



# Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows

## DEMOCRACY REPORT 2020



# 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 28 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2019. 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.**

We are very grateful for our funders' support over the years, which has made this venture possible. To learn more about our funders, please visit: <https://www.v-dem.net/en/v-dem-institute/funders/>.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect an official position of the V-Dem Project or the V-Dem Steering Committee.

**Produced by the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg**

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# Preface

**IN JUNE 2019, VLADIMIR PUTIN** declared liberalism to be “obsolete”.\* At first sight, the data reported in this *Democracy Report* appear to support this assertion because they show a global decline in liberal democratic institutions. For the first time since 2001, there are more autocracies than democracies in the world. Hungary is no longer a democracy, leaving the EU with its first non-democratic Member State. India has continued on a path of steep decline, to the extent it has almost lost its status as a democracy. The United States – former vanguard of liberal democracy – has lost its way.

Nevertheless, the value of political liberalism continues to shine. It is founded upon Enlightenment principles of rights, reason and tolerance. These principles have led the world from societies governed by repression and prejudice to open societies based on merit and freedom.

This is why, in parallel with intensifying autocratization, V-Dem’s latest data show growing popular demand for democracy. We have observed rising numbers of pro-democracy protests demonstrating that those living in autocratizing and autocratic regimes are continuing to fight for rights and freedoms. These rays of hope are countries such as Armenia, Tunisia and Sudan, where we have observed substantial democratic progress. They prove Putin wrong. Liberal democracy is not dead and will not be as long as people crave freedom and equality. Citizens around the world are demanding a more democratic future – including in Russia.

In order to better understand these trends, this year we are publishing two new surveys. The Civic and Academic Space survey sheds new light on citizen mobilization and academic institutions. This survey will hugely enrich and broaden analyses of the role of citizens in both autocratization and democratization processes. In summer 2020, we will publish data and findings from the new Party Identity and Organization survey – an unprecedented effort to capture the policies and positions of political parties in 178 countries since 1970. This dataset offers new opportunities to analyze how political parties evolve and respond to social, economic and political pressures.

This report builds on the efforts of the entire global V-Dem team. The V-Dem Institute has its headquarters and is located at the University of Gothenburg. We are immensely grateful to the over 3,000 Country Experts who provide an invaluable service to the international community and to the Country Coordinators, Regional Managers, Project Managers and Steering Committee Members, without whom this enterprise would not be possible.

*The V-Dem Institute Team*



V-Dem Institute in Gothenburg, Sweden. Photo: Karin Andersson.

\* <https://www.ft.com/content/670039ec-98f3-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36>

# V-Dem in Numbers

## WHO IS V-DEM?

V-Dem is an international effort comprised of:

- 5 Principal Investigators
- 19 Personnel at the V-Dem Institute
- 18 Project Managers
- 30 Regional Managers
- 170 Country Coordinators
- 3,000 Country Experts

All working together to produce  
**28,413,876**  
 data points in the v10 dataset.

## NEW MEASURES IN THE V10 DATASET

21 new indicators on democracy adding to the 408 existing indicators.



## WHERE IS V-DEM DATA USED?



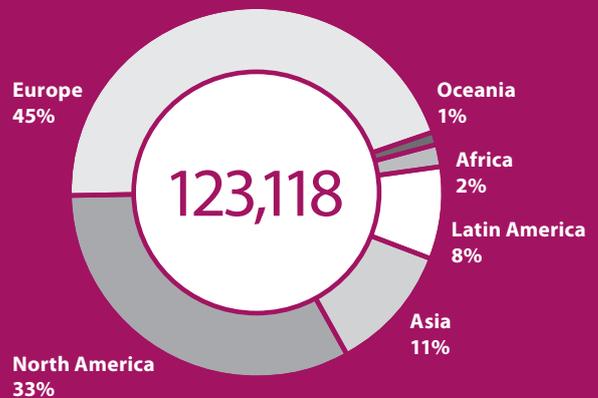
The V-Dem dataset has been downloaded by users in 153+ countries since 2015.



3,512,895 graphs created using the online tools by users in 158+ countries since 2015.

While the majority of the dataset downloads in 2019 come from Europe and North America, users from all regions of the world have accessed the data and used the online tools since 2015.

Dataset downloads (2015–2019)

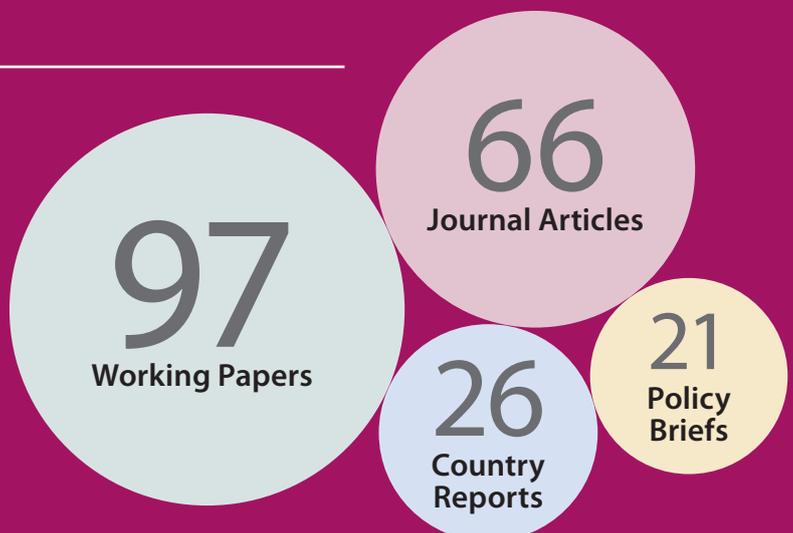


## V-DEM PUBLICATIONS AND

## PRESENTATIONS TO ACADEMIC

## AND POLICY COMMUNITIES

- 675 presentations across the world by V-Dem scholars since 2007.
- 106 visiting scholars presented at the V-Dem Institute since 2014.



# Executive Summary

## AUTOCRATIZATION SURGES

### Autocratization – the decline of democratic traits – accelerates in the world:

- For the first time since 2001, autocracies are in the majority: 92 countries – home to 54% of the global population.
- Almost 35% of the world’s population live in autocratizing nations – 2.6 billion people.
- The EU has its first non-democracy as a member: Hungary is now classified as an electoral authoritarian regime.

### Major G20 nations and all regions of the world are part of the “third wave of autocratization”:

- Autocratization is affecting Brazil, India, the United States of America, and Turkey, which are major economies with sizeable populations, exercising substantial global military, economic, and political influence.
- Latin America is back to a level last recorded in the early 1990s while Eastern Europe and Central Asia are at post-Soviet Union lows.
- India is on the verge of losing its status as a democracy due to the severely shrinking of space for the media, civil society, and the opposition under Prime Minister Modi’s government.

### Attacks on freedom of expression and the media intensify across the world, and the quality of elections begins to deteriorate:

- Attacks on freedom of expression and media freedom are now affecting 31 countries, compared to 19 two years ago.
- The Clean Elections Index fell significantly in 16 nations while improving in only twelve.
- Media censorship and the repression of civil society have intensified in a record 37 countries – eleven more than the 26 states currently affected by severe autocratization. Since these indicators are typically the first to move in a gradual process of autocratization, this development is an early warning signal for what might be yet to come.

### New V-Dem indicators on Civic and Academic Space show that autocratization taints the whole society:

- Academic freedom has registered a conspicuous average decline of 13% in autocratizing countries over the last 10 years.
- The right to peaceful assembly and protest has declined by 14% on average in autocratizing countries.
- Toxic polarization, pro-autocracy mass protests, and political violence rise in many autocratizing countries, such as in Brazil and Poland.



## PRO-DEMOCRACY RESISTANCE GROWS

### New V-Dem data on pro-democracy mass mobilization reveals all-time highs in 2019:

- The share of countries with substantial pro-democracy mass protests rose from 27% in 2009 to 44% in 2019.
- Citizens are taking to the streets in order to defend civil liberties and the rule of law, and to fight for clean elections and political freedom.
- The unprecedented degree of mobilization for democracy in light of deepening autocratization is a sign of hope. While pro-autocracy rulers attempt to curtail the space for civil society, millions of citizens have demonstrated their commitment to democracy.

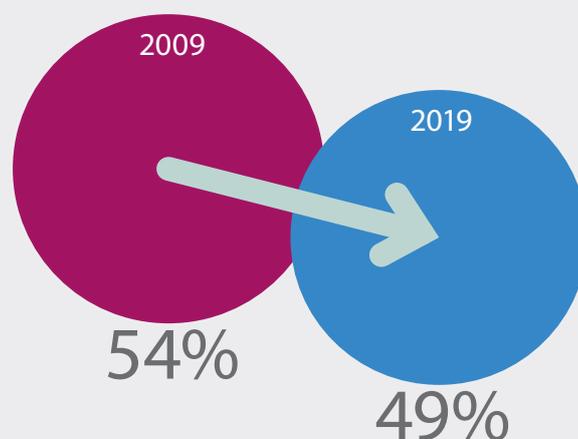
### Protesters in democracies resist the dismantling of democracy while their counterparts in autocracies are demanding more democracy:

- During 2019, citizens in 29 democracies mobilized against autocratization, such as in Bolivia, Poland, and Malawi.
- Citizens staged mass protests in 34 autocracies, among them Algeria, Hong Kong, and Sudan.
- In several cases such as in Sudan, citizens successfully achieved breakthroughs for freedom and democracy.

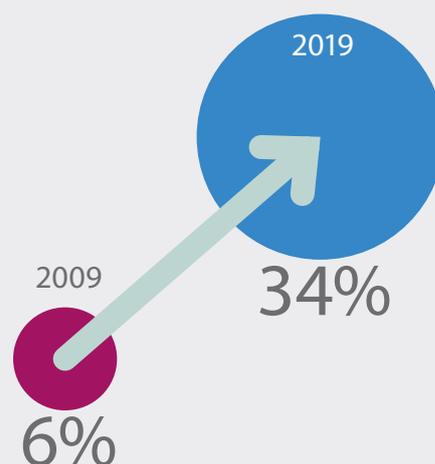
### Democratization continues to progress around the world:

- In 22 countries, pro-democracy mass protests have been followed by substantial democratization during the last ten years.
- Armenia, The Gambia, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia are the four countries achieving the greatest democratic gains.
- Ecuador shows that while autocratization can be turned around, it is difficult to return to a stable democracy.

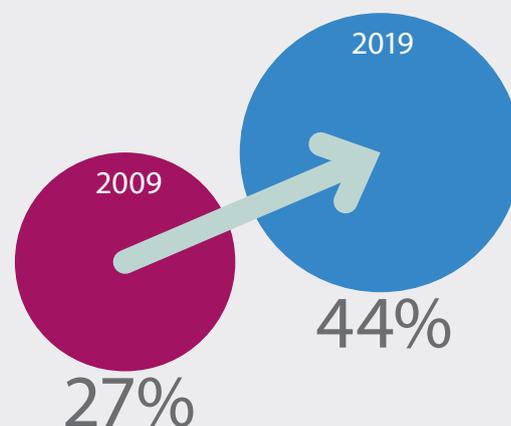
#### GLOBAL SHARE OF DEMOCRACIES



#### SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES



#### SHARE OF COUNTRIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS





# State of the World 2020: Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows

**W**ITH THE DEMOCRACY REPORT 2020, we issue an autocratization alert. The “third wave of autocratization”<sup>1</sup> is accelerating and deepening. Democracy declined in 26 countries during 2019, up from 18 in 2017. For the first time since 2001, democracies are no longer in the majority. Down from 55% (98 states) at its peak in 2010 to 48% of the countries in the world as of 2019, the world is now left with 87 electoral and liberal democracies, which are home to 46% of the world’s population. The dramatic loss of eight democracies in the last year sets a new record in the rate of democratic breakdowns. Exemplifying this crisis is Hungary, now the EU’s first ever authoritarian regime Member State.

The report details how an increasing number of countries are being affected by the decline in critical democratic traits. Government assaults on civil society, freedom of expression, and the media are proliferating and becoming more severe. A new and disturbing trend in this year’s data is that the quality of elections is now also deteriorating in many countries. After years of undercutting countervailing forces, rulers seem now to feel secure enough to attack the very core of democracy: free and fair elections.

Nevertheless, while the “third wave of autocratization” has escalated, there are positive signs of pro-democracy responses. New indicators in the V-Dem dataset show that pro-democracy protests reached an all-time high in 2019. People are taking to the streets to protest the erosion of democracies and challenge dictators. Popular protests have contributed to substantial democratization in 22 countries over the last ten years – including Armenia, Tunisia, and Sri Lanka.

This year’s *Democracy Report* details the state of democracy in the world in 2019 against the backdrop of the decisive changes during the last decade. The report’s analyses are based on the new version 10 of the V-Dem dataset.<sup>2</sup> It builds on assessments by more than 3,000 global experts and provides almost 30 million data points on democracy, human rights, media, civil society, judiciaries, legislatures, and many related issues. The data is freely available for download at <https://v-dem.net>.

## Decline in Liberal Democracy Intensifies

- **The average global decline in liberal democracy in 2019 is more pronounced than was found in last year’s Democracy Report.**

- **Autocratization is affecting major G20 states such as Brazil, India, the United States of America and Turkey – major economies, with sizeable populations, exercising substantial global military, economic, and political influence.**
- **Latin America is back to a level last recorded around 1992 while Eastern Europe and Central Asia is at post-Soviet Union lows.**

Western Europe, North America, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, New Zealand and parts of Latin America remain among the most democratic countries and regions in the world – in spite of substantial declines in the level of democracy in the United States of America in recent years.

1 Lührmann and Lindberg (2019).

2 We base this report on the V-Dem Dataset v10. Every year V-Dem improves the quality of the data and engages a larger number of experts, which may lead to a correction of the scores reported in prior versions of the Democracy Report.

**FIGURE 1: THE STATE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN 2019**

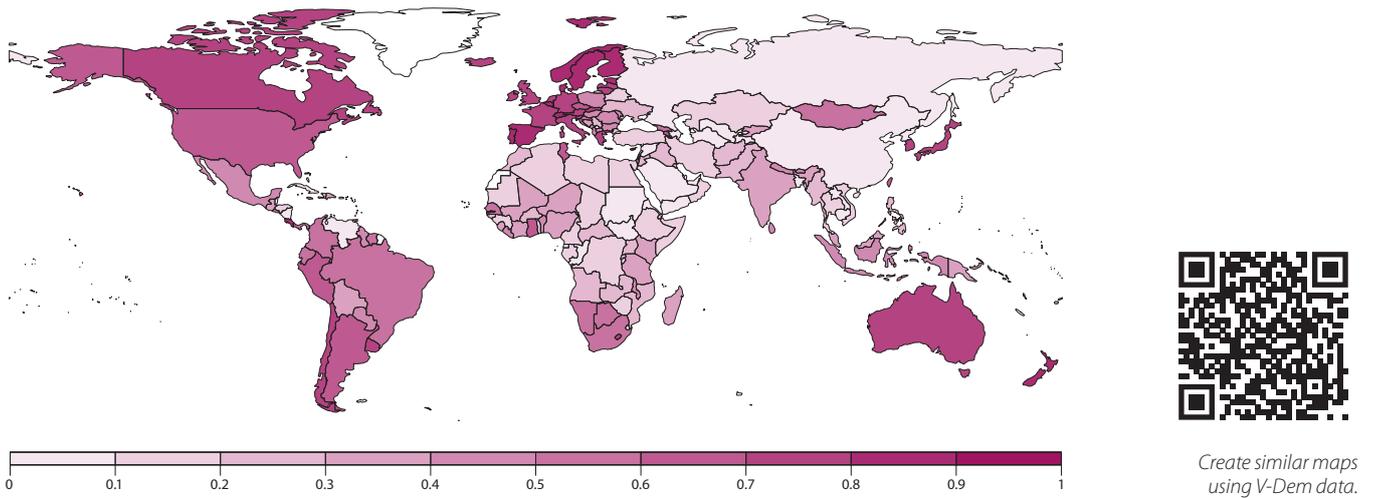


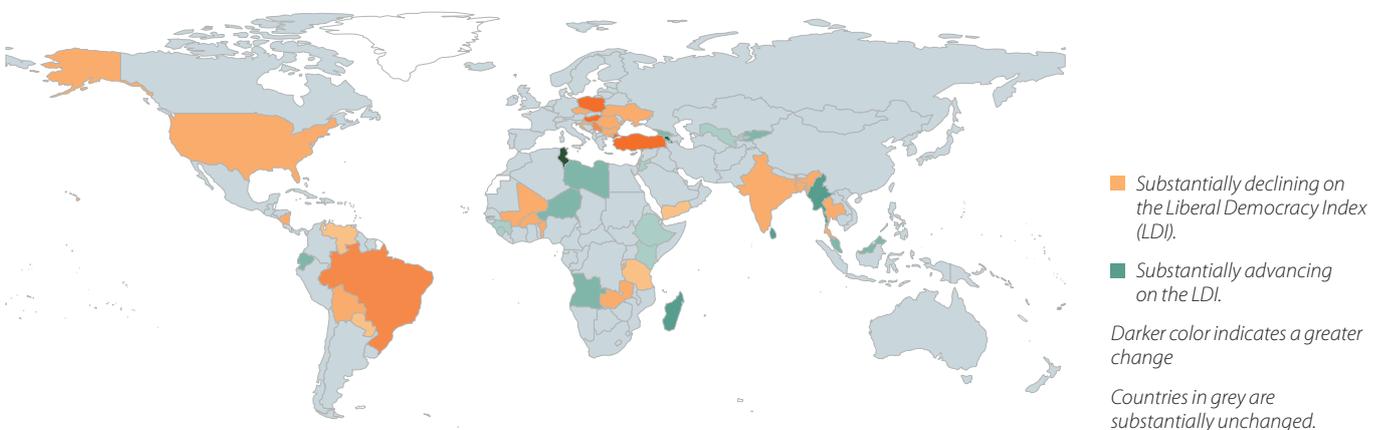
Figure 1 shows the state of democracy in 2019 using the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI). This index combines measures of the quality of elections, suffrage, freedom of expression and the media, freedom of association and civil society, checks on the executive, and the rule of law.<sup>3</sup> Spread around the world, countries such as China and North Korea, Eritrea and Burundi, Nicaragua and Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, as well as Russia and Turkey, have among the lowest levels on V-Dem’s Liberal Democracy Index.

intensified during the 1990s is clearly over. Over the last ten years, more nations have become characterized by autocratization than by democratization as this map shows.

Figure 2 shows where in the world democracy has advanced (green) or retreated (orange) as measured by LDI score over the last 10 years. It demonstrates that the “third wave of democratization” set off by the 1974 Carnation revolution in Portugal that

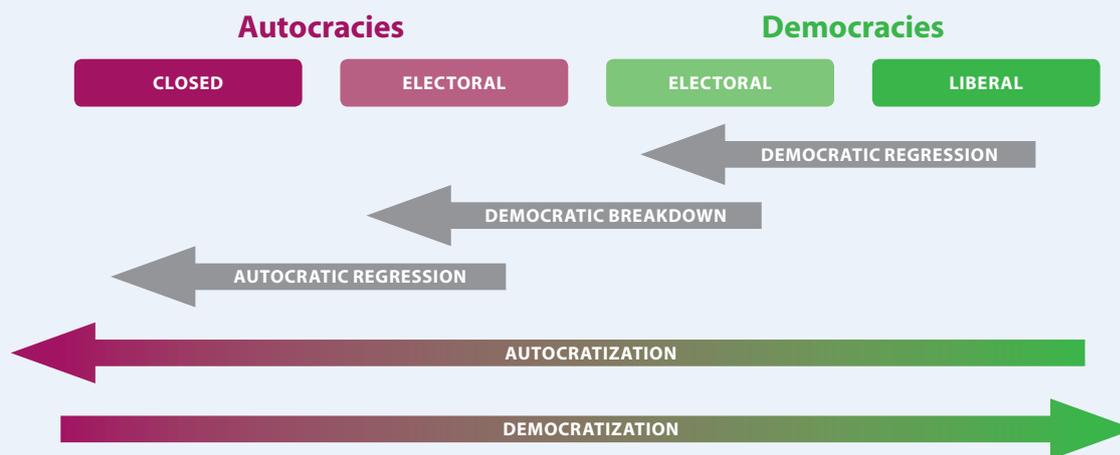
Figure 3 provides more detail by depicting average global as well as regional levels of liberal democracy from 1972 to 2019. The left side is based on straight country averages and the thick black line on the left side represents the global average of the LDI along with confidence intervals.<sup>4</sup> After peaking around 2012, the growing decline in liberal democracy brought the global average in 2019 down to a level last registered in 2002. However, an issue with this conventional measure is that the Seychelles, with some 95,000 inhabitants is given as much weight as India with 1.3 billion inhabitants.

