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Overview

A political regime is a set of rules that determines who has access to power, who may elect the government and under what conditions and restrictions political authority is exercised (Kailitz 2013, Skaaning 2006, Reich 2002). This may sound dry and academic. However, the explosive nature of the regime question lies in the fact that almost all political achievements, but especially the observance of human rights as well as foreign policy behavior, are related to the regime form. For example, Russia's recent war of aggression on Ukraine underscored that autocratic forms of rule are by no means only a problem for the populations of their states, but a danger to a peaceful world order par excellence. Other questions include the connection between the type of political regime and economic development or regime durability.

For a long time, in contrast to the qualitative research literature, the distinction between political regimes was strongly limited to democracies and autocracies. Only since the turn of the millennium, beginning with the seminal work of Barbara Geddes, have global data sets increasingly been produced that differentiated between types of autocracies on the non-democratic side.

Va-PoReg is one of the most comprehensive datasets on political regimes in terms of country-years. It covers not only independent countries but also occupation and colonial regimes within 1900 and the present. For protectorates, dominions, and self-governing colonies that shape their domestic policy independently and are essentially dependent only on foreign and defense policy, we code the internal regime.

Va-PoReg focuses primarily on the different patterns of legitimation of political regimes. For details on the theoretical foundation of the classification see Kailitz (2013). It distinguishes in its standard version in addition to colonial and occupation regimes between the following types of regimes: absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, military, personalist, one-party autocracy, non-electoral transitional regime, electoral autocracy, electoral oligarchy, semidemocracy, and democracy.

Va-PoReg provides an annual update of its political regime data. The data is compiled by a research team led by Steffen Kailitz at the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies in Dresden.

Coverage of the dataset

The dataset encompasses all political entities that have undergone periods of state sovereignty or at least a semi-sovereign status from 1900 to 2024. Therefore, it includes states that have navigated various historical trajectories, including episodes of colonization, occupation, or being incorporated into other sovereign entities, exemplified by instances like Lithuania or Ukraine during their affiliation with the Soviet Union. This inclusive approach to dataset composition affords a more holistic perspective on the trajectory of nations and their respective populations, transcending the confinements of exclusive consideration for independent states. Our dataset includes dozens of cases like, for instance, Newfoundland, Sikkim or Tibet, which are not covered by any dataset on political regimes up to now.

However, the incorporation of territories within the jurisdiction of other states introduces a layer of complexity that sometimes muddles rather than clarifies inquiries pertaining to comparative analyses of political regimes. Consequently, we present different variants of Va-PoReg for different purposes. We strongly recommend that researchers select the regime variable variant that aligns most effectively with the objectives of their research endeavors.

Conceptualization and coding rules for the outlined political regime types

Introduction

In our approach to classifying countries, we emphasize the use of observables, particularly for determining specific regime types like a military autocracy. Our coding rules for regime types require a detailed examination of specific indicators. For a nation to be categorized as a military autocracy, two primary observables are scrutinized:

1. The Nature of the Regime's Inception: We focus on whether the regime originated from a military coup. It's imperative that this coup demonstrates the armed forces assuming a pivotal leadership role.
2. The Post-Coup Regime Structure: We assess whether the governance following the coup is under a military junta or controlled by military personnel.

This is just one example. The form of transition to a regime and, above all, the core features of the structure are the overriding points that are primarily used for classification. The observables form the backbone of our nuanced and precise classification system. For the purpose of coding a country's regime type within a given year, the regime that is in place on 07/01 will be the regime coded for the entire year. Regardless of any regime transitions that occur after 07/01,

the regime in place on this date will represent the regime type for the entire year. The exact dates of transition are detailed in the start and end columns of the dataset and further elaborated in the country reports. This methodology is crucial for a consistent and systematic categorization of regime types.

In the following texts, not only are the coding rules for the political regime types given in brief strokes, but there are also brief explanations of the anchoring in the conceptual basis of the classification and thus the aspect of legitimation.

We use some additions in square brackets to specify a regime type. If these additions only refer to a specific regime type, they are dealt with under the heading of the regime type in question. For example, we use the suffix [Monarchical] to identify monarchies that do not fall into the category of constitutional or absolute monarchy due to the lack of governmental power of the monarch.

Democracy

Conceptualization: The title of the "first modern democracy" is often attributed to the United States, following the establishment of its Constitution in 1787 and the subsequent ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791. These events indeed marked a significant shift toward a government based on democratic principles, including representative government and the separation of powers. The “Federalist Papers,” written by key members of the political elite of the nascent United States, justified democracy by highlighting the importance of multiparty elections, liberty, and executive constraints (Hamilton/Madison/Jay 1987). In this sense, free and fair elections are not only an institutional feature of democracy but also the procedural legitimation of rulers to rule and legislators to legislate.

However, voting rights in the early United States were generally limited to white male property owners, excluding a large portion of the population. In true democracies, universal suffrage is imperative. It mandates that all adult citizens, irrespective of gender, socioeconomic status, wealth, or literacy levels, possess unequivocal rights to vote, stand for election, and engage comprehensively in the political process.

Evaluating a regime's democratic credentials necessitates an examination that extends beyond the quality of the electoral process to encompass various essential governance dimensions. A regime can only be categorized as fully democratic in the absence of significant deficiencies in the institutional constraints placed upon the executive branch, as well as in the domains of political and civil liberties. Effective governance in a democracy is characterized by robust

checks and balances among the branches of government, ensuring no single branch predominates. This includes an independent judiciary with the authority to scrutinize and challenge executive decisions, legislative bodies vested with authentic power and oversight capabilities over the executive, and the establishment of explicit legal boundaries delineating executive powers.

In the competitive arena of politics, it is essential that elections are conducted in a manner that is free, fair, and competitive, devoid of any substantial impediments. This entails the ability of multiple political parties or candidates to contest elections and harbor a genuine prospect of attaining power. The recurrent electoral success of a singular party, provided the elections are conducted freely, fairly, and competitively, does not in itself compromise the democratic integrity of the regime.

Moreover, a democracy is characterized by the absence of significant barriers to political participation. This includes a free media and an unencumbered civil society, both of which should be capable of critiquing the government without fear of retribution. Universal suffrage and the protection of political and civil liberties are fundamental to the conceptualization of democracy, ensuring that all citizens have an equal stake and voice in the governance of their country.

Operationalization: A country is coded as being fully democratic if there are direct popular legislative elections and (direct or indirect) popular multi-party/multi-candidate executive elections. A selection of the executive by a parliament that is elected in popular elections counts as an indirect popular election of the executive by the people. To operationalize universal suffrage it is essential to ensure that all adult citizens, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, wealth, or literacy, have the unequivocal right to vote, run for office, and participate in the political process. This involves assessing legal frameworks to confirm no restrictions on voter eligibility and analyzing voter turnout to ensure inclusiveness. Additionally, the practical implementation of these rights must be evaluated to verify that all citizens can exercise them freely and equally. According to our conceptualization elections in a democracy also have to be free and fair. To determine whether the elections were free and fair, we use academic literature, assessments from international election observers for recent elections, as well as data from Freedom House and Varieties of Democracy. In addition we check if the ruler is effectively constrained by the legislature. For this, we use data from the Polity indicator for executive constraints, as well as assessments from academic literature.

