

Cautionary Notes

- V-Dem is firmly committed to full transparency and release of the data we have. Yet, please note this: The [V-Dem Methodology](#) assumes five or more coders for the "contemporary" period starting from 1900, originally coded to 2012. With the updates covering 2013-2016, it has for a few country-variable combinations, been impossible to achieve that target. We have found that this at times result in significant changes in point estimates as a consequence of self-selected attrition of Country Experts, rather than actual changes in the country. We therefore strongly advise against using point estimates for country-variable-years with three or fewer (≤ 3) ratings for the period 2013-2016. We suggest to filter these out before conducting any type of analysis. For this purpose, a special count-variable for each Country-Expert coded variable is included in the dataset from v7 and onwards.
- During the preparation of the data for v7, identifiers for the main country coded by 11.7% of experts were incorrectly assigned. This misidentification does not affect experts' codings directly, i.e. their codings still correspond to the correct countries. However, our measurement model uses the main country coded identifier when estimating experts' relative strictness, a step which facilitates the cross-national comparability of latent estimates. Though other aspects of the measurement procedure---especially vignettes---also facilitate the cross-national comparability of estimates, this issue has likely reduced cross-national comparability to an unclear extent. We will release a v7.1 of the dataset with the correct identification of the main country coded for all experts as soon as possible.
- While the country-year estimates for Election paid interest group media (v2elpaidig), Election vote buying (v2elvotbuy), Election other voting irregularities (v2elirreg), and Elections multiparty (v2elmulpar) reached a stationary distribution according to our standard diagnostic procedures, population-level thresholds (γ_{μ}) did not. As a result, all estimates from this variable should be treated with caution. In particular, `_osp` and `_ord` values are potentially misleading, as they incorporate population thresholds in their estimation procedure.
- We further ask you to use the following percentage variables with caution: Female journalists (v2mefemjrn), Weaker civil liberties population (v2clslnpct)
- We have also excluded certain percentage variables, since data for these variables have not gone through full quality control with thorough cross-referencing yet. We hope to be able to do so for the version 8 of the dataset. This concerns the following variables:
 - Resident noncitizens who cannot vote (v2elnoncit)
 - Election male suffrage in practice (v2elmalsuf)
 - Election female suffrage in practice (v2elfemsuf)
 - Subnational election area less free and fair population (v2elslnpop)

- Subnational election area more free and fair population (v2elsnmpop)
 - Party switching (v2psswitch)
 - Stronger civil liberties population (v2clsnpct)
 - State authority over territory (v2svstterr)
 - State authority over population (v2svstpop)
 - Media access (v2meaccess)
- We have not included the following quota variables for version 7:
 - Lower chamber gender quota (v2lgqugen)
 - Lower chamber gender quota threshold (v2lgqugent)
 - Lower chamber gender quota placement mandate (v2lgqugens)
 - Lower chamber quota for social groups (v2lgqumin)
 - We have discovered mistakes in the time series. We hope to be able to correct them for version 8 of the dataset.
- We have changed the prior distribution for thresholds in the V-Dem measurement model from a uniform distribution with values ranging from -2 to 2 to a uniform distribution with values ranging -4 to 4. In the case of variables with ordinal expert codings, the effect of this change is likely minimal, though it may noticeably affect the OSP and ordinalized versions of several variables. The effect is more pronounced in the case of variables with dichotomous expert codings.

New in version 7 in comparison to version 6 of the data

New indices and indicators:

- Obligatory referendum index (v2xdd_i_or)
- Popular initiative index (v2xdd_i_pi)
- Popular referendum index (v2xdd_i_rf)
- Plebiscite index (v2xdd_i_pl)
- Citizen-initiated component of direct popular vote index (v2xdd_cic)
- Top-down component of direct popular vote index (v2xdd_toc)
- Equal access index (v2xeg_eqaccess)
- Regimes In the World – the RIW Measure (E) (e_v2x_regime)
- Regimes In the World – the RIW Measure with confidence intervals (E) (e_v2x_regime_ci)
- High court size (by law) (v2juhcsizl)
- High court size (in practice) (v2juhcsizp)
- Female judges (v2jufemjdg)
- First woman appointed (v2jufirstfm)
- Lower chamber electoral system- 13 categories (v2elloelsy)
- Lower chamber election district magnitude (v2elloeldm)
- Constitutional changes popular vote (v2ddlexor)
- Obligatory referendum participation threshold (v2ddpartor)
- Obligatory referendum approval threshold (v2ddappor)
- Obligatory referendum credible threat (v2ddthreor)