**FIGURE 2: COUNTRIES SUBSTANTIALLY DEMOCRATIZING OR AUTOCRATIZING, 2009–2019**



3 The Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) aggregates V-Dem’s Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) and Liberal Component Index (LCI). The first captures whether the components of Robert Dahl’s “polyarchy” (1971) are present *de facto*. The latter measures whether electoral democracy is complemented by civil liberties, the rule of law and sufficient constraints on the executive by the judiciary and legislature as vital elements of liberal democracy.

4 To save space, the regional averages are illustrated without confidence intervals.



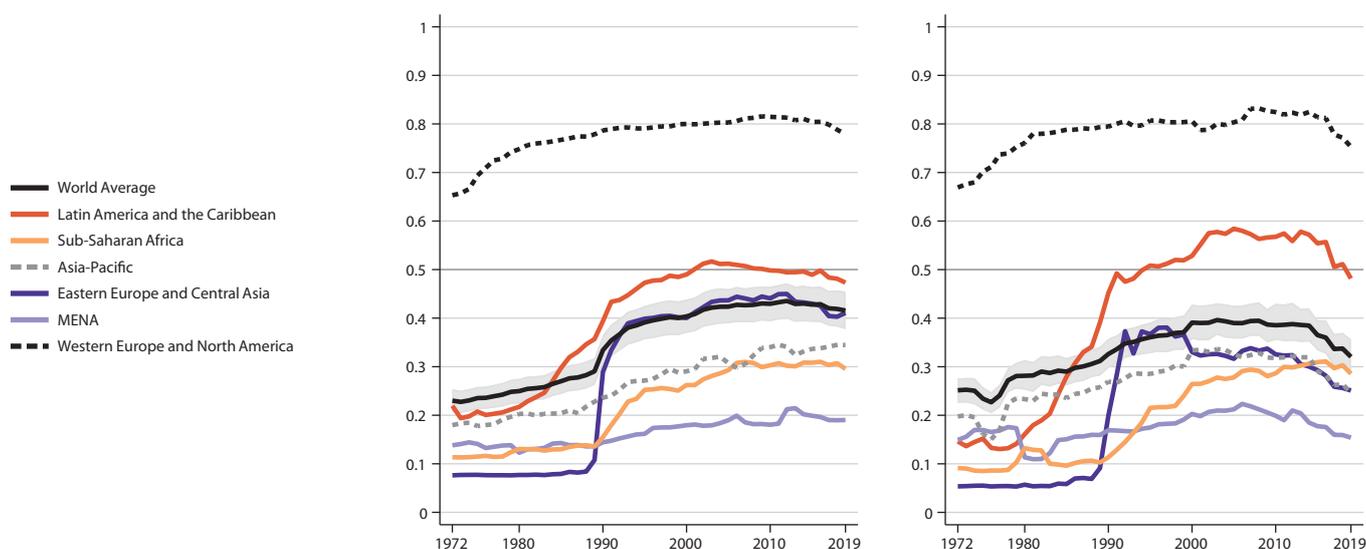
Autocratization captures any substantial and significant decline on V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), which may start in democracies (democratic regression) or autocracies (autocratic regression). Democratization is the opposite process and means any substantial and significant improvement on the LDI scale either in autocracies (liberalization) or democracies (democratic deepening).

To distinguish different types of regimes, we use the Regimes of the World (RoW) typology, classifying countries as democratic if they not only hold free and fair multiparty elections, but also guarantee freedom of speech and expression. Electoral autocracies fail to reach such standards while closed autocracies

do not even hold multiparty elections for the chief executive. We further distinguish between liberal democracies, which uphold the rule of law and have constraints on the executive, and electoral democracies, which do not.<sup>5</sup>

We measure autocratization and democratization as a substantial and significant change on the LDI over ten years. For each year, we take the difference of the score at time  $t$  and time  $t-10$ , capturing both sudden and gradual changes. Significant means that the confidence intervals do not overlap (see Methods section towards the end of this report). We consider a change substantial if the absolute value of the change on the LDI is greater than 0.05.<sup>6</sup>

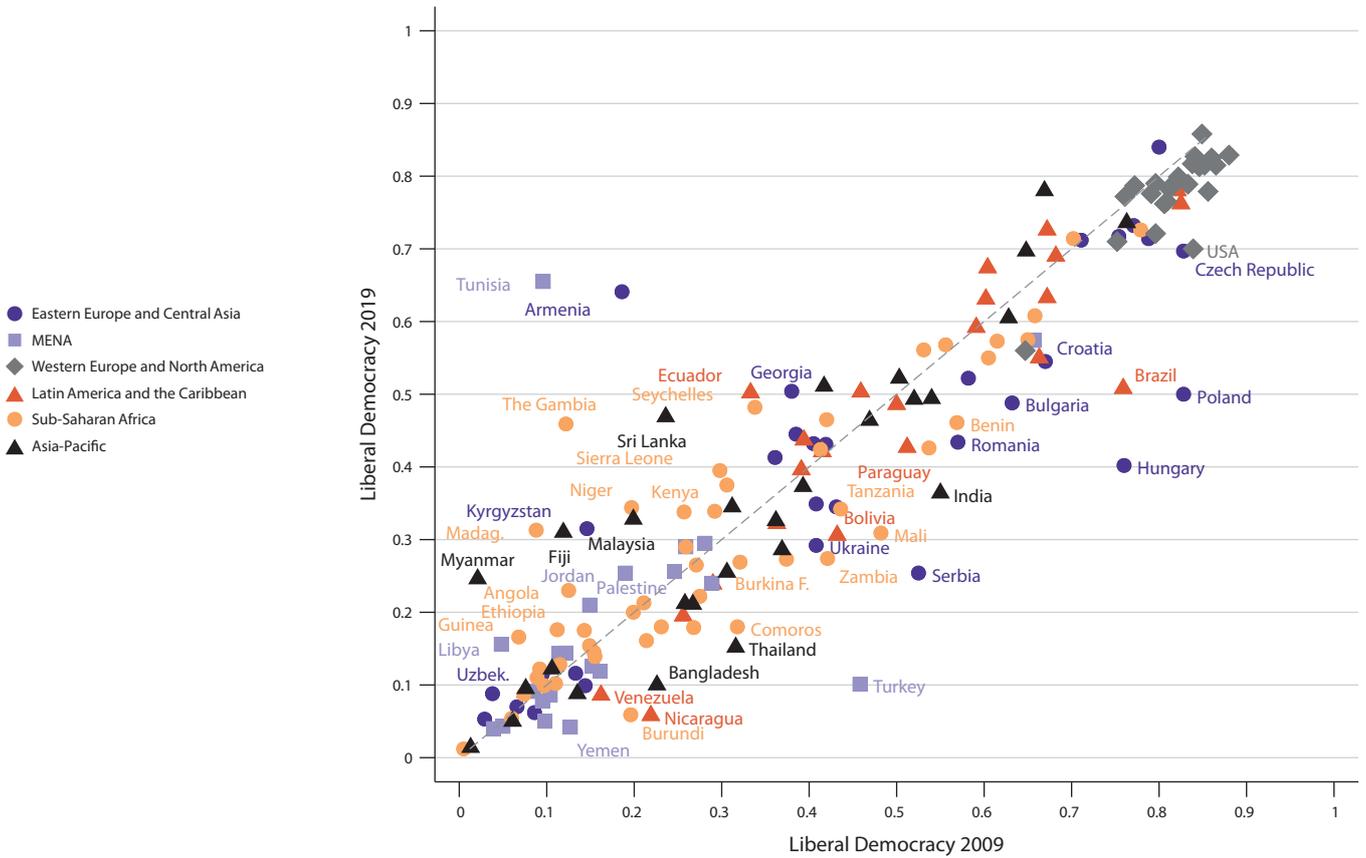
**FIGURE 3: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX, GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES (RIGHT SIDE POPULATION WEIGHTED), 1972–2019**



5 This measure uses V-Dem data but is not officially endorsed by the V-Dem Steering Committee. See Lüthmann, Tannenber and Lindberg (2018).

6 This is a rather broad operationalization of autocratization and democratization based on the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI). For more fine-grade and parsimonious operationalizations, see the V-Dem team's recent work on episodes of democratization and autocratization (Wilson et al. 2020; Lüthmann and Lindberg 2019).

**FIGURE 4: COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, 2009–2019**



Since democracy is about the rights and aspirations of the people, it matters *how many people* are affected. We therefore weight average democracy levels by population size (right side of Figure 3).

This analysis offers two vital insights. First, the decline of liberal democracy in 2019 is much or more pronounced than we found in last year’s *Democracy Report*. Second, the downturns in regional averages are striking in most cases, and this year we found that all regions are affected by a decline in liberal democracy. Until last year, our analysis showed that sub-Saharan Africa seemed to be defying the global trend, but this has now changed.

By the population-weighted measure, Latin America has been thrown back to a level of democracy last recorded around 1992; the Asia-Pacific and MENA regions have reverted to situations last experienced in the mid to late 1980s; and Eastern Europe and Central Asia has fallen to a record-low since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. While the magnitude of autocratization is less pronounced in Western Europe and North America, the declining average suggests that the West has regressed to a situation with regard to electoral and liberal rights not recorded since 1980.

Overall, the population-weighted measures suggest that many very populous countries suffer from autocratization. Figure 4 provides evidence that this is indeed what is happening.

In this Figure, countries above the diagonal line have improved on the LDI since 2009, while countries below the line autocratizing. Labels are provided only for countries where the change

is statistically significant and substantially meaningful. There are 22 countries showing positive development over the last ten years but almost all of them have fairly small populations such as **Armenia** with three million, The **Gambia** with two million, **Georgia** with 3.7 million, **Tunisia** with 11 million, **Ecuador** with 16 million, and so on. These are predominantly nations with little international or regional importance or influence.

This can be contrasted with the autocratizing countries below the line: **Brazil, India, Poland, Ukraine, the United States of America,** and **Turkey**, amongst others. These are large countries with sizeable populations, exercising abundant global and regional strategic, military, economic, and political influence.

**FIGURE 5: AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES BY POPULATION SIZE**



**FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES PER REGIME TYPE (LEFT) AND SHARE OF POPULATION (RIGHT)**

Uncertainty remains about the nature of regimes that exhibit similar degrees of authoritarian and democratic traits.<sup>10</sup>

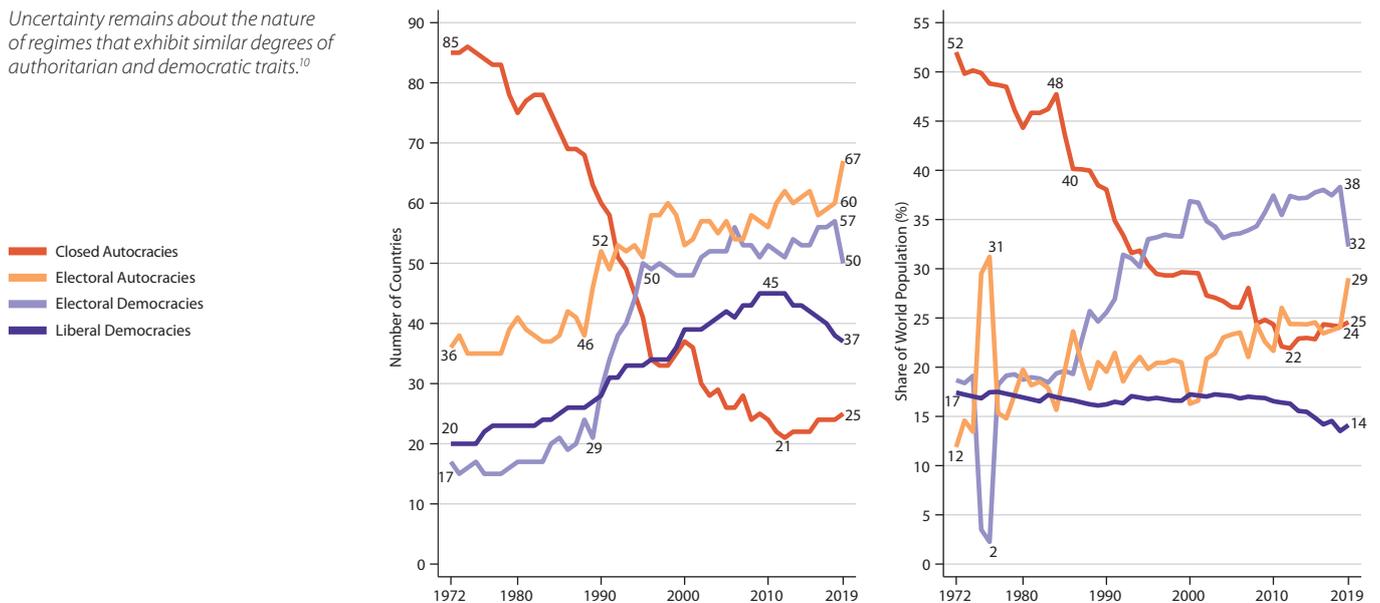


Figure 5 illustrates the relative population sizes among autocratizing countries where **India, the United States of America, Brazil** and **Bangladesh** stand out. We know that “diffusion is no illusion”<sup>7</sup> and global trends tend to pull countries along with them, particularly when large and influential nations are moving in the same direction. This raises a worrying specter for the future of democracy.

Figure 18 (on page 24) provides the LDI score in 2019 for all 179 countries in the V-Dem dataset and the change over the last ten years in detail.

### First Time Since 2001: A Majority of Countries are Autocracies

- **Autocracies are in the majority for the first time since 2001: 92 countries that are home to 54% of the global population.**
- **The EU now has its first non-democratic Member State: Hungary is an electoral authoritarian regime and is the most extreme recent case of autocratization.**
- **India is on the verge of losing its status as a democracy due to a severe curtailment of scope for the media, civil society, and the opposition.**

Another way to gauge the outlook for the world is to classify countries into regime types.<sup>8</sup> Figure 6 (left side) shows that electoral authoritarian rule<sup>9</sup> is now the most common form of government in the world, practiced in 67 countries or almost 40% of all

nations. Closed autocracies have also increased in the last few years, from 21 (12%) in 2013 to 25 (14%) in 2019. Together that makes 92 countries – or 51.4% – that are under authoritarian rule in one form or the other.<sup>10</sup> Also, at 54%, the majority of citizens now live in autocracies (right side of Figure 6).

The number of electoral autocracies has almost doubled from 36 in 1972 to 67 today. For much of the period, this increase represented an improvement since countries which used to be closed dictatorships had opened up and became electoral regimes. But over the last decade, the rise in electoral autocracies is mainly the result of democracies gradually breaking down. Seven of these became electoral autocracies over the last year from 2018 to 2019. This includes **Hungary** as the only EU Member State (see Figure 7). We discuss the dramatic erosion of democracy under Victor Orbán – in particular the loss of pluralism in the media and academia – in detail further below.

Meanwhile, the number and share of democracies are in evident decline since around 2010 when the number of liberal democracies was at its height at 45, and some 55 fulfilled the criteria for electoral democracy. In 2019, the world is left with a mere 37 liberal and 50 electoral democracies. These constitute less than half of the states in the world – 49% – after being in the majority for almost two decades, with a high of 55% in 2010.

Notwithstanding the “autocratization alert” that this year’s *Democracy Report* issues, the world is still unmistakably more democratic today compared to 1972 when 76% of all states – 121 countries – were either electoral or closed autocracies (red and orange lines in Figure 6) and a vast majority of these were

7 For example, Brinks and Coppedge (2006).

8 This is based on the Regimes of the World typology (see Lüthmann, Tanneberg and Lindberg 2018). This measure uses V-Dem data but is not officially endorsed by the V-Dem Steering Committee.

9 Electoral authoritarian regimes hold *de jure* multiparty elections but nevertheless tilt the playing field in the incumbent’s favor to the extent that it is no longer a democracy, typically through restricting media freedom and the space for civil society, and repressing the opposition (see Lüthmann, Tanneberg and Lindberg 2018).

10 Naturally, uncertainty remains about the nature of regimes that exhibit similar degrees of authoritarian and democratic traits and thus are close to the threshold between democracy and autocracy. In 2019, such uncertainty applied to 22 countries. Thus, the number of autocracies in the world might range from 75 to 97 countries, with 92 being our best estimate. For more details, refer to the variable *v2x\_regime\_amb* in the V-Dem Data Set v10 and Lüthmann, Tanneberg and Lindberg (2018).

closed autocracies. This general positive historical trend should be borne in mind while we discuss the worrying specter of further declines that may be yet to come.

A regional breakdown of regime types further illustrates this point (Figure 8). Despite the ongoing autocratization, some regions harbor many democracies. All regimes in Western Europe and North America still qualify as democratic as well as three quarters of all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In all regions of the world – apart from the MENA region – democracies represent at least roughly one third of all countries.

**FIGURE 7: HUNGARY – THE ONLY AUTHORITARIAN EU MEMBER STATE**

*This figure is based on the Regimes of the World typology (see Lührmann, Tanneberg and Lindberg 2018). This measure uses V-Dem data but is not officially endorsed by the V-Dem Steering Committee.*



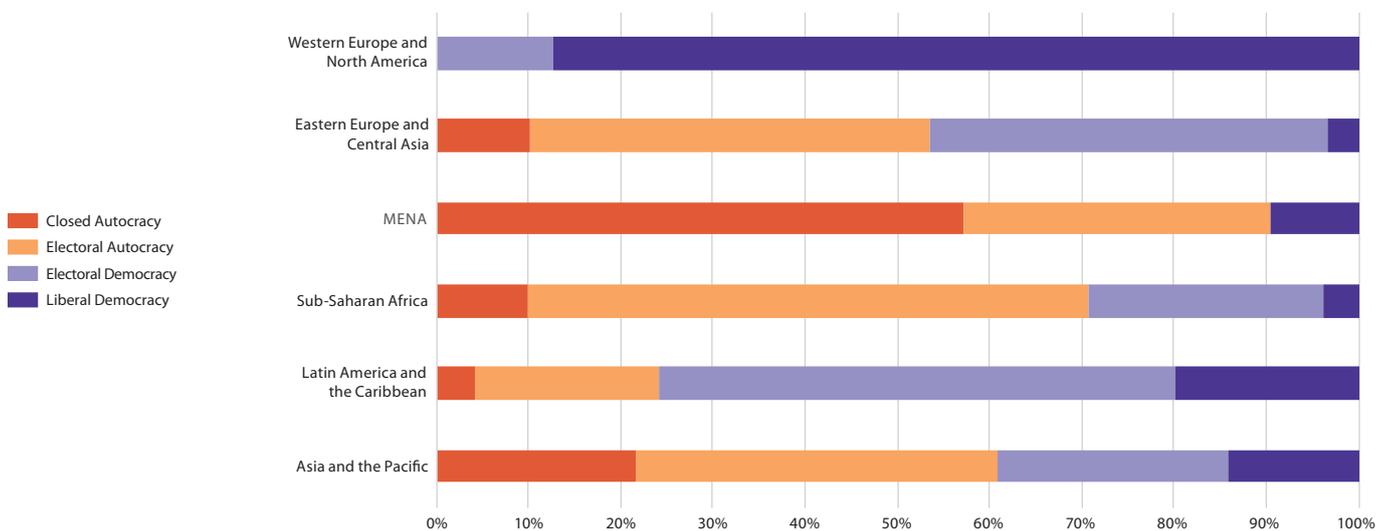
**Autocratization Affecting More People Than Ever**

- **Almost 35% of the world’s population lives in autocratizing nations – 2.6 billion people.**
- **Only 8% live under regimes that are becoming more democratic.**
- **Eastern Europe and Central Asia is worst affected by autocratization: eight countries recorded significant regression over the last ten years.**
- **Turkey lost its status as a democracy in 2014 and has since descended into the bottom 20% in the world on the Liberal Democracy Index.**
- **The United States of America is the only country in Western Europe and North America suffering from substantial autocratization.**

The increasingly dramatic nature of present-day autocratization is depicted in Figure 9. The number of countries affected by autocratization (orange line, left side) has been rising since 1999. We now count 26 cases in 2019, up from 11 cases in the early 2000s to 17 in 2016. This total outnumbers the falling numbers of democratizing countries (green dashed line, left side: 22 in 2018). We have to go back to 1978 to find the world in an equivalent situation.

