V-Dem

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IRAN

A COUNTRY REPORT BASED ON DATA 1900-2012

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Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a new approach to the 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 that comprises almost ten staff members, and a project team across the world with four Principal Investigators, fifteen Project Managers, 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[1].

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

Introduction

This country report portrays key aspects of the democratic development in Iran from 1900 to 2014. It is based on V-Dem data and focuses on the historical development of six key aspects of democracy in Iran: electoral, liberal, deliberative, egalitarian, participatory, and political empowerment of women. This report begins with an overview of the Iranian political history from 1900 until the present, and then investigates the historical development of the six aspects, paying close attention to Iran's development in participatory democracy, liberal democracy, and political empowerment of women. The development in these particular aspects has historically struggled, hindering overall democratic progress in Iran. The report concludes with the state of democracy in Iran today and a hope for future democratic development.

Overview: Iranian Politics from the Qajar Shahs to the Islamic Republic

Like many Middle-Eastern nations, Iran has experienced a long history of authoritarian leaders, international interventions, repressive policies, and wide-scale political violence. Political power has been held in the hands of autocratic regimes almost exclusively, with only brief democratic intervals. Similarly, international forces, either through direct military intervention or through support of autocratic coups, have often encouraged or sustained authoritarian regimes to the detriment of democratic values. Revolutions and protests, often bloody, have led to nominal democratization, but when autocratic regimes fall to popular uprisings, they are usually replaced by another authoritarian regime (Kamrava 1992). As this report will show, the intertwining of all of these factors in Iran's struggle for democratization provides an interesting case study for democratization and political development.

Fundamentally, Iran is one of the oldest democratic systems in the Middle East, with foundations in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905. The revolution ended in the establishment of a national constitution and the election of a parliament, the Majles, in 1906.However, political power still largely rested in the hands of the monarch, the Qajar Shah, and his ministers, who after a coup d'état in 1908 led to the dissolution of the Majles and began a civil war for control of the government. The Shah's military forced constitutionalists into a long siege at Tabriz, but Russian intervention led to a turnaround, with proponents of the constitution capturing Tehran

in late 1909. The Shah abdicated in favor of his son, Ahmad, and the Majles was reestablished in 1910. This was an important step towards democratization, but the Iranian government remained severely underdeveloped. The Majles lacked any real institutional support for the laws that it enacted, and the government lacked domestic and international autonomy following the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, which divided Iran into competing spheres of British and Russian influence. Further hindering democracy, the Majles was dissolved by government Ministers fearful of a Russian march on Tehran. Ahmad Shah regained control, but influence by Russia and Britain dominated almost all political decisions (Daniel 2012).

International influence over domestic actions increased after the onset of World War I in 1914. Hoping to stay out of the conflict by remaining neutral, Iran inadvertently became a front in the battle between Russia, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire. The war exposed the government's inability to protect the nation from foreign invasion, leading to widespread dissolution of central authority as cabinets were established and dissolved within the span of months. After the war ended and Russia became involved with its own domestic revolution, Britain was left with dominant influence over Iran. The Anglo-Persian agreement of 1919, granting London access to Iranian oil-fields, was widely interpreted as establishing a British protectorate over Iran, and the Majles heavily opposed it (Kamvara 1992).

After the devastation of World War I, Iran's already weak state began to crumble further. Between 1917 and 1921, over 2 million Iranians died from war, disease, or starvation, and the government was exhausted, lacking resources, and vulnerable to a power seizure. In 1921, a coup d'état—supported by British forces—allowed the commander of the Cossack Brigade, General Reza Khan to seize control of the government and establish a military dictatorship under himself as Minister of War. He moved to invalidate British influence in Iran, re-establishing Iran's domestic autonomy. Reza Khan spent the next four years consolidating power within his Ministry, dominating the Cabinet and forcing the Shah, now effectively stripped of authority, to flee Iran in 1923. On October 31, 1925, a special Majles was called to formally depose the Qajar monarchy, establishing a new dynasty under Reza Shah Pahlavi (Kamvara 1992).

After his coronation, Reza Shah began to reconstruct the broken Iranian government. The new Shah managed to build the failed nation into a centralized bureaucratic state, but his rule was marked by brutal authoritarianism and absolute monarchical control of political institutions. He retained the electoral laws agreed upon by the Majles, but he personally chose the makeup of parliament by banning political parties and using local electoral boards headed by

centralized state ministers to control candidate access, effectively turning the Majles into an extension of his authority. His political domination allowed the Shah to implement various social and religious reforms, limiting the influence of the clerical establishment in an attempt to shape Iran into a modern-state. The reforms did not stop with society and religion; the Shah also targeted the Iranian economy, establishing state-owned factories that were run by European—predominantly German—engineers. His economic reforms created a new aristocracy centered around the growing Iranian capital, benefitting loyal military officers and a small number of entrepreneurs and merchants that were able to exploit the new mercantile system. The old aristocracy declined in wealth and power, and the heavy taxation needed for the Shah's state-building decimated the economic prospects of middle and lower class Iranians. Growing discontent with the Shah's reforms, combined with the regime's pro-Germany leaning, led to his abdication in favor of his son Mohammad following the Anglo-Russian invasion in 1941 (Kamrava 1992).

The absolutist monarchy of Reza Shah crumbled following his abdication. Mohammad Shah held little real authority, and the nation was occupied with Allied forces throughout the end of World War II. When domestic control was returned to the Iranian government after the war, the constitutional monarchy intended by the 1906 Constitution was implemented. The Shah retained control of the military, but the Majles and its Cabinet saw a political resurrection. For the next 13 years, political power shifted between the Majles, the Cabinet, and the Shah. Following heavy repression during the reign of Reza Shah, new political parties formed and began to dominate politics—many of which united under the coalition of the National Front (*Jebe'eh-e Melli)* led by Muhammad Mosaddegh. Supported by the coalition and the middle class, Mosaddegh became Prime Minister in 1951, and he used the Majles to achieve nationalization of the oil industry against the opposition of the Shah and many Western governments. Mossadegh and his National Front alienated many elites within the government and threatened to encroach on the Shah's power, prompting the Shah and his ruling elite to attempt a coup in August of 1953. Mosaddegh held onto power and the Shah fled, but only days later, with the support of British and American C.I.A. agents and General Fazlollah Zahedi, opponents of Mosaddegh overthrew him in a successful coup d'état, allowing the Shah to gain full control of government (Daniel 2012).

