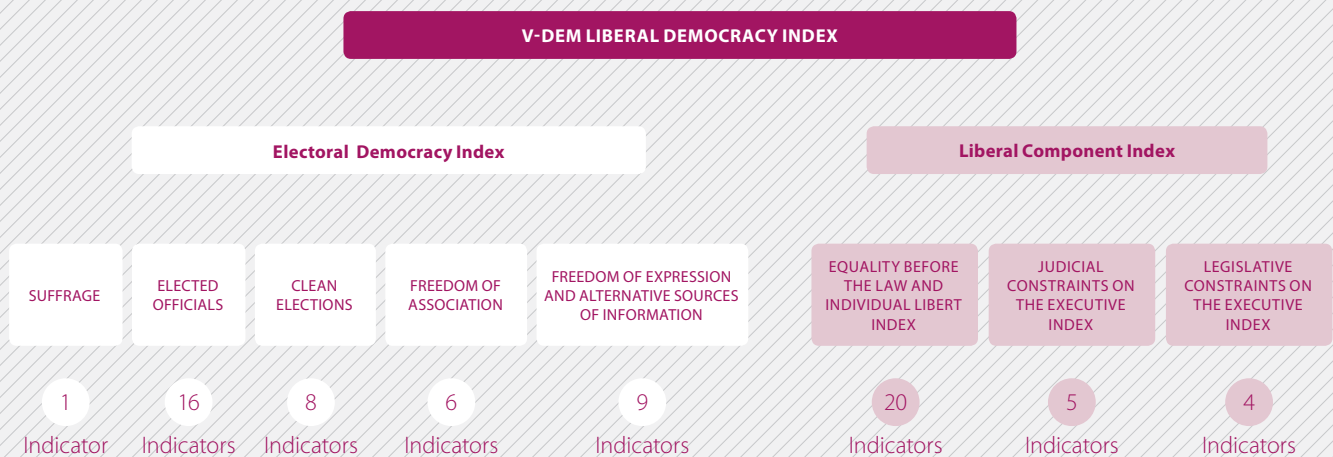


FIGURE A1.2: EXPLANATION OF THE V-DEM LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX



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7.00am - 10.00pm

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Appendix 2: The Electoral Democracy Index

For several decades, scholars and practitioners alike have depicted democracy in the world as though the extant measures really captured what is meant by the concept “electoral democracy”. Yet, we have all known that they did not.¹ V-Dem is the first systematic effort to measure the *de facto* existence of all the institutions in Robert Dahl’s famous articulation of “polyarchy” as electoral democracy. The V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) captures not only the extent to which regimes hold clean, free and fair elections, but also their actual freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and association, as well as male and female suffrage and the degree to which government policy is vested in elected political officials (Figure 2.1).