The difference is more pronounced than ever if one takes population size into account as in the right side of Figure 9. Almost 35% of the world’s population – 2.6 billion – now live in nations undergoing autocratization while less than 8% of the people currently live under governments becoming more democratic.

**FIGURE 8: REGIME TYPES BY REGION, 2019**



## REGIONAL VARIATIONS

There is substantial regional variation in the extent to which the third wave of autocratization is affecting countries across the world. Figure 10 provides a regional inventory of the autocratization and democratization trends.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where a greater share of the population is still being affected by democratization rather than autocratization. At the same time, it is also where we find the largest number of countries showing significant declines on the Liberal Democracy Index (N=7).

Eastern Europe and Central Asia has recorded the steepest rises in the number of countries becoming more autocratic: eight countries showing significant regression over the last ten years. The share of the population in the region impacted by this process now exceeds 35%.

Three regions have relatively few cases of autocratization but nevertheless encompass around 40% of the world's population in countries regressing towards autocratization: Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and North America.

The latter is exceptional. Only one country in this region has registered a substantial decline in liberal democracy – **the United States of America**. It has suffered a fall of 15% from 0.86 in 2008 when President Obama was elected to 0.70 in 2019 after three years of rule by President Trump.<sup>11</sup> The 330 million people living in the USA represent 40% of the total population in Western Europe and North America. Naturally, its influence on the region and the world is probably much greater than the population size suggests with the USA's enormous global reach in trade, military



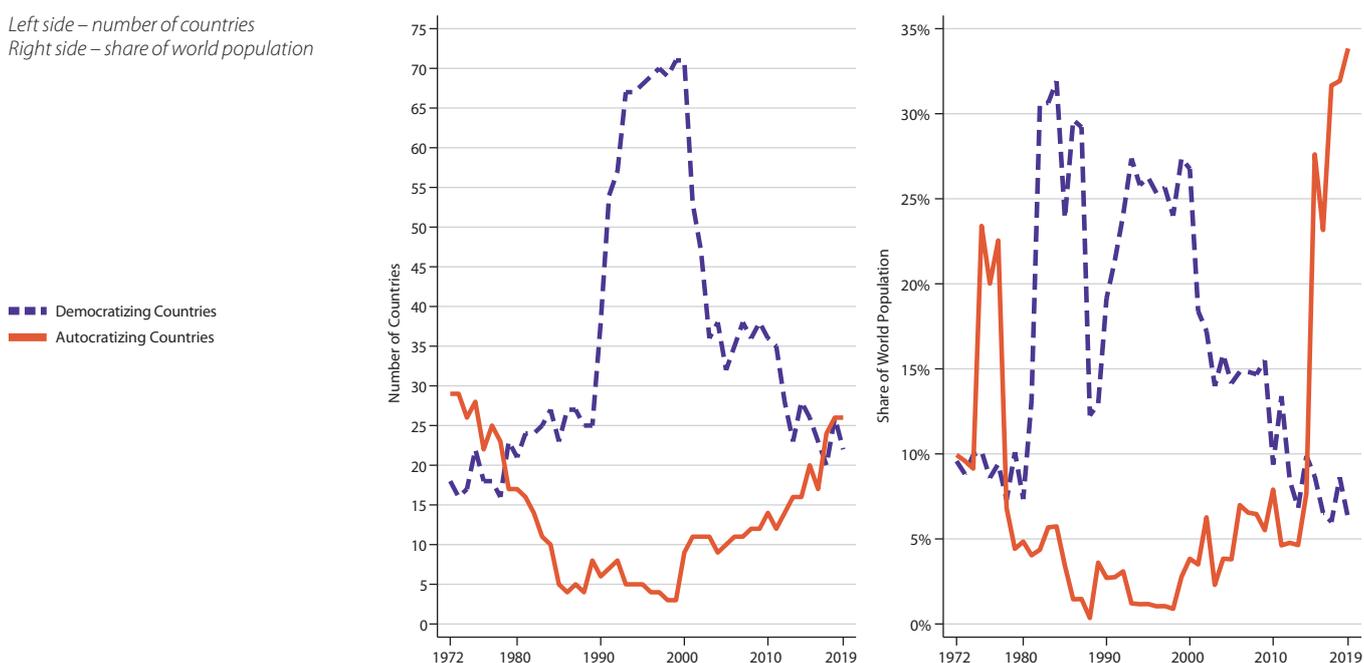
Hong Kong, China. Photo: Shutterstock.

and strategic power, investment and development aid, as well as “soft” power. The possible ripple effects of the USA's decline are huge.

The MENA region continues to be the least democratic in the world. **Turkey** stands out here, as President Erdogan continues to drive his nation further into harsher dictatorship. Besides having a large population of almost 85 million, it is a regional power hub and member of NATO, so this development is a cause of great concern for the coming years. Turkey lost its status as a democracy in 2014 and has since descended into the bottom 20% in the world (see Figure 18, page 25).

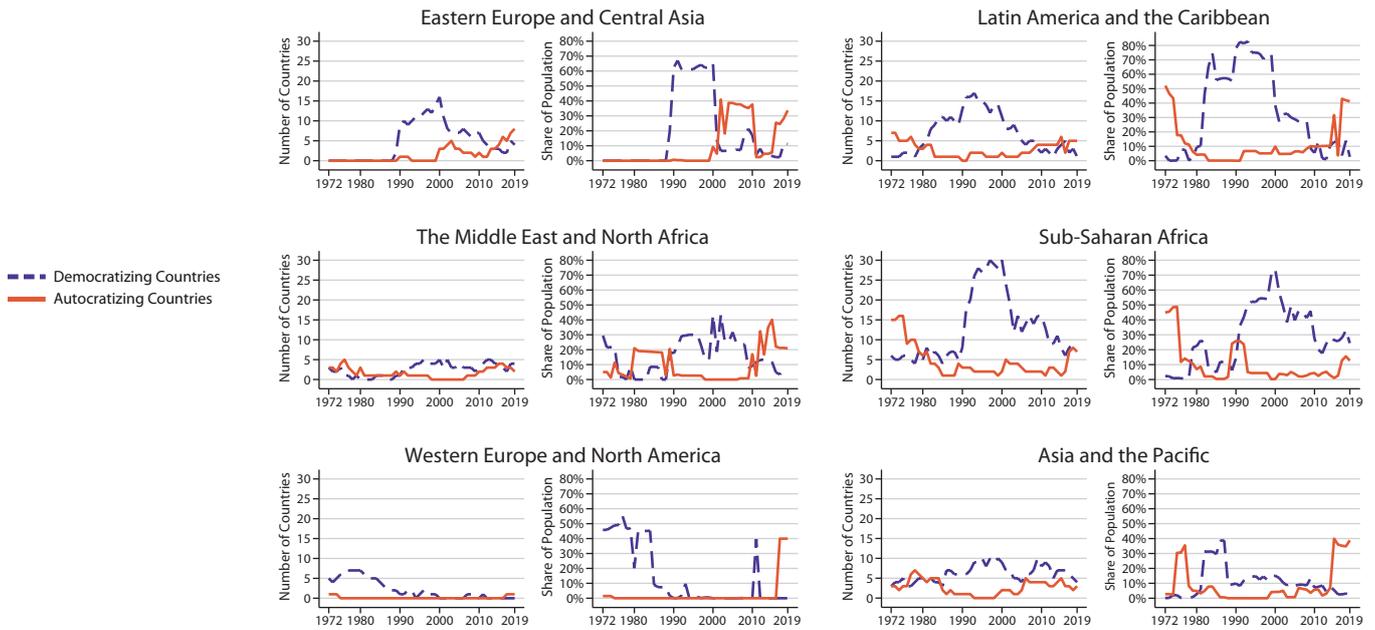
**FIGURE 9: AUTOCRATIZING VS DEMOCRATIZING COUNTRIES BY THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX, 1972–2019**

Left side – number of countries  
Right side – share of world population



<sup>11</sup> During President Obama's two terms, the LDI changed from 0.86 in 2008 to 0.81 in 2016. After he handed over the reins to President Trump, the LDI dropped by 0.11 points to 0.7 in 2019.

**FIGURE 10: REGIONAL INVENTORY OF AUTOCRATIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION, 1972–2019**



**Zooming In:  
The Main Autocratizing Countries**

- The countries that have autocratized the most over the last 10 years are Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Serbia, Brazil and India.
- The autocratizing governments in these countries first restricted the scope for media and civil society.
- Once they had gained sufficient control over the “watchdogs” in the media and civil society, they dared to begin eroding the quality of elections.

Table 1 lists the top 10 regressing countries by magnitude of change on the LDI over the past 10 years. **Hungary** is a particularly striking case of contemporary autocratization and ranks first. We also find **Turkey, Poland, Brazil,** and **India** among the top 10 autocratizing countries. While eight of these countries were still democratic – and three of them were even liberal democratic – in 2009, the majority of them are now autocratic.

**TABLE 1: TOP-10 MAIN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES (LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI), 2009–2019)**

	CHANGE	LDI 2009	LDI 2019	REGIME TYPE 2009	REGIME TYPE 2019
Hungary	-0.36	0.76	0.40	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
Turkey	-0.36	0.46	0.10	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
Poland	-0.33	0.83	0.50	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
Serbia	-0.27	0.53	0.25	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
Brazil	-0.25	0.76	0.51	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
India	-0.19	0.55	0.36	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
Mali	-0.17	0.48	0.31	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
Thailand	-0.16	0.32	0.15	Electoral Autocracy	Closed Autocracy
Nicaragua	-0.16	0.22	0.06	Electoral Autocracy	Electoral Autocracy
Zambia	-0.15	0.42	0.27	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy

To illustrate how autocratization unfolds, in Figure 11 we have graphed the indicators that fell the most among the six main autocratizing countries in the last ten years: Two indicators measuring freedom of the media, one indicator of civil society organization (CSO) repression, and one of freedom of academic and cultural expression. We also added a measure of the freedom and fairness of elections.

The country examples in Table 1 provide evidence that the unfolding of autocratization follows a common pattern. Media freedom and civil society are repressed first. Only well after those arenas of mobilization and countervailing information have been brought under control are the core institutions of democracy – free and fair elections – degraded.<sup>12</sup>

**Hungary** emerges as the first member of the EU ever to host an electoral authoritarian regime, and according to V-Dem data it is the most extreme case of democratic regression in recent times. It was classified as a liberal democracy in 2009 and long before the indicator on the freedom and fairness of elections fell in 2014,<sup>13</sup> the media, civil society, and civil liberties had been significantly constrained. As early as in 2010, the right-wing government led by Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party enacted several media laws that substantially curtailed press freedom.<sup>14</sup> The media landscape in Hungary has since been transformed by the new media supervisory authority<sup>15</sup> and today’s largely state-controlled media is not even allowed to report on Greta Thunberg for example, or human rights issues.<sup>16</sup>

Similar to Hungary, the developments in **Poland, Brazil** and **India** suggest that the first steps of autocratization involve eliminating media freedom and curtailing civil society. Early warnings

12 This observation also reflects the periodic nature of elections.

13 On the constitutional changes and amendments of the electoral system before the 2014 elections, see for example Kelemen (2017, p. 222) and Bozóki and Hegedűs (2018).

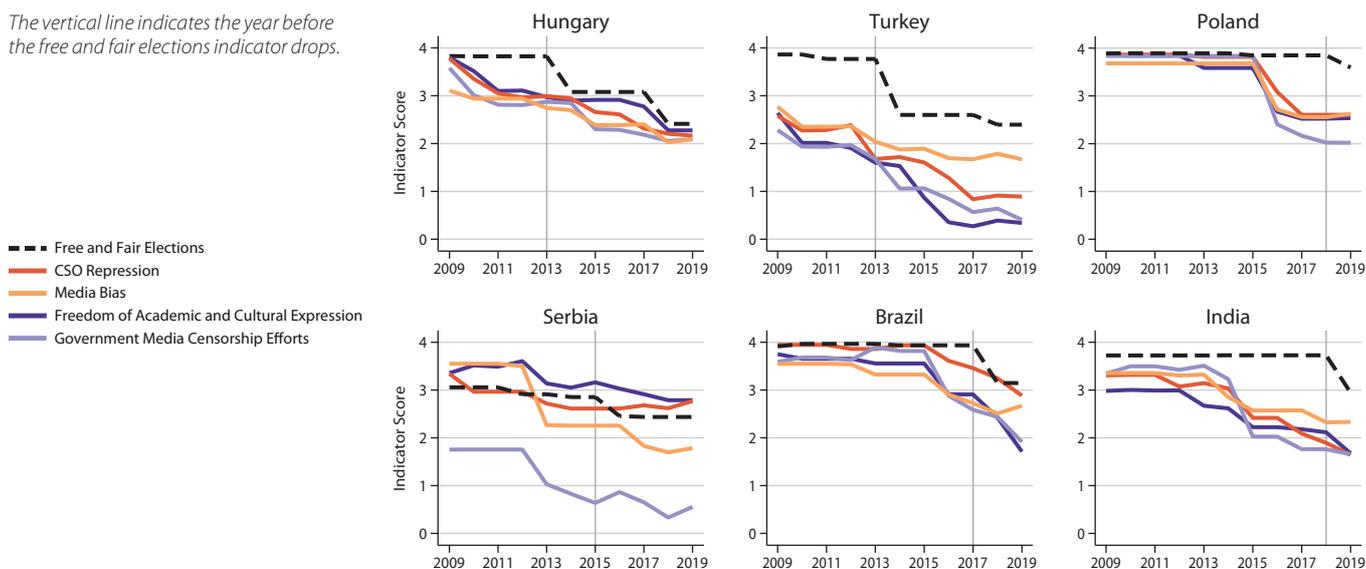
14 <https://www.economist.com/eastern-approaches/2010/12/23/all-eyes-on-orban>

15 For example, the suspension of the oppositional “Klubrádió”, cf. Bozóki (2011, p. 653).

16 <https://www.poltico.eu/article/hungarian-state-media-not-free-to-report-on-greta-thunberg-human-rights/>

**FIGURE 11: HOW AUTOCRATIZATION UNFOLDS – COUNTRY EXAMPLES, 2009–2019**

The vertical line indicates the year before the free and fair elections indicator drops.

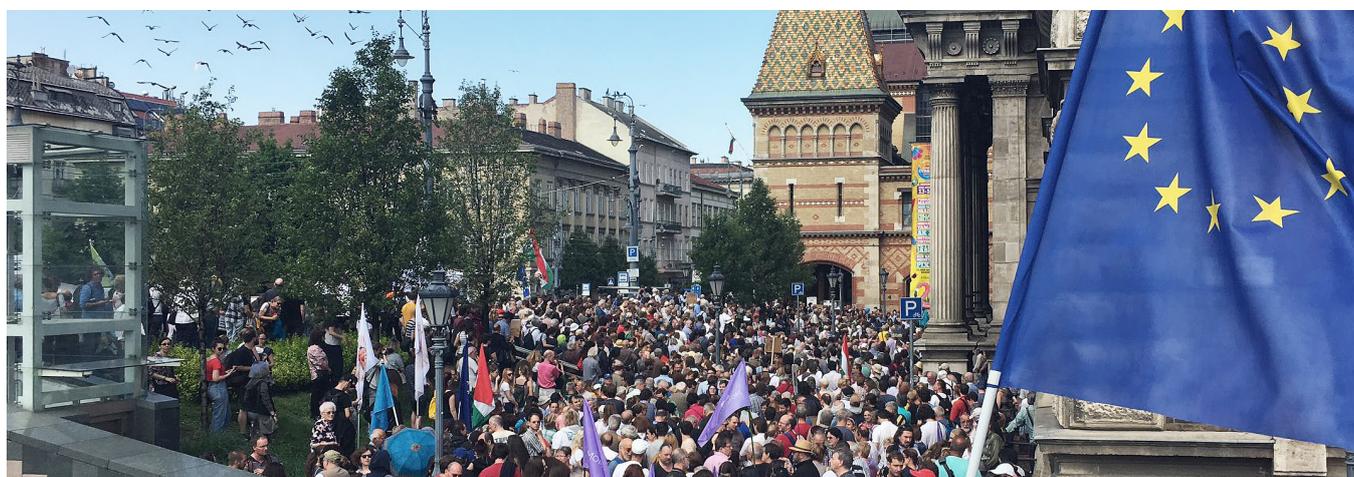


include the Polish media laws in 2015/2016,<sup>17</sup> the increasing media bias during the years before the Brazilian far-right populist Bolsonaro came to power,<sup>18</sup> and the dive in press freedom along with increasing repression of civil society in India associated with the current Hindu-nationalist regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.<sup>19</sup>

Controlling the media and curtailing civil liberties were also the first alarming signs of autocratization in **Turkey** and **Serbia**. While censorship has been a long-standing problem in Serbia, the other indicators concerning the media, civil society and civil liberties also worsened before electoral integrity suffered and this nation slipped back to authoritarianism in 2015. Turkey's scores on press freedom and civil liberties started to slip well before 2009, and its gradual autocratization process led to its classification as an electoral authoritarian state by 2014.

Overall a striking pattern emerges of how autocratization sequentially evolves in the 'wannabe' dictators' playbook: Cracking down on the elections only after decimating the media and civil society. Capturing and making visible these early and sometimes incremental strictures is a key feature of V-Dem, made possible by its highly disaggregated data.

The order in which a democracy is dismantled also makes strategic sense. National elections are highly visible and risky events for leaders. As long as there is enough of a plurality of independent media to report on fraud and malpractices, and civil society can still threaten to mobilize against a stolen election – as we saw in the “colored revolutions” of the early 2000s – rulers should worry about undermining the integrity of elections too much. But if and when the media, civil society, and ultimately the judiciary have been brought under sufficient control by the government, there is little reason left for any dictator-to-be to leave the electoral institutions independent.



Budapest, Hungary. Photo: atlatszo.hu.

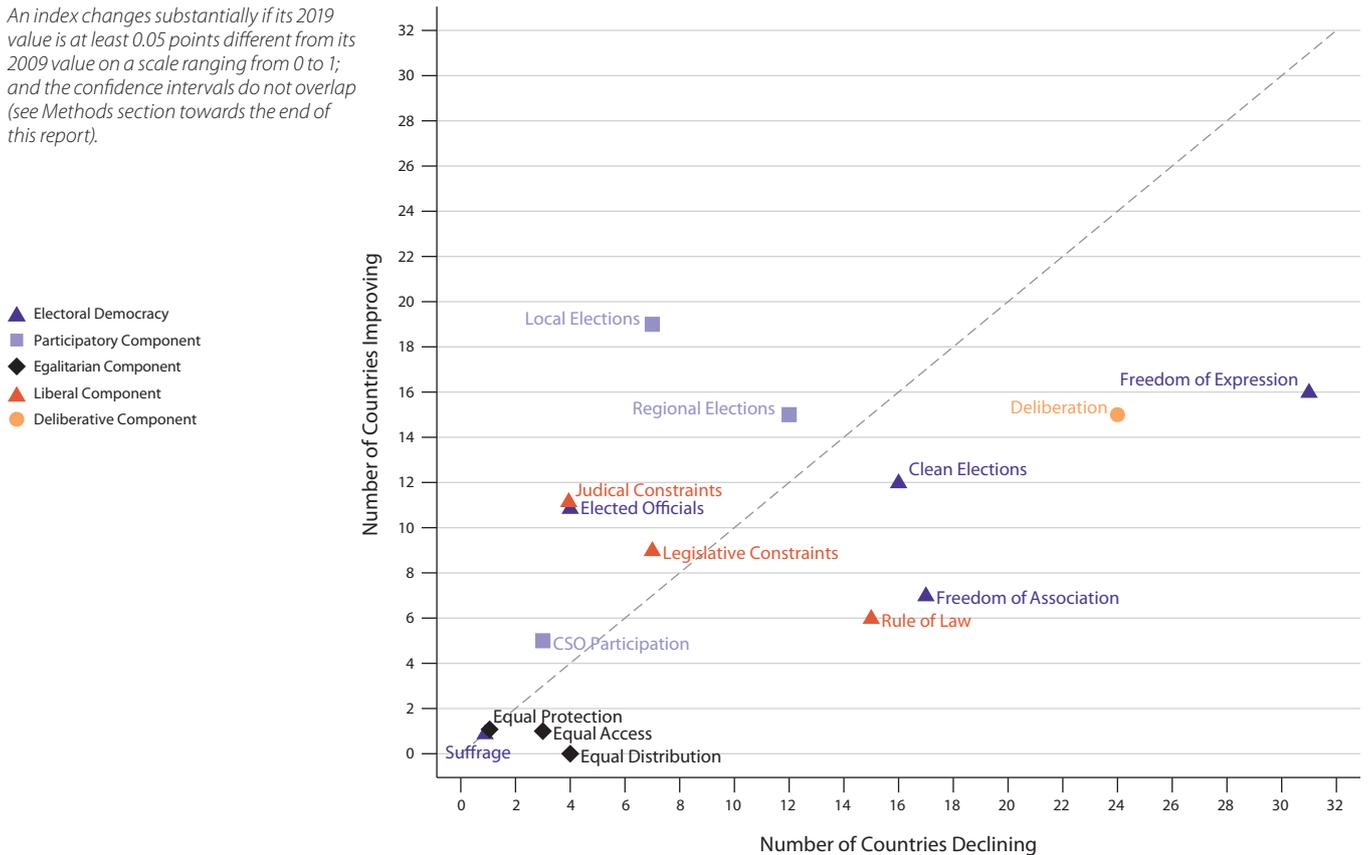
17 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35257105>

18 <https://rsf.org/en/news/brazil-falls-press-freedom-index-now-104th>

19 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-slides-down-in-press-freedom-index/article4362219.ece> and <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/02/indias-media-cant-speak-truth-to-power-modi-bjp-journalism/>

**FIGURE 12: KEY DEMOCRACY ASPECTS, SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE 2009–2019**

An index changes substantially if its 2019 value is at least 0.05 points different from its 2009 value on a scale ranging from 0 to 1; and the confidence intervals do not overlap (see Methods section towards the end of this report).