After the coup, Iran faced an authoritarian regression as the Shah consolidated personal control over all state institutions. He held full control of the military, as well as control over the

election of the Majles and the appointment of Ministerial positions, appointing those loyal to the crown. All political and military decisions were under the authority of Shah with little room for deliberation or input from subordinates. To build up the state's power, the Shah established new Ministries and broadened the scope of others. In 1963, he attempted to modernize the nation through his White Revolution, a system of economic and social reforms aimed at increasing the monarchy's power. The White Revolution increased the Shah's control, but it also led to widespread anti-government opposition throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. The Shah's economic reforms unveiled class divisions and saw widespread clerical opposition to social and political changes, like the suffrage of women. The economic reforms were seen by many Iranians as corrupt, allowing clergy and the religious establishment to place themselves in opposition to the regime's growing corruption and unpopular social change. This strengthened citizens' connection with the clergy—who would lead the 1979 Revolution—as anti-monarchical sentiment grew. To counter the growing discontent, the Shah declared Iran a one-party state under the Resurgence party. All other parties were banned and the new state party began to penetrate its organization into non-state sectors of the Iranian society, threatening to encroach upon the traditional middle class merchant guilds and the powerful clerical establishment and cause a resurgence of the animosity the Iranian state faced in the early Twentieth Century. The Shah dissolved the party and admitted his error in 1978, but it was too late. Discontent with the White Revolution and the formation of the Resurgence Party and its totalitarian ideology set the stage for the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (Abrahaim 2008).

Political, religious, and social tensions were unleashed following the Qom Incident in January 1978, when students and protestors clashed with regime forces during a protest. The Qom incident set off a series of escalating clashes between the regime and opposition forces throughout 1978, forcing the Shah to declare martial law in an effort to quell the uprisings. After massive demonstrations, organized largely by the *ulama*, the regime realized that it could no longer maintain control, and the Shah fled the country in February of 1979. The power vacuum left by the Shah's flight allowed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, exiled for his opposition to the White Revolution, to return to Iran and take charge of the uprising. Upon his triumphant homecoming, Khomeini appointed his own government in opposition to the provincial government left behind by the Shah. Khomeini's government took control in Tehran after military support for the old regime crumbled, allowing Khomeini and the clerical establishment to gain power and implement a plan for the establishment of an Islamic government. The 1979

Islamic Revolution along with the establishment of the repressive Islamic regime remains one of the most important turning points for Iranian democracy (Abrahaim 2008).

A national referendum directly followed the end of the Shah's regime where more than 20 million Iranians voted to implement the world's first Islamic Republic (Abrahaim 2008). The new republic held national elections shortly after the revolution, instituting an Assembly of Experts (*Majles-e Khebregan*)—a body of 86 clerics elected to 8-year terms—that would deliberate on a new constitution, instituting an Islamic Republic. The constitution, ratified by popular referendum in December of 1979, granted Khomeini the title of Supreme Leader, an unelected office with no term limit, and gave him immense control over the Iranian state as the head of the armed forces, the judiciary, and security and intelligence services. Even while granting immense power and autonomy to the Supreme Leader, the constitution called for the direct popular election of the President, the Majles, and the Assembly of Experts—which appoints and then monitors the decisions of the Supreme Leader—as well as the formation of the 12-member Council of Guardians. The council is responsible for approving all candidates for national office and for ensuring that all bills passed by the Majles are in accordance with Islamic Law. The structure of the constitution put immense amounts of power in the hands of the Leader and his clerical coalition. The Guardian Council, appointed by the Supreme Leader and his judicial system, allowed conservatives to control participation and regime competition in elections, while the Assembly of Experts, intended as an institutional check on the Leader, rarely challenged the decisions of Khomeini. Political power was—and remains—essentially in the hands of the Supreme Leader and his circle of regime-elites, and the judiciary and security services were often used to enforce the Ayatollah policies (Abrahaim 2008).

In order to consolidate power and rebuild the Iranian government, Khomeini relied on the popular appeal of Islam, establishing Iran's domestic security service, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), to implement his will and silence opponents of the regime. Under Khomeini, the Islamic regime established itself as the religious authority over all manners of society, with the Supreme Leader enacting strict codes of behavior enforced by the IRGC. Throughout his decade in power, Khomeini's repressive policies were upheld and implemented by the Judiciary and other key state institutions. Further institutionalizing the Supreme Leader's domestic authority, the war with Iraq, which began after Iraq—fearful that Iran's Revolution would promote further Islamic revolution across the Middle East— invaded in late 1980, allowed Khomeini to increase Iran's military power under the premise of strengthening the war

effort against Iraq. Iran took the upper hand in the conflict, but Khomeini refused to sue for peace until mid-1988, and the almost-eight-year conflict claimed countless lives on both sides (Abrahaim 2008). Upon Khomeini's death in 1989, President Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, long seen as his likely successor, was elected Supreme Leader. Because Khamenei lacked the religious qualifications and popularity of his predecessor, the constitution was altered to establish his power and give him final authority over all domestic and foreign policy, leading to a new resurgence of authoritarianism. Khamenei and the conservative-controlled Majles continued the repressive practices of the previous administration, although all final say on legislation now rested with the Supreme Leader (Kamrava 1992).

The Iranian regime did not gain a moderating voice until the Presidential election of 1997, when economic problems and general apathy towards the regime allowed Sayyid Mohammad Khatami to win the presidency, embarrassing the regime-backed candidate, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nour, by gaining over 70 percent of the vote. A prominent reformist, Khatami called for a renovation of the executive system and the establishment of actual constitutional governance, including the limitation of unelected state institutions. After reformists won a Majles majority in 2000, Khatami was able to implement several of his planned reforms, liberalizing the political system, decreasing governmental control of the media, and granting more institutional power to reformists. Khatami and his coalition remained in power until the 2004 elections, when the Guardian Council banned hundreds of moderate candidates associated with his reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front. The political damage caused by the bans allowed a conservative-coalition to sweep the 2004 Majles elections, halting hope for further reform. In 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a conservative directly opposed to the Khatami-era reforms, won the Presidential election, swinging political power away from reform and beginning a new-era of government repression (Abrahaim 2008). His re-election in 2009 was widely disputed with massive protests against the election occurring around the capital city, known as The Green Movement, but the demonstrations were harshly repressed and Ahmadinejad remained in power until the 2013 election, when he was constitutionally barred from seeking a third term.