Example: Present-day Denmark and Norway, where all the outlined requirements are fulfilled.

Semidemocracy

Conceptualization: The conceptualization of semidemocracy focuses on the nuances of suffrage rights and the strength of democratic institutions, rather than the justification of the political regime, which remains consistent with that of a full democracy. The distinction between full democracies and semidemocracies hinges on the extent to which electoral participation is genuinely inclusive and representative of the entire population. A nation is designated as a semidemocracy when it exhibits substantial suffrage restrictions. This encompasses scenarios lacking female suffrage or employing mechanisms like literacy tests to limit electoral participation. Within this context, regimes offering universal male suffrage, absent equivalent rights for women, are specifically identified as "male semidemocracies." This delineation is rooted in historical perspectives where male universal suffrage constituted a fundamental milestone towards democratization (Coppedge/Alvarez/Maldonado 2008: 3, Dahl 1971, Powell 1982: 3). While this is true, this milestone was only halfway to full democracy.

Operationalization: Our methodology for identifying male semidemocracies incorporates a specific criterion, further validated by employing Tatu Vanhanen's participation metrics to ensure that semidemocracies demonstrate an average electoral participation rate surpassing 15%.[1] Moreover, a regime's classification as a semidemocracy also reflects substantial deficiencies in institutional constraints on the executive branch and/or in the sphere of political and civil liberties. Notably, this includes scenarios where checks and balances are undermined, judicial independence is compromised, legislative oversight is curtailed or unduly influenced by the executive, and executive powers exceed established legal boundaries, albeit not to the degree observed in electoral autocracies.

In semidemocracies, while elections are generally free, they may exhibit notable fairness issues. Opposition parties and candidates encounter significant barriers, although these obstacles are not insurmountable. Challenges to political participation manifest through biased media or restricted civil liberties, yet these barriers do not reach the severity found in electoral autocracies. A semblance of media and civil society freedom persists, albeit with potential state-imposed limitations.

For the purposes of categorization, we adopt Freedom House's nomenclature, identifying semidemocracies as "partially free" nations, with a specific focus on cases demonstrating deficits in participatory governance. Our methodology is primarily qualitative, yet it is bolstered by quantitative evidence drawn from supplementary datasets to corroborate our assertions.

[1] https://datafinder.qog.gu.se/dataset/van

Furthermore, the classification of a regime as a semidemocracy is also influenced by the existence of military veto power, which represents a substantial, albeit non-executive, constraint on the autonomy of democratically elected officials. Following Freedom House, the increased centralization of power and restriction of civil liberties under the Modi-Governmnet, qualifies current day India as an example for a semidemocracy.

Electoral Oligarchy

Conceptualization: The main characteristic of an electoral oligarchy is that direct or indirect elections to a parliament exist, but participation in these processes is restricted to a small, select portion of the population. An electoral oligarchy often justifies itself through several self-legitimating narratives that aim to rationalize the restriction of political participation to a select few. One common justification is the argument of competence and stability. These regimes often claim that only a small, educated, and property-owning segment of the population has the necessary knowledge and vested interest in maintaining stable governance. They argue that broader participation could lead to instability, chaos, or the election of populist leaders who might undermine the nation's economic and political order. Some regimes in this category claim that restrictive suffrage is a temporary measure necessary for national development. They argue that once certain developmental milestones are achieved, such as economic stability or a higher literacy rate, the franchise can be extended. This creates a facade of progressiveness while effectively postponing democratic reforms indefinitely. Examples of electoral oligarchies are pre-democratic regimes in South America where the vast majority of the population was excluded based de facto on social status through instruments like literacy tests. The use of literacy as a criterion for voting rights has significant political and social implications when only a rather small proportion of the population is literate. The use of literacy tests often mirrored and reinforced existing social and racial inequalities. Indigenous populations and people of African descent, who historically had less access to education due to systemic discrimination, were more likely to be disenfranchised by these requirements. In several countries, the right to vote was tied to property ownership or a certain level of income. This meant that only wealthier individuals, typically from the upper classes, could participate in elections, thereby excluding the lower-income and working-class populations. In our qualitative analyses we look here for severe restrictions on the suffrage.

Another justification is the assertion of cultural or racial superiority. In regimes like Apartheid South Africa, the exclusion of certain racial groups from the electoral process was often

defended by claims of racial hierarchies, suggesting that only the dominant racial group was capable of making rational, informed decisions for the country. This rationale was deeply rooted in racist ideologies and was used to maintain the social and economic privileges of the ruling minority. The ruling white minority government propagated the idea that different racial groups were fundamentally different and should be kept separate to preserve cultural integrity.

Operationalization: The key element here is the limitation on who is allowed to participate in the democratic process. The franchise, or the right to vote, is limited to a small minority of the population. A regime is also placed into this category if indirect elections are held in which the electors are only elected by a fraction of the population. A regime is not classified in this category if at least universal male suffrage is guaranteed in elections.

As a strong quantitative indicator for an electoral oligarchy, we use Vanhanen's measure of participation. If the percentage of the population participating in an election is less than 15 percent, we consider this a cut-off point for an electoral oligarchy. However, the observation of actual voting restrictions during the election is crucial. This excludes cases where voter participation fell below the 15% threshold due to factors such as a voting boycott, emphasizing that the presence of observable voting restrictions is essential for this classification. Examples: Restricted indirect elections are predominantly observed in limited scenarios, encompassing instances where the process of elector selection was the result of highly unclear circumstances, exemplified by countries like Pakistan or Haiti. Additionally, such elections pertain to situations wherein the pool of electors is composed of a relatively exclusive cohort, gaining entry through established traditional mechanisms of selection. These mechanisms often revolve around entrenched practices such as membership in specific families or established systems of traditional governance, as evidenced by the examples of San Marino and Lebanon.

Non-electoral Transitional Regime

Conceptualization: A non-electoral transitional regime, also referred to as a provisional government, is characterized by its formation without relying on electoral processes. Such a regime can be established by multiple parties, a single party, or non-party actors, including civil society groups or coalitions. The defining feature of a non-electoral transitional regime is the absence of electoral legitimacy; it does not derive its authority from popular elections. Unlike military autocracies, which typically arise from military coups and are often led by military personnel, non-electoral transitional regimes are not inherently linked to military takeover. Instead, they may emerge in contexts such as political crises, revolutions, or in the aftermath of

an authoritarian regime's collapse, where immediate electoral processes are not feasible or have been disrupted. The legitimacy of non-electoral transitional regimes is often rooted in their perceived necessity or suitability for a specific period of transition. They are usually considered temporary arrangements intended to guide a country towards a more stable and democratic governance structure. This legitimacy can be bolstered by factors such as broad-based participation in the regime's formation, commitment to eventual democratization, and efforts to address urgent national issues. International recognition and support can also play a crucial role in legitimizing these regimes. However, the lack of electoral mandate means that their legitimacy may be questioned, and they often face the challenge of establishing credibility and authority in the eyes of the populace and the international community. Such regimes are often falsely subsumed under democracy if they transit in the regime is legitimized by preparing popular elections. However, a democracy only starts with free and fair elections. This distinct regime type is often overlooked in the literature on political regimes (one of the rare exceptions is Shain/Linz/Berat 1995).