## Attacks on the Media and Freedom of Association Intensify

- **Attacks on freedom of expression and media freedom are intensifying and are now substantially worse in 31 nations compared to 19 two years ago.**
- **A disturbing new trend: scores on the Clean Elections Index fell significantly in 16 countries while improving in only 12 countries.**
- **Media censorship and the repression of civil society worsened in a record 37 countries – eleven more than the 26 countries currently affected by severe autocratization. Since these indicators are typically the first to move in a gradual process of autocratization, this development is an early warning signal for what might be yet to come.**

The “early warning” indicators discussed in the previous section are not only the first to signal autocratization, they are also the democratic traits that are suffering the most globally at present. Figure 12 evidences a clear pattern that is not only consistent with what we have reported in previous editions of the *Democracy Report* but also demonstrates that this trend is accelerating.

The broadscale attack on freedom of expression (which includes media freedom) is intensifying. In the 2018 *Democracy Report*, we reported that it was getting worse in 19 countries. We find this year that this number has swelled to encompass a further 31 nations where freedom of expression and the media is suffering

from significant deterioration at the hands of governments but also from non-state actors harassing independent journalists.

In Figure 12, we have simply counted how many countries have registered significant changes on key democracy indices over the last ten years. Indices placing above the diagonal line indicate that more countries have improved than declined, while indices with more negative changes are found below the diagonal line.

Deliberation, which captures how public speech is used by political leaders, similarly exhibits a distressing development. It is in decline significantly in 24 countries in 2019, up from 20 in 2018 and far fewer in previous years.

This year’s *Democracy Report* finds a disturbing new trend where freedom of association for civil society and political parties recorded a striking drop in 2019 compared to earlier years. The data shows 17 countries slipping back in this year’s report while the corresponding number last year was only eleven. This striking uptake is worrying.

Perhaps the most worrying new trend of all concerns elections. This year’s scores on the Clean Elections Index fell significantly in 16 countries while it improved in only 12 countries. In previous years, the V-Dem data showed that *all* component indices related to elections continued to record improvements in more countries than where they had declined. In 2017 and 2018, the critical Clean Elections Index recorded improvements in 15 or more countries and regression in less than 10.



Moscow, Russia. Photo: Shutterstock.

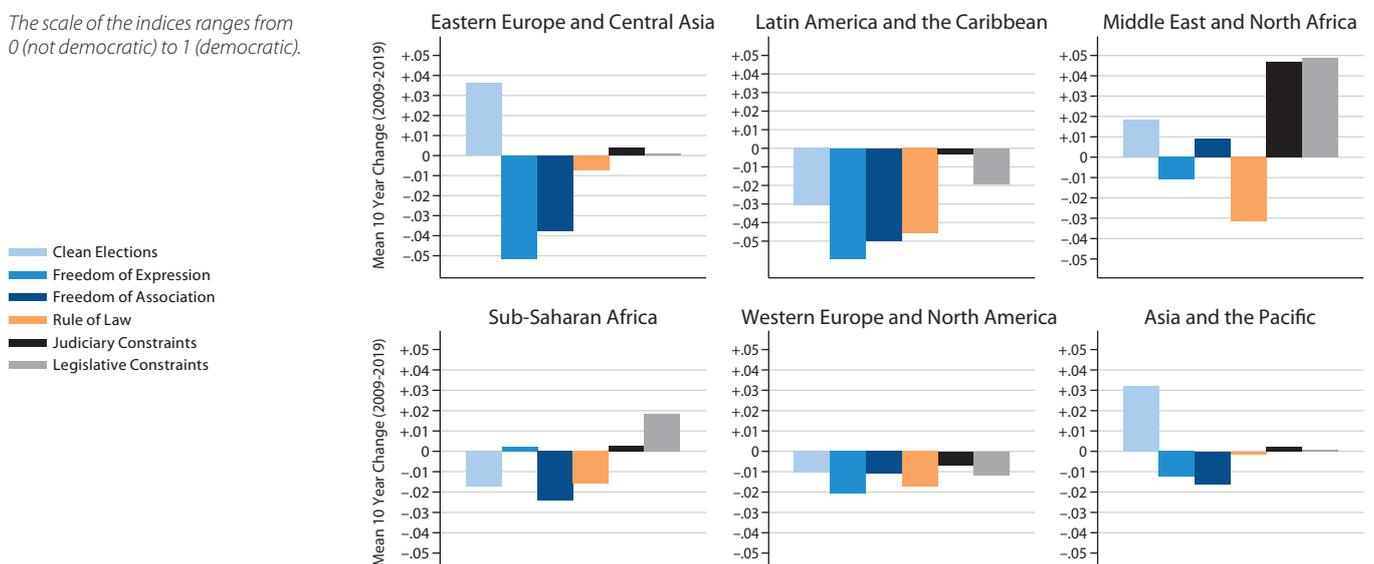
Figure 13 shows the regional variation in this trend. In three regions – Eastern Europe and Central Asia, MENA, Asia and the Pacific – the quality of elections is still improving on average, whereas in the other three it is declining.

Perhaps the world is heading for a tipping point. Ruling governments in country after country may have managed to cast aside constraints to an extent where they can now attack democracy's very core institution: free and fair elections.

Figure 12 focuses on the component indices that capture different aspects of democracy. Each consists of a series of indicators. In Figure 14, we detail 25 specific indicators where V-Dem has registered significant and substantial declines between 2009 and 2019. We also show above that in countries affected by severe autocratization, the following four indicators decline first: Government media censorship efforts, CSO repression, media bias and freedom of academic and cultural expression. These indicators are

**FIGURE 13: AVERAGE REGIONAL CHANGE IN KEY DEMOCRACY ASPECTS, 2009–2019**

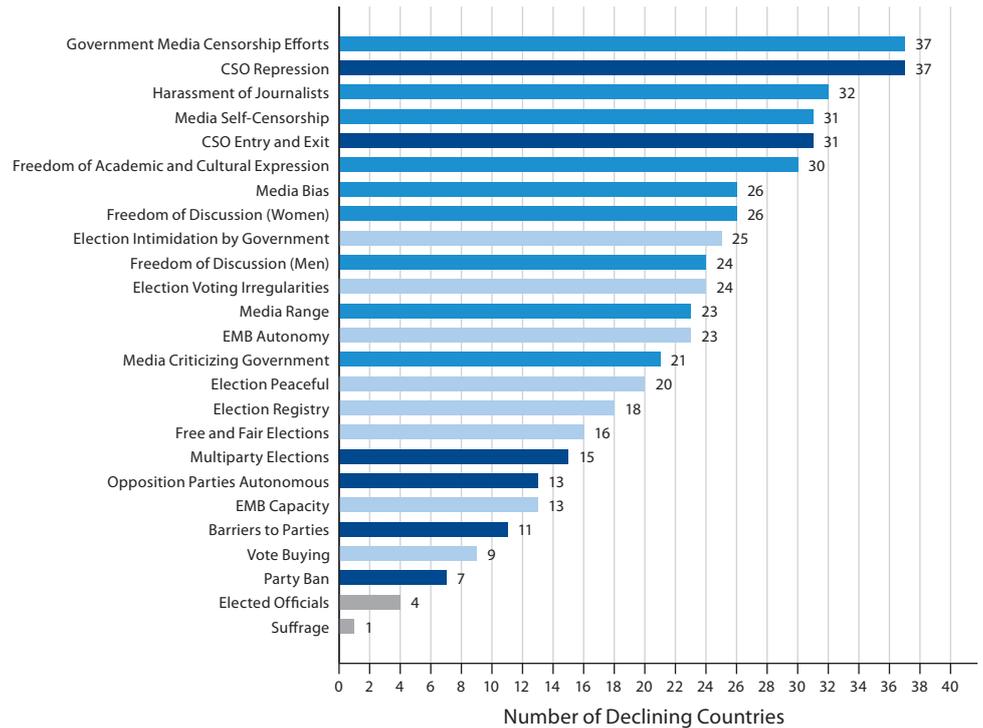
The scale of the indices ranges from 0 (not democratic) to 1 (democratic).



**FIGURE 14: INDICATORS OF DEMOCRACY SUBSTANTIALLY DECLINING, 2009–2019**

We count an indicator as declining substantially if its 2019 value is at least 0.5 points lower than its 2009 value on a scale ranging from 0 to 4; and the confidence intervals do not overlap (see Methods section towards the end of this report).

■ V-Dem Indicators on Freedom of Association  
 ■ V-Dem Indicators on Freedom of Expression  
 ■ V-Dem Indicators on Clean Elections  
 ■ Other Indicators



among the seven indicators that have declined in most countries over the last ten years. What makes this so worrisome is that censorship efforts and repression have increased in a record of 37 countries – 11 more than the 26 countries that are currently affected by severe autocratization. Since they are typically the first to move in a gradual process of autocratization, this development is an early warning signal for what might be yet to come.

## Toxic Polarization Taints Public Debates, Academia, and Popular Protests

- **New V-Dem indicators on Civic and Academic Space show that autocratization taints the whole society.**
- **Academic freedom has registered a conspicuous average decline of 13% in autocratizing countries over the last 10 years.**
- **The right to peaceful assembly and protest has declined 14% on average in autocratizing countries.**
- **Toxic polarization, pro-autocratic mass protests and political violence has risen in autocratizing countries such as Brazil and Poland.**

Autocratization moves beyond formal political institutions and deals a double blow to the whole society. First, autocratizing governments reduce the scope for civil society, protest and academia. Second, various governmental and societal actors are more likely to become polarizing, use political violence, and mobilize the masses in favor of an illiberal agenda. These

are insights from new indicators on Civic and Academic Space featuring in the 2020 version of the V-Dem dataset for the first time.

The new V-Dem index capturing academic freedom<sup>20</sup> has registered a conspicuous decline of 13% in autocratizing countries over the last 10 years, while remaining about the same in other nations (Figure 15). Hungary is one of the worst affected countries with the Central European University forced to relocate to Vienna in 2019 as a result of continued legal and political pressure.<sup>21</sup> With intensified autocratization, scholars' prerogatives to conduct research freely and to teach independent of political concerns increasingly come under attack. This threatens not only freedom of thought in a society but undermines a key prerequisite for innovative economies.

In equal measure, autocratizing governments impose new restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly and to protest. An average 14% decline on this indicator reflects this trend captured by unique, new measures in the V-Dem dataset.

At the same time, the mobilization of citizens in autocratizing countries in support of an illiberal agenda is growing. A unique V-Dem indicator gauges the frequency of protests organized with the aim of undermining democratic ideals and institutions such as the rule of law, free and fair elections, or media freedom. Such protests have become notably more common in autocratizing countries over the last 10 years. Perhaps following such anti-democracy mobilization efforts, the use of political violence by non-state actors is becoming more frequent in these states.

20 This new index is the result of a collaboration between V-Dem, the Global Public Policy Institute, Scholars at Risk, and Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU).

21 Enyedi (2018), Bård (2018), and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/03/dark-day-freedom-george-soros-affiliated-central-european-university-quits-hungary>

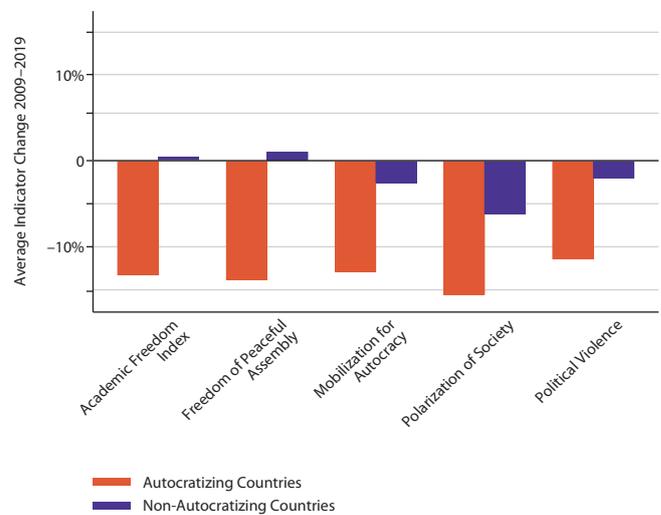
As a result, the society is rapidly becoming more polarized in autocratizing countries compared to other nations. Governments are not acting alone in undermining the free, public-spirited debate necessary for democracy. *Toxic polarization*, captured by the new V-Dem indicator on the polarization of a society, moves far beyond democracy's beneficial wrangles over policy and cuts deep into the social fabric of a society. It splits societies into "mutually distrustful 'Us vs. Them' camps."<sup>22</sup> This is arguably a dangerous course. Once political elites and their followers no longer believe that political opponents are legitimate and deserve equal respect, or are even acceptable as family and friends, they become less likely to adhere to democratic rules in the struggle for power.

## Pro-Democracy Protests Rise to All-Time High

- **New V-Dem data on acts of pro-democracy mass mobilization show that they reached an all-time high in 2019 – higher than during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Arab Spring.**
- **The share of countries with substantial pro-democracy mass protests surged from 27% in 2009 to 44% in 2019.**
- **Citizens take to the streets in order to defend civil liberties, the rule of law and fight for clean elections and political freedom.**
- **The unprecedented degree of mobilization for democracy in light of deepening autocratization is a sign of hope. While pro-autocracy rulers attempt to constrain the scope for civil society, millions of citizens demonstrate their commitment to democracy.**

**FIGURE 15: CIVIC AND ACADEMIC SPACE, AVERAGE CHANGE, 2009–2019**

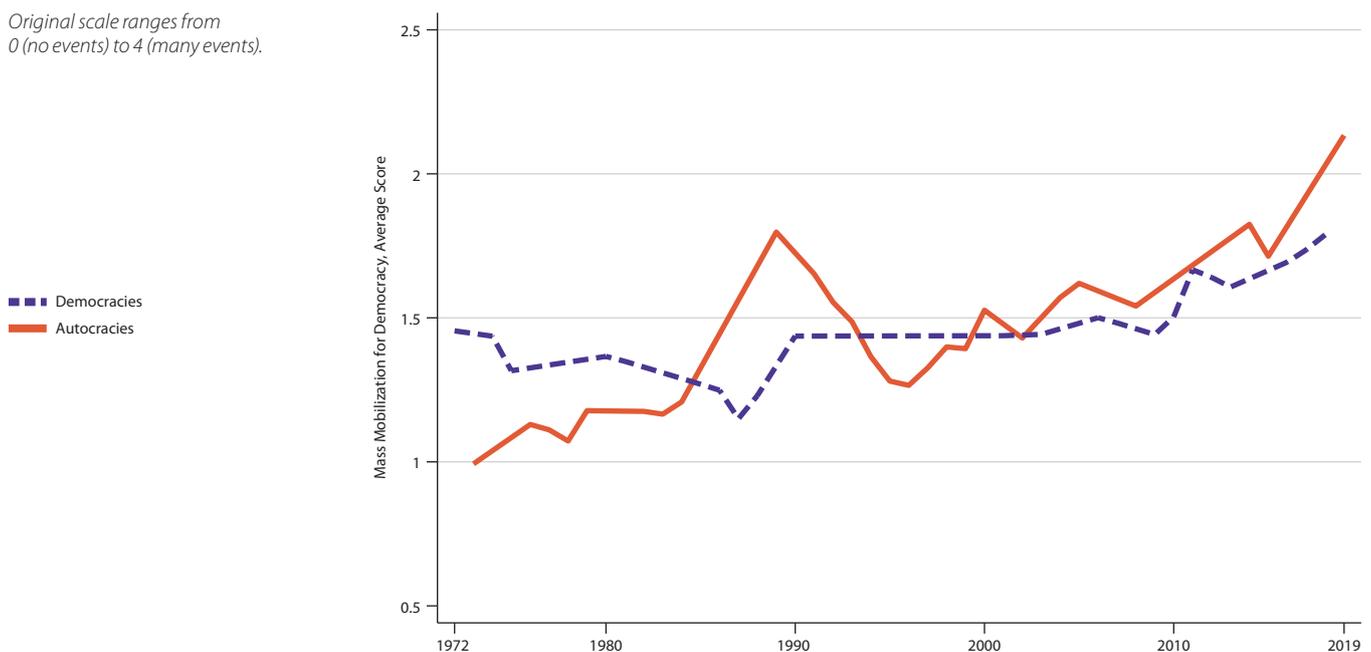
All indicators have been re-scaled to range from 0 (not democratic) to 1 (democratic). Low values on the Academic Freedom Index and the indicator for Freedom of Peaceful Assembly signify low levels; for the other three indicators low values signify a high level e.g. of Mobilization for Autocracy.



2019 was without a doubt the “year of global protests”.<sup>23</sup> Large scale events took place in major cities around the world from Hong Kong and Tehran to Warsaw and Santiago. The 2020 V-Dem dataset includes new statistics on pro-democracy mobilization events across the world.<sup>24</sup> Figure 16 demonstrates that 2019 is the year with the highest global average of pro-democracy protests of all time, towering over even the levels of mobilization around the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Arab Spring.

**FIGURE 16: MASS MOBILIZATION FOR DEMOCRACY 1972–2019 (GLOBAL AVERAGES BY REGIME TYPE)**

Original scale ranges from 0 (no events) to 4 (many events).



<sup>22</sup> McCoy and Somer (2019, p.234).

<sup>23</sup> See <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/23/2019-a-year-of-global-protest/>

<sup>24</sup> V-Dem's country experts have estimated the frequency and size of activities such as demonstrations, strikes and sit-ins to advance or protect democratic institutions and civil liberties. The indicator ranges from “virtually no events” to “many large-scale and small-scale events”. For more information, see the V-Dem Codebook V10.

A wave of pro-democracy protests shakes both democracies and autocracies but for different reasons. While activists in democracies resist the dismantling of democracy, their counterparts in autocracies seek to establish democratic institutions. Figure 17 shows that pro-democracy mobilization globally has increased in what seems to be a response to the recent trend of autocratization. This raises a ray of hope that people's resistance will mount a sufficient challenge to autocratization. In the following, we highlight key cases of large-scale pro-democracy mobilization in both regime types.