Today, the government of Iran remains the oppressive Islamic Republic with Khamenei at its helm. The Ayatollah and his religious establishment still hold power over key institutions within the Iranian state, and Iranian elections remain neither completely free nor fair as the Guardian Council, controlled by conservatives, often rejects candidates that are considered too radical or unpopular with regime elites. However, as this report will detail, there is reason to

suspect change. The Green Movement in 2009, exposed rifts between the Presidency and the Supreme Leader, simultaneously inciting divisions between hardliners and moderates within the Islamic regime. The growing rift culminated in the 2012 parliamentary elections, when the Guardian Council disqualified many incumbent Ahmadinejad-supporters from running for re-election. The growing rift between the elected President and his government and the unelected Supreme Leader and his theocratic institutions underscores the growing tension between the religious regime and the Iranian population (Freedom House 2016).

Additionally, Hassan Rouhani, a popular reformist, was elected to the Presidency in 2013, and he remains an important force of moderation within the regime. The Nuclear Agreement between Iran and several Western nations—which Rouhani has widely been credited for—was a major loss for hardliners in the regime who seek to continue Iran's international isolation. Further hope for reform came in the form of the 2016 elections, when a coalition of moderate and reformist candidates allied with Rouhani managed to wrestle a majority in the Majles away from the Ayatollah-backed conservative parties. This in spite of an attempted crack-down by the Guardian Council. While hardline reformist candidates are still regularly barred from participation in elections, the 2016 elections show that when given moderate choices, many Iranians will take them. Although public demonstrations against the regime are extremely rare, the Iranian people continue to voice their growing opposition to the hardline policies of the regime during the campaign season. What a more moderate government can do for Iranian democratization when confronted with the Supreme Leader and his theocratic establishment's tight-grip on power will need to be monitored in the coming months and years, but this report seeks to provide some historical context and an in-depth analyzes of recent democratization efforts in Iran.

A General Development of Democratic Components

Figure 1 shows the development of Iran in six important dimensions of democracy: *electoral, liberal, deliberative, egalitarian, and participatory aspects of democracy,* as well as a more specific index that measures *empowerment of women* in the Iranian political system. The components are measured on a scale of 0 to 1, where a 0 suggests that a country has experienced the lowest possible score that V-Dem allows.

Throughout the course of the figure, development in the components follows a similar trajectory, experiencing advancement and regression as regimes rise and fall and change. The first major change to these six components of democracy in Iran comes during the Constitutional Revolution in 1906, though the advancements reversed following the coup of 1921 and the regression to authoritarianism under the new Shah. After the ouster of Reza Khan and the creation of a more democratic regime under the new Shah, these aspects increase dramatically throughout the 1940s, only to fall again after the coup of 1953 returned power to the hands of the Shah.
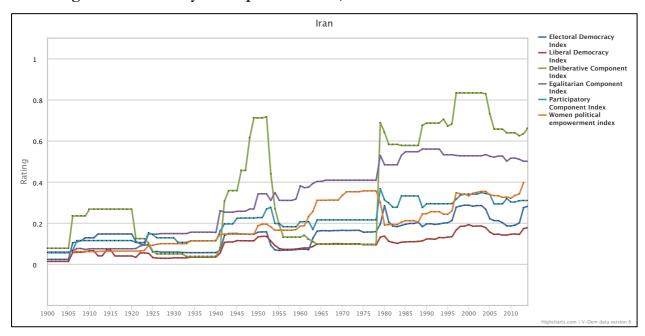
Figure 1. Democracy development of Iran, 1900-2012

The "White Revolution" during 1963 sees further—although nominal—positive development in these aspects, but the Shah's unitary actions, meant to strengthen the regime's hold on power, causes the components of deliberative and participatory democracy to deteriorate. The greatest democratic development on the figure—excluding the development of the women's political empowerment, which falls following the introduction of Sharia Law and the restriction of women's rights within the new regime—comes as a result of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. However, the advance quickly reverses from this peak as the new regime looked to undemocratic means to consolidate power and stabilize the new regime. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Iran's scores across the indices experience a general upturn, increasing dramatically

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after reformers under President Khatami come to power in the late 1990s. While, conservatives regained control of the Majles and reversed many reforms, several important reforms of the Khatami-era remain in effect today.

Overall, a general positive development can be seen among the indices. Still, with the exception of the deliberative and egalitarian components, Iran's scores remain very low for all dimensions, failing to reach above 0.4 for the entirety of the figure and remaining under or near 0.2 for the majority. Although democracy has made incremental progress throughout Iran's history, development lacks far below that of other nations, and the low scores for *the electoral, liberal, participatory, and political empowerment of women measurements* suggests that Iran struggles with limited public participation in all political processes, low levels of electoral competition and institutional electoral inequality, limited protection of individual and minority rights, and high restriction of women's access to influence or affect political decision-making. Most indices remain low, but the egalitarian and deliberative components both rest above the half-mark on the figure implying that public goods are available to a wide-swath of the population and that political decisions are increasingly being reached through a deliberative process involving dialogue and public justification.

The general positive development of the indices shows that Iran is making a nominal move toward democratization in all dimensions. However, the country still has a long way to go to achieve democracy, especially a liberal democracy, with Iran's score on the liberal component failing to increase past 0.2 for the entirety of the figure. Restrictions on civil liberties, low political empowerment and societal standing of women, and low levels of public participation—both electorally and non-electorally—have been, and continue to be, some of the greatest hindrances to achieving democracy in Iran. This brief overview of democratic components in Iran indicates several problem areas for democratization efforts in Iran, allowing us to analyze their impact in the following sections of this report. The following sections will analyze Iran's V-Dem scores for components of the participatory, liberal, and the political empowerment of women aspects of democracy to show that Iran's struggle to achieve full democracy in these aspects has hindered overall democratization in the country.