The precondition for classification in this category is the breakdown of the old regime. However, instead of a single party or military junta ruling the country, a transitional body governs with the stated intention of doing so only temporarily.

Example: Somalia serves as one of the few contemporary examples of non-electoral transitional regimes. Following the civil war, a roadmap for transitioning to democracy was established, which legitimizes a government routinely elected not by the people, but through negotiations between regional clans within the country.

Electoral Autocracy

Conceptualization: Unlike democracies, electoral autocracies lack a positive, coherent basis for legitimation. Many justify their approach by either rejecting the notion that liberty and executive constraints promote societal wellbeing, or by claiming that certain imperatives, typically security concerns, preclude the provision of these liberties. Perhaps the most elaborate justification of an electoral autocracy, “communitarianism” (Chua 1995, Chua 2004), comes from Lee Kuan Yew, the former prime minister of Singapore. He states that in a communitarian society “the interests of society take precedence over that of the individual” (cited by Bell 1997: 7). However, quite often there are only vague or no explicit official justifications as to why the regime does not fulfil the procedural legitimation of a liberal democracy. The specific legitimization of electoral autocracies lies in the semblance of democratic processes. By holding

elections, even if they are not free and fair, electoral autocracies create an appearance of legitimacy and popular support. This semblance serves to mask the undemocratic nature of the regime both domestically and internationally. The presence of multiple parties and candidates, even in a constrained electoral environment, provides a façade of pluralism and choice, further contributing to the regime's perceived legitimacy. However, the true nature of these regimes is revealed in the lack of genuine electoral competition and the absence of effective legislative oversight or constraints on the ruler's power. Cases like Uzbekistan after 1990 in which there are de facto only progovernment parties are borderline cases between a one-party autocracy and an electoral autocracy. However, based on a classification by the legitimation of a regime these cases are classified here as electoral autocracies

Operationalization: A regime is considered an electoral autocracy if it conducts (direct or indirect) popular multi-party/multi-candidate executive elections and direct popular legislative elections. However, a crucial characteristic of electoral autocracies is that these elections are not genuinely free and fair. Additionally, the ruler in an electoral autocracy is not effectively constrained by the legislature, reflecting a significant limitation in the checks and balances typically found in democratic systems. A regime remains classified as an electoral autocracy even if a former opposition party wins elections, provided the elections are not free and fair and/or the new ruler remains unconstrained by the legislature post-election. Furthermore, a regime can retain its classification as an electoral autocracy if it originally gained power through the specified types of elections, even if subsequent elections are overdue, as long as it didn't transition into a different regime type (see on this regime type e.g. Schedler 2006). . In differentiating an electoral oligarchy from an electoral autocracy based on participation, the presence of universal male suffrage is the key criterion. We employ Tatu Vanhanen's participation measure, ensuring that the average voter turnout in cases of electoral autocracy exceeds 15% of the population.

Example: Mexico under the rule of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Russia under Putin

Ruling Monarchy

Conceptualization: A ruling monarchy is a form of government where a monarch, such as a king or queen, holds supreme authority, often embodying the state's continuity and identity (see e.g. Spellman 2004, Thieme 2017). Hence, a political regime is classified as a ruling monarchy if the head of state holds a monarchical title, such as King/Queen, Emperor/Empress, Shah, Tsar or Emir/Amir. The position of the monarch is typically inherited, often following a familial

line, like a dynasty. There are symbols (crowns, scepters, thrones) associated with monarchy. If there is a constitution or legal framework of the country the monarch is recognized as the head of state.

Operationalization: The simple criterion that the ruler has a monarchic title usually is sufficient to effectively differentiate ruling monarchies from other regimes, including cases where former monarchs continue to hold power in a different capacity. For example, Mohammed Dhaud in Afghanistan, Seretse Khama in Botswana, Norodom Sihanouk in Cambodia, Souvanna Phouma in Laos, and Edward Mutesa in Uganda are instances where former kings or monarchs transitioned to non-monarchical roles, such as elected officials. These regimes are not considered ruling monarchies due to the change in the nature of their leadership. However, there are a few historical examples where there is a ruler with a self-proclaimed monarch that we have classified as personalist autocracies. A notable example is Jean-Bédel Bokassa, self-proclaimed Emperor Bokassa I of the Central African Republic. Despite his imperial title, Bokassa's regime is classified as a personalist autocracy because he declared himself emperor without traditional monarchical foundations. In contrast, Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi is categorized as a ruling monarchy. Although Reza Shah originated from a non-aristocratic background, he was formally installed as a monarch, and the regime operated as a monarchy from its inception. The second criterion for a ruling monarchy is the monarch's actual political power, beyond mere ceremonial functions. Parliamentary monarchies, where the monarch does not exercise real governmental power (as seen in contemporary Denmark), are classified as monarchies but not as ruling monarchies. As outlined above we use the suffix [Monarchical] to identify monarchies that do not fall into the category of constitutional or absolute monarchy due to the lack of governmental power of the monarch.

Additional Remarks: In our classification, ruling monarchies are divided into two types: absolute and constitutional monarchies. This distinction is crucial in our classification variants two or three, which differentiate between these types of monarchies (Kailitz 2009). In our dataset we also have two variants of the regime duration variable. In the standard regime duration variable (duration_ VaPoReg_s) a change from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy and vice versa is coded as a new regime. In the alternative variant (duration_ VaPoReg_s) transitions from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy and vice versa are interpreted not as a change of regime, but as a continuation of the ruling monarchy, as long as the dynasty and thus the ruling group do not change. Researchers are advised to use the variant of the regime duration variable that best suits their needs.

Absolute Monarchy

Conceptualization: An absolute monarchy is, by definition, an inherently autocratic political regime where the monarch holds supreme authority, often hereditary, without checks and balances from an elected body. The legitimacy of absolute monarchies traditionally stems from a combination of historical precedent, religious or divine justification, and the idea of a continuous lineage of royal sovereignty. In many cases, absolute monarchs have claimed a divine right to rule, asserting that their authority is sanctioned by a higher power, which in turn forms the basis of their political legitimacy. In an absolute monarchy, the monarch has almost unlimited power and authority. They exercise complete control over the government, making decisions without any considerable limitations or constraints.
Operationalization: Our proxy to code limitations of power of the monarch is the existence of a parliament that is elected by at least a considerable part of the population. Hence, in an absolute monarchy there is no parliament that constraints the power of the monarch.
Example: Saudi Arabia

Constitutional Monarchy

Conceptualization: While the monarch retains considerable authority, the parliament holds significant power, and elected representatives play a role in political decision-making. One example is the Kingdom of Jordan, where King Abdullah II has considerable authority, but universal suffrage and a bicameral parliamentary system are constitutionally guaranteed.
Operationalization: Constitutional monarchies function within the constraints of a constitution and have a democratically elected parliament chosen by at least 15% of the population, blending elements of democracy and autocracy.
Example: Morocco

One-party Autocracy

Concenptualization: A country justify itself as a one-party autocracy with a monist vision of popular sovereignty. This refers to a political philosophy where the state is seen as a singular, unified entity representing the will of the people without division or opposition. In this vision, the ruling party embodies the common interest of the entire population, rendering political pluralism and electoral competition unnecessary and even illegitimate. The justification for

power in such a regime stems from the belief that the ruling party inherently understands and acts upon the collective will and good of the society, leading to a centralized and often autocratic governance structure. Based on this monist vision of popular sovereignty, which one might call a "one-party ideology" (Zolberg 1985: 37-65) there are no (direct or indirect) popular multi-party/multi-candidate executive (s)elections. This monist vision is shared by one-party autocracies and ideocracies. However, different from ideocracies one-party autocracies do not justify themselves by a utopian ideology and do not strive to rule all aspects of societal and economical life.

