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Violent Democratizations and Scandinavian Exceptionalism

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Abstract

Scholars increasingly look to Scandinavia for better formulas of sustainable democracy. One core feature of Scandinavian exceptionalism, they hold, is that the paths to democracy in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were relatively peaceful. As a precondition for pursuing this agenda, I conduct the first systematic, empirical scrutiny of whether Scandinavian democratization periods were in fact exceptionally peaceful. By combining Varieties of Democracy and Historical Varieties of Democracy data, I construct a new measure of democratization, based on multiple dimensions of democracy and protracted periods before and shortened periods after democratization events, and a new measure of violent anti-systemic movements. Statistical analyses for a global sample of countries from 1789 to 2017 show that there was indeed a Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization, but only consistently so when we compare Scandinavian democratizations of competitive elections and suffrage with the rest of Europe before 1946. The results are robust to different specifications of democratization periods, regional diffusion of democratization that instruments for the domestic democratization effect, the sequence theory of liberalization followed by extension of participation, and using extant measures of the dependent and independent variables. I argue that future research needs to reinvestigate the origins of peaceful democratization in Scandinavia from late 18th to early 20th century.

I. Introduction

How may countries make a peaceful transformation from dictatorship to democracy? We are continuously told that the relatively peaceful paths to democracy in Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark, and Norway) hold the key to answering this question (see e.g. Fukuyama 2012: 14-19).¹ However, it is not clear from extant studies that Scandinavian democratization processes were in fact more peaceful.

On the one hand, historical and comparative studies of the Scandinavian countries have for many years pointed out that the Scandinavian paths to democracy were exceptionally well-ordered, harmonious, and peaceful (e.g. Andenæs 1949; Herlitz 1949; Stråth 1988: 4; Knudsen 2001: 72; Jakobsen 2008: 309-311; Möller 2011: 56-66; Sejersted 2011: 4; Mikkelsen and Nyzell 2018: 454). The implicit comparison builds on a key finding in conflict research that countries undergoing democratization are generally more prone to experience violent, civil conflict than stable autocracies and democracies (e.g. Fein 1995; Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 2007; Hegre et al. 2001; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010). Likewise, a series of classic studies on comparative democratization finds that the European experience of democratization was mired in revolutionary violence (see e.g. Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Bernhard and Kopstein 2017).

On the other hand, several studies have documented frequent riots and violent demonstrations in 19th and 20th century Scandinavia (e.g. Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2011; Berglund 2018: 297; Sandvik 2018: 186-187; Mikkelsen 2018: 27-28). Likewise, we should note that although the long 19th century of democratization was known for its violent upheavals, many European democratization processes were more gradual and accommodative (see e.g. Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992; Ziblatt 2017; see also Luebbert 1991; Cornell, Möller, and Skaaning 2017).

Why do we have such contrasting stories? Extant studies tend to either focus on idiosyncratic traits of each Scandinavian country, only mention the Scandinavian countries in passing (probably due to their small size and language barriers), or subsume Scandinavia under a more general Western European or global pattern. In turn, there has so far been no unified, systematic attempt to compare records of violent conflict during democratization periods in Scandinavia with other regions of the world. This lack of solid, comparative analysis means that

¹ Scandinavia is also widely regarded as exceptional in its welfare systems, low levels of corruption, and high levels of institutional and inter-personal trust (Pritchett and Woolcock 2004; Campbell, Hall, and Pedersen 2006; Hilson 2008; Sejersted 2011; Rothstein and Teorell 2015; Teorell and Rothstein 2015). However, the processes of democratization is key in the ideas of “Getting to Denmark” and “Getting to Sweden” (see Bengtsson 2017).

the notion of Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism is likely biased or even outright false with dire consequences for scholarly models of sustainable democracy.

This paper examines whether there is a Scandinavian exception of (relatively) peaceful democratization. I thus answer two fundamental questions that the current literature leaves blank: To what extent was there a common Scandinavian path of peaceful democratization and did any such path differ from other democratization paths in Europe and beyond? If we want to use Scandinavia's democratic experience as a general model for sustainable democracy, it is essential to answer these descriptive questions.

To answer the questions, I conduct statistical analyses of a global sample covering the modern era of democracy from 1789 until today. Besides a set of established measures, I develop novel indicators of democratization and violent conflict based on data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) and Historical V-Dem (H V-Dem) datasets covering country-years from 1789 and beyond. In contrast to most of the extant literature, I construct measures that capture periods of democratization rather than static traits of democracy and I do so for multiple dimensions of democracy: civil and political liberties, legislative and judicial constraints on the executive power, competitive elections, and suffrage. Next, aligning with the core propositions in the thesis of Scandinavian exceptionalism and general insights on mobilization and repression in violent conflict, I focus on societal (i.e. non-governmental) violence measured as the extent of violent anti-systemic movements. Finally, I evaluate the Scandinavian exceptionalism by explicit inter- and intra-regional comparisons based on regional dummies and regional democratization averages.

The results show a persistent Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization apart from most other regions in the world, notably Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe. This finding prevails across all four dimensions of democracy, measures of democracy levels and democratization using Polity IV data, Lexical Scale of Electoral Democracy, and the dichotomous data from Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2014) as well as civil war as a measure of violent conflict. It also holds when controlling for regional democratization averages and the specific theory of endogenous democratization predicting peaceful democratization if contestation preceded inclusiveness. From these results, I draw the conclusion that explaining Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism would first require a study of the origins of peaceful liberalization and democratization from late 18th to early 20th century in Scandinavia compared with the rest of Western Europe.

The paper is organized as follows: First, I review the conceptualization of democratization and violent conflict in extant research and present my own alternatives. Then, I

discuss the theoretical assumptions of Scandinavian exceptionalism and present a hypothesis for it. Second, I present the research design and data. Next, I present the regression results. Finally, I conclude and discuss the implications for future research.

II. Conceptualizing democratization and violent conflict

Before setting up specific hypotheses, we need to confront the particular conceptual challenge that there is no clear, agreed-upon definition or measurement of democratization or violent conflict in conflict research – the literature that has grappled most extensively with the relationship between democracy and conflict.

To start with democratization, extant research disagrees on the number and types of democracy dimensions to include and whether to measure static regime traits, certain events, or periods of regime change. For instance, a number of studies consider electoral events as the cause of intra-state conflict or regime change (e.g. Cederman, Gleditsch, and Hug 2013; Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017). Others focus on electoral regimes and their degree of competitiveness (e.g. Bartusevicius and Skaaning 2018). Still others have used positive changes (i.e. towards more democracy) in the Polity scale to identify periods of democratization (e.g. Hegre et al. 2001; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010). Related literatures study the impact of ethnic conflict and regime type on civil resistance campaigns and government repression (e.g. Davenport 2007; Rørbaek 2016).

I argue that none of these conceptualizations is aligned accurately enough with core conceptual distinctions in the democratization-conflict tradition and the historical specificities of Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism. The original theory of “more murders in the middle” proposes violence as unleashed by movements from the autocratic to the democratic camp and focuses on the broad phenomenon of democracy as “mass politics” rather than just elections (Fein 1995; see also Mansfield and Snyder 1995). This means that we need to measure a process rather than democracy as a static institutional trait or specific events such as competitive elections. It also begs us to measure democracy as more than just competitive elections. Moreover, the historical narratives of Scandinavian exceptionalism and revolutions in Europe more generally focus on mass grievances as both triggers of and responses to regime reforms (see e.g. Bernhard and Kopstein 2017; Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018). We therefore need to measure democratization as a process that both precedes and succeeds certain reform events.

To illustrate, much violence preceding and succeeding pro-democracy reforms involves population strata protesting against their exclusion from political participation or the repression of their ability to express themselves and firm organizations independently from the state. Rather than competitive elections, the motives behind such violence are probably better captured through the lenses of suffrage rules and freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

I define democratization as a protracted period before and a shortened period after a positive reform in one or more dimensions of democracy. In this understanding, democratization is a process surrounding certain events where governments grant or the people or parliament force through certain extensions of political freedom. I further assume that reforms toward more democracy are preceded by a long period – often several years of preparation, negotiation, debate, or even violent conflict (Linz and Stepan 1996; Brownlee 2009). These reforms are then followed by similar repercussions but over a shorter period where the actors are adapting to the new reality (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Logically, it should be harder for the oppressed to achieve a political opening for reform than for them to accept the reform whenever it has been implemented.

Just as democracy is a multidimensional concept, democratization may occur along different dimensions (see Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008; Lauth 2015). It is likely that the different dimensions have different effects on the probability of violent conflict. For instance, research shows that liberalization of civil liberties destabilizes closed autocracies while electoral contestation does not (Brownlee 2009). Thus, it is pertinent that we go beyond the typical focus on elections while avoiding the conflation of electoral contestation with participation or other dimensions of democracy.

I distinguish between four dimensions of democracy: civil and political liberties, competitive elections, constraints on the executive, and suffrage that reflect the developmental stages in the history of modern (post-1789) democracy (see Dahl 1989; Knutsen et al. 2018: 12). Some of these attributes are certainly highly correlated. Most notably, scholars usually speak of a package of civil and political liberties, elections, and executive constraints that together constitute a dimension of contestation (e.g. Dahl 1971). This aggregate version of contestation differs conceptually from inclusiveness, i.e. suffrage (see Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008). Nevertheless, contestation is a multifaceted phenomenon. This generally becomes clearer as we go back in time. Many, mostly Western European, countries have considerable experience with parliamentary rule or the rule of law from medieval times (Møller 2015). The granting of civil and political liberties that served relatively free conditions for deliberation came with the French and German enlightenment movements in the 18th century. Since then, these liberties have been

relatively volatile by changing on a yearly basis in accordance with state security concerns (Davenport 2007). Elections for the executive office typically only came later in the 19th century and, subsequently, the population was gradually enfranchised (Przeworski 2009). In short, this is why we need to consider these four different types of democratization separately.

There are more uniform ways of understanding and measuring violent conflict. However, given that this study is one of the first to combine pre- and post-World War II samples with a focus on some of the relatively peaceful examples of democratization, we need to reassess what we typically conceive as “peaceful” democratization. In conflict research, conflict involves at least two parties, usually the government or state forces on the one side and a minority or extremist group on the other. While government or state repression is definitely part of the picture, I argue that we also measures exclusively focused on politically motivated violence conducted by societal, i.e. non-governmental, forces. There are empirical and theoretical reasons supporting a primary focus on societal violence. Indeed, Scandinavian exceptionalism and the European counter-narratives are about “popular struggles” (Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018) and “revolutionary violence” (Bernhard and Kopstein 2017), not so much government actions. Moreover, the theory of “more murders in the middle” states that democratization and the very existence of democratic features serve as grounds for mobilization (Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017) and send signals to people that (violent) protests matter (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Hug 2013). Thus, societal violence usually triggers government repression in the first place which may then lead to a vicious circle of revenge acts. Precautionary measures by governments to quell resistance in its infancy rarely come as massive outbursts of violence but more often as constant, small-scale repression (Davenport 2007).

Apart from distinguishing between governmental and non-governmental arbitrators of violence, we must be able to distinguish non-violent from violent acts. The latter, our key interest here, comprise physical attacks. Most of the literature uses data on armed conflict or civil war defined in terms of 25 or more battle deaths (e.g. Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010; Bartusevicius and Skaaning 2018). Yet, this focuses attention on extreme forms of violence rather than the series of violent acts that do not involve actual death such as political killings, beatings, torture, and fights during demonstrations and protests (see Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang 2017: 1953-1955). As long as these forms of violence are politically motivated, we should consider, as accurately as possible, any such act. Thus, I define “peaceful” as the relative absence of societal violence during the democratization period.

