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Va-PoReg Team

Principal investigator: Steffen Kailitz

Members of the research team (at various points in time): Victor Samuel Adams, Natalia Bachmann, Maximilian von Boehm-Bezing, Naomi Braun, Tobias Genswein, Andre Günther, Pauline Degirmenci, Dora Gergis, Nicole Husemann, Henriette Victoria Jung, Merle Kaup, Lisa-Marie Lucke, Luisa Meier, Katharina Mette, Ines Meyer, Philipp Nulsch, Jakob Ochsenkühn, Priscilla Pirschle, Leonhard Pitz, Paula Schrank, Lilian Stilz, Johannes Wichert, Malina Witzenrath, Daniel Wünsche

Contact: va-poreg@tu-dresden.de

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1. Introduction

The Varieties of Political Regimes (Va-PoReg) dataset classifies political regimes from 1900 to the present based on their patterns of legitimation, examining how political authority is justified and institutionalized. Combined with its systematic coverage of approximately 90 political entities absent from other datasets (see Coverage), Va-PoReg provides a theoretically grounded framework particularly valuable for understanding autocratic diversity, regime stability, and legitimation crises.

A political regime refers to the set of rules that determine who has access to political power, who may elect the government, and under what conditions and restrictions political authority is exercised {Kailitz, 2013 #43843;Skaaning, 2006 #4959;Reich, 2002 #4394}. Human rights protections, foreign policy behavior, economic development, and regime durability are all closely tied to regime type, making accurate regime classification essential for both scholarly analysis and policy applications. Historically, many cross-national datasets categorized political regimes along a simple democracy-autocracy dichotomy. The seminal work of Barbara Geddes and others introduced systematic distinctions among different types of autocratic regimes based on their institutional configurations, differentiating military, single-party, and personalist rule according to who holds power and through what organizational structures. Building upon this institutional turn, Va-PoReg shifts the analytical focus to regime legitimation, recognizing that the justifications regimes offer for their authority provide a deeper organizing principle for understanding how autocracies vary fundamentally in their structure, durability, and vulnerability to crisis.

Va-PoReg classifies regimes by their legitimation patterns, which determine how authority is justified and institutionally organized. Electoral regimes build institutions around claims to popular mandate, establishing parliaments, parties, and elections. Monarchies structure power around dynastic succession. Ideocracies organize governance around utopian visions, whether communist or Islamist. Military regimes construct authority through narratives of national salvation, while personalist autocracies center on individual charisma. All regimes make legitimation claims. The distinction between regime types lies not only in the nature of these claims but also in their credibility. Electoral regimes span the spectrum from liberal democracies, where competitive elections genuinely confer popular mandate, to electoral autocracies, where manipulated contests generate only a veneer of consent. The presence of an elected parliament, for instance, distinguishes constitutional from autocratic monarchy. The degree of indigenous participation differentiates direct from indirect colonial rule. These

institutional features serve as observable manifestations of underlying legitimization logics rather than as independent criteria.

Va-PoReg complements the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project through a fundamentally different analytical lens. V-Dem measures regimes along a continuum of democratic quality, assessing how far they deviate from liberal democratic standards. Va-PoReg classifies regimes by their forms of legitimization and institutional structure, capturing qualitative differences in how authority is justified and organized. This produces divergent but equally valid classifications. Saudi Arabia, for example, is a closed autocracy in V-Dem's framework (low on democratic attributes), but an autocratic monarchy in Va-PoReg's typology, emphasizing its dynastic-hereditary legitimization that fundamentally distinguishes it from military or party-based rule. Researchers studying democratic backsliding or measuring incremental changes in democratic quality should consult V-Dem. Those studying coup dynamics will find Va-PoReg's distinction between military and civilian authoritarians essential. Analyzing resource-rich autocracies requires Va-PoReg's separation of monarchies from personalist regimes. Researching colonial legacies benefits from Va-PoReg's systematic coding of both colonizer and colony regimes. For the theoretical foundations regarding the central role of regime legitimization in regime classification, see Kailitz {, 2013 #43843}. The conceptual framework and detailed coding rules applied in Va-PoReg have been further developed and expanded based on this foundation.

Funding

The Free State of Saxony funds the development and continuous updating of Va-PoReg from 2022 to 2025, based on a decision of the Saxon State Parliament. The project is hosted at the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies at TU Dresden. The financial support enables the systematic expansion of the dataset, the refinement of coding procedures, and the maintenance of comprehensive country reports to ensure the highest standards of academic quality, transparency, and replicability. The funding body plays no role in conceptual design, data collection, coding decisions, or interpretation of results. All research activities are conducted independently in accordance with principles of academic freedom and scientific integrity.

Coverage of Va-PoReg

Va-PoReg employs a systematic geographic-historical approach to regime classification. Rather than limiting coverage to contemporary lists of independent states, the dataset identifies all political entities that appeared on the world map from 1900 to the present, tracking their complete trajectories through periods of sovereignty, semi-sovereignty, colonization, occupation, or incorporation into other states. It includes states that experienced episodes of colonization, occupation, or incorporation into other sovereign states, such as Lithuania and Ukraine during their annexation by the Soviet Union. This approach provides a more comprehensive perspective on the political development of nations and populations rather than restricting coverage to continuously independent states. The dataset includes approximately 90 political entities absent from other regime datasets, including ephemeral states (Sikkim, Tibet, Newfoundland, Tanganyika, Zanzibar), microstates (Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Nauru), and non-sovereign territories such as Puerto Rico, Guam, French Guiana, and Gibraltar.

However, including non-sovereign territories introduces complexity that may obscure comparative analyses of political regimes. To address this, Va-PoReg is provided in different variants for distinct purposes. Researchers should select the classification variant that best fits their analytical objectives.

2. Conceptual and Methodological Foundations

2.1 Variable Development and Conceptual Integrity

The development of each variable in Va-PoReg begins with conceptual precision. Variables are defined on the basis of clearly delimited theoretical constructs drawn from the comparative literature on political regimes, authoritarianism, democratization, and hybrid forms of rule. Va-PoReg distinguishes each concept clearly from adjacent or overlapping constructs. For example, regime type is strictly separated from government composition, institutional design from regime performance, and electoral form from civil liberties. Definitions are crafted to be globally applicable and reflect cumulative theoretical insights, including both classical regime typologies and recent disaggregated approaches.

2.2 Dimension Independence and Typological Architecture

Each variable captures a distinct, analytically independent dimension of regime structure or transformation. Redundancies and internal overlaps are systematically avoided. Instead, the typology is modular: core components such as regime change mechanisms, direction of change, suffrage inclusiveness, or electoral competitiveness are treated as standalone variables. Where aggregate or binary versions are introduced, for example, simplified regime classifications or liberal-autocratic dichotomies, they are marked as analytically derived and never treated as conceptually independent. These derivations are fully documented and justified for specific analytical purposes.

2.3 Regime Change and Temporal Granularity

The dataset applies a temporally consistent and historically sensitive logic. For annual variables, July 1st is the decisive reference date. For event-based variables such as regime change events, codings are anchored in institutional facts (e.g., adoption of a new constitution, collapse of ruling elites, first implementation of new rules). In cases of gradual transition (e.g., creeping autocratization), coders must identify the tipping point at which change becomes substantively irreversible. This approach balances sensitivity to gradual change with temporal precision.

2.3.1 Why Multiple Classifications? An Epistemic Perspective

The Va-PoReg dataset includes multiple regime classification schemes not merely to enhance comparative usability, but to reveal the constructed and contingent nature of regime typologies themselves. Political regime categories, such as democracy, autocracy, or colonial rule, are not neutral descriptors of political reality. Rather, they are theory-laden frameworks that reflect historically situated ideas about how power is structured, legitimized, and contested.

By enabling users to explore regime types through different classification schemes side by side, Va-PoReg invites critical reflection on the epistemic assumptions embedded in each approach. The contrasts between typologies are not only definitional; they often embody fundamentally different normative orientations and conceptualizations of statehood, authority, and legitimacy. What one classification scheme treats as a stable democracy, another may frame as an electoral autocracy. Such divergences are not errors; they are interpretive differences rooted in distinct political theories.

The approach therefore emphasizes epistemic transparency: users are encouraged not simply to select a preferred typology, but to understand the implications of each classification system and to treat the act of categorization as itself a political and theoretical gesture. This perspective

also informs the visualization design, which foregrounds variation across schemes and supports comparative analysis of regime types as interpretive constructs.

2.4 Normative Benchmarks and Global Standards

Where variables involve normative judgments, especially those concerning regime quality, democratic standards, or autocratic erosion, assessments are anchored in internationally recognized and theoretically grounded benchmarks. Criteria for electoral competitiveness, civil liberties, and executive constraints align with foundational traditions in democratic theory. Arbitrary, culturally biased, or region-specific standards are explicitly rejected in favor of conceptually robust, globally applicable reference points.

2.5 Subnational and Non-Sovereign Entities

Although Va-PoReg codes only sovereign political regimes at the state level, the dataset explicitly recognizes the limitations of this scope. Subnational colonial rule, occupied territories, and internal asymmetries of control (e.g., apartheid homelands, protectorates, military zones) are not treated as separate regimes but are acknowledged in the documentation of coding decisions. Where relevant, annotations indicate how such structures qualify or complicate regime classification. Extended modules are currently being explored to better capture these layered forms of domination.

2.6 Transparency, Replicability, and Discretionary Judgments

All variables in Va-PoReg are defined and operationalized to capture the de facto characteristics of political regimes. Coding is based on observable institutional practices and political behavior rather than on formal-legal provisions or constitutional texts. Wherever possible, coders rely on documented empirical evidence, such as actual electoral conduct, the effective role of legislatures, or patterns of executive dominance, to assess regime features. Legal or constitutional frameworks are considered only to the extent that they shape real political outcomes.

To ensure consistency and replicability across time and cases, each variable is accompanied by explicit coding rules, thresholds, and illustrative examples. Where interpretation is required, especially in cases of ambiguity, hybrid configurations, or contested evidence, coders follow standardized decision criteria and are instructed to document their reasoning and the degree of

certainty in structured case notes. This procedure ensures intersubjective reliability, transparency, and methodological rigor throughout the dataset.

3. Technical Specifications

The technical specifications of Va-PoReg ensure that the dataset is not only conceptually consistent but also practically usable across major software environments. They cover the rules for naming variables, the file formats in which the dataset is released, and the provision of comprehensive variable lists for each version.

3.1 Variable Name Convention

Variable names follow a strict three-part convention to guarantee consistency across Va-PoReg and compatibility with Stata, R, and Python. All names are written in lowercase snake_case, limited to letters, digits, and underscores, and restricted to a maximum length of 32 characters. Each variable name consists of three components: a dataset prefix, a dimension tag, and an indicator token. The fixed prefix `vaporeg` links every variable to the dataset. The dimension element identifies the conceptual family (for example `duration`, `regtype`, `participation`, `competition`, `constraints`, `liberties`). The indicator element is a concise mnemonic for the specific measure (for example `bindem` for the binary democracy indicator). Following this convention, `vaporeg_duration_bindem` denotes the binary democracy indicator within the duration dimension. The same scheme applies uniformly to all current and future variables. Any legacy names are retained only as aliases and must be mapped to their canonical form in the data dictionary to ensure backward compatibility.

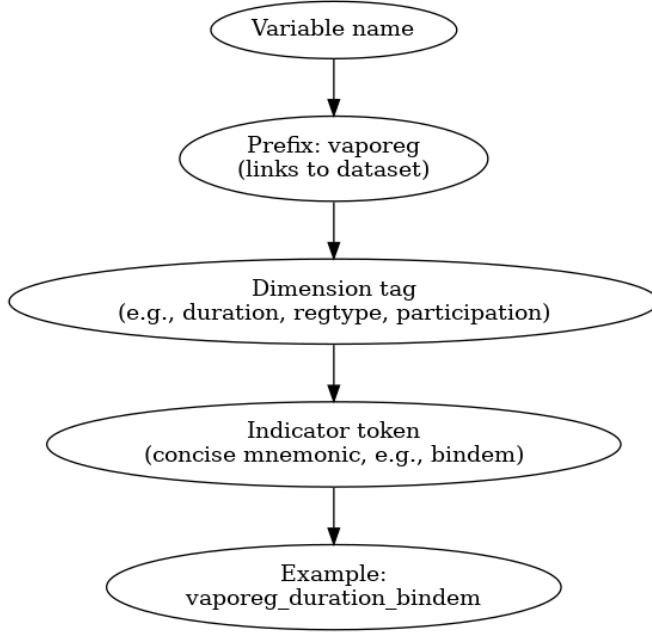


Figure 1: Structure of variable names in Va-PoReg

3.2 File Structure and Format

Va-PoReg is distributed in formats suitable for major statistical software environments, including Stata (.dta), R (.rds), and CSV. Variable names and labels are harmonized across formats. Metadata files (README and codebook) are provided to ensure transparency and facilitate replication. The dataset is structured in a country–year format, with event-based supplements provided in separate files. All files are UTF-8 encoded. Researchers can therefore work with Va-PoReg across different platforms without technical obstacles.

3.3 Variable Lists and Aliases

Each release of Va-PoReg includes a comprehensive variable list, which is provided both in the codebook and as a separate machine-readable file (CSV/Excel). The list documents all active variables, their conceptual dimension, operationalization, coding scheme, and corresponding legacy aliases where applicable. Aliases are retained for reasons of backward compatibility with earlier dataset versions. Users are strongly encouraged to adopt the canonical variable names defined by the naming convention described in Section 2.1. The machine-readable version of the list is automatically generated from the dataset to ensure accuracy and is updated with each release. This dual system—detailed explanatory documentation in the codebook and a separate technical file for direct data use—guarantees maximum transparency and usability.

4. Regime Categories: Conceptualization and Operationalization

This section presents the Va-PoReg regime typology, organized according to primary modes of legitimation. Legitimation refers to the structural pattern through which regimes organize and justify political authority. The focus lies on the institutional architecture and organizing logic of authority rather than on the empirical credibility or popular acceptance of legitimation claims. A regime structured around electoral procedures exhibits an electoral legitimation pattern whether its elections are genuinely free and fair or systematically manipulated. Similarly, a regime organized around dynastic succession manifests a monarchical legitimation pattern irrespective of whether divine right doctrines retain cultural resonance. A personalist autocracy centered on constructed personality cults operates through a personalist legitimation pattern even when charisma is fabricated rather than genuine. Legitimation patterns thus describe how regimes structure authority institutionally, not whether their claims to legitimacy are convincing or accepted by the governed.

The legitimation pattern fundamentally shapes the composition, cohesion, and network structures of the ruling elite, both within regimes and across regime boundaries. In electoral regimes, elites are recruited through party structures and electoral competition, with cohesion maintained through coalition-building and accountability to electoral constituencies. Networks within these regimes form along partisan, legislative, and constituency lines, while inter-regime networks develop through democratic solidarity mechanisms, electoral observation frameworks, and alliance structures privileging fellow electoral systems. In personalist regimes, elites consist of personal loyalists bound to the ruler through patronage networks, with cohesion dependent on the ruler's capacity to distribute resources and maintain control. Intra-regime networks center on family, clan, and loyalty circles radiating from the ruler, while inter-regime connections often remain limited or operate through personalist-to-personalist arrangements that prioritize regime survival over ideological or institutional affinities. Ideology-centered regimes recruit elites through ideological conformity and party schools, with cohesion enforced through doctrinal discipline. Networks within these regimes are structured through party cells and ideological hierarchies, while inter-regime networks may form international ideological movements (such as the Communist International or transnational Islamist coordination) that transcend state boundaries. Military regimes organize elites along command hierarchies, with cohesion derived from institutional loyalty and officer corps solidarity. Intra-regime networks

follow military command structures and professional military ties, while inter-regime networks often manifest in military-to-military cooperation, defense pacts, or patterns of coup contagion. Monarchical regimes embed elites within dynastic lineages and aristocratic networks, with cohesion structured through kinship and hereditary privilege. Networks form through courtly hierarchies and noble kinship systems internally, while monarchical regimes may coordinate through dynastic marriages, royal summits, or exclusive monarchical forums (such as Gulf Cooperation Council mechanisms). The legitimation pattern thus determines not only how authority is justified but also who exercises power, how elites are recruited, how elite cohesion is maintained, and through what channels regimes form networks both internally and with similar regimes internationally.

The classification encompasses regimes based on electoral legitimation (where authority is organized through electoral procedures), personalist legitimation (where authority is embodied in specific persons or lineages), ideology-centered legitimation (where authority is structured around doctrinal blueprints), institutional legitimation (where authority derives from organizational structures such as military command or single-party systems), external legitimation (where authority is imposed by foreign powers), and special cases where conventional legitimation modes are absent or unclear.

Each regime category is defined conceptually and operationalized through specific, observable criteria. The conceptual definitions articulate the legitimation pattern that structures political authority within each regime type. The operationalization criteria specify the empirical indicators used to classify political entities, including institutional features, electoral characteristics, executive constraints, and civil liberties. Special attention is given to borderline cases, which are resolved through qualitative assessment guided by the overarching principle of legitimation patterns, with detailed justifications provided in country reports. All coding decisions reflect the regime type in place on July 1st of each year. Transitions occurring after this date are recorded separately through start and end variables but do not affect the coding for the calendar year. This temporal anchor ensures consistency across cases while capturing regime dynamics through dedicated transition variables.

4.1 Regimes Based on Electoral Legitimation

Regimes grouped under this heading structure authority around electoral procedures as the claimed source of political legitimacy. This electoral legitimation pattern prescribes that the

right to rule derives from popular consent expressed through elections, whether genuinely competitive or systematically manipulated. The pattern describes how authority is institutionally organized through electoral mechanisms (parliaments, parties, electoral commissions, voting procedures) rather than whether elections meet democratic standards or generate genuine accountability. A regime holding regular elections for executive and legislative offices exhibits an electoral legitimation pattern regardless of whether those elections are free and fair. This distinguishes electoral regimes from those structured around personalist legitimation (where authority inheres in specific persons or lineages), ideology-centered legitimation (where authority is structured through doctrinal blueprints), institutional legitimation (where authority derives from military command or party hierarchies), or monarchical legitimation (where authority is transmitted through hereditary succession).

Within this pattern, regimes vary dramatically in how electoral procedures function and what role they play in structuring political authority. At one end of the spectrum, liberal democracies establish electoral and liberal legitimation as complementary foundations for political authority. Elections are genuinely competitive, inclusive, and fair, operating alongside robust protections for civil liberties and institutional constraints on executive power. Electoral procedures serve as authentic mechanisms of accountability, with governments subject to removal through popular vote. At the opposite end, electoral autocracies maintain electoral institutions while systematically undermining their competitive character through manipulation, repression, and unfair advantages for incumbents. Elections occur but fail to function as genuine accountability mechanisms. Between these poles lie electoral oligarchies (where participation is severely restricted), electoral hybrid regimes (where substantial deficits undermine but do not entirely eliminate electoral competition), and defective democracies (where democratic structures persist despite governance shortcomings). The electoral legitimation pattern thus encompasses both regimes where elections genuinely structure authority and those where electoral procedures serve primarily as facades for autocratic rule, united by their institutional organization around electoral claims to legitimacy.

4.1.1 Democracy

Conceptualization: Democratic regimes derive their legitimation from two complementary sources: electoral legitimation and liberal legitimation. This dual foundation distinguishes democracies fundamentally from all other regime types and constitutes the core of democratic governance.

Electoral legitimation establishes that political authority originates from popular consent expressed through competitive elections. In democracies, the right to rule is neither inherited (as in monarchies), nor claimed through ideological orthodoxy (as in ideocracies), institutional control (as in military or one-party regimes), or personal loyalty networks (as in personalist autocracies). Instead, authority is conferred and periodically renewed through elections in which citizens grant or withdraw consent. This creates a chain of accountability from citizens through elections to representatives and ultimately to government. This conceptualization builds on Robert Dahl's {, 1971 #1119} foundational work, which identifies competitive contestation and inclusive participation as the two core dimensions of democratic governance. Following Niklas Luhmann {, 1969 #9999}, electoral procedures generate legitimacy not merely through their outcomes but through the participatory process itself: acceptance of electoral results derives from participation in fair procedures. Elections serve as the procedural mechanism through which rulers gain the right to rule and legislators acquire the mandate to legislate. Crucially, this legitimation is temporary and renewable. Governments must return to the electorate for reauthorization, making electoral accountability a central mechanism for regime legitimacy.

Liberal legitimation establishes that political authority derives from the protection of individual freedom, autonomy, and rights. Democratic regimes claim legitimacy not only because they are chosen by the people, but because they safeguard the liberty of citizens against arbitrary power. This includes protection of civil liberties such as freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as political rights that enable meaningful participation in public life. Liberal legitimation manifests in constitutional constraints on power, the rule of law, and institutional checks and balances that prevent the concentration of authority. An independent judiciary, legislative oversight of the executive, and constitutional guarantees of rights serve to institutionalize this liberal foundation of legitimacy.

These two sources of legitimation are conceptually distinct yet mutually reinforcing. Electoral legitimation without liberal freedoms produces electoral autocracies, where elections occur but fail to serve as genuine mechanisms of accountability due to repression and manipulation. Liberal constitutionalism without electoral accountability produces regimes that may protect certain freedoms but lack popular authorization. Democratic regimes uniquely combine both: they are legitimate because they are chosen by the people and because they protect the freedom of the people. Following Adam Przeworski {, 1991 #4313: 10}, democracy functions when parties lose elections and peacefully transfer power. This commitment by political elites to accept electoral defeat is sustained by the dual legitimation framework: liberal protections

ensure that losing power does not mean facing arbitrary persecution, while electoral mechanisms provide future opportunities to regain authority. Elite acceptance of democratic rules, reinforced by protections for defeated actors, is thus fundamental to democratic stability. The synthesis of these two traditions reflects the historical development of liberal democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries {Backes, 2000 #8067}. Early liberalism emphasized constitutional limits on power and protection of individual rights but often restricted suffrage. Democratic movements expanded political participation but initially paid less attention to constraints on majority power. Liberal democracy emerged as the integration of both principles, establishing that legitimate government requires both popular consent through elections and constitutional protection of rights and freedoms.

For this dual legitimation to function effectively, several conditions must be met. Universal suffrage is imperative, ensuring that all adult citizens, irrespective of gender, socioeconomic status, wealth, or literacy levels, possess unequivocal rights to vote, stand for election, and participate in the political process. Elections must be free, fair, and competitive, conducted without substantial impediments and enabling multiple parties or candidates to contest with genuine prospects of attaining power. Civil liberties and political rights must be comprehensively protected, enabling citizens to form opinions, organize politically, and hold government accountable. Institutional constraints on executive power through independent judiciaries and effective legislative oversight prevent the erosion of either electoral or liberal legitimation.

While all democracies share this dual foundation of electoral and liberal legitimation, they vary substantially in how fully they realize these principles in practice. Our detailed classification distinguishes between liberal democracies, which comprehensively uphold both dimensions of democratic legitimation, and defective democracies, which maintain democratic institutions and the dual legitimation framework but exhibit substantial shortcomings in suffrage inclusiveness, civil liberties protection, or institutional constraints on executive power {Merkel, 2004 #3575; Bogaards, 2009 #550}.

4.1.1.1. Liberal Democracy

Conceptualization: Liberal democracy represents the fullest realization of democratic legitimation without substantial deficits in either electoral or liberal dimensions. Where the overarching democracy framework establishes dual legitimation as the defining feature of all democracies, liberal democracies specifically are distinguished by the absence of substantial

shortcomings across all four operational dimensions: universal suffrage, electoral quality, civil liberties protection, and institutional constraints on executive power {Merkel, 2004 #3575}.

The distinctive feature of liberal democracy lies in how robustly both legitimation sources function. Electoral legitimation operates without significant impediments: all adult citizens possess equal voting rights, elections are genuinely free and competitive, and electoral outcomes determine governmental composition through transparent procedures. Liberal legitimation is comprehensively institutionalized: civil liberties and political rights receive full protection in practice, judiciary and legislature effectively constrain executive authority, and constitutional limits are observed rather than circumvented. This comprehensiveness across all dimensions generates particularly strong elite commitment to democratic procedures, as defeated actors trust that liberal protections will prevent arbitrary persecution and electoral mechanisms will provide future opportunities to regain power.

Liberal democracies are distinguished from defective democracies by the threshold at which governance deficits become substantial. Defective democracies maintain the dual legitimation framework but exhibit significant shortcomings in one or more dimensions: suffrage restrictions (historically through gender or literacy barriers, or through systematic racial disenfranchisement), weakened civil liberties (systematic pressure on media or civil society), or compromised institutional constraints (politicized judiciary, ineffective legislative oversight). The boundary lies where deficits weaken regime legitimacy and elite consensus sufficiently to distinguish the regime from comprehensive liberal democratic governance.

Critical for boundary determination is distinguishing between defensive restrictions protecting constitutional democracy and substantial civil liberties deficits. Liberal democracies may impose narrowly targeted restrictions on anti-democratic extremist parties or organizations that actively seek to abolish democratic order itself, particularly when such restrictions are subject to judicial review and constitutional justification. These defensive measures, grounded in concepts of militant democracy {Loewenstein, 1937 #3220; Loewenstein, 1937 #17243}, do not constitute substantial deficits when: (1) restrictions target only parties or groups explicitly rejecting democratic principles and seeking regime overthrow, (2) bans are imposed through constitutional processes with judicial oversight rather than executive discretion, (3) restrictions remain narrow and exceptional rather than becoming generalized tools for suppressing legitimate opposition, and (4) banned parties command minimal electoral support such that restrictions do not fundamentally alter competitive dynamics. However, when bans target parties with substantial electoral support (typically above 5-10% vote share), even if justified on extremism grounds, the restriction on electoral pluralism creates a substantial deficit

distinguishing the regime from full liberal democracy. The prohibition of a party representing significant segments of the electorate, regardless of constitutional justification, constrains the comprehensiveness of electoral and liberal legitimation by preventing meaningful political representation of substantial constituencies and limiting ideological pluralism in ways that weaken democratic quality without necessarily transitioning the regime to defective democracy if other dimensions remain robust.