Operationalization: In the subset of cases that do not fulfill the criteria of an ideocracy a regime is coded as a one-party autocracy if it is de jure a single party state. In addition to that, all regimes that do not allow any opposition parties are coded as de facto one-party regimes. For instance, during the elections in Syria in 1990 "opposition was not allowed and candidates were only permitted to run through parties associated with the National Progressive Front" (Hyde/Marinov 2011: 5). Arguably, this is a very thin line separating de facto one-party autocracies from electoral autocracies in which – de facto – all parties are pro-government like Uzbekistan after 1990.

Example: Zambia under the one-party rule of the United National Independence Party (1972-1996).

Ideocracy

Conceptualization: In ideocracies the exercise of power is justified by a utopian and totalitarian ideology that is defined as the common interest of the governing and the governed. Ideocratic regimes claim that they fulfil the laws of nature, history or God and pave the way to a utopian future. Their source of legitimation lies in the future, beyond the procedures of the political regime itself. Ideocratic regimes "cannot be compatible with 'pluralism'" and claim "cognitive infallibility" (Di Palma 1991: 57f.) What distinguishes ideocracies from all other political regime types is that the rulers not only claim to have a right to rule, but by virtue of their ideology also assert the right to control and reshape all aspects of society (Arendt 1951, Bernholz 2001, Friedrich/Brzezinski 1965, Schapiro 1972). However, it has to be noted that contrasting Hannah Arendt's approach, the utopian ideology is the key feature, while terror may be present or not (Arendt 1953). Roughly speaking, the regime type ideocracy encompasses what Juan Linz's and Alfred Stepan's regime typology categorized as totalitarianism and post-totalitarianism (Linz/Stepan 1996, p. 39). Ideocracies can take the form

of three subtypes: communist (USSR), fascist (Italy under Mussolini) &, and Islamist (Islamic Republic of Iran) (Backes/Kailitz 2016).

Operationalization: The three forms of ideocracy should be treated as distinctive types of political regimes (Linz 2000). If, however, a researcher wishes to analyze ideocracies as an overarching regime type, corporatist right-wing regimes (which are not also fascist) should not be included in this category, as they clearly do not meet the outlined definitional characteristics of an ideocracy.

Communist Ideocracy

Conceptualization: The concrete ideological legitimation of a communist regime is that it takes the necessary measures to build a utopian classless communist society. In communist regimes, the "theory of history – not popular approval – constitute[s] the permanent core of communist claims to legitimacy" (Di Palma 1991: 50). Central to Marxist theory is the concept of class struggle, where society is divided into classes with opposing interests, primarily the proletariat (working class) and the bourgeoisie (capitalist class). The aim is to abolish class distinctions and create a classless society. Marxism-Leninism advocates for the establishment of a proletarian state through revolution. This state, or "dictatorship of the proletariat," is supposed to act in the interest of the working class and suppress the former ruling class. Communist ideologies manifest in diverse forms across different contexts, influenced by unique historical, cultural, and political conditions (Kołakowski 1978). This variation ranges from Cambodia's agrarian socialism to China's integration of Maoist principles, the Soviet Union's Leninism, Yugoslavia's workers' self-management, and Albania's strict Stalinism. Each variant adapts Marxist-Leninist foundations to its specific circumstances, reflecting a wide spectrum of communist interpretations. In communist regimes the economy is largely or entirely state-controlled usually with significant central planning, as per communist principles. Usually, communist regimes are one-party regimes. In some cases, there are formally several parties, for example in the GDR. In these cases, the regime is nevertheless regarded as a de facto one-party regime because the other parties are merely satellites of the communist party that do not exercise any opposition or control. There are significant doubts about whether North Korea's ideology is truly Communist or Marxist-Leninist. The regime's emphasis on ethnic purity and extreme nationalism aligns more closely with far-right ideology, diverging from the internationalist principles of traditional communism.

Operationalization: The coding is straight forward. A regime is coded as a communist ideocracy if the ideology of the ruling elite – be it a party or the military – and, hence, the state ideology is Marxist-Leninist. Hence, the presence or absence of a left-wing totalitarian ideology of the ruler and/or ruling party is decisive for the classification in this category.
Examples: The USSR and China under the rule of the communist party.

Right-wing [Fascist or Corporatist] Autocracy

This regime group consists of Fascist ideocracies and right-wing corporatist autocracies which are defined separately below. A regime is grouped in this category if it either fulfills the criteria of a Fascist ideocracy or a right-wing corporatist autocracy. Like fascism in Italy, a regime can fulfill the characteristics of both a fascist regime and a corporatist regime. In this case, the case is assigned to the "harder" subtype of fascism in square brackets in the classification. When considering right-wing autocracies led by extremist parties, it is important to note that their ideologies are generally less elaborate than those of communist regimes. In the case of right-wing corporatist autocracies, the ideology is often vague and does not meet the criteria of a totalitarian ideology.

Right-wing [Fascist] Autocracy:
Conceptualization: Fascist ideology is characterized by ultra-nationalism that seeks to create a centralized autocratic government headed by an autocratic leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and the forcible suppression of opposition (Payne 1980, Paxton 2005). It promotes the supremacy of the state or nation over the individual, glorifies violence and war as means to achieve national rejuvenation, and includes elements of racism and xenophobia. National-socialist ideology, as exemplified by the Nazi regime in Germany, incorporates many of these fascist elements but with a specific emphasis on racial purity and anti-Semitism. It advocates for the creation of a homogeneous, racially "pure" nation-state, through the exclusion, persecution, or extermination of minority groups. Both ideologies reject liberal democracy, socialism, and communism, viewing these as threats to national unity and strength.
Operationalization: A regime is coded as a Fascist ideocracy if the ideology of the ruling elite and, hence, the state ideology is Fascist or national-socialist. Given the outlined characteristics of a Fascist or national-socialist ideology, a regime can be classified as a Fascist or national-

socialist if it adopts and enforces such ideological principles as the core of its governance and state policies.
Examples: The Nazi regime in Germany and Fascism in Italy.

