# How great is the current danger to democracy?

# Assessing the risk with historical data

Influential voices contend that democracy is in decline worldwide and threatened in the US. Using a variety of measures, I show that—while there has been some recent backsliding—the global proportion of democracies remains close to an all-time high. The current rate of deterioration is not historically unusual and is well-explained by the lower income and unseasoned institutions of many new democracies swept upwards in the Third Wave. Historical data suggest the probability of democratic breakdown in the US is extremely low. Western governments are seen as threatened by weakening popular support for democracy and an erosion of elite norms. But systematic evidence for these claims is very limited. While eroding democratic quality in some countries is indeed a cause for concern, the fear of a global slide into autocracy appears premature.

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# 1 Introduction

Democracy is widely thought to be in danger both globally and in the US. Around the world, popular government is said to be in "recession," "decaying," "in retreat," and "beleaguered" (Diamond 2015, Zakaria 2018, Rachman 2016, Abramowitz and Repucci 2018). According to one former US Secretary of State, fascism poses "a more serious threat … than at any time since the end of World War II" (Albright 2018). Recent books offer Western readers tips on "surviving autocracy" and resisting "tyranny" (Gessen 2020, Snyder 2017). (Among other useful advice: "Listen for dangerous words," "Make eye contact and small talk," and "Be wary of paramilitaries.") Op-ed pages abound with allusions to Weimar Germany and Chile under Allende (Cohen 2015, Dorfman 2017). Academic assessments have often been more measured, or even skeptical (e.g, Levitsky and Way 2015, Carothers and Young 2017). Still, leading scholars have recently expressed "dread" over the state of American politics, warned that "democracies are always fragile," and suggested that the US may be on the verge of civil war (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 1; Walter 2022).

How serious are current threats to democracy? In this paper, I examine a range of historical data in search of answers. Of course, patterns could change, and the data available are far from perfect. But comparisons to past cases seem to be fueling current alarm, so a systematic review seems warranted.

I begin with description, charting the historical rise of democracy and assessing the dimensions of the current "democratic recession."[1] I then turn to risk analysis. I first examine what factors best account for past breakdowns. Broad public support for democracy and elite norms of cooperation and tolerance are often thought vital for democratic survival. Although plausible, these claims are hard to test, and—as I illustrate with data from two major studies—evidence for them is far from unequivocal. While falling support for democracy might help explain failures among weak electoral democracies, such effects cannot easily explain recent backsliding in most liberal democracies. On elite norms, the most systematic analysis I could find shows only that in Latin America a radical, authoritarian military increases the risk of anti-democratic coups—a finding with few obvious implications for the partisan polarization of Washington. By contrast, I show that advanced economic development and long-established democratic institutions correlate robustly with democratic survival. Using all available historical data, I estimate the hazard that particular states will revert to authoritarianism. For a country with the US's income and political history, the odds of this turn out to be extremely low.

The next section surveys historical trends in the emergence and survival of democracies. Section 3 explores evidence on the correlates of democratic survival and uses the result to forecast reversions to autocracy. The final section concludes.[2]

[1] This part builds on, extends, and updates several recent papers that offer a nuanced view of recent change. Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg (2017, 167), for instance, concluded that as of 2016 "alarmist reports of a global demise or crisis of democracy are not warranted." Concern about democratic decline has risen in the years since then, but I show that a measured evaluation remains appropriate. In a widely cited paper, Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) study the frequency of a certain type of "autocratization episode" in all states—democratic and authoritarian—and note that, although deterioration is clear, "panic is not warranted." I offer a similar review of world trends but focus mostly on deterioration among democracies. And rather than concentrating on a particular type of episode, I survey all downward changes in quantity and quality (autocratization episodes overlap with only 7 percent of all downward annual moves on V-DEM's electoral democracy index). (In Sections 3.1 and 3.2, I explore the correlates of onsets of Lührmann and Lindberg's autocratization episodes and estimate the probability that current liberal democracies will enter one of these in coming years. The estimated odds of this in the US are very low.)

[2] All data and STATA do files to replicate the analysis are available at Treisman (2023).

## 2 Charting democracy's fortunes

I start here by describing the current global distribution of political regimes and how the balance among these has been changing. I discuss both quantity—the proportion of democracies among all states—and quality—just how democratic existing democracies are.

### 2.1 Is the quantity of democracy decreasing?

How to measure the quantity and quality of democracies? Several databases and indicators have been widely used—most notably, those of the Polity project, Freedom House (FH), Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM), and the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy database (LIED). None of these is perfect, and some suffer from significant drawbacks and inconsistencies.[3] In their scope, extensiveness, and transparency, the V-DEM data are particularly attractive, so I focus on them. Still, to demonstrate robustness and to relate directly to previous work, I also show results with the other sources, either in the text or appendix.[4]

Figure 1.A plots the proportion of V-DEM democracies—liberal or electoral—in the world over time. After surging in the 1990s, the trend slows or even plateaus around 2000, after which we see a series of three short-term rises and falls. The last two decades have seen a loss of momentum, but so far no clear downward trend. However, there *is* a decrease in the proportion of V-DEM liberal democracies (Figure 1.B). Since 2010, the share of these has fallen from 24 to 19 percent. Freedom House reports a similar drop in the proportion of "free" states from 47 percent in 2007 to 43 percent in 2021 (Figure 1.C). By contrast, LIED and Polity data show little

[3] For details of these, see Section III of the Online Appendix, posted at https://www.danieltreisman.org/articles.

[4] Some have recently used Freedom House data to illustrate global claims about the state of democracy (e.g., Diamond 2021). The Political Instability Task Force team has used Polity data in the past (Goldstone et al. 2010, Ulfelder 2009).

sign of a significant downward trend (Figures 1.D and 1.E). Polity, in fact, has democracies at an all-time high in 2018, although the proportion could fall when it updates to more recent years.

Figure 1: Proportion of democracies among world states

Which countries account for the declines in V-DEM liberal democracy and Freedom House "free" states? There turns out to be little overlap: only one country, Hungary, appears in both lists of downgrades since 2007. Two of V-DEM's backsliders actually rose slightly on Freedom House's political rights measure, while three of Freedom House's backsliders increased on V-DEM's liberalism index.[5] Only three of V-DEM's 11 backsliders—Poland, Hungary, and Mauritius—were downgraded because of change in political institutions per se. The other eight—Ghana, South Africa, Portugal, Austria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Trinidad and Tobago—fell below the threshold on one or two of three *legal* indicators that V-DEM added to its formula in 2018: access to justice for men and for women and transparency of legal enforcement.[6] In four of the cases, the drop below the threshold was not statistically significant as of 2021.[7]

What to make of this pattern? Any decline is obviously troubling. And some of the countries downgraded—such as India, Nigeria, Poland, and Hungary—are strategically

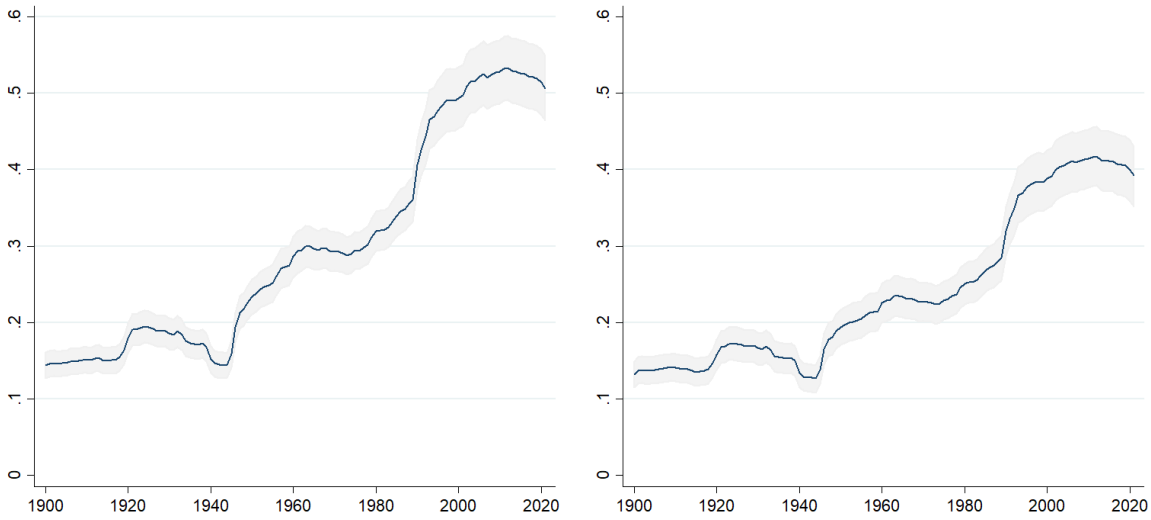
[5] On FH's political rights index, Lithuania rose from 36 to 38 and Trinidad and Tobago from 32 to 33 between 2007 and 2021; on V-DEM's *v2x_liberal*, the Dominican Republic rose (.47 to .64), Senegal (.75 to .76), and Lesotho (.71 to .79).

[6] Indeed, in only five of the 26 breakdowns of liberal democracy that V-DEM identifies since 1900 did the country fall below the relevant threshold on one of the political subcomponents (multiparty elections, free and fair elections, electoral democracy index, liberalism index). In the other 21 cases, the downgrade followed from deterioration on legal transparency or access to justice for men or women. V-DEM does not provide detail on what aspects of legal transparency and access to justice deteriorated. It is certainly possible that the deterioration in each case related to fundamental elements of democratic practice such as voting rights or civil liberties. But there are also aspects of law that concern business, property disputes, family law, and other matters only peripherally related to political rights. The assessments of transparency and access are made by expert coders and are, inevitably, somewhat subjective. (The transparency question asks coders to assess whether the laws of the land are "clear, well publicized, coherent (consistent with each other), relatively stable from year to year, and enforced in a predictable manner.") In a comprehensive analysis, Little and Meng (2022) show that the recent decline in V-DEM democracy scores appears only in the more subjective measures that rely on expert coding decisions and not in more objective, factual ones (such as whether opposition parties were allowed to run, whether they won elections, and whether incumbent leaders evaded term limits). Meng (2022) shows there has been no global trend towards decreasing executive constraints.

[7] For this reason, V-DEM recommends treating the downgrades of Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Portugal "with caution" (Boese et al. 2022, 15). The same could be said of Lithuania, for which the legal transparency measure in 2021 was below the threshold by a statistically insignificant amount.

important, with large populations. The negative trend could continue. All this speaks against complacency. At the same time, the declines to date are not consistently identified by different monitors, are quite often statistically insignificant, and frequently reflect imperfect legal enforcement and transparency rather than erosion of political institutions per se. Even the highest estimates of deterioration at present return us only to levels first reached in the late 1990s or early 2000s—a time at which commentators were celebrating the global triumph of democracy amid the fall of communism and the "end of history."

Figure 2: Average democracy level worldwide

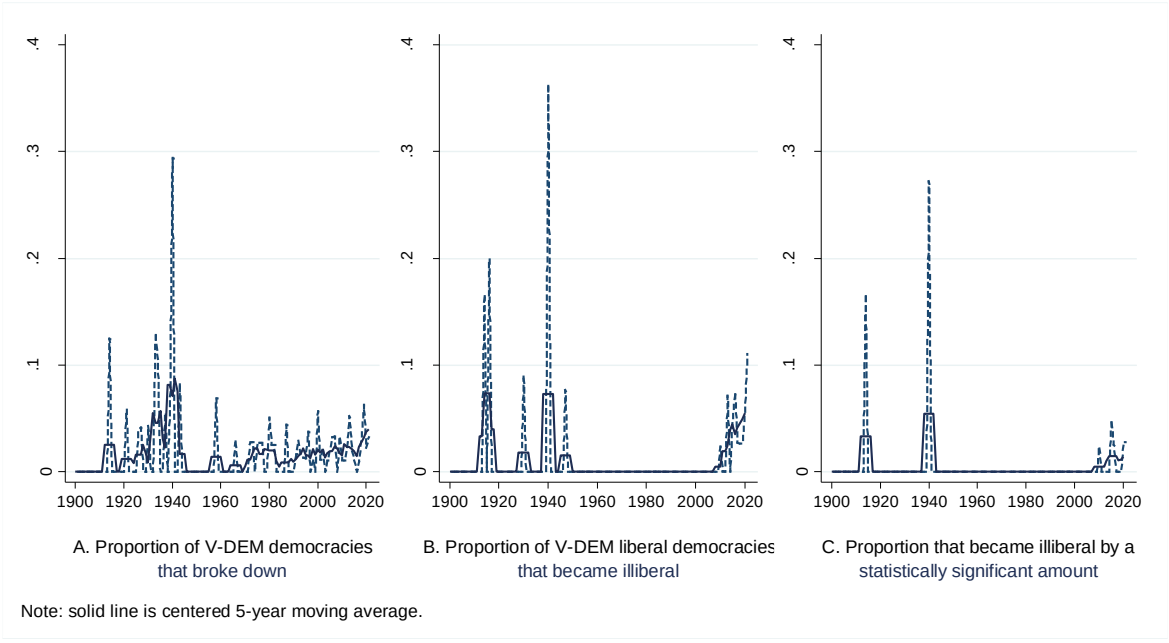



Another way to explore the data is to plot the average democracy score across all countries. This is, in a sense, misleading because it conflates change within democracies with that within dictatorships. Still, for what it's worth, Figure 2 plots the average V-DEM electoral and liberal democracy scores, along with confidence intervals that incorporate coder uncertainty.