## MOBILIZATION FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

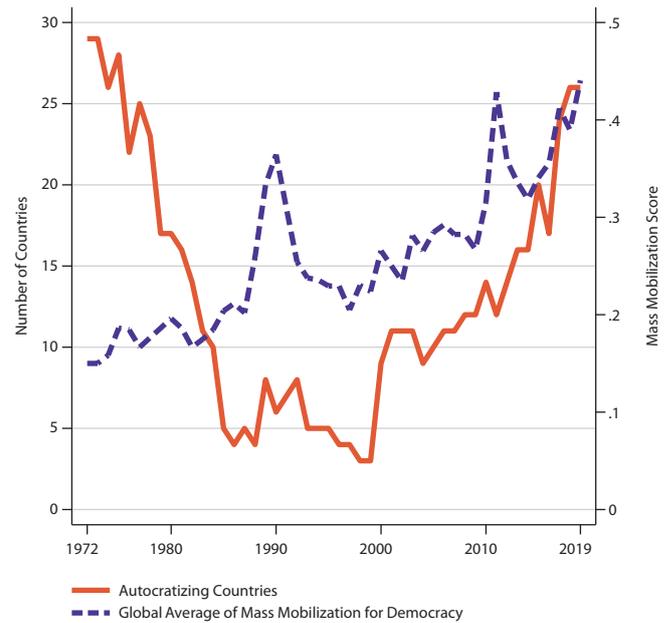
Despite the heavy deployment of coercive state forces, citizens mobilized in mass protests against dictators in 34 territories during 2019, among them Sudan, Algeria, and Hong Kong. Several movements achieved remarkable success in the early stages.

In **Sudan**, a broad-based nonviolent resistance movement brought down President Omar al-Bashir, whose oppressive rule spanned more than three decades. In the face of continued deadly attacks, the popular movement revived its mobilization efforts. Eventually the military was pressured into a power-sharing agreement with civilians.<sup>25</sup> Since August 2019, an interim government under the leadership of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok is in power, which includes both military and civilian actors.<sup>26</sup> For the first time in decades, Sudanese citizens now enjoy freedom of speech, which is already a major achievement. Other institutional reforms and transitional elections are scheduled to follow in the coming years.

Similarly, protesters under a movement known as the *Hirak* in **Algeria** forced President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to leave office on 2nd April 2019 after two decades in power. New elections were held on 12th December 2019 after several postponements. In the months leading up to the elections, state repression was again directed at the popular protest movement. Scores of journalists, CSO activists, and opposition party leaders were detained and prosecuted.<sup>27</sup> In the end, only around 40% of Algerians turned out for the December 12 elections and Abdelmadjid Tebboune who served as prime minister under Bouteflika, won the contest. Mass protests are continuing to voice demands for more far-reaching political reforms.<sup>28</sup>

The largest and perhaps most relentless protest movement of 2019 emerged in **Hong Kong**. Almost two million citizens took to the streets on a single weekend in a territory of seven million people. Protests erupted over a Bill that would allow extradition from Hong Kong to mainland China under certain circumstances. Although sustained protests forced Chief Executive Carrie Lam to withdraw the Bill, protesters continued taking to the streets demanding democratic reforms, the release of detained activists,

**FIGURE 17: GLOBAL TRENDS IN AUTOCRATIZATION AND MASS MOBILIZATION FOR DEMOCRACY**



and an investigation of police brutality. Subsequently, clashes between protesters and the police turned increasingly violent.<sup>29</sup>

These cases illustrate that people across the globe are rising up against authoritarianism, heedless of violent repression. But these stories also make evident that initial successes do not inevitably pave the way for democratization. Sustained, peaceful, and broad-based mobilization is necessary to avoid anti-democracy forces thwarting real political change.

## MOBILIZATION AGAINST AUTOCRATIZATION

During 2019, citizens mobilized to protest in favor of democracy and against government measures eroding norms and institutions in 29 democracies including Poland, Bolivia, and Malawi.

In **Poland**, the ruling Law and Justice Party (PiS) is gradually eroding democratic standards, for instance, by diminishing judicial independence through lowering the retiring age of judges and controlling judicial appointments. Mass protests against these measures have occurred regularly since PiS came to power in 2015. For instance, in December 2019 and January this year, civil society organized marches in 160 cities protesting the judicial reforms. Judges from many European countries also participated in the march, dubbed the "1,000 Robes March".<sup>30</sup> Despite this mass mobilization and pressure from the EU, the Polish government is persisting in its ambitions to subdue the judiciary.

25 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/281-safeguarding-sudans-revolution>

26 See Hassan and Kodouda (2019).

27 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/14/algeria-escalating-repression-protesters>

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/13/algeria-braced-for-protests-as-former-pm-wins-presidential-election>

29 <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/15/asia/hong-kong-protests-explainer-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>

30 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-judiciary-toga-march/thousands-protest-against-polands-plan-to-discipline-judges-idUSKBN1ZA0PD>

Alleged election irregularities triggered widespread protests in both **Bolivia** and **Malawi** during 2019. In Bolivia, incumbent President Evo Morales had to leave the country after massive protests erupted over the results of the elections.<sup>31</sup> Malawian President Peter Mutharika remains in power but protests against the election results and the constitutional court's decision to annul the results are continuing.<sup>32</sup>

## Rays of Hope: Democratization Continues to Progress Around the World

- **In many cases, such as Sudan, pro-democracy protestors were successful and achieved breakthroughs for freedom and democracy.**
- **In 22 countries, pro-democracy mass protests have contributed to substantial democratization during the last 10 years.**
- **Armenia, The Gambia, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia are cases exhibiting the biggest democratic gains.**
- **Ecuador shows that autocratization can be turned around, and that it is difficult to return to a stable democracy.**

The unprecedented mobilization for democracy in the face of deepening autocratization is a sign of hope. While (wannabe) autocrats endeavor to shut down civic, academic, media, and judicial spaces in their societies, citizens are increasingly demonstrating their commitment to democracy around the globe. While autocrats such as Vladimir Putin seek to profess that liberal democracy has lost its global attraction, mass uprisings in defense of democracy demonstrate that this is not the case, and opinion polls reveal resounding popular support for key democratic principles.<sup>33</sup>

The demand for democracy thus remains high. In 22 countries, this translated into substantial positive changes over the last 10 years as captured by V-Dem's LDI (see Figure 18). In most of them, mass protests played a critical role in propelling the democratization process forward. The "Top-10 Advancers" are listed in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: TOP-10 ADVANCERS ON THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI)**

	CHANGE	LDI 2009	LDI 2019
Tunisia	+0.56	0.10	0.66
Armenia	+0.46	0.19	0.64
The Gambia	+0.34	0.12	0.46
Sri Lanka	+0.23	0.24	0.47
Madagascar	+0.23	0.09	0.31
Myanmar	+0.23	0.02	0.25
Fiji	+0.19	0.12	0.31
Kyrgyzstan	+0.17	0.15	0.32
Ecuador	+0.17	0.33	0.50
Niger	+0.15	0.20	0.34

Most notably, democracy seems to have taken hold in Tunisia after mass protests led to the ousting of long-time dictator Ben Ali in 2011. Following the first democratic elections in 2014, a second and successful round of elections led to a peaceful transfer of power that seems to have stabilized the democratization process. In Armenia, pro-democracy activists can now similarly harvest the fruits of their peaceful protests in celebrating that a democratically elected government has been in power for a full year in 2019.

**Ecuador** is another notable case. Grassroots movements in favor of democracy played a decisive role in reversing the autocratization process initiated under former President Rafael Correa. During his tenure from 2007 to 2017, he changed the constitution in order to expand his powers and censor the media, as we reported in the 2017 *Democracy At Dusk?* report.<sup>34</sup> Starting in earnest in 2012, indigenous groups, the environmental movement, unions, and student groups orchestrated mass protests, which eventually forced Correa to abandon his plans to stand for re-election in 2017. PAIS Alliance's new candidate Lenin Moreno won the presidential contest and – much to the surprise of many observers – reversed many of the autocratic-leaning measures of his predecessor.<sup>35</sup> However, Ecuador's citizens rose again in 2019, now protesting against Moreno's economic policies and the regime responded in part with a disproportionate use of violence. The outcome remains uncertain, illustrating that the route from pro-democracy mass protests to a stable democracy is often bumpy.

The 2019 "Year of Protest" shows that movement-based successes do not come easily. Only sustained, organized, and peaceful activism can eventually help to build democracy in countries now attempting to become free. We also know that economic grievances often trigger popular protests, in particular in fledgling democracies. Protesters want to see that the political system can address their needs on socio-economic fronts as well. In the longer run, if new democracies are not able to deliver, they might not prevail.<sup>36</sup>

31 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/11/20/here-are-myths-about-bolivias-protests/>

32 <https://www.ft.com/content/fbd09b8e-46c2-11ea-aeb3-955839e06441>

33 <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/27/democratic-rights-popular-globally-but-commitment-to-them-not-always-strong/>; on Putin: <https://www.ft.com/content/670039ec-98f3-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36>

34 De la Torre and Ortíz Lemos (2016).

35 <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28557/in-ecuador-protests-left-a-lasting-mark-on-moreno-and-the-country-s-future>

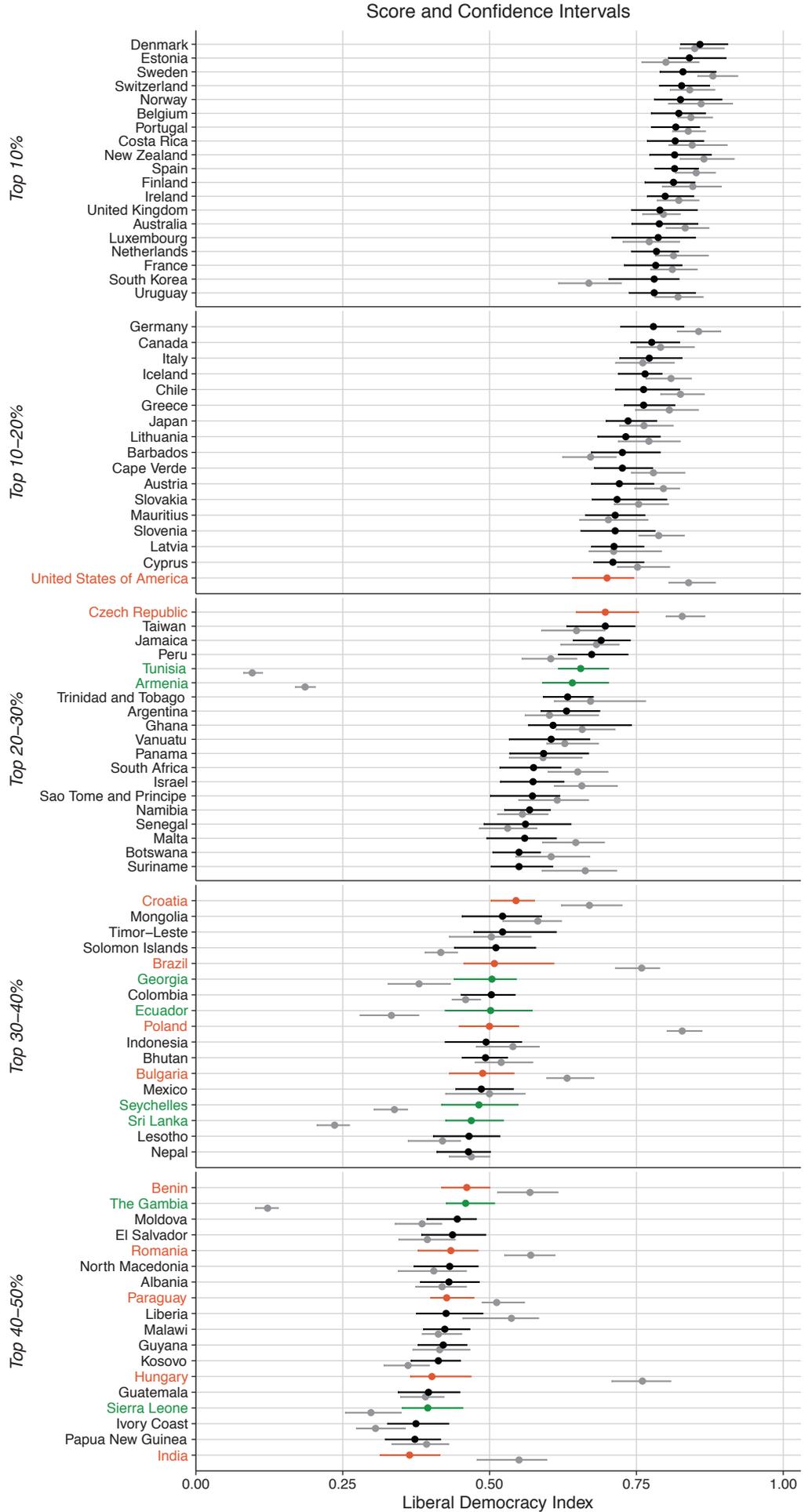
36 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/opinions/global-opinions/2019-was-the-year-of-the-street/>

**FIGURE 18: COUNTRIES BY SCORE ON V-DEM'S LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI), 2009 COMPARED TO 2019**

**Top 50% of countries**

- Score
- Confidence interval
- Autocratizing countries
- Democratizing countries
- 2009
- 2019

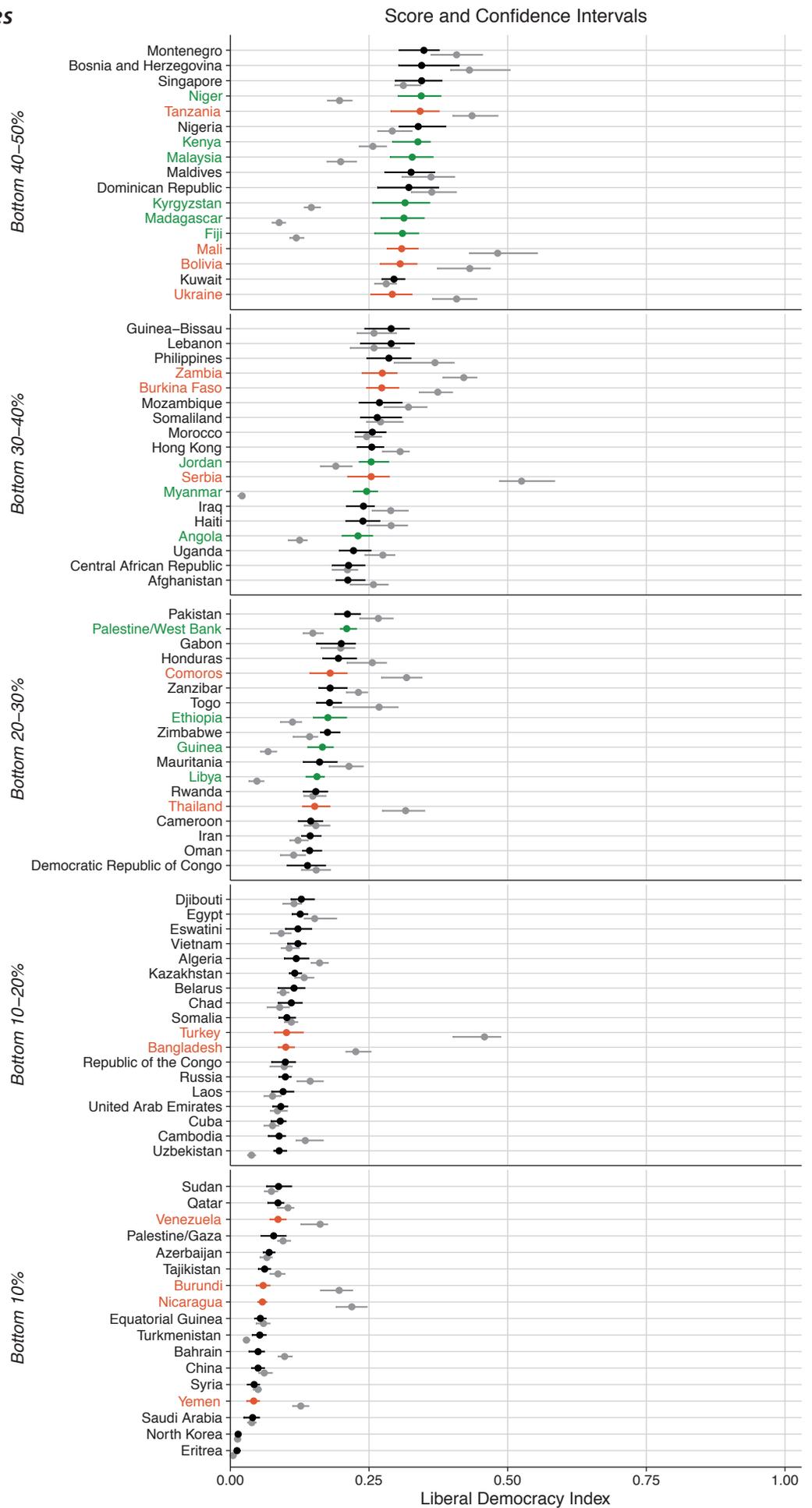
**Orange** country names signify cases of significant and substantial autocratization. **Green** country names indicate cases of significant and substantial democratization. The graph divides all countries' LDI scores into ranks of top 10% to 50% and bottom 50% to 10%. Lines indicate the confidence intervals around the point estimates. Countries with overlapping confidence intervals are statistically indistinguishable.<sup>37</sup>



<sup>37</sup> The confidence intervals we report here are actually 68% highest posterior density intervals, a Bayesian corollary of frequentist confidence intervals.

### Bottom 50% of countries

- Score
- Confidence interval
- Autocratizing countries
- Democratizing countries
- 2009
- 2019



**TABLE 3: REGIMES OF THE WORLD 2009–2019**

The countries are sorted by regime type in 2019, and after that in alphabetical order. They are classified based on the Regimes of the World measure.

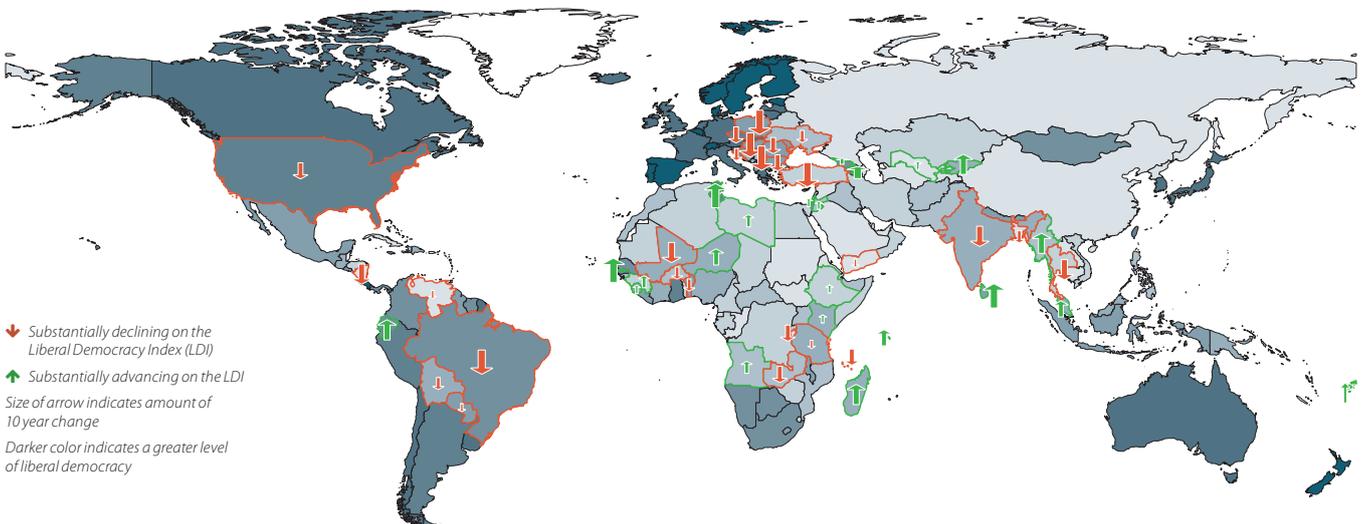
We incorporate V-Dem's confidence estimates in order to account for the uncertainty and potential measurement error due to the nature of the data but also to underline that some countries are placed in the grey zone between regime types.

This builds on the regime-classification by Lührmann 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).