FIGURE A2.1: THE V-DEM ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

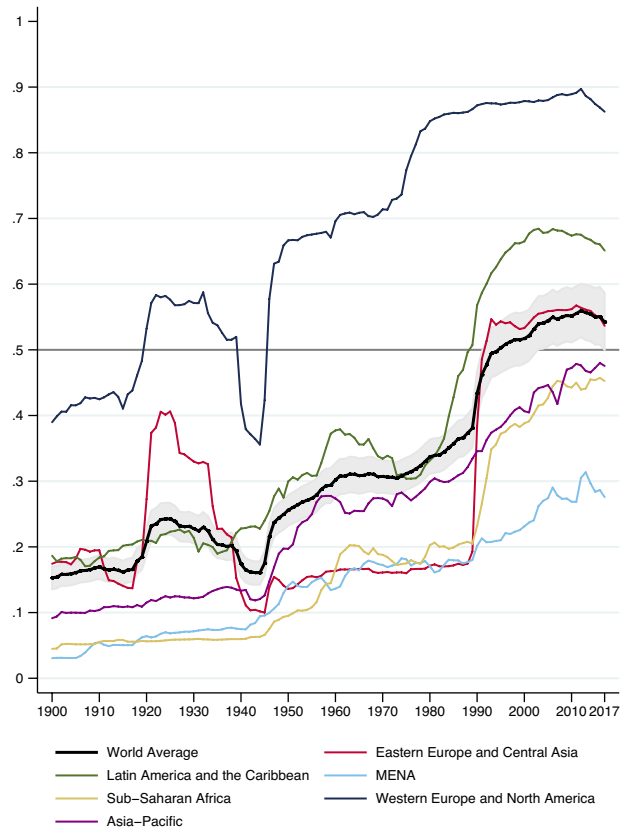
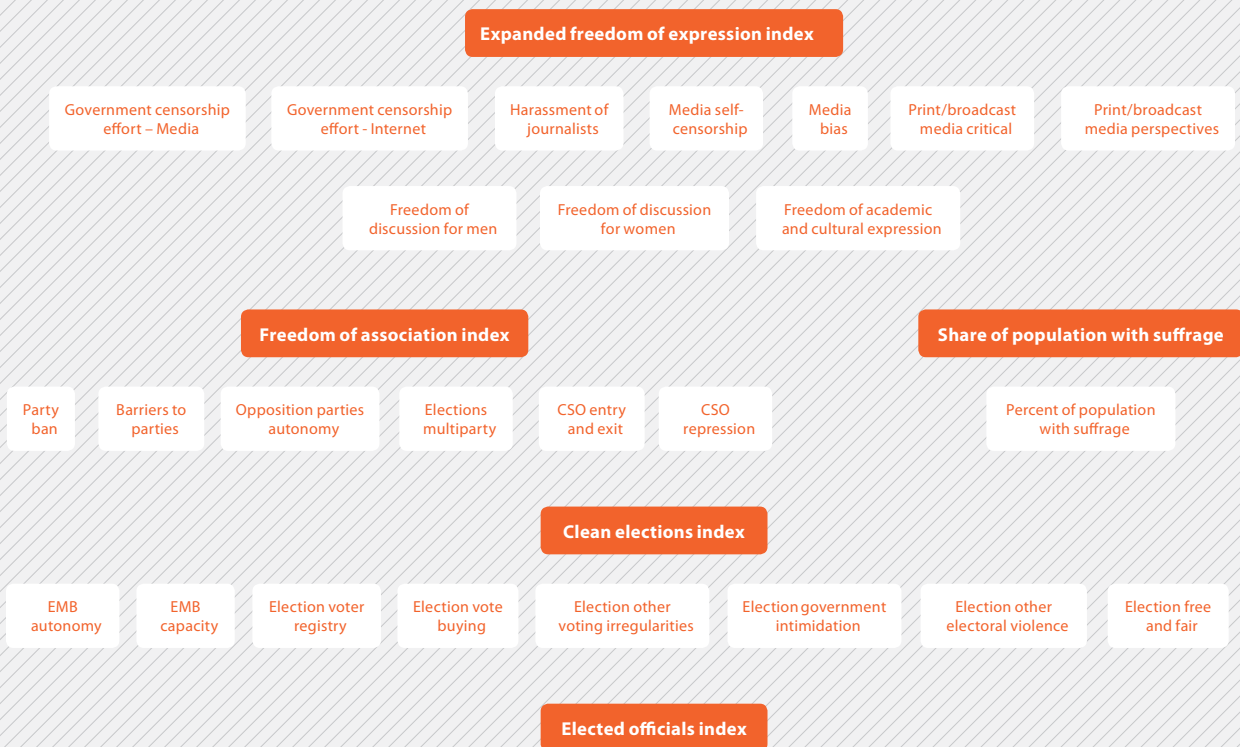


FIGURE A2.2: THE V-DEM ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX





समस्या

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Appendix 3: The Liberal Component Index

In V-Dem’s conceptual scheme the liberal principle of democracy embodies the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against both the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. It also captures the “horizontal” methods of accountability between more or less equally standing institutions that ensure the effective checks and balances between institutions and in particular, limit the exercise of executive power. This is achieved by strong rule of law and constitutionally protected civil liberties, independent judiciary and strong parliament that are able to hold the executive to account and limit its powers. The three indices that capture these dimensions are: the equality before the law and individual liberties (v2xcl_rol), judicial constraints on the executive (v2x_jucon), and legislative constraints on the executive (v2xlg_legcon). Taken together they measure the V-Dem Liberal Component Index (v2x_liberal).