Both record a moderate deterioration of 5-6 percentage points. These recent decreases are far from statistically significant using V-DEM's confidence intervals.[8]

The data so far suggest recent changes have been relatively limited. But democracies could still be failing at much higher rates than in the past if such failures were being offset by the democratization of other states. Figure 3 checks this. It shows the proportion of democracies that broke down each year. V-DEM failures do trend up somewhat in recent years, especially for the liberal democracies. However, there is little sign of this for the Polity or Freedom House measures (Figure A2 in the Appendix). And the rise in liberal democracy breakdowns would be much less dramatic if we required at least one subcomponent's fall below the threshold to be statistically significant (Panel C). As noted, the recent increase in Panel B mostly reflects declines in the transparency or openness of the legal system.

Figure 3: Rates of breakdown of democracies

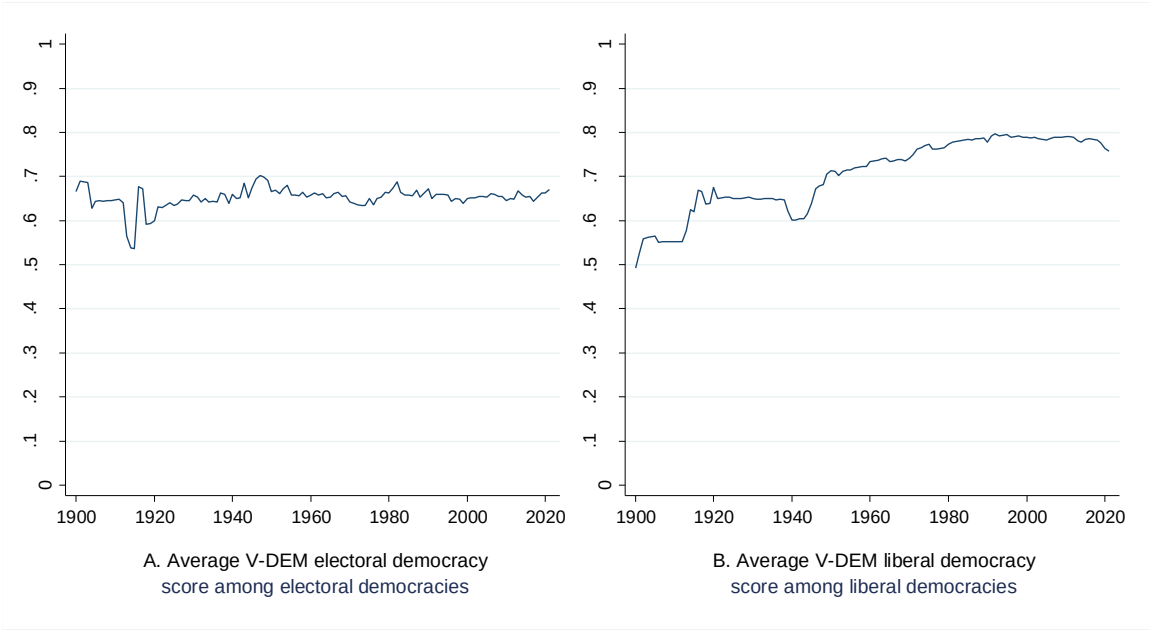



[8] V-DEM judges two points to be significantly different when their confidence intervals do not overlap (VDEM 2022, 18). Clearly, the confidence intervals for the endpoint and the peak in both graphs overlap almost completely. As Little and Meng (2022) point out, even the moderate decline disappears if one replaces the average with the median V-DEM electoral or liberal democracy score. The average FH and Polity2 scores are in Appendix Figure A1.

## 2.2 Is the quality of existing democracies declining?

What about declines in *quality* among democracies? Figures 1 and 3 explored change among democracies that crossed regime thresholds. These will miss any tendency among states that remained either liberal or electoral democracies to move downward within the band, increasingly clustering around the lower threshold. Did anything like that occur? Figure 4 shows the average democracy score among those countries classified as democracies (as opposed to the average in *all* countries, shown in Figure 2).[9] There is a slight decline—by about 3 percentage points—in average quality among the V-DEM liberal democracies since 2010, but, if anything, the quality trend is upward among the electoral democracies. Very little deterioration is evident in recent decades among those countries that remained FH "free" states or Polity democracies (Appendix Figure A3).

Figure 4: Average quality among democracies




[9] Note that this captures just the distribution within the democracy band of those states that remain democracies in the given year. The frequency with which states drop below the democracy threshold is captured in Figure 3.

## 2.4 Summary

The proportion of countries in the world that are democracies by any measure is either slightly below or at an all-time high. While some backsliding has occurred—especially in the legal underpinnings of liberal democracy—it is far from reversing the massive burst of democratization that occurred in the last quarter of the 20th Century. If that is the current situation, what might the future have in store?

# 3 Looking ahead

In this section, I use the patterns in historical data to forecast how regimes may change in coming years. Of course, such forecasts can only predict what will happen if current trends and mechanisms persist. It is always possible that "this time will be different" (Przeworski 2019, 80). Still, while recognizing the limits of extrapolation, it is worth examining what historical patterns suggest.

A small but quite consistent literature suggests that democratic stability is enhanced by certain economic and political characteristics of countries. Before looking more broadly at such factors, I consider two that, for lack of suitable data, are hard to incorporate into a composite analysis. I then estimate survival models, including theoretically plausible determinants for which data do exist and use the predictions from these models to assess the odds of democratic breakdown in countries such as the US.

## 3.1 Attitudes and norms

One of the oldest ideas about democracy is that it requires a certain cultural underpinning. Some have suggested that American democracy is currently under threat because of weakening popular support for it (e.g., Foa and Mounk 2017) or an erosion of elite norms of mutual toleration and

forbearance (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). But is there general empirical evidence for these claims? I consider them in turn.

### *3.1.1 Popular support for democracy*

Anti-democratic attitudes are clearly undesirable in themselves. But is weakening support for democracy a cause of backsliding in the West? Determining how public attitudes affect democratic survival is difficult for several reasons. First, causation may run in the opposite direction: democracies that survive will tend to cultivate pro-democratic values. Second, cross-national surveys on attitudes towards democracy—especially those from past eras when breakdowns were more frequent—are quite limited. Third, raters of regimes sometimes include popular support for democracy—or associated attitudes such as confidence in government—as inputs in their measures of democracy. If support for democracy is part of the definition of democracy, then a lack of it precludes democracy—by definition.[10]

In a pathbreaking article, Claassen (2020) recently combined information from a large set of surveys using a Bayesian latent trait model. The model constructed a crossnational measure of support for democracy from 52 questions on polls taken between 1988 and 2017 (including the World Values Survey, various Barometer Surveys, and the Pew Global Attitudes Project). Claassen then looked to see whether popular support for democracy in year *t* predicted V-DEM's liberal democracy index in year *t + 1*. He found that a permanent one standard deviation fall in popular support for democracy—as occurred, for instance, in Nicaragua in 1996-2004—led to a

[10] For instance, the Economist Intelligence Unit includes "political culture" as one of the five elements used for classifying regimes, which makes it impossible to use this rating to assess the relationship between political culture and democratic survival (see http://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index).

long-term fall of 8-12 percentage points on the liberal democracy index (Ibid, 128).[11]

The study offers more comprehensive crossnational evidence than ever before on the link between public attitudes and democratic deterioration. Based on its results, how much of recent backsliding in Western liberal democracies can falling support for democracy explain? The short answer is: none. Claassen's data actually cast doubt on any such claim, for two reasons.

First, his results turn out to be driven by the electoral democracies. In fact, the data reveal no link between popular support for democracy and backsliding in *liberal* democracies. Table 1 shows the estimated marginal effect of democratic support on the liberal democracy index from a replication of Claassen's regression, using interaction terms to separate out different types of regimes. Among liberal democracies, the effect is insignificant and close to zero. While falling support for democracy may cause backsliding among electoral democracies such as India and Thailand, there is no such association among liberal democracies such as Poland, Hungary, and the US.

Table 1: Estimated marginal effect of popular support for democracy on V-DEM's liberal democracy index in different types of regime

| All regimes | Closed autocracies | Electoral autocracies | Electoral democracies | Liberal democracies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| .27*** | .44 | .26 | .44*** | -.01 |
| (.07) | (.69) | (.24) | (.17) | (.07) |

**Sources:** Claassen (2019), V-DEM 12.
**Note:** Robust standard errors in parentheses. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01. Regime classified as in previous year. Based on replication of Table 1, Model 1 regression in Claassen (2019), with the support for democracy measure interacted with regime dummies based on V-DEM's *v2x_regime*.

[11] The actual fall in Nicaragua in these years was about seven points. See also Jacob (2021), which extends the Claassen data to 2020 and argues that, although high public support for democracy does not prevent the election of an anti-democratic leader, it may constrain the ability of such incumbents to backslide.

Second, even if falling support for democracy did cause backsliding in liberal democracies it could not explain much of the deterioration witnessed recently in the West's liberal democracies. That is because support for democracy has actually been *rising* in these—both on average and in most of the countries where backsliding has been most noticeable. Table 2 shows Claassen's estimates of support for democracy in 2009 and 2017, the last year in his data, both on average across all liberal democracies and in the five liberal democracies as of 2009 that experienced the most severe backsliding in subsequent years. On average, support rose by .07 on the standardized scale. Among the top five backsliders, the Czech Republic was the only one with a slight decrease in support for democracy during the period. Hungary, Poland, the US, and Spain all saw support for democracy rise.[12]

Table 2: Changing support for democracy in V-DEM Liberal Democracy backsliders, 2009-17

| Country | Support for democracy 2009 | Support for democracy 2017 | Change in V-DEM liberal democracy score, 2009-17 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hungary | .28 | .56 | -.33 |
| Poland | -.31 | .30 | -.27 |
| USA | .35 | .59 | -.10 |
| Czech Republic | -.06 | -.12 | -.08 |
| Spain | .87 | .94 | -.06 |
| *Average, all V-DEM liberal democracies as of 2009* | *.61* | *.68* | *-.02* |

**Sources:** Claassen (2019), V-DEM 12.
**Note:** Support for democracy is in standardized units. V-DEM liberal democracy score is on a 0-1 scale.

Among electoral democracies, both support for democracy and the quality of it were falling on average in 2009-17. Average support dropped by .03 while the average liberal democracy score among countries that were electoral democracies in 2009 fell by .02. This—like the regression result in Table 1—is consistent with the view that falling support drives

[12] See Figure A4. There are exceptions such as Greece, where democratic support fell by .55, and South Africa, where it fell by .22.

backsliding in electoral democracies. However, the relationship was reversed in many of the leading backsliders. As the democracy scores of Turkey, Paraguay, Ukraine, and Bulgaria fell, support for democracy among their citizens rose. In these countries, at least, backsliding cannot be attributed to popular disenchantment with democracy (see Figure A5).

### *3.1.2 Elite norms*

"Strong prevailing norms of commitment to democracy… play a crucial role in inoculating democracy against authoritarian attacks," writes Diamond (2021, 11). Again, this seems a reasonable expectation. But is there any systematic evidence for it?

Establishing an empirical link between elite norms and democratic survival is even more challenging than determining the role of democratic support given the dearth of data on such norms. The most systematic study currently available focuses on Latin America (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2013). The authors identified the key political actors in 20 countries in different periods and rated each on their normative preference for democracy and their policy radicalism. Between 1945 and 2005, greater opposition to democracy and (in some models) greater radicalism, correlated with democratic breakdowns in the countries studied. At the same time, the authors found no relationship within Latin America between economic development and democratic survival.

Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán were careful not to generalize beyond Latin America. Their work provides valuable insights into the countries studied. But are there broader implications? To assess that, it makes sense to check which cases drive their finding. Using their data and replicating the main regression, I find the result depends on Argentina and Uruguay: if they are excluded, the effect of actors' normative preference for or against democracy becomes

insignificant with a coefficient close to zero (Table A1). Moreover, income becomes significant with a negative coefficient, suggesting that—as modernization theorists, and more recently Przeworski et al. (2000) contend—economic development did protect against democratic breakdown.