III. Peaceful Democratization and Scandinavian exceptionalism

What is the content of peaceful democratization in Scandinavia, and what is the proper counterfactual to Scandinavia's exceptionalism in this regard? Most historical accounts characterize the processes of democratic development as a whole in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway during the 19th and early 20th centuries as involving remarkably little contention and revolutionary spirit (e.g. Andenæs 1949; Stråth 1988: 4; Jakobsen 2008: 309-311; Sejersted 2011: 4; Mikkelsen and Nyzell 2018: 454). For instance, the making of the first democratic constitution in Denmark in 1848 is often described as a comic moment when a few unarmed citizens and civil servants simply walked up the royal palace stairs, asked for a free constitution and got it (e.g. Clausen 1949; Knudsen 2001: 72). In Sweden, both the abolition of the Parliament of the Four Estates in 1865 and the suffrage reform in 1909 were results of protracted public and parliamentary debates, not violence (e.g. Herlitz 1949; Möller 2011: 56-66). These historical accounts are at the core of a more general narrative of Scandinavian exceptionalism, describing Scandinavian politics as relatively uncorrupt, peaceful, stable, and consensus-driven (see e.g. Rokkan 1987: Ch. 9; Lane et al. 1993; Knudsen and Rothstein 1994; Pritchett and Woolcock 2004; Fukuyama 2012: 14-19; Teorell and Rothstein 2015; Rothstein and Teorell 2015). This holds even during the most tumultuous crises of the 20th century (see e.g. Sejersted 2011: 171-172; Krake 2016: 146). As these examples illustrate, the literature does not qualify the argument of Scandinavian exceptionalism in terms of dimensions of democracy. Thus, we would expect Scandinavia's democratizations paths to be relatively peaceful, no matter the dimension of democracy.

It seems likely that Scandinavian democratizations are exceptions in a global pattern where democratization periods are generally mired in violence. A leading proposition in comparative democratization research notes that in 18th and 19th century Western Europe and the United States as well as in the post-communist world revolutionary violence was a prerequisite for liberalization and a permanent feature of subsequent democratization (e.g. Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Bernhard and Kopstein 2017). Frequently studied phenomena such as the Carlist Wars and violent overthrows and restorations in 19th century Spain, the French Revolutions in 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1870, the German revolutions in 1848 and 1919, the Patriot period and the Belgian revolution in the low countries, and the enclosure movement in early 19th century England give face validity to this proposition. More generally, conflict research has found that countries undergoing democratization experience higher levels of violence. People living in countries on the move from autocracy to democracy are more likely to engage in political mass violence than those

in established autocracies and democracies (e.g. Hegre et al. 2001; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010).

However, a number of historical and contemporary cases disturbs the image of Scandinavian exceptionalism. A recent book edited by Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell (2018) identifies significant anti-systemic movements and violent confrontations between demonstrators and authorities before, during, and after the major reforms towards democracy in Scandinavia. For instance, there were violent clashes between students and military forces in Sweden during the heydays of European revolution in 1848 (Berglund 2018: 297). In Norway, riots over new taxes broke out in 1818 provoking ideas of reestablishing the monarchy (Sandvik 2018: 186-187). For Denmark, Mikkelsen (2018: 27-28) notes a significant rise in violent riots and demonstrations around 1848 in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Mchangama and Stjernfelt (2011) even document frequent riots and crackdowns over freedom of expression and the press from the late 18th century into the post-World War II period.

Moreover, democratizations in the rest of Western Europe were not uniformly violent. Considering the larger size of the population and the vast inequalities in early 19th century England, anti-systemic violence except for the enclosure movement was relatively small-scale. Most notably, countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland experienced relatively little violence during democratic reform periods. In addition, far from all more recent cases of democratization involve high levels of violence before, during, and after the democratic transitions. For instance, Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution in 1989 was led by the non-violent Civic Forum. In Chile, democracy came gradually through constitutional revisions in the 1980s and was pushed forward by the Catholic Church, civic organizations, and the non-violent coalition the National Accord for a Full Transition to Democracy. More generally, some of the so-called "pacted transitions" in the third wave of democratization in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe gave an opportunity for the outgoing autocratic elite to negotiate for a peaceful transition (see Karl and Schmitter 1991).

That being said, the vast majority of studies supports the notion that democratizations in Scandinavia were unusually peaceful. Rather than questioning the overall expectation of Scandinavia's exceptionalism, the diverging accounts of peace and violence during democratization suggest us to reexamine the relationship between democratization and violence in a broader and more explicitly comparative fashion. Therefore, I suggest that

Hypothesis: Periods of democratization were more peaceful in Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) than in other regions of the world

IV. Research design and data

The empirical analyses generally estimate yearly levels of societal violence as a function of democratization period. Most models include some time-invariant variables and are thus estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). Most indicators cover all countries worldwide from 1789 to 2017. Such a span of countries and years makes me able to cover the entire era of modern democracy and compare the presumption of peaceful democratization in Scandinavia with its opposites in the remainder of Europe and postcolonial countries.

Since the purpose is merely descriptive, the analyses as a rule do not include potentially confounding factors. However, all models include some spatial and temporal controls that gauge at the contextual boundaries of the empirical patterns. I control for biases of colonialism and foreign occupation by only including countries that are independent states according to the criteria by Gleditsch and Ward (Gleditsch 2018).² Thus, I avoid comparing most of the Scandinavian democratizations (which happened before World War I) with the contemporary experience of colonized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions. I further include region and time-period dummies. The region dummies serve to compare each political-geographic region in the world, including Scandinavia as a separate region (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland), against one another. As the most direct test of Scandinavian exceptionalism, I also collapse all other regions except Scandinavia and compare with Scandinavia.³ The time-period dummies serve to test effects of certain international orders. Notably, the Scandinavian exception is likely exclusive of the pre-World War I period, which contains most of the Western European regime changes. I thus split country-years according to four distinct episodes in global political development: the long 19th century (1789-1918), the interwar period (1919-1945), the post-World Wars period (1946-1989), and the post-Cold War period (1990-) (see Boix 2011: 823).

Measuring societal violence

Most studies in democracy-conflict research employ the civil war indicators from the UCDP/PRI or Correlates of War (e.g. Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010; Bartusevicius and

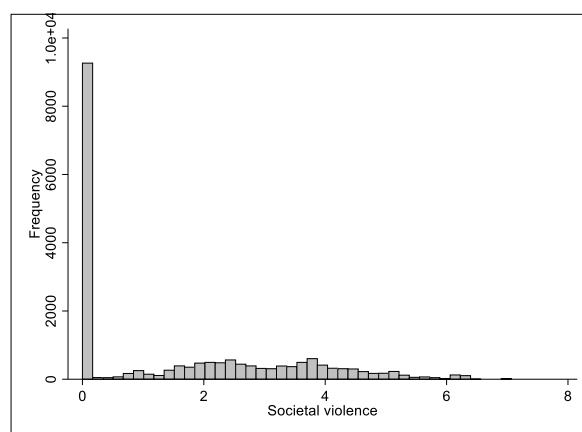
²I have extended their codings from 1816 back to 1789, following their criteria as closely as possible. For instance, I code all predecessor states of the later Germany (1871) and Italy (1861) as independent back to 1789. The only substantial difference is that I code Norway as independent from 1814. This is not only to achieve enough variation for statistical analysis within the Scandinavian category but also carries substantial meaning. Norway did exist in union with Sweden until 1905. However, Norway de facto decided on its own legislation based on its own assembly and constitution. The Swedish government only decided the foreign policy of the union.

³In separate models, I include Finland as part of Scandinavia – otherwise, Finland is coded as Eastern European. In other models, I exclude Iceland from analysis. For a full list of countries and regions, see Table I in the Appendix.

Skaaning 2018). Other studies in conflict research use more accurate indicators of societal violence. However, these indicators do not cover the 19th century,⁴ which is pertinent to capture the relevant variation of democratization in Scandinavia and Europe more generally. Instead, my primary analyses use data from the V-Dem project v8 integrated with Historical V-Dem data back to 1789 (Coppedge et al. 2018a) to construct an indicator of yearly levels of societal violence. The baseline of my indicator is the “CSO anti-system movements” variable, which measures the degree of anti-system opposition activity on a five-point scale (0-4) (Coppedge et al. 2018a: 176). For each country, five experts assigned ordinal scores and reported their uncertainty. A Bayesian item response model then converted the uncertainty into point-estimates while assuming the ordinal scale to be latently interval. The variable is thus continuous.

The substantial advantage of this variable is its focus on the actual records of behavior on a yearly basis. The exclusive focus on anti-systemic opposition movements further points toward politically motivated behavior. However, we must ensure that the behavior among these movements is in fact violent. I use the “CSO anti-system movement character” variables, which include multiple categories for peaceful and violent anti-system behavior and explicitly ask coders to only consider the anti-system movements identified for the “CSO anti-system movements” variable. Thus, positive values on the baseline variable only count if either of two categories, “Insurrectionary” and “Paramilitary”, are scored above 0 (see Coppedge et al. 2018a: 176-177). Remaining country-years, i.e. those where there may be anti-systemic but only non-violent movements, are coded 0.⁵

Figure 1: Country-year observations and societal violence



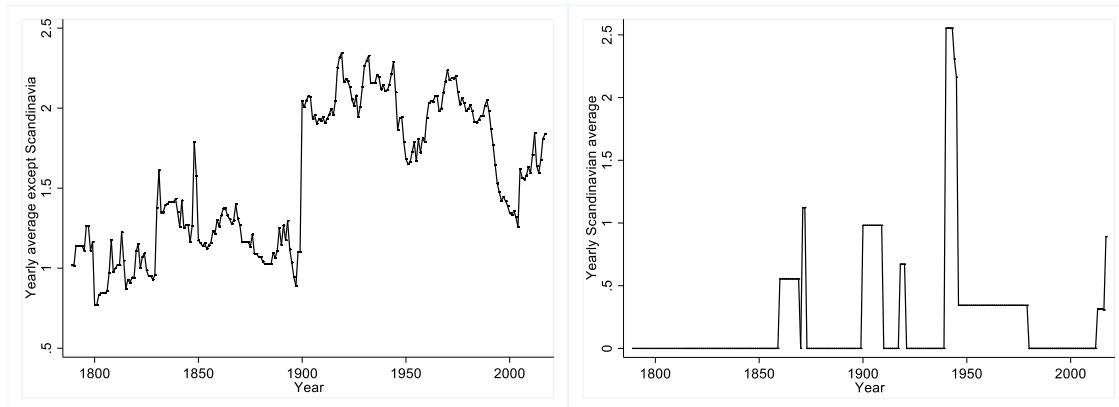
⁴ The NAVCO data project contains measures of violent campaigns back to 1900 (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013). The Databanks CNTS data contains multiple indicators of violent demonstrations, revolutions, and riots but only back to 1919 (Banks and Wilson 2017).

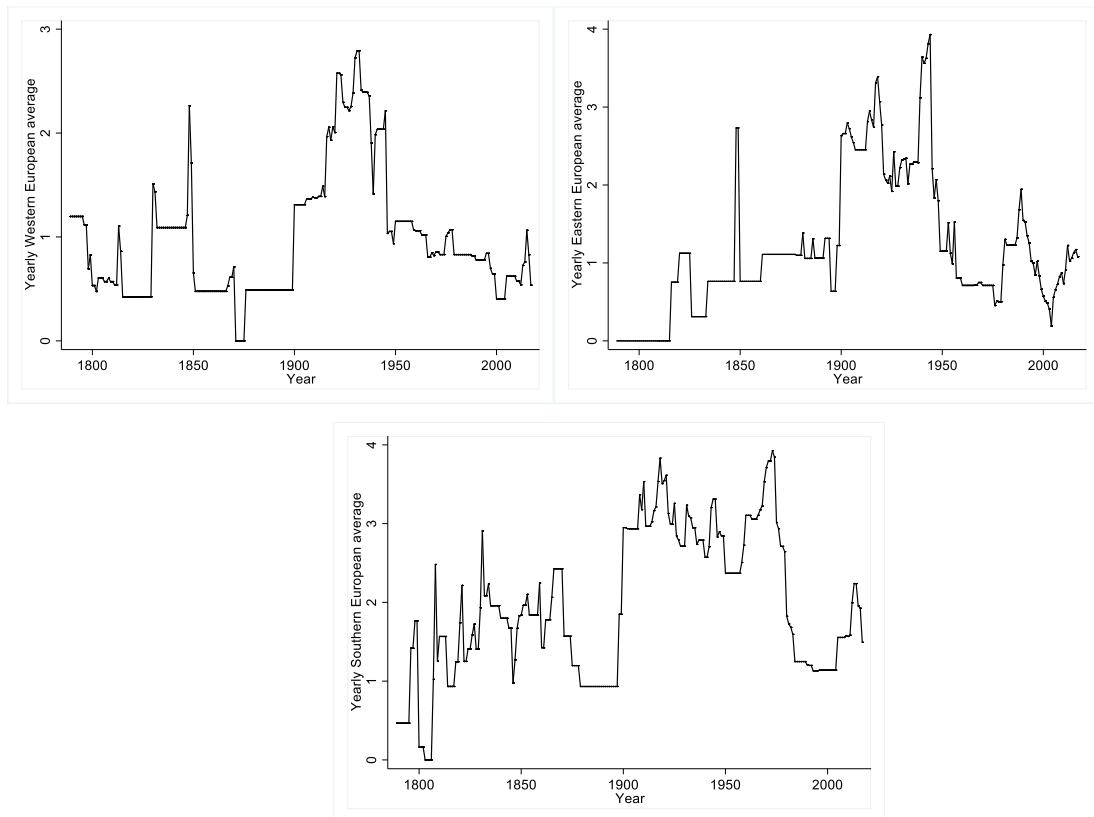
⁵ I recode the variable to only take non-negative values. Due to significant changes in the point estimates of country experts in the 2013-2017 data updates, I filter out country-variable-years with 3 or fewer ratings for the 2013-2017 period (see Coppedge et al. 2018a: 27).

