



# SUDAN

A COUNTRY REPORT BASED ON DATA  
1900-2014

by Blake Sidon

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**Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)** is a new approach to conceptualization and measurement of democracy. It is co-hosted by the University of Gothenburg and University of Notre Dame. With a V-Dem Institute at University of Gothenburg with almost ten staff, and a project team across the world with four Principal Investigators, fifteen Project Managers (PMs), 30+ Regional Managers, 170 Country Coordinators, Research Assistants, and 2,500 Country Experts, the V-Dem project is one of the largest ever social science research-oriented data collection programs.

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## About V-Dem

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy. V-Dem's multidimensional and disaggregated approach acknowledges the complexity of the concept of democracy. The V-Dem project distinguishes among five high-level principles of democracy: *electoral*, *liberal*, *participatory*, *deliberative*, and *egalitarian*, which are disaggregated into lower-level components and specific indicators.

### Key features of V-Dem:

- Provides reliable data on five high-level principles and 39 mid-level indices and components of democracy such as regular elections, judicial independence, direct democracy, and gender equality, consisting of 350+ distinct and precise indicators;
- Covers all countries and dependent territories from 1900 to the present and provides an estimate of measurement reliability for each rating;
- Makes all ratings public, free of charge, through a user-friendly interface.

With four Principal Investigators, two Project Coordinators, fifteen Project Managers, more than thirty Regional Managers, 170 Country Coordinators, several Assistant Researchers, and approximately 2,500 Country Experts, the V-Dem project is one of the largest-ever social science data collection projects with a database of over 15 million data points. The database makes highly detailed analysis of virtually all aspects of democracy in a country, while also allowing for summary comparisons between countries based on aggregated indices for different dimensions of democracy. Users from anywhere are able to use the V-Dem online analysis tools which can be found at the project's website. Governments, development agencies, and NGOs can benefit from the nuanced comparative and historical data when informing critical decisions such as selecting country program priorities, informing program designs and monitoring impact of their programs.

### Methodology:

Unlike extant data collection projects, which typically use a small group of experts who rate all countries or ask a single expert to code one country, the V-Dem project has recruited over 2,500 local and cross-national experts to provide judgments on various indicators about democracy. The V-Dem dataset is created by combining factual information from existing data sources about constitutional regulations and de jure situation with expert coding for questions that require evaluation. Experts' ratings are aggregated through an advanced statistical model that takes into account the possibilities that experts may make mistakes and have different scales in mind when coding. In addition, bridge-coders - experts who code multiple countries - are recruited to calibrate the scales of estimates cross-nationally<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details and information about the V-Dem methodology, see <http://v-dem.net>.

## Introduction

This country report discusses certain aspects of democracy development in Sudan from 1900 to 2014. It is based on V-Dem data and focuses on the historical development of six key aspects of democracy, including liberal, egalitarian, participatory, electoral, and deliberative components of democracy, along with female political empowerment. These democratic features are then analyzed through the perspective of three core democratic dimensions: participation, elections, and equality. An overall analysis of Sudan's historic and current events along with progression of political culture and institutions draw the conclusion that democracy remains elusive in Sudan. The main contributions to this poor standard of democracy are an oppressive authoritarian ruler, internal and external conflict, and restricted civil rights and liberties.

## Overview of Sudan after Independence

Sudan's independence was established after 56 years of Condominium rule by Great Britain and Egypt. The damage Great Britain experienced from World War II, along with ambiguity over British versus Egyptian governance in Sudan, led to a meeting between the colonizers in 1953 (Berry 2015). The meeting initiated an accord that resulted in a 3-year transition period for Sudan to obtain independence (Fadlalla 2004). Official independence was established January 1st, 1956. The newly sovereign state implemented a transitional constitution, giving power to a civilian coalition government.

The coalition was short lived, as it was overtaken by a military coup in 1958 (Fadlalla 2004). The Sudanese military general Ibrahim Abbud carried out the coup. Escalating tensions between northern and southern Sudan led to strong repression by Abbud's regime, eventually intensifying into a civil war in 1962. The northern and southern Sudanese relationship can be characterized by ethnic, geographic, and industrial cleavages. The north is mostly comprised of ethnically Arab populations, whereas the south is composed of several distinct indigenous groups, resulting in differing cultures, languages, and religions (Metz 1991).

Another factor of division between northern and southern Sudan is geographical characteristics. The north is covered by desert and borders the Red Sea and Nile River (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2013). However, grasslands, swamps, and tropical forest

cover the southern region. The southern region is also completely landlocked, without access to a major body of water. These geographical differences help explain the differences in modernization between the two regions, specifically in terms of infrastructure, trade, and water (The World Bank 2014).

The British first colonized Sudan because it provided an advantageous trade route due to its proximity from the Red Sea and Nile River (Metz 1991). In order to exploit these geographic advantages, the northern region of Sudan received greater British investment in infrastructure, which resulted in the development of roads, ports, sewage systems, telegraphs, railroads, and irrigation systems (Berry 2015). The northern region also saw progression in terms of healthcare and education due to the economic growth from the modernized infrastructure (Deng 2001). Meanwhile, investment and modernization were absent in the southern, less geographically important regions.

The first civil war was led by southern guerrilla fighters called the Anya Nya (Berry 2015). The inability for Abbud's regime to settle the violent conflict, along with poor economic activity, led to protests in the country's capital by University of Khartoum students and faculty members. The protests evolved into nationwide strikes and rioting in 1964, also known as "The October Revolution." As a result, Abbud dissolved the government and returned Sudan to its 1956 transitional constitution. A new coalition government, led by Sir al-Khatim al-Khalifa, a former nonpolitical senior civil servant was established.

Under this new government political parties were able to operate. Sudan's parliament was composed of four main political parties, The Sudan African National Union (SANU), who represented the southern region, the National Umma Party (NUP), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and the Sudan Communist Party (SCP) (Berry 2015). Elections were held in March 1965, but continued fighting disrupted voting in the south, resulting in inconclusive election data. A party coalition in parliament appointed NUP leader Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub as head of state, with the intention of finding a solution to the civil war and expelling communists from positions of power. Mahjub's policies banned the SCP from government and funded an offensive by the Sudanese army to invade the south and repress Anya Nya.

In 1966, there was a failed coup by communist rebels, which were a small faction of Sudan's army (Berry 2015). Mahjub was able to hold onto power until a military coup led by Colonel Ja'far al-Numayri and nine other officers seized power in 1969. The coup leaders created an oligarchy of a 10-person Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) with Numayri

as chairman. The RCC claimed Sudan as a “democratic republic” and went on to scrap the transitional constitution and political institutions, and abolished political parties. A failed coup staged by the SCP 1971 instigated Numayri to execute opposition party leaders, ban communist affiliated groups, and reestablish Sudan as a “socialist democracy” (Fadlalla 2014). The “new” Sudanese political structure replaced the RCC with a presidential system and Numayri as president.