Who were the key actors in the Argentine and Uruguayan cases, and what norms did they embrace? It turns out that before each of the democratic breakdowns (1951, 1962, 1966, and 1976 for Argentina; 1973 for Uruguay), one key actor was a military with radical policy positions and a preference for dictatorship.[13] In four of the five cases, a military coup overthrew democracy.[14] In short, where top military leaders favor dictatorship and radical policies, democracy may be at risk. Fortunately, that does not describe the kind of norm erosion detected recently in liberal democracies of the West, where military leaders have so far stayed out of politics and appear committed to democracy. Were that to change, it would certainly be reason to worry.

In the 1970s, Argentina and Uruguay were exemplars of "bureaucratic authoritarianism," a form of dictatorship that survived at moderately high levels of modernization (O'Donnell 1988). Thus, it is not surprising that including them eliminates the association between authoritarianism and low development in Latin America. What is more interesting is that excluding these two countries, there *is* a strong relationship between development and lower democratic breakdown risk among the remaining 18 countries. As the next section demonstrates, high economic development is one of the most robust correlates of democratic survival.

[13] Actors are coded from 0 to 1 on pro-democratic preferences, pro-dictatorship preferences, and radicalism of policy preferences. If we add the scores for pro-dictatorship preferences and radicalism together, subtract the score for pro-democratic preferences, and add 1, we get a measure ranging from 0 to 3 of anti-democratic norms. In each of the 5 Argentine or Uruguayan cases in which breakdown followed, the score for the military was 2.5 or 3.

[14] The exception was 1951 in Argentina. In this case, the incumbent, President Juan Péron, is coded as having undergone a sharp normative change that year towards opposing democracy.

## 3.2 Correlates of democratic breakdown

Previous work has linked a number of factors to democratic survival. Some of these have to do with the nature of society. Economic development renders citizens more eager to participate politically (Inglehart and Welzel 2009) and harder to control. An educated, globally connected, socially skilled, and technologically sophisticated population can monitor incumbents and resist their power grabs (Przeworski et al. 2000, Boix and Stokes 2003, Boix 2011, Aléman and Yang 2011, Erdmann 2011, Treisman 2020). By contrast, very high levels of economic inequality, political polarization and factionalism are often thought dangerous to democracy (e.g., Haggard and Kaufmann 2021, McCoy, Rahman, and Somer 2018, Graham and Svolik 2020, Goldstone et al. 2010).[15]

Other factors have to do with the characteristics and resources of the state. Plentiful mineral rents spare rulers the need to negotiate with citizens over taxes and help to fund either authoritarian co-optation or repression (Ross 2012). Greater administrative capacity might either help or hurt. On the one hand, rulers can use this to control society (Albertus and Menaldo 2018). On the other hand, too little capacity leaves a democracy vulnerable to capture by authoritarian actors (Bratton and Chang 2006, Fortin 2012). Over time, democratic institutions may consolidate (Svolik 2015, Ulfelder 2009). However, past democratic breakdowns—by providing models for the rebellious—may increase the likelihood of new ones (Przeworski et al. 2000). Countries that start out more democratic are likely to be harder for autocratic incumbents to subvert (a country currently near the top of the democracy scale is less likely to drop below the minimum threshold). And the institutional details may matter. Some contend that presidential

[15] Although Ansell and Samuels (2014) suggest that only land-holding inequality, not income inequality, is negative for democracy.

systems enable the executive to subvert democracy more easily than do parliamentary ones (Przeworski et al. 2000, Maeda 2010).

A third set of factors relate to shocks. Economic crises can destabilize democracies, prompting emergency measures or igniting disruptive social conflicts (Przeworski et al. 2000, Svolik 2008). The wave of democratic failures in the 1930s is often blamed on the Great Depression. Fourth, the international environment may affect survival. The end of the Cold War initiated a period of stronger global support for democracy (Boix 2011). Democracies surrounded by others appear less vulnerable than those encircled by dictatorships. And the global performance of different regimes will influence their relative attractiveness. In periods when democracies are spreading, and have faster economic growth relative to autocracies, they may prove more resilient than when autocracy is seen as on the rise and more economically effective (Miller 2016, Abramson and Montero 2020).

The range of possible determinants—and their likely interactions—make identifying causal relationships extremely hard. Plausible instruments have been found for economic development (Boix 2011) and economic growth (Brückner and Ciccone 2011), confirming a relationship between these and democracy, although debate continues (e.g., Acemoglu et al. 2014). Here, however, the goal is not a fully convincing causal explanation but rather the most plausible forecast based on past patterns. Although such a "prediction" merits several grains of salt—as noted, the process may change—it can still provide a useful benchmark. Any thinking about the future should take into account the base rates.

Various empirical studies have used survival models to explore the correlates of democratic breakdown (e.g., Przeworski et al. 2000, Bernhard et al. 2001, Ulfelder 2009). I estimated survival models using a Weibull distribution, which allows for a nonlinear baseline

hazard rate. Democratic failure is defined as transition from "democracy" to "non-democracy" in models 1-4, and from "liberal democracy" to just "electoral democracy" or lower in models 5-8. I present here models using V-DEM data and show that similar results obtain also using that of Polity, Freedom House, and the Lexical Index in the appendix.

I sought measures of the possible determinants mentioned; sources and details are in Table A2. While finding proxies for some variables was straightforward, others posed challenges. Identifying a reliable measure of polarization with broad geographical and temporal coverage was particularly difficult. In models 4 and 8, I use V-DEM's political polarization measure, *v2cacamps*, but with strong reservations: the coders of remote historical periods are almost certain to infer polarization from the fact of regime breakdown itself, rendering such associations spurious.[16] State capacity is also difficult to measure. I use the estimates of Hanson and Sigman (2013), who found that a variety of capacity indicators all load strongly on one common dimension. Unfortunately, this dimension correlates very highly (r = .78) with log income per capita, making it hard to distinguish the effects of each (although for forecasting purposes, that is not essential). Three of the variables—oil and gas income per capita, state capacity, and inequality—are available for far fewer country-years than the others, so I present models both including (columns 3 and 7) and excluding them.

Table 3 shows the results. It presents exponentiated coefficients, which can be interpreted in terms of hazard rates (a coefficient below one reduces the hazard, one above one increases it). Columns 1 and 5 include all variables with broad data coverage, while 2 and 6 show trimmed

[16] In addition, *v2cacamps* turns out to correlate hardly at all with two survey-based measures of affective polarization that are available for a (very) limited number of country-years (Ward and Tavits 2019, Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2020). There are also large, non-random gaps in the VDEM data. And when data do exist, some of the classifications are puzzling; for instance, the US in 2020 was rated as more polarized than Rwanda in 1994, Iran in 1979, Germany in 1932, and Spain in 1935! Another V-DEM variable, "polarization of society" (*v2smpolsoc*), was only available from 2000.

Table 3: Correlates of democratic breakdowns

| | ----------V-DEM democracy---------- | | | | ----------V-DEM liberal democracy---------- | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| *Economic development* | | | | | | | | |
| Ln GDP per Capita *(t – 1)* | 0.72** (0.11) | 0.73** (0.10) | 0.75 (0.25) | 0.66*** (0.100) | 0.48* (0.20) | 0.40** (0.17) | 0.0044 (0.016) | 0.41** (0.17) |
| *State characteristics* | | | | | | | | |
| Electoral democracy index *(t – 1)* | 0.0055** (0.014) | 0.0056** (0.012) | 0.00013*** (0.00041) | 0.0015*** (0.0034) | | | | |
| Liberal democracy index *(t – 1)* | 0.00045*** (0.0011) | 0.00066*** (0.0015) | 0.0017** (0.0051) | 0.0075** (0.018) | 0.0069 (0.025) | | | |
| Legal transparency *(t – 1)* | | | | | 0.034*** (0.037) | 0.030*** (0.026) | 7.0e-50*** (0.00025) | 0.035*** (0.030) |
| Total previous years democratic *(t – 1)* | | | | | 0.93*** (0.022) | 0.96** (0.016) | 0.47* (0.20) | 0.96** (0.015) |
| Ln total previous years democratic *(t – 1)* | 0.38*** (0.13) | 0.38*** (0.13) | 0.32*** (0.11) | 0.40*** (0.12) | | | | |
| Ln past democratic breakdowns *(t – 1)* | 4.73*** (2.07) | 5.26*** (2.25) | 10.3*** (5.90) | 4.44*** (1.79) | 5.63 (7.71) | | | |
| Presidential System *(t – 1)* | 0.95 (0.24) | | | | 1.66 (1.10) | | | |
| *Shocks* | | | | | | | | |
| Growth rate | 0.91*** (0.024) | 0.92*** (0.026) | 0.92* (0.038) | 0.92*** (0.023) | 0.88** (0.055) | 0.87*** (0.045) | 0.81* (0.094) | 0.88*** (0.043) |
| *International factors* | | | | | | | | |
| Post-Cold War (after 1989) *(t – 1)* | 0.84 (0.21) | | | | 1.97 (1.33) | | | |
| Average democratic level of neighbors *(t – 1)* | 0.78 (0.26) | | | | 1.49 (1.02) | | | |
| Change in frequency of democratic breakdowns *(t – 1)* | 546.4*** (1208.4) | 1056.5*** (2445.0) | 0.22 (1.16) | 1107.2*** (2652.8) | 0.044 (0.11) | | | |
| Difference in average growth rate, 10 years, dems - non-dems *(t – 1)* | 0.82 (0.12) | | | | 0.37*** (0.13) | 0.35*** (0.092) | 6.3e-6*** (2.8e-5)) | 0.36*** (0.097) |
| *Additional* | | | | | | | | |
| Gini coefficient (pre-tax income) *(t – 1)* | | | 0.037 (0.12) | | | | 0.00053 (0.0026) | |
| State capacity *(t – 1)* | | | 1.08 (0.53) | | | | 3384.9 (19001.9) | |
| Ln oil and gas income per capita *(t – 1)* | | | 0.96 (0.063) | | | | 0.98 (0.29) | |
| Political polarization *(t – 1)* | | | | 1.55*** (0.15) | | | | 1.15 (0.21) |
| N | 4724 | 4788 | 2512 | 4732 | 2348 | 2364 | 1285 | 2309 |
| Log likelihood | -131.4 | -139.1 | -65.6 | -129.5 | -31.6 | -37.6 | -2.76 | -37.1 |
| Chi squared | 184.9 | 183.0 | 118.6 | 237.3 | 87.8 | 73.4 | 77.5 | 79.9 |
| p | 9.9e-34 | 4.6e-36 | 9.7e-21 | 8.3e-47 | 4.5e-14 | 2.0e-14 | 1.6e-13 | 3.7e-15 |

**Sources**: see Table A2.

**Notes**: Survival model with Weibull distribution; exponentiated coefficients; robust standard errors, clustered by democratic episode, in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

models dropping variables with low statistical significance. Models 3 and 7 add the variables with sparse data coverage, while 4 and 8 include political polarization.

As expected, economic characteristics help to predict democratic durability. Democracies with more developed economies that were growing faster were much less likely to fail. The high correlation between income and state capacity makes it hard to interpret results: when both are included (models 3 and 7), neither is statistically significant. Oil and gas revenues had no effect, which is not so surprising given that the largest hydrocarbon producers per capita among the V-DEM democracies in recent years were Norway, Trinidad and Tobago, and Canada.[17]

Institutional history also seems to matter. A longer experience of democracy, a higher level of it, and fewer past democratic breakdowns were associated with greater resilience of electoral democracies. Longer experience and greater transparency of legal enforcement predicted higher survival odds for liberal democracies.[18] Presidentialism was not significant. The state capacity measure also had no clear effect. Among international conditions, neither the post-Cold War period nor the presence of democratic neighbors had a statistically significant impact. An increasing rate of democratic breakdowns worldwide tended to foreshadow more failures of electoral democracies. And when autocracies were growing faster than democracies, liberal democracies became more vulnerable.

Among social indicators, V-DEM's political polarization measure correlated with higher breakdown odds among electoral democracies but was not significant for liberal democracies.

[17] Oil and gas production *was* associated with higher odds of breakdown of Freedom House "free" states (Table A3).

[18] As already noted (footnote 6), 81 percent of V-DEM's downgrades of liberal democracies since 1900 reflected failure on "legal transparency" or "access to justice," rather than on one of the political subcomponents. Lacking any strong theoretical prior on the form of the relationship, I tried including "years democratic" both logged and unlogged. The latter was more significant for liberal democracies.