Isolated incidents of rights violations or institutional friction do not constitute substantial deficits; systematic patterns of executive pressure on courts, persistent constraints on opposition organizing, or recurring failures of checks and balances indicate transition to defective democracy. Cases where substantial deficits exist across multiple dimensions simultaneously, particularly combining suffrage restrictions with systematic civil liberties violations, may approach the boundary with electoral hybrid regimes where liberal legitimation becomes critically weakened rather than merely reduced.

Liberal democracies are distinguished from electoral oligarchies through universal suffrage. Electoral oligarchies systematically restrict the franchise to a narrow elite through property requirements, literacy tests (particularly when literacy rates are low), racial exclusions, or other discriminatory barriers that reduce the enfranchised population to a small segment of society. While these regimes may maintain constitutional constraints on executive power and relatively free competition among the enfranchised, the systematic exclusion of large population segments from electoral legitimation places them outside the democratic category. Liberal democracies require effective universal adult suffrage: all adult citizens must possess equal voting rights without substantial legal or practical restrictions. Gender-based suffrage restrictions alone constitute fundamental violations of universal participation; historical regimes with male-only suffrage do not qualify as liberal democracies regardless of other institutional features.

Operationalization: A regime is classified as liberal democracy when it meets high thresholds across four core dimensions simultaneously. Substantial deficits in any single dimension result in classification as defective democracy; cumulative deficits across multiple dimensions or severe deficits in electoral quality itself result in classification as hybrid regime or electoral autocracy, depending on severity.

Universal suffrage: All adult citizens possess equal rights to vote and stand for election without significant legal or practical restrictions. Gender-based suffrage restrictions, literacy tests, property requirements, racial exclusions, poll taxes, or other mechanisms that substantially limit electoral participation disqualify a regime from liberal democracy classification. Formal

constitutional guarantees must be implemented effectively in practice; de jure universal suffrage combined with de facto disenfranchisement through intimidation, administrative barriers, or systematic obstacles constitutes a deficit. We assess this dimension through direct examination of suffrage laws, electoral participation patterns, and systematic exclusions, drawing on historical and legal scholarship on voting rights.

Electoral quality: Elections are free, fair, and competitive. Multiple parties contest elections with genuine prospects of winning, electoral processes are transparent and widely accepted as legitimate, vote counting is accurate without manipulation, and opposition parties can campaign freely and access media. We assess electoral quality through direct observation of electoral processes, institutional functioning, and political competition patterns, cross-validating our assessments with Freedom House evaluations, V-Dem clean elections indices, and LIED data where available. For many historical cases and small states, quantitative indicators do not exist, requiring reliance on election observer reports, academic literature, and qualitative evidence. Systematic advantages for governing parties through media bias or unequal resource access may be present in defective democracies but should not fundamentally undermine competition or predetermine outcomes in liberal democracies.

Civil liberties and political rights: Freedom of expression, assembly, association, and media are comprehensively protected in both law and practice. Civil society operates without significant government interference, citizens can criticize government without fear of retribution, and media maintains independence from government control. Narrowly targeted restrictions on anti-democratic extremist parties or organizations explicitly seeking to abolish constitutional order do not constitute substantial deficits when imposed through constitutional processes with judicial oversight and when targeting only marginal political forces. However, bans on parties with substantial electoral support (typically 5-10%+ vote share) create constraints on ideological pluralism that, while potentially justified on constitutional grounds, represent departures from the comprehensive civil liberties protection characteristic of full liberal democracy. We evaluate this dimension through direct assessment of civil liberties protection in practice, cross-validating with Freedom House ratings (liberal democracies typically score "Free" with ratings of 1.0-2.5) and V-Dem indicators on civil liberties, media freedom, and civil society space where available. For many cases, particularly historical regimes and small states, such quantitative indicators do not exist, necessitating qualitative assessment of specific restrictions and their scope. Isolated incidents of rights violations do not disqualify liberal democracy classification; systematic patterns of censorship, harassment, or regulatory pressure on opposition and media indicate defective democracy.

Institutional constraints on executive power: The executive is effectively constrained by independent judiciary and empowered legislature. Judicial review functions without political interference, judicial appointments and decisions are not systematically politicized, legislative oversight is meaningful and not circumvented through emergency powers or procedural manipulation, and constitutional limits on executive authority are observed. We assess institutional constraints through direct observation of executive-judicial-legislative interactions and constitutional practice, cross-validating with Polity's executive constraints indicator (liberal democracies typically score 6-7) and V-Dem indicators on judicial independence, legislative constraints, and executive corruption where available. For cases where quantitative indicators are absent, we rely on constitutional analysis, institutional scholarship, and qualitative evidence of constraint mechanisms. Occasional executive-legislative tensions or isolated judicial decisions favoring government do not constitute substantial deficits; systematic patterns of executive dominance, court-packing, or circumvention of parliamentary procedures indicate defective democracy.

A regime must meet high standards across all four dimensions simultaneously to qualify as liberal democracy. Deficits that fall short of "substantial" (isolated incidents, temporary tensions, minor irregularities that do not materially affect outcomes, or narrowly targeted restrictions on marginal anti-democratic forces) do not disqualify liberal democracy classification. Substantial deficits in one dimension result in defective democracy classification; substantial deficits in multiple dimensions or severe deficits in electoral quality itself result in hybrid regime or electoral autocracy classification.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases: Norway (1913-present, excluding 1940-1945 German occupation regime) exemplifies liberal democracy through comprehensive realization of all four dimensions. Following the introduction of universal adult suffrage in 1913, all citizens possess equal rights to participate without restrictions. Elections are consistently free, fair, and highly competitive, with multiple parties regularly contesting and frequent alternation of power. Civil liberties receive robust protection, media operates independently, and civil society is vibrant. Institutional constraints function effectively with independent judiciary and meaningful parliamentary oversight. Freedom House consistently rates Norway as "Free" (score 1.0). The combination of these features across all dimensions over more than a century places Norway squarely within liberal democracy classification.

Sweden (1921-present) demonstrates sustained liberal democracy following the achievement of universal suffrage. Competitive multiparty elections regularly produce alternation between

Social Democrats and center-right coalitions, civil liberties are comprehensively protected, and institutional constraints operate effectively through independent judiciary and parliamentary oversight.

Borderline Cases: West Germany (1949-late 1960s) illustrates a borderline case where constitutional defense measures created civil liberties constraints distinguishing the regime from full liberal democracy despite meeting high standards in other dimensions. Universal suffrage was established and elections were consistently free, fair, and competitive with genuine alternation between CDU and SPD occurring. Institutional constraints functioned robustly with the Federal Constitutional Court exercising independent judicial review. However, substantial restrictions on freedom of association existed: the Communist Party (KPD) was banned in 1956 after securing 2.2% in the 1953 federal election, the Socialist Reich Party (SRP) was banned in 1952, and Berufsverbot policies restricted public employment for individuals with alleged extremist affiliations {Major, 1997 #44179}. While these measures were justified as constitutional defense against anti-democratic forces and imposed through judicial processes (Constitutional Court rulings), the KPD ban in particular removed a party with non-negligible electoral support and representation in state parliaments, constraining ideological pluralism beyond marginal extremist forces. The combination of party bans affecting parties with some electoral presence and systematic employment restrictions on political grounds created civil liberties deficits that, while defensible as militant democracy measures, prevented full liberal democracy classification during this period. The classification as borderline liberal democracy rather than defective democracy rested on: (1) restrictions were narrowly targeted at specific extremist ideologies rather than creating generalized constraints on opposition, (2) banned parties represented relatively small electoral constituencies (under 5% nationally), (3) other dimensions (universal suffrage, electoral quality, institutional constraints) met high liberal democratic standards, and (4) electoral competition remained robust with major parties competing freely. Transition to unambiguous liberal democracy occurred through gradual liberalization during the late 1960s-1970s as Cold War tensions eased and restrictions were relaxed.

United States (1965-2024) approached the boundary with defective democracy through periodic tensions. Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965, effective universal suffrage was achieved. However, practical barriers (voter ID laws post-Shelby County v. Holder 2013, registration obstacles, gerrymandering) created recurring concerns without rising to systematic disenfranchisement. Electoral quality remained high with competitive elections and regular alternation. Civil liberties were generally protected, though security concerns (post-9/11

surveillance) created temporary tensions. Institutional constraints functioned effectively with independent judiciary and congressional oversight. The classification as liberal democracy rested on deficits not reaching substantial thresholds. Transition to defective democracy in 2025 occurred when institutional constraints weakened substantially through systematic executive pressure on judiciary and persistent attacks on media independence {Levitsky, 2018 #28771; Levitsky, 2023 #47148} #3102}.

Contrasting Cases: Defective democracies such as Poland under Law and Justice (PiS) government (2015-2023) maintained competitive elections meeting minimal standards but exhibited substantial deficits distinguishing them from liberal democracy. Elections remained free and fair with genuine alternation occurring (2023 parliamentary elections produced opposition victory). However, substantial deficits in institutional constraints (disciplinary chambers targeting judges, Constitutional Tribunal manipulation) and civil liberties (advertising taxation targeting critical outlets, public media transformation into government megaphones) weakened liberal legitimation. Courts still occasionally ruled against government and opposition maintained strong institutional presence, indicating reduced but operative liberal legitimation rather than critically weakened liberal legitimation characteristic of hybrid regimes.

Electoral oligarchies such as United States (1776-1920) systematically excluded the majority through suffrage restrictions while maintaining constitutional constraints and competition among the enfranchised elite. Property requirements, literacy tests, racial intimidation, and complete exclusion of women restricted participation to small minorities. The 15th Amendment (1870) was systematically undermined through Jim Crow laws and violence. Transition to defective democracy occurred through women's suffrage (19th Amendment, 1920) {Keyssar, 2000 #47149}, though substantial racial disenfranchisement persisted until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

4.1.1.2 Defective Democracy

Conceptualization: Defective democracies preserve the dual foundation of democratic legitimation (electoral and liberal) but exhibit substantial, systematic deficits in one or more non-electoral dimensions that undermine the full functioning of democratic governance. Competitive elections remain the primary channel of authority transfer, with outcomes not predetermined and alternation possible. Yet the liberal pillar (rights protection, institutional constraint, and equality before law) is impaired to the extent that neither dimension functions fully. Civil liberties are formally guaranteed but curtailed in practice through harassment,

selective enforcement, or resource asymmetries. Judicial and legislative oversight operates but is weakened by politicization, capture, or executive dominance. The regime therefore continues to claim legitimacy from the people's choice and from constitutionalism but achieves neither comprehensively.

The type's organizing logic lies in the coexistence of genuinely competitive elections with incomplete liberal guarantees. This pattern fundamentally distinguishes defective democracies from both consolidated liberal democracies and from hybrid or autocratic regimes. Courts may rule independently on some matters yet remain vulnerable to political interference on sensitive cases. Media outlets operate with formal freedom yet face systematic pressure through advertising withdrawal, tax investigations, or ownership concentration. Citizens participate in elections but under unequal conditions created by incumbency advantages, uneven access to media, or administrative burdens imposed on opposition. These patterns weaken the reliability of liberal constraint without eliminating pluralism or making electoral outcomes predetermined. The legitimation paradox defines the internal mechanism of defective democracy. Democratic legitimacy remains necessary but becomes internally contradictory: the very elections that sustain authority simultaneously erode the liberal conditions that make democratic legitimacy substantively valid. Authority thus rests on procedures that retain formal meaning but declining normative content. This paradox distinguishes defective democracy from mere transitional instability. It represents a stable equilibrium in which incumbents derive sufficient legitimacy from competitive elections to maintain power while systematically undermining the liberal constraints that would limit their authority. The coexistence of genuine electoral authorization with eroding liberal protections creates self-reinforcing dynamics rather than automatic progression toward either consolidation or breakdown.

The upper boundary toward liberal democracy is reached when deficits cease to be substantial. Constraints, freedoms, and suffrage inclusiveness become robust and effective across all dimensions. Improvement may occur gradually through institutional strengthening, civil society mobilization, or international pressure, but the threshold is crossed when systematic impairments recede and protections become reliable. The lower boundary toward electoral hybrid regimes occurs once manipulation, intimidation, or structural unfairness undermines the competitiveness of elections themselves, transforming them from genuine authorization mechanisms into managed contests where outcomes are substantially predetermined. The decisive threshold is crossed when sustained concentration of executive power and systematic repression of civil liberties render elections formally competitive but substantively non-authorizing, as evidenced by V-Dem Clean Elections Index below 0.6, sustained Freedom

House downgrades from "Partly Free" to "Not Free," and the absence of effective judicial vetoes over executive action. This downward transition typically involves escalating executive interference in electoral administration, systematic exclusion of viable opposition candidates, or resource asymmetries so severe that alternation becomes implausible despite formal contestation.

Historically, defective democracies bordered downward on electoral oligarchies through the suffrage inclusiveness dimension. This boundary is particularly salient for regimes that achieved universal male suffrage but systematically excluded women from political participation. The exclusion of approximately half the adult population through gender-based restrictions represents a severe suffrage deficit that places such regimes at the absolute borderline between defective democracy and electoral oligarchy. The classification turns on whether additional exclusions beyond gender reduce the enfranchised population to a narrow elite characteristic of oligarchy, or whether universal male suffrage (despite the massive gender deficit) maintains broader participation patterns consistent with defective democracy.

The United States exemplifies the transition across this boundary through the interaction of multiple exclusion mechanisms. Prior to 1920, the combined exclusion of all women and Black Americans of both genders reduced the enfranchised population to less than 40 percent of adults, qualifying the regime as an electoral oligarchy despite competitive elections among white men. With the 19th Amendment (1920) extending suffrage to women, the United States transitioned to defective democracy. From 1920 to 1965, women's suffrage expanded participation substantially, but persistent disenfranchisement of Black Americans (approximately 10 to 12 percent of the population) created severe suffrage inclusiveness deficits characteristic of defective democracy. The Voting Rights Act (1965) eliminated most formal and informal barriers to Black political participation, enabling gradual transition toward liberal democracy {Keyssar, 2000 #47149}.

Defective democracies display path-dependent vulnerability to further erosion. The coexistence of genuine electoral competition with eroding liberal constraints generates incentives for incumbents to consolidate advantage gradually. Because elections remain competitive, incumbents cannot rely on overt repression or electoral fraud without risking international sanctions or domestic backlash. Instead, they exploit institutional ambiguities, concentrate media ownership, weaken judicial independence, and deploy state resources for partisan advantage. These incremental steps preserve the appearance of democratic competition while systematically tilting the playing field. Defective democracies thus often exhibit creeping autocratization rather than abrupt collapse, making gradual degradation toward hybrid regimes

a recurrent trajectory. This dynamic instability links them closely to the broader transformation logic within the Va-PoReg taxonomy, marking them as a recurrent intermediary equilibrium between democratic and hybrid forms.

Operationalization: A regime is classified as defective democracy when two conditions hold simultaneously and persistently. Both conditions are necessary and jointly sufficient: regimes failing either are reclassified upward (to liberal democracy if deficits are eliminated) or downward (to hybrid or oligarchic forms if electoral competitiveness is undermined or suffrage is restricted to narrow elites).

First, elections must be genuinely competitive in the sense that outcomes are not predetermined, alternation remains possible, and opposition participation is meaningful. Electoral competitiveness requires that multiple parties or candidates contest with realistic prospects of winning, that vote counting is sufficiently accurate and transparent to reflect preferences, and that defeated incumbents transfer power. This distinguishes defective democracies from electoral autocracies and hybrid regimes where elections serve primarily as legitimization rituals rather than authorization mechanisms.

Second, substantial and persistent deficits must exist in at least one of three non-electoral dimensions that constitute liberal legitimation. These dimensions are analytically distinct yet mutually reinforcing components of democratic quality:

Suffrage inclusiveness: Substantial deficits occur when significant population groups face formal or effective exclusion through legal barriers, administrative burdens, intimidation, or violence that systematically prevents their electoral participation. Historical examples include gender-based exclusions, literacy tests, poll taxes, or racial disenfranchisement. The exclusion of women alone (approximately half the adult population) constitutes a severe suffrage deficit placing regimes at the absolute borderline between defective democracy and electoral oligarchy. Classification as defective democracy rather than electoral oligarchy requires that universal male suffrage be effectively implemented without additional systematic exclusions that would reduce the enfranchised population to a narrow elite. Contemporary manifestations include identification requirements that disproportionately affect marginalized groups, voter intimidation in specific regions, or administrative obstacles that create unequal access to registration and voting.

Civil liberties and political rights: Deficits in this dimension arise when freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and media are constrained by systematic harassment, legal restrictions, ownership concentration, or selective enforcement that creates pervasive self-censorship or unequal political participation. Substantial deficits manifest through patterns such as repeated

prosecutions of journalists on spurious charges, systematic tax audits or regulatory harassment of opposition media, advertising boycotts coordinated by state-influenced firms, concentration of media ownership among government allies, restrictions on civil society funding or registration, or repeated use of security forces to disperse peaceful opposition gatherings. The constraint must be systematic rather than episodic: occasional prosecutions or isolated incidents do not constitute substantial deficits, but patterns that demonstrably restrict opposition organizing or critical journalism do.

Institutional constraints on executive power: This dimension encompasses judicial independence and legislative oversight capacity. Substantial deficits occur when courts face systematic political interference that compromises their ability to rule against the executive, when legislative bodies lack effective oversight mechanisms or resources to constrain executive action, or when constitutional amendments or legal changes systematically weaken checks and balances. Observable indicators include repeated executive refusal to comply with unfavorable court rulings, politicized appointment or removal of judges, court-packing that undermines judicial independence, executive dominance over legislative agendas that eliminates meaningful deliberation, or constitutional changes that concentrate power while maintaining electoral facades.

These three dimensions can be impaired individually or in combination. A regime qualifies as defective democracy if substantial deficits exist in any single dimension, even if the other two function robustly. Alternatively, moderate deficits across multiple dimensions may cumulatively create defective classification when their combined effect systematically undermines liberal guarantees. The assessment prioritizes institutional patterns and their effects on democratic functioning over mechanical scoring. A single dramatic incident does not by itself create substantial deficits; rather, deficits emerge from systematic patterns that demonstrably constrain opposition activity, limit accountability, or create unequal political conditions.

The upper threshold to liberal democracy is crossed when institutional improvements enable reliable constraint and protection across all dimensions. The downward threshold to electoral hybrid regime is crossed when deficits extend beyond the liberal dimensions to undermine electoral competitiveness itself, typically marked by V-Dem Clean Elections Index falling below 0.6, Freedom House reclassification from "Partly Free" to "Not Free," and systematic inability of courts to constrain executive action. The downward threshold to electoral oligarchy is crossed when suffrage restrictions reduce the enfranchised population to a narrow elite, typically below 40 to 50 percent of the adult population {Schedler, 2002 #4699}.

Quantitative indicators provide corroboration but not definitive classification. Polity's executive constraints indicator typically ranges around 4 to 5 in defective democracies versus 6 to 7 in liberal democracies. Freedom House typically classifies defective democracies as "Partly Free." V-Dem indicators on civil liberties, judicial constraints, and media freedom typically show intermediate values. Classification relies fundamentally on qualitative assessment of legitimization patterns and institutional functioning rather than on quantitative thresholds.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases: Slovakia (1994-1998) under Vladimír Mečiar exemplifies defective democracy through systematic impairment of institutional constraints and civil liberties while electoral competition persisted. Parliamentary elections remained competitive with multiple parties contesting, and the 1998 elections produced genuine alternation when a broad opposition coalition defeated Mečiar's HZDS despite its control of state resources. However, state television and radio were systematically politicized to favor the government, with opposition parties receiving minimal airtime and critical journalists dismissed or reassigned. The Slovak Information Service conducted surveillance of opposition politicians and journalists. Mečiar's government repeatedly circumvented parliament through executive decrees and attempted to undermine the Constitutional Court's authority when it ruled against government actions. Privatization processes systematically favored firms connected to government officials. Yet opposition parties organized freely despite harassment, civil society remained active in mobilizing voters, and the electoral system functioned with sufficient integrity that voters removed Mečiar through the ballot box {Fisher, 2006 #47170}.

Colombia (1990s-2000s) demonstrates defective democracy in a context of endemic violence and weak state capacity. Presidential and legislative elections were competitive with alternation between parties and the emergence of new political forces. Electoral administration was generally professional and large-scale fraud limited at the national level. However, the liberal pillar was severely compromised by armed groups operating across the territory. Paramilitaries and guerrilla groups systematically assassinated mayors, city council members, and congressional candidates. Over 3,000 local politicians were murdered between 1988 and 2006, creating vast rural areas where opposition could not campaign safely. Journalists investigating paramilitary links faced systematic threats. The judiciary functioned with formal independence but judges faced assassination when handling sensitive cases, leading to massive backlogs and impunity rates exceeding 95 percent. Despite these severe deficits in civil liberties and citizen security, the electoral system continued to produce meaningful contestation and alternation at the national level {Gutiérrez Sanín, 2007 #47173}.

Sri Lanka (2005-2014) under Mahinda Rajapaksa illustrates executive dominance eroding institutional constraints while electoral competition persisted. Rajapaksa consolidated power through the 18th Amendment (2010), which eliminated presidential term limits, weakened judicial independence, and expanded presidential authority over key appointments. The impeachment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake in 2013 exemplified executive interference: after she ruled against a government bill, parliament conducted a rushed impeachment proceeding that violated due process. State media systematically favored the government while independent outlets faced pressure. Yet opposition parties continued to organize, and the 2015 presidential election produced alternation when Maithripala Sirisena's coalition defeated Rajapaksa despite massive use of state resources {DeVotta, 2009 #47174}.

Borderline Cases

Switzerland (1848-1971) represents an absolute borderline case between defective democracy and electoral oligarchy through gender-based suffrage exclusion. Following the 1848 federal constitution, Switzerland established a competitive federal system with regular elections, alternation in cantonal governments, strong federalism, an independent judiciary, press freedom, and robust civil liberties for enfranchised citizens. Elections were genuinely competitive with multiple parties contesting. Institutional constraints functioned effectively. Civil liberties for male citizens were robustly protected.

However, women were systematically and completely excluded from political participation at the federal level until 1971. This exclusion affected approximately 50 percent of the adult population, creating a severe suffrage deficit that placed Switzerland at the absolute threshold between defective democracy and electoral oligarchy. The exclusion was actively defended through repeated referenda where male voters rejected women's suffrage proposals in 1959 (67 percent against) and multiple cantonal votes.

The decisive factor for classification as defective democracy rather than electoral oligarchy was that universal male suffrage was fully implemented without additional systematic exclusions based on property, literacy, ethnicity, or other criteria. The franchise among men exceeded 90 percent of adult males by the early 20th century, far above the typical 40 percent threshold characteristic of electoral oligarchies. Yet the complete exclusion of women constituted a massive suffrage deficit that prevented classification as liberal democracy. Switzerland thus occupied the absolute borderline: one additional systematic exclusion would have reduced enfranchised population to oligarchic levels, but universal male suffrage maintained participation above this threshold. The 1971 federal referendum extending women's suffrage

(66 percent in favor) marked Switzerland's transition toward liberal democracy {Banaszak, 1996 #47176}.

Turkey (2010-2013) represents a borderline case approaching the downward threshold toward electoral hybrid regime. During this period, AKP governments under Erdoğan continued to face genuine electoral competition, with the 2011 parliamentary elections showing robust opposition and municipal elections producing mixed outcomes with opposition victories in major cities. However, systematic erosion of liberal guarantees accelerated dramatically. Turkey led the world in imprisoned journalists by 2012. The Ergenekon and Sledgehammer trials saw hundreds convicted based on questionable evidence. Media ownership became increasingly concentrated among firms dependent on government contracts. The 2013 Gezi Park protests revealed systematic use of excessive police force. Courts showed declining independence in politically sensitive cases.

These deficits placed Turkey near the boundary between defective democracy and electoral hybrid regime. The decisive factor maintaining defective democracy classification through 2013 was that electoral alternation remained conceivable and municipal elections produced genuine opposition victories. The threshold was crossed after 2014 when V-Dem Clean Elections Index fell below 0.6, Freedom House reclassified Turkey from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" (2018), and systematic manipulation of electoral administration through purges and emergency powers rendered competition substantively non-authorizing despite formal contestation {Esen, 2017 #47059}.

Contrasting Cases

India (1947-2019) long represented a paradigmatic defective democracy combining robust electoral competition with persistent liberal deficits. Elections were genuinely competitive with frequent alternation at both national and state levels, high turnout rates regularly exceeding 60 percent, and an Election Commission maintaining administrative integrity. The 2004, 2009, and 2014 elections all produced decisive outcomes with genuine competition. However, substantial deficits persisted across dimensions: pervasive corruption undermining equal access to state resources and justice, communal violence with documented state complicity (2002 Gujarat riots), police excessive force with limited accountability, massive judicial backlogs limiting effective rights protection, and regional bosses operating through patronage networks in multiple states.

Since 2014, pressures on media independence, civil society organizations, and minority rights intensified dramatically under Modi governments. Major media houses facing government pressure increasingly practiced self-censorship. Kashmir's special constitutional status was

revoked in 2019 with mass detentions and communications blackout lasting months. NGOs working on sensitive issues faced funding restrictions and legal harassment. Courts showed declining willingness to constrain executive action on politically sensitive matters. However, elections continued to produce meaningful contestation with opposition victories in multiple states through 2019, maintaining India's classification as defective democracy.