Figure 1 shows country-year observations distributed on the scale of societal violence. As can be seen, the majority of country-years do not hold any violent anti-systemic movements. They are, in other words, relatively peaceful, although there may of course be plenty of non-violent anti-systemic activity. This confirms the presumption that, at least since 1789, anti-systemic violence has been a costly affair and thus generally rare. Consider then the upper left panel in Figure 2, which tracks the global development in societal violence. It shows interesting spikes in violence around the big revolutions in Europe in the 1830s and in 1848 and terror attack on the United States in 2001, high points of violence during the interwar years, and remarkable drops in violence after World War II and the Cold War. We also note a dramatic rise in violence around 1900, which is likely produced by changes of coders or the coding scheme from the H V-Dem (1789-1899) to the V-Dem data (1900-2017). This indicates a need to control for measurement inconsistencies related to the integration of the two datasets.

The remaining four panels compare levels of societal violence in Scandinavia to Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe, which we would expect to be the three most pronounced contrasts to the Scandinavian peace. Apart from significant spikes of violence, in particular during World War II, we see that Scandinavia is generally very peaceful boasting long periods without any violent anti-systemic movements. We also see that the region is relatively more peaceful than the three other European regions. The only exception is that the levels of societal violence in Western Europe and Scandinavia have been converging since World War II.

Figure 2: Yearly average of societal violence globally and in selected regions





Measuring democratization

The question remains whether the Scandinavian peace pertains to democratization years as well, or whether Scandinavia is just generally more peaceful. To answer this, I construct a measure of democratization based on my earlier conceptual distinctions. First, I construct measures of democracy levels for different dimensions of democracy by relying on the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem data, which contain disaggregated democracy component indices and indicators measuring the lowest levels of democracy attributes. I form three indices based on multiple indicators of civil and political liberties, competitive elections, and constraints on the executive and a single-indicator measure of suffrage. As a general criterion, I break down V-Dem's standard indices to sort out indicators of state strength, quality, and legitimacy, which are potential causes rather than constitutive elements of political regimes (see Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014).⁶ As a further criterion, I sort out indicators that are not at least partly direct results of government sanctions. Some indicators could indeed be caused by other factors than those pertaining to the political regime.⁷

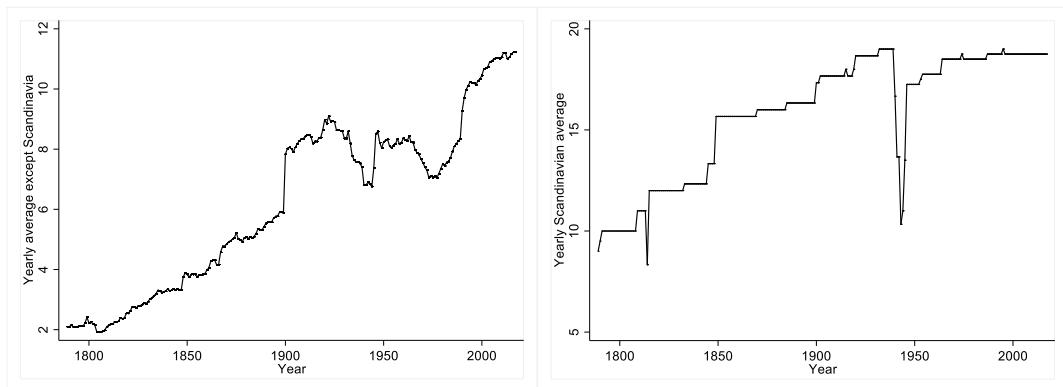
⁶ Specifically, I sorted out “EMB autonomy” and “EMB capacity” from my competitive elections index (see Coppedge et al. 2018a: 51-52).

⁷ Specifically, I sorted out “Media self-censorship” and “Media bias” from my civil and political liberties index (see Coppedge et al. 2018a: 181-182).

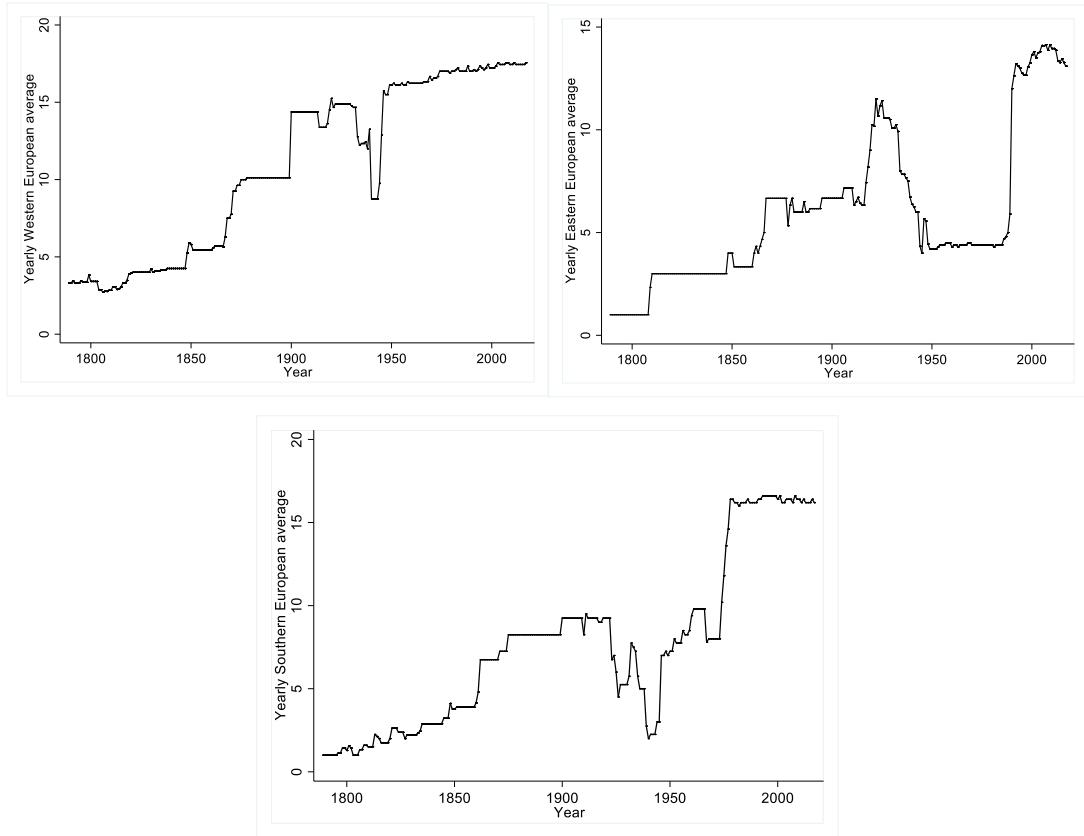
To be able to interpret each score on the measures as theoretically meaningful levels of democracy, I use the rescaled ordinal versions of the interval indicators, except for suffrage for which all levels have a meaningful theoretical interpretation. The rescaled ordinal versions represent the most likely ordinal value on the original codebook scale given the average coder's usage of that scale, i.e. after accounting for measurement errors (Coppedge et al. 2018a: 30). I then add the relevant ordinal-scaled indicators to form each measure. Table II in the Appendix presents the components and measures including their range of values.⁸

To get an impression of these baseline measures of democracy levels across the four dimensions, I present figures for the average levels on each dimension globally and for each of the European regions, including Scandinavia, that much of the literature builds on. Figure 3 focuses on constraints on the executive as the “oldest” dimension of democracy, taking shape in Europe several centuries before 1789. In all plots, we see traces of the waves and reverse waves of democratization as identified by Huntington (1991). Specifically, we see the radical and prolonged downturns during the interwar period, which last the entire Cold War period followed by a dramatic spike in Eastern Europe. As expected, we also see a dramatic spike in the 1970s corresponding with the democratizations in Spain (1975-1978) and Portugal (1974). These empirical patterns support the validity of this particular measure.

Figure 3: Yearly average of democracy levels



⁸ All four measures cover the entire period 1789-2017. Suffrage has a missing rate of 302 relatively evenly scattered country-year observations. Because we do not know values of democracy before 1789, 1789 by definition cannot be a year of democratization in my measurement. This also seems plausible empirically since only a few countries would experience pro-democratic changes exactly from 1788 to 1789.

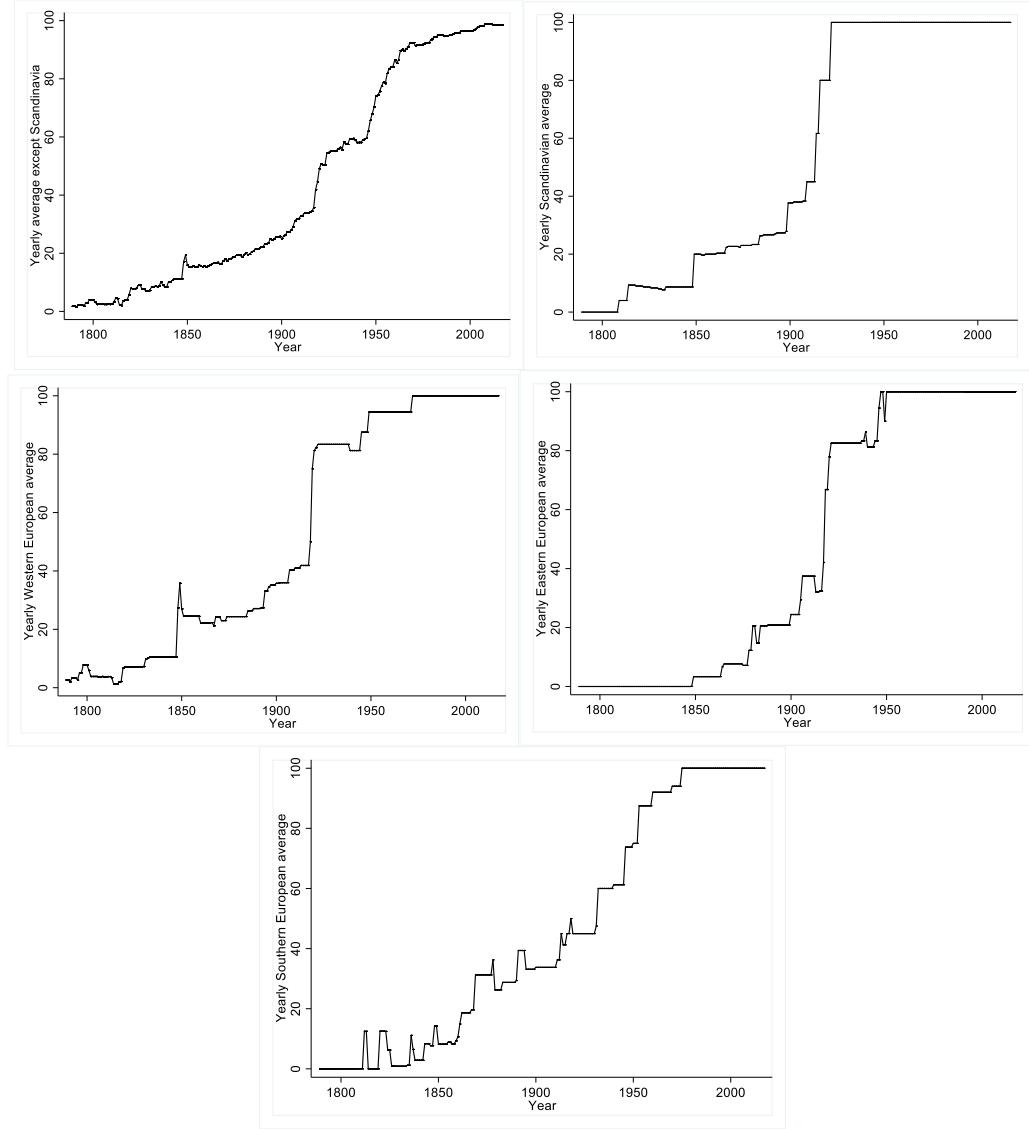


Note: Based on constraints on the executive.