Despite much discussion of polarization in the West, most breakdowns of liberal democracies have occurred in countries *at low levels of polarization* according to V-DEM's data. Only 24 percent of these took place in countries that the previous year had been polarized to a "noticeable" or "large" extent.[19] Greater pre-tax income inequality also had no clear effect.[20]

Table A3 presents regressions for breakdowns as measured by other democracy indicators (Polity2, Freedom House, and LIED). Results are similar. Higher income and growth correlate with lower reversion odds. More deeply democratic and longer established democracies, with fewer past breakdowns, and those with more democratic neighbors tended to be more resilient. And greater state capacity also turns significant in these regressions.

So far, I have examined only those changes that led to a downgrade of the regime type. But what about more gradual change that does not necessarily cross a regime boundary? One option would be to follow the lead of V-DEM's own forecasting team (Beger, Maxwell, and Morgan 2020), who used machine learning techniques to forecast "substantial changes" in any of six disaggregated subcomponents of democracy (associational, economic, electoral, governing, individual, and informational) for the "Democratic Space Barometer" project. A "substantial" change varies by indicator, but ranges from 3 to 8 percentage points (Ibid., 12). However, as Beger et al. note, their models often predict both an upward and a downward change on a given indicator for the same two-year period. In addition, the "substantial" changes often immediately

[19] And the V-DEM indicator may exaggerate the connection between breakdown and polarization. Even for electoral democracies, only 52 percent of the breakdowns occurred in countries that were politically polarized to a "noticeable" or "large" extent.

[20] Using the Polity data, greater inequality is (marginally) significantly associated with a *lower* breakdown probability (Table A3, model 2). The null—or even negative relationship—between inequality and democratic breakdown is at odds with much theorizing (e.g., Boix 2003) and some empirical studies (e.g., Houle 2009). But other recent work casts doubt on a relationship between inequality and regime change (e.g., Ahlquist and Wibbels 2012, Haggard and Kaufmann 2012). I also tried using a measure of post-tax-and-transfer inequality; the results were never statistically significant.

reverse themselves, sometimes fully disappearing within a few years. Instead, I chose to use another indicator—one that counts only gradual changes that cumulate to a significant total movement. Specifically, I use the definition of "autocratization episodes" suggested by Lührmann and Lindberg (2019), restricting attention to just cases that start in democracies. An "autocratization episode" is a period of one or more years in which a country falls at least 0.1 on V-DEM's electoral democracy index, without any reversals of 0.02 points or plateaus of more than four years along the way. Table A4 shows regressions predicting the onset of such episodes among V-DEM democracies.[21] The significant determinants prove very similar to those for regime breakdowns: higher income and growth rates are associated with lower odds of autocratization; so are a higher level of initial democracy, longer democratic experience, and fewer past autocratization episodes. Higher growth in democracies than in autocracies appears to add resilience; and V-DEM's polarization measure also correlates with higher odds of autocratization.

## 3.2 Assessing the risk of authoritarian reversion

The goal in constructing these models was not to resolve arguments about causality but to provide a plausible basis for forecasting. A first question, then, is how well these models fit. How well do they predict out of sample?

Recent papers seeking to forecast regime change or political instability have used several tests to validate their models (Goldstone et al. 2010, Ulfelder 2009, Morgan, Beger and Glynn 2019, Beger, Maxwell and Morgan 2020). A common strategy is to run the model on data up to

[21] Including both V-DEM's electoral and liberal democracy indexes here leads to a very strong positive effect for electoral and an even stronger negative effect for liberal democracy due to the high correlation between them. In the models presented, I include just liberal democracy, which appears to have a strong protective effect.

some year *t - 1* and use the results to estimate hazard rates for countries in year *t.* Starting some 10 or more years before the end of available data, and repeatedly moving forward a year, researchers derive predictions for multiple years. They then use several statistics to assess the fit between these estimated hazard rates and actual events. Two standard metrics are the Area Under the Curve-Receiver Operating Characteristic (AUC-ROC) and the Area Under the Curve-Precision Recall (AUC-PR). The first measures success at predicting both events and non-events, while the second focuses on events, which is arguably more appropriate when events are rare (Cranmer and Desmarais 2017, 155). Values of AUC-ROC above .5 indicate that the model performs better than chance; above .8 is considered good. AUC-PR scores greater than the observed frequency of the event suggest the model is outperforming chance. A third, widely used approach is to check what percentage of actual events occurred in countries with hazard rates in the top 20 that year.

Tables A5 and A6 show these statistics for successive years from 2006 to 2019, based on models 2 and 6 from Table 3, in each case estimated on data up to the preceding year. The model performed well for electoral democracy, with AUC-ROCs ranging from .79 to .98, and AUC-PRs that are substantially greater than the frequency of actual breakdowns. Of 30 actual breakdowns in 2006-19, 24—or 80 percent—occurred in countries whose hazard rates were in the top 20 that year, and 17 (57 percent) had rates in the top 10. For comparison, Ulfelder's (2009, 38) model for democratic breakdowns, constructed for the Political Instability Task Force after experimentation with more than 130 variables, achieved a success rate of 73 percent using the top 20 hazards to predict democratic breakdowns in the years 1995-2008. Morgan, Beger, and Glynn (2019) used machine-learning to predict "adverse regime transitions," defined as downward shifts on the V-DEM regimes index, from liberal to electoral democracy, electoral

democracy to electoral autocracy, or electoral autocracy to closed autocracy. In 2011-17, their top 20 hazard lists included 79 percent of the actual ARTs.[22] Predicting "closing events" on six subcomponents of democracy, Beger, Maxwell, and Morgan's (2020) top 10 hazard lists contained from 22 to 47 percent of actual cases. Interestingly, adding V-DEM's polarization measure to my model does not improve predictive power—still 24 of 30 cases are in the top 20 and only 15 are in the top 10.[23]

The diagnostics are less consistent for the liberal democracy breakdowns, which is not surprising given the smaller number of country-years and cases of breakdown—in many years, there are no failures at all. Still, 9 of the 12 observed breakdowns since 2006 (75 percent) fall in the model's top 20 hazard lists, and 8 (67 percent) are in the top 10. Moreover, in 2 of the 3 "breakdowns" that the model *failed* to predict (Latvia in 2013 and in 2016), V-DEM downrated the country in one year only to restore it to "liberal democracy" the next year, both times based on a temporary dip in "legal transparency."[24] One may at least wonder whether the downgrades might have been a little hasty.

The models in Table 3 also allow us to gauge how surprised we should be by the rate of democratic reversals in recent years. During a burst of democratization as intense and global as the Third Wave, some unlikely contenders get swept up in the momentum. Such crossovers will have lower income and—almost by definition—less consolidated democratic institutions than is conducive to stable democracy. For that reason alone, we should expect some backsliding.

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[22] Calculated from Morgan, Beger, and Glynn (2019, 33-36)—see Appendix Section IV. For comparability, I focused on just the first years of each 2-year prediction. They trained their models on more than 400 explanatory variables, taken from five data sources, including V-DEM itself.

[23] As an additional check, I tried using the model predictions based on years up to $t - 1$ to predict breakdowns not just in $t$ but in all subsequent years in the data. Again, the fit was good, with AUC-ROCs between .86 and .89 for the electoral democracies and AUC-PRs that were substantially higher than the observed frequencies of breakdowns.

[24] In 2016, Freedom House *upgraded* Latvia on "judicial framework and independence" (Freedom House 2017).

Median income among V-DEM "democracies" peaked in 1980 around $17,900 (at 2011 prices, using the Maddison data). It fell to under $10,000 in 1994 and had recovered to around $17,100 in 2019. Meanwhile, the number of democracies less than 10 years old surged from just six in 1977 to 39 in 1996, before falling back to 12 in 2021.

Given the lower income and lack of democratic experience of many democracies that appeared during the Third Wave, we should expect a certain amount of reversion. To estimate how much, I ran survival models as in Table 3, but using data only up to 1999. From these, I predicted the hazard rates for all democracies in subsequent years and summed these to get the predicted total number of breakdowns each year. Table 4 contains the results. In the first model, I include only the lag of logged GDP per capita as an explanatory variable. Based on just the lower income of the new cohort of democracies, we should expect to see 27 breakdowns—almost two thirds as many as actually occurred—between 2000 and 2019.[25] Adding V-DEM's lagged liberal democracy rating to capture the weaker institutions of the new cases, the hazards sum to almost exactly the actual number of breakdowns.

These estimates incorporate information on how income and the liberal democracy index actually changed after 2000. What if we use only information available already in 2000? In line 3, I show estimates formed with income and the liberal democracy index frozen throughout 2000-18 at their 2000 levels. Now the model actually *overpredicts* democratic breakdowns by about 40 percent. The continued growth of incomes and institutional development after 2000 seem to have reduced backsliding relative to what one should expect based on the new democracies' inauspicious initial characteristics as of 2000. To be clear, the point is not the

[25] Of course, income does not explain why a few relatively rich democracies such as Thailand or Turkey became undemocratic in this period. In such cases, past breakdowns and the newness and flaws in young democratic institutions may be key.

precise predictions, which depend on model specification. The point is that, given the changed composition of the pool of democracies, a rate of backsliding comparable to what occurred was already, in a sense, "baked in."

Table 4: Predicted and actual number of democratic failures, 2000-2019, V-DEM democracy

| *Explanatory variables included* | *Actual number* | *Predicted number* | *ROC-AUC* | *PR-AUC* | *Actual rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Just Ln GDP per capita *(t - 1)* | 43 | 27 | .75 | .07 | .02 |
| 2. Ln GDP per capita *(t - 1)*, V-DEM liberal democracy index *(t - 1)* | 43 | 45 | .88 | .13 | .02 |
| 3. Ln GDP per capita *(t - 1)*, V-DEM liberal democracy index *(t - 1) both fixed at 2000 level in subsequent years* | 43 | 61 | .82 | .10 | .02 |

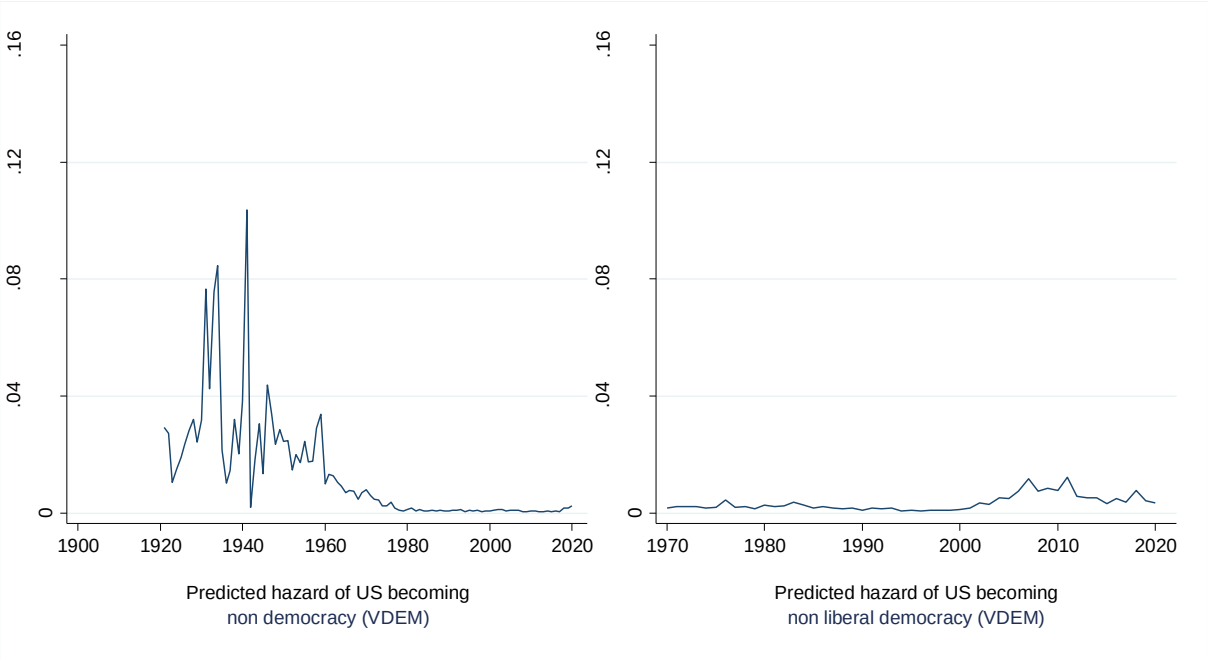
**Note**: Survival models estimated on data up to 1999, then used to form predictions for each year in 2000-19. "Predicted number" is the sum of the individual country-year hazard predictions—that is, the predicted total number of democratic failures over the period. ROC-AUC and PR-AUC calculated for 2000-19.

The analysis allows us to explore how high the risk is that democracy will break down in a country like the US. Using the models in Table 3, we can predict the hazard rate for the US in all years for which data exist. Figure 5 shows hazard rates for democratic failure in the US, estimated from models 2 and 6.

