



# TAIWAN

A COUNTRY REPORT BASED ON DATA  
1900-2014

by Christine Huang

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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<sup>1</sup>.

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

## Introduction

This country report portrays key aspects of democratic development in Taiwan from 1900-2014. It is based on data from *Varieties of Democracy*, and first narrates how Taiwan's government evolved in the twentieth century. It then provides a detailed analysis of how Taiwan developed as an electoral, deliberative, and participatory democracy. These three aspects have shown the most significant changes in Taiwan's transition to a democracy. A brief examination of modern Taiwan's democracy and ways for Taiwan to move forward concludes the report. The analysis shows that democratic development in Taiwan was gradual, with the Taiwanese elite incubating democratic ideals for decades until the first democratic elections in 1996, and that civil society continued to develop after said elections.

## Overall Trends and History of Democratization in Taiwan

### Country Overview

The Republic of China, or Taiwan, was technically established in 1911, but it wasn't until 1949 that the government actually moved to the island that people refer to today as Taiwan. That year, the Kuomintang (the KMT), led by Chiang Kai-Shek, fled to the island of Taiwan and established a government-in-exile after being defeated by the Communists in mainland China.

The KMT was based on its founder Sun Yat-Sen's Three People's Principles (San Min Chu-I): nationalism, democracy, and livelihood. These principles meant that the KMT strived to achieve a democracy that guaranteed people's right to elect and recall leaders, and also the right to propose and review laws.<sup>2</sup> These ideals were eventually reflected in the 1947 Constitution, which established autonomous governments at the local level and two bodies at the national level that would be made up of elected members (i.e., the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly) (Diamond and Shin 2014, 111). Taiwan's ruling party thus started out with democratic aspirations.

However, changes in party leadership and the developments of the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950) derailed the principles enshrined by the constitution. Chiang Kai-Shek obtained a leadership position within the KMT after Sun died in 1925, and his rule was more dictatorial and

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<sup>2</sup> Referred to as the "Four Powers".

conservative than Sun's (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d.). Under Chiang Kai-Shek the KMT took on a definitively less democratic tone. In 1948, the National Assembly amended the 1947 Constitution with the Temporary Provisions, which explained that the security problem presented by the ongoing civil war justified the government's restriction of rights, including political rights (Chou and Nathan 1987). Parts of the territory addressed by the Constitution were also no longer under KMT control (i.e., communist-controlled mainland China), so elections were thus delayed indefinitely. The Executive Yuan<sup>3</sup> also proclaimed Martial Law in 1949 under the pretense of protecting Taiwan from the government of the mainland China, which might have attacked or subverted Taiwan at any time (Chao and Myers 1994, 215). The constant threat of invasion stemming from the ongoing Chinese Civil War therefore justified the limitation of rights, and democratization remained an elusive goal. The KMT's maintenance of a single-party system also did not help the advancement of democracy. (Chao and Myers 1994; Chu and Lin 2001; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.).

Under the KMT's military, one-party rule, there existed no distinction between state and party. The state needed the party mechanism to help coordinate between different branches of the government, to maintain its ideological homogeneity, and restrict who could participate in the political process. Conversely, the party needed the state to help prevent and/or repress opposition, as the state's monopoly on violence and use of security forces helped it silence all opposition. The party also depended on the state's role as an organizer that could connect different sectors of society and use government networks to distribute economic rent (Chu and Lin 2001). Moreover, the party elite was also responsible for governmental functions, such as creating new legislation, which concentrated political power in the hands of a few and made the party elite the same as government elite. Their monopolization of the political sphere allowed them to ignore modern Western legal ideals and maintain traditional Chinese legal practices (Chao and Myers 1994, 217; T. Wang 2002, 538). The KMT's military regime thus precluded deliberative democracy, as it did not allow for competing political ideas to be represented in the political system.

The KMT also held elections and became an electoral democracy to establish regime legitimacy and encourage acceptance of its rule. Establishing its moral superiority over the Communist regime in mainland China was critical, as doing so allowed the KMT regime to claim that it deserved to rule. The regime therefore began allowing some limited freedom in the three spheres of economics, ideology, and politics (Myers 1991). Developments in the political marketplace were most significant, as the local elections involved ordinary people in the selection

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<sup>3</sup> *Yuan* in Chinese refers to one of the branches of the government.

of representatives and leaders who would help direct political life (Chao and Myers 2000). These local elections were also eventually supplemented with a few elected positions opening up at the national level (Kan 1999). However, these elections were still dominated by the KMT, and candidates not affiliated with the KMT rarely showed up on the ballot (Chao and Myers 2000).<sup>4</sup>

Following these elections however, three factors converged to expedite democratic development in Taiwan: economic growth, the development of political journals and the *tangwai*<sup>5</sup>, or opposition, movement and changes in Taiwan's relationship with mainland China. Taiwan started export-oriented industrialization in the 1960s, and private businesses established themselves as the new origin of economic growth (Chu and Lin 2001). The new class of business elites became wealthy enough to fund the journals of the intellectual elite, which encouraged civilians to think about and act on political ideas that had been previously inconceivable (Chao and Myers 2000). The critical elite behind these journals were part of the *tangwai* movement, and used the political journals to coordinate their concerns on a national level. Specifically, political journals encouraged the *tangwai* to focus less on small local issues and instead discuss broader and more significant concepts like democracy, liberalism, and human rights. They also provided a platform for local opposition to connect and recognize national-level concerns. The *tangwai* could thus tackle bigger issues like the governance of the country as a whole (Kan 1999).