The critical threshold was crossed after 2019 when the systematic concentration of executive power, erosion of judicial independence through politicized appointments, and comprehensive repression of civil society curtailed substantive competition. V-Dem Clean Elections Index fell from 0.68 (2018) to 0.57 (2021), crossing below the 0.6 threshold. Freedom House downgraded India from "Free" to "Partly Free" in 2020. The 2024 electoral manipulation through selective disqualification of opposition candidates, frozen bank accounts of the main opposition party, and systematic use of investigative agencies against political opponents rendered elections formally competitive but substantively predetermined. India thus transitioned from long-standing defective democracy into electoral hybrid regime, illustrating the path-dependent vulnerability characteristic of defective democracies: gradual consolidation of incumbent advantage under persistent illiberal conditions culminated in hybridization {Jaffrelot, 2021 #47183}.

Indonesia (after 2004) illustrates the upward transition from defective to liberal democracy. Following Suharto's fall in 1998, Indonesia initially exhibited substantial deficits: military political privileges, endemic judicial corruption, regional violence, and local boss control of elections. However, constitutional reforms in 2001-2002 eliminated military reserved seats and strengthened institutional checks. Direct presidential elections beginning in 2004 enhanced accountability. The Corruption Eradication Commission demonstrated genuine independence by successfully prosecuting high-level officials. Judicial reforms strengthened the Constitutional Court. Media pluralism flourished. By the mid-2000s, these cumulative improvements eliminated substantial deficits, transitioning Indonesia upward into liberal democracy {Mietzner, 2012 #47185}.

Venezuela (after 2006) demonstrates the downward transition from defective democracy to electoral hybrid and eventually electoral autocracy. Initially operating as defective democracy with competitive elections but weakening institutional constraints, the decisive downward shift occurred after 2006 when escalating manipulation undermined electoral competitiveness itself. The National Electoral Council became systematically biased. State resources were massively deployed through social programs conditioned on political loyalty. Opposition media were systematically closed. Electoral districts were gerrymandered to favor the PSUV. Under

Maduro, manipulation intensified: major opposition leaders were imprisoned or barred, hyperinflation prevented effective opposition mobilization. Elections no longer functioned as genuine authorization mechanisms {Corrales, 2015 #46678}.

Hungary (after 2018) similarly illustrates downward transition through systematic institutional capture. Initially a defective democracy, the Orbán government systematically captured independent institutions after securing repeated two-thirds majorities. Constitutional amendments forced judicial retirements enabling loyalist appointments. Electoral laws gerrymandered districts to favor Fidesz. State advertising was redirected to government-friendly media. By the late 2010s, competition became non-credible despite formal multi-party elections, transforming liberal deficits into electoral ones {Scheppele, 2013 #47190}.

Aggregation of Democracy Types Across Classification Variables

vaporeg_regtype_reports / vaporeg_regtype_detailed

10 Liberal Democracy

20 Defective Democracy

→ Differentiated by democratic quality; transitions between them count as regime change.

vaporeg_regtype_compact

10 Democracy

→ Combines Liberal and Defective Democracy for simplified comparisons.

vaporeg_regtype_quadruple / vaporeg_regtype_triple

1 Democracy

→ Both types merged; used in fourfold and threefold typologies to distinguish broader regime families.

vaporeg_regtype_bindem

1 Democracy (Liberal + Defective)

0 Non-democracy

→ Basic dichotomy; „No Central Authority” = 0, „Part of Other Country” = missing.

4.1.2. Electoral Hybrid Regime

Conceptualization: Electoral hybrid regimes represent a critical transition in legitimation patterns where liberal legitimation has become critically weakened while electoral legitimation, though still present, becomes increasingly compromised and supplemented by emerging institutional claims. Authority is structured through electoral procedures that retain some

legitimizing capacity but operate with severely reduced liberal constraints and systematically restricted civil liberties, creating an institutional architecture where ruling parties claim authority through dual sources: managed electoral victories and growing institutional status as guarantors of performance, stability, or national interest {Levitsky, 2010 #3103; Diamond, 2002 #1224}. This positioning between defective democracies (where liberal legitimation remains reduced but operative) and electoral autocracies (where liberal legitimation becomes absent and electoral legitimation becomes purely facade) reflects a fundamental shift in how authority is organized and justified, moving from liberal-electoral patterns toward institutional patterns characteristic of one-party regimes.

Unlike defective democracies where both electoral and liberal legitimation remain operative despite governance deficits, electoral hybrid regimes feature critically weakened liberal legitimation: constraints on executive power are severely reduced though not completely absent, providing minimal effective limitation on executive actions, civil liberties are systematically restricted through limitations on media freedom and opposition organizing, and rule of law is subordinated to regime maintenance interests. Electoral legitimation persists through multiparty elections where opposition can compete and gain representation, yet systematic manipulation (media bias, administrative obstacles, selective coercion) creates uneven playing fields that compromise elections' capacity to serve as genuine authorization mechanisms. Elections in hybrids function less as competitive procedures through which citizens freely select rulers and more as managed contests providing procedural veneer for ruling party dominance while maintaining enough competition to distinguish hybrids from autocracies with predetermined outcomes. The space created by critically weakened liberal legitimation enables emerging institutional legitimation, where ruling parties increasingly claim authority through performance delivery (economic growth, stability, order), party organizational strength, and institutional role as embodiments of national interest or popular will rather than through competitive validation or liberal constraints {Karl, 1995 #2606}.

This legitimation pattern shapes elite structures distinctively. Elite recruitment operates through dual tracks: electoral procedures provide formal channels through which opposition elites can gain positions via party competition and elections (maintaining some pluralism), while ruling party elites dominate through control of state resources, media access, and administrative machinery providing systematic advantages. Unlike democracies where electoral competition creates pathways for alternation and elite circulation, hybrid ruling elites maintain dominance through manipulation while tolerating opposition presence that poses limited threat. Unlike autocracies where opposition elites face complete exclusion or token participation, hybrid

opposition elites can achieve significant legislative representation and occasionally win subnational contests, creating real but constrained political space. Elite cohesion among ruling parties in hybrids operates through patronage networks sustained by state resource access, coordination around maintaining electoral advantages, and emerging party institutional identity as guarantors of regime performance. Opposition elites face fragmentation due to resource disadvantages, restricted media access, harassment limiting organizational capacity, and difficulty coordinating against entrenched ruling parties with systematic advantages. Elite networks within hybrids form along sharp incumbent-opposition divides with limited circulation between camps, as manipulation maintains boundaries preventing alternation characteristic of democracies while retaining more competitive elite dynamics than autocracies with hegemonic party control.

The boundaries distinguishing electoral hybrids from adjacent types rest on the degree and quality of liberal and electoral legitimization components. Defective democracies retain both electoral legitimization (through genuinely free and fair elections meeting minimal competition standards) and reduced but operative liberal legitimization (constraints exist and function though weakened, civil liberties protected though imperfectly). The critical threshold separating defective democracies from hybrids is not merely quantitative decline in democratic quality but qualitative transformation: when liberal legitimization becomes critically weakened to the point of providing only minimal constraint despite formal institutional existence, and electoral legitimization becomes severely compromised through systematic manipulation, the regime crosses into hybrid territory where legitimization logic begins shifting toward institutional patterns. Electoral autocracies differ from hybrids in that liberal legitimization becomes absent rather than critically weakened (constraints exist only on paper or not at all), and electoral legitimization becomes purely facade rather than compromised but meaningful (elections serve as ritualized endorsements with predetermined outcomes through comprehensive manipulation or hegemonic party control eliminating realistic alternation possibilities, while institutional, personal, or ideological legitimization provides primary authority basis). Hybrids occupy the transitional space where electoral procedures still matter enough that opposition can compete and occasionally win, yet liberal legitimization has weakened to the point where it provides minimal effective constraint, and institutional legitimization emerges to supplement compromised electoral authorization.

The critically weakened but not absent state of liberal legitimization in electoral hybrid regimes creates trajectory uncertainty: hybrids may move toward electoral autocracy if liberal constraints erode further and institutional legitimization becomes dominant, or may transition

back toward defective democracy if opposition mobilization, institutional resistance, or international pressure enables revival of liberal constraints and restoration of electoral fairness. This positioning between more stable regime types (defective democracies with operative liberal legitimation, electoral autocracies with absent liberal legitimation) makes hybrids inherently transitional and unstable forms.

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, an electoral regime is classified as hybrid when actual institutional structures meet the following criteria: (1) multiparty elections are held regularly with opposition parties permitted to compete and multiple candidates or parties contesting executive and legislative positions, with opposition achieving significant representation (usually at least 30% or more of legislative seats) demonstrating meaningful though constrained competition and possessing realistic though difficult paths to executive alternation rather than facing structural predetermination characteristic of hegemonic party systems, (2) liberal legitimation is critically weakened through either severely reduced constraints on executive power (executive dominates other institutions with limited accountability, though constraints are not completely absent) or systematic restrictions on civil liberties (limitations on media freedom, assembly, or association hindering opposition organizing) or both, and (3) elections feature systematic manipulation through unequal media access, electoral commission bias, administrative obstacles to opposition, selective coercion, or resource advantages creating substantial playing field inequalities that compromise electoral fairness without eliminating competition entirely. All three conditions must be satisfied: regimes with genuinely free and fair elections meeting minimal competition standards constitute defective democracies regardless of governance deficits, while regimes where manipulation predetermines outcomes through hegemonic party control or opposition presence becomes token constitute electoral autocracies.

The competition and realistic alternation criterion distinguishes hybrids from electoral autocracies with hegemonic party characteristics by requiring evidence that opposition possesses difficult but not impossible paths to executive power rather than merely achieving legislative representation. This is demonstrated through opposition parties gaining substantial legislative representation (not merely token seats), opposition victories in subnational or municipal elections indicating territorial competitive strength, close electoral margins in national contests indicating genuine uncertainty until vote counting, or instances where opposition mobilization threatens ruling party dominance requiring intensified manipulation to maintain control. The critical test distinguishing hybrids from autocracies is whether opposition has realistic paths to executive alternation despite systematic disadvantages: hybrids feature

difficult but achievable alternation (demonstrated through close executive contests, occasional alternation at executive level, or credible threats to incumbent power), while autocracies with hegemonic party control feature structural predetermination making alternation practically impossible regardless of opposition mobilization (demonstrated through prolonged ruling party dominance spanning multiple decades without executive alternation, extreme manipulation creating insurmountable advantages, or comprehensive control eliminating competitive uncertainty). Ruling parties in hybrids must actively work to maintain advantages through ongoing manipulation and campaign mobilization rather than relying on predetermined outcomes or hegemonic control reducing electoral competition to ritual endorsement.

The liberal legitimization criterion captures critically weakened rather than absent constraints and liberties. This is assessed through evaluating whether executive power faces constraints that exist formally but provide only limited effective checks in practice (legislature can occasionally block or modify executive actions but executive typically dominates, judiciary maintains some independence but faces political pressure, accountability institutions function but with restricted capacity), whether civil liberties enable limited opposition organizing despite restrictions (some independent media exist but face systematic bias and pressure, opposition rallies permitted but subject to administrative obstacles, civil society operates but under constraints), and whether rule of law applies inconsistently serving regime interests while maintaining formal legal structures. Hybrid regimes feature constraints and liberties that exist institutionally and sometimes function but are severely weakened to the point of providing minimal effective limitation on ruling party power, distinguishing them from defective democracies where constraints and liberties remain more robust despite weaknesses, and from electoral autocracies where constraints and liberties are absent or purely formal with no practical effect.

The manipulation criterion requires systematic rather than isolated electoral deficits. Evidence includes state media dominance with biased coverage systematically favoring incumbents and restricting opposition access, electoral commission subordination to executive or ruling party creating biased administration (selective rule enforcement, delayed results, registration manipulation), unequal campaign finance with ruling parties accessing state resources while opposition faces financial restrictions, administrative obstacles disadvantaging opposition (bureaucratic barriers to candidate registration, selective venue denials for rallies, targeted arrests of opposition figures), or localized violence and intimidation targeting opposition without effective state response. Manipulation must create substantial incumbent advantages while leaving opposition enough space to organize and compete, positioning hybrids between fair competition (defective democracy) and comprehensive control (electoral autocracy).

Quantitative indicators assist classification without determining it mechanically. Freedom House scores of 8-10 (Va-PoReg's "rather not free" category) align with hybrid status, as do V-Dem Clean Elections Index values around 0.25-0.50 ("not really" to "ambiguous" clean), Election Free and Fair Index scores of 1-2 (not really to ambiguous free and fair), Political Civil Liberties Index of 0.25-0.50 (restricted liberties), Legislative Constraints Index of 0.25-0.50 (limited to moderate constraints), and Polity5 executive constraints of 3-5 (slight to substantial limitations, indicating constraints exist but with reduced effectiveness). However, qualitative assessment of legitimation patterns, opposition space, and competition meaningfulness determines classification, with quantitative indicators providing corroborating evidence. Cases may diverge from typical ranges while qualifying as hybrid based on institutional structure analysis, and researchers should note Freedom House's December 31 cutoff differs from Va-PoReg's July 1 temporal anchor.

Borderline cases arise when liberal legitimation or electoral manipulation falls near thresholds distinguishing hybrids from adjacent types. Upper borderlines occur when liberal constraints or liberties, while weakened, retain enough effectiveness that ambiguity exists about whether liberal legitimation remains operative providing meaningful constraint (defective democracy) or has become critically weakened providing only minimal constraint (hybrid). Lower borderlines occur when electoral manipulation becomes so comprehensive or liberal constraints so minimal that ambiguity exists about whether competition retains meaning and constraints provide any limitation (hybrid) or whether outcomes are predetermined through hegemonic party control and constraints are absent (electoral autocracy). Military veto power, where armed forces possess constitutional or de facto authority to constrain elected government decisions in non-defense policy domains or to exercise autonomous decision-making in areas affecting civilian governance, can constitute sufficient condition for hybrid classification even when elections are relatively fair, as it represents fundamental weakening of liberal constraints through non-elected power centers. The July 1st temporal anchor applies: classification reflects institutional structures in place on 07/01.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Armenia from independence (09/21/1991) through the present exemplifies electoral hybrid regimes where multiparty elections occur regularly with opposition achieving significant representation, yet systematic manipulation ensures ruling party advantages while liberal legitimation remains critically weakened. Following independence, Armenia established multiparty electoral competition where opposition parties competed in presidential and parliamentary elections and gained legislative representation (opposition

parties collectively holding 30-40% of parliament during various periods under Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan administrations). Real uncertainty in electoral outcomes required ruling parties to mobilize supporters and manage campaigns rather than relying on predetermined results, distinguishing Armenia from autocracies with hegemonic control. However, liberal legitimation remained critically weakened: executive power faced severely reduced constraints with presidents dominating weak parliaments and controlling judiciary appointments though formal institutional structures remained, civil liberties were systematically restricted through state media dominance (public television favoring incumbents, harassment of independent journalists) while some independent outlets operated, administrative obstacles to opposition (bureaucratic barriers, selective prosecution of opposition figures) occurred alongside permitted opposition organizing, and localized violence during campaigns (particularly in 2008 post-election crackdowns) demonstrated minimal rule of law protection. Electoral manipulation included biased electoral commission administration (voter list irregularities, ballot stuffing in some precincts), unequal resource access with ruling parties utilizing state resources for campaigns, and media bias creating uneven information environments. Despite these systematic advantages, opposition could compete meaningfully and occasionally posed threats (as in 2008 when opposition mobilized large protests and 2018 when Velvet Revolution occurred), requiring ruling parties to maintain manipulation rather than relying on hegemonic control. The persistence of hybrid characteristics even following the 2018 Velvet Revolution, despite improved civil liberties and reduced manipulation, reflects the difficulty of fully reviving liberal constraints and achieving free and fair elections meeting democratic standards.

Borderline Cases: Georgia from the Rose Revolution (11/23/2003) represents an upper borderline between defective democracy and electoral hybrid, with ongoing debate about whether liberal legitimation remained reduced but operative or became critically weakened under United National Movement government. Georgia featured competitive elections where UNM faced opposition from various parties, with opposition gaining parliamentary representation and winning municipal contests (including Tbilisi mayoralty in some periods). Media pluralism existed with multiple television channels and print outlets representing diverse views, civil society operated with relative freedom, and some institutional checks functioned including Constitutional Court rulings against government and parliamentary debates limiting executive actions to some degree. These factors suggest reduced but operative liberal legitimation characteristic of defective democracy. However, increasing executive dominance (Saakashvili concentrating power through institutional changes, weak parliamentary oversight

in practice), selective prosecution of opposition figures and oligarchs supporting opposition (most notably Bidzina Ivanishvili before his 2012 electoral challenge), and instances of administrative pressure on opposition created systematic disadvantages suggesting critically weakened rather than merely reduced liberal legitimation. The 2012 peaceful alternation when opposition Georgian Dream coalition won parliamentary elections and UNM transferred power argues for defective democracy classification (liberal legitimation sufficient to enable alternation through electoral means), yet the systematic advantages UNM enjoyed while in power and restrictions on opposition position Georgia near the borderline where distinguishing operative from critically weakened liberal legitimation requires careful assessment. The successful alternation suggests constraints retained enough effectiveness to constitute operative rather than critically weakened liberal legitimation, placing Georgia in defective democracy category but at the borderline with hybrid, warranting the borderline designation in Va-PoReg coding.

Contrasting Cases: Defective democracies such as Poland under Law and Justice (PiS) government (2015-2023) feature genuinely free and fair elections meeting minimal competition standards and reduced but operative liberal legitimation despite significant governance deficits. Polish elections during this period involved genuine competition where Civic Platform and other opposition parties competed against PiS, with alternation occurring at local and European Parliament levels, opposition winning presidential elections narrowly in 2020 demonstrating genuine competition, and 2023 parliamentary elections producing opposition victory and government alternation. Electoral administration through independent National Electoral Commission maintained fairness despite political tensions, media pluralism persisted with significant private outlets providing opposition perspectives despite government pressure on public media, and opposition could organize freely through parties and civil society despite challenges. Governance deficits including judicial independence erosion (disciplinary chambers, Constitutional Tribunal manipulation), media freedom pressures (advertising taxation targeting critical outlets), and executive-legislative tensions created reduced liberal legitimation, yet courts still ruled against government in significant cases, opposition maintained strong institutional presence able to challenge government effectively, and constraints proved sufficient to enable electoral alternation. The persistence of both electoral and liberal legitimation (though liberal component reduced) distinguishes defective democracy from electoral hybrid where liberal legitimation becomes critically weakened to point of providing only minimal constraint.

Electoral autocracies such as Belarus under Alexander Lukashenko (1996-present) feature unfree and unfair elections where competition is so constrained that outcomes are predetermined, and liberal legitimation is absent rather than critically weakened. Opposition candidates face systematic exclusion through restrictive registration requirements (arbitrary candidate disqualifications), severe repression including imprisonment of opposition leaders and activists (mass arrests during 2020 protests), complete state control of media with no independent outlets permitted to operate domestically, electoral commission completely subordinated to executive producing implausible victory margins (Lukashenko typically claiming 70-80%+ of vote), and ballot manipulation ensuring predetermined results regardless of actual voting patterns. The absence of meaningful competition (opposition cannot realistically win even subnational contests), token opposition presence (allowed candidates serve as facade without genuine electoral threat), and predetermined outcomes (results known before counting) distinguish electoral autocracy from electoral hybrid where competition remains meaningful despite systematic disadvantages. Liberal legitimation is absent with no effective constraints on executive power (Lukashenko rules with unlimited authority, judiciary and legislature completely subordinated, no institutional checks function), civil liberties completely restricted (no independent media, no freedom of assembly, opposition organizing faces complete repression), and rule of law absent (laws applied arbitrarily serving regime control). Authority rests on institutional control, personal rule, and coercion rather than any electoral or liberal legitimation components.

4.1.3. Electoral Oligarchy

Conceptualization: Electoral oligarchy constitutes a distinct legitimation pattern characterized by the systematic coexistence of robust liberal-constitutional institutions for a legally defined elite alongside formal political exclusion of the majority population. This dual structure represents a sophisticated legitimation strategy that adopts constitutionalism, rule of law, and institutional checks for the enfranchised minority while embracing competitive elections as the legitimate mechanism for authority distribution within this privileged segment. The pattern fundamentally rejects liberal universalism by establishing a legally codified two-tiered rights system: comprehensive civil liberties and political protections for the elite alongside systematic disenfranchisement of the masses. This exclusion is typically justified through stewardship claims grounded in property

ownership, educational attainment, or presumed competence {Rueschemeyer, 1992 #4582}.

The defining feature of electoral oligarchy lies in its institutional architecture: functioning representative institutions—including empowered legislatures, independent judiciaries, and constrained executives—operate authentically but remain accessible exclusively to a propertied or educated minority. This legitimation pattern decisively shapes elite structures, restricting political composition to a narrow, often propertied class while fostering cohesion through consensus on preserving the exclusionary system itself. Elite factions compete vigorously within established constitutional parameters while maintaining fundamental agreement on excluding the disenfranchised majority.

Electoral oligarchy is demarcated from defective democracies through the principle of suffrage inclusiveness. Defective democracies maintain universal suffrage but exhibit substantial deficits in liberal guarantees or institutional constraints. Electoral oligarchies, conversely, feature robust liberal protections for the elite but are fundamentally defined by the legal exclusion of the majority from political participation. The critical boundary distinction lies in procedural inclusion: defective democracies include the masses procedurally but fail them substantively through weak liberal protections; electoral oligarchies exclude the masses procedurally by design while maintaining strong liberal constitutionalism for the enfranchised minority.

The boundary with electoral oligarchic autocracy is crossed when liberal legitimation within the elite collapses. In electoral oligarchy, competition among the elite remains genuine and the executive is effectively constrained by functioning liberal-constitutional rules. In electoral oligarchic autocracy, while suffrage remains restricted, intra-elite competition becomes façade, judicial independence is systematically nullified, and executive power operates without meaningful constraint despite formal institutional structures {Ziblatt, 2017 #47203}.

Operationalization: A regime qualifies as electoral oligarchy when it simultaneously satisfies two necessary and jointly sufficient conditions: Systematic suffrage restrictions: Suffrage must be de jure or de facto restricted to a minority of the adult population through legal and institutional barriers that extend beyond low participation resulting from apathy or boycott. Exclusionary mechanisms include property or income qualifications, literacy tests (particularly in contexts of widespread illiteracy), poll taxes, or racial exclusions. These restrictions must collectively reduce the effectively enfranchised population to a narrow segment. Assessment requires examination of

suffrage legislation, electoral participation data relative to adult population, and historical scholarship on voting rights. The critical threshold operates at approximately 40-50% of the total adult population: when legal or de facto barriers restrict the effective electorate below this range, classify as electoral oligarchy; regimes maintaining suffrage above this threshold with other substantial deficits typically classify as defective democracy.

Critical boundary logic regarding suffrage composition: The exclusion of women alone (constituting approximately 50% of the adult population), while representing a severe democratic deficit, does not automatically warrant electoral oligarchy classification if universal male suffrage is otherwise effectively implemented. Such cases generally classify as defective democracies due to the substantive participation deficit despite procedural inclusiveness for half the population. Electoral oligarchy classification requires either: (1) suffrage restrictions (property, literacy, racial exclusions) that disenfranchise substantial portions across all genders, resulting in an effective electorate comprising a narrow elite minority of both men and women, or (2) the combination of gender exclusion with additional restrictions (property, literacy) that disenfranchise a significant proportion of the male population, creating a doubly restricted franchise confined to elite males.

Elite constitutionalism and competition: Among the enfranchised minority, the regime must function as a liberal or defective democracy. This necessitates meaningful adherence to rule of law, substantive institutional constraints on executive power through independent judiciary and empowered legislature, and protection of core civil liberties (expression, assembly, association) for the elite. Crucially, elections within the elite must feature genuine competition, integrity, and realistic potential for alternation in power. Assessment draws on qualitative evidence of intra-elite contestation, constitutional practice, and judicial independence, supplemented by quantitative indicators where appropriate. If Polity's executive constraints (xconst) indicator consistently registers 4 or below, or V-Dem indicators for judicial and legislative constraints (v2x_jucon, v2xlg_legcon) remain persistently low, the regime typically classifies as electoral oligarchic autocracy, indicating the collapse of functional intra-elite liberal legitimation. A regime must satisfy both conditions simultaneously for electoral oligarchy classification. Failure of the first condition (broad suffrage) results in classification as democracy or hybrid regime depending on other characteristics. Failure of the second condition (elite constitutionalism) while maintaining restricted suffrage yields classification as electoral oligarchic autocracy.

Examples

Paradigmatic Case: The United Kingdom (1832-1867) represents a classic property-based electoral oligarchy. The Great Reform Act of 1832 rationalized the electoral system but maintained stringent property qualifications, restricting the franchise to approximately 18% of adult males (all women excluded). Within this narrow propertied elite, robust competition occurred between Whigs and Tories, with strong parliamentary constraints on the executive and an independent judiciary. This period exemplifies the dual structure: genuine constitutionalism and political competition for the enfranchised minority alongside the systematic legal exclusion of the vast majority of the adult population based on property and gender {Brock, 1972 #47197}.