V-DEM first codes the US as a democracy in 1921, after women got the vote, and as a liberal democracy from 1969, after the civil rights movement. The much greater instability of young democracies, combined with the economic turmoil of the 1930s, drove the risk of breakdown to around 1 in 12 in that decade, and it hit 1 in 10 in 1941, as democracies perished around the globe. But then the hazard falls, reaching an all-time low of .0003 in 2015. It rose a little after that but was still just .002 in 2020. The estimated probability of the US falling from

liberal to electoral democracy hit its all-time low of .0005, in 1996. It rose slightly in the late 2000s, reaching 1 percent in 2011 as the global financial crisis depressed the US economy at a time when autocracies were beating democracies in the global growth race. As of 2020, it had fallen back to .003. Figure A6 in the Appendix shows the estimated hazards using the Polity, Freedom House, and Lexical Index democracy measures, as well as the hazard of the US starting an "autocratization episode." All agree on one point: the hazard of democratic failure in recent years has been extremely low. The US's long experience of democracy and high economic development appear to provide a strong protective effect.[26]

Figure 5: Estimated hazard of democratic breakdown in the US




[26] Using predictions from Table 3, model 4, including V-DEM's polarization measure, the predicted hazard for the US in 2020 rises from .002 to .006. Given that this is based on an estimate of US polarization in 2019 that is higher than that for Vietnam in 1975 as the Viet Cong rolled in or for Spain in 1935 as civil war loomed, we can probably take this as an upper bound.

These numbers should not be taken too literally. But as ballpark estimates, they are revealing. They suggest with which other cases it makes sense to compare the US. For instance, using the V-DEM democracy model, Germany in 1933 was 35 times more likely to become undemocratic than was the US in 2020. Chile in 1973 was eight times more likely.[27] Only one democracy has ever failed with a hazard lower than that of the US in 2020—Suriname, which dipped into authoritarianism for one year in 1991, before snapping back to democracy. (The cause of the breakdown in Suriname was a military coup, which seems unlikely in the US today.) The US is sometimes compared to Hungary, which V-DEM downgraded to "electoral democracy" in 2010. Hungary's hazard that year was 29 times that of the US in 2020. No liberal democracy has been downgraded to electoral democracy with a hazard as low as that of the US in 2020. The closest comparator is Chile in 2019; it had returned to liberal democracy by 2021.

Another way to put this is to estimate how severe an economic crisis would have to be to raise the odds of democratic breakdown for the US to the level of, say, Chile in 1973. The answer is that it would take a collapse of GDP per capita in a single year of about 22 percent. That is far greater than the US has ever experienced. Even in the Great Depression, the largest annual fall in GDP per capita was about 10 percent.[28] And even an economic disaster of this magnitude would probably *not* produce dictatorship in the US: the estimated probability of breakdown in Chile in 1973 was only .02.[29] Sustained contractions on this scale for many years would be required to make dictatorship more likely than not. Again, the point is not to claim

[27] Even in a model including V-DEM's polarization measure (Table 3, model 4), Germany in 1933 was 33 times more likely than the US in 2020, and Chile in 1973 was 9 times more likely.

[28] See the Maddison (2020) database.

[29] The model does not capture the presence of a radical, interventionist military. If it did, it would probably predict even lower breakdown odds for the US, given the tradition of military non-intervention in politics.

exaggerated precision for these numbers but just to illustrate how different conditions are in the US today from those that might plausibly trigger a democratic breakdown.

## 4 Conclusion

Available measures suggest the proportion of democratic countries in the world today is close to an all-time high. Those indicators that show backsliding indicate only a return to levels of the 1990s, a time when liberal democracy was viewed as triumphant. The rate of advance has certainly slowed and average quality has declined somewhat. But this follows the stunning surge of democracy's Third Wave. The rate of recent failures is well explained by the decrease this influx brought about in the level of economic development and quality of liberal institutions in the pool of democracies. While previous democratization waves were followed within 10-15 years by a significant reversion, that has not occurred this time, at least so far.

Previous literature and the survival models presented here confirm that economic development, economic growth, and long democratic experience are associated with much lower odds of democratic breakdown. Indeed, based on V-DEM's classifications, no democracy has ever failed at a per capita income above about $26,000 (in 2011 US dollars) or after surviving for more than 43 years.[30] Based on such estimated relationships, the hazard of a breakdown in the US today appears extremely low. While some data suggest a weakening of commitment to democracy among parts of the US public—worrying in itself—there is little evidence that falling support for democracy is what causes deterioration or breakdowns in liberal democracies. And, in any case, support for democracy, as measured by opinion polls, has recently been rising. As

[30] The highest income democratic breakdown, according to V-DEM, is Hungary 2018 ($25,623). The breakdown after the longest consecutive period of democracy was India in 2019.

for elite norms, an erosion of these has coincided with democratic failure in certain Latin American countries where a radicalized military that favored dictatorship staged a coup. But in countries without a radical, anti-democratic military, the claim that norm erosion threatens democracy appears to rest almost entirely on introspection or anecdotes.

If the rate of democratic failure is not particularly high, why do many observers have a different impression? A number of factors probably contribute. In part, writers highlight the most negative indicators (V-DEM liberal democracy, Freedom House) rather than others that tell a less alarming story (Polity, V-DEM electoral democracy). At the same time, backsliding among democracies is often conflated with increased repression in authoritarian regimes.[31] Each year, Freedom House reports where freedom decreased, combining democracies with autocracies. Of course, declining freedom anywhere is undesirable. But Xi Jinping's harsher methods do not indicate a crisis of democracy—China has never been one. Today's alarm also feeds off the high expectations the Third Wave aroused. Amid the optimism of the 1990s, many assumed that liberal democracy had decisively defeated other models. From that perspective, even just a leveling off feels disappointing.

Some commentators realize decline has been limited so far but aim to raise awareness of the negative trend. The slow start will be little consolation if the deterioration speeds up. Meanwhile, certain well-known cases of backsliding (e.g., Hungary since 2010, Brazil since 2013) are more salient than recent cases of improvement (e.g., South Korea since 2014, Armenia since 2016). That makes sense. Ignoring quickly reversed changes, 17 V-DEM autocracies became democracies between 2000 and 2021, while 15 democracies became autocracies. Yet,

[31] For instance, Diamond (2015, 151): "An important part of the story of global democratic recession has been the deepening of authoritarianism." While related, the deterioration of democracies and the consolidation of authoritarian regimes are not the same thing.

while the upward movers were mostly small, the downward movers included countries with vast populations such as India and Bangladesh. More than two billion people live in the new autocracies, compared to fewer than 200 million in the new democracies. In terms of human welfare, a move to authoritarianism in India harms far more people than similar change in most other countries. At the same time, backsliding has hit unexpectedly close to home for many of the world's leading democracy watchers. Illiberal leaders have appeared within the EU and even the US. And backsliding has occurred even in some countries—such as Hungary and Poland—where democracy was considered institutionalized.

In short, even if democratic deterioration is not as advanced as sometimes feared, that does not mean there is no reason for concern. Negative trends could continue, or even accelerate. Unrecognized local problems may lurk behind the aggregate statistics. For some long-established democracies, particular challenges loom. Few have been tested by the kind of demographic change forecast for the US in coming decades as the numerically dominant race loses majority status. In 2021, V-DEM still classified the US as a liberal democracy. Were American democracy to fail, that would have a devastating global impact.

Still, addressing such dangers requires an accurate, evidence-based assessment of past experience and the current state of play. The historical record suggests that democracies like the US have inner resources that distinguish them from younger and poorer ones. To direct attention to the real weak spots in global democracy, we need to better identify and understand such sources of resilience.

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# Appendix (for online publication)

## I. Tables

Table A1. Normative preferences and democratic breakdown in Latin America

| | (1)<br>Replicating Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, model 4.4.5 | (2)<br>Excluding Argentina and Uruguay |
|---|---|---|
| Normative preferences | -2.70* | 0.090 |
| | (1.10) | (0.94) |
| Radicalism (ruler) | 1.03 | 0.86 |
| | (0.99) | (1.09) |
| Radicalism (opposition) | -0.69 | 0.57 |
| | (0.69) | (0.76) |
| Region, *t – 1* | -4.38* | -1.65 |
| | (1.93) | (2.01) |
| US policy, *t* | -0.83 | -1.57** |
| | (0.64) | (0.56) |
| Polity outside the region, *t – 1* | -0.43 | -0.60 |
| | (0.25) | (0.32) |
| Per capita GDP, ln, *t – 1* | 0.31 | -2.09* |
| | (0.53) | (1.00) |
| Growth, 10 years | 6.96 | 25.7 |
| | (12.9) | (17.2) |
| Oil and mineral exports | -0.98 | 0.28 |
| | (0.71) | (0.66) |
| Industrial labor, *t - 1* | -0.00051 | -0.00051 |
| | (0.048) | (0.044) |
| Age of the regime | 0.21 | 0.24 |
| | (0.16) | (0.15) |
| Age of the regime squared | -0.0081 | -0.0079 |
| | (0.0087) | (0.0080) |
| Age of the regime cubed | 0.00010 | 0.00010 |
| | (0.00013) | (0.00012) |
| Presidential powers | -0.25** | -0.32** |
| | (0.049) | (0.085) |
| Multipartism, *t* | 0.45 | 0.58 |
| | (0.64) | (0.80) |
| Semi-democracy, *t – 1* | 2.31** | 1.71* |
| | (0.62) | (0.73) |
| *N* | 644 | 558 |
| Log likelihood | -70.3 | -56.8 |

**Note**: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.
**Source**: Data from Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2013), http://kellogg.nd.edu/democracies-and-dictatorships-latin-america-emergence-survival-and-fall.

Table A2. Data Sources

| *Variable* | *Definition* | *Source* |
|---|---|---|
| GDP per capita | GDP per capita (2011 US dollars). Fariss et al. estimates based on Maddison Project Database, version 2020 (using gdppc). | Fariss, C. J., Anders, T., Markowitz, J. N., & Barnum, M. 2022. "New Estimates of Over 500 Years of Historic GDP and Population Data." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *66*(3), 553–91.<br><br>Bolt, Jutta, Robert Inklaar, Herman de Jong and Jan Luiten van Zanden (2018), "Rebasing 'Maddison': new income comparisons and the shape of long-run economic development", Maddison Project Working paper 10. |
| Growth rate | Annual growth rate of GDP per capita (using rgdpnapc) | " " " |
| Oil and gas revenue | Value of oil and gas sales | Ross, Michael L, 2013, "Oil and Gas Data, 1932-2011" https://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/20369, Harvard Dataverse, V2, UNF:5:dc22RlDasveOTAJvwIjBTA== updated to 2014. |
| Past democratic breakdowns | Using the same democracy definition as the dependent variable. | Various |
| Average democracy level of neighbors | Average democracy score of neighbors (sharing borders or divided by up to 24 miles of water). | Polity V, Freedom House, V-DEM 12, LIED. Correlates of War Project. *Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2016*. Version 3.2. |
| Presidential system | Dummy for presidential system. | Przeworski, Adam, et al. 2013. *Political Institutions and Political Events Database.* Updated using Database on Political Institutions (Cesi, Cruz, Philip Keefer, and Carlos Scartascini. 2021. *Database of Political Institutions 2020*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank Research Department). |
| Gini pre-tax and post-tax income | Average of 100 imputed values, where data unavailable. | SWIID V6.2. (Solt 2016). |
| State capacity | Estimate of state capacity | Hanson and Sigman (2013). |
| Confidence intervals for V-DEM electoral and liberal democracy variables | Graphed the index for "World." Downloaded data. | V-DEM Website, Graphical Analysis, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/ |
| Change in frequency of democratic breakdowns | Average frequency of breakdowns of democracy previous year - average frequency of breakdowns two years ago | V-DEM 12, Polity V, Freedom House, LIED. |
| Political polarization | *v2cacamps* | V-DEM 12. |