On the government's side, the political reality in mainland China also pushed Taiwan towards democracy. The Chinese Communist Party had successfully taken control of mainland China, and the KMT could no longer claim to still be in control. The KMT realized that it would not be able to reclaim mainland China, and reestablish itself as the legitimate leader of a reunified China. In other words, the KMT needed to find a different way to legitimize its rule in Taiwan, and the political elite was thus forced to see fair and democratic elections as the only way they could maintain their power (Chao and Myers 2000). It then moved to incorporate young Taiwanese into the government so that the younger local generation would have a stake in the KMT regime. This movement was called *Taiwanization*. As a result, more and more Taiwanese intellectuals started using the language of liberalism to call for a more open Taiwan. China also halted its periodic cross-strait shelling to present Taiwan with the option of peaceful reunification. The change in China's tone delegitimized the KMT's imposition of military rule, as a non-violent China meant that the KMT no longer had a reason to maintain a state of siege in Taiwan. It also pushed the KMT to further distinguish itself from the CPC-ruled China by reconstructing a new image of itself that was reformed and more enlightened (Kan 1999). As a

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<sup>4</sup> See Chao, Linda, and Ramon H. Myers. 2000. "How Elections Promoted Democracy in Taiwan under Martial Law." *The China Quarterly* (162): 392-397 for more discussion of KMT strategies of managing elections.

<sup>5</sup> Literally "outside of the party"

result, the political opposition was given more freedom to organize, and people had more access to political outlets.

These three forces were able to converge because of a change in the presidency. Chiang Kai-Shek's son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, came into power in 1972, with a more liberal perspective than his father. Specifically, he favored a peaceful transition to democracy over more violence and political oppression (Chao and Myers 1994). As part of this vision, he formed a party committee with twelve people who would study political reform. He also chose to negotiate with and not simply suppress the key leaders of the political opposition (Chao and Myers 1994). The political atmosphere was thus more relaxed, which helped dissolve existing barriers that prevented access to the political marketplace and also encouraged the government to develop different political ideologies (Chao and Myers 1994).

Taiwan finally held its first free and democratic presidential elections in 1996, which marked the end of a long period of democratization. Previously, elections had been held for local and gubernatorial positions, but they were neither free nor fair. It was difficult to qualify for candidacy and campaigns were strictly monitored. The elections both demonstrated how democratic rule was normalized and formally codified, and ended the KMT's decades-long patriarchal and authoritarian rule. In this election, 14.1 million people were eligible to vote, and the turnout rate was around 75%. Lee Teng-Hui, nominated as a candidate in 1990 by the KMT-dominant National Assembly, won the election. The opposition candidate, Peng Ming-min, expressed his satisfaction with the results and the democratic electoral process, despite his loss (Tyler 1996).

Today, Taiwan is considered one of Asia's most successful democracies. It operates as a presidential system with the following cabinets: the Executive Yuan, the Judicial Yuan, the Examination Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, and the Control Yuan.<sup>6</sup> These cabinets control government policy, handle the court system, organize civil servants, audit government action, and check corrupt officials respectively. This is all in addition to the president, vice-president, and the National Assembly. There are also two levels of government, provincial and local (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). The government has been successful in preventing a backslide towards single-party rule with its 2005 electoral reforms that cemented a two-party system. It has also disentangled the military from a specific political party, meaning that the military is no longer just loyal to the KMT. The 2002 National Defense Law furthered the executive branch's supervisory control over the military to make the military even more independent (Rigger 2011). In these ways, Taiwan has become a fairly successful democracy.

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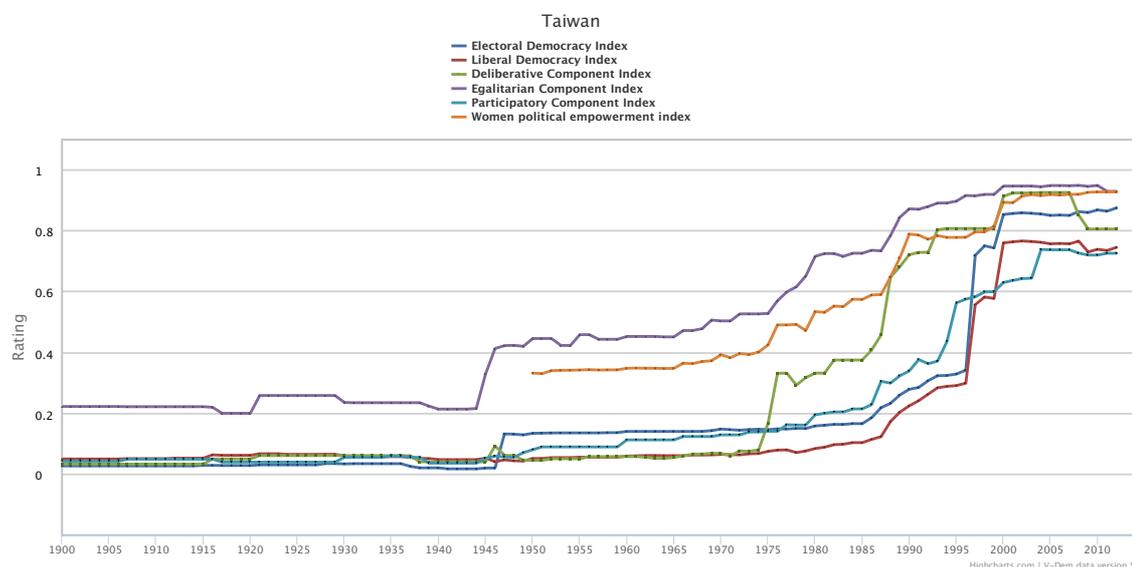
<sup>6</sup> A "Yuan" is a cabinet.