Borderline Cases: The United Kingdom (1867-1918) illustrates the transition from electoral oligarchy toward defective democracy. The Second and Third Reform Acts (1867, 1884) significantly expanded the male franchise, moving the effective electorate from under 20% to over 60% of the adult male population (though all women remained excluded). This period is borderline because it tests the 40-50% threshold and the “exclusion of women alone” rule. While the post-1884 electorate likely exceeded 50% of the *adult population*, the combination of remaining property qualifications for men and the complete exclusion of women creates ambiguity. The regime maintained robust elite constitutionalism, but the expanding franchise places it at the upper boundary of the category, soon to transition into a defective democracy with the inclusion of women {Pugh, 1978 #47199}.

Contrasting Cases: Electoral oligarchic autocracies such as Brazil (1889-1930) contrast with paradigmatic electoral oligarchy by failing the elite constitutionalism criterion despite meeting suffrage restrictions. Brazil's "Old Republic" maintained suffrage restricted through literacy requirements (approximately 2-3% of population enfranchised), satisfying the first criterion. However, it failed the second criterion for genuine liberal competition. The "politics of the governors" (*política dos governadores*) and "coffee with milk" politics (*café com leite*) constituted an institutionalized autocratic cartel rather than genuine competition. State-level oligarchs predetermined outcomes through electoral fraud and violence, voiding meaningful constitutional constraints {Leal, 1977 #47200}.

Defective democracies such as India (1950-2019) represent the opposite legitimization pattern to electoral oligarchy. From its founding, India was based on universal adult suffrage without property, literacy, or gender barriers, establishing procedural

inclusiveness as foundational principle. Despite persistent liberal deficits (corruption, weak rule of law, communal violence), its institutional framework is one of mass inclusion rather than elite exclusion. This demonstrates the critical boundary: defective democracies include the masses procedurally but fail them substantively through weak liberal protections; electoral oligarchies exclude the masses procedurally by design while maintaining strong liberal protections for the enfranchised elite {Jaffrelot, 2021 #47183}. Electoral autocracies such as contemporary Malaysia (1980s-2010s) contrast with electoral oligarchy on both criteria. Malaysia maintained universal suffrage without systematic legal restrictions excluding large population segments (lacking first criterion), but its elections featured systematic malapportionment, gerrymandering, and media control that prevented genuine competition. The fundamental difference in legitimation patterns remains clear: electoral oligarchy features genuine competition and constitutional rule for a legally restricted elite; electoral autocracy features manipulated competition despite formally universal participation {Case, 1993 #37069; Case, 1996 #47202}.

4.1.4. Electoral Autocracy

Conceptualization: Electoral autocracy represents a distinctive configuration within the autocratic family where authority is organized around electoral procedures that are maintained in form but systematically emptied of authorizing function. This creates a specific legitimation pattern: electoral institutions structure authority claims and elite coordination, yet the regime drifts toward institutional legitimation through the complete hollowing-out of electoral authorization and the active suppression of liberal legitimation principles. Elections remain regular and formally multiparty for both legislature and chief executive, and rulers derive their claim to govern from these procedures. In practice, however, the electoral architecture operates as a closed system of incumbency affirmation rather than as a mechanism translating citizen preferences into leadership selection {Schedler, 2006 #4701}.

The distinctive feature of electoral autocracy lies in this tension between electoral form and institutional substance. Unlike regimes organized primarily through institutional legitimation patterns (where authority flows from organizational hierarchies, doctrinal frameworks, or external imposition), electoral autocracies continue to structure elite coordination, resource distribution, and succession claims through electoral cycles and party competition. Yet unlike regimes where electoral legitimation functions genuinely, outcomes are predetermined through

systematic manipulation, and liberal legitimation is not merely weakened but absent: meaningful constraints on executive power do not operate, and civil and political liberties are curtailed to prevent opposition from mounting effective challenges. The result is an electoral façade behind which institutional control mechanisms (security apparatuses, administrative hierarchies, patronage networks) increasingly determine who holds power. This hybrid quality generates distinctive elite behavior: ruling elites coordinate manipulation across information control, legal-administrative exclusion, and selective coercion. Electoral cycles remain central rituals compelling rulers to stage campaigns, distribute patronage, and mobilize loyalty through state resources, yet these rituals produce no genuine authorization. Opposition elites are tolerated but contained, obtaining limited representation under conditions that prevent alternation. Elite cohesion on the ruling side rests on shared access to rents and positions dependent on electoral victories that are practically guaranteed. Opposition elites face systematic fragmentation through media marginalization, financial constraints, and legal harassment {Levitsky, 2010 #3103; Magaloni, 2006 #3319}.

Electoral autocracies are distinguished from electoral hybrid regimes through the completeness of electoral authorization's collapse and liberal legitimation's absence. Electoral hybrid regimes also hold multiparty elections, but electoral legitimation retains partial function: opposition has realistic chances of winning executive power through electoral means, and liberal legitimation, though critically weakened, has not been eliminated entirely. Courts occasionally rule against government on politically consequential matters, opposition can campaign with significant though unequal media access, and civil liberties protections, while compromised, allow meaningful political organization. Electoral autocracy begins once manipulation and repression render outcomes substantially predetermined, electoral authorization ceases to translate citizen preferences into leadership selection, and institutional checks fail to constrain executive power on salient political issues. The boundary lies where opposition loses any realistic path to executive power through elections and liberal constraints cease to function in practice.

Electoral autocracies are distinguished from electoral oligarchies through suffrage inclusiveness rather than electoral quality. Electoral oligarchies restrict the franchise to a narrow segment of adults through property requirements, literacy tests (particularly when literacy rates are low), racial exclusions, or other discriminatory barriers that confine voting rights to an elite minority. While these regimes may maintain relatively free competition among the enfranchised and even some constitutional constraints, the systematic exclusion of large population segments from electoral participation places them outside the broadly participatory autocratic category. The decisive threshold lies in inclusiveness: when formal or effective

exclusions confine voting rights to below roughly half of adults, the regime is oligarchic rather than autocratic, regardless of how predetermined outcomes may be {Schedler, 2002 #4699: pp. 36-50}. Electoral autocracies require broad suffrage where the vast majority of adults possess formal voting rights, even though electoral manipulation and repression predetermine outcomes.

Electoral autocracies are distinguished from one-party autocracies through the source and structure of legitimation. One-party autocracies derive authority primarily from party-organizational hierarchies and doctrinal frameworks rather than from electoral procedures. Elections, if held, serve internal party coordination purposes or provide ritualistic affirmation of decisions already made through party mechanisms. The party monopolizes candidate nominations, legally excludes competitors, or subordinates electoral procedures to organizational discipline such that elections serve primarily internal elite circulation rather than structuring authority claims toward citizens. Electoral autocracies retain formally plural competition with multiple parties contesting and continue to route control through electoral institutions (parties, electoral commissions, constitutional procedures) rather than through monopolistic party hierarchies.

Electoral autocracies are distinguished from personalist autocracies through the continued functionality of electoral-institutional mechanisms in structuring elite coordination and succession. Where incumbents still organize authority primarily through electoral institutions and maintain the electoral cycle as the central mechanism of elite coordination and succession management, the regime remains electoral autocracy even under intense leader-centrism and personalist tendencies. Reclassification to personalist autocracy requires that electoral-institutional mechanisms are de facto neutralized in practice and succession becomes non-institutionalized, such that elite cohesion depends fundamentally on personal loyalty networks and individual discretion rather than on electoral coordination and party-based resource distribution. The boundary lies where electoral institutions cease to structure how elites coordinate, distribute resources, and manage succession, replaced by personal networks and leader discretion.

Operationalization: A regime is classified as electoral autocracy when it meets thresholds across three core dimensions simultaneously. All three conditions are necessary and jointly sufficient. Failure of the first condition moves the case outside the electoral family entirely; failure of either the second or third condition moves it upward to electoral hybrid regime where either liberal constraints retain some bite or electoral authorization retains some function.

Electoral institutions are maintained: The regime holds institutionalized multiparty elections for the national legislature and the chief executive regularly, with legal opposition parties permitted to exist and contest. The electoral calendar functions as the organizing rhythm of political competition, even though outcomes are predetermined. Electoral institutions continue to structure elite coordination, authority claims, and resource distribution through party organizations, electoral commissions, and constitutional procedures. Brief postponements or rescheduling of elections do not alter classification; such tactical delays may serve electoral autocracy's manipulation strategy without fundamentally changing the institutional architecture. Indefinite suspension of elections, abolition of opposition parties, or transformation of elections into single-party nomination procedures indicates transition to non-electoral or one-party autocracy. The key indicator is whether electoral institutions continue to structure how ruling elites coordinate, distribute patronage, and justify authority, not whether elections function democratically or produce uncertainty. We assess this dimension through direct examination of constitutional provisions, electoral laws, party registration requirements, and the actual conduct of electoral cycles, drawing on electoral observation reports, legal scholarship, and institutional analyses. Opposition parties must be permitted legal existence and ballot access; regimes that criminalize all opposition or restrict competition to regime-created parties approach the one-party boundary.

Liberal legitimation is systematically absent: Courts and legislature do not constrain the executive on politically relevant issues, and civil liberties are restricted so severely that opposition cannot campaign freely, access media on equal terms, or mobilize supporters without facing repression. This goes beyond mere weakness of liberal institutions to their functional elimination in practice. Judicial rulings adverse to the executive are not enforced when they concern politically consequential matters, parliamentary oversight mechanisms exist in form only without effective investigative or sanctioning powers, and constitutional provisions limiting executive power operate as dead letters on issues affecting regime survival. Evidence includes systematic disqualification of viable opposition candidates through administrative procedures, criminalization of opposition political activities, total or near-total state control of broadcast media with independent outlets restricted to marginal online presence, systematic denial of assembly permits or violent dispersal of opposition gatherings, and sustained harassment of independent civil society organizations through regulatory pressure or security service intimidation. The regime actively suppresses rather than merely neglects liberal legitimation principles. Isolated judicial rulings favoring opposition on minor matters or token parliamentary debates do not indicate operative liberal constraints; the test is whether

institutional checks meaningfully limit executive action on politically salient issues. We assess this dimension through direct observation of executive-judicial-legislative interactions, media landscape analysis, and civil liberties protection in practice, cross-validating with Freedom House ratings (electoral autocracies typically score "Not Free" with ratings of 5.5-7.0) and V-Dem indicators on judicial constraints, legislative independence, and civil society space where available. For many cases, particularly historical regimes and small states, such quantitative indicators do not exist, necessitating qualitative assessment of institutional functioning and repression patterns {Schedler, 2006 #4701}.

Electoral authorization has collapsed: Manipulation and coercion render outcomes substantially predetermined. Opposition parties may hold token seats in the legislature, but executive alternation through elections is not a realistic prospect. The electoral process no longer translates citizen preferences into leadership selection; instead, it ratifies decisions made through institutional control mechanisms prior to voting. Indicators include implausible incumbent vote margins inconsistent with observable public sentiment, systematic exclusion or disqualification of candidates who pose genuine threats to ruling party dominance, electoral commissions staffed entirely by regime loyalists who openly manipulate procedures without pretense of neutrality, major systematic discrepancies between independent observer assessments and official results, and recurrent violence or intimidation during campaign periods that goes unpunished by authorities. The test is whether opposition victory through electoral means remains within the realm of realistic possibility; if not, authorization has failed. We assess this dimension through analysis of electoral results patterns, observation reports from domestic and international monitors, documentation of manipulation techniques, and comparative assessment of official versus independent vote counts.

A regime must meet thresholds across all three dimensions simultaneously to qualify as electoral autocracy. The hybrid-autocracy boundary is crossed once opposition no longer has a realistic path to executive power through elections and liberal constraints cease to function on salient issues. The oligarchy-autocracy threshold is defined by suffrage inclusiveness: when legal or de facto barriers restrict the effective electorate to below roughly half of adults, classify as electoral oligarchy regardless of how predetermined outcomes are; broad suffrage with predetermined outcomes indicates electoral autocracy. The one-party boundary is reached when the ruling party monopolizes candidate nominations, legally excludes competitors, or subordinates electoral procedures to party-organizational hierarchy such that elections serve primarily internal coordination rather than structuring authority claims toward citizens.

Quantitative indicators from established datasets corroborate qualitative assessment but do not determine classification. Electoral autocracies typically show V-Dem Clean Elections Index scores below 0.30, Freedom House ratings of "Not Free," and Polity executive constraints scores of 1 to 2. Classification rests fundamentally on qualitative assessment of legitimization patterns and institutional functioning in practice.

Personalist-leaning electoral autocracies show pronounced leader dominance and concentration of decision-making authority but continue to rely on electoral and party mechanisms for tenure security and elite coordination. Code as personalist autocracy only if effective checks from electoral-party institutions are absent in practice and succession is non-institutionalized, meaning that transitions depend on personal designation or power struggles rather than on electoral-constitutional procedures.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases: Mexico under the PRI from 1940 to 1988 exemplifies electoral autocracy through comprehensive realization of all three dimensions. Multiparty elections for presidency and legislature anchored all authority claims and structured the political calendar, yet opposition victories were systematically blocked through administrative control of vote counting, monopoly over broadcast media, and massive patronage distribution. Courts and parliament never constrained the president on politically consequential matters, liberal legitimization was completely absent, and alternation remained implausible throughout the period despite formal competitive procedures. The regime maintained elaborate electoral rituals while predetermining outcomes through institutional control mechanisms. The combination of these features across all three dimensions over nearly five decades places Mexico squarely within electoral autocracy classification {Magaloni, 2006 #3319}.

Belarus since 1996 demonstrates sustained electoral autocracy following the concentration of presidential power. Regular presidential and parliamentary elections occur with legal opposition parties permitted to contest, yet systematic repression, candidate exclusion through administrative disqualification, and total control of media and electoral commissions predetermine all outcomes. Judicial and legislative institutions provide no effective limits on executive authority. Opposition candidates are routinely imprisoned or barred from running, independent media outlets are shuttered, and official vote counts systematically diverge from independent assessments. Electoral institutions remain while authorization and liberal constraint have been eliminated entirely {Way, 2015 #47195: 691-706}.

Borderline Cases: Singapore from the 1990s onward illustrates a borderline case where constitutional defense measures and organizational dominance create ambiguity distinguishing

electoral autocracy from one-party autocracy. Elections remain competitive in form with opposition parties contesting and occasionally winning constituencies, satisfying the electoral institutions criterion. Electoral outcomes consistently favor the ruling PAP through manipulation of electoral rules, media control, and legal restrictions on opposition activity. However, the PAP's organizational monopoly, comprehensive control over state institutions, and systematic subordination of plural competition to party-organizational discipline blur the boundary between manipulated electoral pluralism and institutional-organizational dominance. The ambiguity centers on whether electoral procedures or party-organizational hierarchy primarily structures authority. The classification as borderline electoral/one-party autocracy rather than full electoral autocracy rests on: (1) the PAP's institutional monopoly extends beyond electoral manipulation to organizational control over state apparatus, (2) opposition parties obtain limited representation but face systematic administrative and legal constraints that suggest subordination to party-organizational logic rather than merely manipulated pluralism, (3) electoral mechanisms coexist with party-organizational hierarchy in structuring authority rather than electoral procedures alone organizing elite coordination. Transition to unambiguous electoral autocracy would require either genuine electoral pluralism without organizational monopoly or clear shift where party organization no longer structures authority independently of electoral procedures {Chua, 2004 #37074; Bell, 1997 #9153: 6-32}.

Russia from the 2008 office-swap between Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev through approximately 2020 constitutes a borderline case toward personalist autocracy. Multiparty executive and legislative elections continued regularly and structured authority claims, satisfying the electoral institutions criterion. Competition was rendered non-genuine through comprehensive media control, systematic candidate exclusion, and administrative manipulation of electoral procedures, with liberal legitimation absent in practice. However, elite cohesion increasingly centered on the leader and security networks rather than on party-based coordination, yet succession remained managed through electoral-constitutional channels rather than through personal fiat or designation. The regime stands at the boundary: rising personalism and coercive coordination point toward personalist rule, while the organizing logic still operates through electoral institutions. The classification as borderline electoral/personalist autocracy rested on: (1) electoral procedures continued to structure authority claims and elite coordination despite personalist tendencies, (2) succession mechanisms remained institutionalized through electoral-constitutional procedures rather than personal designation, (3) United Russia party maintained organizational role in elite coordination alongside security networks. Classification would shift to personalist autocracy if succession became non-institutionalized and electoral

mechanisms ceased to structure elite coordination in practice, replaced entirely by personal networks and leader discretion {Gel'man, 2015 #47119}.

Azerbaijan under the Aliyev dynasty (particularly after 2003) borders personalist autocracy from the opposite direction. Electoral procedures are maintained with multiparty competition satisfying the electoral institutions criterion, yet dynastic succession (from Heydar to Ilham Aliyev in 2003) and extreme concentration of power in the presidency suggest drift toward personalist rule. However, elections continue to structure elite coordination and resource distribution through the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party rather than purely through personal networks, keeping the regime within electoral autocracy despite strong personalist tendencies. The boundary distinction rests on whether electoral-party mechanisms or personal loyalty networks primarily organize elite coordination.

Contrasting Cases: Electoral hybrid regimes such as Malaysia before 2018 retained genuine though unequal competition allowing realistic opposition victory, distinguishing them from electoral autocracy. Elections still authorized despite significant manipulation, liberal constraints operated partially with courts occasionally ruling against government, and alternation remained possible through electoral means. Opposition could campaign with unequal but significant media access, civil society maintained space for organization despite government pressure, and judicial independence, though compromised, retained some function. The 2018 opposition victory confirmed that electoral authorization functioned sufficiently to translate citizen preferences into leadership selection. This demonstrates the critical threshold: where opposition retains a realistic path to power through elections, electoral authorization retains function, and liberal constraints retain some bite, the regime remains hybrid rather than crossing into electoral autocracy.

Personalist autocracies such as Uganda under Yoweri Museveni (particularly from the mid-2000s onward) illustrate the boundary with electoral autocracy through progressive neutralization of electoral-institutional mechanisms. Multiparty elections were reintroduced in 2005 after a no-party system, formally satisfying electoral procedures. However, electoral institutions became increasingly subordinated to personal rule: succession planning centers on Museveni's personal designation rather than party-institutional processes, authority flows primarily from personal control over military and security forces rather than through party-electoral coordination, and elite cohesion depends fundamentally on personal loyalty networks and patronage distribution through presidential discretion rather than on electoral victories or institutionalized party structures. The contrast shows that electoral autocracy requires electoral institutions to genuinely structure elite coordination and authority claims, even if outcomes are

predetermined. Where personal networks and leader discretion progressively replace electoral-institutional coordination as the primary organizing mechanism of authority, the regime crosses into personalist autocracy.

One-party autocracies such as Uzbekistan after 1991 demonstrate the boundary with electoral autocracy through the subordination of formally plural competition to party-organizational dominance. Multiple political parties exist legally and contest elections, formally satisfying multiparty criteria. However, opposition parties were created by the regime itself or co-opted entirely, with candidate selection controlled through the ruling party's organizational hierarchy. Authority flows from party-organizational structures rather than from genuinely plural electoral procedures. Elections serve primarily to ratify decisions made within party structures and to provide international legitimation rather than structuring authority through competitive electoral pluralism. Elite circulation occurs through party-organizational mechanisms rather than through electoral competition. The fundamental difference lies in the legitimation pattern: where party-organizational hierarchy subordinates nominally plural electoral procedures to internal coordination mechanisms and opposition parties lack genuine autonomy from the ruling party's organizational control, the regime is one-party autocracy rather than electoral autocracy despite the formal existence of multiple parties.

4.1.5. Electoral Oligarchical Autocracies

Conceptualization: Conceptualization Electoral oligarchical autocracy constitutes a distinct legitimation pattern defined by the systematic restriction of political participation to a legally defined minority, combined with the absence of meaningful liberal-constitutional constraints on executive power within that elite. Its legitimizing narrative centers on the necessity of elite stewardship for maintaining order and competent governance, explicitly rejecting the principle of popular sovereignty. This pattern adopts the institutional façade of electoral competition while ensuring these processes lack substantive fairness and capacity to constrain the ruling group. Authority is structured through the legal exclusion of the majority population from suffrage, combined with the systematic failure of intra-elite constitutionalism across three dimensions: electoral competition is rendered meaningless through fraud and manipulation, executive power operates without effective legislative or judicial constraint, and civil liberties are restricted even for the enfranchised elite. Formal representative institutions (parliaments, courts, parties) exist but function as instruments of elite domination rather than as mechanisms

of genuine contestation or constraint {Schedler, 2013 #16449}. The legitimation pattern fundamentally shapes elite composition and cohesion. The ruling coalition comprises a narrow segment defined by socioeconomic status or political allegiance, creating an elite united by shared interest in preserving both the exclusionary system and their dominant position. This distinguishes it from electoral oligarchy, where elite factions compete under meaningful constitutional constraints, and from right-wing autocracy, which implements comprehensive exclusion based on racial or ideological supremacy while typically abandoning multi-party elections altogether in favor of alternative legitimation patterns like corporatism or party monopoly {Gibson, 2012 #47206}. The boundary with electoral oligarchy is decisively crossed when intra-elite constitutionalism collapses, eliminating meaningful competition and constraints within the privileged minority. The boundary with electoral autocracy is defined by suffrage inclusiveness: electoral autocracies maintain universal suffrage but lack competition, while electoral oligarchical autocracies restrict suffrage to a minority elite but similarly lack genuine competition within that elite.

Operationalization A regime qualifies as electoral oligarchical autocracy when it simultaneously satisfies two necessary and jointly sufficient conditions:

Systematic suffrage restrictions to a minority elite: The regime must maintain de jure or de facto suffrage restrictions that reduce the effectively enfranchised population to a minority segment, typically below 40% of the adult population. This threshold reflects the conceptual definition of elite minority rule {Vanhanen, 2019 #43864}. Restrictions must be institutionalized through legal mechanisms such as property qualifications, literacy tests in contexts of widespread illiteracy, or complex registration requirements designed to disenfranchise specific socioeconomic groups. Critically, additive restrictions must have substantial empirical impact. A nominal property requirement in a context of widespread property ownership, or a literacy test in a highly literate society, would not alone satisfy this criterion if the effective electorate still constitutes a majority of the adult population. The restrictions must be the primary cause of the narrow electoral base rather than incidental formal barriers that lack exclusionary effect in practice. Assessment requires examination of suffrage legislation, census data on property ownership or literacy rates, electoral participation data relative to adult population, and historical scholarship documenting the intended and actual exclusionary impact of voting restrictions.

Absence of meaningful intra-elite constitutionalism: Among the enfranchised minority, the regime must fail to maintain a genuine liberal-constitutional order. This condition is operationalized through the failure of at least two of the following three sub-conditions, which collectively define the collapse of intra-elite constraint:

Electoral Competition: Elections lack substantive fairness and competition. This is indicated by

systematic electoral fraud, opposition repression, or the absence of realistic alternation in power. Empirically, V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index (v2x_polyarchy) typically falls below 0.3 for the enfranchised population. Executive Constraints: The executive operates without effective constraint from legislative or judicial institutions. Legislatures serve as rubber-stamp bodies, and judiciaries lack independence from executive control. Polity's executive constraints score (xconst) is typically 3 or below. Civil Liberties: Core civil liberties including freedom of expression, assembly, and association are significantly restricted for the enfranchised population. V-Dem's Freedom of Expression index (v2x_freexp_altinf) typically falls below 0.4. Quantitative indicators from datasets like V-Dem and Polity serve as supporting evidence but never as automatic classification rules {Coppedge, 2020 #45951}. A regime must meet both primary conditions simultaneously. Failure of the first condition (broad suffrage with autocratic features) results in classification as electoral autocracy. Failure of the second condition (restricted suffrage with elite constitutionalism) results in classification as electoral oligarchy.

Examples Paradigmatic Cases: Brazil's Old Republic (1889-1930) represents a paradigmatic case. The regime maintained suffrage restricted through literacy requirements in a context where illiteracy exceeded 65% of the adult population, limiting the effective electorate to approximately 2-3% and satisfying Criterion 1 through restrictions with substantial exclusionary impact. It failed Criterion 2 through the systematic absence of intra-elite constitutionalism: the "politics of the governors" (política dos governadores) constituted an autocratic cartel with predetermined outcomes through coronelismo (a system of electoral fraud and violence controlled by local bosses), the executive dominated a rubber-stamp federal legislature and subordinate judiciary, and civil liberties for the enfranchised were routinely violated through arbitrary detention and press censorship against dissenting elite voices, demonstrating failure on all three sub-conditions {Leal, 1977 #47200}. Honduras (1900-1950) provides a second paradigm. Suffrage was restricted by property and literacy qualifications in a context of widespread poverty and illiteracy, maintaining an effective electorate below 10% of the adult population and satisfying Criterion 1 through restrictions with substantial exclusionary impact. The liberal and conservative parties operated within a system of entrenched elite pacts where electoral outcomes were negotiated among faction leaders rather than determined by free voting. Under figures like Policarpo Bonilla and subsequent caudillos, the executive routinely ignored congressional opposition, dismissed unfavorable judicial rulings, and controlled appointments to both branches. Dissenting voices within the elite faced intimidation through arbitrary arrest and forced exile, while opposition newspapers were shut

down or censored. This confirms the systematic failure of intra-elite constitutionalism across all three dimensions {Mahoney, 2001 #3328}.

Borderline Cases: Argentina (1880-1912) illustrates the boundary with electoral oligarchy. The regime maintained suffrage restricted to approximately 2-9% of the total population through property requirements and the exclusion of unnaturalized immigrants in a context where these restrictions had substantial exclusionary impact, satisfying Criterion 1. The classification hinges on Criterion 2. While some elite competition occurred between factions and civil liberties for the elite were somewhat better protected than in Brazil, the pre-1912 system demonstrated fundamental failure on two dimensions: systematic electoral manipulation by the conservative National Autonomist Party (PAN) eliminated genuine competition, and executive dominance rendered congressional opposition largely ineffective. The systematic reduction of fraud and the genuine opening of competition after the 1912 Sáenz Peña Law confirms the autocratic nature of the prior system, justifying classification as electoral oligarchical autocracy for this period through satisfaction of the "at least two of three" threshold {Rock, 1987 #10477}.

