

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, which is suffixed with “_nr”, is included in the dataset from v7 and onwards.
- During the preparation of the data for v7, identifiers for the main country coded of approximately 12% of experts were incorrectly assigned. As a result, cross-national comparability was reduced to an unclear extent. In v7.1, the identification of the main country coded for all experts is correct, increasing cross-national comparability.
- While estimates of the latent variable Vertical Accountability (v2x_veracc) converged according to standard V-Dem criteria, some parameters involved in the estimation process for this variable did not. As a result, this variable should be used with caution. All other Accountability indices (the overall Accountability index (v2x_accountability), Diagonal Accountability index (v2x_diagacc) and Horizontal Accountability index (v2x_horacc)) met V-Dem criteria for convergence.
- While the country-year estimates for Election paid interest group media (v2elpaidig), Election paid campaign advertisements (v2elpdcamp), Election other electoral violence (v2elpeace), and Executive oversight (v2lgotovst) reached a stationary distribution according to our standard diagnostic procedures, population-level thresholds (γ_{μ}) did not. As a result, all estimates from these variables 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 (v2elsnlpop)
 - 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 discovered mistakes in the time series of the following variables and excluded them from version 7. We hope to be able to correct them for version 8 of the dataset:
 - 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)
 - Due to some technical problems, the SPSS version of the Country Year + Others dataset does not include variables with text answers as well as NELDA variables.

What's New. New in version 7.1 compared to version 7

New indices and indicators

- Accountability index (v2x_accountability)
- Vertical accountability index (v2x_veracc)
- Horizontal accountability index (v2x_horacc)
- Diagonal accountability index (v2x_diagacc)

Modified indices and indicators

- Errors with E type variables in version 7 have been fixed.
- HOS and HOG appointment in practice variables (v2expathhs, v2expathhg) in the Country Year dataset have been corrected to be aggregated by the last observation within a year.

Other new or modified information

- The issue in v7 with identifiers for the main country coded by experts has been fixed.
- Versions of Male suffrage (v2msuffrage), Female suffrage (v2fsuffrage) and Suffrage (v2asuffrage) into executive (*_ex) or legislative (*_leg) elections have been dropped from the dataset, since the original variables are not election specific.
- Convergence problems with Vertical accountability index (v2x_veracc), please see Cautionary Notes for further details.

New in version 7 compared to version 6

New indices and indicators

- Obligatory referendum index (v2xdd_i_or)
- Popular initiative index (v2xdd_i_pi)
- Popular referendum index (v2xdd_i_rf)
- Plebiscite index (vx2dd_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 (v2jufrstfm)
- 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 % (v2ddsigprf)
- 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 (v2xdd_dd) 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).
- 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.
- The information in the codebook about Male suffrage (v2msuffrage), Female suffrage (v2fsuffrage) and Suffrage (v2asuffrage) has been corrected to indicate that responses are given in percent.
- 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 (v2ddthrcon) to (v2ddapprpl)
- Plebiscite administrative threshold (v2dddistspl) 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 (v2ddgrtlic) to (v2ddsiglic)
- Initiatives signature-gathering period (v2ddgrgpci) to (v2ddsigdci)
- Initiatives participation threshold (v2ddbndci) to (v2ddpartci)
- Initiatives approval threshold (v2ddthreci) to (v2ddapprci)
- Initiatives super majority (v2ddspmjci) to (v2ddspmcic)
- Referendums permitted (v2ddlegrf) to (v2ddlexrf)
- Referendums signatures (v2ddsigrfn) to (v2ddsignrf)
- Referendums signature-gathering limit (v2ddgrtllrf) to (v2ddsigllrf)

- Referendums signature-gathering period (v2ddgrgprf) to (v2ddsigdrf)
- Referendums participation threshold (v2ddbndrf) to (v2ddpartrf)
- Referendums approval threshold (v2ddthrerf) to (v2ddapprf)
- Referendums super majority (v2ddspmjrf) to (v2ddspmrf)
- Number of popular votes this year (v2ddnumvot) to (v2ddyall)
- 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.