However, Taiwan still has difficulties institutionalizing all components of democracy. Constitutional amendments, such as taking away the National Assembly’s ability to review the president’s choice of premier, have weakened checks on the power of the government – especially that of the president. Progress towards an independent judiciary and full civil rights is also incomplete as the government has begun to restrict protest content when officials from the People’s Republic of China visit Taiwan (Rigger 2011). Civil society also still has much room for improvement, as Taiwan’s civil society is still quite immature. The lack of international recognition is the most serious problem that civil society organizations face, as it makes it difficult to gain support and attention. The state also maintains a large presence in civil society; it politicizes the judicial system, and many civil society organizations rely on alliances with political parties for clout and support. Civil organizations then have a hard time attaining their independence and exploring a broader range of involvement (Philon 2010).

## General Development of Different Democracy Dimensions

Figure 1 uses six indices to depict the development of democracy in Taiwan from 1900 to 2012. Specifically, these indices measure the extent to which the ideals of electoral and liberal democracy are achieved, the extent to which the deliberative, participatory, and egalitarian principles of democracy are achieved, and the extent to which women are empowered. All of the indices are measured using an interval scale from 0 to 1, where a score of 1 would indicate that Taiwan has managed to perfectly achieve that aspect of democracy being measured.

**Figure 1. Development of Democracy in Taiwan, 1900-2012**



The general trend for all six indices is positive, and there are four significant turning points for the time period measured. The first one is in 1946, where all indices experience a positive change because of the end of World War II and Japan's retreat from Taiwan. Measures of Taiwan's electoral democracy were affected the most as Taiwan transitioned from a military dictatorship to a full democracy. There is another period of accelerated change in the 1970s as Taiwan saw changes in political leadership after Chiang Kai-Shek's death, which encouraged the political empowerment of women and increased levels of egalitarian and deliberative aspects of democracy. The same type of accelerated improvement occurred again in the 1980s for all six indices because of new leader Chiang Ching-Kuo's democratizing policy changes. Finally, there is a dramatic jump in 1996 in regards to levels of Taiwan's liberal democracy and how much the Taiwanese participated in Taiwan's democracy. This jump coincides with the first fully-democratic presidential election in Taiwan.

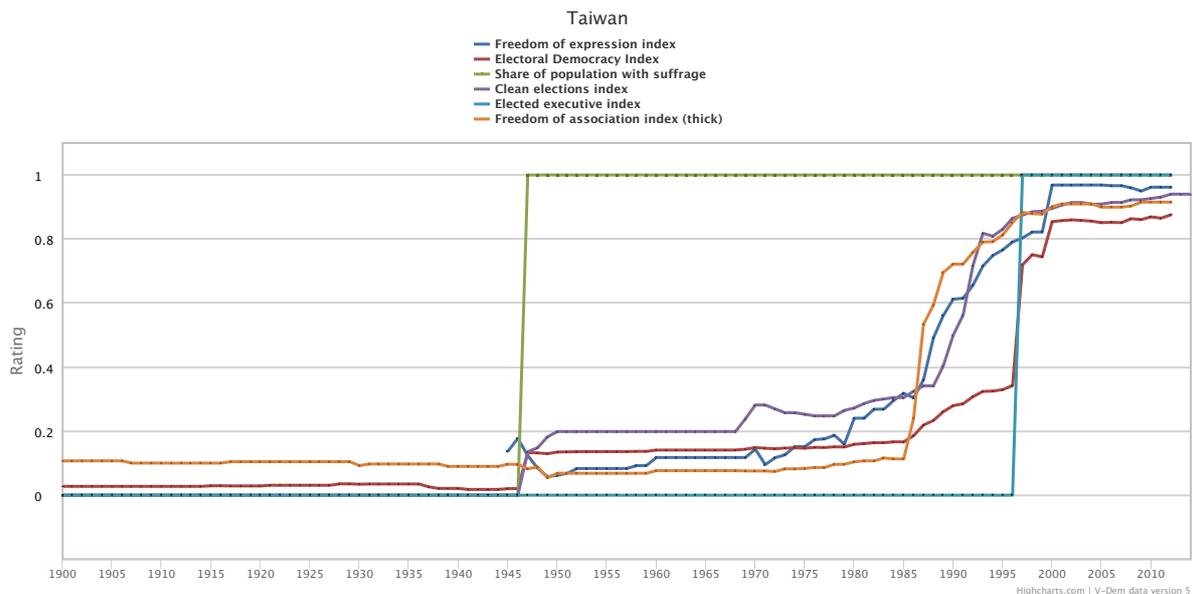
The highest score of 0.950 is achieved in 2008 by the index measuring the egalitarian principle of democracy; the lowest is sustained between 1941-1944 by the electoral democracy index with a score of 0.0178. All indices start out relatively low at around 0.2, suggesting that Taiwan's early government mostly relied on party appointments instead of democratic elections, that Taiwan's one-party political system was not very deliberative or egalitarian, and that participation in the system was mostly limited to established elite. However, the various aspects of democracy gradually develop, and by 2012, they all come close to being completely fulfilled, with the measurement of the egalitarian principle of democracy being the highest (0.930) and the measurement of the participatory principle of democracy being the lowest (0.727). The relatively high scores indicate that Taiwan now holds fairly free and competitive elections, reasonably protects individual and minority rights, and has fairly extensive discussions during the political decision-making process as demonstrated by the two-party system. The scores also reflect economic growth in Taiwan, which mainly occurred during the 60s and 70s and has encouraged its population to become mostly materially and immaterially equal and politically engaged. Additionally, the scores reflect how Taiwan has been largely successful in empowering its women to participate in the political process, with the Constitution allowing both genders to vote and to run for office.

