Coding Manual

Updated Data and New Insight: A New Version of WTH's Authoritarian Regime Type Dataset

This coding manual complements the dataset codebook by documenting the concrete decision rules and thresholds used to assign regime classifications. Whereas the codebook describes variables and values, this manual explains how those values are produced. Countries that become independent 1946–2024 are coded as missing and enter the dataset in the year after independence. We rely on Banks & Wilson (2022) for the year of a country's independence.

Variable: regime_type

The variable takes on seven categorical values. One category is democracy, and the remaining six constitute autocratic regime types. Each category is defined by a set of decision rules described below

1. Democracy

To classify countries as democracies we rely on V-Dem variables. A country–year is classified as a Democracy if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. Electoral Democracy Index (v2x_polyarchy) > 0.43
2. Free and fair elections (v2elfrfair_osp) > 2
3. Multiparty elections (v2elmulpar_osp) > 2

Classification rule: If all three criteria are met, the country–year is classified as a Democracy.

Threshold rationale EDI: The cutoff at v2x_polyarchy >0.43 is derived by calculating the EDI value in the year before a democratic transition and the year after a democratic breakdown across established democracy measures for our whole time period 1946-2024. The datasets used for the threshold estimation are: Cheibub et al. 2010; Boix et al. 2013; Geddes et al. 2014; Wahman et al. 2013; Skaaning et al. 2022; Kasuya & Mori 2022. The EDI values we use are V-Dem's measurement model estimates, which aggregate multiple expert ratings while accounting for disagreement and measurement; reported point estimates are posterior medians (Pemstein et al. 2022).

Threshold rationale Free and Fair elections and Multiparty elections: we add a condition to the democracy threshold where countries are classified as democratic if they have an

EDI score above 0.43 and if the scores on the V-Dem indicators for free and fair elections (v2elfrfair_osp) and multiparty elections (v2elmulpar_osp) are greater than 2. Thresholds for election quality follow Lührmann et al. (2018). In line with Lührmann et al. (2018), we rely on the *_osp* versions of these indicators, which correspond to linearly transformed posterior point estimates mapped back onto the original ordinal response scales (e.g. 0–4 for *v2elmulpar_osp*).

2. Autocratic Regime Types

Country–years not classified as democracies are classified as autocracies. Autocratic regimes are divided into six mutually exclusive types.

2.1 Monarchy

Requirements:

1. *Banks & Wilson:* Effective executive (Type) type = 1
   Corresponds to a monarch being the individual who exercises primary influence in the shaping of most major decisions affecting the nation's internal and external affairs.

Classification: If the requirement is fulfilled a country is classified as a monarchy

Comment/Exceptions: Sudan (1986–1988) is classified as a monarchy in Banks & Wilson, but Sudan has never been a monarchy; we therefore revise this classification. The United Arab Emirates is classified as having a president rather than a monarch in Banks & Wilson; we revise this classification and classify the UAE as a monarchy in line with the original WTH data.

2.2 Military

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem*: Military dimension index (v2x_ex_military) exceeds 0.26
   Corresponds to the extent the power base of the chief executive determined by the military
2. *V-Dem:* Regime most important support group (C) (v2regimpgroup) =5
   Corresponds to the military being the (one) group that the current political regime relies on most strongly in order to maintain power. The group that, if it were to retract its support to the regime, would most endanger the regime.
3. *Banks & Wilson:* Type of Regime = 2 or 3
   Corresponds to Military–Civilian or Military regimes.

Classification: If **two out of three** requirements are fulfilled a country is classified as military

Threshold rationale: Cut-off on the Military dimension index is given by the average score for the Military category on this variable in the original WTH data minus 1 standard deviation.

Comment: Banks & Wilson ends in 2019. From 2020 onward, we rely solely on the two V-Dem indicators, both of which must indicate a military regime for a country-year to be classified as military. In 2024, only the Military dimension index is available; countries are classified as military if they exceed the 0.26 threshold and if the index value is greater than its 2023 value. A country retains its military classification in 2024 if it was classified as military in 2023 and the index value is unchanged or higher.

