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WHY INDIA DOES POORLY ON GLOBAL PERCEPTION INDICES

*Case study of three opinion-based indices- Freedom in the World index,
EIU Democracy index and Variety of Democracy indices*



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Executive Summary

A noticeable trend in recent years has been the decline of India's rankings on a number of global indices, specifically in opinion-based indices that deal with subjective issues such as democracy, press freedom etc. One way to respond to this is ignore these as mere opinions. However, the issue is that they have concrete implications. For instance, these indices are inputs into the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGI) that, in turn, have approximately 18-20% weightage in sovereign ratings. So, they can't be completely ignored.

In this paper we look at 3 such indices which are used by WGI, which are Freedom in the World Index, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index and V-DEM indices. All three indices are almost entirely perception-based.

The first index in this paper is the Freedom in the World Index which has been published since 1973 by Freedom House. India's score on Civil Liberties was flat at 42 till 2018 but dropped sharply to 33 by 2022; that for Political Rights dropped from 35 to 33. Thus, India's total score dropped to 66 which places India in the "partially free" category – the same status it had during the Emergency. Since the publication of the index, the only two previous instances where India was considered as Partially Free was during the time of emergency and then during 1991-96 which were years of economic liberalisation. Clearly, this seems very arbitrary as what did the period of emergency which was a period of obvious curtailment of various activities had similar to the period of economic liberalisation or of the current times.

In contrast, the Freedom in the World report has given the territory of Northern Cyprus a score of 77 which makes it a free democracy. This is a territory only recognized by Turkey, not even by the United Nations. Meanwhile, the think-tank continues to treat Jammu and Kashmir as a separate territory since the early 1990s and now places it in the category of "not free".

The second index we look at in this paper is the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index. This index is published by EIU, which is the research and consulting arm of the firm that publishes the Economist magazine. India is placed in the category of "Flawed Democracy" and its rank deteriorated sharply from 27 in 2014 to 53 in 2020 and then improved a bit to 46 in 2021. The decline in rank has been on account of decline in scores primarily in the categories- Civil Liberties and Political Culture. The maximum decline has been in the category Civil Liberties, for which the score declined from 9.41 in 2014 to 5.59 in 2020. In the same time period, India's score for Political Culture declined

from 6.25 to 5.0. India's rank then recovered marginally to 46 in 2021, primarily on grounds that the government rolled back farm-sector reforms, which lead to improvement in scores on the categories- Civil Liberties, Functioning of Government and Political participation.

The comparison of scores of other countries on this EIU-Democracy Index has some surprising results. India's latest score for Civil Liberties lags that of Hong Kong (8.53). Similarly, India's score for Political Culture is much lower than that of Hong Kong (7.5) and Sri Lanka (6.25). Clearly, this seems very arbitrary.

EIU in their methodology mention that they do not only rely on opinion of experts but also take responses for some questions from opinion polls, if available (primarily from World Value Survey (WVS)). If the responses from opinion polls are not available, then the responses for those questions also are answered by experts. In case of India, the latest available WVS report is of 2012. The latest round of Wave 7 (2017-2020) has not been conducted for India yet. This implies that score of EIU Democracy index for India is based only on expert opinion since 2012.

The third is Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) indices produced by the Varieties of Democracy Institute at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. It comes up with six indices covering various aspects of democracy – Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Liberal Component, Egalitarian Component, Participatory Component, and Deliberative Component. These indices are comprised of various sub-indices. Some of the variables that feed into these indices are objective, i.e., which are based on factual data such as election type, minimum voting age, percentage of population with suffrage, occurrence of referendum, head of state name, upper chamber name, Presidential election vote share of largest vote-getter etc. Whereas some other variables are subjective, i.e. evaluative indicators based on ratings provided by experts. The final indices are created combining both kind of variables.

A time series analysis of the V-DEM scores show that India does well on objective parameters such as share of population with suffrage, but scores on various subjective sub-indices have declined sharply since 2014. In fact, India's has been termed as an "electoral autocracy" in the 2021 report, same as it was during the period of Emergency. The Liberal Democracy Index has declined from 0.567 in 2013 to a 0.357 in 2021. Secondly, the Electoral Democracy Index declined from 0.695 to 0.444 during the same time period. This Electoral Democracy index has 5 sub-indices. The scores remained high on the category- share of population with suffrage and elected official index, but declined sharply on the other three- Clean Elections sub-index has dropped from 0.785 in 2013 to 0.552 in 2021, Freedom of Expression from 0.882 to 0.598 and Freedom of Association from 0.863 to 0.72.

The cross-country comparison of this index also throws up some interesting results. India's rank on Liberal Democracy Index is 93. In contrast, Kingdom of Lesotho which started having democratically elected government only in mid 1990s, and has since faced various disruptions including a military coup and emergencies has a rank of 60. Or Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia only in 2008 has a rank of 79.

A common thread in all these indices is that they are derived from the perceptions or opinions of few experts. These institutions do not provide any transparency on how the experts were chosen or even their expertise or nationality (except in case of V-DEM where they clarify that they chose some experts from each country from different fields). For instance, the Freedom House report mentions that report is produced by a team of in-house staff/analysts/consultants and external analysts and expert advisers from the academic, think tank, and human rights communities. The nationality and expertise of the experts are not clear in the report.

Another common feature of these indices is all these are based on a set of questions. A reading of the questionnaire shows that most of the questions are subjective in nature, hence simply providing the same questions for all countries does not mean getting comparable scores for different countries as the generic questions can be answered very differently by experts. For instance, EIU has a question "How pervasive is corruption?". This kind of question is not possible to answer objectively even for a country and is impossible to do across countries. Further, the way the questions are framed can have an impact on scores. For instance, if an ostensibly reasonable question like "Is the head of state democratically elected?" is added in the list of questions, it would immediately negatively affect countries such as Sweden, Norway, UK, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands as these countries are constitutional monarchies. Most readers will agree that asking such a question is not unreasonable in an index trying to assess the democratic situation in a country.

Moreover, there are questions that are not meaningful indicators of democracy. For instance, there is a sub-index called Direct Popular Vote (in V-DEM) based on the following question: "To what extent is the direct popular vote utilized?" This is an indicator in which India scores zero! This is because it relates to use of direct referendum, plebiscites which is obviously not possible for a large country like India; even US scores zero on this. Obviously, this sub-index is suitable only for a small country like Switzerland where direct referendums are feasible. Ironically, countries such as Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba have score high than zero in this sub-index (In short, they are deemed more democratic on this parameter than India or the US).

To the extent that the think-tanks justify the change in scores in the reports, they are based on a selective use of some reports from media. For instance, EIU in its report

mentions that “authorities’ handling of the coronavirus pandemic has also led to a further erosion of civil liberties in 2020”. There is no basis to show how anything different was being done in India beyond what was necessary to contain the pandemic. Most countries had imposed restrictions during the time. Further, Freedom House declares that “informal community councils issue edicts concerning social customs that discriminate against women and minority groups”. However, it does not explain how this has worsened over time. There are many such examples listed in this paper.

Overall, it is important to understand that perception-based indices should not be ignored as mere opinions as they find their way into concrete things such as sovereign ratings via WGI which is based on a combination of lot of these indices. These will become even more important in future as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) indices are introduced into global business/investment decisions.

Hence, as a first step, the Indian government should request the World Bank to demand transparency and accountability from think-tanks that provide inputs for the WGI. In the longer term, independent think-tanks in India should be encouraged to research in these areas and come up with their own indices so that comparative indices are available.

I. Introduction

Various international agencies come up with global indices which rank countries on various parameters such as democracy, press freedom, internet freedom etc. Some of these indices are purely or primarily based on **perception of some “experts”**. However, it is important to note that these indices do not just form media and public opinion, **but also end up influencing some concrete things such as sovereign ratings**. These will become even more important in future as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) indices are introduced into global business/investment decisions. Hence, they cannot be ignored as mere opinions of some agency.

A country’s sovereign rating is based on certain **subjective factors** such as assessments of governance, political stability, rule of law, corruption, press freedom etc., in addition to various economic indicators. Some rating agencies use the World Bank’s World Governance Indicators (WGI) as a proxy of these subjective factors. Infact, in most cases, WGI is the single most important input for capturing the subjective factors. For example, Moody’s rating agency use 3 sub-indices from WGI- i.e., Government Effectiveness, Rule of Law, Control of corruption etc. Fitch uses all 6 sub-indices of WGI for capturing the subjective aspect of ratings- i.e., Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, Control of Corruption. WGI itself is a weighted average of various indices produced by think-tanks, NGOs and survey agencies¹.