## Specific Dimensions of Interest

### Electoral Democracy Index

Given Taiwan's history of authoritarian elections, the index measuring the fulfillment of the electoral principle of democracy in Taiwan is of special interest. The index and its components – the freedom of expression index, the share of population with suffrage, the clean elections index, the elected executive index, and the freedom of association index – are shown below in Figure 2 using a scale of 0 to 1. Three points in time are essential to the trajectory of the electoral dimension of Taiwan's democracy.

**Figure 2. Electoral Democracy Index Taiwan, 1900-2012**



The first point of significance is in 1947, when the share of population with suffrage jumps from 0 to 1. The dramatic increase in 1947 is the result of the new constitution of 1947 that granted all twenty-year-old citizens of Taiwan the right to vote and to stand for election (The Constitution of the Republic of China, Chapter XII, Article 129).

The second significant period of change is 1986-1995, which sees dramatic changes in the freedom of association and of expression in Taiwan, as well as the cleanliness of Taiwanese elections. They all increased dramatically from around 0.2 to 0.8 as more political ideologies that reinforced the value of the rule of law and encouraged political tolerance were introduced to

Taiwan. These ideas included Western liberalism and the ideas of David Hume. Chiang Ching-Kuo also explicitly told Taiwanese security personnel to not interfere with the **technically-illegal** formation of the Democratic People's Party (DPP) in 1986. His actions demonstrated how Taiwanese people had more freedom to associate with different political or social groups and how the government was less restrictive about what the people could say. Moreover, the members of the new party knew that they needed to strictly adhere to electoral rules to maintain party legitimacy, and their actions made elections freer and fairer. As the new president, Chiang Ching-Kuo's establishment of reform committees to formally study how Taiwan could transition into a democracy also reflected official commitment to a progression towards democracy (Chao and Myers 1994; The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica n.d.). The establishment of the Democratic People's Party, and the generally more tolerant political atmosphere introduced by Chiang Ching-Kuo explain the changes in the indices, as they both show the KMT's increased tolerance of civilians associating with the political opposition, the stronger commitment to liberal rules of the game, and how the people who disagreed with the KMT had more freedom to express their different opinions without also having to fear for their lives.

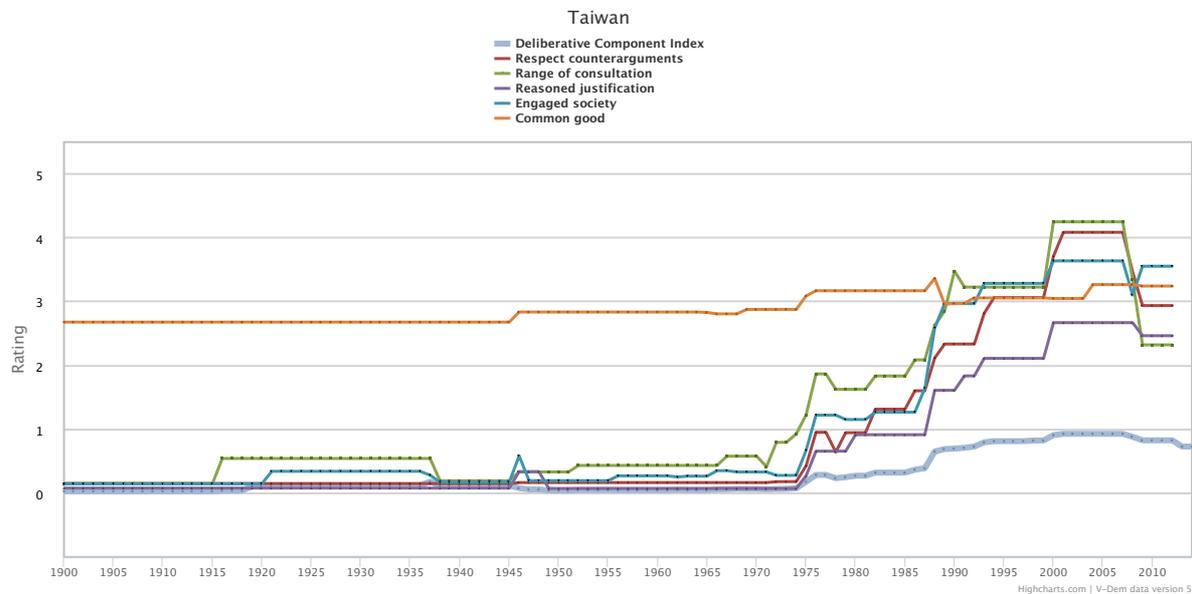
Finally, 1996 is the last year of great change. That year saw a free and fair presidential election that electorally legitimized President Lee Tung-Hui's rule. It meant that the chief executive of Taiwan went from being party-appointed to being chosen by popular vote, driving the increase in the electoral executive index. Other indicators were minimally affected, as the aspects of democracy they measured were all factors that led up to the election, but were not directly affected by the election itself. Consequently, they all increase in 1996 but only the electoral executive index jumps dramatically.