FIGURE A3.1: THE V-DEM LIBERAL COMPONENT INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

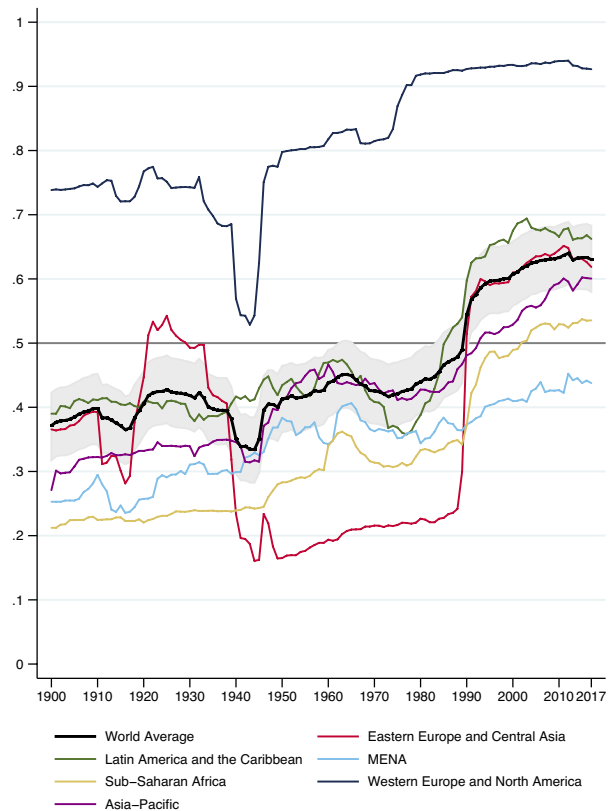


FIGURE A3.2: THE V-DEM LIBERAL COMPONENT INDEX (LCI)





Appendix 4: The Egalitarian Component Index

The egalitarian principle of democracy measures to what extent all social groups enjoy equal capabilities to participate in the political arena. It relies on the idea that democracy is a system of rule “by the people” where citizens participate in various ways, such as making informed voting decisions, expressing opinions, demonstrating, running for office or influencing policy-making in other ways. The egalitarian principle of democracy is fundamentally related to political participation, as systematic inequalities in the rights and resources of citizens of specific social groups limit capabilities to participate in the political and governing processes. Therefore, a more equal distribution of resources across groups results in political equality and hence democracy.