In this paper, we illustrate the case of three global (perception based) indices- Freedom in the World Index by Freedom House, Democracy Index by Economist Intelligence Unit, V-DEM indices by the Varieties of Democracy Institute. All three are part of WGI and hence impact our sovereign ratings. The paper discusses the methodology of these 3 indices, India’s performance on these indices across time and among countries.

¹ <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Documents>

II. Freedom in the World Index

II (A). Methodology

Freedom in the World is an annual global report on political rights and civil liberties, composed of numerical ratings and descriptive texts for each country and a select group of territories. Freedom in the World report is being published since 1973 by Freedom House. Freedom House is a non-governmental organisation headquartered in New York, United States. The 2022 report currently covers 195 countries and 15 territories².

The Freedom in the World report is produced by a team of in-house staff/analysts/consultants and external analysts and expert advisers from the academic, think tank, and human rights communities. The 2022 edition of the report involved 128 analysts and 50 advisers. The analysts use news articles, academic analyses, reports from non-governmental organizations, individual professional contacts, and on-the-ground research to score countries and territories. The analysts' proposed scores are discussed at a series of review meetings, organized by region and attended by Freedom House staff and a panel of advisers and regional experts.

There are 2 key areas, within which there are seven topics on which the report assess the countries which are as follows³:

1. Political rights

- Electoral Process: executive and legislative elections, and electoral framework (3 questions)
- Political Pluralism and Participation: party system, competition, freedom to exercise political choices, and minority voting rights (4 questions)
- Functioning of Government: corruption, transparency, and ability of elected officials to govern in practice (3 questions)

2. Civil liberties

- Freedom of Expression and Belief: media, religious freedom, academic freedom, and free private discussion (4 questions)

² <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>

- Associational and Organizational Rights: free assembly, civic groups, and labor unions (3 questions)
- Rule of Law: independent judges and prosecutors, due process, crime and disorder, and legal equality (4 questions)
- Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: freedom of movement, property rights, personal and family rights, and freedom from economic exploitation (4 questions)

The overall scoring is based on a set of 25 questions which are answered by staff/analysts/consultants/experts. The full list of questions is in Annex 1. On each question, the experts give scores ranging from 0 to 4. A score of 0 represents the smallest degree of freedom and 4 the greatest degree of freedom. So maximum score on Political rights is 40 (4 marks *10 questions) and 60 for Civil liberties (4 marks*15 questions). Overall, a country can get maximum 100 marks.

Based on the scores on both parameters, the countries are then classified into status- Free (F), Partly Free (PF) and Not Free (NF). Below is the table based on which categories are formed (Figure 1)⁴.

Figure 1: Categorisation of Status of countries

Status		Political Rights Score						
		0-5	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-29	30-35	36-40
Civil Liberties Score	53-60	PF	PF	PF	F	F	F	F
	44-52	PF	PF	PF	PF	F	F	F
	35-43	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	F	F
	26-34	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	F
	17-25	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF
	8-16	NF	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF
	0-7	NF	NF	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF

Source: Freedom in the World Methodology

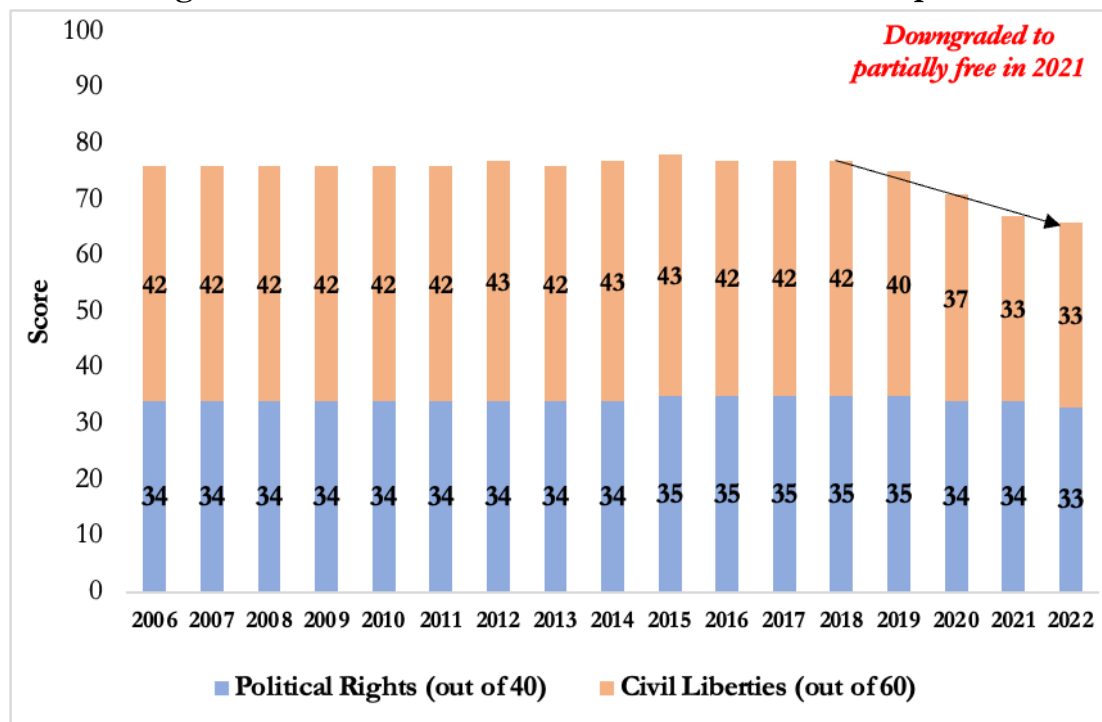
II (B). India's performance

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>

India's score on Freedom in the World Index has consistently declined post 2018. Overall, India's score on index stands at 66 in 2022, down from 77 in 2018⁵. The decline has been on account of the category Civil Liberties which declined from 42 in 2018 to 33 in 2022. The score on Political Rights also declined slightly from 35 in 2018 to 33 in 2022 (Figure 2). India is now considered to be only '*partially free*' after it was downgraded down from free status in 2021 report.

Note that the report considers Jammu and Kashmir as a separate territory from India and gives its separate ranking since 1990. As per the latest report, territory of Jammu and Kashmir is considered as "*Not free*"⁶.

Figure 2: India's Scores on Freedom in the World Report



Source: Annual Freedom in the World Reports

The previous two times when India was downgraded to 'Partially Free' status was during 1975-76 (Emergency period) and 1991-96 (years of economic liberalisation). Clearly this is arbitrary. What did the years of emergency which was a period of obvious political repression, suspended elections, official censoring of the press, jailing of

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2022>

⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/indian-kashmir/freedom-world/2022>

opponents without charge, banned labour strikes etc. have in common with period of economic liberalisation and of today.

The questions on which India’s score declined from 2018 leading to overall decline in score for India are listed in Table 1 (the complete list of questions and their scores are placed at Annex 1). Out of the total 25 questions in the questionnaire, scores decreased on 10 questions, out of which 8 were in the category of Civil Liberties. Further, India’s score did not increase on any question during this time period.

Table 1: Questions on which India’s score declined from 2018 to 2022

Questions	Scores 2018	Scores 2022
I.CIVIL LIBERTIES		
1 Are there free and independent media?	3	2
2 Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	3	2
3 Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	3	2
4 Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	4	3
5 Is there freedom of assembly?	4	2
6 Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?	3	2
7 Is there an independent judiciary?	3	2
8 Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	3	2
II.POLITICAL RIGHTS		
1 Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	4	3
2 Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	3	2

Our analysis of the annual reports show that they use some media reports and cherry pick some issues to make the judgements. For instance, the report notes that “Muslim candidates notably won 27 of 545 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, up from 22 previously. However, this amounted to just 5 percent of the seats in the

chamber, whereas Muslims make up some 14 percent of the population”. Note that number of seats have increased over the years, so it’s not clear how the situation has worsened over time. Freedom House report further notes that “In parts of the country, particularly in rural areas, informal community councils issue edicts concerning social customs that may discriminate against women and minority groups”. The report does not explain how this problem has increased over the years. If anything, increasing rural development, education, electrification, and road building are likely to be diminishing these informal discriminatory practices, not exacerbating them. Another example is that the report notes that journalists risk harassment, death threats, and physical violence in the course of their work. Here Freedom House cites figures from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) claiming that 5 journalists were killed in India in 2021, which is the highest figure for any country. However, the report ignores that from the same CPJ’s data, India’s 5 journalist deaths represented 11% of the world total, and in comparison, India constitutes 22% of the world’s population outside China (where journalist deaths are not included in the CPJ data).⁷

II (C). Cross country analysis

In the latest report of 2022, India’s score of the Freedom in the World Index is 66 and it is in category Partially Free. Cross country comparisons point towards the arbitrariness in the way scoring is done. There are some examples of countries which have scores higher than India which seem clearly unusual.