## Deliberative Component Index

Taiwan's history of one-party and authoritarian rule makes the index evaluating deliberation around political decisions another interesting index to consider when explaining Taiwan's path to democracy. Figure 3 shows the deliberative component index and its components, which measure the following: how much counterarguments are acknowledged and respected, the range of consultation at elite levels, how much public and reasoned justification political elites give for decisions, how much political elites use the idea of a common good to justify their decisions, and the range and independence of public deliberations. All measurements use a 0 to 4 scale, except for the deliberative component index itself, which uses a 0 to 1 scale. In evaluating deliberative

democracy, the extent of consideration of common good remains relatively stable, while the other components experience more drastic changes. There are four points of significance to consider for evaluation.

**Figure 3. Deliberative Component Index Taiwan, 1900-2012**



The first significant point in time is 1975, as it marks the death of Chiang Kai-Shek, who had taken over the KMT after Sun Yat-Sen. When alive, his simultaneous roles as head of the KMT and president of Taiwan made him a political strongman; and his removal of factionalism within his government’s security and intelligence forces further limited the space in which political decisions could be discussed (Chu and Lin 2001). Chiang Kai-Shek’s death thus indicates the removal of a strong authoritarian and centralizing force and the creation of more room for discussion. There was more respect of counterarguments, a wider range of consultation, more reasoned justification, and a more engaged society following 1975.

The formation of the DPP in 1986 also coincides with higher scores for the same indices affected by Chiang Kai-Shek’s death. The opposition’s formation symbolized a more relaxed political environment with a developing ideological discourse, and the political elite’s newfound willingness to negotiate with its opponents (Chao and Myers 1994). It also meant that there was an official organization that could represent opposition and non-KMT interests. Respect of counterarguments, the range of consultation, the amount of reasoned justification, and the measurement of societal engagement thus jump again after 1986.

Next, respect for counterarguments, the range of consultation, the amount of reasoned justification provided, how engaged society is, and how much focus is placed on common good

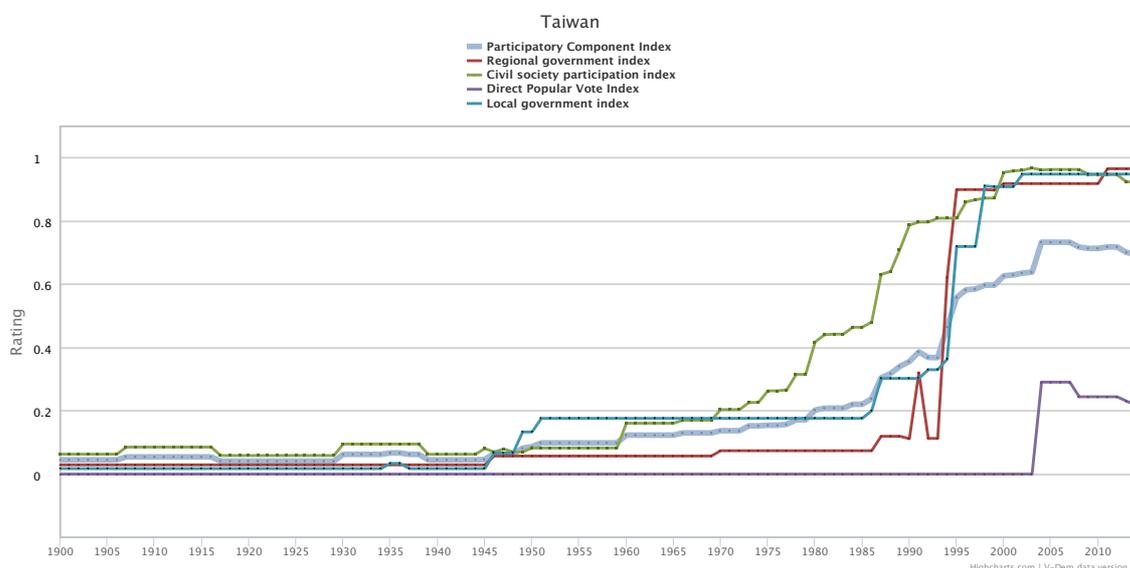
when making political decisions all increase in 2000. Chen Shui-Bian was elected in 2000 as president, marking the first time that an opposition leader was elected as the head of state and the first successful transfer of power between political parties. The empowerment of the opposition party demonstrated that the opposition was definitely part of the political dialogue and that their arguments would be treated with respect. A non-KMT perspective was also carried into the government, increasing the range of opinions consulted.

Finally, it is worth noting that the 2008 legislative elections resulted in a KMT majority in the Legislative Yuan (Ginsburg n.d.). The domination of the KMT in the legislature reduced the influence of the political opposition and meant that KMT proposals would be discussed the most. With less opposition representation, the range of ideas consulted definitely shrank, as did the amount of respect and weight given to counterarguments. The 2008 election results were therefore not conducive to extensive discussions. The measure has remained low until 2014, as the KMT continued to maintain a legislative majority.

## Participatory Component Index

Finally, civilian mobilization has played an important role in the democratization of Taiwan, making the participatory component index an important index to examine. Figure 4 shows this index and its components, which evaluate the election and regulation of regional and local governments and participation in civil society organizations (CSOs) and the extent to which the direct popular vote is utilized. There are again three significant time periods that changed citizens' political participation.