Right-wing [Corporatist] Autocracy:
Conceptualization: Corporatism refers to the organization of society by corporate groups, such as agricultural, labor, military, scientific, or guild associations, based on their common interests. In a corporatist autocracy, these groups are often used as a means of control, with the state directing and incorporating them into its political structure, rather than allowing them to act as independent entities or as a channel for genuine democratic participation (Costa Pinto 2017). The corporatist approach can be seen as a way to manage and control various sectors of society and the economy, maintaining stability and order under the autocratic rule. Right-wing autocratic corporatism constitutes a rather vague ideology. It does not fulfill the criteria of a totalitarian ideology. However, lest there be any misunderstanding, this in no way implies that a communist regime is per se more repressive than a right-wing corporatist autocracy. Compare, for example, Spain under Franco with the communist regime in the GDR. The classification relates exclusively to ideology. Regarding right-wing corporatist autocracies, the institutional setup varies.
Operationalization: A regime is coded in this category if the regime is guided by a right-wing autocratic corporatist ideology. Hence, the presence or absence of a right-wing authoritarian corporatist ideology of the ruler and/or ruling party in the above outlined way is decisive for the classification in this category.
Examples: Spain under Franco and Portugal under Salazar (Schmitter 1975).

Islamist Ideocracy

Conceptualization: An Islamist ideocracy is a form of regime where the exercise of power is justified and guided by an Islamist ideology. This ideology, which combines religious and political elements, is considered the common interest of both the rulers and the ruled. The regime is characterized by its interpretation of Islamic principles and laws as the foundational basis for governing society, politics, and often personal life. The regime bases its legitimacy and laws primarily on Islamic teachings and principles. There is a significant fusion of religious and state institutions, with religious leaders often playing pivotal roles in governance. The legal system is heavily based on Sharia, Islamic law, which dictates various aspects of public and

private life. The regime enforces strict control over social and cultural practices, aligning them with its interpretation of Islamic teachings (Tibi 2007, Esposito 1998).

Operationalization: A regime is classified in this category if it is guided by an Islamist ideology. The decisive factor for this classification is the presence or absence of a right-wing authoritarian corporatist ideology within the ruler and/or ruling party, as outlined above.

Examples: The sole instances of Islamist ideocracies to date are Afghanistan under Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001 and again beginning in 2021, and Iran following the Islamic Revolution in 1978/79.

Military Autocracy

Conceptualization: Military autocracy is a form of government where political power is concentrated in the hands of the military. This regime type is characterized by the suspension of democratic processes and the imposition of martial law, often justified by the need to restore order and stability in times of crisis. The military leadership, typically composed of high-ranking officers, assumes control over the state apparatus and often marginalizes or eliminates civilian political participation (Finer 2002, Nordlinger 1977).

In military autocracies, the justification for assuming power and maintaining control is often rooted in the perceived incapacity of civilian governments to handle severe crises. The military presents itself as a rational and apolitical arbiter, capable of transcending partisan conflicts to safeguard national interests. This narrative positions the military as the sole institution capable of addressing existential threats, whether they are economic, social, or political.

However, the procedural justification of military regimes is notably vague and lacks consistency. Unlike constitutional democracies, which have clear and established processes for governance and accountability, military regimes often operate with broad and ill-defined mandates. This can be seen in the example of the Chilean Junta in 1978, which asserted its authority to implement “whatever regulations, norms, and instructions” it deemed necessary for the common good and national interest. This expansive and ambiguous justification allows military regimes to exercise unchecked power, often leading to the erosion of civil liberties and the suppression of political opposition.

The lack of a common procedural framework for military autocracies results in a governance style that is highly variable and dependent on the specific context and leadership of the regime. While the overarching narrative remains one of national salvation and crisis management, the methods and extent of military control can differ significantly between cases. This variability

underscores the fundamentally arbitrary nature of military rule, where decisions are often made without transparency or accountability, based solely on the discretion of the ruling military elite. The vague justification of a military regime is that only the military – usually together with the bureaucracy – is able to save the nation as a rational apolitical arbiter of social conflict in a time of crisis; and the country is in a severe crisis. However, there is no common procedural justification of military regimes. A military regime claims that it is justified to lay down "whatever regulations, norms, and instructions" the military junta thinks fit "for the attainment of [its] objectives aimed at the common good and the maximum patriotic interest" (Chilean Junta 1978: 198).

Operationalization: A political regime for this subset of cases is coded as a military autocracy if the regime starts by a military coup and military officers form a military junta or a military officer serves as the ruler and is selected by the military (for more or less similar definitions of a military regime see Ezrow/Frantz 2011: 166, Geddes 1999: 124, Linz 2000: 172). If a junta chooses a civilian (who has not been elected by the population) as a figurehead president, like in Uruguay 1976, the regime is still coded as a military autocracy as long as a military junta de facto rules the country. However, preconditions for coding a regime as a military autocracy are that 1) it cannot be coded as a monarchy or an ideocracy; and 2) there are no popular multi-party/multi-candidate elections for president. However, in a military autocracy like in a monarchy there might well be multi-party parliamentary elections. If there are elections for a president and a person with military background is elected the regime is not coded as a military autocracy.

Example: Chile ruled by a military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

Personalist Autocracy

Conceptualization: The ruler in a personalist autocracy often cultivates a personal image of charisma and leadership, positioning themselves as uniquely qualified to lead the nation. This charismatic authority can be bolstered by a narrative of personal sacrifice, exceptional competence, or a historical role in the country's liberation or founding. Personalist autocrats often exploit crises, whether real or manufactured, to justify their grip on power. They use emergencies such as wars, natural disasters, or economic collapses to argue that extraordinary measures and strong leadership are needed, thereby consolidating their authority. Personalist autocracy can best defined negatively, as it is characterized by the absence of institutions that effectively constrain the ruler's power (e.g. Brooker 2008: 139, Jackson/Rosberg 1982: 8). The

hallmark of a personalist autocracy is the concentration of nearly unlimited power in the hands of a single ruler. The ruler holds power for an indefinite period, potentially until death. Neither at the state level nor at any other level, such as a military junta or a regime party, is there any institutional, non-violent mechanism for the removal of the ruler and the selection of a new leader is a distinguishing characteristic.

Operationalization: The conditions requisite for the classification of a political regime as a personalist autocracy encompass the following criteria. The absence of institutional mechanisms that effectively constrain the ruler's power. The indefinite tenure of the ruler, often until death. The lack of institutional, non-violent mechanisms for the removal of the ruler. The non-institutionalized, often non-transparent selection of new leaders. A regime is never classified as a personalist autocracy if there are popular multi-party or multi-candidate executive elections, whether through direct or indirect means. If there is a regime party there are no procedures of a selection or recall of the party leader, who is at the same time the ruler of the country. A regime is designated as a personalist autocracy when the ruler holds a term that extends for the duration of their life. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that while this condition is sufficient, it is not an obligatory prerequisite for the classification of a country as a personalist autocracy. In instances where legislative elections occur, as exemplified by Turkmenistan under the leadership of Saparmurat Niyazov, who declared himself president for life in 1999, the presence of such elections is inconsequential. However, if a country lacks both presidential and parliamentary elections, as observed during the rule of Hissene Habre in Chad, the regime is designated as a personalist autocracy, even if the president does not explicitly claim a lifelong presidency. Some personalist rulers may opt to permit the existence of a regime-affiliated party and orchestrate one-candidate plebiscites to bolster their assertion of legitimacy, a practice akin to that adopted by figures such as Hector Trujillo in the Dominican Republic or Mobutu Sese Seko in Congo-Zaire. Ways of establishing a personalist autocracy are a self-coup of an elected president, who dissolves the parliament and bans all parties possibly except his own. Another way of establishing a personalist autocracy is a coup by a gang of soldiers, like 1971 in Uganda (Idi Amin) or 1981 in Ghana (Jerry Rawling).