Northern Cyprus is considered as a free territory with a score of 77 (in 2022 report). It is ironical as North Cyprus is not even recognised by United Nations as a country. It is recognised only by Turkey. It is a Turkish controlled area and infact is also called as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The territory has ethnically cleansed its indigenous Greek population⁸. Further, there are countries that became recently independent and have had no time to show a track record of developed democratic institutions, but they have scores higher than India. For instance, Timor Leste officially became a country only

⁷ <https://quadrant.org.au/opinion/qed/2022/08/indian-democracy-at-75-who-are-the-barbarians-at-the-gate/>

⁸ http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/Embassies/Embassy_Vienna/vienna.nsf/page74_en/page74_en?OpenDocument

in 2002⁹. Still its score is 72 and is categorised as Free territory. Further, Montenegro became independent only in 2006¹⁰ and still its score is 67. Mongolia ended its one-party system in 1990 in favour of free multiparty elections only in 1990¹¹, however its score is 84 and it is categorised as Free Country.

III. EIU- Democracy Index

III (A). Methodology

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) is the research and consulting arm of the firm that publishes the Economist magazine. It publishes a Democracy Index since 2006. The index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide in 165 independent states and two territories¹².

The index is based on 5 categories which are as follows:

- 1) Electoral process and pluralism
- 2) Functioning of government
- 3) Political participation
- 4) Political culture
- 5) Civil liberties

The index is based on responses to 60 questions spread across the above mentioned 5 parameters {full list of questions in Annex 2}. Out of these 60, category Electoral process and pluralism has 12 questions, functioning of government has 14 questions, Political Participation has 9 questions, Political Culture has 8 questions and Civil Liberties have 17 questions.

The scoring of these questions is based on a combination of dichotomous and three-point scoring system i.e., 0/1 for some questions and 0/0.5/1 for some questions. Then, based on the scores for the questions, the individual category indices are calculated. The individual indices are sum of scores of the questions converted to a 0 to 10 scale. **Then the final score of democracy index is calculated as a simple average of scores of**

⁹ https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/timor_lest.htm

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17667132>

¹¹ <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/mongolia.htm>

¹² <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/>

individual 5 indices. The index values are then used to categorize countries within one of four types of regimes:

- 1) Full democracies: Scores greater than 8
- 2) Flawed democracies: Scores greater than 6, and less than or equal to 8
- 3) Hybrid regimes: Scores greater than 4, and less than or equal to 6
- 4) Authoritarian regimes: Scores less than or equal to 4

Our analysis of the list of questions show questions are quite subjective, making objective scoring difficult. Hence, they do not lend themselves easily to cross-country analysis. Some questions to illustrate the same are listed in Table 2 below (the detailed list of questions is placed in Annex 2).

Table 2: Some questions of EIU-Democracy index

1) How pervasive is corruption?
2) Popular perceptions of the extent to which citizens have free choice and control over their lives.
3) Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.
4) Is there freedom of expression and protest?
5) Do citizens enjoy basic security?
6) Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms. Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study.
7) The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.
8) Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military rule.
9) Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections.

Source: EIU methodology

The answers to these questions are taken from 2 sources: 1) Expert opinions and 2) Public opinion polls (for about 15 questions) if available.

1) The Experts

The responses for about 45 questions are from experts. The report does not reveal the number, nationality, credentials or even field of expertise of the experts.

2) Public opinion Poll

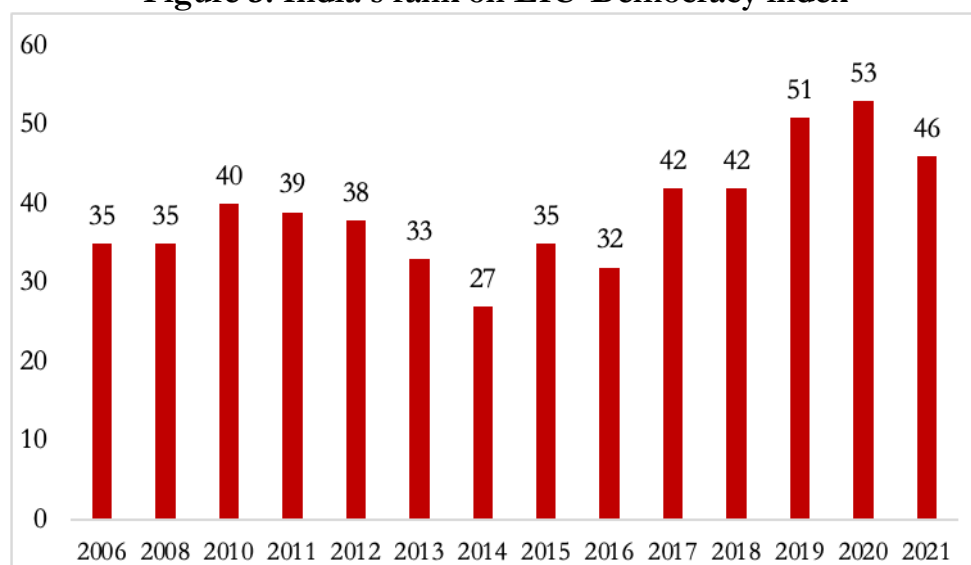
Public-opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey (conducted by World Values Survey Association) are used for some questions, if available. If not available, then expert assessment is used for those questions as well. Indicators based on the surveys predominate heavily in the ‘political participation’ and ‘political culture’ categories, and a few are used in the civil liberties and functioning of government categories.

In case of India, the latest World Value Survey report available is of 2012 (from Wave 6). The latest round of Wave 7 (2017-2020) has not been conducted for India yet. It is mentioned on their website “Further surveys interrupted by the outbreak of the coronavirus- whose delivery is delayed and expected after April 2022 include India, Uzbekistan, Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. **Since the latest public opinion poll has not been conducted after 2012, this implies that the score for India is based only on expert opinions since 2012 till today.**

III (B). India’s performance

India has been kept in the category of ‘Flawed democracy’ since 2006, when the EIU Democracy index was first released. India’s rank deteriorated sharply from 27 in 2014 to 53 in 2020 (Figure 3). The score and consequently the rank (46th position) improved slightly in 2021, which the report mentions as being primarily on account of repealing the farm laws.

Figure 3: India’s rank on EIU-Democracy index



Source: EIU annual reports

The scores declined primarily in three categories- Civil Liberties, Political Culture and Electoral Process and Pluralism (Table 3). The decline was the maximum in the category of Civil Liberties, where it declined from 9.41 in 2013 to 5.59 in 2020. During the same period, the score on Political Culture declined from 6.25 to 5.0 and on Electoral Process and Pluralism from 9.58 to 8.67. From 2020 to 2021, the scores improved on Civil Liberties, Political Participation and Functioning of government.

Table 3: Scores for India on various categories of the EIU Democracy Index

Year	Scores					
	Electoral Process and Pluralism	Functioning of Government	Political Participation	Political Culture	Civil Liberties	Overall Score
2006	9.58	8.21	5.56	5.63	9.41	7.68
2008	9.58	8.21	5.56	6.25	9.41	7.80
2010	9.58	8.57	4.44	4.38	9.41	7.28
2011	9.58	7.50	5.00	5.00	9.47	7.30
2012	9.58	7.50	6.11	5.00	9.41	7.52
2013	9.58	7.14	6.67	5.63	9.41	7.69
2014	9.58	7.14	7.22	6.25	9.41	7.92
2015	9.58	7.14	7.22	5.63	9.12	7.74
2016	9.58	7.50	7.22	5.63	9.12	7.81
2017	9.17	6.79	7.22	5.63	7.35	7.23
2018	9.17	6.79	7.22	5.63	7.35	7.23
2019	8.67	6.79	6.67	5.63	6.76	6.90
2020	8.67	7.14	6.67	5.00	5.59	6.61
2021	8.67	7.50	7.22	5.00	6.18	6.91

Source: EIU annual reports

The EIU report mentions few excerpts from media explaining the situation in the country. For instance, the 2021 report cited that the authorities’ handling of the coronavirus pandemic has also led to a further erosion of civil liberties in 2020. Now there is no basis to show how anything separate was being done in India beyond what was necessary to contain the pandemic. Most countries actually imposed restrictions during the time based on the local conditions to prevent the spread of COVID. In its 2022 report, the EIU found a slight improvement in the quality of India’s democracy, citing “year-long protests by farmers eventually forced the government to repeal the farm laws that it had introduced in 2020. The victory of the protesters showed that there are mechanisms and institutions in place to allow government accountability to the

electorate". This seems strange that the report is taking a political position on agriculture policy of a country.