**Figure 4. Participatory Component Index Taiwan, 1900-2012**



As discussed, the 1970s and the mid-1980s affected the electoral and deliberative components of democracy; they also affected how much Taiwanese citizens were willing to participate in the democratic system. Again, the former period of time marked the death of Chiang Kai-Shek and an increasingly tolerant political environment. International trade also introduced a barrage of liberal ideas that started being debated in publications and forums, creating a new intersection of intellectual discourse about liberalism and the KMT's political opposition. Some institutions of higher education, such as the National Taiwan University even started teaching these ideas (Chao and Myers 1994). This coincided with the Taiwanization movement, where the KMT tried to recruit more local Taiwanese into the government through local elections. As a result, an increasing number of Taiwanese intellectuals started calling for a more open Taiwan using classic liberal vocabulary (H. Wang 2012). Intellectuals also became more involved in politics (Kan 1999). Taiwan's civil society participation index thus rose steadily after the 1970s, culminating in the formation of an opposition party in 1986. The establishment of formal representation for opposition ideas gave individuals who did not agree with KMT methods, a medium for participation; it also demonstrated the government's increased tolerance towards dissenting ideas. Both developments encouraged people who previously did not participate to enter the political sphere, which explains the second leap in participation in civil society.

The year 1994 is also important for explaining the trends of the participatory component of democracy in Taiwan, as the year sees an increase in the autonomy of local and regional elections and governments. The changes in the measurements indicate that more local and regional governments started being elected in 1994, and that such governments received less interference from unelected bodies. The changes also coincide with the 1994 gubernatorial and local elections, which resulted in the first popularly-elected provincial governors (Pao-Min 1996). Taiwan also amended its constitution in 1994's Second National Assembly to give its people more of a say in government composition. It added clauses about electing a president through a popular vote, and detailed how members in the Judicial, Control, and Examination Yuans were to be appointed, allowing Taiwanese citizens to elect their mayors, and giving the local government more autonomy (Kan 1999). These developments explain the upward trend in the local and regional government indices in the 1990s. They also triggered a small upward movement in the civil society participation index as local governments became more elected and citizens felt more connected to the government.

Then, in the most recent development, the utilization of the direct popular vote jumped in 2004, which is related to two events. The first is the presidential election of 2004, and the

second is the referendum held by the DPP over PRC/Taiwan relations. The two elections experienced higher voter turnouts, which affected how much the direct popular vote was used.

## Conclusion

Taiwan has experienced an upward trend of democratization. It started out as a single-party authoritarian regime and has now become a multiparty electoral democracy. All indices follow similar trajectories, remaining stagnant for most the 20th century, and only experiencing major increases in the 1980s. The deliberative component of democracy is an exception, as the common good indicator begins at slightly below three in 1900. This is possibly because traditional Chinese political philosophies (e.g., Confucianism) also emphasized the common good. The women's political empowerment index also experienced a more gradual change because its starting point was similarly higher: they received the right to vote in 1947. Now, the younger political party, the DPP, is well-respected and its candidate won the most recent 2016 presidential election. Elite-led changes in attitudes towards democracy and sources of legitimacy explain this trajectory, and society has now generally been socialized with democratic norms. Continued economic growth, and a less sensationalized and bipartisan media could both help Taiwan maintain its democratization.

## Appendix

### Indicators included in Figure 1

#### Electoral democracy index

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

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

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the average of, on the one hand, the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association (thick) (v2x\_frassoc\_thick), suffrage (v2x\_suffr), clean elections (v2xel\_frefair), elected executive (v2x\_accex) and freedom of expression (v2x\_freexp\_thick); and, on the other, the five-way multiplicative interaction between those indices. This is half way between a straight average and strict multiplication, meaning the average of the two. It is thus a compromise between the two most well known aggregation formulas in the literature, both allowing (partial) "compensation" in one sub-component for lack of polyarchy in the others, but also punishing countries not strong in one sub-component according to the "weakest link" argument.

#### 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 (v2dlconstl), 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**

#### **Freedom of expression index**

*Question:* To what extent does government respect press & media freedom, the freedom of ordinary people to discuss political matters at home and in the public sphere, as well as the freedom of academic and cultural expression? *Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for print/broadcast censorship effort (v2mecenefm), internet censorship effort (v2mecenefi), harassment of journalists (v2meharjrn), media self-censorship (v2meslfcen), freedom of discussion for men/women (v2cldiscm, v2cldiscw) and freedom of academic and cultural expression (v2clacfree).

## **Electoral democracy index**

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

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

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the average of, on the one hand, the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association (thick) (v2x\_frassoc\_thick), suffrage (v2x\_suffr), clean elections (v2xel\_frefair), elected executive (v2x\_accex) and freedom of expression (v2x\_freexp\_thick); and, on the other, the five-way multiplicative interaction between those indices. This is half way between a straight average and strict multiplication, meaning the average of the two. It is thus a compromise between the two most well known aggregation formulas in the literature, both allowing (partial) "compensation" in one sub-component for lack of polyarchy in the others, but also punishing countries not strong in one sub-component according to the "weakest link" argument.