Examples: Uganda under Idi Amin and Ghana under Jerry Rawling.

Colonial Regime

Conceptualization: A colonial regime is a form of governance where a foreign power exerts almost complete control over a territory and its people with the intention of maintaining this

control indefinitely. In contrast to an occupation regime of a foreign power, a colonial regime is designed to be permanent. The colonized territory does not possess sovereign status. Instead, it is governed by the colonial power, which makes all significant political, economic, and legal decisions. People living under direct colonial rule typically have limited political and civil rights. They are often subject to discriminatory laws and practices and have little say in the governance of their own land. This lack of representation and autonomy is a hallmark of colonial rule. Hence, the country is not sovereign. A primary feature of colonial regimes is the economic exploitation of the colonized territory for the benefit of the colonial power. This includes the extraction of resources, exploitation of labor, and control over trade and commerce. Sometimes the regime is officially referred to as a protectorate, although it is de facto a colonial regime. We have explained the reasons for our classifications in the respective country reports. Conversely, however, under the formal term colony, as in the case of the settler colonies in Canada or Australia, for example, such far-reaching autonomy rights can develop from a certain point in time that our definition of a colony is no longer fulfilled. In the final phases of colonial regimes, such as e.g. in Barbados, several characteristics often emerged that marked the transition from colonial rule to independence. In the later stages of colonial rule, there was often a gradual increase in the autonomy granted to the local population. This could involve the establishment of local legislative bodies or greater involvement of indigenous leaders in governance. Colonial powers sometimes introduced political reforms aimed at preparing the colony for eventual independence. This could include the implementation of new constitutions, electoral reforms, and the establishment of political parties. Economic policies often shifted towards fostering greater self-sufficiency and reducing dependency on the colonial power. This might include investments in local industries, infrastructure development, and efforts to diversify the economy. There was often an increase in social and educational investments to prepare the local population for self-governance. This included expanding access to education, improving healthcare systems, and promoting social development programs. For instance, in the latter stages of the British Raj in India, there were legislative councils and local self-governing bodies, which provided some level of political engagement for Indians. In between the extremes of very repressive and liberal colonial regimes, many colonial regimes exhibited a blend of both authoritarian and liberal elements, fluctuating based on local conditions, resistance movements, and international pressures. This diversity in colonial governance highlights the complex and varied nature of colonialism, influencing the development trajectories of former colonies in different ways.

Operationalization: A regime is coded as colonial if a territory is controlled and governed by a foreign power. The key criteria for this classification include control and governance by the foreign power, the territory's lack of full sovereignty, significant economic exploitation by the foreign power, limited political and civil rights for the population, and the presence of discriminatory laws and practices. The regime might be referred to as a protectorate or colony, but the defining factor is the level of control and governance by the foreign power, not just the nomenclature. These criteria are used to determine whether a regime qualifies as colonial in our dataset.

Example: Algeria was a French colony from 1830 to 1962. The French government exercised extensive control over Algerian territory and its people, with significant economic exploitation and restrictions on the political and civil rights of Algerians.

Additional Remarks: To furnish an in-depth analysis of colonial regimes, our dataset incorporates the variable governing_country, which specifies the name of the nation exerting dominion over the colonial territory. Furthermore, the dataset encompasses the colonizer's regime type in the variables VaPoReg_s_of_gc and VaPoReg_a_of_gc highlighting the political regime of the colonizing country. The rationale behind including this variable lies in the hypothesis that the political nature of the colonizing entity markedly affects the attributes and governance approach of the colonial regime. Through the examination of these variables, scholars are positioned to uncover how the essence of the colonizing authority shapes the management and policy enactment within the colonial domain.

Occupation Regime

Conceptualization: An occupation regime is defined as a political and administrative system established when a foreign power, operating through its own occupation institutions rather than the existing national political regime, directs and integrates all activities through which domestic policy in the occupied territory is formulated and executed. An occupation regime is often justified on the grounds of ensuring security and stability, both for the occupying power and the occupied territory. The foreign power may claim that their presence is necessary to prevent violence, maintain order, or counteract perceived threats. The occupying power may argue that the occupation is essential to protect its strategic interests, such as securing resources, maintaining regional influence, or preventing the spread of hostile ideologies or movements. Occupation regimes can also be justified through international mandates or agreements, such as resolutions from international bodies (e.g., the United Nations) that authorize the occupation

for peacekeeping or stabilization purposes. In an occupation regime, the occupying force typically establishes new administrative structures to govern the territory. These structures may encompass military governance, the appointment of military governors or administrators, and the establishment of new administrative units tailored to the occupation's needs. Occupation regimes are inherently complex and exhibit considerable variation, influenced by factors such as the specific circumstances of the occupation, the objectives of the occupying power, and the response of the local population to the occupation.

Operationalization: We use the following criteria. The regime is directed by a foreign power rather than a national political regime and the foreign power operates through occupation institutions that are distinct from existing national institutions. The foreign power integrates all activities related to the formulation and execution of domestic policy in the occupied territory and establishes administrative structures to govern the territory.

Example: An example would be Poland during World War II, which was first occupied by Germany and the Soviet Union, then solely by Germany, and finally by the Soviet Union again.

Additional Remarks: To provide a comprehensive understanding of occupation regimes, our dataset includes the variable Governing Country. This variable identifies the name of the country that is exercising control over the occupied territory. Additionally, the dataset features variables, VaPoReg_s_of_gc and VaPoReg_a_of_gc, which denote the political regime type of the occupying country. The inclusion of this variable is predicated on the assumption that the regime type of the occupying power significantly impacts the characteristics and governance style of the occupation regime. By analyzing these variables, researchers can gain insights into how the nature of the occupying power influences the administration and policies implemented in the occupied territory.

No Central Authority

Conceptualization: This category is reserved for a political situation where a territory lacks a unified, effective governing body that exercises central control over the entire region.

Operationalization: A country is coded in this category if the territory is divided into multiple regions, each controlled by different factions, warlords, militias, or local authorities, without a single overarching central authority. There is no central body to coordinate policies, laws, or administrative functions across the territory, leading to inconsistent and often conflicting governance practices. Central state institutions, such as a national government, judiciary, or legislature, either do not exist or are ineffective and lack authority over the entire territory. The

territory experiences significant political instability and chaos, with frequent power struggles among different groups vying for control. there is no clearly identifiable central authority. The lack of a central authority creates a security vacuum, often leading to widespread violence, lawlessness, and humanitarian crises as different groups compete for dominance. These are extreme situations that usually occur during a civil war.