In 1972, a peace deal, the Addis Ababa Agreement, was constructed between the Sudanese government and leaders of Anya Nya (Kasfir 1977). The agreement gave Sudan’s southern region self-governance, ending the costly civil war. The same year, Numayri formed a Constituent Assembly in order to draft a permanent constitution, which concentrated power in the presidency, provided the southern region limited autonomy, and allowed for only one political party, the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU) (Berry 2015). Several failed coup attempts by opponents of the new constitution caused Numayri to implement more conciliatory policies to appease the population. Agreements in 1977 restored civil liberties and allowed for independent candidates to compete in parliamentary elections. Numayri’s original objective was to gain public legitimacy through a relatively competitive election in 1978, however independent candidates won about half of the parliamentary seats, causing him to forfeit power in the legislature and at the local level. In order for Numayri to resist his loss of power, he adopted a stronger dictatorial style of rule, arresting thousands of opponents and dissidents, and restructuring his cabinet to favor loyalty over competence (Berry 2015). Other steps taken to reserve power included dividing southern Sudan into three provinces and implementing sharia law as the basis for the Sudanese legal system in 1983.

These more dictatorial measures began the Second Sudanese Civil War between the Sudanese government and rebel groups in the south (Walter 1997). Amongst these rebel groups, The Sudan’s People Liberation Army (SPLA) were the best-organized fighters in the south. Comprised from a military division of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), the SPLA fought for southern autonomy and the abolishment of the sharia legal system. Numayri’s regime finally collapsed under the 1985 general strike in Khartoum over escalating food, gasoline, and transportation prices caused by the ongoing civil war (Berry 2015). A group of military officers removed Numayri from office in April of 1985, prompting a Transitional Military Council (TMC) to rule Sudan, led by former general Abd al-Rahman Siwar al-Dhahab. The TMC tried to establish peace and relinquish power to a

civilian government, which enabled over 40 political parties to register with the TMC (Fadlalla 2004).

The TMC held elections for the new civilian government in 1986. Sudan's Umma Party won 99 seats, with Sadiq al-Mahdi, the party's leader, elected prime minister (Berry 2015). Sadiq's government struggled to form and sustain coalitions, leading to the dissolution of the government in 1988 and again in 1989. Yet failure to implement a peace agreement and the inability to dispose of sharia law led to a coup by the National Salvation Revolution (NSR) in 1989.

The coup of 15 military officers was led by the charismatic and clever military colonel Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir (Berry 2015). Bashir immediately banned all political parties and abolished the constitution, national assembly, and trade unions under the authority of his armed military defectors. His main goal was to implement an Islamist revolution and distance the country from Western influence. He arrested many opposition politicians and citizens he believed were conspiring against him, including Sadiq (Collins 2008). Popular dissent quickly proceeded Bashir's actions, resulting in anti-government demonstrations in Wad Madani, Atbarah, Khartoum, and Al-Obeid. The NSR disbanded in 1993 in preparation for elections in October (Berry 2015). The elections were essentially an appointment of Bashir as president by the NSR since no citizens actually voted (Collins 2008). Bashir's Islamic Republic of Sudan can be characterized by single party authoritarian rule implemented by stringent sharia law (Berry 2015). Apostasy was declared punishable by death and women were restricted to working only during the day and sitting in the back of buses. Bashir's government also excluded non-Muslims from senior government and military positions.

The ongoing civil war brought Bashir and the SPLM/A's poor human rights records to the attention of the international community (Berry 2015). Multinational organizations such as the U.N., African Rights, and Amnesty International accused Bashir and the SPLM/A of violating international law with extra-judicial executions. Slave raids in the south were frequent, along with beatings, rape, and kidnappings (Fadlalla 2014). Opposition groups, especially the SPLM/A, tried to overthrow Bashir, but failed on multiple occasions due to the inability of these groups to organize effectively and Bashir's divide-and-rule strategy. This strategy effectively split opposition regions and provided benefits to the areas and groups that supported him (Berry 2015).

In 1998, a new constitution was ratified by over 96% of voters in a referendum (Fadlalla 2014). The SPLM rejected the constitution due to its religious nature and because it

defined Sudan as a federation rather than a confederation. That same year, Bashir agreed to the restoration of multiparty politics to precede the 1999 elections (Berry 2015). The elections, however, were postponed due to Bashir declaring a state of emergency. This came as a response to Hassan al-Turabi's, speaker of the National Assembly, proposal that the National Assembly would be allowed to remove the president in a majority vote. Al-Turabi had helped Bashir Islamize Sudan throughout the 1990's, yet their relationship became estranged during their 1999 power struggle.

Elections were finally held in 2000 in which Bashir won by a landslide; however, most opposition parties boycotted the election (Berry 2015). Tensions between Bashir and al-Turabi continued to escalate until 2001 when al-Turabi and several of his aides were arrested for allegations of conspiring to overthrow Bashir. That same year, Sudan's foreign policy moved to improve relations with Europe and the U.S., and pushed for peace negotiations with the south to end the decades long civil war. This effort achieved success through a deal between the Sudanese government and the SPLM in 2005, which allocated significant representation to southern government officials. Most of the allocated seats in government were held by SPLM members, which converted the SPLM from a rebel movement into a recognized political party.

During the years of negotiations, rebels in the western region of Darfur revolted against the government, claiming Bashir's regime neglected them during the 2004 famine (Berry 2015). Military action and Bashir's hiring of the Janjaweed, an Arab militia group located in Darfur, were used to squash the revolts, resulting in violent killings, especially of non-Arabs in the region (Prunier 2005). The suppression of the rebels and mass killings of civilians in Darfur has been labeled a genocide by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and foreign governments (Berry 2015). The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Bashir's war crimes in 2009; however, he has not been tried due to the ICC's inability to enforce the warrant. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from Darfur have fled to neighboring Chad (Fadlalla 2014). The U.N. also authorized sanctions against any group that violated the 2005 ceasefire in Darfur. However, two rebel faction groups in Darfur rejected the ceasefire and the fighting continued. The U.N. offered to send a peacekeeping force to the region in August of 2006, but Sudan rejected the offer, claiming the international force would compromise its sovereignty. In 2007, the Sudanese government finally agreed to a partial deployment of U.N. peacekeepers and African Union troops to halt fighting in Darfur. The U.N predicts 300,000 people died in the peak of the Darfur conflict between 2004 and 2007. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the main Darfur rebel group, signed a peace

accord with the government in 2010, two months before elections. Darfur still remains unstable today with the displacement 34,000 people in 2013 and the continued violence toward non-Arab citizens (The World Bank 2014).