Public Participation: The Role of Civil Society in Iranian Politics

Although Iran's 1979 Revolution was widely considered a "popular" movement—with over 11 percent of the population participating—the current regime does little to encourage popular participation in politics, often repressing and stifling civil society within the nation (Milani 2015). Iranian civil society has historically struggled and the struggle continues: civil society organizations (CSOs) battle to gain widespread participation and popularity, few non-state sponsored CSOs exist, and voluntary participation is not widespread. Iranians experience little social or institutional pressure to integrate into groups or to form organization. In addition, CSOs opposed to the government have been widely discouraged throughout much of Iran's history. Even so, anti-system movements and oppositional CSOs have played a role in inciting regime change; before every period of major regime change, anti-system movements have amplified and posed severe threat to the ruling regime—reaching a peak shortly before the most prominent regime change in Iranian history, the Islamic Revolution. Figure 2 displays the robustness of civil society in Iran (measured by the *core civil society index)*, which includes measures of *governmental control over the entry and exit of CSOs into public life*, *governmental CSO repression*, *CSO anti-system opposition movements,* and *the overall CSO participatory environment.*
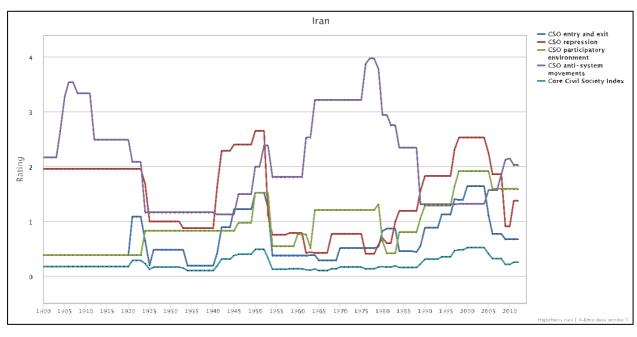
Figure 2. Development of the Core civil society index in Iran, 1900-2012

The figure indicates that participation in CSOs has historically been restricted by autocratic regimes experiencing brief periods of liberalization before ultimately regressing. Obstacles to healthy civil society have been widespread and participation has been limited by government repression. The first negative development in the figure comes after Reza Khan gained power in the early 1920s. In his effort to build up the Iranian state, Reza Shah limited participation in CSOs, including the once powerful middle-class trade unions. CSOs were repressed, state control over public organization became near monopolistic, and few non-state or religious CSOs were tolerated, as indicated by the overall negative trend of the figure from 1921-1941. After the abdication of the Shah in 1941, state-sponsored control over CSOs became less widespread and repression was limited by the new government. However, following the coup d'état of 1953, the state reconstituted control over CSOs, returning to the repressive practices of Reza Shah, causing the negative regression of indices in Figure 2. Although the state continued its near monopolistic political control of CSOs once again, anti-system movements increased as public unrest and anti-regime demonstration increased following the Shah's unilateral action in the White Revolution in 1963. As the Shah's personal rule become institutionalized within the state, dissent with the Shah increasingly became dissent with the governmental system, and the regime's repressive actions left little room for oppositional forces to act without turning to radical means, accounting for the increase in the anti-system movement components throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. After the imposition of the one-party system in 1975, repression of CSOs increased, and dissent with the regime skyrocketed, forcing the Shah to back-down and dismantle the party.

But the damage was already done. In 1979, people took to the streets in widespread protests and massive demonstrations against the Shah, toppling the regime in the Islamic Revolution. Following the Revolution, the new theocratic government loosened control over CSOs slightly, but, though repression continued to decrease, the state once again reconstituted near monopolistic political control over CSOs. In the period from the revolution until 2004, Iran experiences an upturn in the *CSO repression, control of CSO entry into public life*, and *voluntary participation in CSOs measurements,* experiencing a peaking during the Khatami presidency as he introduced minor reforms aimed at liberalizing the Islamic Republic's control of society. After the conservative-resurgence of 2004-2005, CSO control and repression by the government increased as the Ahmadinejad administration worked to stymie Khatami-era reforms, harassing and closing CSOs, and using security laws to suppress any cultural dissent (Beyeler 2008). The

repressive moves of the Ahmadinejad government cause a regression across all indices since 2004. The 2009 Green Movement, an anti-system movement against the speculated rigging of the Presidential election in favor of Ahmadinejad, was widely repressed and the CSOs that participated were forced to dissolve. The violent repression of the Movement led to an overall decrease in public demonstrations against the regime, although tensions still exist between the Iranian public and the regime's attempted control of civil society.

Currently, civil society is a weak counter-force to the Islamic regime. Following conservative pushback to the Khatami presidency, governmental control over CSOs has been amplified, and there has been negative development across the board. Although a reformist President holds office, his political power has been limited by the Supreme Leader and conservative-dominated Majles, and the current regime retains substantial political control over CSOs, engaging in moderate repression and harassment to suppress non-government organizations that oppose the state. Figure 2 underscores the many obstacles to robust civil society and the historical struggle Iran has faced to develop a healthy, autonomous civil society. However, there is prospect for improvement. Conservative pushback against CSOs and recent attempts to impose state control over society has resulted in "underground revolutions"—democratic activists demonstrating their discontent with the regime through small acts of defiance in daily life—as evidenced by the upswing in anti-system movements evident since 2004 (Milani 2015). Although the IRGC still brutally suppresses all open voices for change and the Ayatollah and his clerical establishment still hold immense power over the daily lives and religious practices of Iranian citizens, these "micro-political" anti-regime actions and the consistent electoral support for modest and reformist candidates may help break the regime's authoritarian grip on society (Milani 2015).

Liberal Democracy: Selected Civil Liberties and Indicators of Equality in Iran

In addition to the struggle for a healthy and robust civil society, Iran has long struggled with granting consistent and equal access to civil liberties to all of its citizens. Throughout much of its history, important civil liberties have been denied to large sectors of the population, based largely on social group standing and socioeconomic class. Understanding how various regimes have restricted or expanded civil liberties can allow a better understanding of their role in the story of

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Iranian democratization. Figure 3 displays several important components of the liberal democracy index, measuring several indicators of civil liberties and freedom in Iran, including measures of: *freedom of academic and cultural expression, freedom from torture, freedom from political killings, civil liberties granted based on socioeconomic class,* and *civil liberties granted based on social group.*
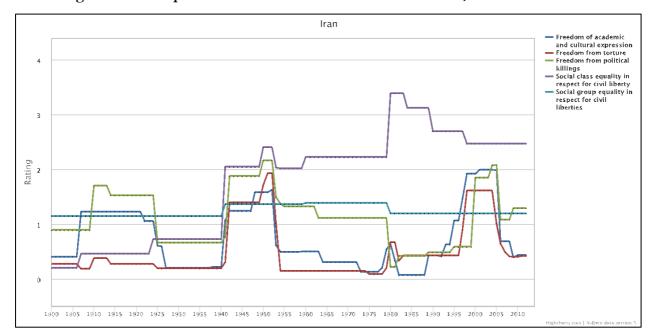
Figure 3. Development of indicators of civil liberties in Iran, 1900-2012

The figure shows that citizens' rights to freedom of expression, freedom from political killing, and freedom from torture have not been respected by the government for the majority of Iran's history, although there are brief periods of liberalization. The figure also shows that civil rights have been largely withheld from members of particular social groups—particularly non-state tolerated religious groups such as the Baha'is —and those without high socioeconomic standing, although this last measure has improved markedly over the course of the figure, especially upon the implementation of the Islamic Republic in 1979 (Kamvara 1992).