## **Share of population with suffrage**

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

*Clarification:* This question does not take into consideration restrictions based on age, residence, having been convicted for crime, or being legally incompetent. It covers legal (de jure) restrictions, not restrictions that may be operative in practice (de facto). The scores reflect de jure provisions of suffrage extension in percentage of the adult population as of January 1 in a particular year. The adult population (as defined by statute) is defined by citizens in the case of independent countries or the people living in the territorial entity in the case of colonies. Universal suffrage is coded as 100%. Universal male suffrage only is coded as 50%. Years before electoral provisions are introduced are scored 0%. The scores do not reflect whether an electoral regime was interrupted or not. Only if new constitutions, electoral laws, or the like explicitly introduce new regulations of suffrage, the scores were adjusted accordingly if the changes

suggested doing so. If qualifying criteria other than gender apply (such as property, tax payments, income, literacy, region, race, ethnicity, religion, and/or ‘economic independence’), estimates have been calculated by combining information on the restrictions with different kinds of statistical information (on population size, age distribution, wealth distribution, literacy rates, size of ethnic groups, etc.), secondary country-specific sources, and – in the case of very poor information – the conditions in similar countries or colonies.

*Aggregation:* v2elsuffrage/100

### **Clean elections index**

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

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

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for EMB autonomy (v2elembaut), EMB capacity (v2elembcap), election voter registry (v2elrgstry), election vote buying (v2elvotbuy), election other voting irregularities (v2elirreg), election government intimidation (v2elintim), election other electoral violence (v2elpeace), and election free and fair (v2elfrfair). Since the bulk of these indicators are only observed in election years, the index scores have then been repeated within election regime periods (as defined by v2x\_elecreg)

### **Elected executive index**

*Question:* Is the chief executive appointed through popular elections (either directly or indirectly)?

*Clarifications:* This index attempts to measure whether the chief executive is elected, either directly elected through popular elections or indirectly through a popularly elected legislature that then appoints the chief executive. Note that a popular election is minimally defined and also includes sham elections with limited suffrage and no competition. Similarly, “appointment” by legislature only implies selection and/or approval, not the power to dismiss. This index is useful primarily for aggregating higher-order indices and should not be interpreted as an important element of democracy in its own right.

*Aggregation:* There are six different chains of appointment/selection to take into account in constructing this index, all of which are scaled to vary from 0 to 1. First, whether the head of state is directly elected (a=1) or not (a=0). Second, the extent to which the legislature is popularly elected (b), measured as the proportion of legislators elected (if legislature is unicameral), or the weighted average of the proportion elected for each house, with the weight

defined by which house is dominant (if legislature is bicameral). Third, whether the head of state is appointed by the legislature, or the approval of the legislature is necessary for the appointment of the head of state ( $c_1=1$ , otherwise 0). Fourth, whether the head of government is appointed by the legislature, or the approval of the legislature is necessary for the appointment of the head of government ( $c_2=1$ , otherwise 0). Fifth, whether the head of government is appointed by the head of state ( $d=1$ ) or not ( $d=0$ ). Sixth, whether the head of government is directly elected ( $e=1$ ) or not ( $e=0$ ). Define  $hosw$  as the weight for the head of state. If the head of state is also head of government ( $v_{2exhoshog}=1$ ),  $hosw=1$ . If the head of state has more power than the head of government over the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers, then  $hosw=1$ ; if the reverse is true,  $hosw=0$ . If they share equal power,  $hosw=.5$ . Define the weight for the head of government as  $hogw=1-hosw$ . The formula is:  $v_{2x\_accex} = hosw*[\max(a_1, b*c_1)]+hogw*[\max(a_1*d, b*c_1*d, a_2, b*c_2)]$

### **Freedom of association index**

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

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for party ban ( $v_{2psparban}$ ), barriers to parties ( $v_{2psbars}$ ), opposition parties autonomy ( $v_{2psoppaut}$ ), elections multiparty ( $v_{2elmulpar}$ ), CSO entry and exit ( $v_{2cseeorgs}$ ) and CSO repression ( $v_{2csreprss}$ ). Since the multiparty elections indicator is only observed in election years, its values have first 52 been repeated within election regime periods (as defined by  $v_{2x\_elecrag}$ ).

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

#### **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 (v2dlconstl), and engaged society (v2dlengage).

### **Respect counterarguments**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, to what extent do political elites acknowledge and respect counterarguments?

*Clarification:* Because discourse varies greatly from person to person, base your answer on the style that is most typical of prominent national political leaders.

*Responses:*

- 0: Counterarguments are not allowed or if articulated, punished.
- 1: Counterarguments are allowed at least from some parties, but almost always are ignored.
- 2: Elites tend to acknowledge counterarguments but then explicitly degrade them by making a negative statement about them or the individuals and groups that propose them.
- 3: Elites tend to acknowledge counterarguments without making explicit negative or positive statements about them.
- 4: Elites almost always acknowledge counterarguments and explicitly value them, even if they ultimately reject them for the most part.
- 5: Elites almost always acknowledge counterarguments and explicitly value them, and frequently also even accept them and change their position.

### **Range of consultation**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, how wide is the range of consultation at elite levels?

*Clarification:* Because practices vary greatly from policy to policy, base your answer on the style that is most typical of policymaking.

*Responses:*

0: No consultation. The leader or a very small group (e.g. military council) makes authoritative decisions on their own.

1: Very little and narrow. Consultation with only a narrow circle of loyal party/ruling elites.

2: Consultation includes the former plus a larger group that is loyal to the government, such as the ruling party's or parties' local executives and/or women, youth and other branches.

3: Consultation includes the former plus leaders of other parties.

4: Consultation includes the former plus a select range of society/labor/business representatives.

5: Consultation engages elites from essentially all parts of the political spectrum and all politically relevant sectors of society and business.