- LD Liberal Democracy
- ED Electoral Democracy
- EA Electoral Autocracy
- CA Closed Autocracy
- indicates that taking uncertainty into account, the country could belong to the lower category
- + signifies that the country could also belong to the higher category
- ↑ indicates that the country sees a movement upwards from one level to another
- ↓ indicates that the country sees a movement downwards from one level to another

COUNTRY	2019	CHANGE FROM 2009	COUNTRY	2019	CHANGE FROM 2009	COUNTRY	2019	CHANGE FROM 2009	COUNTRY	2019	CHANGE FROM 2009
Australia	LD		Namibia	ED +	↓	Bolivia	EA +	↓	Nicaragua	EA	
Austria	LD		São Tomé & Príncipe	ED +		Fiji	EA +	↑	Niger	EA	
Belgium	LD		Senegal	ED +		Hungary	EA +	↓	Pakistan	EA	
Denmark	LD		Slovakia	ED +	↓	Lebanon	EA +		Palestine/West Bank	EA	
Finland	LD		Vanuatu	ED +		Madagascar	EA +		Russia	EA	
Germany	LD		Argentina	ED		Malawi	EA +	↓	Rwanda	EA	
Ireland	LD		Brazil	ED		Malaysia	EA +		Serbia	EA	↓
Japan	LD		Bulgaria	ED		Maldives	EA +	↓	Singapore	EA	
Luxembourg	LD		Colombia	ED		Mali	EA +	↓	Somaliland	EA	
Netherlands	LD		Croatia	ED		Montenegro	EA +		Tajikistan	EA	
New Zealand	LD		Dominican Republic	ED		Nigeria	EA +		Tanzania	EA	↓
South Korea	LD		Ecuador	ED		Papua New Guinea	EA +		Togo	EA	↓
Spain	LD		El Salvador	ED		Philippines	EA +		Turkey	EA	↓
Sweden	LD		Georgia	ED		Ukraine	EA +	↓	Uganda	EA	
Switzerland	LD		Guatemala	ED		Afghanistan	EA		Venezuela	EA	
Taiwan	LD		Guyana	ED		Algeria	EA		Zambia	EA	↓
USA	LD		Indonesia	ED		Angola	EA	↑	Zanzibar	EA	
Uruguay	LD		Ivory Coast	ED	↑	Azerbaijan	EA		Zimbabwe	EA	
Barbados	LD –	↑	Kosovo	ED		Bangladesh	EA	↓	Turkmenistan	EA –	↑
Bhutan	LD –		Liberia	ED		Belarus	EA		Kuwait	CA +	
Botswana	LD –	↑	Malta	ED		Burkina Faso	EA	↓	Uzbekistan	CA +	
Canada	LD –		Mexico	ED		Burundi	EA		Vietnam	CA +	
Chile	LD –		Moldova	ED	↑	CAR	EA		Bahrain	CA	
Costa Rica	LD –		Mongolia	ED		Cambodia	EA		China	CA	
Cyprus	LD –		Nepal	ED		Cameroon	EA		Cuba	CA	
Estonia	LD –		North Macedonia	ED		Chad	EA		Eritrea	CA	
France	LD –		Panama	ED		Comoros	EA	↓	Eswatini	CA	
Ghana	LD –		Paraguay	ED		Congo	EA		Hong Kong	CA	
Israel	LD –		Peru	ED		DRC	EA		Jordan	CA	
Italy	LD –		Poland	ED	↓	Djibouti	EA		Laos	CA	
Latvia	LD –		Romania	ED		Egypt	EA		Libya	CA	
Norway	LD –		Sierra Leone	ED		Equatorial Guinea	EA		Morocco	CA	
Portugal	LD –		Solomon Islands	ED		Ethiopia	EA		North Korea	CA	
Slovenia	LD –		South Africa	ED	↓	Gabon	EA		Oman	CA	
Trinidad and Tobago	LD –		Sri Lanka	ED	↑	Guinea	EA	↑	Palestine/Gaza	CA	
Tunisia	LD –	↑	Suriname	ED		Haiti	EA		Qatar	CA	
United Kingdom	LD –		Timor-Leste	ED		Honduras	EA		Saudi Arabia	CA	
Cape Verde	ED +		BiH	ED –		Iran	EA		Somalia	CA	
Czech Republic	ED +	↓	Guinea-Bissau	ED –	↑	Iraq	EA		South Sudan	CA	↓
Gambia	ED +	↑	India	ED –		Kazakhstan	EA		Sudan	CA	↓
Greece	ED +	↓	Lesotho	ED –		Kenya	EA		Syria	CA	↓
Iceland	ED +	↓	Seychelles	ED –	↑	Kyrgyzstan	EA		Thailand	CA	↓
Jamaica	ED +		Albania	EA +	↓	Mauritania	EA		UAE	CA	
Lithuania	ED +	↓	Armenia	EA +		Mozambique	EA		Yemen	CA	↓
Mauritius	ED +	↓	Benin	EA +	↓	Myanmar	EA	↑			

**FIGURE 19: THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019**



# Publications from the V-Dem Team

## Varieties of Democracy: Measuring Two Centuries of Political Change

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Adam Glynn, Staffan Lindberg, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Svend-Erik Skaaning, and Jan Teorell

2020 | *Cambridge University Press*

The book is an essential user's guide to the V-Dem project. It creates opportunities for V-Dem data to be used in education, research, news analysis, advocacy, policy work, and elsewhere.

## Parties, Civil Society, and the Deterrence of Democratic Defection

Michael Bernhard, Allen Hicken, Christopher Reenock, and Staffan I. Lindberg

2019 | *Studies in Comparative International Development: 1–26*

Both an active mobilized civil society and institutionalized political parties exert a substantial effect on the survival of democracies.

## Who Revolts? Empirically Revisiting the Social Origins of Democracy

Sirianne Dahlum, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Tore Wig

2019 | *The Journal of Politics, 81(4)*

Movements dominated by industrial workers or the urban middle classes more often result in democracy, both when compared to other movements and to situations without organized mass opposition.

## Comparing public communication in democracies and autocracies: Automated text analyses of speeches by heads of government

Seraphine F. Maerz, and Carsten Q. Schneider

2019 | *Quality and Quantity*

Using web-scraping techniques, the authors generate a data set of speeches by heads of government that captures meaningful differences in liberalness between political regimes.

## Patterns of Regime Breakdown Since the French Revolution

Vilde Lunnan Djuve, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Tore Wig

2019 | *Comparative Political Studies*

The risk and mode of regime breakdown followed a cyclical pattern across modern history (in over 2000 regimes from 1789 to 2016).

## What makes experts reliable? Expert reliability and the estimation of latent traits

Kyle L. Marquardt, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, and Yi-ting Wang

2019 | *Research and Politics*

V-Dem's item response theory models help to enhance the reliability of expert-coded data.

## Institutionalising electoral uncertainty and authoritarian regime survival

Michael Bernhard, Amanda B. Edgell, and Staffan I. Lindberg.

2019 | *European Journal of Political Research*

Whether elections are dangerous for dictators depends on differences between competitive and hegemonic forms of electoral authoritarianism.

## Why Low Levels of Democracy Promote Corruption and High Levels Diminish It

Kelly M. McMann, Brigitte Seim, Jan Teorell, and Staffan I. Lindberg.

2019 | *Political Research Quarterly*

## A Closer Look at the Limits of Consociationalism

Matthew Charles Wilson.

2019 | *Comparative Political Studies*

The peace-promoting effects of consociational institutions may depend on how polarized societies are.

## On revolutions

Leroi M. Armand M. Leroi, Ben Lambert, Matthias Mauch, Marina Papadopoulou, Sophia Ananiadou, Staffan I. Lindberg, and Patrik Lindenfors

2020 | *Palgrave Communications, 6(4)*

## State of the world 2018: democracy facing global challenges

Anna Lührmann, Sandra Grahn, Richard Morgan, Shreeya Pillai, and Staffan I. Lindberg

2019 | *Democratization*

## Neopatrimonialism and Democracy: An Empirical Investigation of Africa's Political Regimes

Rachel Sigman, and Staffan I. Lindberg

2019 | in *Von Doepp, Peter and Gabrielle Lynch (eds.) Handbook of Democratization in Africa*, London: Routledge

## Do Political Finance Reforms Reduce Corruption?

Calla Hummel, John Gerring, and Thomas Burt

2019 | *The British Journal of Political Science*

## Civil Society and the Democratic Peace

Håvard Hegre, Michael Bernhard, and Jan Teorell

2019 | *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

## Leaders, Private Interests, and Socially Wasteful Projects: Skyscrapers in Democracies and Autocracies

Haakon Gjerlow, and Carl Henrik Knutsen

2019 | *Political Research Quarterly, 72(2): 504–520*

## Building Impartial Electoral Management? Institutional Design, Independence and Electoral Integrity

Carolien van Ham, and Holly Ann Garnett

2019 | *International Political Science Review*

## Democratic Stability in an Age of Crisis: Reassessing the Interwar Period

Agnes Cornell, Jørgen Møller, and Svend-Erik Skaaning

2020 | *Oxford: Oxford University Press*

## Party Institutionalization and Welfare State Development

Carl Henrik Knutsen and Magnus B. Rasmussen

2019 | *British Journal of Political Science: 1–27*

## Linking Democracy and Biodiversity Conservation: Empirical Evidence and Research Gaps

Oskar Rydén, Alexander Zizka, Sverker C. Jagers, Staffan I. Lindberg, and Alexandre Antonelli

2019 | *Ambio*

## Simulating Pluralism: The Language of Democracy in Hegemonic Authoritarianism

Seraphine F. Maerz

2019 | *Political Research Exchange*

## The Many Faces of Authoritarian Persistence: A Set-Theory Perspective on the Survival Strategies of Authoritarian Regimes

Seraphine F. Maerz

2020 | *Government and Opposition, 55: 64–87*

## Pulling the Strings? The Strategic Use of Pro-Government Mobilization in Authoritarian Regimes

Sebastian Hellmeier, and Nils B. Weidmann

2020 | *Comparative Political Studies, 53(1): 71–108*

## Self-censorship of regime support in authoritarian states: Evidence from list experiments in China

Darrel Robinson, and Marcus Tannenberg

2019 | *Research and Politics*

## Rethinking the D'Hondt Method

Juraj Medzihorsky

2019 | *Political Research Exchange*

## Reconsidering African Elections

Carolien van Ham, and Staffan Lindberg

2019 | *In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics. Oxford University Press*

## The Methodology of "Varieties of Democracy" (V-Dem)

Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Joshua Krusell, Juraj Medzihorsky, Josefina Pernes, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Natalia Stepanova, Jan Teorell, Eitan Tzelgov, Steven L. Wilson, and Staffan I. Lindberg

2019 | *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique, 134(1)*

# V-Dem Methodology: Aggregating Expert Assessments

Authors: Laura Maxwell, Kyle L. Marquardt and Anna Lührmann

**V**-DEM HAS DEVELOPED INNOVATIVE methods for aggregating expert judgments to produce valid estimates of difficult-to-observe concepts. We use expert judgments 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 an executive. However, assessing the extent to which the legislature actually does so requires evaluation by experts with extensive conceptual and case knowledge.

V-Dem typically gathers data from five experts per observation, resulting in a pool of over 3,000 country experts who provide judgment on different concepts and cases. These experts are from almost every country in the world, allowing us to leverage opinions from diverse backgrounds.

However, expert-coded data present a variety of potential problems. Even equally knowledgeable experts disagree, making it imperative to report measurement error. Moreover, rating complex concepts requires judgment, which varies across experts and cases. Finally, expert-coded data raise concerns regarding comparability across time and space. We address these concerns by aggregating expert-coded data with a custom Bayesian measurement model, which allows us to statistically account for uncertainty about estimates and potential biases.

We illustrate these concerns and how our measurement model deals with them using the following question from the V-Dem expert survey, which regards academic freedom:

## 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.

Boston, USA. Photo: Alice Donovan Rouse on Unsplash.



As the example demonstrates, questions and response categories on the expert survey are relatively clear. Nevertheless, we cannot ensure that two experts understand descriptions such as ‘somewhat respected’ in a consistent way: one expert’s ‘somewhat’ may be another’s ‘weakly’ even if they perceive the same level of freedom of expression in a particular country. Equally importantly, an expert’s level of expertise may vary over questions and countries, meaning that in some contexts their coding may be less reliable than in others.

Pemstein et al. (2018) developed a Bayesian Item-Response Theory (IRT) model that both accounts for many of these concerns and provides estimates of remaining random measurement error, converting the ordinal responses experts provide into continuous estimates of the concepts being measured. The logic of the model is that an unobserved latent trait exists (e.g. a certain level of academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression) but we only see imperfect manifestations of this trait. By analysing these manifest items (in our case, expert ratings) together, we can estimate the trait itself. In the resulting V-Dem dataset, we present users 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 V-Dem IRT model allows for the possibility that experts have different thresholds for their ratings. These thresholds are estimated based on patterns in the data and 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.” We also account for the concern that experts vary in their expertise by using the degree to which experts agree with their peers to estimate their reliability within the measurement model. Experts with higher reliability thereby have greater influence on the estimation of concepts.

We use two main techniques to facilitate cross-country comparability. We refer to the first as bridge coding. A “bridge” expert codes the same set of questions and same time period for a second country in addition to their main country. This 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 more information regarding an expert’s thresholds. By extension, this information also provides us with a better sense of the thresholds of an expert’s colleagues who only coded one of the countries they coded.

Second, we employ anchoring vignettes to improve estimates of expert-level parameters and thus the concepts measured. Anchoring vignettes are descriptions of hypothetical cases providing all 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. We therefore also provide interval-level point estimates that have been linearly transformed back to the original coding scale that experts originally 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.

**TABLE 3: 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 ( <i>_codehigh</i> ) and below ( <i>_codelow</i> ) the point estimate	Evaluating differences over time within units
_sd	Interval	Standard deviation of the interval estimate	Creating confidence intervals based on user needs

The result of this process is a set of versions of indicators of democratic institutions and concepts, along with estimates of uncertainty, allowing academics and policy-makers alike to understand the different features of a polity. The box summarizes the output with which we provide users.

## 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.

## References

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**TABLE 4: COUNTRY SCORES FOR THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI) AND ALL COMPONENTS INDICES**

↑ indicates that the country's score has improved over the past 10 years at a statistically significant level

↓ indicates that the country's score has decreased over the past 10 years at a statistically significant level

SD+/- reports the standard deviation to indicate the level of uncertainty

COUNTRY	LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI)			ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (EDI)			LIBERAL COMPONENT INDEX (LCI)			EGALITARIAN COMPONENT INDEX (ECI)			PARTICIPATORY COMPONENT INDEX (PCI)			DELIBERATIVE COMPONENT INDEX (DCI)		
	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-
Denmark	1	0,858	0,039	1	0,9	0,033	1	0,967	0,019	2	0,94	0,029	10	0,711	0,011	5	0,959	0,646
Estonia	2	0,84	0,048	2	0,892	0,04	7	0,95	0,027	11	0,913	0,044	24	0,65	0,035	33	0,879	0,649
Sweden	3	0,829	0,048	8	0,874	0,046	5	0,959	0,02	13	0,91	0,062	31	0,642	0,032	19	0,923	0,626
Switzerland	4	0,827	0,043	11	0,873	0,043	2	0,964	0,014	6	0,926	0,042	1	0,875	0,023	3	0,974	0,645
Norway	5	0,825	0,056	9	0,874	0,047	6	0,95	0,021	1	0,948	0,032	29	0,644	0,024	1	0,984	0,657
Belgium	6	0,822	0,046	4	0,882	0,043	8	0,947	0,024	7	0,924	0,034	35	0,634	0,03	24	0,896	0,624
Portugal	7	0,817	0,046	12	0,87	0,043	16	0,922	0,031	27	0,859	0,04	50	0,603	0,047	11	0,945	0,65
Costa Rica	8	0,816	0,047	3	0,889	0,041	18	0,919	0,033	15	0,899	0,054	25	0,65	0,039	9	0,95	0,62
Spain	9	0,815	0,038	7	0,876	0,032	12	0,933	0,024	18	0,89	0,034	26	0,649	0,018	26	0,891	0,636
New Zealand	10	0,815	0,05	10	0,873	0,044	13	0,933	0,022	26	0,864	0,076	7	0,722	0,037	64	0,782	0,622
Finland	11	0,813	0,048	13	0,87	0,04	11	0,935	0,03	10	0,917	0,043	23	0,651	0,02	17	0,926	0,64
Ireland	12	0,799	0,043	15	0,864	0,04	14	0,925	0,025	21	0,877	0,052	30	0,643	0,046	14	0,934	0,633
United Kingdom	13	0,79	0,058	18	0,859	0,054	19	0,916	0,028	38	0,82	0,06	16	0,671	0,028	38	0,854	0,647
Australia	14	0,789	0,056	23	0,838	0,054	3	0,963	0,025	33	0,831	0,063	17	0,666	0,035	23	0,904	0,637
Luxembourg	15	0,787	0,071	6	0,879	0,046	37	0,879	0,058	3	0,938	0,04	130	0,402	0,052	4	0,97	0,631
Netherlands	16	0,784	0,039	25	0,83	0,036	4	0,962	0,017	30	0,847	0,057	42	0,621	0,035	6	0,958	0,628
France	17	0,783	0,046	5	0,879	0,038	29	0,893	0,04	24	0,87	0,056	47	0,615	0,04	34	0,878	0,639
South Korea	18	0,816	0,059	21	0,842	0,055	10	0,941	0,033	31	0,84	0,058	46	0,615	0,039	13	0,935	0,619
Uruguay	19	0,78	0,053	19	0,858	0,041	20	0,913	0,032	12	0,911	0,048	2	0,801	0,04	12	0,94	0,648
Germany	20	0,779	0,054	24	0,834	0,047	9	0,947	0,018	5	0,935	0,044	21	0,652	0,029	7	0,952	0,64
Canada	21	0,776	0,046	14	0,866	0,035	30	0,889	0,045	14	0,906	0,047	22	0,651	0,017	16	0,927	0,626
Italy	22	0,772	0,053	17	0,86	0,05	25	0,908	0,03	4	0,938	0,029	3	0,757	0,037	28	0,889	0,625
Iceland	23	0,765	0,036	20	0,85	0,032	26	0,902	0,032	23	0,871	0,036	13	0,683	0,029	2	0,974	0,652
Chile	25	0,762	0,056	43	0,773	0,045	21	0,912	0,025	85	0,649	0,069	49	0,609	0,03	25	0,893	0,623
Greece	24	0,762	0,048	16	0,86	0,047	35	0,88	0,036	32	0,838	0,045	34	0,635	0,038	22	0,908	0,615
Japan	26	0,736	0,043	27	0,82	0,043	27	0,898	0,026	8	0,92	0,041	96	0,532	0,049	27	0,889	0,619
Lithuania	27	0,732	0,051	36	0,803	0,052	15	0,924	0,019	25	0,865	0,052	5	0,748	0,035	50	0,818	0,64
Cape Verde	28	0,726	0,049	37	0,8	0,049	17	0,92	0,03	39	0,817	0,067	87	0,551	0,052	56	0,811	0,626
Barbados	29	0,726	0,058	26	0,822	0,057	31	0,889	0,038	34	0,831	0,068	145	0,315	0,033	51	0,817	0,619
Austria	30	0,721	0,051	34	0,809	0,051	23	0,911	0,031	22	0,876	0,062	14	0,681	0,033	40	0,847	0,628
Slovakia	31	0,717	0,063	29	0,813	0,065	28	0,896	0,048	45	0,794	0,06	6	0,731	0,049	52	0,815	0,635
Mauritius	32	0,714	0,05	28	0,818	0,05	38	0,879	0,045	19	0,877	0,05	90	0,545	0,068	20	0,915	0,641
Slovenia	33	0,714	0,06	39	0,797	0,05	22	0,912	0,036	35	0,829	0,064	8	0,722	0,036	35	0,875	0,631
Latvia	34	0,712	0,045	31	0,811	0,049	32	0,887	0,05	28	0,851	0,043	32	0,641	0,045	39	0,849	0,622
Cyprus	35	0,71	0,046	22	0,84	0,051	52	0,825	0,042	9	0,918	0,047	67	0,576	0,043	47	0,836	0,652
USA	36	0,7	0,048	38	0,798	0,055	34	0,883	0,039	74	0,674	0,081	20	0,657	0,009	97	0,668	0,645
Taiwan	37	0,697	0,062	32	0,811	0,053	41	0,854	0,056	20	0,877	0,06	4	0,754	0,03	46	0,838	0,636
Czech Republic	38	0,697	0,05	40	0,796	0,048	33	0,885	0,029	16	0,898	0,073	33	0,64	0,03	72	0,747	0,623
Jamaica	39	0,69	0,055	33	0,81	0,054	43	0,85	0,034	46	0,789	0,064	38	0,63	0,029	21	0,908	0,631
Peru	40	0,674	0,05	41	0,784	0,057	40	0,858	0,03	107	0,565	0,087	27	0,649	0,048	87	0,703	0,626
Tunisia	41	0,655	0,041	48	0,723	0,042	24	0,909	0,031	47	0,789	0,063	97	0,531	0,057	8	0,952	0,64
Armenia	42	0,641	0,055	35	0,805	0,05	61	0,772	0,044	40	0,815	0,077	52	0,597	0,052	31	0,882	0,633
Trinidad & Tobago	43	0,633	0,043	46	0,744	0,04	44	0,85	0,039	37	0,821	0,057	71	0,571	0,049	18	0,925	0,634
Argentina	44	0,631	0,051	30	0,812	0,041	66	0,743	0,05	70	0,683	0,1	66	0,576	0,045	76	0,738	0,632
Ghana	45	0,608	0,084	49	0,718	0,091	39	0,866	0,053	64	0,703	0,061	132	0,374	0,067	42	0,843	0,619
Vanuatu	46	0,605	0,064	50	0,712	0,063	47	0,843	0,036	52	0,758	0,059	73	0,57	0,045	45	0,841	0,639
Panama	47	0,592	0,064	42	0,783	0,069	78	0,717	0,062	79	0,666	0,114	61	0,582	0,043	65	0,781	0,632
South Africa	48	0,575	0,056	59	0,678	0,048	49	0,839	0,067	92	0,618	0,081	60	0,584	0,053	32	0,881	0,647
Israel	49	0,574	0,052	65	0,667	0,061	42	0,853	0,051	43	0,803	0,063	65	0,578	0,051	61	0,799	0,624
São Tomé & Príncipe	50	0,573	0,058	53	0,704	0,064	53	0,817	0,048	63	0,712	0,073	59	0,586	0,055	48	0,831	0,625
Namibia	51	0,568	0,042	54	0,7	0,064	56	0,791	0,051	104	0,581	0,092	112	0,5	0,066	98	0,665	0,633
Senegal	52	0,561	0,069	52	0,708	0,08	58	0,788	0,043	67	0,695	0,069	124	0,432	0,069	37	0,865	0,629
Malta	53	0,56	0,059	44	0,757	0,049	81	0,7	0,063	54	0,746	0,077	12	0,686	0,052	55	0,812	0,625
Botswana	54	0,55	0,044	64	0,668	0,045	50	0,83	0,076	75	0,673	0,083	113	0,49	0,066	54	0,814	0,642
Suriname	55	0,55	0,053	47	0,736	0,051	79	0,71	0,069	78	0,668	0,067	117	0,458	0,093	57	0,81	0,628
Croatia	56	0,545	0,046	56	0,687	0,064	51	0,827	0,044	51	0,767	0,111	37	0,633	0,045	79	0,718	0,62
Mongolia	57	0,522	0,061	57	0,683	0,078	63	0,757	0,039	53	0,749	0,087	84	0,556	0,072	30	0,883	0,638
Timor-Leste	58	0,522	0,068	45	0,754	0,071	96	0,637	0,058	89	0,621	0,096	93	0,542	0,065	75	0,743	0,615
Solomon Islands	59	0,511	0,067	63	0,67	0,078	68	0,741	0,047	103	0,583	0,078	82	0,56	0,054	126	0,511	0,623
Brazil	60	0,508	0,075	60	0,674	0,095	73	0,728	0,062	143	0,407	0,097	69	0,575	0,063	104	0,636	0,634
Georgia	61	0,504	0,062	67	0,642	0,066	62	0,771	0,042	36	0,829	0,037	44	0,618	0,067	49	0,826	0,624
Colombia	62	0,503	0,045	66	0,667	0,045	75	0,722	0,06	134	0,442	0,091	36	0,634	0,039	100	0,658	0,626
Ecuador	63	0,502	0,073	62	0,673	0,064	82	0,697	0,082	108	0,563	0,086	18	0,661	0,041	63	0,784	0,641
Poland	64	0,5	0,048	55	0,692	0,059	83	0,693	0,063	17	0,896	0,055	28	0,648	0,032	122	0,542	0,625
Indonesia	65	0,494	0,061	68	0,636	0,061	65	0,749	0,058	119	0,51	0,091	54	0,595	0,044	15	0,931	0,649
Bhutan	66	0,493	0,038	86	0,558	0,048	36	0,879	0,035	44	0,796	0,066	74	0,57	0,058	36	0,871	0,617
Bulgaria	67	0,488	0,053	80	0,587	0,06	54	0,815	0,044	62	0,713	0,077	11	0,707	0,055	58	0,805	0,639
Mexico	68	0,486	0,05	51	0,71	0,063	92	0,646	0,061	112	0,548	0,101	101	0,529	0,065	120	0,562	0,623
Seychelles	69	0,482	0,06	85	0,563	0,07	45	0,847	0,047	56	0,735	0,094						