III (C). Cross country analysis

India's rank in the EIU Democracy Index is 46 in 2021. Cross country comparisons show that India's rank is below various countries that are clearly less democratic or are recently formed states etc. Take the example of Malaysia, which is ranked 39, despite the fact that there has been an ongoing political crisis in the country since 2019/20. Moreover, the Constitution of Malaysia forbids discrimination against citizens based on sex, religion, and race, but also accords a "special position" in Article 153 of the Constitution, to Bumiputera, the indigenous peoples of Malaysia including ethnic Malays and members of tribes indigenous to the states of Sabah and Sarawak in eastern Malaysia.

Moreover, on the two categories where India's score has deteriorated sharply (Civil Liberties and Political culture), there are instances of countries which are newly formed countries and have clearly faced political issues in recent past having higher scores. India's score on Political Culture is 5.0 in 2021. In comparison, Lesotho is a country which faced a military coup in 2014 and emergency was declared in 2020 and again in 2022¹³, however has a score of 5.63; Timor Leste which officially became a country only in 2002 has score of 6.88. Moreover, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong which have faced political turmoil in recent past have scores of 6.25 and 7.50 respectively. India's score on Civil Liberties was 6.18. In contrast, Lesotho has a score of 6.47, Timor Leste a score of 7.35 and Hong Kong a score of 8.53. This points towards the issue that simply providing the same questions for all countries does not mean getting comparable scores as the generic questions can be answered very differently by different experts leading to arbitrary cross country scoring and hence rankings.

¹³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-17/lesotho-declares-two-week-state-of-emergency-as-bills-not-passed>

IV. V-DEM indices

IV (A). Methodology

The V-DEM rankings are produced by the Varieties of Democracy Institute at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Indices that are given in the V-DEM report are¹⁴:

1. **Liberal Democracy Index-** It captures both liberal and electoral aspects of democracy based on Electoral Democracy Index and Liberal component index and (Index 2 and 3)
2. **Electoral Democracy Index-** The V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index captures not only the extent to which regimes hold clean, free and fair elections, but also their actual freedom of expression, alternative sources of information and association, as well as male and female suffrage and the degree to which government policy is vested in elected political officials.
3. **Liberal Component index-** This index is created to capture the liberal principle of democracy which embodies the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against both the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. The index covers three sub-indices including the equality before the law and individual liberties, judicial constraints on the executive, legislative constraints on the executive.
4. **Egalitarian Component Index-** The egalitarian principle of democracy measures to what extent all social groups enjoy equal capabilities to participate in the political arena. The index covers aspects such as equal protection, access and distribution of resources.
5. **Participatory Component Index-** The participatory principle of democracy emphasises the active participation by citizens in all political processes, electoral and non-electoral. The index takes into account 4 important aspects of citizen participation- civil society organisations, mechanisms of direct democracy, participation and representation through local and regional governments.

¹⁴ https://v-dem.net/documents/19/dr_2022_ipyOpLP.pdf

6. **Deliberative Component Index-** The V-Dem Deliberative Component Index captures to what extent the deliberative principle of democracy is achieved. It assesses the process by which decisions are reached in a polity.

All of these indices have various sub-components which are generated using various set of variables. The details of sub-indices under each index are placed in Annex 3 of the paper. The sub-indices and hence the democracy-based indices are created by combining two kinds of variables. There are overall approximately 473 variables in the V-DEM dataset.

- 1) **Factual-** The first kind of variables are factual in nature and these are filled or pre-coded by research assistants/project manager/country coordinator etc. Some examples of these indicators are election type, minimum voting age, percentage of population with suffrage, head of state name, presidential election vote share of largest vote-getter etc.
- 2) **Evaluative indicators based on ratings provided by experts-** The second kind of variables are based on the responses for questions from experts. The data on these questions is gathered generally from five experts per country-year observation¹⁵. As per V-Dem report, these experts are generally in academics or professionals working in media, or public affairs (e.g. senior analysts, editors, judges); about 2/3rd are also nationals of and/or residents in a country and have documented knowledge of both that country and a specific substantive area. The details of who are the experts are not put out in public {V-DEM's policy on confidentiality is placed in Annex 4}. After collecting data from on these questions, the data is aggregated using a measurement model.¹⁶

However, the issue is that the list of questions clearly shows that they are subjective in nature and it is very difficult for any expert to answer the questions objectively, making cross country comparison very tough. Some examples of the questions for the experts are listed below:

¹⁵ https://v-dem.net/documents/19/dr_2022_ipyOpLP.pdf

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Does the government directly or indirectly attempt to censor the print or broadcast media?
- Is there freedom from torture?
- Do men enjoy the right to private property?
- Is political power distributed according to social groups?
- How centralized is legislative candidate selection within the parties?
- Is there self-censorship among journalists when reporting on issues that the government considers politically sensitive?
- Is there media bias against opposition parties or candidates?
- Of the major print and broadcast outlets, how many routinely criticize the government?

Further, there are questions which actually does not reflect democracy appropriately. One sub-index in V-DEM Participatory Component index is Direct popular Vote- i.e. To what extent is the direct popular vote utilized? 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 understood¹⁷. Now this is a question which is not a meaningful way to capture democracy. It may be possible for small countries like Switzerland, but not for country with size like India. India (Table 5) and even US gets a zero score on this variable, whereas Afghanistan (0.02), Belarus (0.064) and Cuba (0.151) gets a score greater than zero.

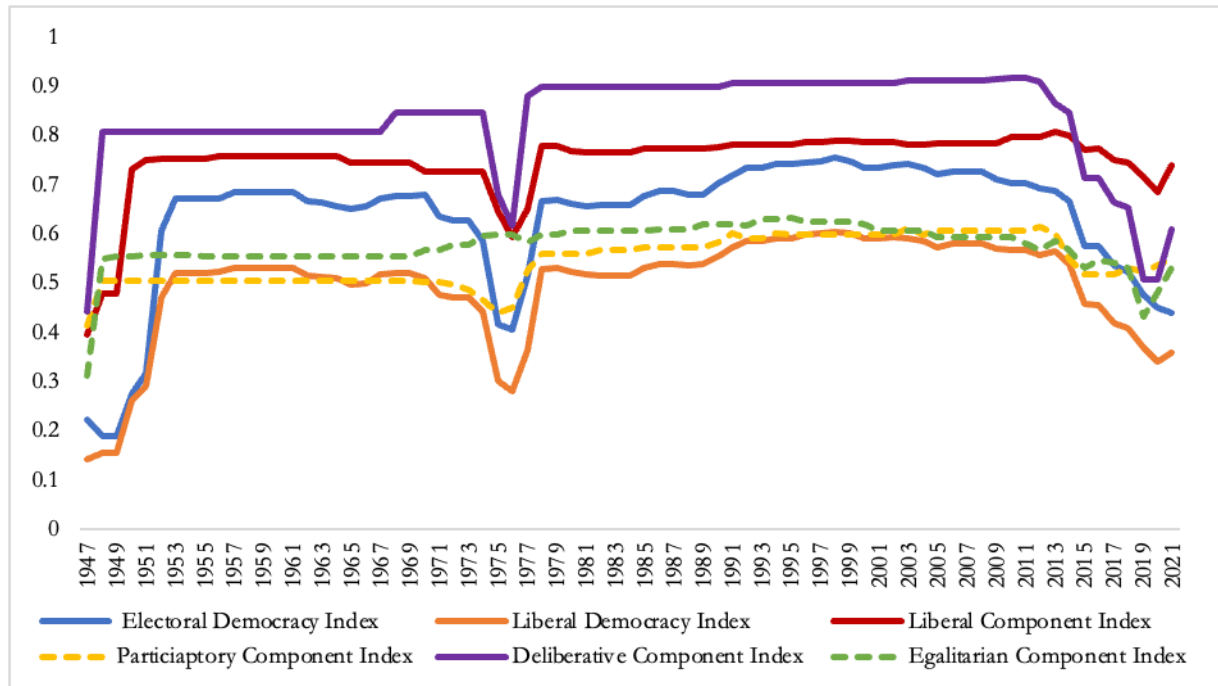
IV (B). India's performance

The scores on most of these V-DEM indices have been declining for India since 2014 and in fact India was downgraded to “Electoral Autocracy” in 2021. The scores have declined on 4 indices- Liberal Democracy Index, Electoral Democracy Index, Liberal Component Index and Deliberative Component Index (Figure 4). The score on Liberal Democracy index reduced from 0.567 in 2013 to 0.357 in 2021. During the same time period, score on Electoral Democracy Index declined from 0.695 to 0.444, Deliberative

¹⁷ This index results from the addition of the weighted scores of each type of popular votes studied (popular initiatives ×1.5, referendums ×1.5, plebiscites, and obligatory referendums). {V-DEM codebook}

Component Index from 0.885 to 0.605, Liberal component Index from 0.806 to 0.744. Consequently, India's rank also worsened on these four categories (Table 4). The scores on other 2 indices- Egalitarian Component Index and Participatory Component Index remained almost same during this time.