Contrasting Cases: Electoral oligarchies such as the United Kingdom (1832-1867) contrast through their maintenance of genuine intra-elite constitutionalism, including robust party competition between Whigs and Tories and independent institutional constraints within the propertied elite, despite restricted suffrage {Brock, 1972 #47197}. Right-wing autocracies such as Apartheid South Africa (1948-1994) differ fundamentally by basing exclusion on racial supremacy and abandoning multi-party elections for the dominant group in favor of National Party monopoly {Marx, 1998 #47207}. Electoral autocracies such as contemporary Russia maintain universal suffrage while eliminating genuine competition, thus failing Criterion 1 while demonstrating similar autocratic features in Criterion 2 {Gel'man, 2015 #47119}.

4.2 Regimes Based on Provisional Legitimation

Regimes Based on Provisional Legitimation claim authority through temporal self-limitation and future orientation rather than through established authorization procedures or permanent institutional frameworks. These regimes explicitly designate themselves as temporary, pending alternative forms of legitimation, typically electoral authorization. Authority derives from managing transitions between regime types rather than from stable institutional patterns.

The legitimation logic centers on future orientation: regimes claim current authority is justified by commitments to establish alternative legitimation frameworks. This temporal framing

structures elite behavior, as anticipated future authorization provides incentives for cooperation during transition. However, when provisional status becomes indefinite without progress toward promised authorization, legitimization claims weaken and often reveal underlying autocratic consolidation.

Provisional Legitimation encompasses two variants differentiated by whether liberal legitimization operates during transition. Democratizing regimes maintain robust civil liberties, genuine executive constraints through multiparty power-sharing, and inclusive procedures, creating structural conditions that make electoral commitments credible. Non-Electoral Transitional regimes lack these liberal features, operating through crisis-necessity claims (emergency conditions, revolutionary consolidation, post-conflict stabilization) that justify unconstrained executive authority. Both variants typically reference electoral legitimization as intended endpoint, but differ fundamentally in whether authority derives from liberal-procedural correctness (inclusive processes, rights protection, executive constraints) or from substantive necessity claims (crisis management, revolutionary credentials, technocratic expertise).

This distinction between democratizing and non-electoral transitional regimes has both definitional and predictive significance. Liberal features during transition create structural conditions making electoral commitments more credible: opposition can organize effectively, executive power faces institutional constraints, and pluralism enables monitoring. Electoral promises without liberal features face weaker enforcement mechanisms, as opposition lacks organizational capacity and accountability depends on regime self-restraint rather than institutional checks.

Boundary setting distinguishes Provisional Legitimation from adjacent patterns. These regimes differ from Electoral Autocracies undergoing liberalization because incumbents lack electoral mandates; authority is explicitly provisional rather than based on electoral victories. They differ from Military Autocracies claiming transitional status when unified military command monopolizes authority from inception; genuine Provisional Legitimation requires institutional fluidity, not consolidated hierarchy using transitional rhetoric as cover. They differ from personalist or one-party regimes claiming endless transitions when institutional consolidation has occurred; provisional status requires genuine uncertainty about future authorization, not merely rhetorical claims masking permanent rule.

Elite composition reflects transitional imperatives. In democratizing variants, recruitment occurs through multiparty negotiation and inclusive processes, with elites from diverse political constituencies represented. In non-electoral transitional variants, recruitment reflects crisis

management needs (militia control, bureaucratic survival, revolutionary credentials). Networks in democratizing regimes form around horizontal power-sharing commitments; in non-electoral transitional regimes around vertical patron-client ties and coercion. These differences shape post-transition trajectories: inclusive elite networks facilitate democratic consolidation possibilities, while exclusive crisis-based networks create pressures toward autocratic consolidation.

Provisional Legitimation is inherently temporally unstable. Most regimes transition to electoral legitimation, consolidate into permanent autocracy, or experience breakdown. Extended duration without resolution typically reveals either successful resistance to consolidation (state failure preventing stabilization) or fake provisional claims (autocracy consolidated under personalist, military, or party control while maintaining transitional rhetoric as legitimation facade). Genuine provisional legitimation creates pressures toward resolution, while indefinite transitional status indicates underlying permanent patterns.

4.2.1. Democratizing Regime

Conceptualization: Democratizing regimes legitimate authority through provisional-procedural claims: the assertion that inclusive processes, pluralistic structures, and binding commitments to democratic transition confer legitimacy during periods when electoral authorization is deferred. Authority derives neither from electoral victories, revolutionary mandates, technocratic necessity, nor imposed settlements, but from procedural architecture itself: governance structures resulting from multiparty consensus, operating through power-sharing mechanisms preventing single-faction monopoly, and maintaining openness to contestation through protected opposition rights. The regime's explicitly temporary character is itself a legitimation source: by institutionalizing provisional status through binding electoral timelines or constitutional roadmaps, regimes claim authority precisely through self-limitation. This legitimation pattern shapes elite structures distinctively. Elites are recruited across ideological and organizational boundaries through negotiated inclusion rather than electoral competition, revolutionary vanguards, or technocratic appointment, reflecting political constituencies requiring representation to validate the transitional process. Cohesion derives from procedural pacts {O'Donnell, 1986 #3991: 37-47}: shared commitment to the transition process temporarily suspends winner-take-all competition, creating incentives for cross-factional cooperation. Networks form horizontally through transitional institutions (coalition cabinets, roundtable forums) rather than vertically through party discipline or military

command. This creates distinctive fragility: elite cohesion depends on continuous demonstration of progress toward democratic transition and unravels if timelines are breached or dominant factions defect from procedural commitments.

Democratizing regimes are distinguished from autocracies deploying transitional rhetoric by credible procedural architecture. Autocratic regimes frequently claim provisional status to justify emergency powers or indefinite rule but lack institutional mechanisms (binding timelines, multiparty governance, opposition rights) characterizing genuine provisional-procedural legitimation. Military regimes may promise elections while monopolizing authority; personalist rulers may convene multiparty forums lacking decision-making power; revolutionary governments may claim transitional mandates while systematically excluding opposition. The distinguishing feature is whether procedural inclusiveness and temporal self-limitation are institutionalized through binding commitments and distributed authority, or merely rhetorical covers for unilateral rule.

Critical for classification is distinguishing negotiation phases from transitional government formation. During negotiation phases, incumbent autocratic regimes may bargain with opposition while retaining unilateral executive authority and capacity to reverse the process through normal governmental decisions. These periods are coded according to incumbent regime's legitimation pattern, with notation of ongoing negotiations. Classification as democratizing begins only when shared executive authority is institutionalized such that reversal would require violation of established frameworks, coercion against multiparty partners, or regime breakdown rather than routine policy reversal. This shift from unilateral reversal capacity to institutionalized multiparty governance marks the beginning of provisional-procedural legitimation.

Despite liberal features (inclusiveness, pluralism, civil liberties), democratizing regimes are classified as Hybrid rather than Democracy because they lack electoral authorization. Democracy definitionally requires authority derived from competitive elections; provisional regimes, regardless of quality or liberal character, cannot be democracies until elections conferring governmental authority are held. The transition from Hybrid to Democracy occurs when elections are successfully conducted, assuming other democratic criteria (fairness, competitiveness, civil liberties) are maintained.

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, a regime is coded as Democratizing when actual institutional structures meet all of the following criteria simultaneously.

Electoral authorization must be absent. No executive or legislative elections conferring governmental authority have been held. If competitive elections have occurred, classify as democracy or electoral regime type regardless of transitional claims. This criterion is binary: either elections have been held (not democratizing) or they have not (potentially democratizing pending other criteria).

A multiparty transitional government must be established. An interim executive authority exercises *de facto* governmental power, issuing decrees and controlling ministries. The government must exhibit multiparty character through either representatives from at least two distinct political factions holding positions with substantive decision-making authority (cabinet posts with genuine policy influence, not merely advisory roles), or if the executive remains single-faction, at least two additional opposition parties can organize freely, contest scheduled elections, and operate media without systematic repression. The government must explicitly claim provisional status through self-designation as "interim," "transitional," or equivalent terminology, and must be formed after regime rupture (revolution, authoritarian collapse, negotiated settlement) rather than through normal democratic succession. Critically, reversal of the transition process must require violation of established institutional frameworks or coercion against multiparty partners rather than routine executive decisions, distinguishing transitional governments from mere negotiation phases where incumbents retain unilateral reversal capacity.

Binding electoral commitment must be demonstrated within 12 weeks of transitional government formation. The regime demonstrates commitment to democratic elections through announced election date with timeline not exceeding 24 months, binding transitional constitution specifying electoral timeline with enforcement mechanisms, or formal invitation to international electoral monitoring with agreed timeline. Election postponements do not disqualify if new date is set within six months with technical justification (voter registration, security stabilization), but repeated postponements (more than two) or indefinite delay without credible justification result in reclassification. This criterion is non-negotiable: absence of electoral commitment within 12 weeks disqualifies democratizing classification regardless of other features, as electoral commitment distinguishes provisional-procedural legitimation from crisis-necessity legitimation.

A civil liberties floor must be maintained. The regime must satisfy at least two of three sub-criteria: opposition organizing rights (at least two opposition parties can engage in peaceful political activity without systematic detention or blanket prohibition), media pluralism (at least one independent media outlet operates without pre-publication censorship), and proportionate

repression (repression limited to responses to armed resistance rather than targeting peaceful organization or media criticism). Satisfaction of fewer than two criteria results in non-electoral transitional classification rather than democratizing.

No single faction may hold monopoly power. No single political faction holds unconstrained veto power over transitional decisions. Government operates through coalition requiring consensus, transitional council with distributed authority, or parliamentary accountability with multiparty composition. Regimes where one faction dominates all key decisions despite nominal inclusion of other parties fail this criterion.

Alternative legitimization patterns must be excluded. The regime cannot be dominated by a military junta exercising effective veto power over civilian decisions (military autocracy), a single ruling party monopolizing transitional institutions while banning opposition (one-party autocracy), or personalist authority exercising unilateral control (personalist autocracy). If armed forces hold veto power or a single party or leader monopolizes decision-making despite nominal multiparty structures, classify according to underlying autocratic pattern.

Temporal considerations for mid-year formations apply. All assessments use July 1st as the temporal anchor. If transitional government forms after July 1st of year N, code as democratizing beginning July 1st of year N+1, provided all criteria remain satisfied at that date. Changes in government composition (prime minister replacement, party withdrawals, coalition reshuffles) do not reset the 12-week electoral commitment timeline unless a fundamental shift in legitimization pattern occurs (military coup against transitional government, transition from unilateral to multiparty executive). Regimes persisting beyond 24 months without holding elections should be reassessed for whether they remain genuinely provisional or have consolidated into underlying autocratic patterns; indefinite maintenance of transitional status without electoral progress typically indicates crisis-necessity legitimization rather than provisional-procedural legitimization.

Borderline cases guidance assists with ambiguous situations. If electoral commitment is slightly delayed (13-16 weeks) but other criteria strongly satisfied and commitment appears credible, code as democratizing with annotation. If power imbalance exists despite formal multiparty structure, apply substantive authority test: Can weaker parties veto key decisions or exit with consequences for regime stability? If yes, code as democratizing; if no, code as non-electoral transitional. If multiple criteria are borderline simultaneously, presume non-electoral transitional unless clear trajectory of improvement is evident.

Quantitative indicators provide supplementary guidance. V-Dem Political Civil Liberties Index above 0.50 and Freedom House scores below 11 typically align with democratizing status,

though qualitative assessment of multiparty governance and electoral commitment determines classification.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Germany (11/10/1918-01/19/1919) exemplifies democratizing regime characteristics through the Council of People's Deputies' multiparty composition (SPD and USPD at executive level, DDP in key ministries), rapid electoral commitment (elections announced 11/30/1918, 20 days after formation, held 01/19/1919), and civil liberties permitting opposition organizing and media pluralism. Despite repression of the armed Spartacist uprising, proportionate repression criterion was satisfied because violence targeted armed insurrection rather than peaceful opposition, and other leftist parties operated legally. Legitimation derived from procedural inclusiveness and electoral commitment rather than revolutionary mandate {Kolb, 2005 #2775: 23-36}.

South Africa (09/01/1993-04/27/1994) represents paradigmatic negotiated transition through the Transitional Executive Council including ANC, National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, and other formations in power-sharing arrangements. Authority derived from inclusive negotiation and binding electoral commitment in the Interim Constitution scheduling 04/27/1994 elections with constitutional enforcement mechanisms. Civil liberties and media freedom enabled opposition across the spectrum to organize and campaign. The TEC period marked the shift from negotiation phase (where NP retained unilateral reversal capacity) to institutionalized multiparty governance requiring regime breakdown rather than routine policy change for reversal {Sisk, 1995 #47078: 210-235}.

Nepal (04/24/2006-04/10/2008) following the Jana Andolan II movement exemplifies post-monarchy democratizing transition. The interim government included Seven Party Alliance and Maoists in power-sharing arrangements after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (November 2006). All three civil liberties sub-criteria satisfied: opposition organizing across full spectrum including former insurgents, media pluralism with independent outlets operating freely, and proportionate repression with violence limited to isolated security incidents rather than systematic political targeting. Binding electoral commitment established through peace agreement specifying Constituent Assembly elections (held 04/10/2008). The shift from King Gyanendra's autocratic rule to multiparty interim government required regime rupture rather than policy adjustment, with reversal necessitating breakdown of peace agreement and renewed armed conflict {Lawoti, 2010 #47085: 1-19}.

Borderline Cases: Portugal (04/25/1974-11/25/1975) illustrates complexity during military-influenced transitions. MFA takeover established provisional government with civilian party

participation, announced elections (Constituent Assembly held 04/25/1975), and maintained formal democratic commitment. However, Council of the Revolution exercised substantial veto power and systematic purges of rightist forces occurred, straining the exclusion of alternative patterns criterion. Coded as borderline democratizing rather than military autocracy because civilian parties held genuine governmental authority contestable through political mobilization, elections were held with results respected despite MFA preferences, and civil liberties were maintained for most spectrum {Maxwell, 1995 #47080}.

Spain (04/01/1977-06/15/1977) presents temporal complexity. Democratizing classification begins only 04/01/1977 with Communist Party legalization establishing genuine multiparty pluralism, not with Suárez's appointment (07/01/1976) when PCE remained illegal. The brief window before 06/15/1977 elections constitutes democratizing: multiparty government (though Suárez-dominated), full opposition legalization, expanded civil liberties, and binding electoral commitment (announced 10/01/1976). Only when all criteria converged did Spain transition from liberalizing autocracy to democratizing regime.

Contrasting Cases: Thailand (05/22/2014-03/24/2019) under NCPO is classified as military autocracy rather than democratizing despite transitional rhetoric and electoral promises. The National Council for Peace and Order exercised unconstrained authority through unified military command under General Prayuth Chan-ocha. Interim constitution (July 2014) granted NCPO absolute legislative and executive power with legal immunity. Civilian advisory bodies (National Legislative Assembly, National Reform Council) lacked substantive decision-making authority and were appointed by NCPO rather than emerging from multiparty negotiation. Civil liberties systematically violated: opposition organizing prohibited under martial law and Article 44 powers, media faced pre-publication censorship and post-publication prosecution, repression targeted peaceful political activity including academic seminars and symbolic gestures. Electoral promises repeatedly postponed (2015, 2016, 2017) with NCPO controlling timeline unilaterally. Test: could military as unified institution override civilian decisions? Yes, demonstrably through constitutional prerogatives and direct command authority {Chambers, 2016 #47087: 387-406}.

Iraq (06/28/2004-01/30/2005) under Iraqi Interim Government is classified as non-electoral transitional rather than democratizing due to insufficient liberal features despite formal multiparty structure. Government included diverse factions (Kurdish, Shia, Sunni representatives) but excluded Baathist elements systematically. Civil liberties floor not met: only one of three sub-criteria satisfied. Media pluralism existed with multiple outlets operating, but opposition organizing severely constrained by security collapse and sectarian violence, and

repression extended beyond armed insurgents to peaceful political exclusion of former regime elements. Executive constraints nominal: substantial American military presence (138,000 troops) and external influence over security decisions meant reversal capacity depended on coalition forces rather than Iraqi multiparty consensus. While elections were announced and held (01/30/2005), absence of robust civil liberties during transitional period prevents democratizing classification {Dawisha, 2009 #32553: 178-203}.

Zimbabwe (02/13/2009-07/31/2013) Government of National Unity is classified as electoral autocracy (power-sharing variant) rather than democratizing because it emerged from flawed elections rather than post-rupture transition. ZANU-PF retained dominant control over security forces (military, police, intelligence) and state apparatus despite nominal power-sharing with MDC formations. Systematic repression continued throughout GNU period: opposition organizing faced harassment and violence, independent media operated under threat, and civil liberties floor not maintained. Power-sharing arrangement represented accommodation within ongoing electoral autocratic rule rather than genuine multiparty governance where reversal would require regime breakdown. MDC ministers could be removed or sidelined by ZANU-PF unilaterally, failing the test for genuine coalition governance. The arrangement emerged from electoral manipulation (2008 runoff boycott) rather than regime rupture, distinguishing it from post-revolutionary or post-collapse democratizing transitions {LeBas, 2011 #47089: 133-156}.

4.2.2. Non-Electoral Transitional Regime

Conceptualization: Non-electoral transitional regimes legitimate authority through crisis-necessity claims rather than liberal-procedural commitments. These regimes represent the autocratic variant of Provisional Legitimation and constitute a common pattern for post-rupture governance. They emerge from regime ruptures (revolutions, institutional collapse, civil war termination) where authority structures have dissolved but no new inclusive legitimation framework has been established. Unlike democratizing regimes that claim authority through liberal processes pending elections, non-electoral transitional regimes assert the right to govern through substantive necessity: emergency conditions, revolutionary consolidation, post-conflict stabilization, or technocratic imperatives that preclude normal authorization procedures.

The legitimation logic centers on retrospective validation rather than procedural correctness. Regimes claim authority will be justified by outcomes (successful stabilization, revolutionary consolidation, crisis resolution) rather than through processes (multiparty governance, protected civil liberties, executive constraints). This distinguishes them fundamentally from

democratizing regimes, where legitimacy derives from inclusive procedures and liberal features themselves during the transitional period, not from promised future outcomes.

The critical distinction from democratizing regimes lies in whether liberal legitimation operates during transition. Both regime types typically reference electoral legitimation as intended endpoint and often promise elections. The difference is not whether elections are promised, but whether liberal features create structural conditions making those promises credible and enforceable. Democratizing regimes maintain robust civil liberties, genuine executive constraints through multiparty power-sharing, and pluralism enabling monitoring. These liberal features serve as commitment devices: opposition has structural power to hold regimes accountable, executive authority is constrained through institutional checks, and renegeing carries high costs. Non-electoral transitional regimes lack these features. Opposition organizing is constrained, executive power operates unilaterally or through dominated coalitions, and civil liberties are limited. Electoral promises under such conditions constitute cheap talk: opposition lacks organizational capacity to enforce promises, regimes retain unilateral authority to cancel or manipulate elections, and no accountability mechanisms exist beyond regime self-restraint. Elite composition reflects crisis imperatives rather than negotiated inclusion. Recruitment occurs through control of violence, bureaucratic survival, revolutionary credentials, or clan networks, not through representation of diverse political constituencies. Cohesion derives from shared crisis management or revolutionary solidarity rather than from procedural pacts. Networks form around vertical patron-client ties and coercion rather than horizontal power-sharing. When crises resolve, these regimes typically consolidate into permanent autocracy rather than transitioning to democracy, as liberal elite structures were never established.

Non-electoral transitional regimes encompass considerable heterogeneity, ranging from highly exclusive governance to partially liberalized autocracies with some opposition activity tolerated. Classification as non-electoral transitional rather than democratizing is determined by whether liberal features are sufficiently robust to constitute genuine liberal legitimation, assessed without ex post consideration of outcomes. Regimes are coded based on features present at the time, not retrospectively adjusted based on whether democratization ultimately succeeded or failed.

Boundary setting distinguishes non-electoral transitional from other patterns. These regimes differ from democratizing regimes through absence of robust liberal features (fewer than two of three civil liberties criteria satisfied, or lack of genuine executive constraints). They differ from military autocracies because military-led regimes with unified command hierarchies code as military autocracy from inception, regardless of transitional rhetoric or electoral promises.

When military officers exercise authority through chain of command or hold veto power over civilian actors, classification is military autocracy. Non-electoral transitional applies only when armed groups are fragmented without institutional hierarchy or when civilian actors hold primary authority with military participation but not monopoly. They differ from personalist autocracy because authority remains formally collective; from one-party autocracy because no single party monopolizes while banning alternatives; and from external legitimation when domestic actors exercise primary authority despite external support.

Legitimation through crisis necessity becomes less credible as crises resolve or become normalized. Extended duration without elections reveals either that crises were exaggerated (legitimation was facade for autocratic consolidation) or that new crises perpetually emerge (state failure preventing consolidation). Most non-electoral transitional regimes either consolidate into permanent autocracy as institutional patterns emerge, transition to electoral legitimation through elections, or fragment into renewed conflict. Regimes claiming transitional status while exhibiting consolidation indicators should be recoded as underlying autocracy type. Assessment focuses on whether institutional pattern has emerged beneath transitional rhetoric, not on duration alone.

Operationalization: A regime is coded as non-electoral transitional if, as of July 1st, it meets all of the following criteria:

Electoral Authorization Absent: No executive or legislative elections have conferred governmental authority in the preceding period. This distinguishes non-electoral transitional from all electoral regime types and from democratizing regimes emerging from existing electoral frameworks.

Post-Rupture Context: Regime established following regime rupture including revolutionary overthrow, military coup followed by civilian transition without elections, institutional collapse from civil war termination or foreign occupation end, or authoritarian breakdown. This distinguishes non-electoral transitional from stable autocracies undergoing liberalization and from democratizing regimes emerging through negotiated transitions within existing electoral frameworks.

Provisional Claim: Regime explicitly claims transitional, interim, or provisional status through self-designation in official statements or founding documents. This rhetorical claim is necessary but insufficient; regimes making provisional claims but exhibiting consolidated institutional patterns code according to underlying autocracy type.

Liberal Legitimation Absent: Regime fails to maintain robust liberal features characterizing democratizing regimes. Assessment must be conducted without ex post bias, coding regimes

based on features present at the time regardless of subsequent outcomes. Threshold for democratizing classification requires both civil liberties floor and executive constraints. Civil liberties floor demands at least two of three criteria robustly satisfied: (a) opposition organizing rights across full ideological spectrum without systematic detention or blanket prohibition, (b) multiple independent media outlets operating without systematic post-publication sanctions, (c) violence and detention limited to armed resistance, not targeting peaceful political activity. Executive constraints require genuine multiparty power-sharing where coalition partners can veto major decisions or control key ministries autonomously, exit from coalition threatens regime stability, and decision-making requires consensus among multiple factions.

External validation indicators suggest but do not determine classification. Freedom House scores of "rather free" (5-6) or better indicate likely sufficient liberal features; "rather not free" (7-9) suggests insufficient features. V-Dem Political Civil Liberties Index "somewhat present" or better suggests sufficient features; "not truly present" suggests insufficient. Qualitative assessment of whether opposition can organize effectively, media operates without fear, and executive power is genuinely constrained takes precedence over quantitative thresholds. If regime satisfies fewer than two of three civil liberties criteria, or lacks genuine executive constraints, classify as non-electoral transitional regardless of electoral promises.

Weak or Absent Electoral Commitment: Either no electoral promises made, or promises lack binding character through vague timeline ("when conditions permit"), no institutional preparation, repeated postponements with shifting justifications, or delays attributed to conditions regime itself controls. This criterion is secondary to liberal features. Even regimes with announced election dates code as non-electoral transitional if liberal legitimation is absent.

No Consolidated Autocratic Pattern: Regime is not dominated by any institutional pattern warranting classification as the respective autocracy type from day one regardless of transitional rhetoric.

Military autocracy exists when unified military command hierarchy exercises authority through institutional rank and chain of command. Military-led "transitional" regimes code as military autocracy regardless of transitional rhetoric, electoral promises, civilian participation in advisory roles, or announced timelines for elections. Test: Can military as unified institution override civilian decisions? If yes, military autocracy. If military participates but cannot unilaterally override and civilians control key ministries autonomously, assess for non-electoral transitional. Examples of military-led regimes coding as military autocracy include Egypt SCAF (2011-2012), Thailand NCPO (2014-2019), Myanmar SAC (2021+), and Sudan Sovereign Council (2019-2021). Non-electoral transitional requires fragmented armed groups

without unified military command or civilian-dominated governance with military participation but not monopoly. If in doubt between military autocracy and non-electoral transitional, code as military autocracy.

One-party autocracy exists when single party monopolizes political organization while banning opposition. Personalist autocracy exists when single leader monopolizes authority through personal loyalty networks. External legitimation exists when foreign military provides essential control or external actors hold veto over key decisions. Ideological autocracy exists when comprehensive doctrine structures all authority. Non-electoral transitional is reserved for regimes where none of these patterns has consolidated.

Consolidation Assessment: Non-electoral transitional classification is based on legitimation pattern, not duration. However, regimes claiming transitional status while exhibiting consolidation indicators should be recoded as underlying autocracy type. Consolidation indicators include unified command hierarchy established, same leadership for more than five years without competition, single-party monopoly, personalist cult developed, or "transitional" rhetoric unchanged for more than five years with zero electoral progress. Genuine provisional indicators include authority structure remaining fragmented, leadership turnover through coups or coalition reshuffles, state failure conditions preventing consolidation, or elections attempted but failed due to violence rather than regime blocking. Assessment focuses on whether institutional pattern has emerged, not on duration alone.