- Plebiscite Credible Threat (v2ddthrepl)
- Initiatives administrative threshold (v2ddadmci)
- Popular Initiative Credible Threat (v2ddthreci)
- Referendums signatures % (v2ddsigrf)
- Referendums administrative threshold (v2ddadmrf)
- Popular Referendum Credible Threat (v2ddthrerf)
- Occurrence of obligatory referendum this year (v2ddyror)
- Occurrence of plebiscite this year (v2ddyopl)
- Occurrence of citizen-initiative this year (v2ddyrci)
- Occurrence of referendum this year (v2ddyrrf)
- HOS age (v2exagehos)
- HOG age (v2exagehog)
- Legislature declares war by law (v2lgwarlaw)
- Chief executive appointment by upper chamber (v2exapup)
- Chief executive appointment by upper chamber explicit approval (v2exapupap)

Modified indices and indicators:

- Direct popular vote index has been updated with a new aggregation formula.
- Divided party control of legislature index has been corrected to Divided party control index (v2x_divparctrl).
- Elected executive index (v2x_accex) has been replaced with Elected officials index (v2x_elecoff).
- Party system institutionalization index (v2xps_party) has been renamed to Party institutionalization index and was modified with a new aggregation formula.
- Equal protection index (v2xeg_eqprotec) has been modified to exclude equal access to justice for men and women (v2xcl_acjst).
- Equal distribution of resources index (v2xeg_eqdr) has been modified to be formed by the indicators particularistic or public goods (v2dlencmps), means tested vs. universalistic welfare policies (v2dlunivl), educational equality (v2peedueq) and health equality (v2pehealth).
- Egalitarian component index (v2x_egal) is formed by equal protection index (v2xeg_eqprotec), equal distribution of resources (v2xeg_eqdr) and in version 7 additionally by equal access index (v2xeg_eqaccess).
- Freedom of expression indices (v2x_freexp, _thick) are no longer including Media Internet censorship (v2mecenefi).
- National party control (v2psnatpar) has been updated with a new aggregation formula.
- Election free campaign media (v2elfrcamp) is divided into executive and legislative election free campaign media (v2elfrcamp_ex) (v2elfrcamp_leg).
- The text for the subsets of Fraud allegations by Western monitors (v2elwestmon), has been changed to refer to Fraud allegations by Western monitors for executive/legislative elections only (v2elwestmon_ex) (v2elwestmon_leg).
- Stronger respect for civil liberties characteristics (v2clrgstch) is renamed to Stronger civil liberties characteristics.
- Income inequality, Gini (e_Unequal_UTIP) has been corrected to measure whether the Gini coefficient is above the mean.