Figure 4: Scores of various V-DEM indices for India since independence



Source: V-DEM database¹⁸

Another key point to note here is that the previous time period when there was a considerable decline in democracy indices was in the year 1975-76 which was a period of Emergency. Clearly this is totally arbitrary as the years of Emergency which was a period of obvious political repression, suspended elections, censored press etc. have been put on par with today's situation.

Table 4: India's rank in V-DEM indices

Year	Liberal Democracy Index	Electoral Democracy Index	Liberal Component Index	Egalitarian Component Index	Participatory Component Index	Deliberative Component Index
2017	70	73	76	118	62	76
2018	81	82	78	110	82	128
2019	85	87	70	118	84	102

¹⁸ <https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/>

2020	90	89	93	122	105	145
2021	97	101	88	124	91	126
2022	93	100	69	114	85	102

Source: V-DEM annual reports

When we go into details of indices and sub-indices, we find that India does well on objective parameters such as share of population with suffrage or share of direct popular vote but shows sharp decline in categories which are based primarily on “expert opinion” (Table 5). Some such examples are:

- The score declined from 0.882 in 2013 to 0.598 in 2021 in the category “Freedom of expression and alternate information” which is based on question such as, Is there self-censorship among journalists when reporting on issues that the government considers politically sensitive? Is there media bias against opposition parties or candidates? Of the major print and broadcast outlets, how many routinely criticize the government? etc.
- Score for India declined from 0.785 in 2013 to 0.552 in 2021 in the category “Clean Election index” which is based on questions such as Does the Election Management Body have autonomy from government to apply election laws and administrative rules impartially in national elections? In this national election, were opposition candidates/parties/campaign workers subjected to repression, intimidation, violence, or harassment by the government, the ruling party, or their agents? etc.
- India’s scores declined from 0.885 in 2013 to 0.605 in 2021 in the “Deliberative Component Index”. This is based on some questions such as When important policy changes are being considered, how wide and how independent are public deliberations?, When important policy changes are being considered, how wide is the range of consultation at elite levels?, 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? etc.

Table 5: Score on indices and sub-indices of the V-DEM indices

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Liberal Democracy Index	0.59	0.577	0.574	0.574	0.565	0.567	0.541	0.451	0.447	0.408	0.393	0.357	0.322	0.357
Electoral Democracy	0.735	0.721	0.711	0.711	0.704	0.695	0.667	0.57	0.563	0.522	0.507	0.46	0.415	0.444

Index														
Share of Population with suffrage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Elected Officials Index	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996
Clean Elections Index	0.853	0.806	0.787	0.787	0.787	0.785	0.763	0.733	0.733	0.7	0.7	0.587	0.529	0.552
Freedom of Association	0.865	0.871	0.879	0.879	0.866	0.863	0.86	0.832	0.832	0.81	0.8	0.764	0.732	0.72
Freedom of expression and alternate information	0.905	0.905	0.902	0.902	0.889	0.882	0.846	0.675	0.65	0.591	0.575	0.558	0.524	0.598
Liberal Component Index	0.788	0.788	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.806	0.801	0.767	0.772	0.748	0.738	0.713	0.693	0.744
Equality before law	0.717	0.717	0.723	0.723	0.723	0.766	0.757	0.728	0.728	0.715	0.732	0.685	0.671	0.702
Judicial constraints	0.838	0.838	0.835	0.835	0.835	0.833	0.833	0.815	0.808	0.777	0.784	0.763	0.751	0.761
Legislative constraints	0.832	0.832	0.846	0.846	0.846	0.846	0.836	0.783	0.798	0.774	0.732	0.714	0.674	0.789
Egalitarian Component Index	0.609	0.608	0.606	0.591	0.586	0.588	0.571	0.533	0.55	0.537	0.542	0.442	0.491	0.526
Equal Protection Index	0.714	0.714	0.706	0.706	0.706	0.759	0.734	0.718	0.718	0.704	0.707	0.62	0.621	0.698
Equal Access Index	0.8	0.8	0.782	0.782	0.766	0.743	0.709	0.626	0.632	0.617	0.627	0.425	0.563	0.596
Equal Distribution of Resources	0.315	0.314	0.345	0.308	0.298	0.281	0.286	0.284	0.317	0.322	0.3	0.278	0.293	0.295
Participatory Component Index	0.614	0.614	0.614	0.613	0.614	0.61	0.553	0.528	0.528	0.529	0.53	0.529	0.547	0.547
Civil society participation	0.859	0.859	0.859	0.86	0.863	0.841	0.68	0.597	0.597	0.592	0.595	0.606	0.662	0.652
Direct Popular Vote	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Government Index	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.909	0.895	0.89	0.89
Regional Government Index	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.994	0.994	0.994
Deliberative Component Index	0.925	0.928	0.928	0.928	0.924	0.885	0.818	0.699	0.699	0.652	0.637	0.538	0.547	0.605

Source: V-DEM database

Analysis of the reports of V-DEM indicates that articles from media seem to have been cherry picked and judgements have been made on that basis. For instance, the report notes that there has been a decline in the autonomy of the election management body. It mentioned that “The overall freedom and fairness of elections (Elections free and fair) also was hard hit, with the last elections held under Prime Minister Modi’s reign in 2019, precipitating a downgrading to an electoral autocracy.” The report does not provide solid basis for coming to this conclusion.

IV (C). Cross country analysis

As per the latest report, India's rank in V-DEM Liberal Democracy Index is 93. Cross country comparisons show that countries which are recently formed countries or have reported some clear political issues also have better ranks than India. This is a reflection of the arbitrariness in the way scoring and ranking is done. For instance, the Kingdom of Lesotho has been ranked 60 in the report. The country started having democratically elected government first in mid 1990s, but has faced various disruptions after that. Even in 2014, there was a military coup that replaced the then Prime Minister. In 2020 and again in 2022, emergency was declared in the country. Timor Leste which officially become a country only in 2002 is ranked at 64th position. Kosovo which is at 79th rank declared independence from Serbia in 2008 and only then gained recognition as a sovereign state by UN. Countries such as Nepal (71st position) and Bhutan (65th position) which are recent democracies are also ranked higher than India.

V. Conclusion

In recent years, India's rankings and scores have declined on a number of global opinion-based indices that deal with subjective issues such as democracy, freedom and so on. This paper looked at three such reports published by well-known international think-tanks. As discussed above, Freedom in the World Index and V-DEM indices have placed India at the same level as during the Emergency of the 1970s (the third index began in 2006 but would probably have done the same if it had a longer series). Surely, this is not credible.

A closer inspection of the reports found that India is even ranked below the likes of Northern Cyprus! Nonetheless, these indices cannot be ignored as mere opinions as they indirectly feed into concrete things like World Bank's WGI that, in turn, feeds into sovereign ratings. In addition, these indices will gain further currency because of the growing mandate for using ESG indicators for investment and trade.

As discussed in the paper, there are serious problems with the methodology used in these perception-based indices. First, these indices are primarily based on the opinions of a tiny

group of unknown “experts”. The institutions do not provide any transparency on how the experts are chosen, or their expertise. EIU is supposed to use an additional ground survey, but we found that the one for India has not been done in decade!

Second, the questions that are used are subjective and are worded in a way that is impossible to answer objectively even for a country, let alone compare across countries. Hence, simply providing the same set of questions to everyone does not necessarily lead to comparable scores across countries. Various examples mentioned in the paper, moreover, show the arbitrariness of these questions.

Third, there are questions that should be asked but are excluded. For instance, surely it would make sense to include a reasonable question such as: “Is the head of state democratically elected?”. Such an inclusion would sharply reduce scores for countries such as Sweden, Norway, UK, Denmark, Belgium, and Netherlands which are constitutional monarchies. Not only is such a question pertinent to a measure of democracy, it can also be answered objectively.

Fourth, certain questions used by these indices are not an appropriate measure of democracy across all countries. A good example is the Direct Popular Vote sub-index in V-DEM, which is based on the question- “To what extent is the direct popular vote utilized?”. This is an indicator in which both India and US score zero because a system of direct referendums/votes is feasible only for a small country like Switzerland, and not for a large country like India. Ironically, countries such as Afghanistan score higher than zero in this sub-index!

As one can see, the methodologies used by these perception-based indices is not tenable. Since these indices are inputs into the World Governance Indicators, Government of India should request World Bank to demand greater transparency and accountability from these institutions.

Meanwhile, independent Indian think-tanks should be encouraged to do similar perception based indices for the world in order to break the monopoly of a handful of western institutions.