Figure 4 pits the same average trends, now only based on suffrage. I highlight suffrage because this dimension is at the other extreme compared to executive constraints, developing the latest among the four dimensions of democracy. The waves and reverse waves are not as visible.⁹ Instead, we see a gradual and almost unbroken upward trend in levels of suffrage ending in (close to) universal suffrage after World War II. The great exception is Southern Europe with a pattern of “two-steps-forward-one-step-back.” Figures I and II in the Appendix show the equivalent trends for competitive elections and civil and political liberties. Whereas the latter resembles the trends in executive constraints, the positive trend for competitive elections is slightly more linear.

⁹ This makes sense as Huntington (1991), like many others, tended to subsume suffrage under the heading of electoral contestation. Yet, there are conceptual and empirical reasons to distinguish between contestation and inclusiveness (Dahl 1971; Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008).

Figure 4: Yearly average of democracy levels



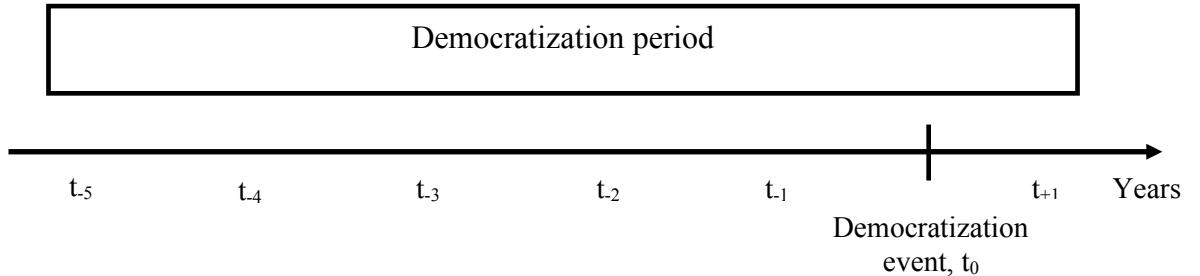
Note: Based on suffrage.

For each democracy measure, I regard any positive change in democracy levels from t_0 to t_1 as a democratization event. I thus subtract the level of democracy in t_1 from the level of democracy in t_0 to measure the magnitude of the democratization event in t_1 . This provides a number of democratization events for each country spell in the sample corresponding with substantial pro-democratic changes.

Democratization periods have no obvious or finite start and end. Therefore, I code multiple, alternative democratization periods around the democratization events on each democracy measure. However, as argued, extant theory most often conceives of democratization as a protracted period before and a shortened period after a democratization event. Thus, the different democratization periods range from five years before to one year after each

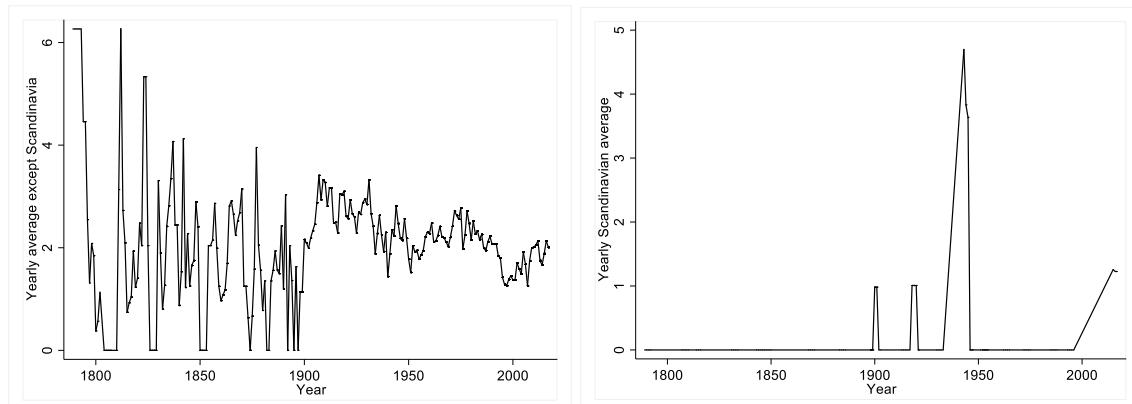
democratization event as the longest period investigated here. Figure 5 illustrates the logic of this approach. It implies that some countries have prolonged periods of continued democratization across multiple democratization events.

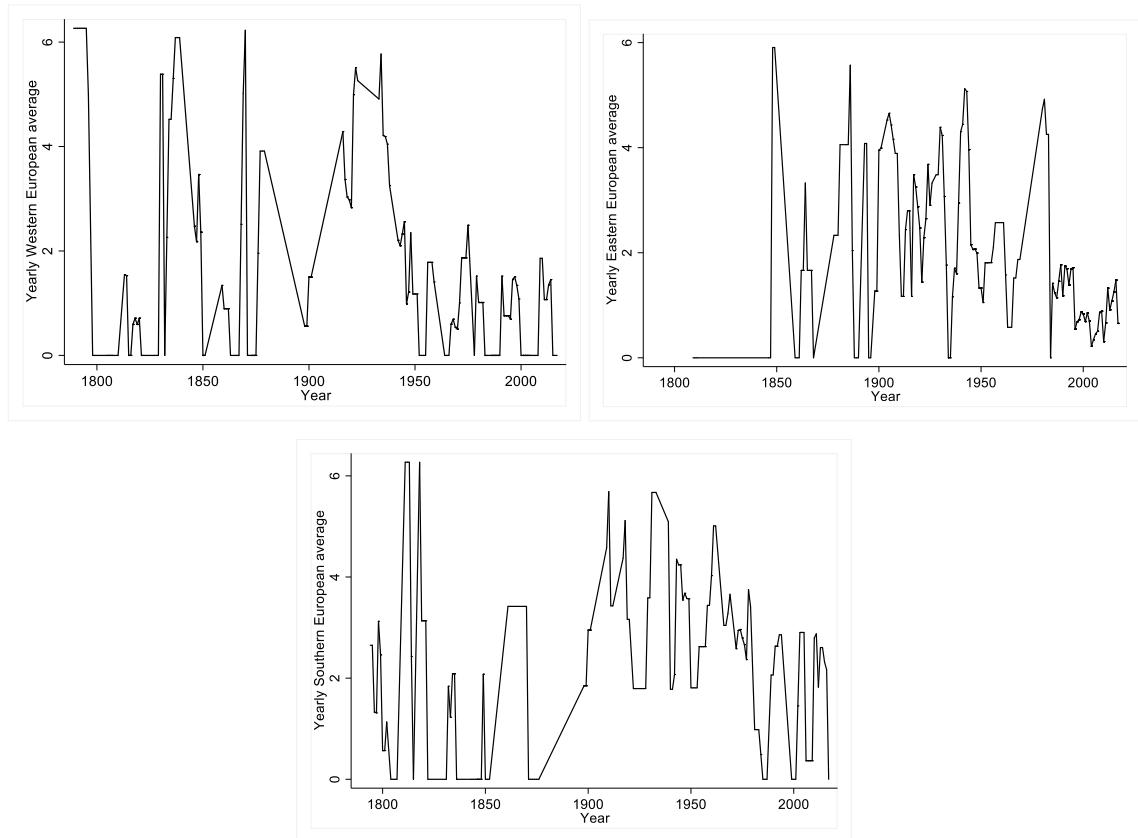
Figure 5: Example of a 7-year democratization period



To measure the magnitude of democratization as a periodic phenomenon, I calculate moving averages based on each democracy measure and for each period, i.e. 5 years before and one year after the democratization event, 4 years before and 1 year after etc. This results in a pattern whereby the level of democratization increases gradually over time, reaches a high point in the year of the actual pro-democracy reform, and decreases more rapidly in the year after. As mentioned, this is a substantially different but also more plausible way of capturing the spirit of democratization.

Figure 6: Yearly average of societal violence in 4-year democratization periods



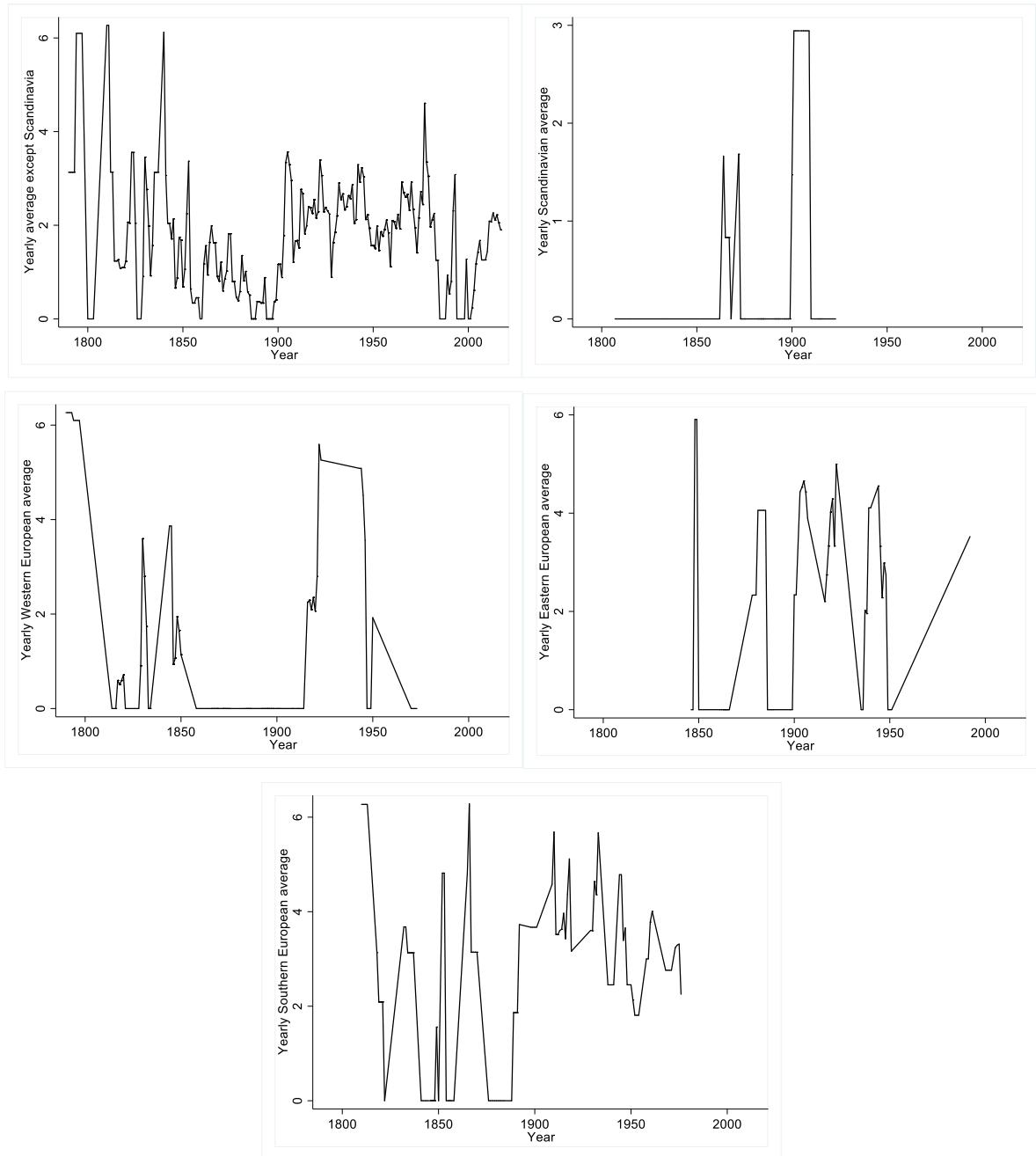


Note: Based on constraints on the executive.