Examples

Libya 08/01/2011 to 07/07/2012 (National Transitional Council): The NTC exemplifies crisis-necessity legitimation without liberal features. Civil liberties floor not met: Political Isolation Law systematically excluded Gaddafi-era officials beyond reasonable accountability. While some independent media operated, opposition organizing was constrained and repression extended beyond armed loyalists to political exclusion (only 1 of 3 civil liberties criteria satisfied). Executive constraints absent: Revolutionary council dominated by eastern militias (Benghazi, Misrata, Zintan) operated without genuine power-sharing with excluded western/southern factions. Critically, militias operated as independent armed groups without unified military command, distinguishing this from military autocracy. No chain of command coordinated all armed actors. Electoral commitment weak: elections mentioned but without binding timeline for eight months. Authority derived from revolutionary victory and crisis management. Post-election outcome illustrated absent liberal foundations: Libya descended into civil war (2014) as elections could not legitimate contested authority when pluralism and constraints were never established {Pack, 2012 #47094: 12-18.

Somalia 10/10/2004 to 08/20/2012 (Transitional Federal Government): The TFG demonstrates how genuine fragmentation prevents consolidation into permanent autocracy. Civil liberties minimal: key factions excluded, media operated under restrictions. Executive constraints absent but authority structurally fragmented: TFG controlled minimal territory (parts of Mogadishu only) and faced rival authorities preventing monopoly. Clan-based militias operated without unified command. Ethiopian intervention (2006-2009) and AMISOM presence (2007+) provided external support but did not constitute external legitimation because formal authority remained with Somali TFG. Electoral promises repeatedly postponed but partially credible given genuine security barriers. Classification as non-electoral transitional rather than underlying autocracy justified by state failure: no unified military hierarchy, no personalist consolidation (leadership changed 2009), no party monopoly. Authority remained genuinely provisional because conditions prevented institutional consolidation.

Central African Republic 03/24/2013 to 01/10/2014 (Seleka Coalition): The Seleka coalition under Michel Djotodia exemplifies non-electoral transitional through extreme fragmentation and inability to consolidate authority. Following the seizure of Bangui, Djotodia declared himself "president" but explicitly described the government as transitional, announcing intentions to organize elections within 18 months. Djotodia assumed presidency but exercised limited control over autonomous militia factions that continued operating independently. Civil liberties absent: systematic violence by competing armed groups and complete security collapse meant no political organizing could occur peacefully. Executive constraints structurally absent: Djotodia could not enforce decisions on component militias operating autonomously in different regions. Electoral promises made but not credible given security conditions. Authority derived from claimed crisis management necessity, not inclusive processes. International pressure led to Djotodia's resignation (01/10/2014) and transition to externally-supervised government. The brief period demonstrates how extreme fragmentation creates non-electoral transitional pattern distinct from consolidated military rule {Lombard, 2016 #47091: 145-158}.

Democratic Republic of Congo 07/17/2003 to 12/06/2006 (Transitional Government): The DRC transitional government illustrates borderline between non-electoral transitional and external legitimation. The power-sharing structure included belligerent factions, with elections eventually held (07/30/2006). However, each faction retained autonomous military forces, UN peacekeeping provided essential security, and external mediation was critical for maintaining cooperation. Civil liberties extremely limited: all factions committed abuses in controlled territories. Executive constraints nominal: power-sharing represented factional division of territory, not genuine multiparty governance. Classification depends on whether international

role coded as essential control (external) or facilitating (non-electoral transitional with support). The eventual elections and transition to electoral government distinguishes this from perpetual state failure {Autesserre, 2010 #47096: 89-112}.

Tunisia 01/17/2011 to 10/23/2011: Tunisia contrasts through robust liberal features enabling democratizing classification. All three civil liberties criteria satisfied: opposition organized freely, media pluralism flourished, repression limited to genuine security threats. Executive constraints present through inclusive government. Authority derived from inclusive procedural legitimation. This created structural conditions for democratization: opposition could organize effectively, executive power faced checks, promises were enforceable. Comparison with Libya (similar revolutionary context, similar timeline, but Libya lacked liberal features) demonstrates that liberal legitimation during transition, not merely electoral promises, distinguishes democratizing from non-electoral transitional patterns {Stepan, 2012 #47079}.

Egypt 02/11/2011 to 06/30/2012 (SCAF): Egypt's SCAF period codes as military autocracy rather than non-electoral transitional despite transitional rhetoric and electoral promises. The decisive distinction: unified military command hierarchy exercised authority from day one. SCAF was composed of top generals ruling through chain of command. Military officers occupied executive positions through military rank; armed forces could enforce decisions through disciplined units. SCAF held unconstrained veto power: dissolved elected parliament unilaterally (06/14/2012), controlled constitutional process, and maintained autonomous security sector. Test: could military as unified institution override civilian decisions? Yes, demonstrably. This differs from non-electoral transitional regimes where authority is genuinely fragmented or civilian-primary with military participation. Military-led regimes with unified command hierarchies code as military autocracy regardless of transitional claims or electoral promises {Brownlee, 2015 #47081: 89-108}.

Myanmar 09/18/1988 to 11/07/2010 (SLORC/SPDC): Myanmar illustrates indefinite "transitional" rhetoric masking consolidated military autocracy. From inception, SLORC was unified military command ruling through institutional hierarchy. Officers coordinated through chain of command. When elections were held (1990), results were ignored and NLD leaders detained. The 22-year "transition" demonstrates fake transitional claims: indefinite duration, unchanging rhetoric, clear institutional consolidation. Classification as military autocracy reflects de facto authority structure (unified military command) rather than regime's self-description. Non-electoral transitional requires genuinely fragmented authority, which Myanmar never exhibited.

Spain 11/18/1976 to 04/01/1977: Spain's early transition codes as electoral autocracy (liberalizing) rather than democratizing or non-electoral transitional, illustrating ex post bias elimination. Classification reflects features at the time: Freedom House 8 ("rather not free"), political liberties "absent," Communist Party illegal. These place Spain below democratizing threshold and outside typical non-electoral transitional rupture context (continuity from Franco regime, not post-rupture). Only after PCE legalization (April 1977) did liberal features meet democratizing threshold. The case demonstrates regimes can transition through electoral autocracy to democratizing to democracy without passing through non-electoral transitional pattern. Methodologically, this illustrates coding without ex post bias: Spain is not classified as democratizing merely because democratization succeeded {Share, 1986 #47099}.

4.3. Regimes Based on Personalist Legitimation

Regimes grouped under this heading structure authority around specific persons or lineages rather than procedures, doctrines, or organizational structures. This personalist legitimation pattern prescribes that the right to rule inheres in the identity of the ruler. The legitimation pattern describes how authority is structured around specific persons or dynasties, irrespective of whether claims about the ruler's exceptional qualities or sacred lineage are credible or believed. Authority is fundamentally non-transferable through impersonal procedural mechanisms. Legitimacy remains bound to particular persons or dynasties, making the question of who rules central rather than incidental to the regime's claim to authority. This distinguishes personalist regimes from those structured around electoral legitimation (where authority derives from electoral procedures regardless of whether elections are free and fair), ideological regimes (where leaders derive legitimacy through doctrinal commitment regardless of personal identity), and military regimes (where authority derives from organizational position rather than individual attributes).

Within this pattern, regimes differ in whether personalist legitimacy operates through institutionalized hereditary succession or through individualized rule detached from stable institutional frameworks. Monarchies represent the institutionalized form, embedding authority in dynasties through the hereditary principle and establishing formal rules of succession that ensure continuity across generations. Personalist autocracies exemplify the non-institutionalized form, concentrating power in the person of the ruler while systematically weakening or subordinating formal institutions. Authority becomes personalized rather than institutionalized, operating through networks of patronage and coercion that center on the ruler.

Without institutionalized mechanisms of succession, leadership transitions remain unpredictable, and regime continuity depends on the ruler's capacity to control patronage networks and coercive forces rather than on formal or hereditary principles.

4.3.1. Monarchy

Regimes grouped under this heading are ruling monarchies in which political authority derives from hereditary succession and dynastic continuity. Monarchical legitimation rests on the principle that certain families possess a sacred or inherent right to rule, transmitted through bloodline across generations. Historically, this legitimation pattern has been grounded in doctrines of divine right, which assert that monarchs are appointed by God or cosmic order and thus accountable to transcendent rather than popular authority. The claim to rule emanates not from electoral mandate, ideological truth, or institutional achievement, but from the sanctity of lineage and the continuity of dynastic succession. Even where religious justifications have weakened, monarchical legitimation continues to draw on tradition, the mystique of royal blood, and the symbolic embodiment of national identity in the person of the monarch. Crowns, scepters, thrones, and elaborate ceremonial rituals reinforce the exceptionality of monarchical authority, distinguishing it from the procedural or doctrinal foundations of other regime types {Spellman, 2004 #31649;Thieme, 2017 #31647}.

This legitimation pattern fundamentally differentiates monarchies from regimes structured around competing principles. Electoral regimes derive authority from popular choice expressed through institutional procedures. Ideological regimes ground their claim in doctrinal blueprints asserting universal truths about history or society. Military regimes justify rule through organizational command structures and narratives of crisis intervention. Personalist regimes center authority on individual charisma detached from institutional or familial foundations. Monarchies, by contrast, embed authority in the dynasty itself. The monarch does not create legitimacy through personal qualities or achievements but inherits it through birth, making the institution rather than the individual the source of political authority. This dynastic principle implies that legitimacy is neither earned nor conferred but simply exists by virtue of succession, rendering monarchical rule conceptually independent of performance, ideology, or popular approval.

A regime is classified as a monarchy when the head of state holds a recognized monarchical title (such as King, Queen, Emperor, Empress, Shah, Tsar, or Emir) and exercises actual political power beyond ceremonial functions. Parliamentary monarchies, where the monarch

retains symbolic status but exercises no real governmental authority, are not classified as ruling monarchies. The defining criterion is whether the monarch actively participates in governance and decision-making, shaping the institutional architecture of the regime through monarchical authority.

Within this legitimation pattern, monarchies vary substantially in the degree of institutional constraint on monarchical power. Autocratic monarchies represent the most concentrated form. Executive authority is vested in the monarch without effective checks from elected institutions, and the regime lacks meaningful separation of powers. Constitutional monarchies, by contrast, operate within frameworks where elected parliaments exercise genuine legislative authority and judicial institutions provide at least moderate constraints on executive power. While the monarch retains significant influence and formal authority, power is shared with representative institutions that limit autocratic rule. This distinction between autocratic and constitutional forms reflects differences in institutional pluralism rather than in the fundamental legitimation pattern, which remains grounded in hereditary succession in both cases {Kailitz, 2009 #2560}. In the detailed classification, monarchies are differentiated into these two subtypes. In the compact classification, both forms are grouped under ruling monarchy. Transitions between autocratic and constitutional monarchy are coded as regime change in the detailed variant but as regime continuity in the compact variant when the dynasty remains unchanged.

4.3.1.1. Autocratic Monarchy

Conceptualization: Autocratic monarchies concentrate executive, legislative, and often judicial authority in the hands of the monarch without effective institutional constraints. Within the broader monarchical legitimation pattern of hereditary dynastic succession, the autocratic variant is distinguished by the absence of meaningful separation of powers or institutional pluralism. Authority flows from hereditary right alone, operating through a single legitimation pattern rather than being shared with elected institutions. Where legislatures exist, they function as consultative or symbolic bodies without capacity to constrain core monarchical decisions or initiate removal of the monarch or appointed officials.

Monarchical legitimation historically varies in intensity of transcendent claims. European absolute monarchies employed divine right doctrines, asserting monarchs are appointed by God and accountable to transcendent authority. More extreme forms claimed the monarch possessed divine or semi-divine nature: Japan venerated the Emperor as *arahitogami* (living deity), creating legitimation through inherent sacred essence rather than divine appointment. Ethiopia's

Solomonic dynasty claimed the Emperor was God's elect descended from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Contemporary autocratic monarchies typically employ weaker transcendent claims, emphasizing dynastic continuity, traditional sanctity, and religious authority (as in Gulf monarchies' alliances with religious establishments) rather than explicit divine nature. These variations affect symbolic architecture and ceremonial intensity but share the core logic: authority derives from the monarch's special status rather than popular choice or institutional achievement.

The boundary with constitutional monarchy is defined by dual legitimation. Constitutional monarchies operate through two coexisting legitimation patterns: hereditary monarchical succession and electoral parliamentary representation. Both the monarch and elected parliament possess real authority, with power shared through institutional frameworks creating genuine constraints on monarchical rule. The monarch retains substantial executive authority but cannot govern unilaterally; parliament exercises legislative authority and can constrain executive decisions through budget control, legislative oversight, and institutional checks. In autocratic monarchies, only monarchical legitimation operates. Parliaments serve consultative or symbolic functions without capacity to genuinely constrain the monarch's core decisions. Authority flows from hereditary right alone, not shared with elected institutions.

Autocratic monarchy encompasses cases where the monarch delegates day-to-day governance to a prime minister or similar figure exercising extensive power on the ruler's behalf. In these instances, the prime minister functions as extension of monarchical control, entirely dependent on and accountable to the monarch rather than operating as independent executive constrained by elected institutions. Executive power remains autocratic in nature even if not personally exercised by the monarch in every decision, as authority flows from the monarch's hereditary position and all officials serve at monarchical pleasure.

The boundary with personalist autocracy requires careful specification, particularly regarding rulers who adopt monarchical titles. The critical distinction lies in the legitimation pattern and institutional embedding of hereditary succession. In autocratic monarchies, authority derives from dynastic hereditary right institutionalized through formal succession mechanisms, whether embedded in centuries of tradition or established through initial generations of functional succession. The dynasty, not the individual ruler, constitutes the source of legitimacy. In personalist autocracies, authority remains bound to the individual ruler's personal identity even when monarchical titles are adopted, operating through personal loyalty networks without institutionalized hereditary transfer mechanisms.

Three factors distinguish autocratic monarchy from personalist autocracy with monarchical symbolism. First, the legitimation pattern must center on hereditary dynastic right rather than personal qualities or achievements. The regime justifies authority through bloodline succession, not through the ruler's individual characteristics. Second, hereditary succession must be institutionalized through formal rules and mechanisms that can organize power transfer within the dynasty. Self-proclaimed titles without functional succession mechanisms constitute personalist rule regardless of monarchical costume. Third, either the country must possess historical monarchical traditions that the regime inherits and continues, or the dynasty itself must demonstrate continuity through successful hereditary transfers proving the institutional viability of dynastic succession.

Elite composition in autocratic monarchies reflects the hereditary principle combined with royal patronage. Royal family members occupy privileged positions by birth rather than through institutional advancement, personal loyalty networks, military rank, or ideological credentials. Monarchs also appoint supporting elites dependent on royal favor. Cohesion mechanisms center on dynastic loyalty, traditional hierarchies, and patronage from the monarch.

Operationalization: A regime is classified as autocratic monarchy when four cumulative criteria are satisfied. First, the head of state must hold a recognized monarchical title (King, Queen, Emperor, Empress, Shah, Sultan, Emir, or equivalent) designating hereditary authority. Recognized monarchical title means domestic and international acknowledgment of hereditary dynastic status, not merely self-proclaimed titles without institutional foundation. Emirs, Sultans, and other hereditary rulers of historically recognized polities qualify as monarchical titles even when governing smaller territories.

Second, the monarch must exercise actual political power beyond ceremonial functions, actively participating in governance and decision-making that shapes the institutional architecture. The monarch must make or substantially influence core political decisions regarding appointments, policy, legislation, or state direction.

Third, executive authority must be concentrated in the monarch without effective institutional checks from elected bodies or meaningful separation of powers. In autocratic monarchies, legislatures (if they exist) lack genuine capacity to constrain executive decisions, pass legislation against monarchical opposition, or remove the monarch or appointed officials through institutional procedures. The monarch rules by decree or dominates the legislative process, making core political decisions without requiring parliamentary approval or facing institutional accountability. Judicial institutions similarly lack independence to check executive authority. Where prime ministers exercise substantial governmental authority, they must

function as extensions of monarchical control, serving at the monarch's pleasure and remaining accountable to the monarch rather than to elected institutions.

The boundary with constitutional monarchy requires assessing whether genuine dual legitimation operates. When parliaments possess real legislative authority including budget control, can constrain executive decisions through institutional mechanisms, and the monarch requires parliamentary cooperation to govern effectively, classify as constitutional monarchy. The diagnostic test is whether the monarch can govern core policy areas unilaterally or must negotiate with parliament possessing autonomous authority. When the monarch retains ultimate control over budgets, can dissolve parliament at will without institutional constraint, and governs core areas (military, security, foreign policy) without requiring parliamentary approval, classify as autocratic monarchy regardless of parliamentary forms. The threshold is genuine power-sharing between hereditary and electoral legitimation versus monarchical monopoly with consultative facades.

Fourth, hereditary succession must be institutionalized through either long-standing dynastic continuity or demonstrated functional succession within a newly established dynasty. The regime must possess formal or traditional mechanisms specifying how authority transfers within the dynasty. For recently established dynasties (within the last century), at least one successful hereditary succession must have occurred, proving the institutional viability of dynastic transfer. Self-proclaimed monarchies without such succession remain classified as personalist autocracies until hereditary transfer demonstrates that legitimation pattern has shifted from personal to dynastic.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases

Saudi Arabia under the Al Saud dynasty (1932-present) represents paradigmatic autocratic monarchy with deep dynastic roots. The Al Saud family established hereditary rule as Emirs of Diriyah in 1744, governing through successive Saudi states before Ibn Saud proclaimed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, representing nearly 300 years of dynastic continuity. The king holds ultimate executive, legislative, and judicial authority, ruling by royal decree. The Consultative Council (Majlis ash-Shura) is appointed by the monarch and lacks legislative power, serving purely advisory functions. Political parties are banned, competitive elections do not occur, and civil liberties are severely restricted. Legitimation rests on dynastic continuity combined with religious authority through the historical alliance with the Wahhabi establishment, with the king serving as "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" {Commins, 2006

#47137}. Succession occurs through the royal family according to hereditary principles, with multiple successful successions (1953, 1964, 1975, 1982, 2005, 2015, 2024).

Japan under the Meiji Emperor and successors (1868-1945) exemplified autocratic monarchy with extreme divine legitimation. The Meiji Constitution (1889) designated the Emperor as "sacred and inviolable," concentrating sovereignty in the imperial person. The Emperor was venerated as *arahitogami* (living deity) descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu, transcending European divine right by claiming inherent divine essence. The Imperial Diet existed but served consultative functions without capacity to constrain imperial authority. The Diet could not pass legislation without imperial approval, possessed no budget control independent of the Emperor, and exercised no oversight. While oligarchs (*genrō*) and later military factions exercised *de facto* power, all authority required legitimation through imperial sanction. The 1945-1947 transition, where Emperor Hirohito renounced divinity and accepted the postwar constitution establishing parliamentary sovereignty, transformed Japan from autocratic monarchy to constitutional monarchy (and subsequently liberal democracy with ceremonial monarchy), demonstrating how fundamental change in legitimation pattern alters regime classification {Gluck, 1985 #46917}.

Ethiopia under Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) exemplified autocratic monarchy with divine appointment legitimation. The Ethiopian monarchy claimed descent from the Solomonic dynasty, tracing lineage to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Haile Selassie bore the title "Conquering Lion of Judah, Elect of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia." The 1955 constitution concentrated sovereignty in the Emperor, who held absolute executive, legislative, and judicial authority. Parliament possessed no genuine legislative power; the Emperor could dissolve it, veto legislation without override possibility, and ruled by decree. Legitimation operated through the Solomonic dynasty's ancient lineage, the Emperor's designation as God's elect, and Ethiopian Orthodox Church recognition of imperial authority. The 1974 revolution by the Derg military committee ended the monarchy, demonstrating that even centuries-old sacred legitimation could not withstand internal pressure combined with economic crisis {Marcus, 1994 #47139}.

Borderline Cases: Iran under the Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1941) illuminates the threshold between personalist autocracy and newly established monarchy. Reza Khan came to power through military means and crowned himself Reza Shah in 1925 after deposing the Qajar dynasty. Three factors support borderline monarchy classification. First, Persia possessed millennia of monarchical institutional history which Pahlavi inherited even as a new dynasty. Second, successful hereditary succession occurred in 1941 when Mohammad Reza Shah

succeeded his father. Third, legitimation centered on hereditary right to the Persian throne rather than personal military achievements. The 1925-1941 period represents a borderline phase where personalist origins coexisted with monarchical institutionalization. The 1941 succession confirmed transformation from personalist to monarchical legitimation pattern, contrasting with King Zog where no succession occurred and no historical monarchical tradition existed to embed the new dynasty.

Contrasting Cases: King Zog of Albania (1928-1939) contrasts as personalist autocracy despite monarchical title. Ahmed Bey Zogu served as President (1925-1928) before proclaiming himself King Zog I in 1928. However, authority remained grounded in personal networks from his strongman origins. Albania possessed no historical monarchical traditions, and Zog's monarchy was invented without institutional roots. The regime never achieved dynastic succession; Zog's son Leka was born in 1939 shortly before Italian invasion ended the regime. Legitimation rested on Zog's personal authority, with monarchical title functioning as enhancement of personal rule rather than transformation to dynastic legitimation. This demonstrates that monarchical titles alone are insufficient; hereditary succession must be institutionalized through either historical tradition or demonstrated functional transfer {Fischer, 1984 #47140}.

The German Empire (1871-1918) contrasts as constitutional monarchy, demonstrating dual legitimation. The Kaiser held substantial executive authority through the Hohenzollern dynasty, appointed the Reichskanzler, commanded the military, and directed foreign policy. However, the Reichstag (elected parliament) exercised genuine legislative authority including crucial budget control. The Reichskanzler required parliamentary cooperation to pass legislation and secure funding. Both legitimation patterns operated: the Kaiser could not govern unilaterally without parliamentary approval for budgets, while parliament could not govern without the Kaiser's executive authority. This power-sharing through dual legitimation distinguishes constitutional from autocratic monarchy. The contrast with Saudi Arabia is fundamental: the Saudi king determines budgets unilaterally through royal decree, while the German Kaiser negotiated with the Reichstag possessing autonomous authority to approve or reject budgets {Anderson, 2000 #17146; Mommsen, 1995 #47141}.

4.3.1.2. Constitutional Monarchy

Conceptualization: Constitutional monarchies structure authority through dual legitimation combining hereditary monarchical succession with electoral parliamentary representation. Both

the monarch and elected parliament possess real political authority, with power shared through institutional frameworks that create genuine constraints on monarchical rule. This dual legitimation pattern distinguishes constitutional from autocratic monarchies (where only monarchical legitimation operates) and from liberal democracies with ceremonial monarchies (where only electoral legitimation operates substantively).

The hereditary monarch retains substantial executive authority, including powers over appointments, policy influence, and state direction, but cannot govern unilaterally. Parliament exercises genuine legislative authority including budget control, can constrain executive decisions through institutional mechanisms, and participates meaningfully in governance. The monarch requires parliamentary cooperation to govern effectively, and parliament requires monarchical executive authority to function. Neither legitimation source can govern alone, necessitating institutional power-sharing.

Monarchical legitimation in constitutional monarchies typically employs moderate transcendent claims rather than extreme divine right or sacred nature assertions. Contemporary constitutional and ceremonial monarchies emphasize traditional authority, national symbolism, and constitutional continuity rather than explicit god-given rule {Bogdanor, 1995 #47130}. The monarch embodies historical continuity and national unity through hereditary succession, but legitimacy increasingly derives from constitutional position within democratic frameworks rather than from divine appointment or inherent sacred status. This represents partial shift from transcendent to constitutional-legal legitimation while maintaining hereditary succession as essential component.

The boundary with autocratic monarchy hinges on whether genuine power-sharing through dual legitimation exists. In autocratic monarchies, parliaments (if present) serve consultative functions without capacity to genuinely constrain core monarchical decisions. The monarch retains ultimate control over budgets, can dissolve parliament without institutional constraint, and governs core areas (military, security, foreign policy) without requiring parliamentary approval. In constitutional monarchies, parliaments possess autonomous authority to approve or reject budgets, constrain executive actions through legislative mechanisms, and exercise meaningful oversight. The diagnostic test is whether the monarch can govern unilaterally or must negotiate with parliament possessing real constraining power.

The boundary with liberal democracies featuring ceremonial monarchies requires specification based on the effective head of executive. In liberal democracies (Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands), monarchs retain purely symbolic status without real governmental authority. Executive power resides entirely in prime ministers and cabinets accountable to

elected parliaments. The monarch performs ceremonial functions (state openings, royal assent) but exercises no substantive influence over policy, appointments, or governance. Electoral legitimation operates exclusively; monarchical legitimation is purely symbolic overlay. Classification follows the effective head of executive: when executive authority flows through elected officials accountable to parliament, classify as liberal democracy regardless of ceremonial monarchical retention.

Critically, the shift from ruling to ceremonial monarchy does not automatically produce liberal democracy. When monarchs lose real authority, classification depends on which actors constitute the effective executive and what legitimation pattern structures governance. If executive power flows through elected officials accountable to robust parliaments with political liberties, classify as liberal democracy with ceremonial monarchy. If executive power flows through military hierarchies, single-party structures, or other autocratic mechanisms, classify according to the actual legitimation pattern regardless of ceremonial monarchical retention. Thailand during military rule (2014-2019) exemplifies this: the monarch served ceremonial-legitimizing functions while the military junta held effective executive authority, warranting military autocracy classification {McCargo, 2005 #47132}. The diagnostic test is always: who is the effective head of executive and what legitimation pattern structures authority? Monarchical status (ruling vs. ceremonial) is necessary but insufficient for regime classification without identifying the operative legitimation pattern.