FIGURE A4.1: THE V-DEM EGALITARIAN COMPONENT INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

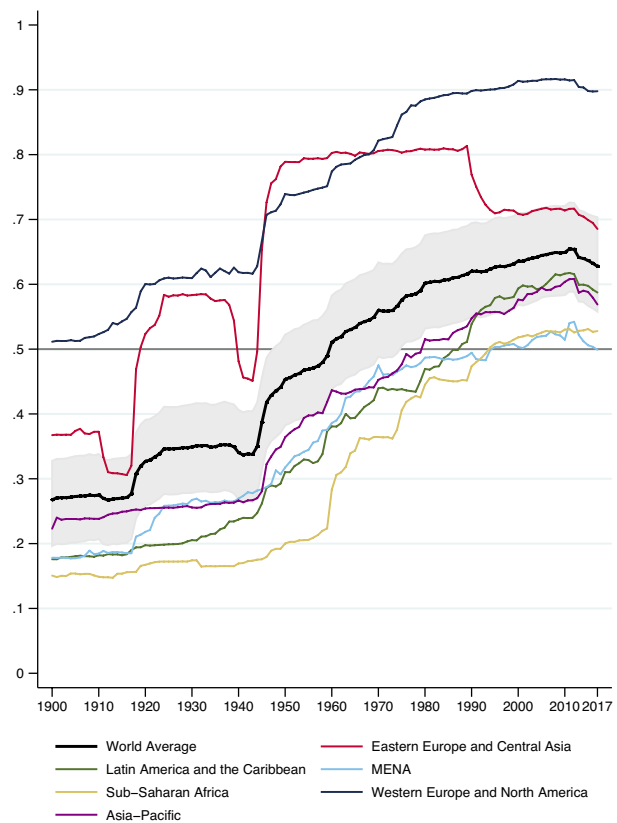
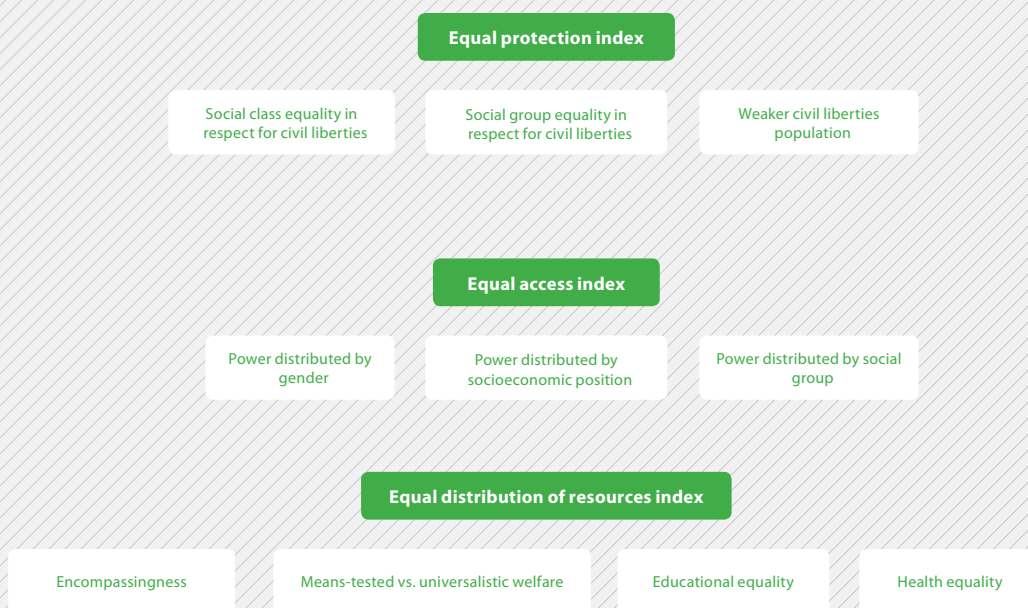


FIGURE A4.2: THE V-DEM EGALITARIAN COMPONENT INDEX



we can be
HEROES
JUST FOR
One day.
DAVID
BOWIE



Appendix 5: The Participatory Component Index

The participatory principle of democracy emphasizes active participation by citizens in all political processes, electoral and non-electoral. This principle prefers direct rule by citizens as practicable. The V-Dem Participatory Component Index (PCI) takes into account four important aspects of citizen participation: civil society organizations, mechanisms of direct democracy, and participation and representation through local and regional governments (Figure 5.1). Four different V-Dem indices capture these aspects and are the basis for the PCI.