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

### **Reasoned justification**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, i.e. before a decision has been made, to what extent do political elites give public and reasoned justifications for their positions?

*Clarification:* Because discourse varies greatly from person to person, base your answer on the style that is most typical of prominent national political leaders.

*Responses:*

0: No justification. Elites almost always only dictate that something should or should not be done, but no reasoning about justification is given. For example, "We must cut spending."

1: Inferior justification. Elites tend to give reasons why someone should or should not be for doing or not doing something, but the reasons tend to be illogical or false, although they may appeal to many voters. For example, "We must cut spending. The state is inefficient." [The inference is incomplete because addressing inefficiencies would not necessarily reduce spending and it might undermine essential services.]

2: Qualified justification. Elites tend to offer a single simple reason justifying why the proposed policies contribute to or detract from an outcome. For example, "We must cut spending because taxpayers cannot afford to pay for current programs."

3: Sophisticated justification. Elites tend to offer more than one or more complex, nuanced and complete justification. For example, "We must cut spending because

taxpayers cannot afford to pay for current government programs. Raising taxes would hurt economic growth, and deficit spending would lead to inflation.”

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

### **Engaged society**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, how wide and how independent are public deliberations?

*Clarification:* This question refers to deliberation as manifested in discussion, debate, and other public forums such as popular media.

*Responses:*

- 0: Public deliberation is never, or almost never allowed.
- 1: Some limited public deliberations are allowed but the public below the elite levels is almost always either unaware of major policy debates or unable to take part in them.
- 2: Public deliberation is not repressed but nevertheless infrequent and non-elite actors are typically controlled and/or constrained by the elites.
- 3: Public deliberation is actively encouraged and some autonomous non-elite groups participate, but it is confined to a small slice of specialized groups that tends to be the same across issue-areas.
- 4: Public deliberation is actively encouraged and a relatively broad segment of nonelite groups often participate and vary with different issue-areas.
- 5: Large numbers of non-elite groups as well as ordinary people tend to discuss major policies among themselves, in the media, in associations or neighborhoods, or in the streets. Grass-roots deliberation is common and unconstrained.

### **Common good**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, to what extent do political elites justify their positions in terms of the common good?

*Clarification:* Because discourse varies greatly from person to person, base your answer on the style that is most typical of prominent national political leaders.

*Responses:*

- 0: Little or no justification in terms of the common good is usually offered.
- 1: Specific business, geographic, group, party, or constituency interests are for the most part offered as justifications.

2: Justifications are for the most part a mix of specific interests and the common good and it is impossible to say which justification is more common than the other.

3: Justifications are based on a mixture of references to constituency/party/group interests and on appeals to the common good.

4: Justifications are for the most part almost always based on explicit statements of the common good for society, understood either as the greatest good for the greatest number or as helping the least advantaged in a society.

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

## **Indicators included in Figure 4**

### **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).

### **Regional government index**

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

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

*Aggregation:* First, regional government elected (v2elsrgel) is recoded so that 0=none elected, 1=only executive elected, 2=only assembly elected, and 3=both elected. This new construct is then scaled to vary from 0-1 and multiplied by regional offices relative power (v2elrgpwr) scaled to vary from 0-1.

### **Civil society participation index**

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

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

*Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for candidate selection – national/local (v2pscnslnl), CSO consultation (v2cscnsult), CSO participatory environment (v2csptrcpt), and CSO women's participation (v2csgender).

### **Direct popular vote index**

*Question:* To what extent is the direct popular vote utilized?

*Clarification:* Direct popular voting refers here to an institutionalized process by which citizens of a region or country register their choice or opinion on specific issues through a ballot. It is intended to embrace initiatives, referendums, and plebiscites, as those terms are usually understood. It captures some aspects of the more general concept of direct democracy. The term does not encompass recall elections, deliberative assemblies, or settings in which the vote is not secret or the purview is restricted. Likewise, it does not apply to elections for representatives.

*Aggregation:* This index results from the addition of the scores of each type of popular votes studied (popular initiatives, referendums, plebiscites, and obligatory referendums). Each type of popular vote receives a maximum score of two resulting from the addition of two terms (easiness of initiation and easiness of approval), where each term obtains a maximum value of

one. As we are studying four types of popular votes, the minimum value is 0, and the maximum is 8. In the v2xdd\_dd all scores are normalized to range between 0 and 1. Regarding each type of citizen initiated popular vote (i.e., popular initiative or referendum), the ease of initiation is measured by (a) the existence of a direct democracy process (v2ddlegci), (b) the number of signatures needed (v2ddsigcip), (c) time-limits to circulate the signatures (v2ddgrgpci), and (d) the level of government (national and/or subnational). Easiness of approval is measured by the multiplication of the quorums pertaining to (a) participation (v2ddgrgpci), (b) approval (v2ddbndci), (c) supermajority (v2ddspmjci). The resulting score is then multiplied with (d) district majority (v2dddistsci). Consequences are measured by (a) the legal status of the decision made by citizens (binding or merely consultative) (v2ddlegci), and (b) the frequency with which direct popular votes have been held in the past (v2ddciniyr).

### **Local government index**

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

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

*Aggregation:* First, local government elected (v2ellocelc) is recoded so that 0=none elected, 1=only executive elected, 2=only assembly elected, and 3=both elected. This new construct is then scaled to vary from 0-1 and multiplied by local offices relative power (v2ellocpwr) scaled to vary from 0-1.

*Scale:* Interval

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