Annex 1: Questions and Scores for India in Freedom in the world Report

Q No.	QUESTIONS ON POLITICAL RIGHTS	Scores 2018	Scores 2022
A. Electoral Process (12)		12	12
A1	Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?	4	4
A2	Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?	4	4
A3	Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	4	4
B. Political Pluralism and Participation (16)		14	12
B1	Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	4	3
B2	Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	4	4
B3	Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?	3	3
B4	Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	3	2
C. Functioning of Government (12)		9	9
C1	Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	4	4
C2	Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	2	2
C3	Does the government operate with openness and transparency?	3	3

Q No.	QUESTIONS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES	Scores 2018	Scores 2022
D. Freedom of Express and Belief (16)		13	9
D1	Are there free and independent media?	3	2
D2	Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	3	2

D3	Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	3	2
D4	Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	4	3
E. Associational and Organizational Rights (9)		10	7
E1	Is there freedom of assembly?	4	2
E2	Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?	3	2
E3	Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	3	3
F. Rule of Law (16)		9	8
F1	Is there an independent judiciary?	3	2
F2	Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	2	2
F3	Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?	2	2
F4	Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	2	2
G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (16)		10	9
G1	Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	3	2
G2	Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	3	3
G3	Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	2	2
G4	Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	2	2

Annex 2: Questions of EIU Democracy Index

I. Electoral process and pluralism	
1	<p>Are elections for the national legislature and head of government free? Consider whether elections are competitive in that electors are free to vote and are offered a range of choices.</p> <p>1: Essentially unrestricted conditions for the presentation of candidates (for example, no bans on major parties). 0.5: There are some restrictions on the electoral process. 0: A single-party system or major impediments exist (for example, bans on a major party or candidate)</p>
2	<p>Are elections for the national legislature and head of government fair?</p> <p>1: No major irregularities in the voting process. 0.5: Significant irregularities occur (intimidation, fraud), but do not significantly affect the overall outcome. 0: Major irregularities occur and affect the outcome.</p> <p>Score 0 if score for question 1 is 0.</p>
3	<p>Are municipal elections both free and fair?</p> <p>1: Are free and fair. 0.5: Are free, but not fair. 0: Are neither free nor fair.</p>
4	<p>Is there universal suffrage for all adults? Bar generally accepted exclusions (for example, non-nationals; criminals; members of armed forces in some countries).</p> <p>1: Yes. 0: No</p>
5	<p>Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state or non-state bodies?</p> <p>1: Yes. 0: No.</p>
6	<p>Do laws provide for broadly equal campaigning opportunities?</p> <p>1: Yes. 0.5: Formally, yes, but, in practice, opportunities are limited for some candidates. 0: No</p>
7	<p>Is the process of financing political parties transparent and generally accepted?</p> <p>1: Yes. 0.5: Not fully transparent. 0: No</p>
8	<p>Following elections, are the constitutional mechanisms for the orderly transfer of power from one government to another clear, established and accepted?</p> <p>1: All three criteria are satisfied. 0.5: Two of the three criteria are satisfied. 0: Only one or none of the criteria is satisfied</p>
9	<p>Are citizens free to form political parties that are independent of the government?</p> <p>1. Yes. 0.5: There are some restrictions. 0: No.</p>
10	<p>Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?</p> <p>1: Yes. 0.5: There is a dominant two-party system, in which other political forces never have any effective chance of taking part in national government. 0: No</p>
11	<p>Is potential access to public office open to all citizens?</p> <p>1: Yes. 0.5: Formally unrestricted, but, in practice, restricted for some groups, or for citizens from some parts of the country. 0: No</p>
12	<p>Are citizens allowed to form political and civic organisations, free of state interference</p>

	and surveillance? 1: Yes. 0.5: Officially free, but subject to some unofficial restrictions or interference. 0: No.
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II. Functioning of government	
13	Do freely elected representatives determine government policy? 1: Yes. 0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence. 0: No
14	Is the legislature the supreme political body, with a clear supremacy over other branches of government? 1: Yes. 0: No
15	Is there an effective system of checks and balances on the exercise of government authority? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but there are some serious flaws. 0: No.
16	Government is free of undue influence by the military or the security services. 1: Yes. 0.5: Influence is low, but the defence minister is not a civilian. If the current risk of a military coup is extremely low, but the country has a recent history of military rule or coups. 0: No
17	Foreign powers and organizations do not determine important government functions or policies. 1: Yes. 0.5: Some features of a protectorate. 0: No (significant presence of foreign troops; important decisions taken by foreign power; country is a protectorate)
18	Do special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups exercise significant political power, parallel to democratic institutions? 1: Yes. 0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence. 0: No
19	Are sufficient mechanisms and institutions in place for ensuring government accountability to the electorate in between elections? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist. 0: No.
20	Does the government's authority extend over the full territory of the country? 1: Yes. 0: No
21	Is the functioning of government open and transparent, with sufficient public access to information? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist. 0: No.
22	How pervasive is corruption? 1: Corruption is not a major problem. 0.5: Corruption is a significant issue. 0: Pervasive corruption exists
23	Is the civil service willing to and capable of implementing government policy? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist. 0: No.
24	Popular perceptions of the extent to which citizens have free choice and control over their lives. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low.

	If available, from World Values Survey % of people who think that they have a great deal of choice/control. 1 if more than 70%, 0.5 if 50-70%, 0 if less than 50%.
25	Public confidence in government. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey, Gallup polls, Eurobarometer, Latinobarometer % of people who have a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in government. 1 if more than 40%. 0.5 if 25-40%. 0 if less than 25%
26	Public confidence in political parties. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who have a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence. 1 if more than 40%. 0.5 if 25-40%. 0 if less than 25%.

III. Political participation	
27	Voter participation/turn-out for national elections. (Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.) 1 if above 70%. 0.5 if 50%-70%. 0 if below 50%. If voting is obligatory, score 0. Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.
28	Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist. 0: No
29	Women in parliament. % of members of parliament who are women. 1 if more than 20% of seats. 0.5 if 10-20%, 0 if less than 10%.
30	Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations. Score 1 if over 7% of population for either. Score 0.5 if 4-7%. Score 0 if under 4%. If participation is forced, score 0
31	Citizens’ engagement with politics. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics. 1 if over 60%. 0.5 if 40-60%. 0 if less than 40%
32	The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations. 1 if over 40%. 0.5 if 30-40%. 0 if less than 30%.
33	Adult literacy.

	1 if over 90%. 0.5 if 70-90%. 0 if less than 70%
34	Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey % of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day. 1 if over 50%. 0.5 if 30-50%. 0 if less than 30%.
35	The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation. 1: Yes. 0.5: Some attempts. 0: No. Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora. If participation is forced, score 0