The Constitutional Revolution sees the first shift to liberalization, with freedom of expression becoming weakly accepted and political killing decreasing in frequency. Following the rise of Reza Shah in 1925, these nominal civil liberties were restricted, political killings became systematic, and all cultural and academic expression was carefully monitored by the Shah in order to control his consolidation of political power. Following his forced abdication in 1941, the new government liberalized, ceasing the approval of political killings and ordered torture from the

top-levels of government and reducing the government's control of cultural expression. Although the poor received greater civil liberties under the new government, certain social groups still experienced substantially fewer civil liberties than the general population. These changes account for the significant development in Iran's scores across all indices post-1941.

The new government's liberalization was brought to a halt following the 1953 coup d'état, after which the Shah resorted to torture and killings to incite confessions and crack down on opponents and increase his hold on power. Establishing a domestic security and intelligence service, the SAVAK, in 1957, the Shah exerted immense control over the Iranian state, controlling all forms of cultural expression. The SAVAK's influence grew throughout the Shah's reign, and the organization gained immense power to act unilaterally to quell dissidence, both inside and outside of the regime. The SAVAK continued its use of political killings, torture, and repression of expression and media freedom until it was dissolved in the 1979 Revolution.

Following the Revolution, lower socioeconomic classes gained greater freedoms, but Iran experiences gradual deterioration in this index following its peak in the early years of the Supreme Leader's rule. The leaders of the Revolution executed thousands of previous regime leaders and officers, forcing a significant decrease in the *freedom from political killings index* (Daniel 2012). Torture, and repression of cultural expression remained widespread after the Revolution, incited and approved by the the Supreme Leader and his inner circle of clerical elites. Khomeini's regime instituted the "Iranian Cultural Revolution" to purge the country of all non-Islamic cultural influence, forcing the Ayatollah's notion of theocratic rule on the nation. Using the IRGC as a powerful instrument to ensure compliance with the new Islamist-state ideology, dissent with the regime was widely suppressed. After Khamenei assumed the position of Supreme Leader in 1989, the Ministry of Cultural and Islamic Guidance slightly eased up on its monopolistic control of cultural expression, and after President Khatami appointed his reformist Minister in 1997, only strong government criticism was met with repression. Khatami's reforms to the Ministry lasted until he lost the Presidency in 2005 (Abrahaim 2008).

There is a brief period of liberalization in Iran during the Khatami-era presidency (1997-2005) when torture and administration-incited executions became less frequently used as political tools, though the scores remained less than their peaks under Prime Minister Mosaddegh in the 1950s. Since the resurgence of conservative-support in the Majles in the 2004 elections, conservative forces within the regime stymied civil and political freedoms. Following the victory of Ahmadinejad in 2005, the regime reverted back to its repressive policies against cultural

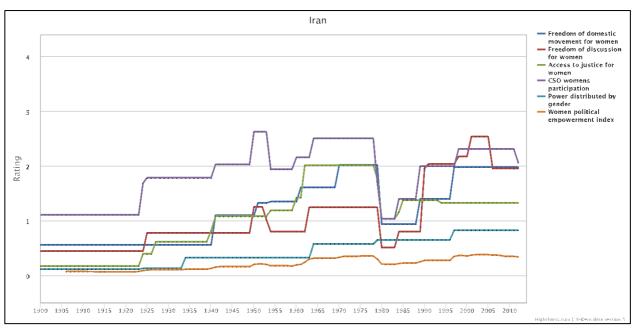expression, inciting the IRGC to use torture to elicit wrongful confessions from dissenters and approving the executions of oppositional competition, resulting in the massive regression of civil-liberties after 2005, accounting for Iran's sudden reversal across almost all indices.

Moderates recently gained a voice in the regime, but online activists, oppositional journalists, and human-rights defenders who voice concern with the repressive policies are frequently arrested, tried, and often tortured by the IRGC because of the Supreme Leader's institutional control of the Judiciary and security forces. Even so, President Rouhani was elected based on a platform easing restrictions on civil liberties, and although faced with tough opposition from the regime, the 2016 election of a moderate-leaning Majles may give him the chance to expand civil freedoms and to lessen governmental control of cultural expression (Freedom House Report 2016).

Silent Hope for Change: Women's Rights in Iran

Unsurprisingly in one of the most repressive Islamist regimes in the world, women enjoy very severely restricted political autonomy and civil liberties in Iran. However, over the course of the past-century, women's roles in politics have increased, and in the face of severe gender-subordination, a growing campaign to increase women's rights is occurring (Beyerle 2008). Figure 4 shows several important indicators of women's political and civil freedoms in Iran, including: *freedom of domestic movement, freedom of discussion, access to justice, CSO participation, access to political power,* and *overall political empowerment.* As the figure shows, women have historically experienced little freedoms, but recent in-roads have been made following heavy repression during the introduction of state-imposed Sharia law in 1979.

Figure 4. Development indicators of women's political and civil freedoms in Iran, 1900-2012

The reigns of the Pahlavi monarchs bring the greatest early expansion of rights to women. Both monarchs sought to modernize the country through the granting of rights to women, against the wishes of the clerical establishment. Reza Khan's reforms cause Iran's scores on the *cso women's participation, freedom of discussion for women, and access to justice for women indices* to increase significantly in his reign, although from an extremely low position. As with most other aspects of democracy, Iran experiences positive development across all indices during the Mosaddegh years, only to experience regression after the coup d'état of 1953. Women lost many freedoms after the coup, but these changes were across the board and not specifically targeted towards the restriction of women's rights. Later in his reign, the Shah passed reforms aimed at increasing women's role in society, although they were still largely subordinate to men politically. In 1963, women earned the right to vote and participate in politics, greater access to justice, and decreased restriction on women's participation in CSOs, accounting for the general positive development of the figure in the early-mid 1960s.