COUNTRY	LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI)			ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (EDI)			LIBERAL COMPONENT INDEX (LCI)			EGALITARIAN COMPONENT INDEX (ECI)			PARTICIPATORY COMPONENT INDEX (PCI)			DELIBERATIVE COMPONENT INDEX (DCI)		
	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-	RANK	SCORE	SD+/-
Montenegro	91	0,349	0,034	105	0,455	0,058	85	0,692	0,073	73	0,676	0,087	53	0,595	0,043	91	0,692	0,634
Bosnia & Herzegovina	93	0,345	0,053	88	0,534	0,055	106	0,588	0,076	76	0,67	0,097	106	0,521	0,053	118	0,574	0,631
Singapore	92	0,345	0,038	114	0,398	0,044	59	0,777	0,053	50	0,771	0,093	168	0,15	0,056	59	0,799	0,621
Niger	94	0,344	0,043	104	0,457	0,052	84	0,692	0,061	58	0,729	0,086	64	0,579	0,075	10	0,949	0,651
Tanzania	95	0,342	0,051	109	0,43	0,064	71	0,728	0,048	59	0,725	0,076	114	0,487	0,066	67	0,777	0,632
Nigeria	96	0,339	0,041	92	0,498	0,056	99	0,618	0,047	133	0,449	0,091	45	0,618	0,037	108	0,615	0,637
Kenya	97	0,338	0,039	110	0,429	0,052	74	0,726	0,052	130	0,458	0,094	88	0,55	0,065	41	0,844	0,618
Malaysia	98	0,328	0,038	101	0,466	0,049	94	0,64	0,063	72	0,68	0,065	98	0,53	0,065	74	0,744	0,63
Maldives	99	0,326	0,046	94	0,49	0,06	87	0,675	0,071	90	0,621	0,086	99	0,529	0,069	62	0,79	0,637
Dominican Republic	100	0,322	0,055	78	0,598	0,061	126	0,449	0,072	128	0,471	0,068	62	0,582	0,046	77	0,733	0,631
Kyrgyzstan	101	0,315	0,051	116	0,389	0,071	69	0,737	0,058	69	0,685	0,059	120	0,443	0,089	123	0,537	0,624
Madagascar	102	0,313	0,038	93	0,496	0,048	110	0,56	0,056	157	0,341	0,084	127	0,427	0,052	92	0,69	0,652
Fiji	103	0,31	0,036	103	0,465	0,057	102	0,601	0,06	71	0,682	0,094	137	0,362	0,049	82	0,708	0,63
Mali	104	0,309	0,029	100	0,467	0,06	104	0,595	0,063	57	0,734	0,079	116	0,464	0,097	53	0,814	0,627
Bolivia	105	0,306	0,033	87	0,537	0,042	124	0,476	0,069	87	0,641	0,072	15	0,675	0,035	106	0,627	0,624
Kuwait	106	0,295	0,02	131	0,316	0,025	67	0,743	0,051	81	0,662	0,076	153	0,261	0,076	85	0,705	0,637
Ukraine	107	0,292	0,038	99	0,469	0,054	114	0,537	0,056	99	0,605	0,078	72	0,571	0,047	44	0,842	0,641
Lebanon	108	0,29	0,048	102	0,465	0,067	113	0,547	0,071	123	0,484	0,073	110	0,507	0,055	110	0,605	0,632
Guinea-Bissau	109	0,29	0,039	90	0,507	0,049	123	0,483	0,059	132	0,45	0,07	147	0,299	0,053	158	0,248	0,65
Philippines	110	0,286	0,048	98	0,48	0,052	117	0,516	0,098	150	0,358	0,087	41	0,624	0,035	60	0,799	0,624
Zambia	111	0,274	0,035	119	0,372	0,046	90	0,657	0,076	113	0,546	0,1	86	0,552	0,064	113	0,587	0,632
Burkina Faso	112	0,273	0,028	125	0,358	0,019	98	0,629	0,085	109	0,561	0,078	107	0,519	0,06	102	0,649	0,649
Mozambique	113	0,269	0,049	112	0,409	0,074	115	0,518	0,08	110	0,555	0,066	100	0,529	0,062	116	0,578	0,619
Somaliland	114	0,265	0,036	108	0,441	0,055	116	0,518	0,052	155	0,342	0,078	76	0,567	0,057	139	0,411	0,638
Morocco	115	0,256	0,026	136	0,29	0,021	86	0,683	0,077	102	0,583	0,069	83	0,557	0,06	68	0,771	0,62
Hong Kong	116	0,255	0,022	130	0,318	0,014	91	0,651	0,062	49	0,775	0,067	156	0,23	0,049	146	0,364	0,633
Jordan	118	0,254	0,025	140	0,276	0,021	77	0,717	0,067	88	0,629	0,1	141	0,345	0,07	109	0,605	0,624
Serbia	117	0,254	0,038	124	0,359	0,04	105	0,588	0,07	60	0,719	0,1	81	0,561	0,041	125	0,512	0,645
Myanmar	119	0,246	0,022	113	0,406	0,035	120	0,502	0,07	126	0,472	0,101	58	0,587	0,07	80	0,715	0,622
Iraq	120	0,24	0,026	115	0,398	0,053	119	0,504	0,057	158	0,335	0,097	63	0,58	0,057	101	0,651	0,644
Haiti	121	0,239	0,031	106	0,449	0,051	127	0,445	0,048	175	0,186	0,059	115	0,474	0,062	147	0,342	0,647
Angola	122	0,23	0,028	117	0,386	0,046	121	0,49	0,072	168	0,251	0,072	169	0,144	0,051	112	0,596	0,625
Uganda	123	0,222	0,027	132	0,307	0,041	112	0,554	0,079	116	0,533	0,08	43	0,619	0,048	99	0,66	0,635
CAR	124	0,213	0,03	118	0,383	0,041	129	0,427	0,071	142	0,41	0,088	146	0,304	0,065	130	0,483	0,631
Afghanistan	125	0,212	0,027	127	0,347	0,033	137	0,397	0,065	135	0,441	0,108	152	0,268	0,085	124	0,519	0,636
Pakistan	126	0,211	0,024	126	0,351	0,029	125	0,475	0,07	177	0,175	0,079	136	0,363	0,089	78	0,722	0,637
Palestine/West Bank	127	0,21	0,015	138	0,283	0,018	109	0,567	0,038	55	0,739	0,057	95	0,537	0,071	81	0,711	0,658
Gabon	128	0,2	0,035	121	0,367	0,04	134	0,409	0,072	96	0,609	0,097	51	0,599	0,039	105	0,627	0,658
Honduras	129	0,195	0,031	122	0,36	0,038	132	0,415	0,064	164	0,291	0,093	92	0,543	0,055	95	0,674	0,646
Zanzibar	130	0,18	0,026	149	0,245	0,029	118	0,504	0,068	114	0,535	0,072	161	0,183	0,063	129	0,5	0,647
Comoros	131	0,18	0,032	111	0,427	0,052	150	0,288	0,06	83	0,653	0,089	75	0,568	0,05	117	0,576	0,643
Togo	132	0,179	0,023	123	0,359	0,041	140	0,376	0,053	98	0,608	0,11	104	0,523	0,074	88	0,701	0,627
Ethiopia	133	0,176	0,029	128	0,33	0,028	136	0,397	0,086	129	0,459	0,097	151	0,274	0,09	66	0,781	0,619
Zimbabwe	134	0,175	0,019	137	0,289	0,022	128	0,438	0,051	162	0,314	0,094	70	0,573	0,062	136	0,426	0,631
Guinea	135	0,166	0,027	107	0,442	0,042	154	0,258	0,057	148	0,37	0,092	142	0,344	0,05	154	0,288	0,624
Mauritania	136	0,161	0,031	120	0,368	0,048	143	0,329	0,069	166	0,277	0,079	48	0,614	0,057	93	0,69	0,643
Libya	137	0,156	0,016	145	0,25	0,018	131	0,42	0,051	106	0,57	0,086	148	0,293	0,061	70	0,756	0,629
Rwanda	138	0,154	0,027	143	0,259	0,031	135	0,408	0,062	105	0,579	0,112	102	0,528	0,093	144	0,385	0,66
Thailand	139	0,152	0,025	164	0,166	0,019	122	0,489	0,081	131	0,457	0,094	144	0,315	0,078	172	0,097	0,63
Cameroon	140	0,145	0,023	134	0,294	0,022	142	0,337	0,059	101	0,588	0,08	159	0,226	0,068	140	0,41	0,608
Iran	141	0,144	0,018	153	0,217	0,021	133	0,411	0,052	117	0,532	0,105	174	0,108	0,073	133	0,45	0,645
Oman	142	0,143	0,017	160	0,185	0,018	130	0,424	0,042	84	0,652	0,068	139	0,35	0,07	163	0,159	0,64
DRC	143	0,139	0,031	129	0,327	0,039	151	0,284	0,079	138	0,417	0,115	128	0,414	0,069	73	0,746	0,66
Djibouti	144	0,128	0,021	142	0,259	0,019	146	0,315	0,06	125	0,475	0,093	125	0,432	0,078	135	0,429	0,633
Egypt	145	0,126	0,014	159	0,19	0,014	139	0,381	0,05	152	0,349	0,09	140	0,345	0,076	157	0,26	0,631
Eswatini	147	0,122	0,023	168	0,149	0,026	138	0,391	0,08	171	0,233	0,078	155	0,252	0,078	161	0,21	0,656
Vietnam	146	0,122	0,02	154	0,217	0,025	141	0,339	0,057	97	0,608	0,091	68	0,575	0,051	132	0,479	0,644
Algeria	148	0,119	0,024	133	0,3	0,028	158	0,248	0,069	68	0,69	0,086	157	0,229	0,053	142	0,401	0,612
Kazakhstan	149	0,116	0,012	151	0,231	0,022	147	0,31	0,037	93	0,617	0,071	162	0,179	0,068	155	0,281	0,625
Belarus	150	0,115	0,022	144	0,257	0,032	152	0,274	0,043	41	0,81	0,06	158	0,229	0,058	159	0,213	0,625
Chad	151	0,11	0,02	141	0,27	0,042	156	0,254	0,054	170	0,233	0,08	118	0,449	0,085	127	0,503	0,666
Somalia	152	0,102	0,016	166	0,161	0,017	144	0,321	0,053	169	0,248	0,086	149	0,292	0,08	148	0,339	0,631
Turkey	153	0,101	0,024	135	0,292	0,035	164	0,208	0,063	137	0,433	0,078	134	0,371	0,07	156	0,278	0,627
Bangladesh	154	0,1	0,014	139	0,279	0,025	162	0,211	0,042	172	0,228	0,079	119	0,448	0,063	151	0,32	0,64
Russia	156	0,099	0,011	147	0,246	0,019	161	0,233	0,032	95	0,61	0,108	121	0,436	0,081	150	0,322	0,638
Congo	155	0,099	0,022	146	0,249	0,027	160	0,233	0,064	161	0,324	0,079	108	0,515	0,064	143	0,394	0,654
Laos	157	0,095	0,021	172	0,122	0,011	145	0,32	0,077	146	0,387	0,089	138	0,351	0,074	162	0,172	0,648
UAE	158	0,091	0,013	174	0,101	0,017	149	0,301	0,062	121	0,49	0,081	173	0,112	0,052	137	0,423	

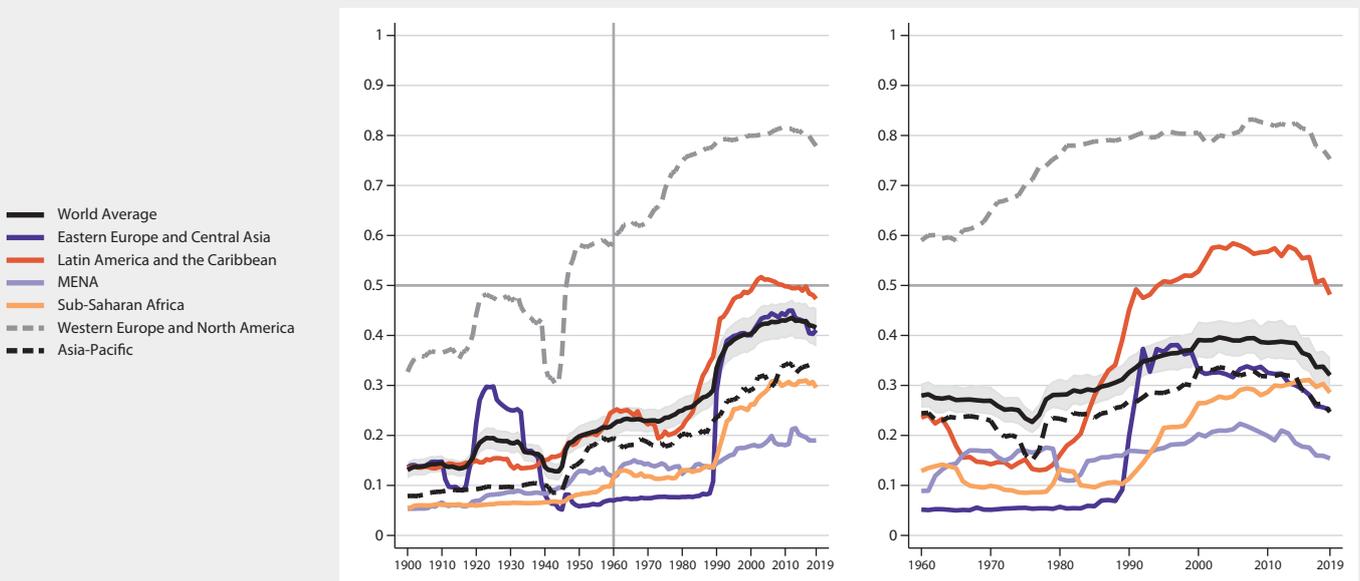
# Country Scores and V-Dem Indices

## The Liberal Democracy Index

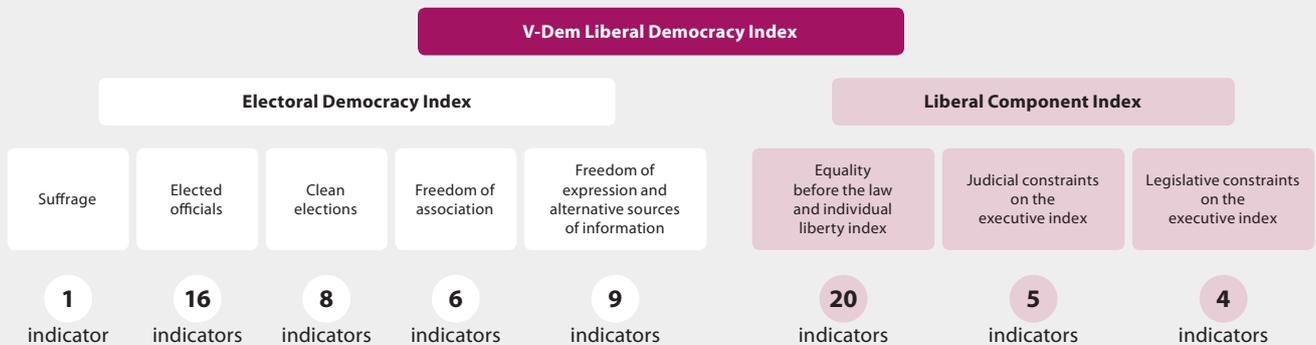
The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) captures both liberal and electoral aspects of democracy based on the 71 indicators included in the Liberal Component Index (LCI) and the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI). The EDI reflects a relatively ambitious idea of electoral democracy where a number of institutional features

guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of association and freedom of expression. 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.