FIGURE A5.1: THE V-DEM PARTICIPATORY COMPONENT INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

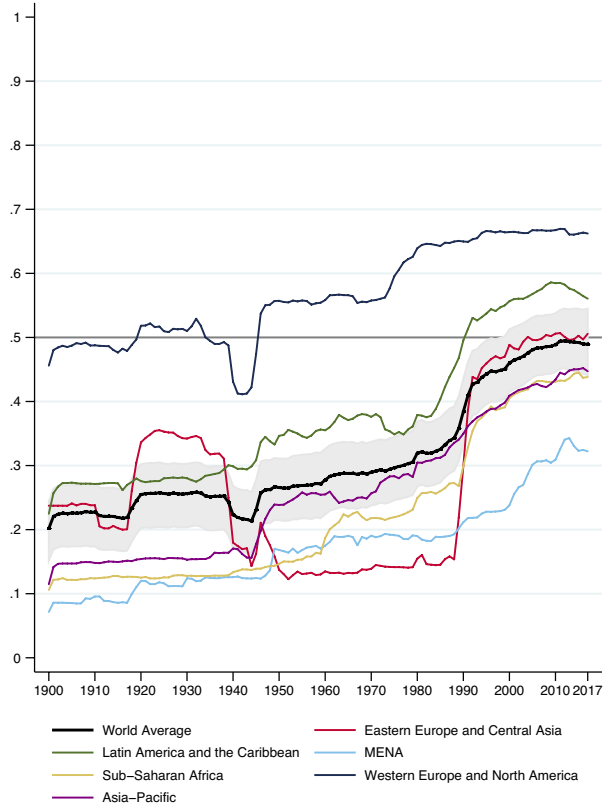
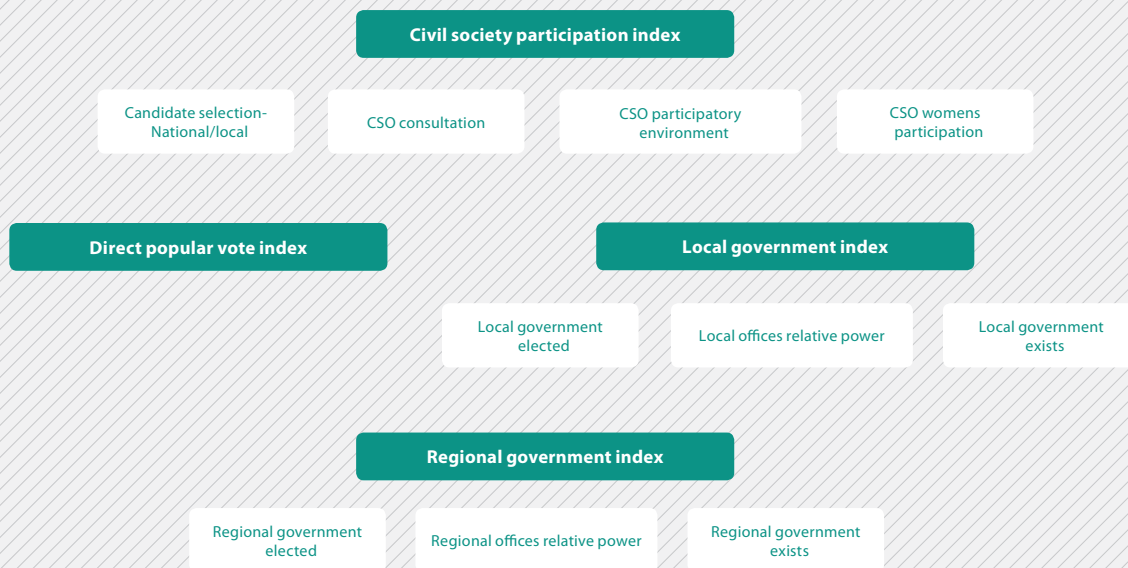


FIGURE A5.2: THE V-DEM PARTICIPATORY COMPONENT INDEX (PCI)





Appendix 6: The Deliberative Component Index

TV-Dem Deliberative Component Index (DCI) captures to what extent the deliberative principle of democracy is achieved. It assesses the process by which decisions are reached in a polity. A deliberative process is one in which public reasoning, focused on the common good, motivates political decisions—as contrasted with emotional appeals, solidary attachments, parochial interests, or coercion. According to this principle, democracy requires more than an aggregation of existing preferences. There should also be respectful dialogue at all levels—from preference formation to final decision— among informed and competent participants who are open to persuasion.

FIGURE A6.1: THE V-DEM DELIBERATIVE COMPONENT INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900 TO 2017.