Exceptions: Eritrea 1994-2024: Eritrea is a militarized authoritarian state that has not held national elections since gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The country is governed by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), led by President Isaias Afwerki, which remains the sole legal political party. Arbitrary detention is widespread, and citizens are subject to mandatory national service, often extending indefinitely throughout their working lives. Independent media has been banned since 2001. Although the ruling group, formerly the rebel movement Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), initially came to power through armed struggle, it has since institutionalized its rule through the PFDJ. While previous coding (WTH 1993–2014) categorized the regime as a "rebel regime," we find this classification outdated. Eritrea cannot be classified as a one-party state due to the absence of electoral processes. Despite Banks and Wilson labeling the regime as civilian, the dominance of the military in governance, combined with assessments from Freedom House, supports classifying the regime as military. This is the only instance where we make a qualitative assessment and classify Eritrea as military, in line with the original WTH classification.

2.3 No-Party

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -2.54 and is less than -.84
   Corresponds non-partisan elections or instances where there are no officially recognized parties
2. *V-Dem*: Number of Parties in legislature (E) (e_legparty) = 0
   Corresponds to Number of parties in the legislature
3. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If all requirements are fulfilled, a country is classified as No-Party

Threshold rationale: The party-ban interval is defined using the mean among no-party regimes dataset (including monarchy–no-party and military–no-party subtypes) in the original WTH dataset ± one standard deviation. The election-timing rule is derived from the maximum inter-election interval observed among democracies in WTH and is further motivated by the DPI, where the longest observed "years left in current term" is seven years. Information on the timing of elections is constructed using two sources: (1) the

Banks & Wilson variable on the number of legislative elections, and (2) the V-Dem indicator for the lower chamber seat share won by the largest party (v2ellostsl).

Comment: Countries that become independent 1946-2024 are not classified as electoral regimes until they have held their first elections. See for instance Kazakhstan 1992-93.

2.4 One-Party

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) is less than -1.4
   Corresponds to instances where opposition parties are not allowed. Or instances where there are no autonomous, independent opposition parties. Opposition parties are either selected or co-opted by the ruling regime.
2. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) is less than -1.6
   Corresponds to instances where all parties except the state-sponsored party (and closely allied parties) are banned
3. *Banks & Wilson*: Number of Seats/ Size of Legislature = 1 *or*
   V-Dem: The largest party holds all lower-chamber seats, operationalized as (v2ellostsl / v2elloseat) = 1.
   Corresponds to the largest party winning all seats in the legislature
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If **two out of three** requirements (1–3) are fulfilled and fewer than 8 years have passed since the most recent election, a country is classified as One-Party. This rule applies only to regimes not already classified as monarchies or military regimes.

Threshold rationale: The cutoffs for opposition autonomy and party bans are derived by calculating the mean values of these indicators among regimes classified as one-party in the original WTH dataset and defining the thresholds as one standard deviation above these means. The criterion requiring fewer than eight years since the most recent election is based on the maximum observed inter-election interval among countries classified as democracies in the original WTH dataset. This cutoff is further motivated by the Database of Political Institutions (DPI), in which the longest observed value for "years left in current term" is seven years. Information on the timing of elections is constructed using two sources: (1) the Banks & Wilson variable on the number of legislative elections, and (2) the V-Dem indicator for the lower chamber seat share won by the largest party (v2ellostsl).

Comment: Countries that become independent 1946-2024 are not classified as electoral regimes until they have held their first elections. See for instance Kazakhstan 1992-93.

Exceptions: Laos (1981–1988), we classify Laos as a One-party state 1981-88 despite it having been more than 8 years since elections. The Communist party took power in 1975 and did not hold elections until 1989. The reason for this is that all indicators point to

Laos being a One-party state, and we maintain this classification in line with the original WTH. North Korea (post-1948) gained independence in 1948 but did not hold its first elections until 1957. Rather than classifying North Korea as "Other", we classify the country as a "One-party regime" despite the lack of elections. Cuba (2001–2002), Cuba is classified as a One-party regime 2001-02, while 8 years have passed since elections, the Cuban National Assembly was in place, and elections were held in 2003. Mozambique (1985) is classified as a "One-party regime" 1985, while 8 years have passed since elections, the People's Assembly was in place, and elections were held in 1986. The USSR and Yugoslavia are classified as "One-party regimes" in the year prior to their dissolution (1990), even though the indicators do not meet the threshold for One-party.