Because the Shah's social reforms were unpopular with a wide swath of the Iranian population, clerics were able to incite dissent with the regime's actions, eventually boiling over in the Islamic Revolution. After religious clerics gained power and implemented state-imposed

Sharia law in 1979, women's participation in CSOs, freedom of domestic movement, discussion, and access to justice became limited by the implementation of repressive policies meant to uphold the Islamic-regime's theocratic rule. However, throughout much of the mid-1980s and early 1990s, women's positions in society and political circles improved. Even greater social change came during the reformist era of Khatami, when he appointed women to government positions, including the office of the Vice President, and important reforms allowed women to form CSOs and to debate and discuss political issues without widespread government harassment. Even so, women's access to justice under Sharia Law remained largely stagnant and men still held a near-monopoly on all political power. Conservatives wrestled control back from Khatami and his moderate coalition in 2004, but many of the changes lasted or only experienced nominal reversal, even as Ahmadinejad instituted repressive anti-civil society policies.

Khatami's reforms were important for contemporizing Iran, but Figure 4 underscores that women's rights still have a long way to go as the Khatami-era reforms were unable or unwilling to implement more wide-spread change. Campaigns to expand women's rights have been growing, but several social, political, and legal restrictions remain major obstacles to tackling the problematic discrimination of women in Iran. The figure shows that a sizeable minority of women are still restricted from free domestic travel and that women are not allowed to attend public civic events. Women's access to justice is not widely respected; women still face state-sanctioned domestic abuse and "honor-killings"; women are still sometimes harassed for public discussion of political issues; and women are frequently barred from participating in or forming civil society organizations (Beyerle 2008). In addition, the cultural absolutism of the regime results in women being arrested for "immodest dressing" and other perceived insults to Islamic moral code (Beyerle 2008). Women's rights activists remain a force for change in Iran, but the government's ability to block anti-regime movements with rhetoric of upholding religious legitimacy remains a large obstacle to achieving legal gender equality. Even so, the vague charges and dramatic measures brought against women's rights activists show that the regime feels that its cultural authority is threatened. Repressive governmental action against activists often works to coalesce public support behind the movement, legitimizing their struggle for equal civil and political liberties for women in the eyes of many ordinary Iranians. Still, the Islamic regime's repression of women remains one of Iran's largest hindrances to achieving participatory democracy in Iran.

Conclusion: Hope for the Future

Iran has faced several challenges on its road to democracy. From foreign powers derailing of democratic achievements, despotic power-grabs of autocratic leaders, and the popular religious legitimacy granted to the current Islamic Republic, the road to democratization has been an uphill climb for the Middle-East's second most-populous state. V-Dem data shows that Iran holds very low scores for each of the major aspects of democracy and that's the nation's development has been slow, with little progress made. Weak civil society, restrictive civil liberties, and the extremely limited political role of women remain several crucial obstacles to Iranian democratization.

However, the nation has made democratic in-roads, achieving the direct election of a Parliament, President, and the Assembly of Experts—although candidate selection is controlled by the conservative regime—greater deliberation and discourse in public decisions, and higher levels of economic and political equality for those in lower socioeconomic classes. Brief periods of liberalization and increased public participation, particularly during the Khatami-era presidency (1997-2005) of the Islamic Republic, show that Iran's many cultural and political obstacles to reform are not insurmountable. In addition, the role that public demonstrations and uprisings have had on the formation of the first constitution and the overthrow of the nation's last monarchy demonstrate that popular support and demonstration is important to achieving reform. Even so, the current regime actively suppresses any form of dissent, using its control of cultural expression and theological ideology to stifle opposition on the grounds of preserving the moral principles of Islam.

Recent hope for reform to the regime's brutal repression has come in the form of President Rouhani and his promising rhetoric, but he holds little real political authority, and all final say on matters of domestic cultural policy comes from the Supreme Leader. Without the support of crucial institutions and the Majles, the President can enact little change on his own. Recently, Rouhani may have been given a chance to implement change; many moderate candidates allied with Rouhani were elected in the February 2016 elections for the Majles. Reformists, centrists, and pragmatic conservatives open to the President's Nuclear Agreement gained a Majles majority after economic-sanctions relief boosted support for the moderate-backed Agreement. With Rouhani enjoying the support of a moderate coalition, his path to implement reforms has become clearer. As the 76-year old Khamenei grows older, there is

uncertainty surrounding his succession, but with moderates increasingly gaining power within the Majles and the Assembly of Experts, there is possibility that the next Supreme Leader could support democratic advancement in the country.

However, the President will still need to tread cautiously. Even with growing voices for moderation within the government, politics continue to be dominated by the Khamenei and his conservative supporters. Khamenei exerts political control over most key state institutions including the judiciary, the security and intelligence services, the Guardian Council, and media and television services. In addition, the Supreme Leader remains the top religious leader in the country, using this platform to advocate for repressive policies that undermine cultural freedom of expression, giving him immense control on the daily lives of Iranian citizens. Through his control of the judiciary and the IRGC, the Supreme Leader is able to curtail civil liberties to intimidate and eliminate oppositional leaders and organizers. Because the Supreme Leader is able to exert such unchecked power over society, Iran continues to struggle to develop robust civil society, grant consistent civil liberties and freedoms to all citizens, and increase the cultural and political standings of women.

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 theelectorate'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.

Liberal democracy index

Question: To what extent is the ideal of liberal 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. To make this a measure of liberal democracy, the index also takes the level of electoral democracy into account.

Aggregation: The index is aggregated using this formula:

v2x_libdem= .25* v2x_polyarchy^1.6 + .25* v2x_liberal + .5* v2x_polyarchy ^1.6*v2x_liberal.

Deliberative component index

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

Clarification: 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, solidary attachments, parochial interests, or coercion. According to this principle, democracy requires more than an aggregation of existing preferences. There should also be respectful dialogue at all levels—from preference formation to final decision—among informed and competent participants who are open to persuasion. 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.

Aggregation: The index is formed by point estimates drawn from a Bayesian factor analysis model including the following indicators: reasoned justification (v2dlreason), common good justification (v2dlcommon), respect for counterarguments (v2dlcountr), range of consultation (v2dlconslt), and engaged society (v2dlengage).

Egalitarian component index

Question: To what extent is the egalitarian principle achieved?

Clarifications: The egalitarian principle of democracy holds that material and immaterial inequalities inhibit the exercise of formal rights and liberties, and diminish the ability of citizens from all social groups to participate. Egalitarian democracy is achieved when 1) rights and freedoms of individuals are protected equally across all social groups; and 2) resources are distributed equally across all social groups. The distribution of resources must be sufficient to ensure that citizens' basic needs are met in a way that enables their meaningful participation. Additionally, an equal distribution of resources ensures the potential for greater equality in the distribution of power.