In constitutional monarchies, the monarch exercises real executive authority as effective or co-equal head of executive. The monarch actively participates in governance through appointment powers, policy influence, convening/dissolving parliament (within constitutional constraints), and executive decision-making. While constrained by parliament, the monarch shapes institutional architecture and governmental direction. Executive authority is genuinely shared between hereditary monarch and elected institutions rather than residing exclusively in parliamentary-accountable officials.

Elite composition reflects dual legitimation. Royal family members occupy positions through hereditary privilege, while ministers and officials increasingly require parliamentary confidence alongside monarchical appointment. Cohesion mechanisms combine dynastic loyalty with parliamentary accountability. Elite recruitment operates through both hereditary succession (for monarchy) and electoral/parliamentary processes (for governmental officials). Cross-regime networks may form among constitutional monarchies sharing the challenge of balancing traditional hereditary authority with democratic institutional constraints.

Operationalization: A regime is classified as constitutional monarchy when five cumulative criteria are satisfied. First, the head of state must hold a recognized monarchical title designating hereditary authority, and the monarchy must retain real political power beyond ceremonial functions. The monarch must actively participate in governance through appointment powers, executive influence, or institutional authority that shapes political outcomes. Purely ceremonial monarchies where executive power resides exclusively in elected officials are classified according to the effective head of executive (typically liberal democracy).

Second, a popularly elected parliament must exist possessing genuine legislative authority. Parliament must exercise real power to pass legislation, approve budgets, constrain executive actions through institutional mechanisms, and provide meaningful oversight. The parliament cannot be purely consultative or symbolic; it must possess autonomous authority to block, modify, or approve governmental initiatives. Universal or broad suffrage and competitive multi-party elections are required to establish electoral legitimation.

Third, parliament must at least moderately constrain the executive. This constraint operates through multiple mechanisms: budget approval requiring parliamentary consent, legislative oversight the executive cannot simply override, capacity to question and hold ministers accountable, and institutional checks on unilateral executive action. The threshold is genuine constraining power, not merely advisory functions. The monarch cannot govern core policy areas without parliamentary cooperation, and parliament possesses institutional means to block or modify monarchical decisions.

Fourth, the judiciary must at least moderately constrain the executive. Judicial institutions must possess meaningful independence to review executive actions, interpret constitutional provisions, and provide legal checks on governmental power. Courts need not possess full judicial review authority over all matters, but must exercise real judicial independence constraining arbitrary executive action. The combination of parliamentary and judicial constraints creates institutional pluralism limiting monarchical unilateralism.

Fifth, political liberties cannot be entirely absent. Citizens must possess basic freedoms enabling political participation, expression, and association sufficient to support competitive elections and parliamentary functions. Freedom House scores typically fall in the "partly free" to "free" range. Constitutional monarchies blend democratic elements (elections, parliamentary authority, political liberties) with monarchical authority (hereditary executive power, royal prerogatives).

The boundary with autocratic monarchy is crossed when parliament gains genuine constraining power through budget control and legislative authority that the monarch cannot simply override.

When the monarch must negotiate with parliament possessing autonomous authority, and parliament can block governmental initiatives, dual legitimation operates. Morocco and Jordan, despite elected parliaments, remain autocratic because monarchs retain ultimate control without requiring genuine parliamentary cooperation for core governance. Bhutan post-2008 crosses the threshold because parliament exercises real legislative authority and budget control that constrains even the king's substantial residual powers.

The boundary with liberal democracy is crossed when executive authority shifts from shared (monarch and parliament) to exclusively parliamentary-accountable. When prime ministers and cabinets govern without requiring monarchical approval or input beyond ceremonial functions, and the monarch exercises no real influence over policy or appointments, classify as liberal democracy. Norway exemplifies this threshold: despite constitutional provisions granting the king powers, actual governance flows entirely through the Storting (parliament) and prime minister, with the king performing only ceremonial roles. The effective head of executive test determines classification.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases: Bhutan since 2008 exemplifies constitutional monarchy following the transition from autocratic to constitutional framework. The 2008 constitution established dual legitimation combining the hereditary Wangchuck dynasty with elected parliamentary institutions {United Nations Development Programme, 2018 #47146}. The Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King) retains substantial formal authority including appointing key officials (judges, election commissioners), commanding the armed forces, and influencing executive decisions as head of state. However, the National Assembly (lower house) is elected through universal suffrage and exercises real legislative authority including budget approval. The National Council (upper house, partially elected) provides additional legislative input.

The king cannot govern unilaterally. Parliamentary approval is required for budgets and legislation, creating genuine constraints on executive action. The prime minister leads the government and must maintain parliamentary confidence, though appointed by the king from the majority party. Ministers require both royal appointment and parliamentary accountability, embodying dual legitimation. The judiciary exercises meaningful independence in interpreting the constitution and reviewing governmental actions. Political parties compete in free elections, and civil liberties exist (though with limitations), supporting democratic elements.

The regime blends monarchical and democratic authority. The king retains significant influence through appointment powers, constitutional interpretation authority, and traditional reverence, but shares power with elected institutions possessing autonomous authority. Parliament can

constrain executive decisions through budget control and legislative oversight, and the king must work within constitutional frameworks requiring parliamentary cooperation. This power-sharing through dual legitimation distinguishes Bhutan from both autocratic monarchy (where parliament lacks genuine constraining power) and liberal democracy with ceremonial monarchy (where the monarch exercises no real authority).

Liechtenstein under Hereditary Prince Hans-Adam II and Hereditary Prince Alois (regent from 2004) represents constitutional monarchy with strong monarchical authority balanced by parliamentary constraints. The 2003 constitutional amendments strengthened princely powers while maintaining parliamentary system {Veenendaal, 2017 #47147}. The prince holds substantial executive authority including appointing the government (prime minister and ministers require parliamentary confidence but also princely approval), dissolving parliament, vetoing legislation (subject to referendum override), and commanding the military. The prince actively participates in governance and policy formation.

However, the Landtag (parliament) exercises genuine legislative authority elected through universal suffrage and proportional representation. Parliament possesses budget control, legislative initiative, and capacity to constrain executive actions through institutional mechanisms {Marxer, 2009 #35348; Marxer, 2007 #47144}. Crucially, the people retain ultimate sovereignty through referendum powers, including the capacity to abolish the monarchy (2003 constitutional provision). The judiciary operates independently, reviewing governmental actions and interpreting constitutional provisions. Political liberties are robust, and competitive multi-party elections occur regularly.

Dual legitimation operates clearly: the prince cannot govern without parliamentary cooperation for budgets and legislation, while parliament requires princely executive authority for governmental formation. The system represents genuine power-sharing where neither hereditary nor electoral legitimation monopolizes authority. This distinguishes Liechtenstein from both autocratic monarchies (where parliament lacks real constraining power) and ceremonial monarchies (where the monarch exercises no real authority).

Borderline Cases: Kuwait (pre-2024 suspension) occupied contested territory at the autocratic-constitutional boundary. Kuwait's 1962 constitution established formal constitutional monarchy features: elected National Assembly through universal male suffrage (women enfranchised 2005), multi-party competition (though parties formally illegal), and genuine parliamentary activism {Herb, 1999 #35276}. The Assembly exercised some real legislative authority including questioning ministers, interpellation powers, and budget influence. The Assembly

could block legislation and forced ministerial resignations through no-confidence votes, suggesting real constraint.

However, the Emir retained ultimate authority to dissolve the Assembly (which occurred repeatedly, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2023, 2024), appointed the government including prime minister (traditionally crown prince), and controlled security and foreign policy. The threshold question was whether the Assembly's constraining power was genuine or ultimately subordinate to Emiri authority. The Emir's dissolution power and appointment authority limited parliamentary autonomy. Kuwait had not definitively crossed into constitutional monarchy because the Emir retained capacity to override parliamentary actions through dissolution and governmental appointment, but it showed more parliamentary constraint than paradigmatic autocratic monarchies, creating borderline status. The May 2024 indefinite suspension of parliament with constitutional articles suspended for four years decisively moved Kuwait back toward autocratic monarchy classification.

Jordan under Abdullah II (1999-present) occupies contested territory at the autocratic-constitutional boundary. Jordan possesses formal constitutional monarchy features: elected Chamber of Deputies, multi-party competition, and constitutional provisions establishing parliamentary system. However, classification as autocratic monarchy persists because the king retains ultimate control without requiring genuine parliamentary cooperation for core governance. The king can dissolve parliament, appoints the prime minister and upper house, controls military and security forces independently, and governs foreign policy without parliamentary approval. Parliament exercises some legislative activity and provides

4.3.2. Personalist Autocracy

Conceptualization: Personalist autocracies concentrate political authority in the hands of an individual ruler whose power is not effectively constrained by formal institutions {Brooker, 2008 #9262: 139; Jackson, 1982 #2419: 8}. The regime's architecture is organized around the ruler as the central locus of authority, rather than parties, doctrines, or military hierarchies. This concentration of power is actively produced through the systematic weakening, subordination, or destruction of institutions that could limit or replace the ruler. Authority thus becomes personalized and is exercised through coercive and patronage networks that ensure direct dependence on the ruler. This personalization is not merely descriptive but represents a functional necessity: as formal institutions are systematically weakened, the ruler must

construct alternative control mechanisms through direct patronage distribution and personalized command over coercive forces to ensure compliance and policy implementation.

Personalist autocrats do not govern through credible procedures, inherited rights, or ideological doctrines but through constructed images of indispensability and strength. These rulers portray themselves as the embodiment of the nation's unity, often using personality cults, rituals of loyalty, and symbolic acts of beneficence to render their rule as inevitable and unchallengeable. However, these symbols function as institutional mechanisms of control rather than as expressions of genuine charisma. Succession remains inherently unstable, as the continuity of the regime depends on the ruler's personal capacity to maintain coercive control and distribute patronage, not on rules or norms that can ensure transfer of power.

Operationalization: A regime is coded as personalist autocracy when the structure of authority centers on the ruler personally and institutions that could constrain or replace the ruler are systematically neutralized or subordinated. The essential criteria are (1) the concentration of executive power in one person, (2) the absence of effective institutional checks, and (3) the non-institutionalized nature of succession. The absence of effective institutional checks refers to situations where formal bodies such as legislatures, courts, or party organs lack the *de facto* capacity to constrain the ruler's core decisions or initiate his removal through established procedures. In quantitative datasets such as Polity, paradigmatic cases typically exhibit scores indicating unlimited executive authority, while borderline cases with semi-institutionalized features may show slight institutional limitations that upon qualitative examination prove to be facades rather than genuine constraints. Auxiliary indicators include pervasive patronage networks, personalized control of the coercive apparatus, and enforced displays of loyalty to the leader. The absence of competitive executive elections or genuine intraparty selection mechanisms confirms the classification.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Uganda under Idi Amin (1971–1979) and Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–1997) exemplify personalist autocracy in its purest form. Amin rapidly dismantled both the military hierarchy and bureaucratic authority, creating a system in which personal loyalty and coercion substituted for institutional rules. Mobutu institutionalized personalism by fusing the ruling party, the army, and the state bureaucracy into extensions of his will, ensuring that all power relationships were mediated through him personally. In both cases, patronage networks and the security apparatus, rather than ideology or procedures, structured political life.

Borderline Cases: Turkmenistan under Saparmurat Niyazov (1990–2006) and Libya under Muammar Gaddafi (1969–2011) represent semi-institutionalized variants where personalist patterns coexist with partially retained institutional structures. In Turkmenistan, the personality cult and direct control over coercion clearly fit the personalist pattern, but remnants of Soviet-era party and bureaucratic structures retained some administrative autonomy. In Libya, Gaddafi's Jamahiriya system created a facade of direct democracy through people's committees while actual authority remained personalized. These borderline cases reveal that partial institutionalization does not preclude classification as personalist if ultimate authority depends on the ruler personally and institutional structures function as instruments of personal rule rather than as genuine constraints.

Core Contrasting Cases: Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China, though centered on powerful leaders with pervasive personality cults, are not coded as personalist autocracies but as communist ideocracies. Despite massive purges and ritualized leader worship, Stalin and Mao ruled within doctrinal and organizational frameworks that survived them. The critical distinction manifests in succession: following Stalin's and Mao's deaths, the Communist Party as an institution managed the transfer of power, however brutal. Upon the death or removal of personalist rulers such as Amin, Mobutu, or Gaddafi, regime structures collapsed into power vacuums or civil conflict, precisely because no institution existed to organize succession independent of the ruler's personal authority.

Borderline Contrasting Cases: Stroessner's Paraguay (1954–1989) presents a particularly instructive contrast where surface features suggest personalism but institutional foundations reveal military autocracy. Stroessner's 35-year rule and captured Colorado Party resembled personalist patterns superficially. However, three factors distinguish the regime. First, no personality cult emerged; legitimation remained functional, emphasizing order and anticommunism rather than charismatic leadership. Second, the 1989 military coup revealed that the armed forces retained latent institutional capacity to organize his removal through military hierarchy rather than triggering regime collapse. Third, elite loyalty operated through military discipline rather than personalized patronage. This demonstrates that long tenure and party capture alone do not constitute personalism when institutional foundations remain intact, even if latent during stable periods.

4.4 Regimes Based on an Ideology-Centered Legitimation Autocracies

Regimes grouped under this heading are structured around an ideological blueprint that defines the legitimate sources, scope, and exercise of political power. This legitimation pattern prescribes how authority is organized, justified, and reproduced within the regime. It determines the relationship between ruler and ruled, the role of ideology in institutional design, and the acceptable boundaries of political action. Ideology operates not merely as a claim to truth but as the constitutive architecture of rule, shaping institutions, laws, and the distribution of authority. This ideological form of legitimation distinguishes these regimes fundamentally from those structured around electoral procedures (democracies, electoral autocracies), hereditary succession (monarchies), military command structures (military autocracies), or personalist networks (personalist autocracies).

Ideology-centered autocracies encompass three primary ideological families: communist, right-wing extremist, and Islamist. Each represents a distinct doctrinal foundation for political authority. Communist regimes derive legitimation from Marxist-Leninist doctrine claiming to fulfill the laws of historical materialism. Right-wing extremist regimes ground authority in ultra-nationalist, corporatist, or racist ideologies emphasizing hierarchy, order, and exclusion. Islamist regimes base legitimation on religious doctrine asserting that governance must conform to Islamic law and principles.

Across these ideological families, regimes vary substantially in the scope and transformative ambition of their ideological commitment. Ideocratic autocracies establish a totalizing legitimation pattern in which all institutions and social relations are subordinated to a comprehensive ideological vision that seeks to fundamentally reshape society {Backes, 2016 #17216}. Their legitimation derives from the claim to represent an absolute truth, whether secular or religious, defined as the common interest of the governing and the governed. The ideology provides both the rationale for power and the framework for policy, leaving little room for political pluralism or dissent. Opposition is not merely suppressed but delegitimized as a threat to the overarching historical or spiritual mission. The fusion of state and ideology entails mass mobilization, indoctrination, and the subordination of legal systems, education, and media to the ideological project. Ideocratic regimes claim that they fulfill the laws of nature, history, or God and pave the way to a utopian future. What distinguishes ideocracies from all other political regime types is that the rulers not only claim a right to rule, but by virtue of their ideology also assert the right to control and reshape all aspects of society. This regime type roughly encompasses what Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan categorized as totalitarianism and post-totalitarianism {Linz, 1996 #31198, p. 39}, though contrasting Hannah Arendt's approach, the

utopian ideology is the key feature while terror may be present or not {Arendt, 1953 #17126}. Communist, fascist, and Islamist regimes typically manifest as ideocracies.

Semi-ideocratic regimes, by contrast, employ ideology as the organizing framework but without totalizing ambition. Ideology structures authority and justifies rule, yet coexists with traditional, nationalist, or pragmatic elements that stabilize rather than transform the political order. These regimes do not assert comprehensive control over all spheres of social life. Their legitimation pattern rests on conservative principles—order, hierarchy, social harmony—rather than revolutionary transformation. The pattern constrains rather than absorbs institutional plurality. Right-wing corporatist and racist autocracies exemplify this semi-ideocratic form: ideology provides the blueprint for political authority without pursuing the comprehensive societal restructuring characteristic of full ideocracies.

The three ideocratic forms (communist, fascist, and Islamist) should be treated as distinctive types of political regimes {Linz, 2000 #3182}. If, however, a researcher wishes to analyze the broader family of ideology-centered autocracies, semi-ideocratic regimes may be included alongside full ideocracies. Researchers should distinguish between ideocracies and semi-ideocratic regimes when precision regarding the scope and transformative ambition of ideological legitimation is analytically relevant. The sections below provide detailed conceptualizations and operationalization criteria for each regime type within this family.

4.4.1. Communist Ideocracy

Conceptualization: Communist ideocracies structure authority through the institutional fusion of party, state, and ideology, claiming that Marxism-Leninism represents scientific truth about history. Legitimation does not rest on popular authorization but on ideological necessity: the ruling elite presents itself as the vanguard of the proletariat entrusted with guiding humanity toward a classless society. The party's right to rule derives from its role as interpreter of historical laws, making ideology the constitutive architecture of authority. Institutions, leadership selection, and policy direction are organized around doctrinal imperatives rather than pragmatic governance. As Giuseppe Di Palma observed, "the theory of history, not popular approval, constitute[s] the permanent core of communist claims to legitimacy" {Di Palma, 1991 #9282: 50}.

The institutional architecture reflects this legitimation logic directly. The communist party exercises vanguard authority and penetrates all branches of the state through parallel hierarchies. Party committees sit embedded within administrative, military, and judicial organs.

The nomenklatura controls elite recruitment, ensuring that ideologically reliable cadres occupy all decisive positions. Central planning and state control of key sectors subordinate the economy to political and doctrinal objectives. Education, culture, and media serve as channels of indoctrination, promoting the formation of a new socialist human. Law and morality are redefined within ideological categories. Organized opposition is treated as counterrevolutionary hostility rather than legitimate dissent. These mechanisms transform Marxist-Leninist doctrine into the operative blueprint of governance {Kołakowski, 1978 #43911;Linz, 1996 #31198}.

Elite composition and cohesion follow directly from this structure. Access to power depends on ideological loyalty and service within party hierarchies rather than kinship or personal patronage. Purges and rectification campaigns enforce doctrinal conformity and periodically recalibrate the inner party balance. Cohesion is maintained through shared commitment to the revolutionary mission and subordination to collective discipline. Personality cults may arise, but they remain embedded in the party's ideological framework and justified through devotion to doctrine. The decisive boundary with Personalist Autocracy lies in institutional survivability: as long as party structures and Marxist-Leninist ideology organize succession and decision-making, the system remains ideocratic even under leaders with immense personal authority. Once party institutions lose autonomy and authority flows through personal networks, the regime becomes personalist {Linz, 1996 #31198: 39;Kailitz, 2013 #43843}.

The boundary with One-Party Autocracy turns on doctrinal ambition. Both share organizational monopoly, but only communist ideocracy grounds this monopoly in a comprehensive transformative project to remake society according to historical materialism. One-party autocracies justify monopoly pragmatically through national unity, stability, or developmentalism. Communist ideocracies justify it as historical necessity in humanity's teleological progression toward socialism. The distinction lies in the operative legitimation logic, not in institutional form.

Communist ideocracies may emerge through different pathways and exhibit varying degrees of external dependence. Revolutionary movements often begin as military autocracies legitimized through successful armed struggle. The transition to communist ideocracy occurs when a revolutionary movement institutionalizes itself as a Marxist-Leninist party, establishes party-state fusion through parallel hierarchies, and adopts the transformative doctrinal mission. Until this institutional consolidation, authority remains organized through military command structures rather than party discipline. Communist ideocracies may also be imposed through external occupation, as occurred throughout Eastern Europe after 1945. Imposed regimes fulfill the same three criteria as indigenous ones: Marxism-Leninism functions as operative doctrine,

party-state fusion is institutionalized, and transformative ambition is asserted. However, imposed communist ideocracies typically show tighter coordination with the sponsoring power in elite recruitment (cadre training in the sponsoring state, advisors embedded in ministries), policy formulation (ultimate authority retained by external power), and regime stability (dependent on external military guarantees). The 1989 collapse of Eastern European communist regimes following the withdrawal of Soviet support illustrates this dependence, yet their classification as communist ideocracies during their existence remains valid because the formal legitimation structure operated through party and ideology rather than through explicit colonial administration {Linz, 2000 #3182}.

Communist ideocracies typically evolve through distinct phases. The revolutionary or totalitarian phase is characterized by mass mobilization, ideological zeal, and coercive transformation of social structures. In post-totalitarian phases, the same doctrinal principles persist but become routinized through bureaucratic discipline and ritualized ideology. The regime remains ideocratic as long as Marxism-Leninism continues to structure authority, elite recruitment, and policy justification, even when partial market reforms or limited pluralism emerge {Arendt, 1953 #17126;Backes, 2016 #17216}.

Operationalization

A regime qualifies as a Communist Ideocracy when three necessary conditions are jointly satisfied in practice.

First, Marxism-Leninism or a derivative variant must function as the operative doctrine of governance. Party and state justify authority through reference to scientific socialism, class struggle, and a historical mission to build socialism on the path toward communism. Ideological education, cadre vetting, and doctrinal justification must form integral components of recruitment and policy formulation rather than mere rhetoric. Revolutionary movements may pursue socialist policies and align with Marxist-Leninist states without qualifying as communist ideocracies; classification requires the formal adoption of Marxism-Leninism as the operative doctrine {Kořakowski, 1978 #43911}.

Second, party-state fusion must be institutionalized. The communist party exercises supremacy over government and social organizations through embedded committees and a hierarchical nomenklatura. Parallel structures ensure that party organs guide and supervise all state institutions, the military, and the judiciary. The existence of satellite organizations or nominal secondary parties does not negate this criterion when they function under binding party direction. Revolutionary socialism alone, organized through military command structures, does

not constitute communist ideocracy; the institutionalization of party supremacy over state organs is necessary.

Third, the ambition of rule must be transformative and totalizing. Political authority must assert the right to reshape economic structures, social relations, and human consciousness according to doctrinal principles. Command planning, collectivization, and ideological campaigns illustrate this ambition, but the defining element is the claim to reorganize society according to an all-encompassing Marxist-Leninist vision.

These three criteria are jointly necessary and must all be met for classification. Quantitative indicators from datasets such as V-Dem, Polity, or Freedom House may align with the expected absence of pluralism and high state control but serve only as background corroboration. Classification relies exclusively on de facto legitimation structure.

When party monopoly persists but legitimation pivots to national unity, state-building, or performance without doctrinal centrality, the regime is a One-Party Autocracy. When ideological language persists but authority flows primarily through an individual ruler's personal network and succession is dynastic, the regime is a Personalist Autocracy. When authority remains organized through military command structures without institutionalized party supremacy, the regime is a Military Autocracy. Transitional or reform phases remain coded as ideocratic as long as Marxism-Leninism continues to define elite recruitment, organizational discipline, and the justificatory grammar of rule.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases

The Soviet Union (1956-1985) exemplifies communist ideocracy in its most institutionalized form. Following Stalin's death, the CPSU established collective leadership and routinized party supremacy over all state organs. Marxism-Leninism served as the unquestioned basis of legitimacy, the nomenklatura system ensured ideological conformity of elites across all institutions, and central planning subordinated the economy to doctrinal objectives. The regime moderated coercion compared to the Stalinist period but maintained the transformative claim to build communism. Party congresses and Politburo deliberations organized succession and policy formation through institutional procedures rather than personal fiat. Opposition remained defined as ideological deviation. The post-Stalin USSR thus represents the canonical form of routinized communist ideocracy {Linz, 2000 #3182;Kołakowski, 1978 #43911}.

The People's Republic of China (1949-1976) under Mao Zedong equally meets all criteria. The CCP established a hierarchical dual structure in which party organs directed state administration at every level. Maoist ideology interpreted Marxism-Leninism through continuous revolution

and class struggle, legitimizing campaigns that sought to transform both economic production and human consciousness. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution pursued total social transformation in accordance with doctrinal imperatives. Although Mao's personal authority was immense, party structures and ideology survived him, confirming the ideocratic rather than personalist nature of the regime {Linz, 1996 #31198;Schurmann, 1968 #47122}.

Poland (1945-1989) and the German Democratic Republic (1949-1989) represent imposed communist ideocracies. Both regimes were installed through Soviet occupation and remained dependent on Soviet military guarantees for survival, as demonstrated by their rapid collapse in 1989 when that support was withdrawn. Yet both fulfilled all three criteria throughout their existence: the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) established complete party-state fusion through embedded committees and nomenklatura systems, Marxism-Leninism functioned as operative doctrine in cadre training and policy justification, and both pursued transformative campaigns including collectivization and socialist industrialization. Elite recruitment was coordinated with Moscow, with many cadres trained in Soviet institutions, and ultimate authority in crisis situations rested with the Soviet leadership (as shown in 1956 and 1980-81 in Poland). These imposed variants demonstrate that external dependence does not alter the formal legitimation structure, though it shapes elite formation patterns and regime stability {Linz, 2000 #3182}.

Vietnam (1954-present) represents an enduring communist ideocracy that has survived market reforms. The regime maintains party supremacy through parallel structures, justifies authority through Marxist-Leninist ideology, and retains the transformative claim that socialism represents a necessary stage of historical development. Market liberalization did not replace doctrinal legitimation or party monopoly.