Sudan's 2010 elections claimed Bashir winner with 68.2% of the votes; however, his party, the National Congress, lost 30 seats in the National Assembly whereas the SPLM won 99 (Martell 2010). A referendum for southern independence was released later that year due to international pressure by the U.S. and African Union (Berry 2015). The citizens of Sudan voted in favor of southern independence, resulting in the formation of South Sudan. In 2011, the leader of the SPLM party, Salva Kiir Mayardit, became president of the newly founded democracy of South Sudan.

Since most of Sudan's oil fields are located in South Sudan, independence caused a large drop in Sudan's oil revenues and a spike in the price of oil, leading to protests in Khartoum in 2012 (Fadlalla 2014). Later that year, a deal was made between Sudan and South Sudan to allow Sudan to refine and export South Sudan's oil. Today, conflict and tensions arise periodically over oil revenue distribution between Sudan and South Sudan. The tensions often center on the rent allocation to the Sudanese and the South Sudanese governments by foreign oil companies using South Sudan's oil fields and Sudan's refineries. Conflict also arises due to contested control over the Abyei region, which contains the majority of South Sudan's oil.

Sudan held elections in 2015, which President Bashir won with 94.7% of the vote. The elections however, were characterized by low turnout and boycotts by opposition parties claiming the election would be unfair (Sudan Country Profile 2015). In sum, the Sudanese political system since independence represents many shifts in power and variations in civil society and political participation, moving between periods of military rule to oligarchic rule to autocratic rule.

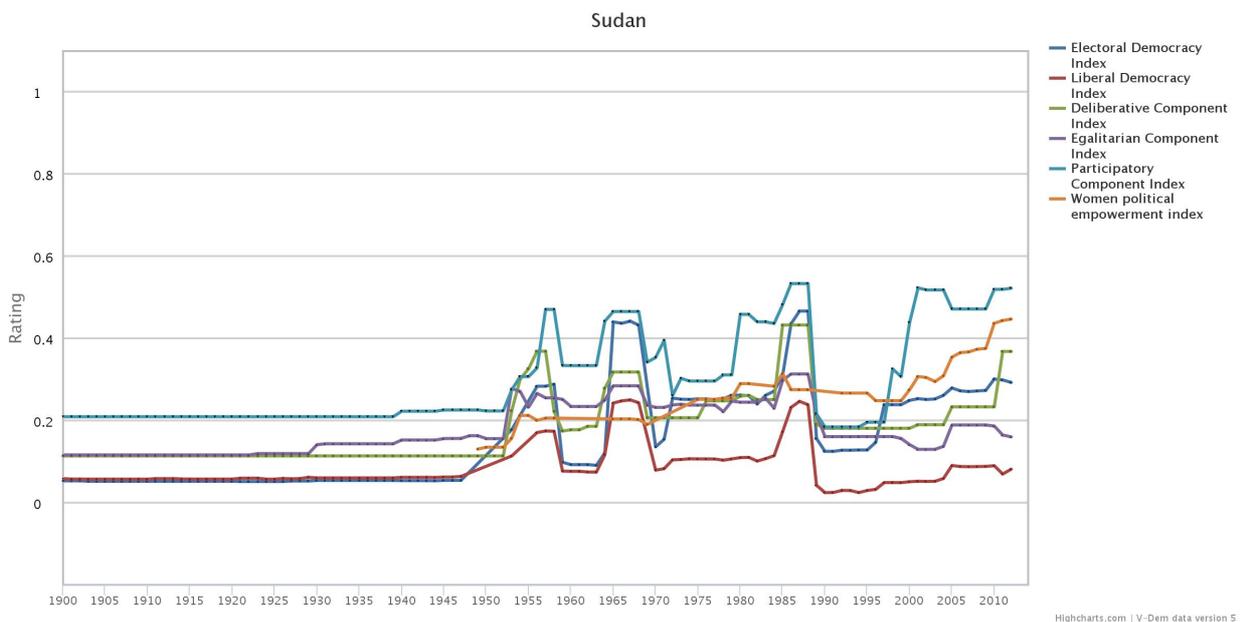
## Principles of Democracy

In Figure 1, democratic development in Sudan over the past 65 years is depicted with six indices for different aspects of democracy and human rights: *liberal democracy index*, *participatory component index*, *electoral democracy index*, *deliberative component index*, and *egalitarian component index*, as well as the *women political empowerment index*. All of these indices are

measured on a 0 to 1 scale, where a score of 0 is the lowest score and a 1 is the maximum value for that indicator.

Since independence, Sudan's democratic indices, excluding the *participatory component index*, have never surpassed a 0.5 rating. The *participatory component index* only surpasses this 0.5 threshold in 2001, implying that although the indices have varied throughout the last 65 years, Sudan has experienced relatively limited dimensions of democracy.

**Figure 1. Democratic development of Sudan, 1900-2012**



As evidenced by the *electoral democracy index*, *liberal democracy index*, *deliberative component index*, *egalitarian component index*, and *participatory component index*, periods of elected government were eras of peaking democratic characteristics. The election of Sudan's first Prime Minister Ismail al-Azhari in 1956, the election of Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub in 1965, Numayri's regime after the elections in 1978, and the parliamentary elections held by the Transitional Military Council in 1986 all demonstrate the positive impact of elected officials on Sudan's democratic tendencies. These instances of recognized power by popular vote increased democratic freedoms because the citizens granted power to those elected in a legitimate and lawful manner. When elections were held they served as a mechanism for conflict resolution; participants were actually given some say in their elected leader, thereby increasing the

likelihood of citizens being treated equally, fairly, and with their best interests in mind (Teorell 2010).

Periods preceding military coups express poorer levels of democratic principles. The military coups that occurred in 1958, 1969, and 1989 were carried out by small groups of military officers. Since those in power did not necessarily reflect the interests of the greater Sudanese population, the government lacked the kind of legitimacy provided by elections. As a result, the rulers following these coups limited civil liberties and rights in order to compensate for their lack of elected legitimacy. An example of a ruler restricting civil liberties to maintain illegitimate power was Numayri's implementation of Sharia Law as the basis for Sudan's legal and legislative system in 1973 (Kasfir 1977). Without popular consent, nor lawful means, Numayri drafted a new constitution, exerting Islamic Law as the main source of legislation. This enraged thousands of Sudanese citizens in the south and west and precipitated the Second Sudanese Civil War. Another example of a democratic restriction used by illegitimate leaders was al-Bashir's banishment of all opposing political parties, trade unions, and non-religious institutions following his 1989 coup (Berry 2015).