**FIGURE A1.1: THE V-DEM LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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

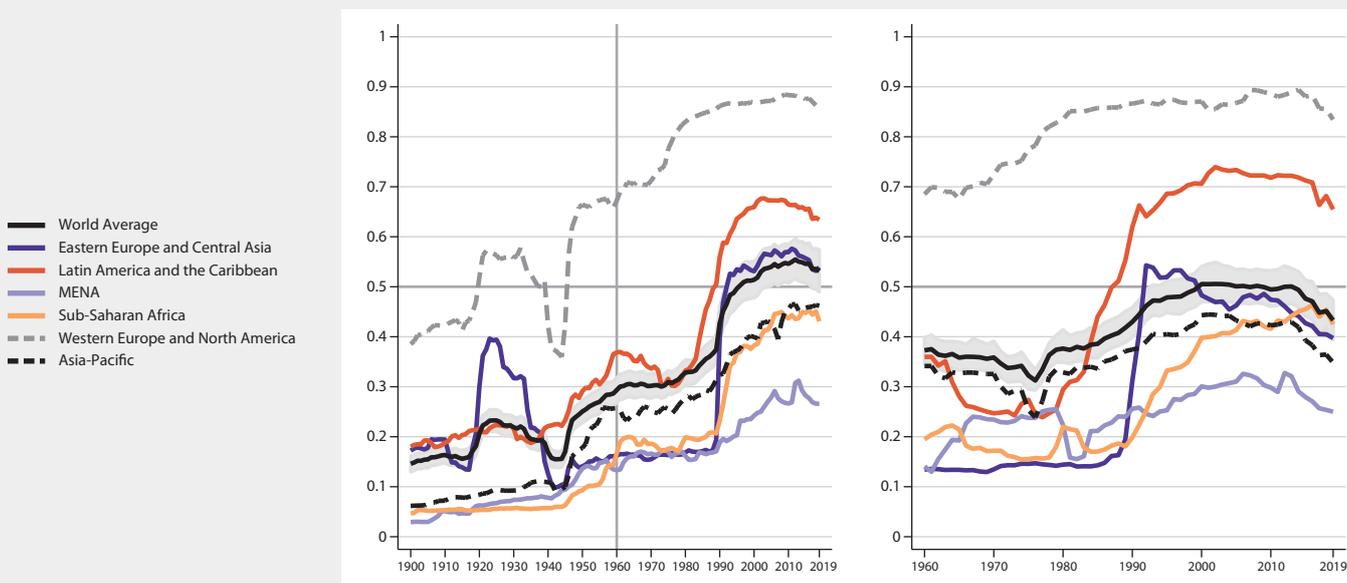


## The Electoral Democracy Index

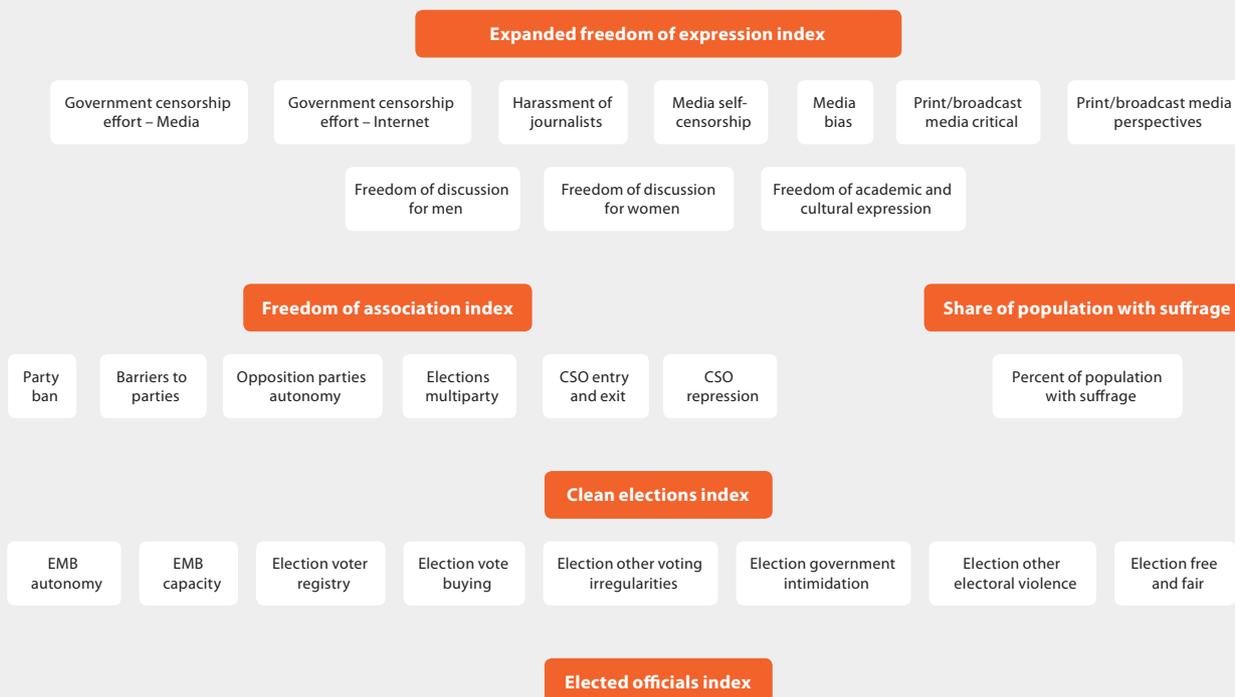
For several decades, scholars and practitioners alike depicted democracy in the world as though the extant measures really captured what is meant by the concept “electoral democracy”. Yet, we have all known that they did not. V-Dem is the first systematic effort to measure the *de facto* existence of 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 A2.1: THE V-DEM ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX: WORLD AND REGIONAL AVERAGES, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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

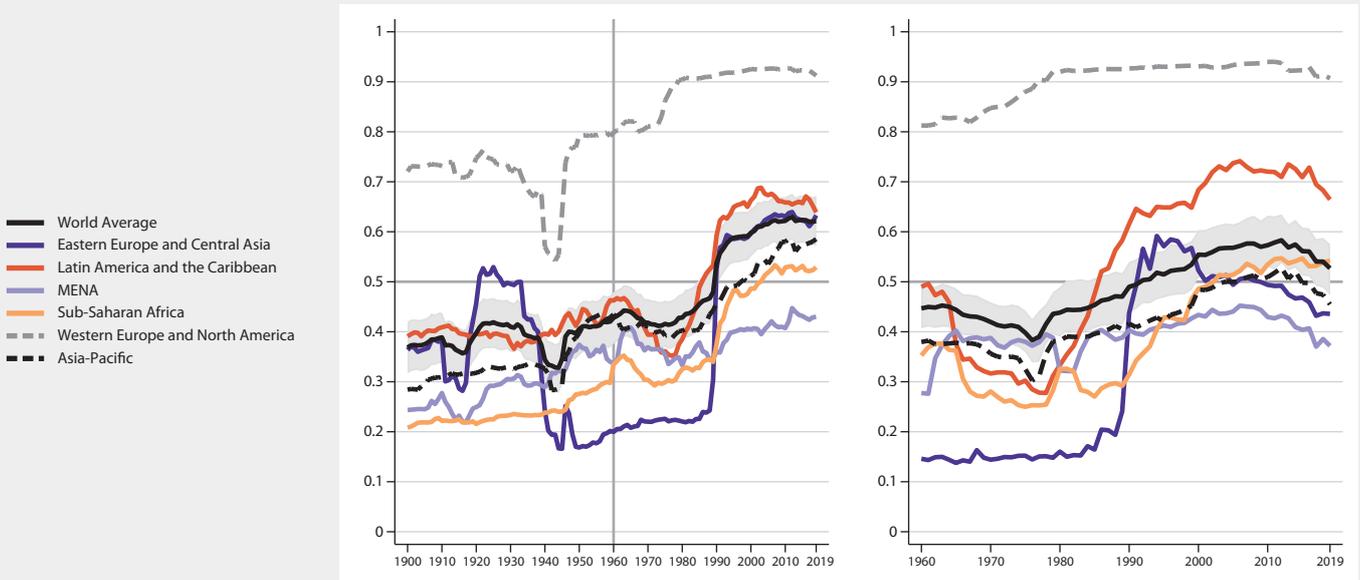


## The Liberal Component Index

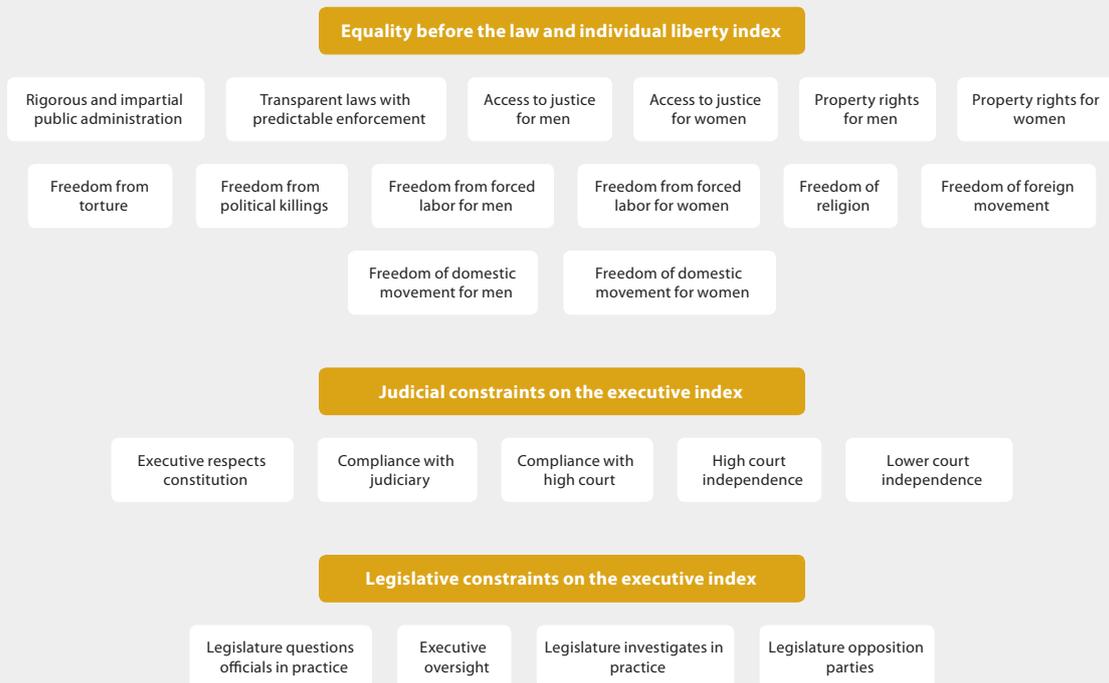
In V-Dem’s conceptual scheme the liberal principle of democracy embodies the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against both the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. It also captures the “horizontal” methods of accountability between more or less equally standing 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, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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

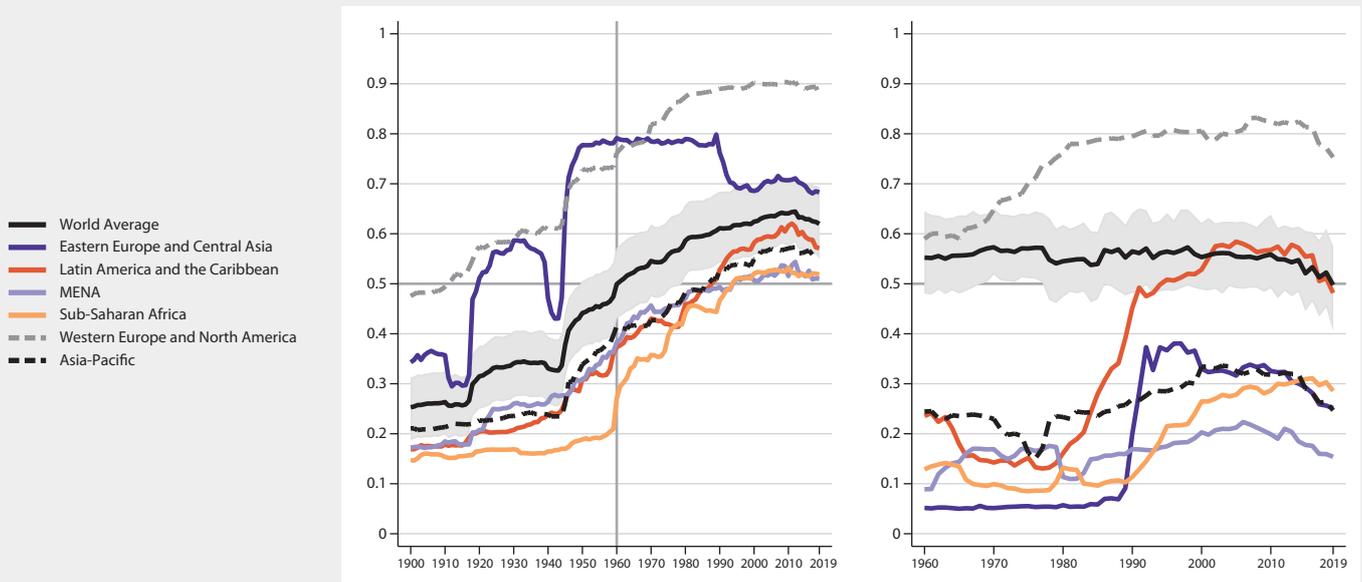


## The Egalitarian Component Index

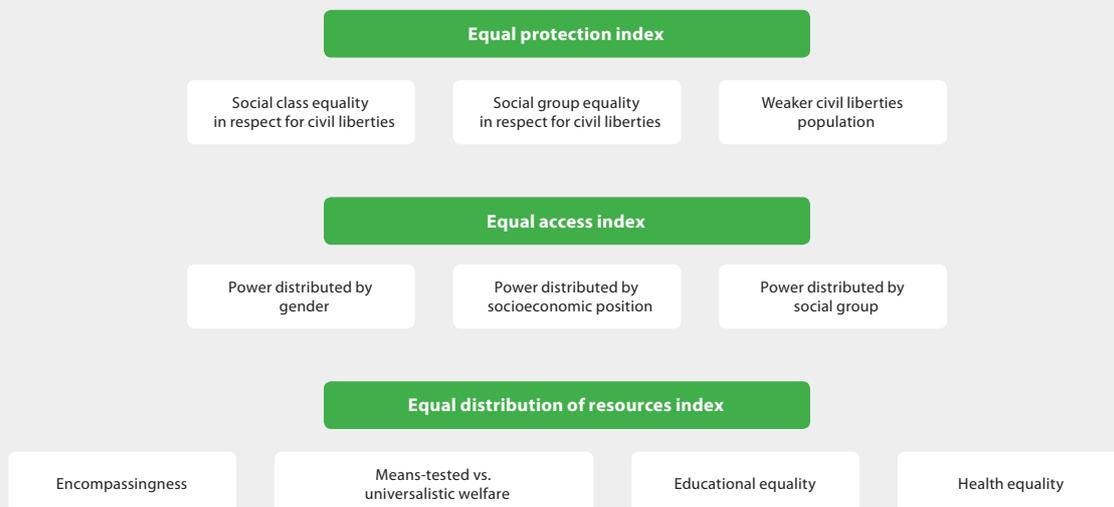
The egalitarian principle of democracy measures to what extent all social groups enjoy equal capabilities to participate in the political arena. It relies on the idea that democracy is a system of rule “by the people” where citizens participate in various ways, such as making informed voting decisions, 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, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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

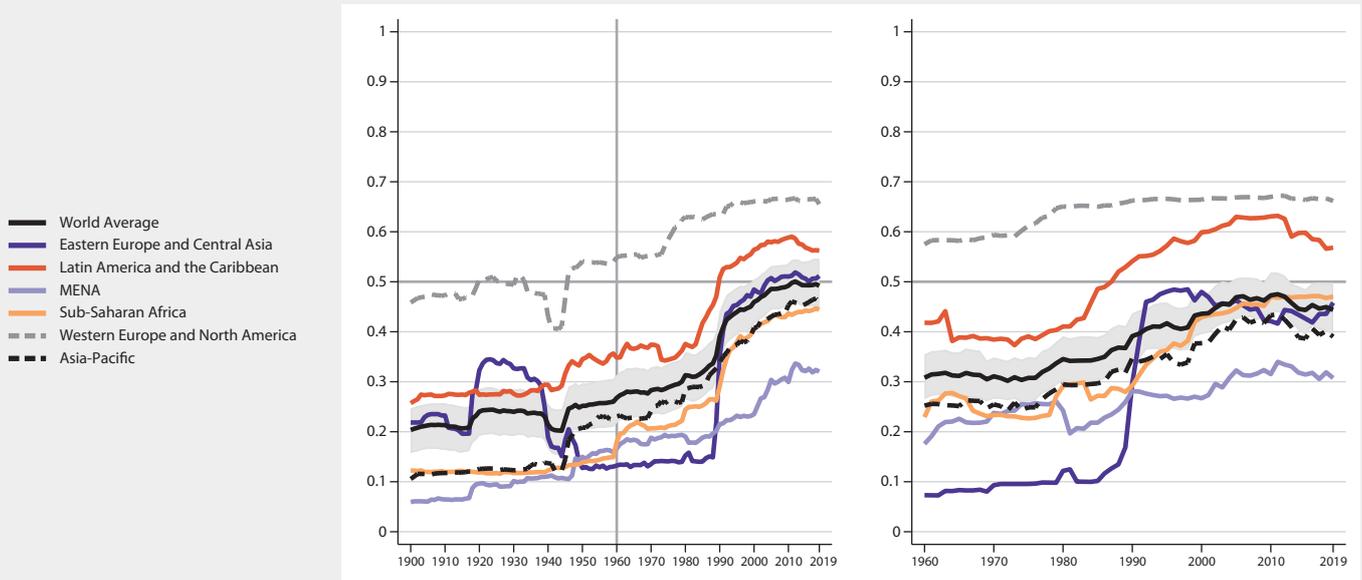


## The Participatory Component Index

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. 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, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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

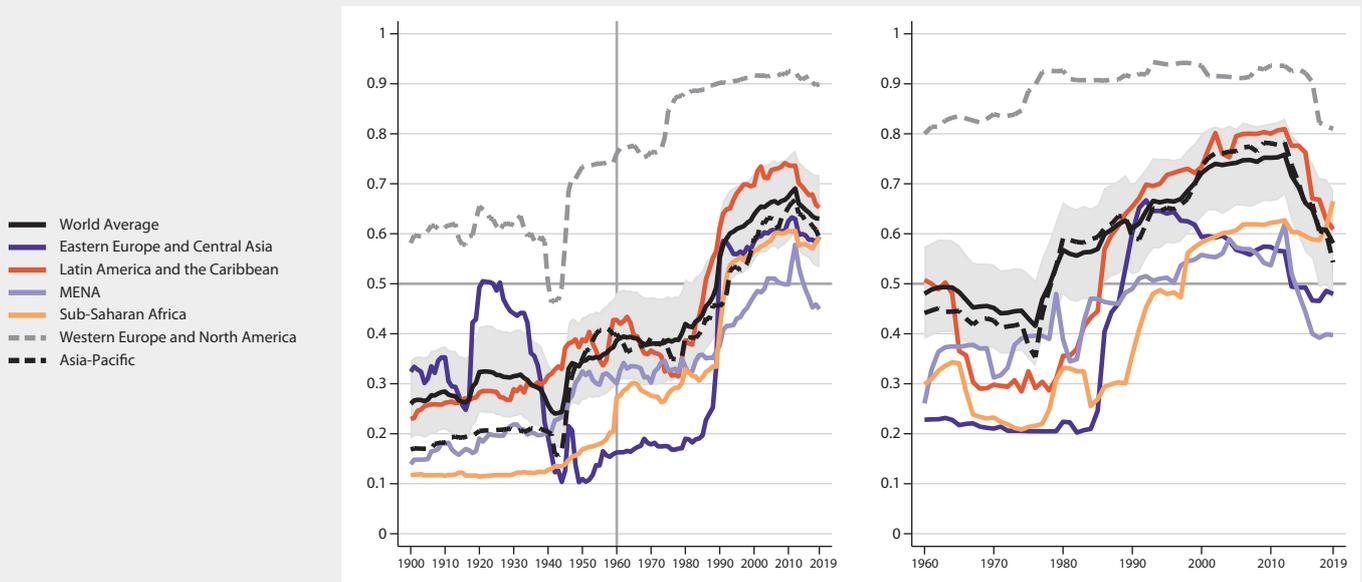


## The Deliberative Component Index

The V-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, 1900/1960 TO 2019**



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



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# Global Standards, Local Knowledge



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