Figure 6 tracks developments of societal violence for years of democratization only (i.e. a moving average score on the relevant democracy measure above 0), defined here by a 4-year democratization period ($t_2 - t_1$), which is the minimum requirement for my conceptualization of a democratization period.¹⁰ This figure focuses on constraints on the executive. Note first that there are gaps in the Eastern European chart reflecting that no country in this region achieved democratizations of executive constraints from 1789 and several years into the 19th century. While noting this, the figure supports the Scandinavian exception thesis by showing generally very low levels of violence during democratization and much lower levels than in the rest of the world, including the rest of Europe. Again, there are a few exceptional years of violence in Scandinavia during World War II. If comparing with Figure 2, we see that in all regions, including to some extent Scandinavia, levels of societal violence are generally higher in democratization as opposed to non-democratization periods. However, there is still evidence of a Scandinavian exception of relatively more peaceful democratization.

¹⁰ The descriptive patterns are similar for the remaining three period specifications ($t_5 - t_1$, $t_4 - t_1$, $t_3 - t_1$).

Figure 7: Yearly average of societal violence in 4-year democratization periods



Note: Based on suffrage.

Figure 7 tracks the same developments, only now based on positive changes in suffrage. The inter-regional comparisons clearly reproduce the Scandinavian exception. Note, however, that for the comparisons with the remaining European regions this mainly builds on the pre-World War II period since, as expected, most Northwestern European democracies had achieved universal suffrage by the end of World War II.¹¹

¹¹ Descriptives for civil and political liberties and competitive elections reproduce the Scandinavian exception (see Figures III and IV in the Appendix).

V. Regression results

The following analyses use standard regression statistical tools to examine the hypothesis that Scandinavian democratizations have been relatively more peaceful. The models in Table 1 include region and time-period dummies alongside democratization period as covariates. Note first that the main independent variable is 4-year democratization period, the minimally acceptable measurement of my conception of a democratization period. In all four models, this democratization period is positively and significantly associated with societal violence, supporting the notion that democratization – whether of executive constraints, everyday civil and political liberties, contestation at elections, or suffrage levels – generally spurs more anti-systemic violence.

The models include region dummies that contrast each region against the baseline region of Western Europe to get the most comprehensive look at regional effects. In all these models, the Scandinavian region stands out as the only one with a significant and negative effect on societal violence. This implies that democratizations in this region is significantly less violent than in the rest of the world and Western Europe specifically. More to this point, the models show that all other regions than Scandinavia, except Eastern Europe and Neo-Europe, are significantly and positively related with societal violence. This suggests that the Scandinavian democratic peace is indeed an outlier in a general pattern of violent conflict during democratization.

However, to investigate this thesis more accurately we need to estimate the impact of being a Scandinavian country on the relationship between democratization and societal violence. Table 2 thus replaces the comprehensive list of region dummies with two region dummies that compare Scandinavia with the rest of the world and the rest of Europe (Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe combined), respectively. To gauge at any moderation of the general democratization-conflict relationship, the models interact these two dummies with 4-year democratization period.

The results from these tests are more mixed. The direct effect of democratization (4-year period) on societal violence is positive and significant as expected. Both region dummies (Scandinavia vs. all other countries and Scandinavia vs. the rest of Europe) are negatively and significantly related with societal violence. This was expected as well. However, the interaction between democratization and Scandinavia vs. all other countries is only significant for civil and political liberties and competitive elections. Likewise, the interaction between democratization and Scandinavia vs. the rest of Europe is only significant for competitive elections and suffrage. Thus, the effects of being Scandinavian are much more uneven when looking only at democratization years instead of all country-years. Also, the results seem to suggest that there is only a clear

Table 1: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, region dummies

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Civil and political liberties	(3) Competitive elections	(4) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1}	0.292*** (0.069)	0.177*** (0.029)	0.144*** (0.040)	0.029*** (0.009)
Region				
Scandinavia	-0.768*** (0.230)	-0.760*** (0.230)	-0.768*** (0.229)	-0.764*** (0.230)
Southern Europe	0.928** (0.442)	0.919** (0.438)	0.929** (0.444)	0.932** (0.440)
Eastern Europe	0.207 (0.308)	0.220 (0.307)	0.217 (0.308)	0.247 (0.308)
Neo-Europe	-0.468 (0.313)	-0.459 (0.312)	-0.483 (0.311)	-0.472 (0.310)
Latin America	0.616* (0.315)	0.621** (0.314)	0.630** (0.314)	0.645** (0.314)
Africa	0.823*** (0.306)	0.822*** (0.305)	0.827*** (0.307)	0.851*** (0.307)
MENA	0.738* (0.436)	0.747* (0.434)	0.727* (0.437)	0.829* (0.427)
Asia	1.260*** (0.371)	1.269*** (0.371)	1.265*** (0.372)	1.280*** (0.371)
Time period				
Interwar	0.856*** (0.199)	0.866*** (0.200)	0.877*** (0.199)	0.836*** (0.202)
Post World Wars	0.476** (0.216)	0.471** (0.216)	0.506** (0.215)	0.461** (0.217)
Post Cold War	0.024 (0.207)	0.031 (0.206)	0.068 (0.207)	0.054 (0.210)
Constant	0.747*** (0.230)	0.734*** (0.230)	0.746*** (0.231)	0.760*** (0.231)
N country-years	19037	19037	19037	18928
N countries	196	196	196	196

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for region = Western Europe. Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Table 2: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, different interaction term

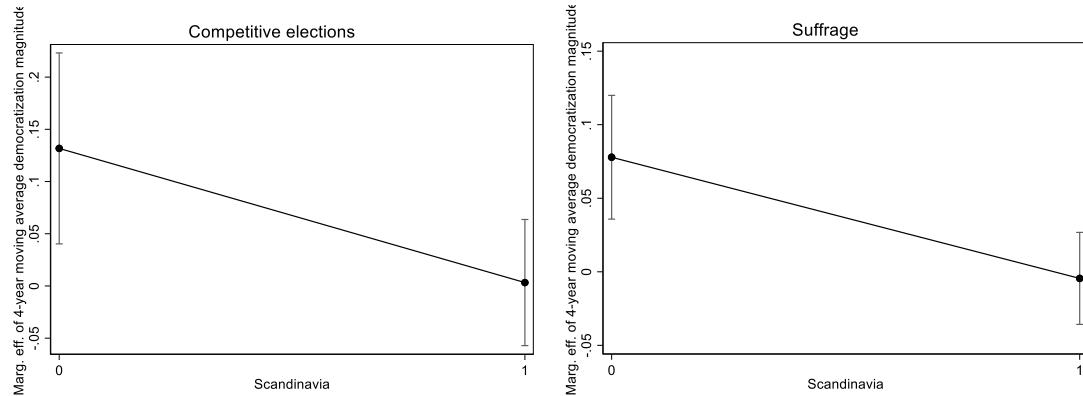
	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Constraints on the executive	(3) Civil and political liberties	(4) Civil and political liberties	(5) Competitive elections	(6) Competitive elections	(7) Suffrage	(8) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1}	0.309*** (0.075)	0.266** (0.104)	0.185*** (0.033)	0.155*** (0.057)	0.150*** (0.042)	0.132** (0.055)	0.032*** (0.010)	0.078*** (0.025)
Time period								
Interwar	0.820*** (0.202)	1.287*** (0.296)	0.832*** (0.203)	1.309*** (0.298)	0.843*** (0.202)	1.316*** (0.297)	0.809*** (0.204)	1.289*** (0.299)
Post World Wars	0.639*** (0.197)	0.210 (0.250)	0.636*** (0.197)	0.208 (0.252)	0.669*** (0.196)	0.241 (0.249)	0.638*** (0.199)	0.243 (0.249)
Post Cold War	0.215 (0.188)	-0.196 (0.191)	0.224 (0.187)	-0.171 (0.191)	0.262 (0.187)	-0.154 (0.192)	0.263 (0.189)	-0.109 (0.189)
Scandinavia vs. All	-1.347*** (0.123)		-1.345*** (0.122)		-1.357*** (0.122)		-1.375*** (0.121)	
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1} ## Scandinavia vs. All	-0.156 (0.101)		-0.072* (0.039)		-0.102* (0.053)		-0.016 (0.016)	
Scandinavia vs. Europe		-1.007*** (0.171)		-1.003*** (0.168)		-1.012*** (0.173)		-0.988*** (0.166)
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.138 (0.128)		-0.068 (0.066)		-0.128* (0.072)		-0.082** (0.032)
Constant	1.275*** (0.177)	1.051*** (0.209)	1.265*** (0.176)	1.037*** (0.206)	1.279*** (0.179)	1.050*** (0.212)	1.306*** (0.179)	1.025*** (0.203)
N country-years	19037	6522	19037	6522	19037	6522	18928	6522
N countries	196	60	196	60	196	60	196	60

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization when it comes to reforms toward more competitive elections. Regarding suffrage extensions, violence levels are only exceptionally low in Scandinavia compared to the rest of Europe. For civil and political liberties, Scandinavian violence levels are only exceptional compared with countries outside Europe.¹²

Based on Models 6 and 8 in Table 2, Figure 8 plots the marginal effects of the democratization measure on societal violence for competitive elections and suffrage. They show no significant marginal effects of being a Scandinavian country instead of a European country outside Scandinavia.

Figure 8: Societal violence predicted, 1789-2017



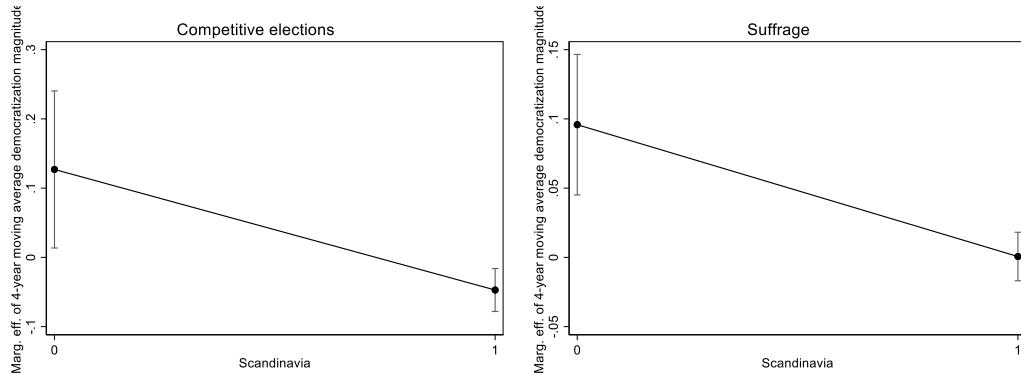
The estimates in Table 2 may, however, be driven by temporal effects in the sense that democratization has taken different shapes and magnitudes in different historical periods. In particular, we might expect to see different, relative levels of societal violence during the long 19th century (1789-1918) or including the interwar period as well, when we find most of the European variation in the dimensions of democracy. As the descriptive figures (see Figures 3-4 and Figures I-II in the Appendix) revealed, Western Europe and Scandinavia experienced almost no democratizations after World War II and Scandinavia's democracy levels in particular began to stabilize at high levels during the interwar period. Table III in the Appendix repeats the same analysis as Table 2 but limits the sample to only include democratizations in the long 19th century. We see that the Scandinavian exception is only significant across all four dimensions of democracy when it is compared with the rest of Europe. Scandinavian societal violence during democratization is insignificant when we compare with all other countries.

¹² I run equivalent models (not reported) where, respectively, Iceland is excluded and Finland is included in the Scandinavian region and compared with the rest of Europe. The results reproduce the pattern whereby Scandinavian democratizations of competitive elections and suffrage are negatively and significantly related with societal violence. Equivalent models (not reported) with the initial definition of Scandinavia using the different specifications of democratization period reproduce these results as well.

Tables IV and V in the Appendix accentuate this pattern. Table IV include only a sample of democratizations of the period 1789-1945, thus including the interwar period. In this analysis, the Scandinavian exception is only vindicated in models comparing Scandinavia with the rest of Europe and focusing on competitive elections and suffrage. There are no significant interactions in the models with civil and political liberties and constraints on the executive. Table V employs a sample from 1789 to 1899. This is a test of the reliability of the codings across the V-Dem (1900-2017) and H V-Dem (1789-1899) datasets, which have been merged in the most recent version. The results could be an artefact of different coding procedures and different coders between the two datasets. While this is a more general concern, we can also interpret this as yet another test of temporal effects. The results show a significant Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization for all four dimensions of democracy but only when comparing Scandinavia with the rest of Europe.