The only exceptions to these patterns of poor democratic qualities were during the implementation of a southern governing infrastructure in 1971 and the Umar al-Bashir regime in 2000. In the midst of Numayri's military coup, Joseph Lagu, the claimed founder of the Anya Nya rebel group, successfully united southern insurgents and previously exiled southern politicians. As a result, Lagu's coalition was able to develop and implement a governing infrastructure throughout the southern region (Berry 2015). Lagu's unification consisted of thousands of southern Sudanese working to organize and build local government institutions, as indicated by the measurement of the *participatory component index* around 1971.

After Bashir held elections in 2000, political participation increased for the first time since his 1989 military coup. The 2000 elections were the first year in which opposition parties, specifically the SPLM, were allowed to compete in elections (Berry 2015). This accounted for greater southern representation in the National Assembly, and therefore led to greater polity when it came to making decisions. As evidenced by Figure 1, the *electoral democracy index*, *liberal democracy index*, *deliberative component index*, and *participatory component index* were positively affected by the 2000 election. Bashir's legitimacy grew as a result of the election, even though the regime still restricted civil liberties in the south.

As for women's role in society and government, it has been a cultural norm for men to have complete authority over women in public. This tradition restricted women from

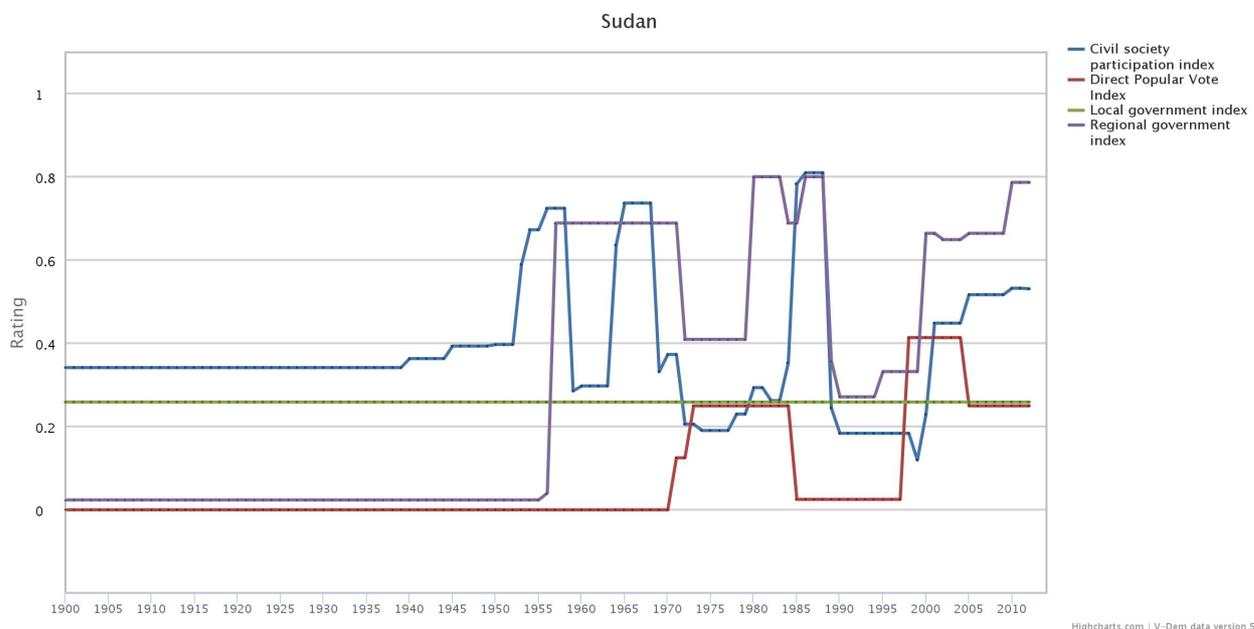
holding office or running for a government position (Berry 2015). This accounts for the low score of the *women political power index* until 1983 when the Women's Union pushed for gender equality in government (Fadlalla 2014). The Women's Union equality initiative, along with the overthrow of the Numayri regime in 1985, provided women the opportunity to become active in Sudanese politics. Bashir's reintroduction of Sharia Law in 1989 hindered female political power because new laws required women to wear hijabs and to be with their families or husbands when in public. This lasted until 2000, when the international community began calling on the Sudanese government to reform these oppressive laws (Berry 2015). Bashir's agenda to improve diplomatic relations with foreign nations gave rise to a quota system requiring 27% of seats in the legislature to be held by women, incrementally increasing the political power held by women. Although women are allocated over a quarter of the seats in the National Assembly, the actual power they possess remains meager because of deeply engrained cultural, traditional, and political biases towards women in powerful positions (Fadlalla 2014).

## Dimensions of Democracy

### Participation

Democracy is founded upon the principle of rule by the people. In order for the people to rule, they must participate and take an active role in deciding their leaders. The *participatory component index* in Figure 2 is comprised of the *civil society participation index*, *direct popular vote index*, *local government index*, and *regional government index*. These indices are measured on a 0 to 1 scale, with 1 representing the achievement of the index to the fullest extent. Unlike the principle of democracy indices in Figure 1, there are few parallel shifts in the ratings for these indices. The *local government index* and *direct popular vote index* never surpass a 0.5 rating, whereas the *civil society participation index* and *regional government index* change throughout time. Also, the *local government index* remains constant at 0.26 for the entire period displayed.

**Figure 2. Development of the participatory component index of Sudan, 1900-2012**



Sudan’s independence from Britain and Egypt in 1956 shifted power to state governments from concentrated power in the presidency. As indicated by the high rating of the *regional government index* in 1956, the states acquired governance over their constituents’ education, health care, and infrastructure (Ryle 2011). Regional governors were disbanded after Numayri’s suspension of the Transitional Constitution in 1971 (Berry 2015). Since regional government institutions were placed under the jurisdiction of Revolutionary Command Council, regional elected offices were stripped of power to ensure a strong centralized government, demonstrated by a steep decline in the *regional government index* in 1971.

State elections and partial regional autonomy resumed in 1978 after Numayri held elections nationwide in order to improve legitimacy in public’s eyes (Ryle 2011). As evidenced by the decreased rating of the *regional government index*, 1985’s deposition of Numayri’s regime resulted in the suspension of regional governors as the Transitional Military Council dissolved the government in preparation for the 1986 elections.