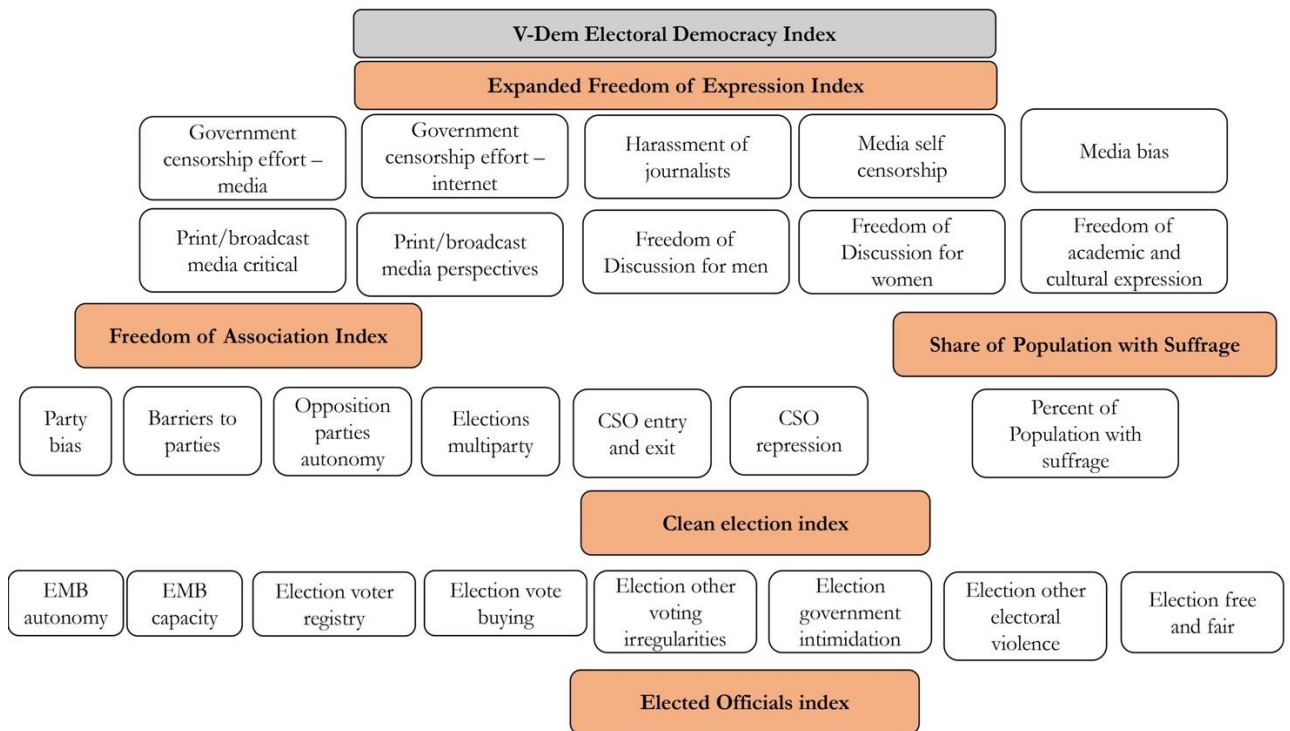
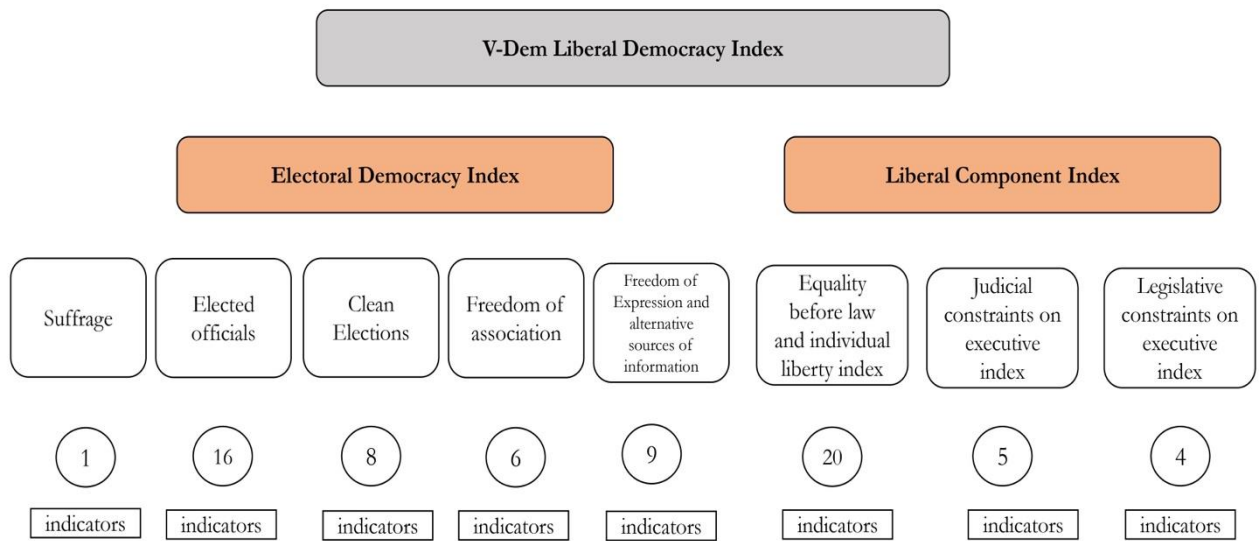
IV. Democratic political culture	
36	Is there a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy? 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but some serious doubts and risks. 0: No
37	Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections. 1: Low. 0.5: Moderate. 0: High. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who think it would be good or fairly good to have a strong leader who does not bother with parliament and elections. 1 if less than 30%. 0.5 if 30-50%. 0 if more than 50%.
38	Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military rule. 1: Low. 0.5: Moderate. 0: High. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have military rule. 1 if less than 10%. 0.5 if 10-30%. 0 if more than 30%
39	Perceptions of rule by experts or technocratic government; proportion of the population that would prefer rule by experts or technocrats. 1: Low. 0.5: Moderate. 0: High. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have experts, not government, make decisions for the country. 1 if less than 50%, 0.5 if 50-70%, 0 if more than 70%.
40	Perception of democracy and public order; proportion of the population that believes that democracies are not good at maintaining public order. 1: Low. 0.5: Moderate. 0: High. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who disagree with the view that democracies are not good at maintaining order. 1 if more than 70%. 0.5 if 50-70%. 0 if less than 50%.

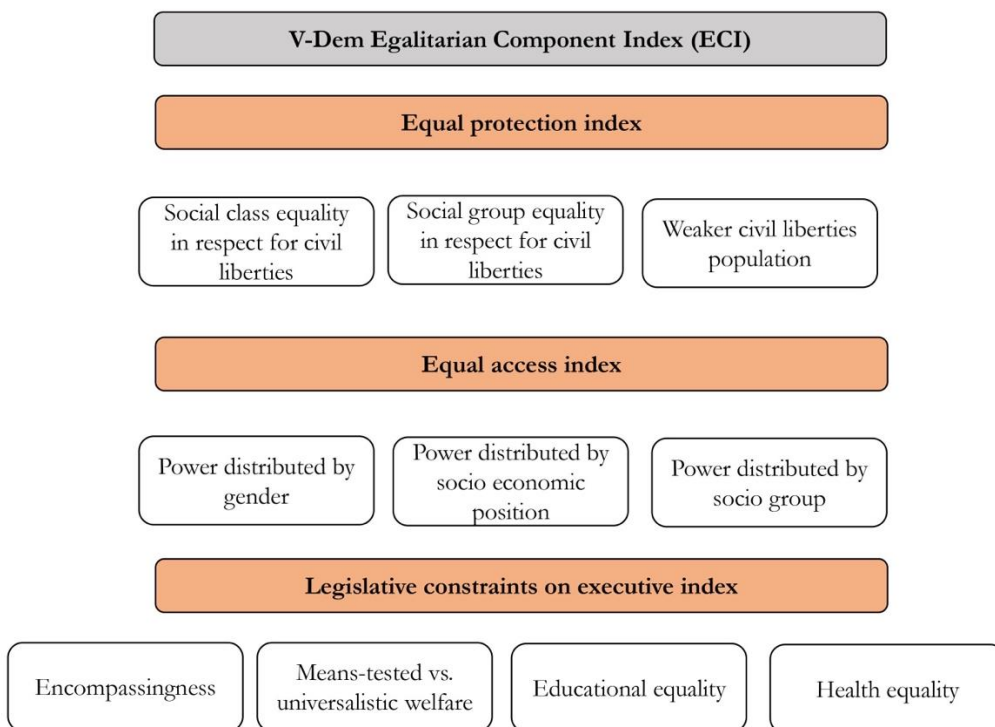
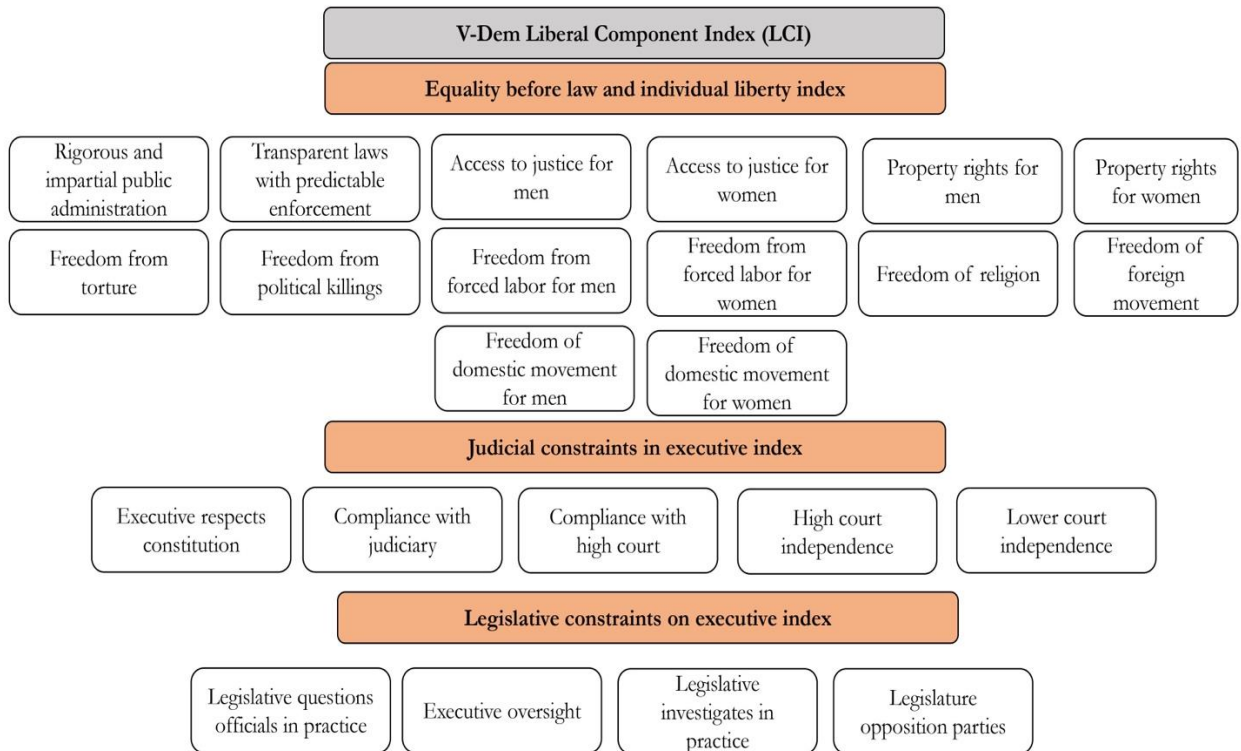
	Alternatively, % of people who think that punishing criminals is an essential characteristic of democracy. 1 if more than 80%. 0.5 if 60-80%. 0 if less than 60%.
41	Perception of democracy and the economic system; proportion of the population that believes that democracy benefits economic performance. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who disagree with the view that the economic system is badly run in democracies. 1 if more than 80%. 0.5 if 60-80%. 0 if less than 60%
42	Degree of popular support for democracy. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey % of people who agree or strongly agree that democracy is better than any other form of government. 1 if more than 90%. 0.5 if 75-90%. 0 if less than 75%
43	There is a strong tradition of the separation of Church and State. 1: Yes 0.5: Some residual influence of Church on State. 0: No