Aggregation: This index is formed by averaging the following indices: equal protection index (v2xeg_eqprotec) and equal distribution of resources (v2xeg_eqdr).

Participatory component index

Question: To what extent is the participatory principle achieved?

Clarification: 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.

Aggregation: This index is formed by averaging the following indices: civil society participation (v2x_cspart), direct popular vote (v2xdd_dd), elected local government power (v2xel_locelec), and elected regional government power(v2xel_regelec).

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.

Aggregation: The index is formed by taking the average of women's civil liberties index (v2x_gencl), women's civil society participation index (v2x_gencs), and women's political participation index (v2x_genpp).

Indicators included in Figure 2.

CSO entry and exit

Question: To what extent does the government achieve control over entry and exit by civil society organizations (CSOs) into public life?

Responses:

0: Monopolistic control. The government exercises an explicit monopoly over CSOs. The only organizations allowed to engage in political activity such as endorsing parties or politicians, sponsoring public issues forums, organizing rallies or demonstrations, engaging in strikes, or

publicly commenting on public officials and policies are government-sponsored organizations. The government actively represses those who attempt to defy its monopoly on political activity.

1: Substantial control. The government licenses all CSOs and uses political criteria to bar organizations that are likely to oppose the government. There are at least some citizen-based organizations that play a limited role in politics independent of the government. The government actively represses those who attempt to flout its political criteria and bars them from any political activity.

2: Moderate control. Whether the government ban on independent CSOs is partial or full, some prohibited organizations manage to play an active political role. Despite its ban on organizations of this sort, the government does not or cannot repress them, due to either its weakness or political expedience.

3: Minimal control. Whether or not the government licenses CSOs, there exist constitutional provisions that allow the government to ban organizations or movements that have a history of anti-democratic action in the past (e.g. the banning of neo-fascist or communist organizations in the Federal Republic of Germany). Such banning takes place under strict rule of law and conditions of judicial independence.

4: Unconstrained. Whether or not the government licenses CSOs, the government does not impede their formation and operation unless they are engaged in activities to violently overthrow the government.

CSO repression

Question: Does the government attempt to repress civil society organizations (CSOs)?

Responses:

0: Severely. The government violently and actively pursues all real and even some imagined members of CSOs. They seek not only to deter the activity of such groups but to effectively liquidate them. Examples include Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, and Maoist China.

1: Substantially. In addition to the kinds of harassment outlined in responses 2 and 3 below, the government also arrests, tries, and imprisons leaders of and participants in oppositional CSOs who have acted lawfully. Other sanctions include disruption of public gatherings and violent sanctions of activists (beatings, threats to families, destruction of valuable property). Examples include Mugabe's Zimbabwe, Poland under Martial Law, Serbia under Milosevic.

2: Moderately. In addition to material sanctions outlined in response 3 below, the government also engages in minor legal harassment (detentions, short-term incarceration) to dissuade CSOs from acting or expressing themselves. The government may also restrict the scope of their actions through measures that restrict association of civil society organizations with each other or political parties, bar civil society organizations from taking certain actions, or block international contacts. Examples include post-Martial Law Poland, Brazil in the early 1980s, the late Franco period in Spain.

3: Weakly. The government uses material sanctions (fines, firings, denial of social services) to deter oppositional CSOs from acting or expressing themselves. They may also use burdensome registration or incorporation procedures to slow the formation of new civil society organizations and sidetrack them from engagement. The government may also organize Government Organized Movements or NGOs (GONGOs) to crowd out independent organizations. One example would be Singapore in the post-Yew phase or Putin's Russia.

4: No. Civil society organizations are free to organize, associate, strike, express themselves, and to criticize the government without fear of government sanctions or harassment.

CSO participatory environment

Question: Which of these best describes the involvement of people in civil society organizations (CSOs)?

Responses:

0: Most associations are state-sponsored, and although a large number of people may be active in them, their participation is not purely voluntary.

1: Voluntary CSOs exist but few people are active in them.

2: There are many diverse CSOs, but popular involvement is minimal.

3: There are many diverse CSOs and it is considered normal for people to be at least occasionally active in at least one of them.

CSO anti-system movements

Question: Among civil society organizations, are there anti-system opposition movements?

Clarification: An anti-system opposition movement is any movement – peaceful or armed – that is based in the country (not abroad) and is organized in opposition to the current political system.

That is, it aims to change the polity in fundamental ways, e.g., from democratic to autocratic (or vice-versa), from capitalist to communist (or vice-versa), from secular to fundamentalist (or vice-versa). This movement may be linked to a political party that competes in elections but it must also have a "movement" character, which is to say a mass base and an existence separate from normal electoral competition. If there are several movements, please answer in a general way about the relationship of those movements to the regime.

Responses:

0: No, or very minimal. Anti-system movements are practically nonexistent.

1: There is a only a low-level of anti-system movement activity but it does not pose much of a threat to the regime.

2: There is a modest level of anti-system movement activity, posing some threat to the regime.

3: There is a high level of anti-system movement activity, posing substantial threat to the regime.

4: There is a very high level of anti-system movement activity, posing a real and present threat to the regime

Core civil society index

Question: How robust is civil society?

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.

Aggregation: The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for CSO entry and exit (v2cseeorgs), CSO repression (v2csreprss) and CSO participatory environment (v2csprtcpt).

Indicators included in Figure 3

Freedom of academic and cultural expression

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

Responses:

0: Not respected by public authorities. Censorship and intimidation are frequent. Academic activities and cultural expressions are severely restricted or controlled by the government.

1: Weakly respected by public authorities. Academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression are practiced occasionally, but direct criticism of the government is mostly met with repression.

2: Somewhat respected by public authorities. Academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression are practiced routinely, but strong criticism of the government is sometimes met with repression.

3: Mostly respected by public authorities. There are few limitations on academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression, and resulting sanctions tend to be infrequent and soft.

4: Fully respected by public authorities. There are no restrictions on academic freedom or cultural expression.

Freedom from torture

Question: Is there freedom from torture?

Clarification: Torture refers to the purposeful inflicting of extreme pain, whether mental or physical, with an aim to extract information or intimidate victims, who are in a state of incarceration. Here, we are concerned with torture practiced by state officials or other agents of the state (e.g., police, security forces, prison guards, and paramilitary groups).

Responses:

0: Not respected by public authorities. Torture is practiced systematically and is incited and approved by the leaders of government.