The 1986 elections relinquished participation onto citizens in deciding their regional officials until 1989, when Bashir came into power and immediately concentrated power to the executive (Berry 2015). This gave Bashir total control of Sudan’s government after

illegitimately taking power through a military coup. Bashir's monopoly on centralized control became the status quo as indicated by the low rating of the *regional government index* from 1989 to 1995.

Sudan's unification of the SPLA, Umma Party, and Democratic Unionist Party to create the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) of 1995 allowed Bashir to appoint regional governors in stable northern regions (Rye 2011). This surrender of power came during the tense period of the Second Sudanese Civil War as neighboring countries became more involved in the conflict. The NDA allowed Bashir to focus on the war rather than potential political opposition.

Bashir was able to further strengthen regional governance during the 2000 elections, which gave citizens the ability to elect regional governors (Berry 2015). As indicated by the high rating of the *regional government index* in 2000, the central government relinquished power to the states in order to increase governing legitimacy just as Numayri did in 1978. Ratification of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 gave southern states further governing autonomy (Berry 2015). Beginning in 2006, southern regions were able to vote for their corresponding regional governor, delegating additional governing power from the central government to the states as evidenced by the slight increase in the *regional government index* after 2006.

Although regional governance provides states more power, turnovers in power by military coups in Sudan hurt this progress as they all shared the common characteristic of immediate bans on civil organizations in order to weaken opposition groups and movements. In 1958, General Abboud used violence and arrests to silence opposition groups and competing political parties (Ryle 2011). Another example was in 1968 when Numayri disposed of the constitution, giving him power to ban civil organizations and requiring them to be approved in order to exist. Furthermore, Bashir's coup in 1989 led to the arrest of several political opposition party leaders and the banishment of political parties and civil organizations nation-wide. Prohibition of civil organizations reduced the citizens' power to oppose the government, exhibited by the low score of the *civil society participation index* during these times of power transition by coup (Teorell 2010).

Civil society faced another hurdle in 1999 when Bashir declared a state of emergency when Hassan al-Turabi, speaker of the National Assembly, proposed a policy that would allow the National Assembly to remove the president in a majority vote (Berry 2015). In response, Bashir banned political parties and civil organizations in order to retain his grip on power, decreasing *civil society participation* during the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Contrary to the restrictions on civil society during periods of forced rule, periods of legitimate, elected rule resulted in greater civil society involvement. Independence in 1956 gave Sudanese citizens the ability to form their own political parties and organizations (Berry 2015). Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub's election in 1965 resulted in a period of a strong civil society as indicated by the high rating of the *civil society participation index* from 1965 to 1968. The same is true for Numayri's regime after the elections in 1978 and the Transitional Military Council after elections in 1986. Elected governments are more likely to be open to citizen involvement and political opposition since they are supported by the votes of the people (Teorell 2011).

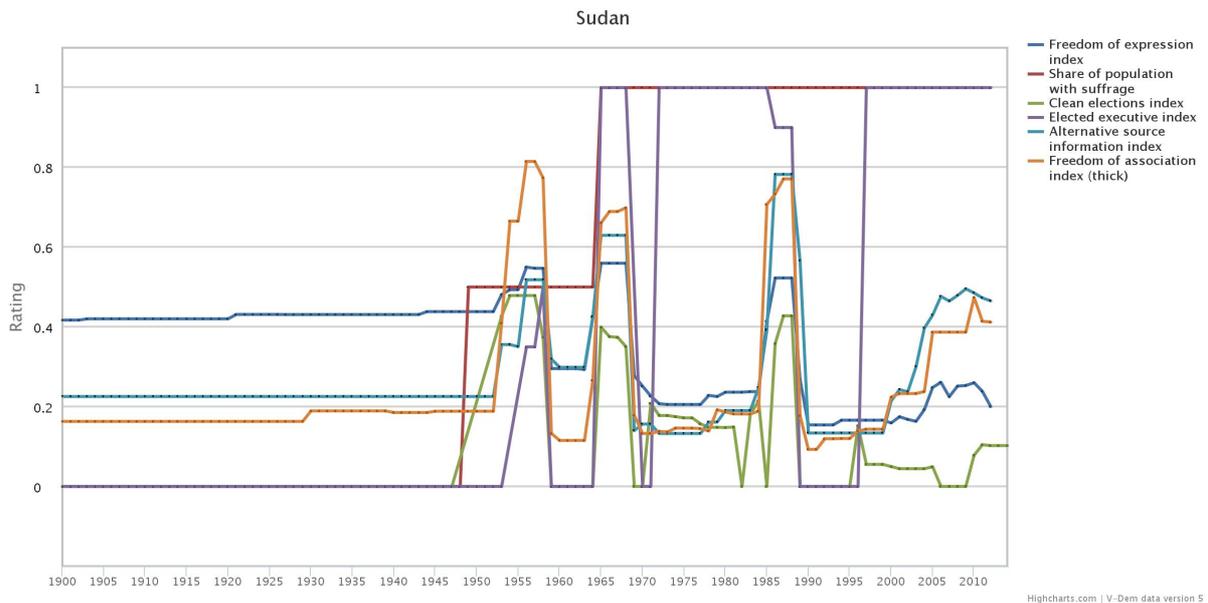
Implementation of Sudan's new constitution in 1998 allowed for the formation and participation of civil organizations (Fadlalla 2004). Elections in 2000 and the end of Bashir's state of emergency aided in growing and developing Sudan's civil society by continuing to uphold the 1998 constitution. Although civil organizations and political parties are legal, they still require approval by the central government in order to exist, thus explaining the rating of the civil society index since the early 2000s (Berry 2015). The progression of civil society throughout Sudan's history gave citizens the ability to voice opinions and participate in governing decisions. Although the Sudanese can participate in civil society to some extent, participation in local government is rare.

On the local level, officials have never been elected and are rarely appointed to their home regions. This reduces their governing legitimacy and knowledge of constituents, causing local governance to remain constantly low throughout Sudan's history (Ryle 2011). Referendums held in 1973, regarding southern autonomy, and in 1998, regarding the ratification of a new constitution, required a nation-wide vote as reflected in the positive fluctuations of the *direct popular vote index*.

## Elections

In Figure 3, Sudan's *electoral democracy index* is comprised of *freedom of expression index*, *share of population with suffrage*, *clean election index*, *elected executive index*, *alternative source information index*, and *freedom of association index*. The indices follow similar trends due to the effects of internal electoral factors, such as turnover in power by force or election; yet, the *share of the population with suffrage* and *elected executive index* vary from these trends because they are measured on a binary scale, receiving a score of 1 if fully achieved and a score of 0 otherwise. The other indices are measured on a 0 to 1 continuous scale.