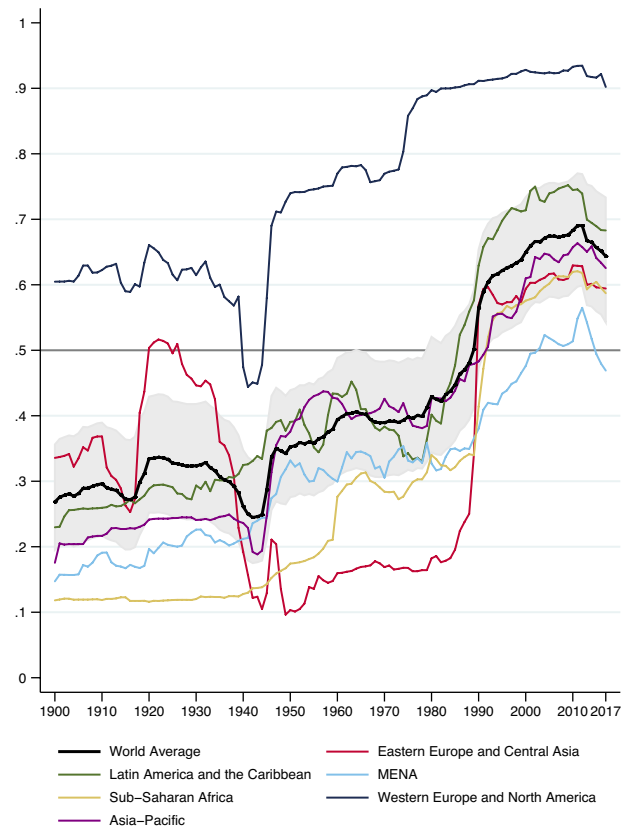


FIGURE A6.2: THE V-DEM DELIBERATIVE COMPONENT INDEX (DCI)

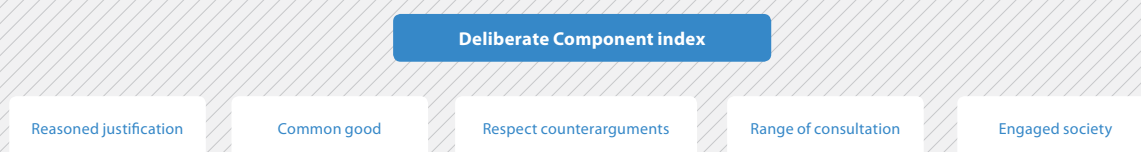


Table A7: Regimes of the World 2007/2017.