2.5 Multiparty

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) exceeds -1.4
2. *V-Dem***:** Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -1.6
3. *Banks & Wilson*: Number of Seats/ Size of Legislature > 1 *or*
   V-Dem: The largest party holds all lower-chamber seats, operationalized as (v2ellostsl / v2elloseat) > 1.
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If two out of three requirements (1–3) are fulfilled and fewer than 8 years have passed since the most recent election, the country is classified as Multiparty.

Threshold rationale: The rationale is the same as with the One-party classification.

2.6 Other

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* State authority over territory (C) (v2svstterr) less than or equal to 50%
2. 8 or more years has passed since an election and a country cannot be classified as Monarchy or Military
3. No elections since independence and not Monarchy or Military
4. *V-Dem:* Number of successful coups attempts in a year (E) (e_pt_coup) is 1 or more and where the coup is either not military or where the subsequent year is not military.
5. *V-Dem:* Regime most important support group (C) (v2regimpgroup) =7
   Corresponds to a religious group being the (one) group that the current political regime relies on most strongly in order to maintain power
6. Banks & Wilson type of Regime==4
   Correspond to Other. All regimes not falling into civilian or military categories, including instances in which a country, save for reasons of exogenous influence, lacks an effective national government

Classification: If any of the above criteria are satisfied a country is classified as Other

Variable: regime_sub_type

The variable regime_sub_type takes on 17 categorical values and is intended to capture sub-classifications of the main regime types Monarchy, Military, and Other, as defined under regime_type. The categories Democracy, Limited Multiparty, One-Party, and No-Party correspond directly to the classifications in regime_type and are therefore not explained further in this section.

3.1 Monarchy

The Monarchy regime type has four sub-categories. Three correspond to electoral variants of autocratic monarchies and follow rules and thresholds analogous to the electoral regime types defined under regime_type. The fourth sub-category captures monarchies without elections. In some instances, Freedom House reports were consulted to ensure the sub-classification was correct.

3.1.1 No-party Monarchy

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -2.54 and is less than -.84
   Corresponds to elections are non-partisan or there are no officially recognized parties
2. *V-Dem* : Number of Parties in legislature (E) (e_legparty) = 0
   Corresponds to the number of parties in the legislature
3. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If all requirements are fulfilled a country is classified as No-Party Monarchy

3.1.2 One-party Monarchy

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) is less than -1.4
2. *V-Dem***:** Party ban (C) (v2psparban) is less than -1.6
3. *Banks & Wilson*: Number of Seats/ Size of Legislature = 1 *or*
   V-Dem: The largest party holds all lower-chamber seats, operationalized as (v2ellostsl / v2elloseat) = 1.
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If at least two of requirements 1–3 are fulfilled and fewer than eight years have passed since the most recent election, the country–year is classified as One-Party Monarchy.

Threshold rationale: Same as One-Party classification

3.1.3 Multiparty Monarchy

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) exceeds -1.4
2. *V-Dem***:** Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -1.6
3. Banks & Wilson: Number of seats / size of legislature > 1 *or* the ratio v2ellostsl / v2elloseat > 1
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification**:**
If at least two of requirements 1–3 are fulfilled and fewer than eight years have passed since the most recent election, the country–year is classified as Multiparty Monarchy.

Threshold rationale: Same as Multiparty classification

3.1. 4 Monarchy

Requirements: No other sub-classification applies

Classification: If no other subclassification applies a country is classified as the subclassification Monarchy.

3.2 Military

The Military regime type has four sub-categories. Three correspond to electoral variants of autocratic military regimes and follow rules and thresholds analogous to the electoral regime types under regime_type. The fourth captures military regimes without elections. In some instances, Freedom House reports were consulted to ensure the sub-classification was correct.