Figure 9 plots marginal effects based on Models 6 and 8 in Table IV. These models suggest some of the strongest results for competitive elections and suffrage. The differences in societal violence between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe on these dimensions of democratization are indeed as expected. However, whereas the marginal effect of being Scandinavian is significantly negative for competitive elections, the marginal effect is insignificant for suffrage.

Figure 9: Societal violence predicted, 1789-1945



In sum, the tests so far reveal that the Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization is not uniformly present on all dimensions of democracy and that it is both spatially and temporally bounded. Although the Scandinavian exception can be vindicated in some models for all four dimensions (in particular competitive elections and suffrage), the only consistently significant finding is that Scandinavian democratizations in electoral contestation were relatively more peaceful compared to the rest of Europe before World War II. On the one hand,

Table 3: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, liberalization first

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Constraints on the executive	(3) Civil and political liberties	(4) Civil and political liberties	(5) Competitive elections	(6) Competitive elections	(7) Suffrage	(8) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1}	0.301*** (0.074)	0.264** (0.105)	0.178*** (0.033)	0.154*** (0.057)	0.143*** (0.041)	0.130** (0.054)	0.035*** (0.010)	0.079*** (0.025)
Liberalization first t_{-1}	-0.474*** (0.173)	-0.191 (0.229)	-0.469*** (0.172)	-0.192 (0.228)	-0.476*** (0.173)	-0.192 (0.229)	-0.498*** (0.172)	-0.203 (0.228)
Scandinavia vs. All	-1.185*** (0.173)		-1.183*** (0.168)		-1.196*** (0.169)		-1.206*** (0.171)	
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1} ## Scandinavia vs. All	-0.167* (0.087)		-0.083* (0.047)		-0.085* (0.048)		-0.015 (0.018)	
Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.955*** (0.193)		-0.949*** (0.190)		-0.961*** (0.195)		-0.933*** (0.188)
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.144 (0.123)		-0.076 (0.066)		-0.125* (0.069)		-0.082** (0.032)
Constant	1.376*** (0.188)	1.111*** (0.226)	1.365*** (0.187)	1.098*** (0.223)	1.380*** (0.189)	1.111*** (0.228)	1.411*** (0.189)	1.088*** (0.221)
N country-years	19037	6522	19037	6522	19037	6522	18928	6522
N countries	196	60	196	60	196	60	196	60

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Outcome variable = societal violence level. Time period controls included but not reported to save space.

this is a highly restricted version of Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism. On the other hand, the pre-World War II comparison with the remaining Europe on competitive elections holds virtually all the relevant variation in Scandinavia and thus constitutes the most likely case of support for the exception.

Examining the sequencing of democratization

In the traditional narrative, Scandinavia's democracies developed in a relatively incremental manner as authorities gradually relaxed civil and political liberties, introduced elections, and finally extended suffrage over some decades in small-scale reforms (Derry 1973; Knudsen 2001; Möller 2011; see also Dahl 1971). However, the thesis that Scandinavia's democratization should be comparatively peaceful assumes comparability of the democratization process with other countries. From this point of view, Scandinavian democratizations must be relatively more peaceful independently of factors endogenous to the democratization process itself, such as a certain sequence.

I construct a measure of the “liberalization first” sequence first identifying what we can conceive as thresholds to democracy on all four democracy measures. Just as it makes theoretical sense to consider each positive value change on the measures as steps toward more democracy, some values are likely harder to reach than others because they represent some latent move to democracy “proper” (see Krusell et al. 2018). I choose the mid-value on each measure as the threshold that countries need to pass. For the suffrage measure, I choose a 10%-threshold.¹³ This results in variables of “proper” democratization (=1) on all four dimensions of democracy. I then measure the sequence as present 1 in t_0 if either civil and political liberties, constraints on the executive, or competitive elections scores 1 in t_1 and t_0 and suffrage scores 0 in t_1 . The sequence variable scores 0 if this condition does not apply. However, for pragmatic reasons I apply a five-year lag meaning that all liberalization dimensions of democracy need to score 0 for more than five years for the sequence to end.

Table 3 includes the variable measuring the sequence of liberalization before participation. As expected, we see that this variable is negatively and positively associated with societal violence in all models that the global sample, i.e. where Scandinavia is compared to the rest of the world. However, the variable is insignificant in the remaining models that only include the Scandinavian and other European countries. This indicates that the effect of liberalization first is not a particular Scandinavian phenomenon. Next, the results for the interaction terms are once again somewhat mixed, but they reproduce the finding

¹³ This should serve to capture reforms that decisively move democracy towards a mass electoral system, as interpreted by contemporary political elites. Some examples are England's Second Reform Act in 1867 (Saunders 2007) and the Swedish Parliamentary Reform in 1866 (Holmberg 1959: 54–56).

that the Scandinavia's peaceful democratization is most consistent for competitive elections and suffrage and when compared with the rest of Europe.¹⁴

Robustness checks

I run a number of robustness tests with controlling for regional diffusion and employing alternative conceptualizations and measures of the main independent and dependent variables. First, the results may be artefacts of reversed causation in the sense that past societal violence records have shaped the prospects of democracy, such as is the case in the most stylized versions of the argument that revolutionary violence preconditions successful democratization (see Bernhard and Kopstein 2017). To test for reversed causality, Table VI in the Appendix runs two-stage least-squares regressions based on the base models. I use the regional average of democratization for each country-year, excluding the country in question. The average is based on the magnitude measures for each dimension of democracy as instruments for the domestic effect of democratization. On the one hand, it seems likely that violence and democracy have diffused according to regional dynamics in general and in Scandinavia specifically (see Derry 1979: 9-11). On the other hand, it is hard to imagine such regional diffusion yielding its effects without any domestic intermediation, implying that regional democratization effects on societal violence should only work if channeled through domestic democratization (see Weyland 2010). The results from the IV regressions support that democratization is generally, i.e. across all four dimensions, associated with societal violence and that these effects are not amenable to reversed causation (all four F-statistics pass the threshold of 10 to produce unbiased results for the TSLS estimator).

I then run models that examine the relevance of the specific conception of democratization. Models 1-4 in Table VII test my specific definition of period (i.e. protracted before and shortened after the democratization event) by employing the democratization magnitude variable lagged one year. The interaction terms with Scandinavia vs. the rest of Europe are negative and significant for all dimensions except competitive elections. Thus, the results differ somewhat in that civil and political liberties and executive constraints are significant while competitive elections is insignificant. Models 5-8 break more radically with my conception as they look at the impact of lagged level of democracy on each dimension. As we can see, the results are radically different. None of the direct effects of democracy level or the interaction terms are significant. This suggests that we see a general effect of democratization and not democracy level on societal violence levels.

¹⁴ The results stay the same if I employ a ten-year lag for the sequence end instead of a five-year lag.

Can we reproduce the results with alternative measures of the dependent and independent variables? In Table VIII, I perform tests that predict societal violence based on measures of democracy from some of the leading studies in the field. Model 1 employs the dichotomous indicator of democracy based on free and fair elections and full male suffrage from Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2014). This is one of the most popular measures used to estimate effects of being democratic as opposed to autocratic. We see that the effect of being democratic is positive and significant. This result is reproduced in Models 2 and 3 that employ the more fine-grained measures of democracy level based on the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (Skaaning, Gerring, and Bartusevicius 2015; see also Bartusevicius and Skaaning 2018) and the Polity IV combined score (Marshall et al. 2010; see also Hegre et al. 2001),¹⁵ respectively. We also see that none of the interaction terms is significant. These findings seem to confirm that the “more murders in the middle” thesis is indeed about democratization and not democracy levels. The former, as shown clearly in the previous tests, is related with increased societal violence, the latter is related with decreased societal violence.

I also run tests (not reported) that employ the dichotomous intra-state war measure from Correlates of War defining civil war as a conflict between a state government and non-state actor resulting in at least 1000 battle deaths for a given year (Sarkees and Wayman 2010). Substituting this for the indicators of societal violence reproduces the finding that democratization generally increases the level of civil conflict, but not in Scandinavia. Over the entire sample, there are no instances of civil war among the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

VI. Future research on Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism

Is there an exception of peaceful democratization in Scandinavia? Comparative democratization and conflict research largely take for granted that this is the case but have so far failed to deliver systematic, large-n analysis that compare levels of societal violence during democratization in Scandinavia with the rest of the world. This paper developed new measures of democratization and societal violence and conducted statistical analyses for a global sample of countries from 1789 to 2017 to answer the question. The results are more mixed than expected – indeed much more ambiguous than what common beliefs hold. They show that there was indeed a Scandinavian exception of peaceful democratization, but only

¹⁵ I code the values of -77 (transition) and -66 (foreign interference) as missing. Following convention, I code the value -88 (anarchy) as “0”, the mid-value between autocracy and democracy.

consistently so when we compare Scandinavian democratizations of competitive elections and suffrage with the rest of Europe before 1946. Thus, the Scandinavian exceptionalism, while clearly evident, is substantively, spatially, and temporally bounded.

If we want to further theorize and use models of Scandinavia's democratizations to build sustainable democracy in developing contexts, we first need to establish much more accurately than hitherto what Scandinavian democratizations looked like, what caused them, and what effects they had. This paper's results specifically speak to the latter research agenda. They imply that future research needs to reinvestigate the origins of peaceful democratization in Scandinavia altogether. The findings suggest that we should study prolonged processes of de facto improvements in electoral contestation and suffrage extensions during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Rather than becoming focal points for violent conflict, we should look for factors that enabled Scandinavian autocratic elites to reform their regimes without sparking revolutionary violence.

I believe a two-pronged focus on structural conditions and institutional legacies is fruitful. On the one hand, we need to think of the relatively low levels of rural (and later, general income) inequality that set Scandinavia apart from most of Europe already in the late 18th century. Relative equality probably lowered the baseline interest of the masses to engage in revolutionary violence. But this factor is likely insufficient as it does not explain how objective conditions of inequality could some places be perceived as less unjust or at least as amenable to change in the near future. Here, a focus on impartial state institutions – another historical particularity of Scandinavia – is warranted. Indeed, a stronger separation between politics and administration tended to separate bureaucrats from specific class interests and could thus raise beliefs that demands for political liberation had a fair chance of being adopted. Such a combination of relatively low levels of inequality and impartial state institutions is merely one of a number of potential propositions that could explain Scandinavia's exceptionalism of peaceful democratization.