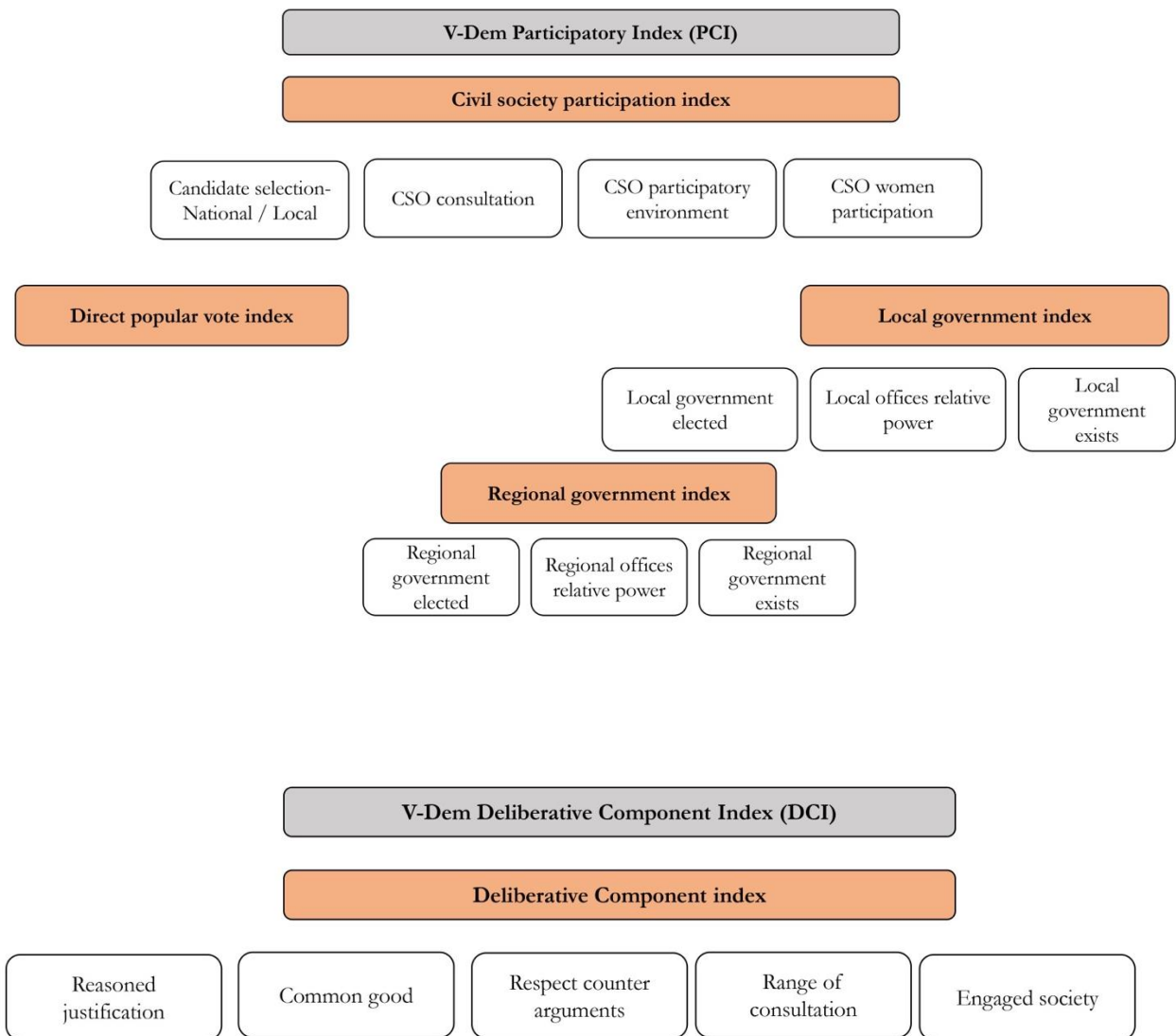
V. Civil liberties	
44	Is there a free electronic media? 1: Yes. 0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. One or two private owners dominate the media. 0: No
45	Is there a free print media? 1: Yes. 0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. There is high degree of concentration of private ownership of national newspapers. 0: No
46	Is there freedom of expression and protest (bar only generally accepted restrictions, such as banning advocacy of violence)? 1: Yes. 0.5: Holders of minority viewpoints are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws heavily restrict scope for free expression. 0: No.
47	Is media coverage robust? Is there open and free discussion of public issues, with a reasonable diversity of opinions? 1: Yes. 0.5: There is formal freedom, but a high degree of conformity of opinion, including through self censorship or discouragement of minority or marginal views. 0: No.
48	Are there political restrictions on access to the Internet? 1: No. 0.5: Some moderate restrictions. 0: Yes.
49	Are citizens free to form professional organizations and trade unions? 1: Yes. 0.5: Officially free, but subject to some restrictions. 0: No.
50	Do institutions provide citizens with the opportunity to petition government to redress grievances? 1: Yes. 0.5: Some opportunities. 0: No
51	The use of torture by the state. 1: Torture is not used. 0: Torture is used.

52	The degree to which the judiciary is independent of government influence. Consider the views of international legal and judicial watchdogs. Have the courts ever issued an important judgement against the government, or a senior government official? 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low.
53	The degree of religious tolerance and freedom of religious expression. Are all religions permitted to operate freely, or are some restricted? Is the right to worship permitted both publicly and privately? Do some religious groups feel intimidated by others, even if the law requires equality and protection? 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low.
54	The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law. Consider whether favoured groups or individuals are spared prosecution under the law. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low
55	Do citizens enjoy basic security? 1: Yes. 0.5: Crime is so pervasive as to endanger security for large segments. 0: No.
56	Extent to which private property rights are protected and private business is free from undue government influence 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low.
57	Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms. Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low
58	Popular perceptions on protection of human rights; proportion of the population that think that basic human rights are well-protected. 1: High. 0.5: Moderate. 0: Low. If available, from World Values Survey: % of people who think that human rights are respected in their country. 1 if more than 70%.0.5 if 50-70%. 0 if less than 50%.
59	There is no significant discrimination on the basis of people's race, colour or religious beliefs. 1: Yes. 0.5: Yes, but some significant exceptions. 0: No.
60	Extent to which the government invokes new risks and threats as an excuse for curbing civil liberties. 1: Low. 0.5: Moderate. 0: High.

Annex 3: Sub-indices of V-DEM indices







Annex 4: V-DEM Policy on confidentiality

The identity of country experts is not revealed due to several reasons such as :

- Following national and EU laws and regulations (GDPR), it is prohibited to share personal identifying information;
- There are a number of repressive countries in the world where the participation in V-Dem may be dangerous to Country Experts and/or their relatives;
- It is impossible to predict with complete accuracy which country may become repressive in the future and by that, making participation in the V-Dem surveys dangerous;
- V-Dem data is used in evaluations and assessments internationally in ways that could affect a country's status. Thus, there are incentives for certain countries and other actors to try to affect ratings.