**Figure 3. Development of the Electoral democracy index for Sudan, 1900-2012**



Sudan’s independence process beginning in 1953 resulted in an era of increased electoral freedoms, specifically freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of information (Berry 2015). Starting in 1953, leading government positions that were previously appointed by Egyptian or British officials became empty due to colonial withdrawal (Fadlalla 2014). These positions were often filled in accordance to polls and discussions among civil servants. The leadership vacuum also caused the Sudanese to become more active in politics by creating political parties and citizen controlled media outlets as reflected by the spike in the *freedom of expression index*, *freedom of association index*, and *alternative source information index* in the mid-1950s (Ryle 2011).

Electoral freedoms, portrayed by the *share of population with suffrage*, *clean elections index*, and *elected executive index* in Figure 3, also flourished in the era following the October Revolution. The October Revolution in 1964 generated a coalition civilian government, which allowed participation by all political parties and recognized several southern regional governments (Berry 2015). This civilian coalition government in 1964 fostered an electoral environment in which citizens in the north and south could express their beliefs through voting or participation in political parties.

Sadiq al-Mahdi’s election in 1986 exhibited similar outcomes in terms of electoral freedoms. Citizens were able to express their opinions through voting and participating in civil organizations as expressed by the spike in the *elected executive index*, *freedom of expression index*, *freedom of association index*, and *alternative source information index* in Figure 3 (Ryle 2011).

These events caused similar positive trends within the components of the *electoral democracy index* in 1953, 1965, and 1986. The emerging pattern between these events is popular turnovers in power lead to greater electoral freedoms. In an effort to hold their leaders accountable, citizens subjected leaders to their opinions and participation (Teorell 2011). By legalizing political parties and protecting electoral freedoms, such as the formation of the Umma Party after independence or Sadiq al-Mahdi allowing citizens to participate in protests regarding high produce prices, leaders become susceptible to the opinions of their constituents (Berry 2015).

Inversely, turnovers in power through military coups in 1958, 1969, and 1989 hindered electoral freedoms. The lack of an elected executive and mandated restrictions on freedom in order for authoritarian rulers to hold onto power suppressed citizens' ability to express their views regarding policies and leaders. Abboud's regime in 1958 prevented citizens from expressing negative opinions of his regime by arresting those who did (Fadlalla 2014). Numayri's 1969 coup resulted in the nationalization of all media outlets and execution of opposition leaders (Ryle 2011). These repressive actions are reflected in the menial *electoral democracy index* scores in the late 1950s and 1960s. President Bashir's most public example of restricting clean elections and freedom of expression was the conviction of his strongest, and very popular, political opponent, Hassan al-Turabi for submitting policies aimed to increase checks on the president, before the 2000 election. Turabi's exile enforced Bashir's authoritarian grip on power and caused the 2000 election to be biased towards him, as Turabi was no longer able to run (Berry 2015). Opposing political parties also claimed the 2005 elections were rigged, and therefore did not participate. This claim is supported by accounts of the Bashir regime suspending voting in Darfur and conflict regions in southern Sudan that strongly opposed the regime (The World Bank 2014). These unfair election tactics likely changed in the 2010 election because of external pressure from the U.S. and U.N to extend voting by several weeks so third-party organizations could monitor the results. As a result, Figure 3 exhibits a slight increase in the *clean elections index*.

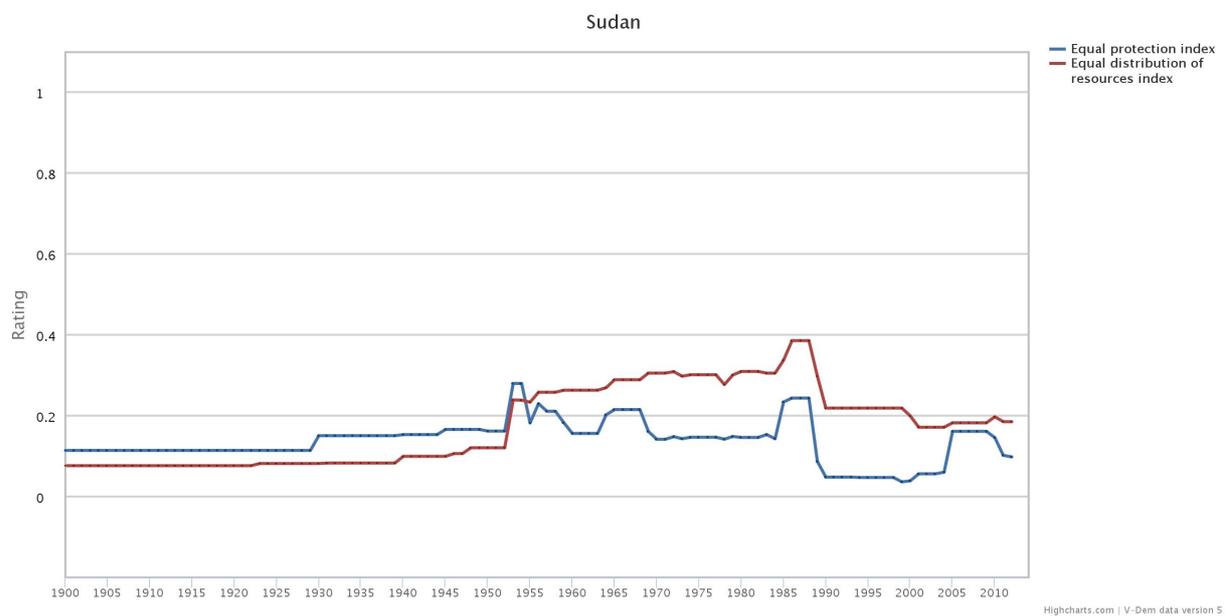
## Equality

Another revealing dimension of democracy is equality, which demonstrates a country's ability to provide equal protection under the law and equal allocation of resources. The northern and southern Sudanese relationship has been plagued by ethnic, geographic, and

industrial cleavages that often unevenly divided the nation; therefore in order to understand democratic development in Sudan it is important to assess equality throughout history.

Figure 4 measures the components of the *egalitarian component index*, including the *equal protection index* and the *equal distribution of resources index*, both of which indicate levels of equality in Sudan on a 0 to 1 scale. Both never surpass a 0.4 rating; meaning Sudan has historically been unequal in terms of protection of the population and allocation of resources.