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Appendix

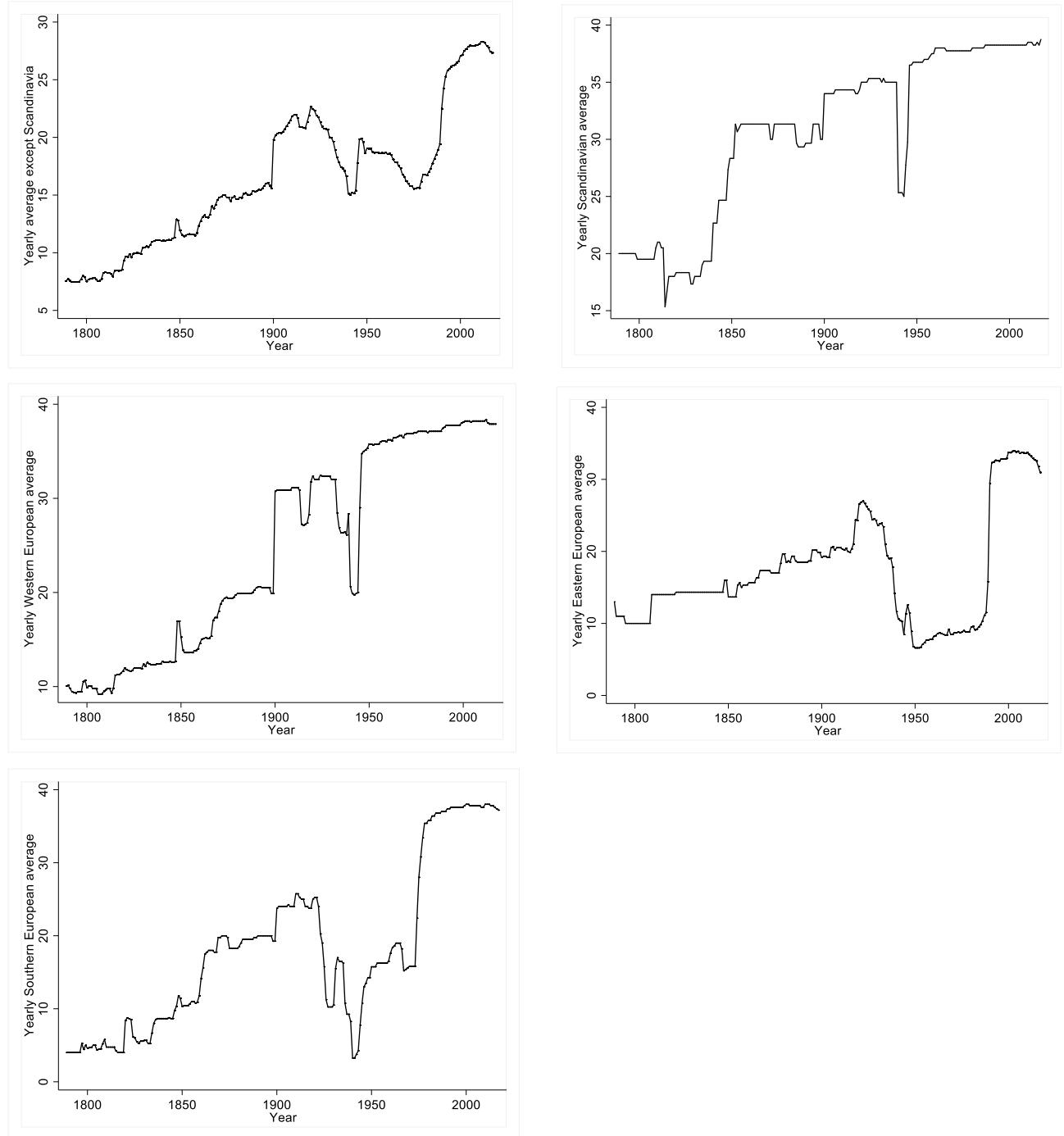
Table I: Regions and countries

Region	Country
Western Europe	Austria, Baden, Bavaria, Belgium, Brunswick, France, Germany, Hamburg, Hanover, Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Kassel, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mecklenburg Schwerin, Nassau, Netherlands, Oldenburg, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Saxony, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Würtemberg
Scandinavia	Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland
Southern Europe	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Papal States, Parma, Piedmont-Sardinia, Portugal, Spain, Tuscany, Two Sicilies
Eastern Europe	Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Modena, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine
Neo-Europe	Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States of America
Latin America	Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela
Sub-Saharan Africa	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe
MENA	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine/British Mandate, Palestine/Gaza, Palestine/West Bank, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Asia	Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Georgia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, North Korea, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Republic of Vietnam

Table II: Democracy components and measures

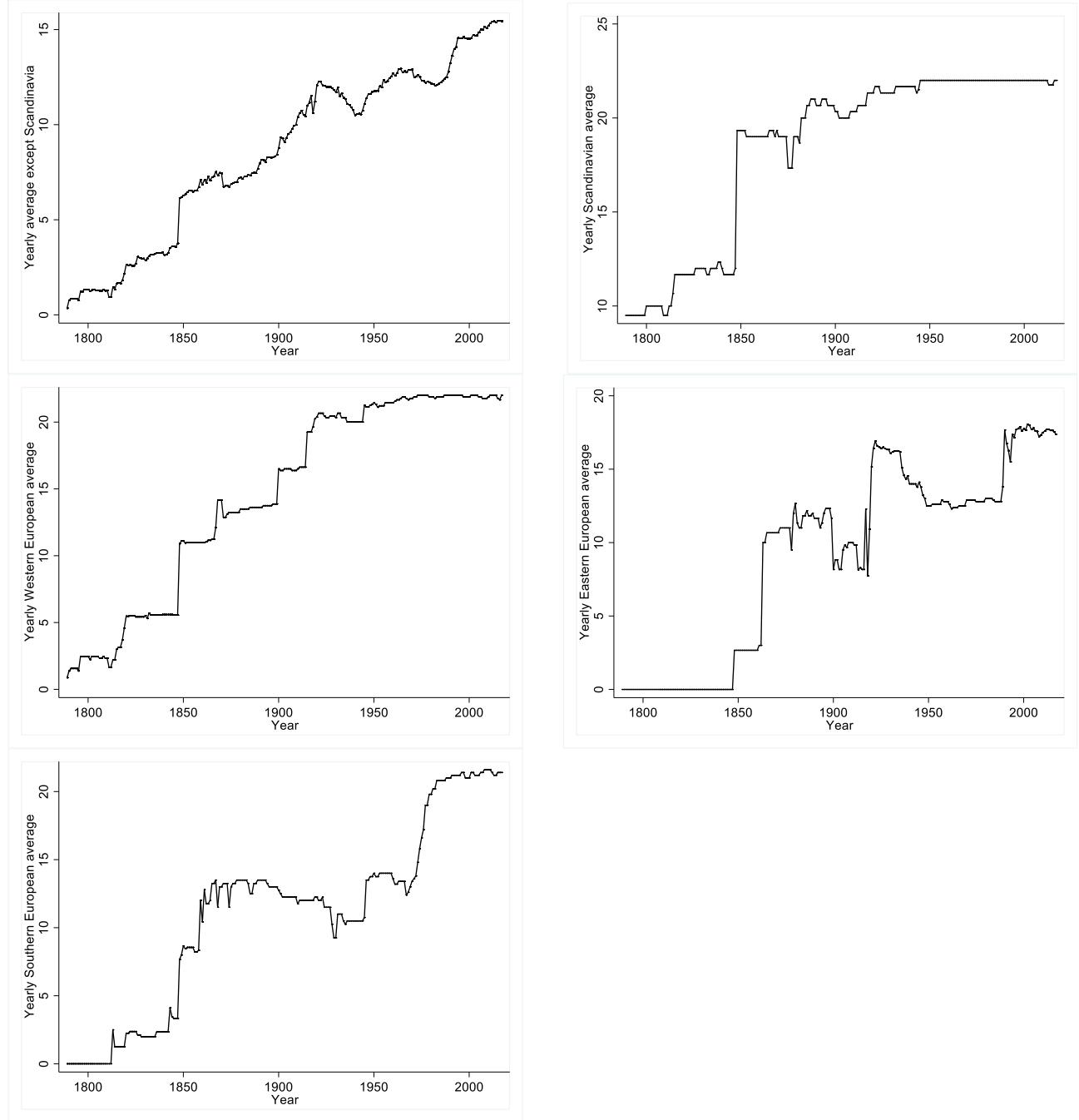
Constitutive components (V-Dem variable name)	Measure (by addition of components)	Value range of measure
Government censorship effort (v2mecenefm_ord) Harassment of journalists (v2meharjrn_ord) Print/broadcast media perspectives (v2merange_ord) Freedom of discussion for men (v2cldiscm_ord) Freedom of discussion for women (v2cldiscw_ord) Freedom of academic and cultural expression (v2clacfree_ord) Party ban (v2psparban_ord) Barriers to parties (v2psbars_ord) CSO entry and exit (v2cseerorgs_ord) CSO repression (v2csreprss_ord)	Civil and political liberties	0-39
Election free and fair (v2elfrfair_ord) Election other voting irregularities (v2elirreg_ord) Election voter buying (v2elvotbuy_ord) Election voter registry (v2elrgstry_ord) Elections multiparty (v2elmulpar_ord) Election assume office (v2elasmoff_ord)	Competitive elections	0-21
Executive oversight (v2lgotovst_ord) Legislature investigates in practice (v2lginvstp_ord) Legislature opposition parties (v2lgoppart_ord) Legislature controls resources (v2lgfunds_ord) Judicial reform (v2jureform_ord) High court independence (v2juhcind_ord) Lower court independence (v2juncind_ord)	Constraints on the executive	0-22
Percentage of population with suffrage (v2elsuffrage)	Suffrage	0-100 (%)

Figure I: Yearly average of democracy levels



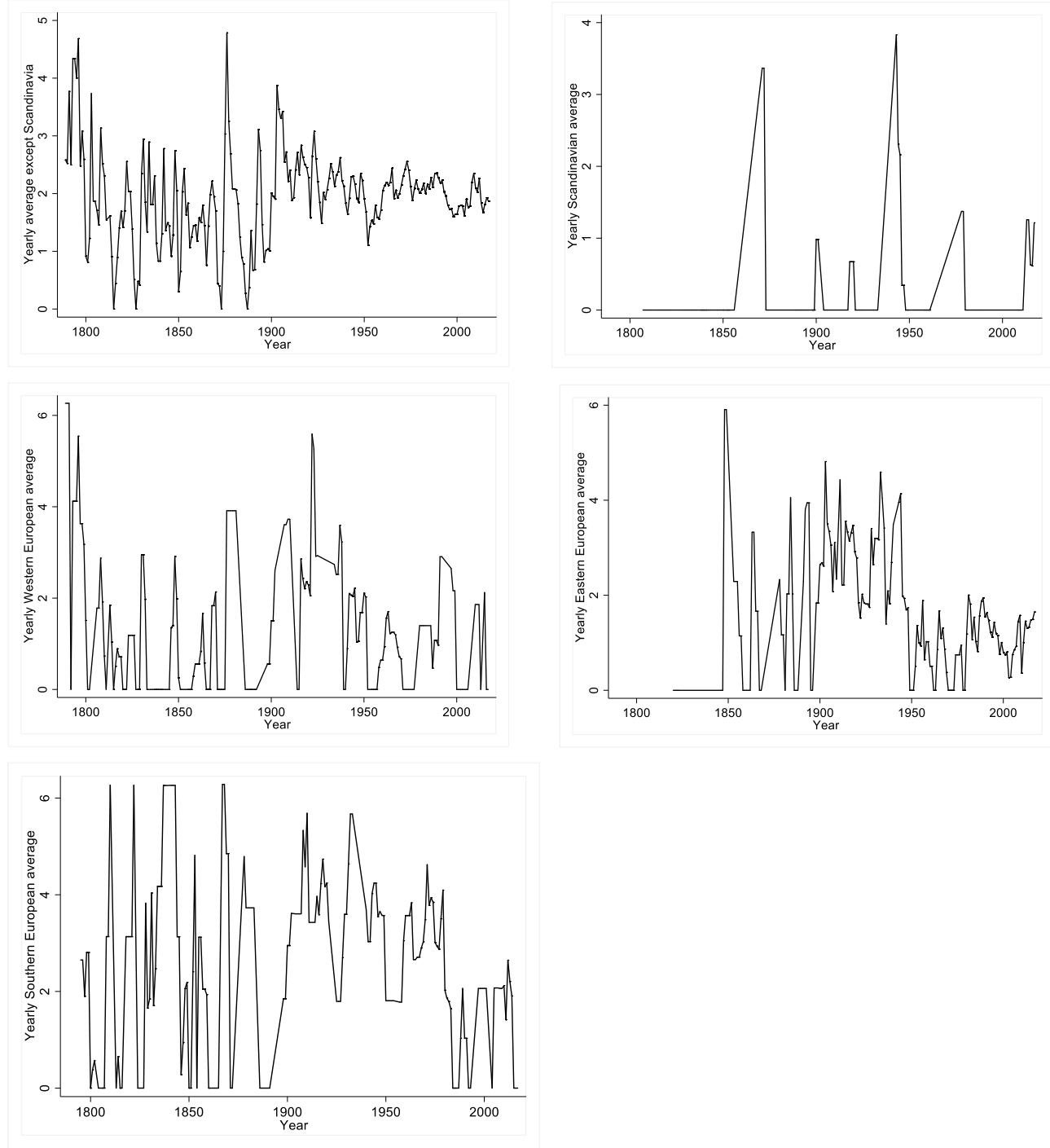
Note: Based on civil and political liberties.