Table A3: Correlates of democratic breakdowns—Polity, Freedom House, Lexical Index

| | *Polity* | | | *Freedom House* | | | *Lexical Index* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| *Economic development* | | | | | | | | | |
| Ln GDP per Capita *(t – 1)* | 0.43*** (0.068) | 0.80 (0.27) | 0.51*** (0.084) | 0.41*** (0.062) | 0.58 (0.20) | 0.35*** (0.056) | 0.42*** (0.065) | 0.66 (0.20) | 0.43*** (0.064) |
| *State characteristics* | | | | | | | | | |
| Democracy index *(t – 1)* | 0.85*** (0.032) | 0.84*** (0.046) | 0.89*** (0.034) | 0.71** (0.12) | 0.84 (0.15) | 0.77* (0.11) | | | |
| Ln total previous years democratic *(t – 1)* | 0.31** (0.18) | 0.33 (0.35) | 0.38* (0.21) | 0.88 (0.097) | 0.63*** (0.11) | 0.80 (0.15) | 0.23*** (0.12) | 0.23** (0.16) | 0.26*** (0.12) |
| Ln past democratic breakdowns *(t – 1)* | 5.41*** (3.05) | 3.98 (3.43) | 3.97** (2.15) | 1.18 (0.41) | 1.00 (0.42) | 0.89 (0.34) | 7.76*** (3.49) | 7.83*** (4.53) | 7.64*** (3.49) |
| Presidential System *(t – 1)* | 0.93 (0.27) | 1.27 (0.56) | 1.04 (0.29) | 1.37 (0.39) | 0.69 (0.20) | 1.11 (0.34) | 1.20 (0.32) | 0.79 (0.32) | 1.07 (0.29) |
| *Shocks* | | | | | | | | | |
| Growth rate | 0.90*** (0.031) | 0.92* (0.048) | 0.91*** (0.034) | 0.90*** (0.028) | 0.87*** (0.044) | 0.91*** (0.023) | 0.87*** (0.016) | 0.87*** (0.039) | 0.89*** (0.017) |
| *International factors* | | | | | | | | | |
| Post-Cold War (after 1989) *(t – 1)* | 0.64 (0.18) | 0.75 (0.41) | 0.74 (0.20) | 0.80 (0.23) | 1.99 (0.99) | 0.99 (0.29) | 0.58** (0.15) | 0.62 (0.33) | 0.60* (0.16) |
| Average democratic level of neighbors *(t – 1)* | 0.93** (0.026) | 0.93 (0.040) | 0.92*** (0.023) | 1.14 (0.095) | 1.05 (0.13) | 1.08 (0.085) | 0.37*** (0.12) | 0.27** (0.15) | 0.36*** (0.13) |
| Change in frequency of democratic breakdown *(t – 1)* | 2.52 (5.30) | 0.00050 (0.0032) | 1.19 (2.57) | 745.3 (7462.0) | 0.59 (7.36) | 395.7 (3850.2) | 569.4 (6826.0) | 6.6e+08 (1.1e+09) | 1845.3 (21879.0) |
| Difference in average growth rate, 10 years, dems - non-dems *(t – 1)* | 0.78 (0.12) | 1.01 (0.21) | 0.81 (0.12) | 1.10 (0.11) | 1.07 (0.15) | 1.13 (0.12) | 0.76** (0.088) | 0.83 (0.12) | 0.83 (0.10) |
| *Additional* | | | | | | | | | |
| Gini coefficient (pre-tax income) *(t – 1)* | | 0.0074* (0.019) | | | 0.11 (0.25) | | | 0.049 (0.14) | |
| State capacity *(t – 1)* | | 0.36** (0.14) | | | 0.34*** (0.14) | | | 0.51* (0.20) | |
| Ln oil and gas income per capita *(t – 1)* | | 1.09 (0.085) | | | 1.21*** (0.087) | | | 0.98 (0.084) | |
| Political polarization *(t – 1)* | | | 3.03*** (0.77) | | | 1.87*** (0.22) | | | 1.78*** (0.18) |
| N | 4796 | 2612 | 4738 | 2840 | 1889 | 2608 | 5252 | 2799 | 4980 |
| Log likelihood | -161.1 | -73.4 | -147.2 | -139.1 | -80.2 | -118.1 | -187.3 | -79.3 | -166.7 |
| Chi squared | 102.8 | 69.4 | 124.7 | 118.3 | 130.7 | 135.0 | 155.6 | 85.7 | 212.0 |
| p | 1.5e-17 | 1.1e-09 | 2.0e-21 | 1.1e-20 | 1.5e-21 | 1.7e-23 | 6.1e-29 | 3.4e-13 | 5.2e-40 |

**Sources**: see Table A2.

**Notes**: Survival model with Weibull distribution; exponentiated coefficients; robust standard errors, clustered by democratic episode, in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Ln total years democratic: in models 4-6, using the V-DEM measure of democracy since many countries had already been democratic for many years when the FH data begin in 1972. Polity's own measure of polarization (parcomp = 3: participation is "factionalized") used in model 3, V-DEM's *v2cacamps* used in models 6 and 9.

Table A4: Correlates of onset of "autocratization episodes"

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Economic development* | | | | |
| Ln GDP per Capita *(t – 1)* | 0.72* (0.13) | 0.71** (0.12) | 0.84 (0.22) | 0.61*** (0.12) |
| *State characteristics* | | | | |
| Liberal democracy index *(t – 1)* | 0.036** (0.058) | 0.051* (0.080) | 0.015** (0.032) | 0.20 (0.34) |
| Civil liberties index *(t – 1)* | 0.0098*** (0.013) | 0.0075*** (0.010) | 0.014* (0.032) | 0.028** (0.039) |
| Ln total previous years democratic *(t – 1)* | 0.26** (0.14) | 0.28** (0.15) | 0.48* (0.19) | 0.36** (0.18) |
| Ln past autocratization episodes *(t – 1)* | 6.71*** (3.81) | 5.70*** (3.10) | 4.36** (2.63) | 3.83** (2.28) |
| Presidential System *(t – 1)* | 0.96 (0.28) | | | |
| *Shocks* | | | | |
| Growth rate *(t – 1)* | 0.88*** (0.018) | 0.88*** (0.017) | 0.89*** (0.020) | 0.87*** (0.017) |
| *International factors* | | | | |
| Post-Cold War (after 1989) *(t – 1)* | 0.77 (0.22) | | | |
| Average democratic level of neighbors *(t – 1)* | 0.77 (0.27) | | | |
| Share of democracies becoming less democratic *(t – 1)* | 0.035 (0.53) | | | |
| Difference in average growth rate, 10 years, dems - non-dems *(t – 1)* | 0.61*** (0.095) | 0.65*** (0.086) | 0.64*** (0.11) | 0.67*** (0.093) |
| *Additional* | | | | |
| Gini coefficient (pre-tax income) *(t – 1)* | | | 0.13 (0.28) | |
| State capacity *(t – 1)* | | | 0.98 (0.33) | |
| Ln oil and gas income per capita *(t – 1)* | | | 1.02 (0.063) | |
| Political polarization *(t – 1)* | | | | 1.74*** (0.22) |
| N | 4367 | 4413 | 2324 | 4358 |
| Log likelihood | -153.7 | -155.5 | -92.1 | -145.3 |
| Chi squared | 166.8 | 171.3 | 97.4 | 187.1 |
| p | 5.4e-30 | 1.4e-33 | 1.8e-16 | 3.3e-36 |

**Sources**: see Table A2.

**Notes**: Survival model with Weibull distribution; exponentiated coefficients; robust standard errors, clustered by democratic episode, in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Autocratization episodes as defined in Lührmann and Lindberg (2019).

Table A5: Diagnostics for electoral democracy breakdowns (Table 3, model 2); all data through year *t – 1* used in estimates

| *t* | AUC-ROC: *t* | AUC-PR: *t* | Failure rate: *t* | Observed breakdowns | Observed breakdowns in top 20 hazards | Observed breakdowns in top 10 | AUC-ROC: *all* ≥ *t* | AUC-PR: *all* ≥ *t* | Failure rate: *all* ≥ *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2006[a] | .81 | .15 | .04 | 3 | 2 | 0 | .87 | .13 | .02 |
| 2007[b] | .98 | .48 | .02 | 2 | 2 | 2 | .89 | .15 | .02 |
| 2008 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .88 | .13 | .02 |
| 2009 | .98 | .79 | .03 | 3 | 3 | 3 | .88 | .14 | .02 |
| 2010 | .93 | .14 | .01 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .87 | .12 | .02 |
| 2011 | .98 | .29 | .01 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .87 | .12 | .02 |
| 2012 | .79 | .11 | .02 | 2 | 1 | 1 | .86 | .12 | .03 |
| 2013 | .86 | .35 | .05 | 5 | 4 | 3 | .87 | .12 | .03 |
| 2014 | .96 | .37 | .02 | 2 | 2 | 2 | .88 | .11 | .02 |
| 2015 | .91 | .10 | .01 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .87 | .10 | .02 |
| 2016 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .86 | .11 | .03 |
| 2017 | .79 | .05 | .01 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .86 | .13 | .03 |
| 2018 | .85 | .16 | .03 | 3 | 2 | 1 | .86 | .17 | .04 |
| 2019 | .90 | .38 | .06 | 6 | 5 | 2 | .87 | .22 | .04 |
| Total | | | | 30 | 24 | 17 | | | |
| *Rate* | | | | | *80%* | *57%* | | | |

Notes: AUCs cannot be calculated for years with no breakdowns. PR curves interpolated where necessary.
[a] In 2005-6, VDEM also codes Montenegro as failing, but since it was not yet independent it is not included in the model. [b] In 2007, State of Palestine also coded as failing, but data not available to include it in model.

Table A6: Diagnostics for liberal democracy (Table 3, model 6); all data through year *t – 1* used in estimates

| *t* | AUC-ROC: *t* | AUC-PR: *t* | Failure rate: *t* | Observed breakdowns | Observed breakdowns in top 20 hazards | Observed breakdowns in top 10 hazards | AUC-ROC: *all* ≥ *t* | AUC-PR: *all* ≥ *t* | Failure rate: *all* ≥ *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2006 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .61 | .14 | .02 |
| 2007 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .61 | .14 | .03 |
| 2008 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .60 | .14 | .03 |
| 2009 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .60 | .15 | .03 |
| 2010 | .90 | .19 | .02 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .60 | .15 | .03 |
| 2011 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .66 | .14 | .03 |
| 2012 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .67 | .19 | .04 |
| 2013 | .38 | .20 | .07 | 3 | 1 | 1 | .68 | .24 | .04 |
| 2014 | -- | -- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .79 | .23 | .04 |
| 2015 | 1.00 | .99 | .05 | 2 | 2 | 2 | .82 | .35 | .04 |
| 2016 | .74 | .23 | .08 | 3 | 2 | 2 | .81 | .17 | .04 |
| 2017 | .86 | .14 | .03 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .82 | .15 | .03 |
| 2018 | .95 | .33 | .03 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .82 | .18 | .04 |
| 2019 | .64 | .07 | .03 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .79 | .17 | .04 |
| Total | | | | 12 | 9 | 8 | | | |
| *Rate* | | | | | *75%* | *67%* | | | |

Notes: AUCs cannot be calculated for years with no breakdowns. PR curves interpolated where necessary.