**Figure 4. Development of the components of the Egalitarian component index for Sudan, 1900-2012**



The British first colonized Sudan because it provided an advantageous trade route due to its approximation from the Red Sea and Nile River (Metz 1991). The northern region of Sudan received greater British investment in infrastructure to support Britain’s trade, which resulted in the development of roads, ports, sewage systems, telegraphs, railroads, and irrigation systems (Berry 2015). Progression in terms of healthcare and education also became apparent in the north (Deng 2001). Meanwhile, investment and modernization were absent in the south. These divergent economic developments are indicated by the low scores of the *equal protection index* and *equal distribution of resources index* throughout Sudan’s colonial history.

In 1953, the start of colonial withdrawal commenced with British and Egyptian officials and companies leaving Sudan (Berry 2015). The British and Egyptian governments were no longer exploiting Sudanese goods for their own benefit and the long ignored

southerners were able to hold some, but few, civil servant positions. The increased southern employment in government is evidenced by the increased score of the *equal distribution of resources index* and *equal protection index* in 1953. However, in 1955, the First Sudanese Civil War began, initiating military action against southern guerilla fighters (Ryle 2011). Independence in 1956 provided the south with some government representation outlined in the Transitional Constitution, but escalating violence in the civil war and banishment of the constitution by the Abboud regime in 1958 led to decreased equality in regards to protection under the government as evidence by a decrease in the *equal protection index*. Discriminatory policies implemented in 1989 by the new Bashir regime favored northern cities in terms of roads, hospitals, and educational developments (Berry 2015). Bashir, being from the north, created policies favoring northern Arab populations during his early years as president as seen by the low *equal distribution of recourses index* score in 1989.

The discriminatory policies intensified into the 21st Century as Sudan became more reliant on oil revenues and decided to build refineries located on northern territory (Fadlalla 2014). Since the majority of oil fields were located in southern Sudan, the northern refineries were the only means for an unindustrialized south to refine their oil. As a result, oil revenues and employment in the north grew fast in comparison with the south, furthering discrepancies in resource allocation between the north and south.

Discriminatory policies against non-Muslim and non-Arab citizens in 1989 were exhibited by the increased rate of development and economic prosperity in the Islamic northern cities and almost absent in the non-Muslim, southern cities (Berry 2015). However, peace accords with southern rebel groups fighting for equality in the National Assembly and greater southern autonomy provided slightly more protection to southern citizens under the law in 2005 (Berry 2015). One of the 2005 accords resulted in greater southern representation in government, allowing southern representatives to have a greater say on legislation favoring the north as evidenced by the increased *equal protection index* score in 2005 to 2010.

In 2011, however, northern troops overran the southern city of Abyei over disputed borders with the newly independent South Sudan, causing over 100,000 Southern Sudanese to flee from their homes (Berry 2015). The Sudanese government used military force to drive certain citizens, specifically non-Arab southerners, from their homes in 2011. The decisions made by the Sudanese government to use military force against citizens in the south reduced

equality in terms of the government protecting all of its citizens as evidenced by the decrease in the *equal protection index* in 2011.<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

This brief overview of the democratic environment of Sudan over the past 65 years exhibits the turbulent and varying political culture throughout Sudan's history. Poor political participation, substandard election processes and rights, and unequal allocation of resources and protection characterize Sudan's elusive democratic levels. Sudan's current deficiency in these key democratic dimensions can be attributed to the authoritarian stronghold of power by the Bashir regime and constant conflict between Bashir and rebel groups in South Sudan and Darfur. However, South Sudan's independence has enabled Sudan to establish greater territorial and border control, along with the ability to focus on domestic problems and less so on unifying a disparate region. These components provide Sudan with some hope of democratizing.

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<sup>2</sup> The data used after 2011 takes into account the new border of Sudan as including Abyei, although the city remains in dispute whether it is part of Sudan or South Sudan. Therefore, the citizens that consider themselves Southern Sudanese in this area are still included the *equal protection index* for Sudan.

## Appendix

### Indicators included in Figure 1.

#### Electoral Democracy Index

*Question:* To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?

*Clarifications:* The electoral principle of democracy seeks to embody the core value of making rulers responsive to citizens, achieved through electoral competition for the electorate's approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country. In between elections, there is freedom of expression and an independent media capable of presenting alternative views on matters of political relevance. In the V-Dem conceptual scheme, electoral democracy is understood as an essential element of any other conception of (representative) democracy – liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, or some other.

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the average of, on the one hand, the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association (thick) (v2x\_frassoc\_thick), suffrage (v2x\_suffr), clean elections (v2xel\_frefair), elected executive (v2x\_accex) and freedom of expression (v2x\_freexp\_thick); and, on the other, the five-way multiplicative interaction between those indices. This is halfway between a straight average and strict multiplication, meaning the average of the two. It is thus a compromise between the two most well known aggregation formulas in the literature, both allowing (partial) "compensation" in one sub-component for lack of polyarchy in the others, but also punishing countries not strong in one sub-component according to the "weakest link" argument. The aggregation is done at the level of Dahl's sub-components (with the one exception of the non-electoral component). Note that data release 6 suggests an updated formula to create this index (release 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 used a different, preliminary aggregation formula).

#### Liberal Component Index

*Question:* To what extent is the liberal principle of democracy achieved?

*Clarifications:* The liberal principle of democracy emphasizes the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. The liberal model takes a "negative" view of political power insofar as it judges the quality of

democracy by the limits placed on government. This is achieved by constitutionally protected civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and effective checks and balances that, together, limit the exercise of executive power.

### **Deliberative Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the deliberative principle of democracy achieved?

*Clarifications:* The deliberative principle of democracy focuses on 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, solitary 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. To measure these features of a polity we try to determine the extent to which political elites give public justifications for their positions on matters of public policy, justify their positions in terms of the public good, acknowledge and respect counter-arguments; and how wide the range of consultation is at elite levels.

### **Egalitarian Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the egalitarian principle achieved?

*Clarifications:* The egalitarian principle of democracy addresses the distribution of political power across social groups, i.e., groups defined by class, sex, religion, and ethnicity. This perspective on democracy emphasizes that a formal guarantee of political rights and civil liberties are not always sufficient for political equality. Ideally, all social groups should have approximately equal participation, representation, agenda-setting power, protection under the law, and influence over policymaking and policy implementation. If such equality does not exist, the state ought to seek to redistribute socio-economic resources, education, and health so as to enhance political equality.

### **Participatory Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the participatory principle achieved?

*Clarifications:* The participatory principle of democracy emphasizes active participation by citizens in all political processes, electoral and non-electoral. It is motivated by uneasiness about a bedrock practice of electoral democracy: delegating authority to representatives. Thus, direct rule by citizens is preferred, wherever practicable. This model of democracy thus takes suffrage for granted, emphasizing engagement in civil society organizations, direct democracy, and subnational elected bodies.