Figure II: Yearly average of democracy levels



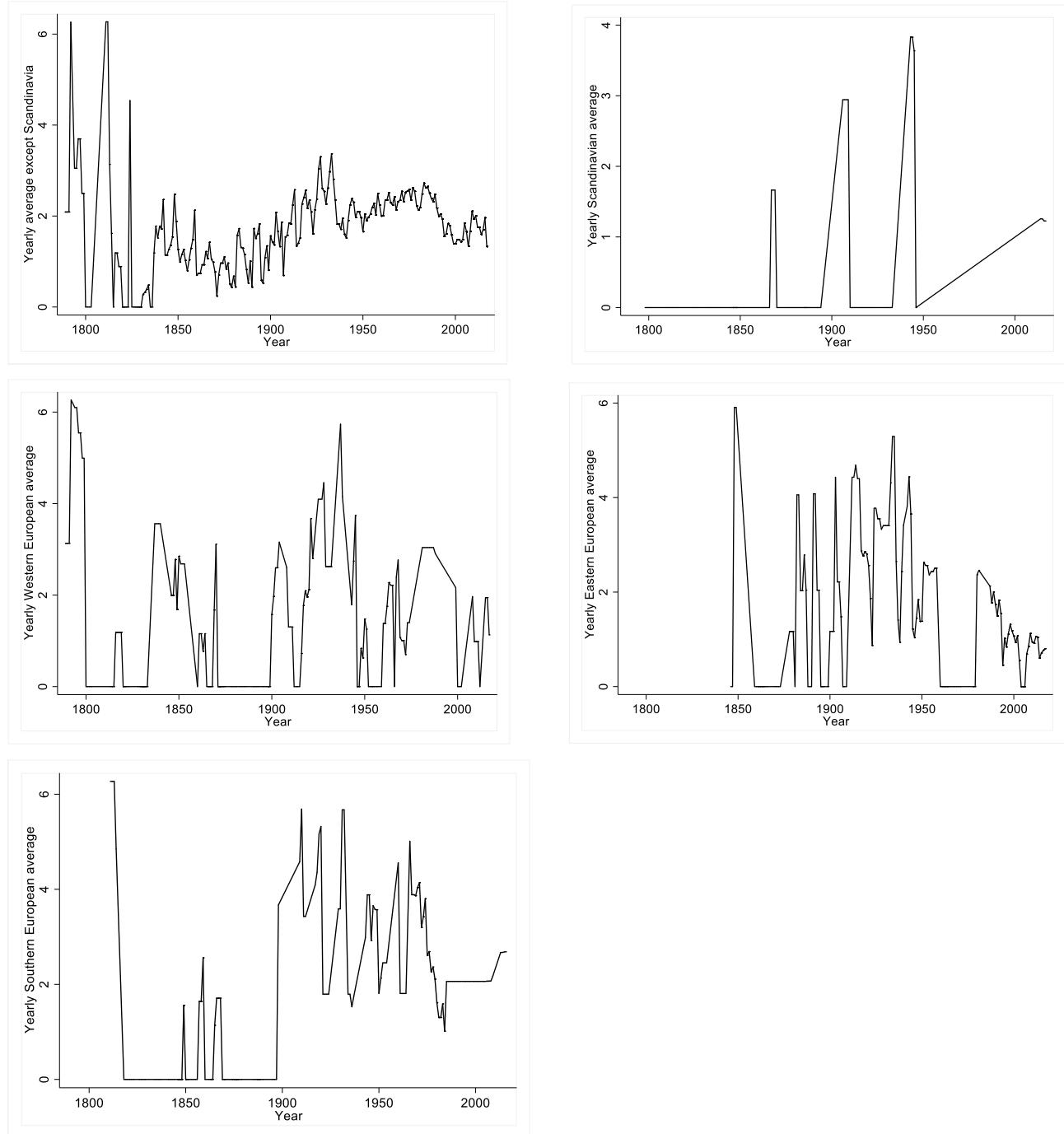
Note: Based on competitive elections.

Figure III: Yearly average of societal violence in 4-year democratization periods



Note: Based on civil and political liberties.

Figure IV: Yearly average of societal violence in 4-year democratization periods



Note: Based on competitive elections.

Table III: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, long 19th century

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Constraints on the executive	(3) Civil and political liberties	(4) Civil and political liberties	(5) Competitive elections	(6) Competitive elections	(7) Suffrage	(8) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1}	0.399 (0.249)	0.523* (0.282)	0.255** (0.098)	0.244* (0.132)	0.071 (0.076)	0.114 (0.073)	0.095*** (0.036)	0.121*** (0.040)
Scandinavia vs. All		-1.102*** (0.203)		-1.086*** (0.203)		-1.121*** (0.206)		-1.129*** (0.200)
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. All	-0.449* (0.251)		-0.274*** (0.099)		-0.105 (0.079)		-0.076* (0.039)	
Scandinavia vs. Europe			-0.864*** (0.237)		-0.851*** (0.231)		-0.884*** (0.240)	
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.573** (0.284)		-0.264* (0.133)		-0.148* (0.076)		-0.102** (0.042)
Constant	1.257*** (0.181)	1.020*** (0.218)	1.242*** (0.180)	1.007*** (0.212)	1.278*** (0.184)	1.041*** (0.220)	1.267*** (0.181)	0.984*** (0.206)
N country-years	7208	3522	7208	3522	7208	3522	7099	3522
N countries	85	42	85	42	85	42	85	42

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Table IV: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, 1789-1945

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Constraints on the executive	(3) Civil and political liberties	(4) Civil and political liberties	(5) Competitive elections	(6) Competitive elections	(7) Suffrage	(8) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1}	0.423** (0.201)	0.561** (0.227)	0.240*** (0.086)	0.239** (0.118)	0.096 (0.068)	0.127* (0.068)	0.078*** (0.023)	0.096*** (0.030)
Scandinavia vs. All		-1.218*** (0.165)		-1.210*** (0.166)		-1.197*** (0.167)		-1.193*** (0.164)
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. All	-0.026 (0.210)		-0.053 (0.100)		-0.143** (0.071)		-0.077*** (0.025)	
Scandinavia vs. Europe			-1.043*** (0.199)		-1.043*** (0.195)		-1.030*** (0.202)	
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.164 (0.235)		-0.052 (0.129)		-0.174** (0.070)		-0.095*** (0.032)
Constant	1.419*** (0.160)	1.243*** (0.195)	1.411*** (0.161)	1.244*** (0.190)	1.444*** (0.164)	1.278*** (0.200)	1.434*** (0.162)	1.232*** (0.189)
N country-years	8967	4244	8967	4244	8967	4244	8858	4244
N countries	98	49	98	49	98	49	98	49

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Table V: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, 1789-1899

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Constraints on the executive	(3) Civil and political liberties	(4) Civil and political liberties	(5) Competitive elections	(6) Competitive elections	(7) Suffrage	(8) Suffrage
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1}	0.390 (0.330)	0.649* (0.340)	0.249* (0.130)	0.288* (0.171)	0.075 (0.094)	0.154* (0.079)	0.088* (0.049)	0.121** (0.057)
Scandinavia vs. All	-1.064*** (0.197)		-1.047*** (0.197)		-1.078*** (0.200)		-1.080*** (0.196)	
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ##	-0.439 (0.331)		-0.269* (0.135)		-0.095 (0.095)		-0.080 (0.053)	
Scandinavia vs. All								
Scandinavia vs. Europe		-0.787*** (0.232)		-0.773*** (0.226)		-0.806*** (0.236)		-0.768*** (0.220)
4-year democratization magnitude _{t-1} ##		-0.697* (0.342)		-0.308* (0.175)		-0.173** (0.079)		-0.113* (0.060)
Scandinavia vs. Europe								
Constant	1.145*** (0.194)	0.868*** (0.229)	1.128*** (0.193)	0.854*** (0.223)	1.158*** (0.197)	0.886*** (0.234)	1.154*** (0.194)	0.842*** (0.217)
N country-years	6177	3119	6177	3119	6177	3119	6068	3119
N countries	78	40	78	40	78	40	78	40

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Table VI: 4-year democratization magnitude and societal violence, regional diffusion

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Civil and political liberties	(3) Competitive elections	(4) Suffrage
Panel A: Two-stage least squares (societal violence)				
4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1}	0.483 (0.355)	0.231* (0.123)	0.394 (0.386)	0.037 (0.042)
Liberalization first t_{-1}	-0.201 (0.230)	-0.202 (0.228)	-0.203 (0.232)	-0.212 (0.230)
Time period				
Interwar	1.276*** (0.285)	1.320*** (0.290)	1.339*** (0.291)	1.328*** (0.289)
Post World Wars	0.185 (0.250)	0.193 (0.248)	0.255 (0.236)	0.240 (0.243)
Post Cold War	-0.253 (0.191)	-0.196 (0.190)	-0.178 (0.193)	-0.155 (0.196)
Scandinavia vs. Europe	-0.950*** (0.198)	-0.949*** (0.196)	-0.941*** (0.194)	-0.968*** (0.194)
Panel B: First stage estimates for 4-year democratization magnitude t_{-1}				
Regional democratization average t_{-2}	0.205*** (0.033)	0.246*** (0.034)	0.113*** (0.028)	0.138*** (0.031)
First stage F-statistic	38.45	51.17	17.17	19.61
N country-years (TSLS)	6423	6423	6423	6423
N country-years (First stage)	6499	6499	6499	6499
N countries (TSLS)	60	60	60	60
N countries (First stage)	60	60	60	60

Note: IV regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Constant not reported. Panel B includes the same controls as panel A except 4-year democratization magnitude.

Table VII: Democratization magnitude, democracy level, and societal violence

	(1) Constraints on the executive	(2) Civil and political liberties	(3) Competitive elections	(4) Suffrage	(5) Constraints on the executive	(6) Civil and political liberties	(7) Competitive elections	(8) Suffrage
Democratization magnitude _{t-1}	0.052* (0.029)	0.033* (0.019)	0.029 (0.018)	0.018** (0.007)				
Democracy level _{t-1}					-0.021 (0.020)	-0.003 (0.009)	-0.003 (0.016)	-0.000 (0.005)
Time period								
Interwar	1.319*** (0.296)	1.322*** (0.296)	1.323*** (0.296)	1.312*** (0.297)	1.436*** (0.293)	1.356*** (0.300)	1.348*** (0.299)	1.349*** (0.386)
Post World Wars	0.231 (0.250)	0.230 (0.250)	0.237 (0.249)	0.235 (0.249)	0.357 (0.243)	0.273 (0.257)	0.261 (0.252)	0.265 (0.457)
Post Cold War	-0.160 (0.191)	-0.157 (0.191)	-0.150 (0.191)	-0.141 (0.191)	0.058 (0.228)	-0.082 (0.246)	-0.119 (0.243)	-0.124 (0.458)
Scandinavia vs. Europe	-1.025*** (0.172)	-1.022*** (0.170)	-1.030*** (0.173)	-1.022*** (0.171)	-0.196 (0.552)	-0.691* (0.398)	-1.005*** (0.295)	-0.892*** (0.268)
Democratization magnitude _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe	-0.075** (0.030)	-0.047** (0.022)	-0.031 (0.021)	-0.024*** (0.009)				
Democracy level _{t-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe					-0.042 (0.032)	-0.010 (0.013)	-0.001 (0.017)	-0.002 (0.004)
Constant	1.069*** (0.211)	1.066*** (0.210)	1.068*** (0.212)	1.063*** (0.210)	1.174*** (0.243)	1.106*** (0.239)	1.091*** (0.246)	1.064*** (0.234)
N country-years	6522	6522	6522	6521	6522	6522	6522	6521
N countries	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Outcome variable = societal violence level.

Table VIII: Reexaminations based on extant measures

	(1) Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2014)	(2) Bartusevicius and Skaaning (2018)	(3) Hegre et al. (2001)
Democracy t_{-1}	-0.607* (0.316)	-0.108* (0.061)	-0.038* (0.021)
Time period			
Interwar	1.193*** (0.304)	1.158*** (0.335)	1.082*** (0.309)
Post World Wars	0.102 (0.302)	0.182 (0.308)	0.048 (0.313)
Post Cold War	-0.198 (0.280)	-0.033 (0.278)	-0.192 (0.315)
Scandinavia vs. Europe	-1.371*** (0.334)	-1.248** (0.405)	-1.354*** (0.226)
Democracy t_{-1} ## Scandinavia vs. Europe	0.384 (0.420)	0.039 (0.087)	0.020 (0.022)
Constant	1.621*** (0.311)	1.559*** (0.292)	1.398*** (0.296)
N country-years	4868	5315	4797
N countries	49	54	47

Note: OLS regressions. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-sided test). Reference category for time period = Long 19th century. Outcome variable = societal violence level.