Examples: Somalia after multiple rebel groups ousted Siad Barre's regime from Mogadishu on 01/26/1991 or after the government of Mohammad Najibullah in Afghanistan was ousted by the Mujaheddin insurgency on 04/16/1992.

Part of Other Country

Conceptualization: Like No Central Authority Part of Other Country is not a category of political regimes. A region or territory falls into this category if it is politically and administratively integrated into another sovereign state.
Additional Remarks: The relevance of this category within a regime dataset may prompt inquiry. Our dataset only designates a territory as part of another country if, at any juncture from January 1, 1900, to July 1, 2024, it either attained independence or was a remote colony of another sovereign state. This specific category applies exclusively to the Va-PoReg_cr variable (where "cr" denotes country reports), and is intentionally excluded from the regime variables Va_PoReg_s and Va_PoReg_s. The justification for this is straightforward: scholarly research predominantly concentrates on nation-states as the fundamental unit of analysis. This methodology seeks to precisely assess the incidence of regime types, notably democracies, across all sovereign states, thus deeming the incorporation of territories under another state's sovereignty as non-essential for such analysis. However, the Va-PoReg_cr variable, with a distinct category for territories that are part of other countries, serves a divergent purpose. It is intended to compile a cohesive dataset for countries, documenting their historical trajectories. This encompasses acknowledging a territory's historical ties to another nation, exemplified by Lithuania's period within the Soviet Union. This variant extends further, elucidating the specific state of association (e.g., the Soviet Union) and the regime type in existence at that time (e.g., communist ideocracy). Such detailed information is available in the variables Governing country, VaPoReg_s_of_gc, and VaPoReg_a_of_gc. This comprehensive strategy furnishes a richer, more intricate historical context for each country's journey towards, as well as away from, sovereignty.

The following two categories, protectorate and international mandate, are not included VaPoReg_s_of_gc, and VaPoReg_a_of_gc. However, the formal status as protectorate and international mandate addresses often a state of semi-sovereignty. The categories protectorate and international mandate are addressed in the country reports and in dichotomous variables in the data set. In the regime classification with respect to the degree of sovereignty of the addressed countries the regime is either classified according to the internal regime type if the country is ruled by its own government which is more or less sovereign regarding internal affairs. However, if a protectorate in name is de facto fully controlled by another state it is classified as a colony. The same holds for international mandate. If the state under international

mandate retains a degree of sovereignty it is classified according to the regime type in the country. If the country is de facto fully controlled by a mandatory power the regime type is classified as a colony.

Protectorate

A protectorate is a state that is "protected" and partially controlled by another state. In a protectorate relationship, the protector state has significant influence over the protected state's affairs. Nevertheless, the protected state retains a degree of sovereignty. The key difference between a protectorate and a colony is the level of control that the controlling state has over the territory. In a protectorate, the protected state retains some measure of control over its own affairs, while in a colony, the controlling state has complete control. An example for a protectorate is Slovakia during World War II when the country declared independence from Chechosolvakia and became a client state of Nazi Germany.

International Mandate

An international mandate, in the context of the League of Nations or the United Nations, refers to a system of governance established by these international organizations to oversee and administer territories that were previously under the control of defeated or collapsed states. The mandate system emerged as a response to the dissolution of empires and the aftermath of World War I. It aimed to provide temporary supervision and guidance to territories that were deemed not yet ready for self-rule. The League of Nations established mandates primarily in the Middle East and Africa, while the United Nations continued this practice until the 1940s. Under an international mandate, the administering state (the mandatory power) was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the mandated territory for eventual self-government. . An example for an international Mandate is Palestine after World War I as it was given to Great Britain as a colonial protectorate in the Sanremo declaration by the League of Nations.

Sources for the coding of regime types

In developing our comprehensive dataset, we embarked on an ambitious journey akin to standing on the shoulders of giants, drawing inspiration from the monumental efforts of our predecessors. However, a more apt metaphor might be that of an industrious anthill, where

countless tiny yet significant contributions have collectively formed a robust and intricate structure. Our dataset's coding is meticulously crafted, anchored in a thorough examination of both the research literature and a wealth of online resources about various countries.

We emphasize the utmost transparency in our coding process, ensuring that users can trace the rationale behind each coding decision. This is particularly crucial for understanding the nuances in borderline cases between different categories, all of which are meticulously documented in our regime narrative files. These three files are treasure troves of sources, encompassing all references that informed our coding.

We owe a special acknowledgment to a particular series of volumes on global elections organized by Dieter Nohlen (Nohlen/Krennerich/Thibaut 1999, Nohlen/Grotz/Hartmann 2001a, Nohlen/Grotz/Hartmann 2001b, Nohlen 2005a, Nohlen 2005b, Nohlen/Stöver 2010), which were instrumental in cross-verifying our data on legislative and executive elections. The ongoing digital updates of these volumes would significantly benefit future research. From May 1999 to March 2022 Psephos, Adam Carr's election archive, was the largest, most comprehensive and most up-to-date archive of electoral information in the world. It is a great loss for science that this archive is no longer being updated.[2] Interestingly, we found Wikipedia's election result data to be exceptionally reliable, meriting more recognition as a valid academic resource.

As can easily be seen in our comprehensive country reports, we have consulted extensively articles in Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica.[3] Wikipedia has its own system of checks and balances, including a community of volunteer editors who monitor changes and correct errors. However, the quality can vary significantly from one article to another, depending on the vigilance of these volunteers. It should be noted that we have the basic rule that a fact should be confirmed by at least two sources. Therefore, Wikipedia in particular is never the only source on which the presentation is based. The Encyclopædia Britannica is renowned for its high-quality content and is often regarded as one of the most reliable and authoritative sources of general knowledge. The Encyclopædia Britannica, in its 15th edition, consists of 32 volumes. The text of the English Wikipedia alone is as of December 2023 equivalent to 3.333.4 volumes of Encyclopædia Britannica.[4] In view of this difference in quantity, Wikipedia addresses numerous topics in their own articles that are not covered in Encyclopædia Britannica, or only in passing.

[2] http://psephos.adam-carr.net/
[3] https://www.wikipedia.org/; https://www.britannica.com/
[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Size_in_volumes

Furthermore, we integrated insights from renowned sources like Freedom House, Polity, and the Bertelsmann Index country reports, enhancing our understanding of political regimes. Our dataset also benefits enormously from the datasets of many esteemed colleagues, particularly those focusing on political regimes. The incorporation of variables from datasets like Freedom House, LIED, Polity IV, and V-Dem was instrumental in coding essential information. This integration, however, was not without challenges, as we occasionally encountered discrepancies between these datasets and the information gleaned from academic literature.

One of the standout features of our dataset is its historical depth. While data richness post-World War II is fairly common, datasets such as AF, Polity, LIED, and V-Dem are rare gems that provide insights into much earlier periods. This historical breadth was invaluable in enriching our research and enabling nuanced comparisons with our findings.