### **Women political empowerment index**

*Question:* How politically empowered are women?

*Clarifications:* Women's political empowerment is defined as a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making. It is understood to incorporate three equally-weighted dimensions: fundamental civil liberties, women's open discussion of political issues and participation in civil society organizations, and the descriptive representation of women in formal political positions.

### **Indicators included in Figure 2.**

#### **Civil society participation index**

*Question:* Are major CSOs routinely consulted by policymakers; how large is the involvement of people in CSOs; are women prevented from participating; and is legislative candidate nomination within party organization highly decentralized or made through party primaries?

*Clarifications:* The sphere of civil society lies in the public space between the private sphere and the state. Here, citizens organize in groups to pursue their collective interests and ideals. We call these groups civil society organizations (CSOs). CSOs include, but are by no means limited to, interest groups, labor unions, spiritual organizations (if they are engaged in civic or political activities), social movements, professional associations, charities, and other non-governmental organizations. The core civil society index (CCSI) is designed to provide a measure of a robust civil society, understood as one that enjoys autonomy from the state and in which citizens freely and actively pursue their political and civic goals, however conceived.

## **Direct Popular Vote Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the ideal of direct democracy achieved?

*Clarifications:* Direct popular voting refers here to an institutionalized process by which citizens of a region or country register their choice or opinion on specific issues through a ballot. It is intended to embrace initiatives, referendums, and plebiscites, as those terms are usually understood. It captures some aspects of the more general concept of direct democracy. The term does not encompass recall elections, deliberative assemblies, or settings in which the vote is not secret or the purview is restricted. Likewise, it does not apply to elections for representatives. This index measures how easy it is to initiate and approve a direct popular vote and how consequential that vote is (if approved). Ease of initiation is measured by (a) the existence of a direct democracy process, (b) the number of signatures needed, (c) time-limits to circulate the signatures, and (d) the level of government (national and/or subnational). Ease of approval is measured by quorums pertaining to (a) participation and (b) approval. Consequences are measured by (a) the legal status of the decision made by citizens (binding or merely consultative), and (b) the frequency with which direct popular votes have been approved in the past.

## **Local government index**

*Question:* Are there elected local governments, and if so to what extent can they operate without interference from unelected bodies at the local level?

*Clarifications:* The lowest score would be reserved for a country that has no elected local governments. A medium score would be accorded a country that has elected local governments but where those governments are subordinate to unelected officials at the local level (perhaps appointed by a higher-level body). A high score would be accorded to a country in which local governments are elected and able to operate without restrictions from unelected actors at the local level (with the exception of judicial bodies). (Naturally, local governments remain subordinate to the regional and national governments.)

## **Regional government index**

*Question:* Are there elected regional governments, and if so to what extent can they operate without interference from unelected bodies at the regional level?

*Clarifications:* The lowest score would be reserved for a country that has no elected regional governments. A medium score would be accorded a country that has elected regional governments but where those governments are subordinate to unelected officials at the regional level (perhaps appointed by a higher-level body). A high score would be accorded to a country in which regional governments are elected and able to operate without restrictions from unelected actors at the regional level (with the exception of judicial bodies). (Naturally, regional governments remain subordinate to the national government.)

### **Indicators included in Figure 3.**

#### **Clean elections index**

*Question:* To what extent are elections free and fair?

*Clarifications:* Free and fair connotes an absence of registration fraud, systematic irregularities, government intimidation of the opposition, vote buying, and election violence.

#### **Elected executive index**

*Question:* Is the chief executive appointed through popular elections (either directly or indirectly)? *Clarifications:* This index attempts to measure whether the chief executive is elected, either directly elected through popular elections or indirectly through a popularly elected legislature that then appoints the chief executive. If the head of state is not the head of government (dual executive), the chief executive is determined by comparing the two executives' power over the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers. Heads of governments are also counted as indirectly elected if they are appointed by heads of states that are either directly or indirectly elected. If the head of state and head of government share equal powers over the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers, the index averages across average of the extent to which both are directly or indirectly elected. Note that a popular election is minimally defined and also includes sham elections with limited suffrage and no competition. Similarly, "appointment" by legislature only implies selection and/or approval, not the power to dismiss. This index is useful primarily for aggregating higher-order indices and should not be interpreted as an important element of democracy in its own right.

### **Freedom of association index (thick)**

*Question:* To what extent are parties, including opposition parties, allowed to form and to participate in elections, and to what extent are civil society organizations able to form and to operate freely?

### **Freedom of expression index**

*Question:* To what extent does government respect press & media freedom, the freedom of ordinary people to discuss political matters at home and in the public sphere, as well as the freedom of academic and cultural expression?

### **Share of population with suffrage**

*Question:* What share of adult citizens (as defined by statute) has the legal right to vote in national elections?

### **Alternative source information index**

*Question:* To what extent is the media (a) un-biased in their coverage (or lack of coverage) of the opposition, (b) allowed to be critical of the regime, and (c) representative of a wide array of political perspectives?

### **Indicators included in Figure 4.**

#### **Equal distribution of resources index**

*Question:* How equal is the distribution of resources?

*Clarifications:* This component measures the extent to which resources – both tangible and intangible – are distributed in society. An equal distribution of resources supports egalitarian democracy in two ways. First, lower poverty rates and the distribution of goods and services (such as food, water, housing, education and healthcare) ensure that all individuals are capable of participating in politics and government. In short, basic needs must be met in order for individuals to effectively exercise their rights and freedoms (see, for example, Sen 1999, Maslow 1943). Second, high levels of resource inequality undermine the ability of poorer populations to participate meaningfully (Aristotle, Dahl 2006). Thus, it is necessary to include not only measures of poverty and the distribution of goods and services, but also the

levels of inequality in these distributions, and the proportion of the population who are not eligible for social services (i.e. means-tests, particularistic distribution, etc.). This principle also implies that social or economic inequalities can translate into political inequalities, an issue addressed most notably by Walzer (1983), who argues that overlapping “spheres” of inequality are particularly harmful to society. To address these overlapping spheres, this component also includes measures of the distribution of power in society amongst different socio-economic groups, genders, etc.

### **Equal protection index**

Question: How equal is the protection of rights and freedoms across social groups by the state?

*Clarifications:* Equal protection means that the state grants and protects rights and freedoms evenly across social groups. To achieve equal protection of rights and freedoms, the state itself must not interfere in the ability of groups to participate and it must also take action to ensure that rights and freedoms of one social group are not threatened by the actions of another group or individual.

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