3.2.1 No-party Military

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -2.54 and is less than -.84
Corresponds non-partisan elections or there are no officially recognized parties
2. *V-Dem* : Number of Parties in legislature (E) (e_legparty) = 0
Corresponds to the number of parties in the legislature
3. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If all requirements are fulfilled a country is classified as No-Party Military

Threshold rationale: Same as No-Party

3.2.2 One-party Military

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) is less than -1.4
2. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) is less than -1.6
3. Banks & Wilson: Number of seats / size of legislature = 1 *or* v2ellostsl / v2elloseat = 1
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If at least two of requirements 1–3 are fulfilled and fewer than eight years have passed since the most recent election, the country–year is classified as One-Party Military.

3.2.3 Multiparty Military

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Opposition parties' autonomy (C) (v2psoppaut) exceeds -1.4
2. *V-Dem*: Party ban (C) (v2psparban) exceeds -1.6
3. Banks & Wilson: Number of seats / size of legislature > 1 *or* v2ellostsl / v2elloseat > 1
4. Fewer than 8 years since the most recent election

Classification: If at least two of requirements 1–3 are fulfilled and fewer than eight years have passed since the most recent election, the country–year is classified as Multiparty Military.

3.2.4 Military Trad

Requirements: No other military sub-classification applies

Classification:
If no other military sub-classification applies, the country–year is classified as Military Trad.

Comment: Following a military coup, a country is classified as Military Trad until elections are held, even if elections occurred prior to the coup.

3.3 Other

The category Other contains five sub-categories, which capture distinct reasons for the Other classification: Civil War, Occupation, Transitional, Theocracy, and residual Other. While general rules govern these sub-classifications, qualitative assessment—primarily using Freedom House reports—was employed in many cases to ensure accurate classification.

3.3.1 Civil War

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem*: Civil war (E) (e_civil_war) =1
2. Country-year is classified as Other

Classification: If both conditions are met, the country–year is classified as Other with sub-classification Civil War.

3.3.2 Theocracy

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Regime most important support group (C) (v2regimpgroup) =7
   Corresponds to a religious group being the (one) group that the current political regime relies on most strongly in order to maintain power. The group that, if it were to retract its support to the regime, would most endanger the regime.

Classification: If the requirement is met, the country–year is classified as Other with sub-classification Theocracy.

3.3.3 Occupation

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Regime most important support group (C) (v2regimpgroup) = 13
   Corresponds to a foreign government or colonial power the (one) group that the current political regime relies on most strongly in order to maintain power. The group that, if it were to retract its support to the regime, would most endanger the regime.
2. V-Dem: International autonomy (C) (v2svinlaut_ord) = 0
   Corresponds to Foreign policy is controlled by an external power, either *de facto* or *de jure*. The most common examples of this are colonial rule and military occupation

Classification: If either condition 1 or 2 is met and occupation is confirmed by Freedom House, the country–year is classified as Other with sub-classification Occupation.

Comment: Classifying all country–years with v2regimpgroup = 13 or v2svinlaut_ord = 0 as *Other (Occupation)* would be incorrect, as these values are also assigned in cases where, for example, UN peacekeeping forces are present rather than a foreign occupation authority

3.3.4 Transitional

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* Number of successful coups attempts in a year (E) (e_pt_coup) is 1 or more
2. 1-3 years has passed between independence and first election

Classification: A country–year is classified as "Other" with sub-classification "Transitional" if either condition is met. Transitional status persists until elections are held, provided the subsequent regime is not classified as "Military" or "Monarchy". In line with WTH, the "Transitional" sub-classification may be assigned for up to three consecutive years.

Comment/Exceptions: Country–years in which a coup occurs that satisfies the requirements for classification as a "Military" regime, and where the regime in the subsequent year is also classified as "Military", are **not** coded as "Transitional" but as "Military". Similarly, instances in which countries experience consecutive yearly coups that satisfy the requirements for "Military" classification, and where the regime type both prior to and following the coups is "Military", are classified as "Military" rather than "Transitional."

3.3.5 Other

Requirements:

1. *V-Dem:* State authority over territory (C) (v2svstterr) less than or equal to 50%.
2. Eight or more years have passed since the most recent election and the country cannot be classified as Monarchy or Military
   Four or more years have passed since independence without elections, and the country cannot be classified as Monarchy or Military

Classification: If any of the above conditions are met, and if no other sub-classification applies, the country–year is classified as "Other."

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