# II. Figures

Figure A1: Average democracy level worldwide, FH and Polity

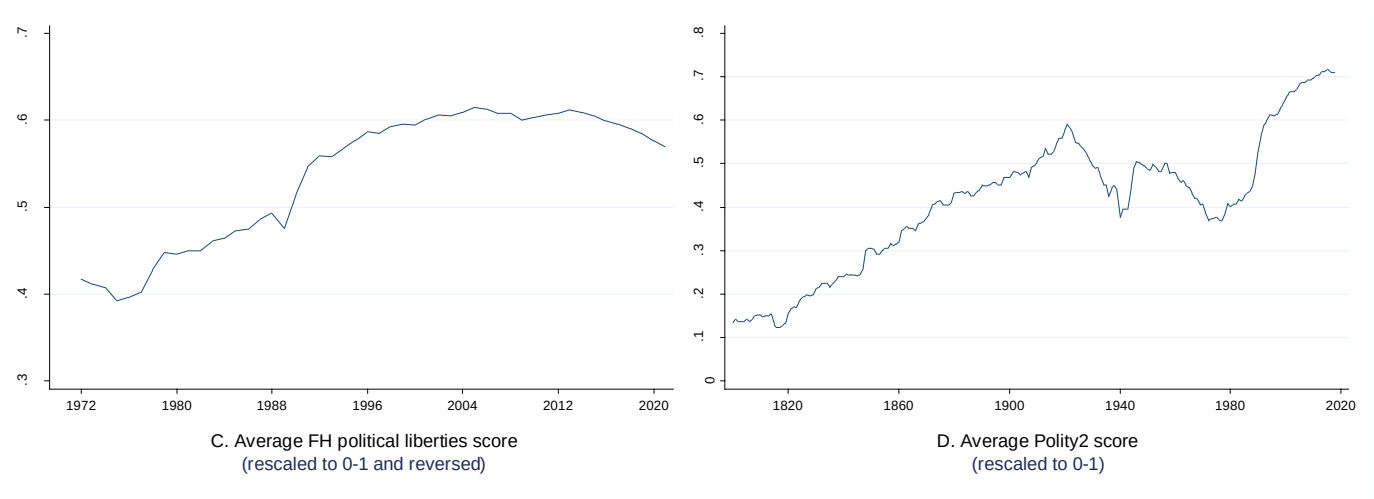



Figure A2: Rates of breakdown of democracies, FH and Polity

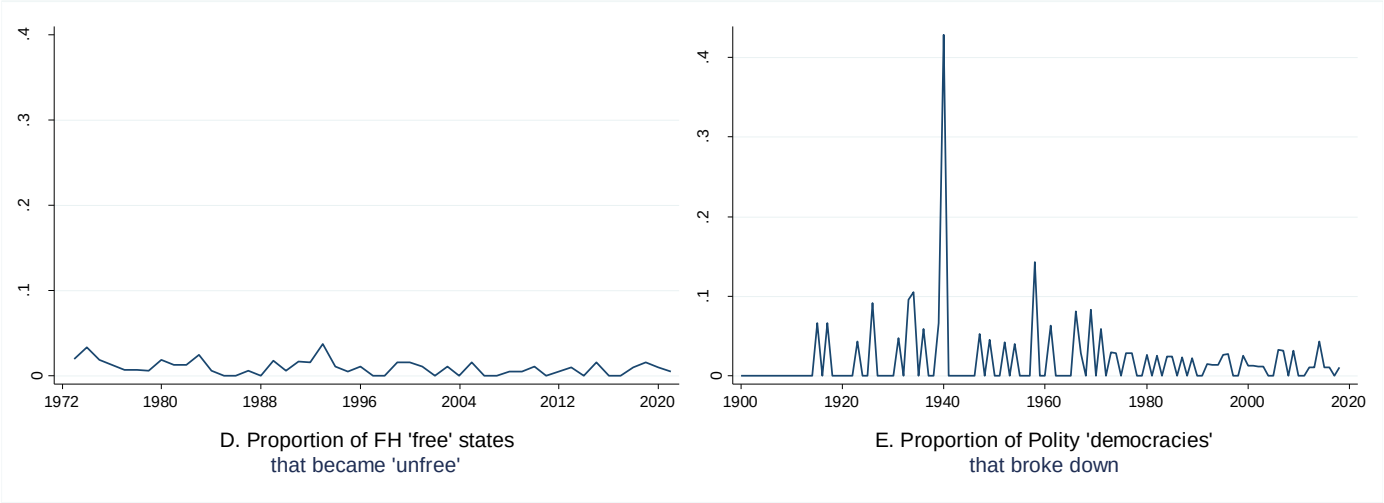
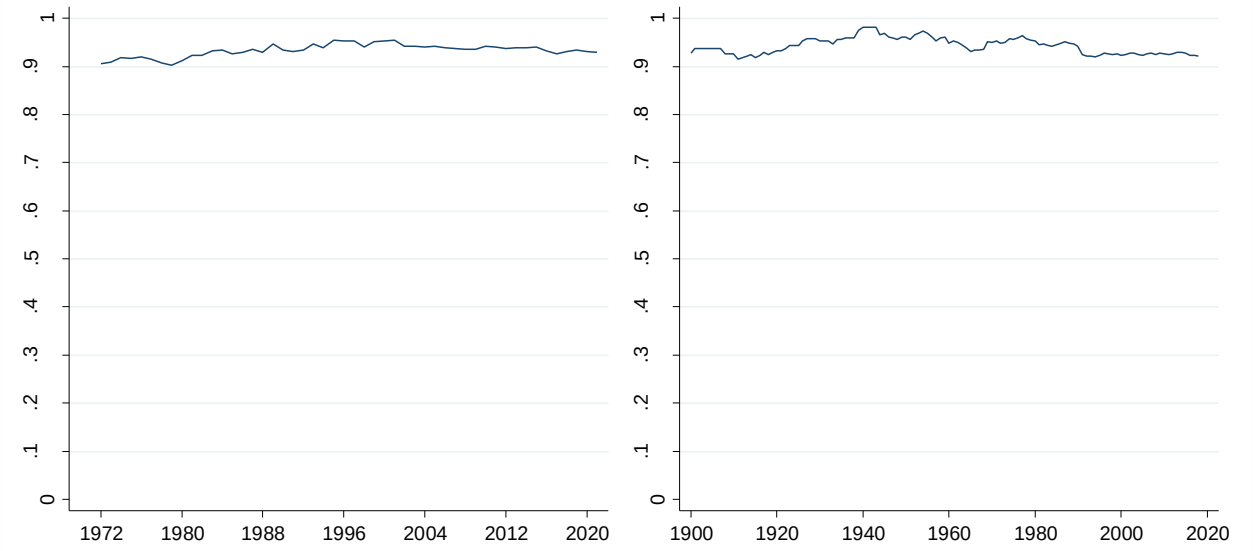


Figure A3: Average quality among democracies, FH and Polity




A. Average FH political liberties score among free countries (rescaled 0-1 and reversed)

B. Average Polity2 score among democracies (rescaled to 0-1)

Figure A4: Support for democracy and level of liberal democracy in liberal democracies with greatest backsliding

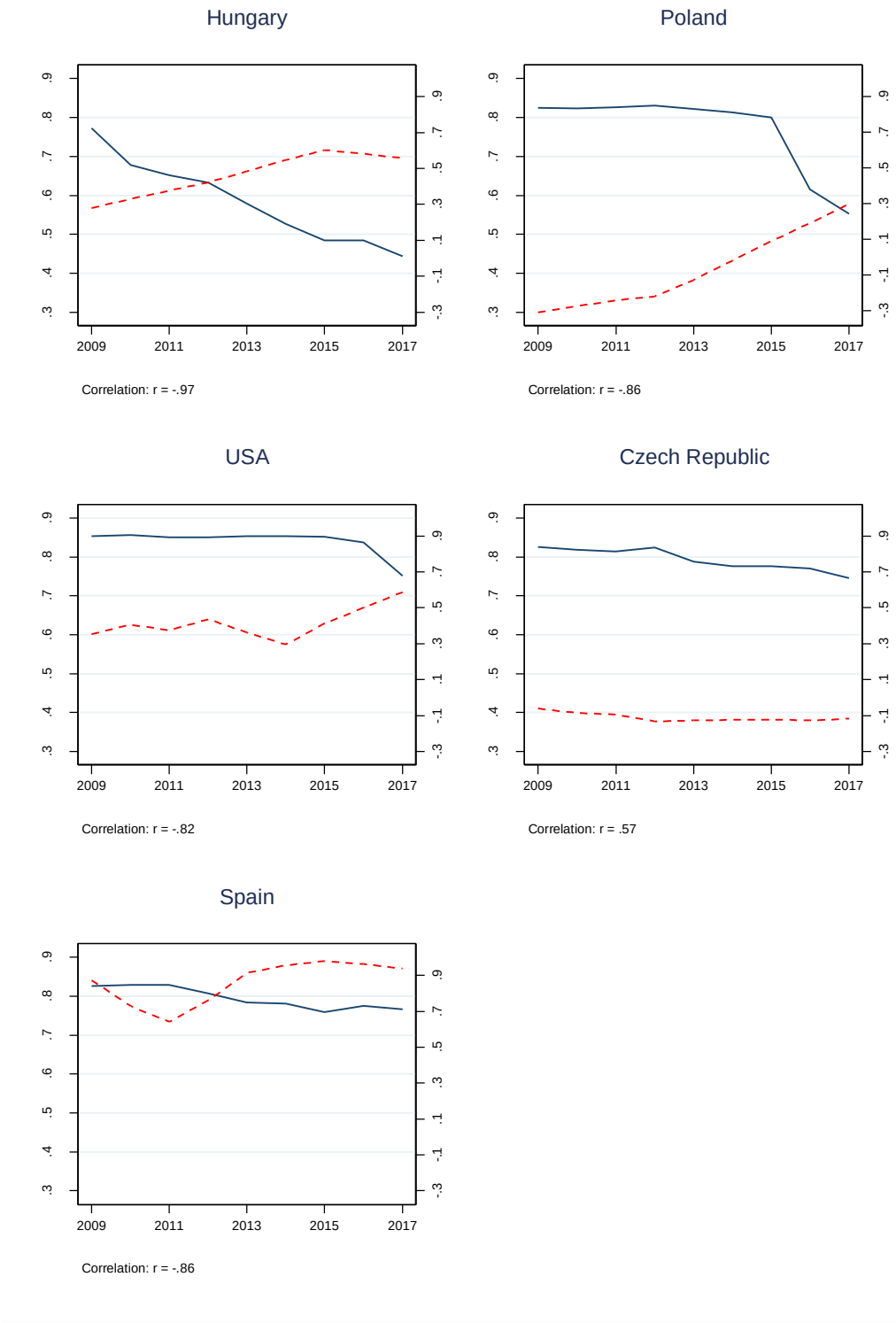


Figure A5: Support for democracy and level of liberal democracy in selected electoral democracies

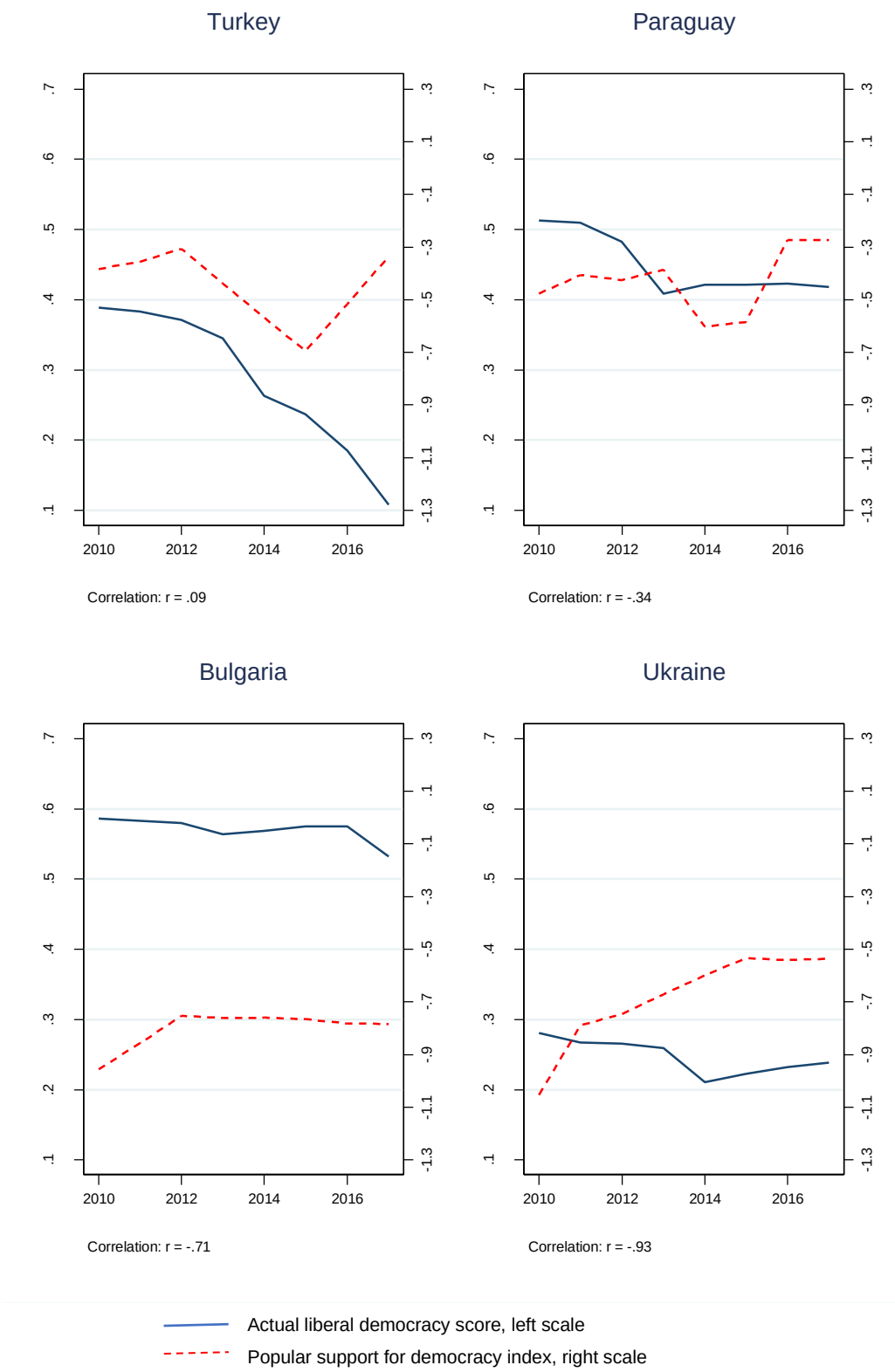
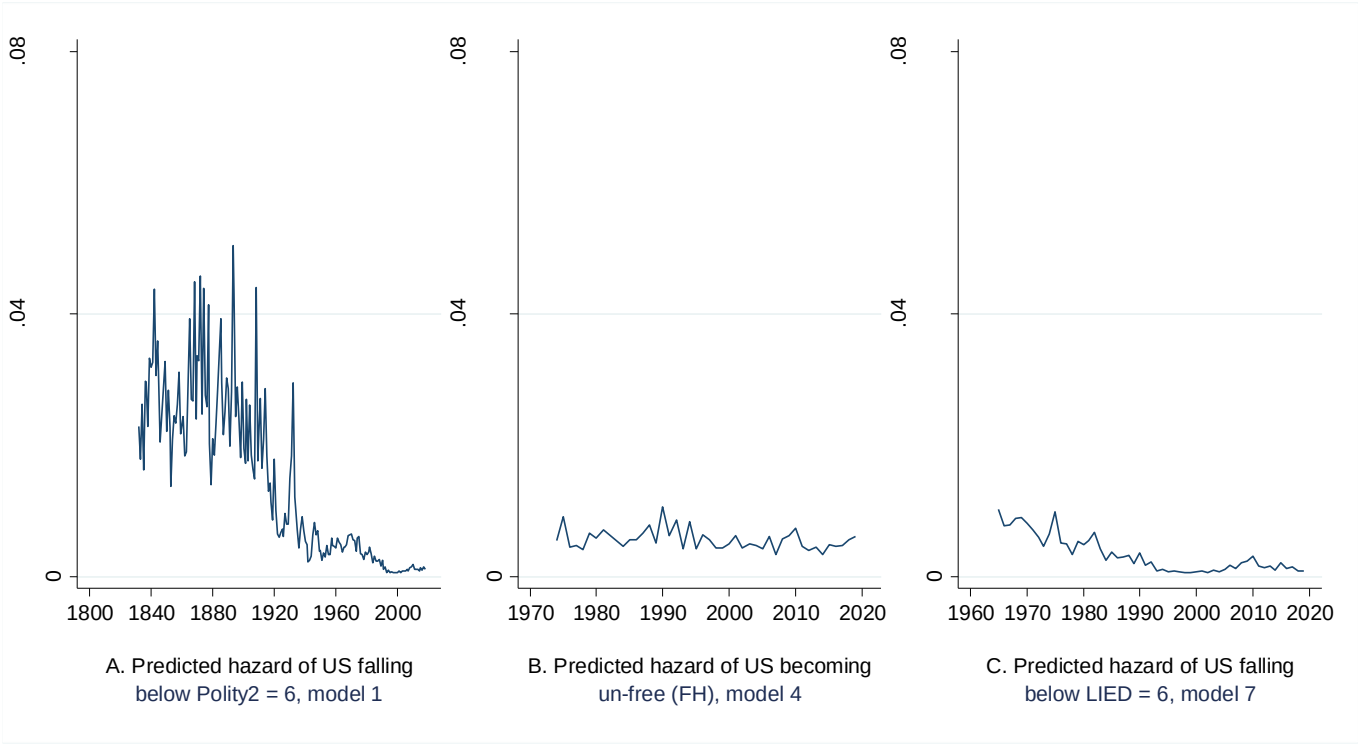