1: Weakly respected by public authorities. Torture is practiced frequently but is often not incited or approved by top leaders of government. At the same time, leaders of government are not actively working to prevent it.

2: Somewhat. Torture is practiced occasionally but is typically not approved by top leaders of government.

3: Mostly respected by public authorities. Torture is practiced in a few isolated cases but is not incited or approved by top government leaders.

4: Fully respected by public authorities. Torture is non-existent.

Freedom from political killings

Question: Is there freedom from political killings?

Clarification: Political killings are killings by the state or its agents without due process of law for the purpose of eliminating political opponents. These killings are the result of deliberate use of lethal force by the police, security forces, prison officials, or other agents of the state (including paramilitary groups).

Responses:

0: Not respected by public authorities. Political killings are practiced systematically and they are typically incited and approved by top leaders of government.

1: Weakly respected by public authorities. Political killings are practiced frequently and top leaders of government are not actively working to prevent them.

2: Somewhat respected by public authorities. Political killings are practiced occasionally but they are typically not incited and approved by top leaders of government.

3: Mostly respected by public authorities. Political killings are practiced in a few isolated cases but they are not incited or approved by top leaders of government.

4: Fully respected by public authorities. Political killings are non-existent

Social class equality in respect for civil liberty

Question: Do poor people enjoy the same level of civil liberties as rich people do?

Clarification: This question specifies the extent to which the level of civil liberties is generally the same across socioeconomic groups so that people with a low social status are not treated worse than people with high social status. Here, civil liberties are understood to include access to justice, private property rights, freedom of movement, and freedom from forced labor.

Responses:

0: Poor people enjoy much fewer civil liberties than rich people.

1: Poor people enjoy substantially fewer civil liberties than rich people.

2: Poor people enjoy moderately fewer civil liberties than rich people.

3: Poor people enjoy slightly fewer civil liberties than rich people.

4: Poor people enjoy the same level of civil liberties as rich people.

Scale: Ordinal, converted to interval by the measurement model.

Social group equality in respect for civil liberties

Question: Do all social groups, as distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, or caste, enjoy the same level of civil liberties, or are some groups generally in a more favorable position?

Clarification: Here, civil liberties are understood to include access to justice, private property rights, freedom of movement, and freedom from forced labor.

Responses:

0: Members of some social groups enjoy much fewer civil liberties than the general population.

1: Members of some social groups enjoy substantially fewer civil liberties than the general population.

2: Members of some social groups enjoy moderately fewer civil liberties than the general population.

3: Members of some social groups enjoy slightly fewer civil liberties than the general population.

4: Members of all salient social groups enjoy the same level of civil liberties.

Indicators included in Figure 4

Freedom of domestic movement for women

Question: Do women enjoy freedom of movement within the country?

Clarification: This indicator specifies the extent to which all women are able to move freely, in daytime and nighttime, in public thoroughfares, across regions within a country, and to establish permanent residency where they wish. Note that restrictions in movement might be imposed by the state and/or by informal norms and practices. Such restrictions sometimes fall on rural residents, on specific social groups, or on dissidents. This question does not ask you to assess the relative freedom of men and women. Thus, it is possible to assign the lowest possible score to a country even if men and women enjoy equal – and extremely low – freedom of movement. Do

not consider restrictions in movement that are placed on ordinary (non-political) criminals. Do not consider restrictions in movement that result from crime or unrest.

Responses:

0: Virtually no women enjoy full freedom of movement (e.g., North Korea or Afghanistan under the Taliban).

1: Some women enjoy full freedom of movement, but most do not (e.g., Apartheid South Africa).

2: Most women enjoy some freedom of movement but a sizeable minority does not. Alternatively, all women enjoy partial freedom of movement.

3: Most women enjoy full freedom of movement but a small minority does not.

4: Virtually all women enjoy full freedom of movement.

Freedom of discussion for women

Question: Are women able to openly discuss political issues in private homes and in public spaces?

Clarification: This indicator specifies the extent to which women are able to engage in private discussions, particularly on political issues, in private homes and public spaces (restaurants, public transportation, sports events, work etc.) without fear of harassment by other members of the polity or the public authorities. We are interested in restrictions by the government and its agents but also cultural restrictions or customary laws that are enforced by other members of the polity, sometimes in informal ways. This question does not ask you to assess the relative freedom of men and women. Thus, it is possible to assign the lowest possible score to a country even if men and women enjoy equal – and extremely low – rights to freedom of discussion.

Responses:

0: Not respected. Hardly any freedom of expression exists for women. Women are subject to immediate and harsh intervention and harassment for expression of political opinion.

1: Weakly respected. Expressions of political opinions by women are frequently exposed to intervention and harassment.

2: Somewhat respected. Expressions of political opinions by women are occasionally exposed to intervention and harassment.

3: Mostly respected. There are minor restraints on the freedom of expression in the private sphere, predominantly limited to a few isolated cases or only linked to soft sanctions. But as a rule there is no intervention or harassment if women make political statements.

4: Fully respected. Freedom of speech by women in their homes and in public spaces is not restricted.

Access to justice for women

Question: Do women enjoy equal, secure, and effective access to justice?

Clarification: This question specifies the extent to which women can bring cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, trials are fair, and women have effective ability to seek redress if public authorities violate their rights, including the rights to counsel, defense, and appeal. This question does not ask you to assess the relative access to justice men and women. Thus, it is possible to assign the lowest possible score to a country even if men and women enjoy equal – and extremely limited – access to justice.

 Responses:

0: Secure and effective access to justice for women is non-existent.

1: Secure and effective access to justice for women is usually not established or widely respected.

2: Secure and effective access to justice for women is inconsistently observed. Minor problems characterize most cases or occur rather unevenly across different parts of the country.

3: Secure and effective access to justice for women is usually observed.

4: Secure and effective access to justice for women is almost always observed.

CSO women's participation

Question: Are women prevented from participating in civil society organizations (CSOs)?

Clarification: Please pay attention to both (A) whether women are prevented from participating in civil society organizations (CSOs) because of their gender and (B) whether CSOs pursuing women's interests are prevented from taking part in associational life.

Responses:

0: Almost always.

1: Frequently.

2: About half the time.

3: Rarely.

4: Almost never

Power distributed by gender

Question: Is political power distributed according to gender?

Responses:

0: Men have a near-monopoly on political power.

1: Men have a dominant hold on political power. Women have only marginal influence.

2: Men have much more political power but women have some areas of influence.

3: Men have somewhat more political power than women.

4: Men and women have roughly equal political power.

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