Variables in the data set

year

Calendar year, values 1900-2024

country_name

Name of the political entity: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Brunei, Bukhara, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Colony, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Curaçao, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Fiji, Finland, France, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Germany - East, Germany - West, Ghana, Gibraltar, Greece, Greenland, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guam, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hejaz, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Khiva, Kiribati, Korea, Korea - North, Korea - South, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macau, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Morocco, Mozambique,

Myanmar, Namibia, Natal, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, North Macedonia, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Oman, Orange Free State, Ottoman Empire, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Palestine - Gaza Strip, Palestine - West Bank, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Réunion, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Samoa - American, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sikkim, Singapore, Sint Maarten, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanganyika, Tanzania, Thailand, Tibet, Togo, Tonga, Transvaal, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos Islands, Tuvalu, U.S. Virgin Islands, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Vietnam - North, Vietnam - South, Wallis and Futuna, Western Sahara, Yemen, Yemen - North, Yemen - South, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe.

VaPoReg_code

This variable uniquely identifies all political entities in our dataset. The code is based on the country codes from the Correlates of War project and is supplemented with codes for all political entities, such as Sikkim or Tibet, which are included in our dataset but do not have a country code assigned by the Correlates of War project.

GeoNames_ID

The GeoNames_ID uniquely identifies geographical entities within the GeoNames database, covering a wide array of locations. This code assigns each geographical entity a unique numerical ID, ensuring precise geolocation. The ID reflects the hierarchical nature of geographical entities, ranging from continents and countries to cities and specific landmarks, and is associated with attributes such as the name, latitude, longitude, and administrative division of the location. The GeoNames_code facilitates accurate geolocation and seamless data integration across various datasets, promoting consistency and interoperability. By enabling the cross-referencing of geographical information, it enhances research and operational efficiency across diverse fields.

cow_code

The Correlates of War country code is a system that uniquely identifies countries within the Correlates of War (COW) project database. This coding system assigns a specific numerical identifier to each country, facilitating the consistent and accurate identification of countries across various datasets and studies. The COW country code promotes standardized data collection and analysis, enhancing the comparability and interoperability of research in international relations and conflict studies.

VaPoReg_s

This is the standard version of the political regime variable of Varieties of Political Regimes.

10 Democracy

20 Semidemocracy

30 Electoral Oligarchy

40 Non-electoral Transitional Regime

50 Electoral Autocracy

60 Constitutional Monarchy

70 Absolute Monarchy

80 One-party Autocracy

90 Right-wing Autocracy

100 Communist Ideocracy

110 Islamist Ideocracy

120 Military Autocracy

130 Personalist Autocracy

140 Colonial Regime

150 Occupation Regime

160 No Central Authority

VaPoReg_a

This alternative version of the political regime variable from Varieties of Political Regimes merges democracy and semidemocracy into one category and combines absolute and constitutional monarchies into the ruling monarchy category.

15 Democracy & Semidemocracy

30 Electoral Oligarchy

40 Non-electoral Transitional Regime

50 Electoral Autocracy
65 Ruling Monarchy
80 One-party Autocracy
90 Right-wing Autocracy
100 Communist Ideocracy
110 Islamist Ideocracy
120 Military Autocracy
130 Personalist Autocracy
140 Colonial Regime
150 Occupation Regime
160 No Central Authority

VaPoReg_cr

VaPoReg_cr is identical to the standard version (VaPoReg_s) with an additional category for Part of other country. The abbreviation cr stands for country reports, as this additional category is consistently used in our country reports.

10 Democracy
20 Semidemocracy
30 Electoral Oligarchy
40 Non-electoral Transitional Regime
50 Electoral Autocracy
60 Constitutional Monarchy
70 Absolute Monarchy
80 One-party Autocracy
90 Right-wing Autocracy
100 Communist Ideocracy
110 Islamist Ideocracy
120 Military Autocracy
130 Personalist Autocracy
140 Colonial Regime
150 Occupation Regime
160 No Central Authority
170 Part of Other Country

All codings for VaPoReg_s, VaPoReg_a, and VaPoReg_cr refer to the political regime as of July 1 each year.

governing_country

For the categories of colonial regime, occupation regime, and territories that are part of another country, this variable specifies the governing country of the political entity.

VaPoReg_s_of_gc

This variable classifies the regime type of the governing country for colonial regimes, occupation regimes, and territories under another country, according to the standard version of our regime classification (VaPoReg_s).

10 Democracy
20 Semidemocracy
30 Electoral Oligarchy
40 Non-electoral Transitional Regime
50 Electoral Autocracy
60 Constitutional Monarchy
70 Absolute Monarchy
80 One-party Autocracy
90 Right-wing Autocracy
100 Communist Ideocracy
110 Islamist Ideocracy
120 Military Autocracy
130 Personalist Autocracy
140 Colonial Regime
150 Occupation Regime
160 No Central Authority

VaPoReg_a_of_gc

This variable classifies the political regime type of the governing country for colonial regimes, occupation regimes, and territories under another country, according to the alternative version of our regime classification (VaPoReg_a). This alternative version of the regime variable merges democracy and semidemocracy into a single category and combines absolute and constitutional monarchies into a ruling monarchy category.

15 Democracy & Semidemocracy
30 Electoral Oligarchy
40 Non-electoral Transitional Regime
50 Electoral Autocracy
65 Ruling Monarchy
80 One-party Autocracy
90 Right-wing Autocracy
100 Communist Ideocracy
110 Islamist Ideocracy
120 Military Autocracy
130 Personalist Autocracy
140 Colonial Regime
150 Occupation Regime
160 No Central Authority

un_continent

1 Africa
2 Americas
3 Asia
4 Europe
5 Oceania

un_region

1 Australia and New Zealand
2 Caribbean
3 Central America
4 Central Asia
5 Eastern Africa
6 Eastern Asia
7 Eastern Europe
8 Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia
9 Middle Africa
10 Northern Africa
11 Northern America

12 Northern Europe
13 South America
14 South-Eastern Asia
15 Southern Africa
16 Southern Asia
17 Southern Europe
18 Western Africa
19 Western Asia
20 Western Europe

start_ VaPoReg_s

The date on which the political regime type, according to the standard version of our political regime categorization, began.

end_ VaPoReg_s

The date on which the political regime type, as defined by the standard version of our political regime categorization, ended.

change_ VaPoReg_s

The variable identifies regime changes based on the standard version of our political regime categorization. It takes a value of one if a different regime is in place on July 1st compared to July 1st of the previous year.

duration_ VaPoReg_s

The number of years the political regime has lasted, as defined by the standard version of our political regime categorization, counting only if the regime was still in power on July 1st of each year.

start_ VaPoReg_a

The date on which the political regime type, according to the alternative version of our political regime categorization, began.

end_ VaPoReg_a

The date on which the political regime type, as defined by the alternative version of our political regime categorization, ended.

change_ VaPoReg_a

The variable identifies regime changes based on the standard version of our political regime categorization. It takes a value of one if a different regime is in place on July 1st compared to July 1st of the previous year.

duration_ VaPoReg_a

The number of years the political regime has lasted, as defined by the alternative version of our political regime categorization, counting only if the regime was still in power on July 1st of each year.

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