- The variable tags of the following questions within Direct Democracy have been renamed:
 - Obligatory referendum super majority (v2ddspmjor) to (v2ddspmor)
 - Plebiscite permitted (v2ddlegpl) to (v2ddlexpl)
 - Plebiscite participation threshold (v2ddbndpl) to (v2ddpartpl)
 - Plebiscite approval threshold (v2ddthrcn) to (v2ddapprpl)
 - Plebiscite administrative threshold (v2dddistpl) to (v2ddadmpl)
 - Plebiscite super majority (v2ddspmlpl) to (v2ddspmpl)
 - Initiatives permitted (v2ddlegci) to (v2ddlexci)
 - Initiatives signatures (v2ddsigcin) to (v2ddsignci)
 - Initiatives signatures % (v2ddsigcip) to (v2ddsigpci)
 - Initiatives signature-gathering time limit (v2ddgrtlci) to (v2ddsiglci)
 - Initiatives signature-gathering period (v2ddgrgpci) to (v2ddsigdci)
 - Initiatives participation threshold (v2ddbndci) to (v2ddpartci)
 - Initiatives approval threshold (v2ddthreci) to (v2ddapprci)
 - Initiatives super majority (v2ddspmjci) to (v2ddspmci)
 - Referendums permitted (v2ddlegrf) to (v2ddlexrf)
 - Referendums signatures (v2ddsigrfn) to (v2ddsignrf)
 - Referendums signature-gathering limit (v2ddgrtlrf) to (v2ddsiglrf)
 - Referendums signature-gathering period (v2ddgrgrpf) to (v2ddsigdrf)
 - Referendums participation threshold (v2ddbndrf) to (v2ddpartrf)
 - Referendums approval threshold (v2ddthrerf) to (v2ddapprrf)
 - Referendums super majority (v2ddspmjrf) to (v2ddspmrfr)
 - Number of popular votes this year (v2ddnumvot) to (v2ddyral)
 - Occurrence of any type of popular vote this year credible (v2ddvotcrd) to (v2ddcredal)

Other new or modified information:

- Updated list of countries.
- Updated list of variables.
- Updated citations for V-Dem Reference materials.
- New citation for Ordinal versions of V-Dem's indices (Lindberg 2016).
- Gaps in coding periods should be interpreted as including the start and end year of the gap. For example, Germany is coded 1900-1945, 1949-2016, which means that the years 1946, -47, and -48 are excluded from the dataset.
- Freedom of expression index (v2x_freexp) was included in Electoral democracy index (v2x_polyarchy) in v6. This has been fixed for v7, where the Expanded freedom of expression index (v2x_freexp_thick) instead is included in the Electoral democracy index.

New in version 6 compared to version 5

Changes:

- All CSV files are now encoded in UTF-8. When importing CSV data on platforms where UTF-8 is not the default, ensure that the correct encoding is specified in order to properly render diacritics for text variables.
- v2x_suffrage and v2elsuffrage have been modified with small changes to their respective comprising indices.

Bug fixes:

- Superfluous variables corresponding to the means of the binary versions of the following variables have been removed: v2exdfdshg, v2exdfdshs, v2exdjcbhg, v2exctlhg, v2exctlhs, v2exrmhsol, v2exrmhgnp.
- Country specific coding periods were previously incorrectly set for the 6.1 country-date dataset. As a result, 279 observations falling outside of the V-Dem coding periods have been removed.
- Missing data for the variables v2expathhg and v2exaphogp for Serbia from 1900 to 1941 have been filled in.
- A bug was fixed regarding the ordinalization of indices. Previously, for the corresponding 5 category ordinal variables, observations that were meant to be 0.75 were incorrectly set as 0.5.

New indices and indicators:

- Civil liberties index
- Private civil liberties index
- Physical integrity rights index
- Political civil liberties index
- Additive polyarchy index
- Multiplicative polyarchy index
- Divided party control of legislature index
- Division of power index
- HOG term length by law
- HOS term length by law
- Election voter turnout
- Primary school enrollment
- Secondary school enrollment
- Secondary tertiary enrollment
- Political equality comments

Modified indices and indicators:

- Electoral democracy index has been updated with a new aggregation formula.

Other new or modified information:

- Providing a standard calculation for standard deviation which is marked with the suffix "sd" (e.g., v2elmpar_sd). The SD might be used to compute the standard frequentist confidence intervals.
- Providing uniqueness scores to the structure of aggregations – all indices and indicators. Uniqueness is the variance that is 'unique' to the variable and not shared with other variables. It is equal to $1 - \text{communality}$ (variance that is shared with other variables). Factor loadings are the weights and correlations between each variable and the factor. The higher the load the more relevant in defining the factor's dimensionality. A negative value indicates an inverse impact on the factor.
- Updated lists of numbers of variables.
- Updated list of countries.