Country	2007	2017	Country	2007	2017	Country	2007	2017	Country	2007	2017
Australia	LD	LD	Namibia	ED+	ED	Solomon Isl.	ED-	ED	Singapore	EA	EA+
Austria	LD	LD	Panama	ED+	ED+	Tanzania	ED- ↘	EA+	Somaliiland	EA	EA+
Belgium	LD	LD	São Tomé and Pr.	ED+	ED+	Zambia	ED- ↘	EA	Sri Lanka	EA ↗	ED
Canada	LD	LD	Vanuatu	ED+	ED+	Guinea-Biss.	EA+ ↗	ED-	Sudan	EA	EA
Costa Rica	LD	LD-	Argentina	ED	ED	Kosovo	EA+	EA+	Syria	EA ↘	CA
Cyprus	LD	LD	Benin	ED	ED+	Lebanon	EA+ ↗	ED-	Tajikistan	EA	EA
Denmark	LD	LD	Bolivia	ED	ED	Madagascar	EA+	EA+	The Gambia	EA	EA
Estonia	LD	LD	Brazil	ED	ED	Mauritania	EA+	EA	Togo	EA	EA+
Finland	LD	LD	Bulgaria	ED	ED+	Moldova	EA+ ↗	ED-	Tunisia	EA ↗	LD-
France	LD	LD	Burkina Faso	ED	ED	Montenegro	EA+	EA	Uganda	EA	EA
Germany	LD	LD	Croatia	ED	ED	Mozambique	EA+	EA+	Yemen	EA ↘	CA
Greece	LD	LD-	Dominican Rep.	ED	ED-	Seychelles	EA+ ↗	ED-	Zanzibar	EA	EA
Hungary	LD ↘	ED	Ecuador	ED	ED	Venezuela	EA+	EA	Zimbabwe	EA	EA
Iceland	LD	LD	El Salvador	ED	ED	Afghanistan	EA	EA	Uzbekistan	EA- ↘	CA
Ireland	LD	LD	Georgia	ED	ED	Algeria	EA	EA	Kuwait	CA+	CA+
Japan	LD	LD	Guatemala	ED	ED	Armenia	EA	EA	Maldives	CA+ ↗	EA
Lithuania	LD ↘	ED	Guyana	ED	ED	Azerbaijan	EA	EA	Angola	CA	CA
Luxembourg	LD	LD	India	ED	ED	Belarus	EA	EA	Bahrain	CA	CA
Netherlands	LD	LD	Indonesia	ED	ED	BiH	EA	EA	Bangladesh	CA ↗	EA
New Zealand	LD	LD	Jamaica	ED	ED	Burundi	EA	EA	Bhutan	CA ↗	ED+
Norway	LD	LD	Lesotho	ED	ED	Cambodia	EA	EA	Myanmar	CA ↗	EA
Portugal	LD	LD	Liberia	ED	ED+	Cameroon	EA	EA	China	CA	CA
Slovenia	LD	LD-	Macedonia	ED	ED-	CAR	EA	EA	Cuba	CA	CA
South Korea	LD	LD	Mali	ED	ED-	Chad	EA	EA	DR of Vietnam	CA	CA+
Sweden	LD	LD	Mexico	ED	ED	DRC	EA	EA	Eritrea	CA	CA
Switzerland	LD	LD	Mongolia	ED	ED	Djibouti	EA	EA	Fiji	CA ↗	EA+
Taiwan	LD	LD	Niger	ED	ED-	Egypt	EA	EA	Hong Kong	CA	CA
Trinidad and Tobago	LD	LD	Paraguay	ED	ED	Eq. Guinea	EA	EA	Jordan	CA	CA
UK	LD	LD	Peru	ED	ED	Ethiopia	EA	EA	Laos	CA	CA
USA	LD	LD	Romania	ED	ED	Gabon	EA	EA	Libya	CA	CA
Uruguay	LD	LD	Senegal	ED	ED+	Guinea	EA	EA	Morocco	CA	CA
Cape Verde	LD-	LD-	Serbia	ED ↘	EA+	Iran	EA	EA	Nepal	CA ↗	ED
Chile	LD-	LD-	Sierra Leone	ED	ED	Ivory Coast	EA ↗	ED	North Korea	CA	CA
Czechia	LD-	LD	Suriname	ED	ED	Kazakhstan	EA	EA	Oman	CA	CA
Ghana	LD-	LD-	Timor-Leste	ED	ED	Kenya	EA	EA	Palest. Gaza	CA	CA
Israel	LD- ↘	ED+	Turkey	ED ↘	EA	Kyrgyzstan	EA	EA+	Qatar	CA	CA
Italy	LD-	LD-	Ukraine	ED ↘	EA	Malawi	EA ↗	ED	Saudi Arabia	CA	CA
Latvia	LD-	LD-	Albania	ED ↗	LD-	Malaysia	EA	EA	Somalia	CA	CA
Mauritius	LD- ↘	ED+	Colombia	ED-	ED	Nigeria	EA ↗	ED-	Swaziland	CA	CA
Poland	LD- ↘	ED	Comoros	ED- ↘	EA+	Pakistan	EA	EA+	Thailand	CA	CA
Slovakia	LD- ↘	ED+	Haiti	ED-	ED-	Palestine WB	EA ↘	CA	Turkmenistan	CA	CA+
South Africa	LD- ↘	ED+	Honduras	ED- ↘	EA	Papua New G.	EA	EA	UAE	CA	CA
Spain	LD-	LD	Iraq	ED- ↘	EA	R Congo	EA	EA	South Sudan	CA	CA
Barbados	ED+ ↗	LD-	Nicaragua	ED- ↘	EA	Russia	EA	EA			
Botswana	ED+	ED	Philippines	ED-	ED-	Rwanda	EA	EA			

Note: The countries are sorted by regime type in 2007, and after that in alphabetical order. They are classified based on the Regimes of the World measure, where **LD** stands for Liberal Democracy; **ED** - Electoral Democracy; **EA** - Electoral Autocracy; and **CA** - Closed Autocracy.

We incorporate V-Dem's confidence estimates in order to account for the uncertainty and potential measurement error due to the nature of the data but also to underline that some countries are placed in the grey zone between regime types.

The sign "-" indicates that taking uncertainty into account, the country could belong to the lower category, while "+" signifies that the country could also belong to the higher category. The countries that see a movement upwards or downwards from one level to another are displayed in bold.

This builds on the regime-classification by Lüthmann et al. (2018). While using V-Dem's data, this measure is not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee of V-Dem (only the main V-Dem democracy indices have such an endorsement).

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