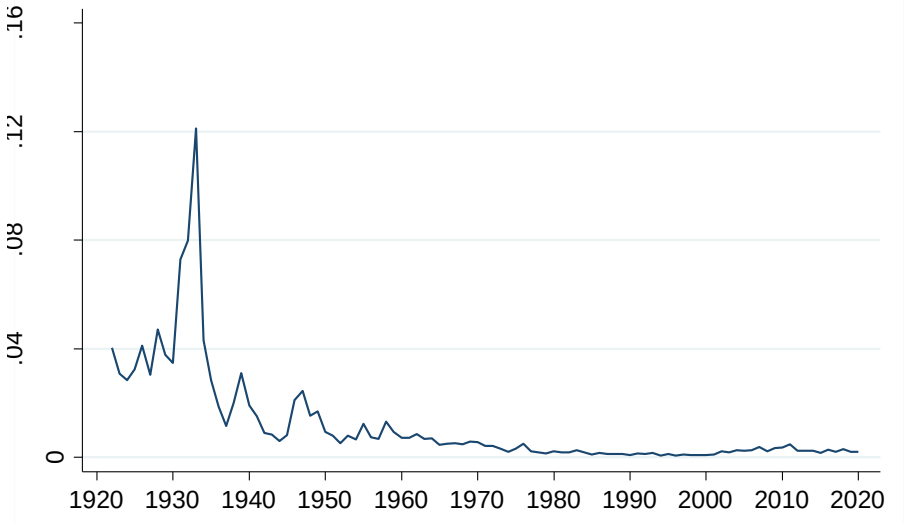
Figure A6: Estimated hazard for the US




A. Predicted hazard of US falling below Polity2 = 6, model 1

B. Predicted hazard of US becoming un-free (FH), model 4

C. Predicted hazard of US falling below LIED = 6, model 7




D. Predicted hazard of US beginning an autocratization episode (Table A4, model 2)

## III. Widely used democracy indexes and data

The paper focuses on the data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-DEM), which evaluates countries on a range of democratic subcomponents, in some cases going back to 1789. Its composite variable *v2x_regime* distinguishes between "electoral democracies," "liberal democracies," "electoral autocracies," and "closed autocracies." (https://www.v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/ ).

But the paper also refers to data from Polity, Freedom House, and the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy database. The goal is to demonstrate robustness and also to address previous work that has used these data sources. For instance, Diamond (2021) uses Freedom House ratings, while the Political Instability Task Force team has in the past used Polity data (Goldstone et al. 2010, Ulfelder 2009).

1. **Polity.** The Polity project rates countries annually on their "authority characteristics" on the Polity2 scale, which ranges from -10 ("hereditary monarchy") to +10 ("consolidated democracy"). Those scoring 6 or higher are classified as democracies. This score combines ratings on a number of components, which include political competition and constraints on the executive. (https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html).

2. **Freedom House (FH).** Since 1972 the NGO Freedom House (FH) has assessed "political rights" and "civil liberties" in countries around the world on a scale from 1 ("most free") to 7 ("least free"). Based on these, it rates countries "free," "partly free," or "not free." Although not a measure of democracy per se, "free" governments have often been equated to democracies. It makes sense to place the "partly free" category on the non-democratic side since two-thirds of the "partly free" country years correspond to Polity non-democracies. (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world).

3. **The Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy database (LIED).** This records when each country first met certain electoral thresholds—for instance, holding competitive elections in which virtually all adults were allowed to vote (Skaaning et al. 2015). (https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/29106),

## Issues with widely used democracy data

**Freedom House:** Bush (2017, p.722) shows that Freedom House consistently rates US allies higher than does Polity.

Bush, Sarah Sunn. "The politics of rating freedom: Ideological affinity, private authority, and the Freedom in the World ratings." *Perspectives on Politics* 15.3 (2017): 711-731.

**Polity:** Under President Trump, the team lowered the US Polity2 score dramatically, in a way that was not convincingly justified and that seemed to be a comment on the president's illiberal speech more than an evaluation of the system per se. The low scores given the US in these years were inconsistent with the previous scoring of the US and with crossnational comparisons.

For 2016, the team lowered the US's Polity2 score from 10 to 8. According to the Polity notes: "Political discourse in the United States had become increasing partisan during the administration of President Barack Obama. During the campaign for the November 2016 presidential elections, Donald Trump used combative rhetoric to excite 'populist' support and seize the Republican Party nomination. His surprise victory in Electoral College votes polarized political competition into 'anti-establishment' and 'anti-Trump' factions." It is not clear what in this description represents an erosion of democracy: partisan discourse, combative rhetoric, and surprise victories that divide the winner's supporters and

opponents are everyday occurrences in democracies (and were common in the US before 2016). More specifically, Polity downgraded the US "political participation" score from "competitive" to "factional." A "factional" polity is defined as one in which "parochial or ethnic-based political factions… regularly compete for political influence in order to promote particularist agendas and favor group members to the detriment of common, secular, or cross-cutting agendas." The "parochial or ethnic-based political factions" presumably refer to the Democratic and Republican parties. If so, it is hard to understand what change in the ethnic or parochial bases of the parties in 2016 justifies the downgrade. Exit polls suggest a slightly *weaker* correlation between race and the presidential vote in 2016 than in 2012. African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans voted at higher rates for Obama in 2012 than for Clinton in 2016, and a higher proportion of white voters chose Romney than chose Trump (59 to 57 percent). In terms of party identification, 92 percent of Democrats voted for Obama in 2012 and 93 percent of Republicans for Romney; the corresponding figures for Clinton and Trump in 2016 were 89 and 88 percent (see https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/polls/us-elections/how-groups-voted/groups-voted-2016/ and https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/polls/us-elections/how-groups-voted/how-groups-voted-2012/). Thus, coding the US as "factionalized" in 2016 but "competitive" in 2012 appears odd. It is also hard to reconcile this with the coding of the US as Polity2 = 10 throughout the Jim Crow era, definitely a time of "parochial or ethnic-based political factions" in the South.

The Polity codings of subsequent years are even stranger. The US score was reduced from 8 to 7 in 2019 and then to 5 in 2020, rendering it no longer a "democracy." This put the US in 2020 on a level with Suriname, Ecuador, Mali, and Niger in 2018. The team judged constraints on the executive in the US, at 4, to be weaker than those under Zimbabwe's dictator Robert Mugabe or Algeria's military government. They were on a par with those in Russia under Putin or in Afghanistan in 2018. The reasons given for this were "the executive's systematic purge of "disloyalists" from the administration, forceful response to protest, vilification of the main opposition parties; and undermining public trust in the electoral process" (http://www.systemicpeace.org/index.html).

With regard to the purge of "disloyalists," it is worth noting that Polity did not lower the US executive constraints rating from its perfect score at all during the McCarthy "Red Scare" period from 1947 to 1956, during which "5 million federal workers were screened for communist ties" under "vague and ever-changing" loyalty standards, with about 25,000 undergoing FBI investigation, about 2,700 dismissed and 12,000 resigning (https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/03/history-trump-attacks-civil-service-federal-workers-mccarthy-214951/). Nothing under Trump came close to this. Polity also continued to give the US a perfect 7/7 for executive constraints during the presidency of James Buchanan at the height of the 19th Century "spoils system," during which office-holders loyal to Buchanan's rival were "hunted down like wild beasts" and "virtually every federal worker" subject to presidential appointment was replaced (Mitnick 2021, Tabachnik 1971).

The forceful policing of protests under Trump also bears little comparison to the brutality of Southern police during the Civil Rights era and before or to the killings of peaceful union organizers during late 19th Century strikes; during both periods, Polity gives the US a perfect score on executive constraints. Verbal attacks on opposition parties are hardly something new to US politics. As for "undermining public trust in the electoral process," in the 1888 election the Republicans overtly bribed voters to vote for their candidate—but Polity continued to give the US a perfect score of 7 on executive constraints. (https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/rigged-vote-four-us-presidential-elections-contested-results-180961033/). In other countries, major candidates have refused to accept official election results without attracting Polity's attention. In Mexico in 2006, Andrés Manuel López Obrador—now the president—claimed fraud and occupied the center of Mexico City for weeks with demonstrations. In 1988, the ruling PRI party committed a massive electoral fraud—not just claiming the election was stolen but probably actually stealing it. Polity *increased* the country's rating for executive constraints that year, from 3 to 4.

Another interpretation of the aftermath of the 2020 election would be that institutional checks were extremely effective at constraining an unprincipled incumbent, whose efforts to subvert the election met a wall of resistance from state-level officials and were rejected dozens of times by the courts. Despite

a rampaging mob invading the Capitol, Congress refused to delay the certification of the election results for more than a few hours. Indeed, even in the highly conservative Supreme Court, Trump lost more frequently than any president since before FDR (https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/07/20/trump-has-worst-record-supreme-court-any-modern-president/ ).

# IV. Morgan, Beger, and Glynn (2019)

Morgan, Beger, and Glynn (2019, 33-6): ARTS in top 20 hazard lists for "ensemble model"

| *Year* | *Observed onsets* | *Of which, countries in top 20 hazard list* |
|---|---|---|
| 2011 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 8 | 6 (Ukraine, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kosovo, Turkmenistan, Macedonia) |
| 2013 | 9 | 7 (Guinea-Bissau, Pakistan, Maldives, South Africa, Syria, Thailand, Egypt) |
| 2014 | 3 | 3 (Ivory Coast, Thailand, Libya) |
| 2015 | 7 | 4 (Serbia, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Benin) |
| 2016 | 8 | 7 (Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania, Yemen, Montenegro, Vietnam, Fiji, Latvia) |
| 2017 | 7 | 6 (Lesotho, Kenya, Albania, Togo, Mauritius, Namibia) |
| *Total* | *42* | *33* |
| *Rate* | | *79%* |