Borderline Cases

Cuba represents a dual borderline case illustrating both temporal and structural thresholds. From 1959 to 1965, the revolutionary regime derived legitimacy from armed liberation and organized authority through military command structures, with Castro, Che Guevara, and Raúl Castro functioning as guerrilla commanders rather than party cadres. Despite socialist policies and alignment with the Soviet bloc after 1961, the absence of institutionalized party-state fusion meant the regime qualified as Military Autocracy. The 1965 founding of the Partido Comunista de Cuba marked the transition to Communist Ideocracy through formal adoption of Marxism-Leninism as operative doctrine and the establishment of party committees in state organs.

However, Cuba also illuminates the boundary with Personalist Autocracy. Fidel Castro's charismatic authority dominated all institutions, the PCC remained institutionally weaker than

canonical communist parties like the CPSU, and the 2008 succession to Raúl Castro (Fidel's brother) contained quasi-dynastic elements. Personal networks centered on the Castro family occupied key positions, and major decisions often reflected Fidel's personal authority rather than collective party deliberation. Yet the regime remains ideocratic rather than personalist because party structures continued to organize succession, Marxist-Leninist doctrine remained the formal basis of cadre recruitment and policy justification, and the system survived leadership transitions institutionally. The 2018 transition to Miguel Díaz-Canel, a non-Castro, confirmed that party mechanisms rather than pure personal networks structure authority. Cuba thus demonstrates that personal dominance and weak party institutionalization can coexist with communist ideocracy as long as the party retains organizational autonomy and continues to frame succession and elite recruitment through doctrinal categories. The threshold would be crossed if succession became explicitly hereditary within a single family or if party organs lost all deliberative function.

China since the early 1990s represents the key borderline case in the opposite direction. The regime preserved the institutional core of CCP supremacy and the formal Marxist-Leninist framework, but ideological ambition has gradually become instrumental. Economic liberalization and technocratic modernization have replaced revolutionary mobilization. References to class struggle have given way to narratives of national rejuvenation and the "China Dream." The reforms of the 1980s, like the Soviet Union's New Economic Policy, remained ideocratically framed as tactical adaptation within socialist construction. The borderline phase begins when doctrinal commitment becomes secondary to economic performance and national prestige. Yet, as long as Marxism-Leninism remains codified as the party's guiding ideology, cadre promotion continues to require formal ideological training, and policy justifications still reference the socialist stage of development, China remains a communist ideocracy. Observable shifts indicating transition to One-Party Autocracy would include the removal of Marxism-Leninism from party statutes, the substitution of ideological education with purely technocratic or nationalist training, and the abandonment of the CCP's claim to serve as a Leninist vanguard organization.

The Soviet Union under Stalin (1929-1953) constitutes a borderline case toward Personalist Autocracy. Stalin developed an extreme personality cult that exceeded typical communist ideocratic patterns. The Great Purges decimated party cadres and institutional autonomy, concentrating decision-making in Stalin's person. Succession mechanisms were unclear, and terror reached into the highest party organs. However, the regime remained ideocratic rather than personalist because party structures and Marxist-Leninist ideology continued to organize

authority and survived Stalin's death. The 1953 succession occurred through party mechanisms (Politburo deliberation), not through dynastic transfer or pure personal designation. The nomenklatura system, though terrorized, continued to function as the recruitment framework. Legitimation remained grounded in doctrinal claims about building socialism rather than in Stalin's personal charisma alone. The regime's institutional resilience after Stalin's death, with party organs reasserting collective authority, confirms its ideocratic classification. The threshold to Personalist Autocracy would have been crossed if Stalin had established dynastic succession or if party institutions had lost all independent organizational capacity.

Yugoslavia (1945-1991) constitutes a decentralized borderline case. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia legitimized its rule through a Marxist vision of workers' self-management as the authentic socialist path. Federal and republican institutions operated under party supervision, and ideological education remained central to elite recruitment. Although the regime moderated coercion and tolerated limited autonomy, its claim to embody the historical mission of socialism and its party-state fusion kept it within the ideocratic category {Linz, 2000 #3182}.

Contrasting Cases

North Korea demonstrates a temporal transition from Communist Ideocracy to Personalist Autocracy. From 1948 to 1993, the regime operated as a communist ideocracy: the Workers' Party of Korea organized state and social life through a Marxist-Leninist framework adapted as Juche, which was officially described as a creative national version of Marxism-Leninism. Party institutions exercised genuine organizational authority, and legitimacy rested on claims of socialist construction. After 1994, with Kim Il Sung's death and Kim Jong Il's succession, Juche evolved into an explicitly hereditary doctrine centered on the leader's lineage rather than on Marxist-Leninist historical laws. Authority became dynastic and personal rather than ideological. The party lost institutional autonomy, functioning as an instrument of the Kim family rather than as an independent vanguard organization. Succession became purely hereditary (Kim Jong Il to Kim Jong Un in 2011). From 1994 onward, the regime transformed into a personalist autocracy, fulfilling neither the doctrinal criterion nor the institutional autonomy condition.

Algeria under the FLN (1962-1989) and Tanzania under the CCM (1965-1992) illustrate the opposite boundary with One-Party Autocracy. Both established party monopolies and pursued state-led development, but legitimacy rested on national unity and modernization rather than an all-encompassing doctrine of historical transformation. Neither regime adopted Marxism-Leninism as operative doctrine, established systematic ideological vetting of cadres, or claimed

to reorganize society according to scientific socialism. Their authority structures lack the doctrinal organizing principle and totalizing transformative ambition of communist ideocracy. They thus fall under One-Party Autocracy despite single-party rule and socialist policy orientations.

4.4.2. Right-wing Autocracy

Conceptualization: Right-wing autocracy legitimates authority through anti-egalitarian hierarchical principles that reject both liberal democratic procedures and egalitarian transformation. This legitimation pattern structures authority around the claim that individuals or groups possess inherently different capacities and rights, requiring political order based on natural, functional, racial, or national hierarchies. Elite recruitment flows from ideological conformity to these hierarchical principles, distinguishing right-wing autocracy from personalist autocracy where patronage networks dominate. The institutional architecture enforces hierarchy through legal codification, corporatist integration, or revolutionary mobilization.

Within this shared legitimation pattern, three subtypes emerge based on ideological foundation and transformative ambition. These subtypes are not mutually exclusive categories but rather analytical dimensions that can coexist within single regimes, with classification determined by which dimension most comprehensively defines the regime's legitimation pattern. Fascist autocracies pursue totalizing societal transformation through ultranationalist revolution, permanent mass mobilization, and creation of a new man, exhibiting ideocratic character comparable to communist regimes but directed toward hierarchical ends. These regimes seek comprehensive penetration of all social spheres through party organizations, subordinating traditional institutions to the totalizing project. Fascist ideology glorifies the state, war, and national regeneration as transformative forces, requiring active participation rather than passive subordination. Corporatist autocracies structure authority around conservative principles of hierarchical social harmony, functional group organization, and anti-communism, seeking to preserve rather than revolutionize hierarchical order. Corporatist ideology structures authority and elite organization but coexists with traditional elements, especially the Catholic Church, without seeking comprehensive societal penetration. Citizens are integrated into state-controlled syndicates without requiring ideological enthusiasm. Racist autocracies ground authority in doctrines of racial hierarchy and segregation, organizing state institutions and legal frameworks around racial dominance as the primary organizing principle. While

comprehensive in legal codification, racist autocracy does not seek totalizing ideological penetration or permanent mobilization. The goal is conservative: maintaining racial hierarchies perceived as natural rather than creating new racial orders through revolutionary transformation. Racist autocracies typically emerge from settler colonial contexts where demographically substantial settler populations transition from external imperial sovereignty to independent statehood while constructing legal-ideological justifications for racial hierarchy. Regimes frequently combine multiple dimensions. Nazi Germany exhibited both fascist revolutionary-transformative ambition and comprehensive racist legal codification; Fascist Italy combined ultranationalist mobilization with corporatist institutional structures; Francoist Spain employed corporatist mechanisms alongside elements of fascist rhetoric. Classification follows a hierarchy of analytical precedence: revolutionary-transformative ambition and totalizing penetration (fascist dimension) takes precedence when present, as ideocracy represents the most comprehensive form of ideological structuring. When revolutionary transformation is absent, classification depends on whether racial hierarchy functions as the constitutive principle through citizenship redefinition (racist dimension) or whether functional group integration structures authority without racial ordering (corporatist dimension). This hierarchy reflects degrees of ideological comprehensiveness rather than mutual exclusivity {Payne, 1980 #4117; Costa Pinto, 2014 #43843}.

Racist autocracy must be distinguished from electoral oligarchical autocracy with race-based suffrage restrictions. The decisive criterion is whether racial hierarchy constitutes the state's foundational organizing principle or serves as an instrumental restriction within an electoral legitimation pattern. In racist autocracy, racial ideology redefines citizenship and territory itself through legal mechanisms that assign different racial groups to separate political entities, such as apartheid South Africa's Bantustan system which denationalized Black South Africans by designating them citizens of nominally independent homelands. The dominant racial group constitutes itself as the state, with subordinated groups defined as external to the polity. In electoral oligarchical autocracy, exclusion operates within a shared framework of citizenship, with suffrage restrictions maintaining elite power rather than restructuring the fundamental nature of statehood. Elections in racist autocracies, when present, organize authority within the dominant racial group, not as the regime's legitimation pattern toward the entire population.

Right-wing autocracy must be distinguished from additional adjacent regime types. Personalist autocracies structure authority through personal patronage networks, whereas right-wing autocracies employ ideological legitimation patterns that structure elite recruitment independently of personal ties. Military autocracies rest on military power bases with limited

ideological institutionalization, whereas right-wing autocracies demonstrate elaborated ideological legitimation structures extending beyond military command hierarchies. Communist autocracies, like fascist autocracies, are ideocracies with revolutionary-transformative ambitions, but pursue egalitarian class transformation versus hierarchical national or racial regeneration. The transition from direct rule colonial regime to racist autocracy marks a critical threshold: when settler populations establish independent sovereignty while maintaining legal racial hierarchies, authority shifts from external imperial control to internal ideological legitimation. Colonial regimes derive authority from external imperial sovereignty; racist autocracies claim internal ideological sovereignty based on racial ordering maintained by settler populations.

Operationalization: A regime qualifies as Right-wing Autocracy when it meets both necessary conditions and demonstrates institutional enforcement of hierarchical ordering. The necessary conditions include rejection of competitive democracy and political pluralism as legitimating principles, anti-egalitarian ideology asserting inherent hierarchies among groups, and elite recruitment structured by ideological criteria rather than primarily through personal loyalty networks. To distinguish ideological from personalist legitimation, coders assess whether ideology structures elite recruitment measurably or serves merely as rhetoric for personal rule. Indicators of genuine ideological structuring include institutionalized party or movement organizations with authority independent of personal ties, systematic inclusion or exclusion criteria based on ideological principles, and persistence of ideological institutions across leadership transitions.

Institutional enforcement of hierarchical ordering must be demonstrated through at least one of three mechanisms, which are not mutually exclusive but can coexist within regimes. Fascist mechanisms involve party-organizational penetration through compulsory mass organizations, permanent mobilization structures requiring active participation, and totalizing ideological institutions aimed at comprehensive societal transformation. Corporatist mechanisms involve functional group integration through state-controlled syndicates and hierarchical organization of labor and professional associations without totalizing penetration. Racist mechanisms involve legal codification of racial classifications systematically embedded in law and administration, territorial and citizenship redefinition along racial lines such as creation of separate homelands or denationalization of subordinated groups, and institutionalized spatial segregation that restructures the polity itself rather than merely restricting participation within it. The decisive criterion distinguishing racist autocracy from electoral oligarchical autocracy with racial suffrage restrictions is whether racial hierarchy redefines the fundamental nature of

statehood and citizenship or serves as an instrumental method for elite exclusion within an existing polity.

Borderline cases require careful assessment of whether right-wing ideology genuinely structures authority or serves as rhetorical cover for other legitimation patterns. Regimes with right-wing rhetoric but primarily personalist power structures classify as Personalist Autocracies unless ideological institutions demonstrably structure elite recruitment independently of personal loyalty networks. The critical test is whether institutional positions confer authority independent of personal ties, whether ideological criteria systematically govern recruitment, and whether structures persist beyond individual leadership. Vargas's Estado Novo in Brazil exemplifies this boundary: despite corporatist rhetoric and syndical structures, authority rested on personal patronage networks. Nationalist military regimes without elaborated ideological frameworks typically classify as Military Autocracies. The decisive criterion is whether ideology has been institutionalized beyond military command structures to structure civilian authority and elite recruitment. Metaxas-era Greece demonstrates this threshold: corporatist symbolism and nationalist ideology existed, but authority derived primarily from military backing rather than elaborated ideological structures structuring civilian elite recruitment independently. Regimes under foreign occupation with collaborationist right-wing governments classify as Occupied Regimes despite right-wing ideological elements, because external control constitutes the primary basis of authority.

For subtype assignment when regimes exhibit multiple dimensions, coders apply this decision sequence based on analytical precedence. If the regime exhibits revolutionary-transformative ambition deriving legitimation from fascist or national-socialist ideology seeking to create a new man and comprehensively transform society through permanent coerced mass mobilization and totalizing penetration of all social spheres, classify as Fascist Autocracy regardless of whether corporatist or racist mechanisms are also present. Revolutionary-transformative ambition takes precedence because ideocracy represents the most comprehensive form of ideological structuring. If revolutionary transformation is absent but the regime employs comprehensive racial laws as its constitutive organizing principle, with racial classification and segregation systematically embedded in law and administration, and particularly if citizenship itself is redefined along racial lines through mechanisms like separate homelands, classify as Racist Autocracy. If neither revolutionary transformation nor racial citizenship redefinition dominates, but the regime maintains conservative hierarchical ordering through state-controlled functional integration guided by corporatist ideology emphasizing social harmony,

traditionalist principles, and anti-communism while coexisting with traditional institutions, classify as Corporatist Autocracy.

This hierarchy reflects analytical precedence rather than mutual exclusivity. Nazi Germany combined fascist revolutionary mobilization with comprehensive racist legal codification, but classifies as Fascist Autocracy because totalizing revolutionary ambition most comprehensively defined its legitimation pattern. Fascist Italy combined ultranationalist mobilization with extensive corporatist structures, but fascist ideology's revolutionary goals and permanent mobilization take precedence over corporatist institutional mechanisms. Apartheid South Africa employed some corporatist elements in organizing white political and economic life, but racial citizenship redefinition through the Bantustan system most comprehensively defined the regime's legitimation pattern, warranting Racist Autocracy classification {Costa Pinto, 2014 #43843}.

Examples: The following cases exemplify Right-wing Autocracy in its three principal analytical dimensions, demonstrating how anti-egalitarian hierarchical legitimation patterns structure authority across different institutional configurations, ideological foundations, and transformative ambitions. Because these dimensions are not mutually exclusive, many regimes exhibit characteristics of multiple dimensions, with classification determined by which dimension most comprehensively defines the legitimation pattern.

Fascist Autocracy

Paradigmatic Cases: Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945 represents Right-wing Autocracy where the fascist dimension most comprehensively defines the legitimation pattern, despite also exhibiting extensive racist mechanisms. The regime rejected both liberal democracy and egalitarian principles, grounding authority in ultranationalist racial ideology that asserted hierarchical ordering among peoples. The fascist ideocratic character manifests in the regime's totalizing ambition to create a new man and comprehensively transform German society. Political opposition was eliminated through Gleichschaltung, all institutions were subordinated to Nazi party control, and society was penetrated by party organizations requiring active participation including Hitler Youth, German Labor Front, and NS Women's League. Unlike semi-ideocratic right-wing forms that preserve traditional structures, Nazi ideology sought to subordinate the Church, transform regional identities, and create a racially purified Volksgemeinschaft through revolutionary means. State policies aimed at racial transformation through systematic exclusion and genocide, culminating in the Holocaust. Permanent mass mobilization through rallies, demonstrations, and organizational membership was constitutive of the regime's legitimation pattern. Violence and war were glorified as purifying and

regenerative forces essential to national rebirth. While the regime also systematically codified racial hierarchy through Nuremberg Laws and comprehensive segregation, classification as Fascist Autocracy reflects that revolutionary-transformative ambition and totalizing penetration most comprehensively structured the regime's authority {Payne, 1980 #4117; Paxton, 2005 #44654}.

Fascist Italy from 1925 to 1943 represents Right-wing Autocracy where fascist and corporatist dimensions coexisted, with fascist revolutionary ambition taking analytical precedence. The regime established a one-party state rooted in ultranationalism, anti-liberalism, and glorification of violence. Mussolini's fascism combined totalitarian ambition with extensive corporatist institutional structures, organizing labor and professional associations into state-controlled corporations and establishing the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations. However, the revolutionary ultranationalist ideology, permanent mobilization requirements through party organizations and youth movements, and comprehensive penetration goals demonstrate fascist ideocratic character taking precedence over corporatist institutional mechanisms. The regime sought transformation of Italian society through creation of a disciplined, militarized populace devoted to state greatness and imperial expansion, not merely preservation of hierarchical order. Classification as Fascist Autocracy reflects that revolutionary mobilization and transformative ambition most comprehensively defined legitimation, even as corporatist structures provided institutional architecture {Payne, 1980 #4117; Costa Pinto, 2014 #43843}.

Borderline Cases. The Metaxas regime in Greece from 1936 to 1941 shows the threshold between Military Autocracy and Fascist Right-wing Autocracy. General Metaxas established dictatorship with fascist-influenced rhetoric including corporatist symbolism and the Third Hellenic Civilization ideology combining nationalism, anti-communism, and traditionalism. However, ideological institutionalization remained limited. Authority derived primarily from military backing and personal rule rather than from elaborated party-organizational structures that structured elite recruitment independently. Corporatist institutions were more symbolic than substantive, and the regime lacked the permanent mobilization structures or comprehensive institutional penetration characteristic of ideocratic forms. This represents a borderline case leaning toward Military Autocracy due to the primacy of military power base over ideological institutionalization.

Contrasting Cases. Chile under Pinochet from 1973 to 1990 illustrates a regime just outside the Fascist Autocracy threshold. The regime employed anti-communist crusade rhetoric, DINA secret police apparatus, and personality cult elements resembling fascist forms. However, the regime lacked fascist ideology's revolutionary mass mobilization and transformative ambition.

Authority derived primarily from military command structures rather than from party-organizational penetration of society. The absence of permanent mobilization structures requiring active participation and the regime's conservative rather than revolutionary orientation warrant classification as Military Autocracy despite fascist stylistic elements. This demonstrates how military power base without ideological institutionalization places a regime outside fascist classification, even when employing fascist rhetoric and repressive apparatus.

Corporatist Autocracy

Paradigmatic Cases: Francoist Spain from 1939 to 1975 exemplifies Right-wing Autocracy where the corporatist dimension most comprehensively defines the legitimation pattern, despite incorporating elements of fascist rhetoric and symbolism. The regime rejected liberal democracy and egalitarianism, grounding authority in Catholic traditionalism, functional hierarchy, and anti-communism. The corporatist semi-ideocratic character manifests in the regime's goal to preserve rather than transform Spanish society. Labor and professional organizations were integrated into state-controlled vertical syndicates eliminating independent representation while maintaining hierarchical order. Unlike fascist regimes' permanent mobilization and comprehensive penetration, Francoist corporatism coexisted with traditional institutions. The Catholic Church retained significant autonomy and served as a pillar of the regime. Regional identities, family structures, and traditional social hierarchies were preserved rather than revolutionized. The regime relied on passive subordination through institutional control and repression rather than requiring ideological enthusiasm or active participation. While the regime employed Falangist symbolism and rhetoric from fascist sources, the absence of revolutionary-transformative ambition and permanent mobilization structures means corporatist functional integration most comprehensively defined legitimation. Legitimacy rested on notions of organic national unity, social harmony, and defense of traditional Catholic values against communist and liberal threats {Linz, 2000 #3182; Costa Pinto, 2014 #43843}. Portugal under Salazar from 1933 to 1968 similarly institutionalized corporatist Right-wing Autocracy through the Estado Novo. Salazar promoted an authoritarian vision embedding corporatist structures into the political system through the National Union and organized corporate representation. Trade unions were banned, strikes outlawed, and all civil society organizations brought under state control through vertical integration. The regime's legitimacy derived from Catholic social doctrine, hierarchical nationalism, and anti-communist ideology rather than revolutionary mobilization or totalizing penetration. Traditional institutions, especially the Church and rural social structures, were preserved and integrated into the authoritarian framework. The regime exemplifies corporatist autocracy in its conservative form,

seeking social order through functional hierarchy and passive subordination without revolutionary transformation {Linz, 2000 #3182; Costa Pinto, 2017 #43842}.

Borderline Cases: Vargas's Estado Novo in Brazil from 1937 to 1945 demonstrates the boundary between Right-wing Corporatist and Personalist Autocracy. The regime employed corporatist rhetoric and institutions including a labor code modeled on Italian fascism and syndical structures. However, authority fundamentally rested on Vargas's personal patronage networks and coalitional management. Corporatist ideology served instrumental purposes for personal rule rather than structuring elite recruitment independently. Access to power and resources depended on personal loyalty to Vargas and incorporation into his clientelistic networks, not on ideological criteria or institutional position within corporatist structures. The regime's policies were shaped by Vargas's strategic calculations and patronage imperatives rather than by corporatist doctrine, warranting classification as Personalist Autocracy.

Racist Autocracy

Paradigmatic Cases: Apartheid South Africa from 1948 to 1994 represents Right-wing Autocracy where the racist dimension most comprehensively defines the legitimation pattern, despite employing some corporatist mechanisms in organizing white political and economic life. The racist semi-ideocratic character is evident in comprehensive legal entrenchment of racial dominance combined with conservative rather than revolutionary ambition. The regime's legitimacy rested on the doctrine of separate development, asserting that distinct racial groups possessed inherently different capacities requiring separate political and social structures under white dominance. Apartheid laws systematically codified racial classification through the Population Registration Act, restricted movement and residence through the Group Areas Act, prohibited interracial marriage through the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, and excluded the Black majority from political representation through constitutional provisions and pass laws. All major institutions including education, healthcare, urban planning, and labor markets were structured around racial segregation embedded in legal and administrative frameworks. The regime's racist character manifested most fundamentally in the Bantustan system, which legally redefined Black South Africans as citizens of nominally independent homelands, stripping them of South African citizenship and restructuring the state's territorial foundations to constitute whites as the sole legitimate polity {Fredrickson, 1981 #47208}. This citizenship redefinition distinguishes racist autocracy from electoral oligarchical forms that restrict suffrage within a shared framework of citizenship. Unlike fascist regimes' totalizing mobilization, apartheid relied on segmented control through legal segregation and spatial separation. While corporatist mechanisms organized some aspects of white labor and

professional life, racial citizenship redefinition most comprehensively defined the regime's legitimization pattern. The regime sought to maintain rather than revolutionize racial hierarchies, coexisting with traditional institutions and social structures within the white community. The regime emerged from a settler colonial context where a demographically substantial white population, roughly twenty percent at apartheid's height, transitioned from British colonial administration to independent sovereignty while constructing elaborate legal-ideological justifications for racial hierarchy {Marx, 1998 #47207}.

Borderline Cases: Rhodesia from 1965 to 1979 demonstrates the threshold conditions for racist autocracy classification. The regime instituted constitutional provisions excluding ninety-five percent of the population via property and education qualifications alongside Land Tenure Act legislation codifying spatial segregation. Racial hierarchy was legally codified and structured political authority. However, several factors place Rhodesia at the lower threshold of racist autocracy. The settler population was smaller, roughly five percent, providing a narrower demographic base for independent sovereignty claims. The regime faced ongoing counterinsurgency requiring external support, revealing fragility in its claim to constitute stable independent authority. The unilateral declaration of independence lacked international recognition, maintaining ambiguity about whether the regime constituted genuinely independent sovereignty or remained under contested external authority. Institutional elaboration was less comprehensive than apartheid South Africa, with segregation laws less systematically embedded across all administrative and social institutions, and without the comprehensive citizenship redefinition represented by the Bantustan system. These characteristics demonstrate borderline status illustrating how demographic scale of settler populations, international recognition of sovereignty, comprehensiveness of legal codification, and depth of institutional penetration determine classification thresholds {Cell, 1982 #47209}.

Contrasting Cases: German Southwest Africa from 1894 to 1915 illustrates a regime just outside the Racist Autocracy threshold despite implementing racist policies including genocide against Herero and Nama peoples. The regime maintained comprehensive racial hierarchy through legal segregation, forced labor systems, and systematic exclusion of indigenous populations from political participation. However, authority derived from external imperial sovereignty of the German Empire rather than from internal ideological sovereignty claimed by a settler population. Colonial administrators and settlers operated under imperial mandate from Berlin, with the Kaiser and Reichstag retaining ultimate authority over colonial policy. The regime lacked the independent statehood and internal sovereignty characteristic of racist autocracy. Classification as Direct Rule Colonial Regime remains warranted because external

imperial control constituted the primary basis of authority, despite the presence of racist ideology and policies. This demonstrates how the source of sovereignty—external imperial versus internal ideological—constitutes the decisive criterion distinguishing colonial regimes from racist autocracies, even when both maintain comprehensive racial hierarchies {Cell, 1982 #47209}.

The United States from 1890 to 1965 in Southern states represents an Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy just outside the Racist Autocracy threshold. Southern states maintained Jim Crow laws and systematic Black disenfranchisement through poll taxes, literacy tests, and violence. However, this represented suffrage restriction within a shared, if systematically violated, framework of formal citizenship rather than ideological redefinition of statehood itself. Black Americans remained legally citizens of the United States with constitutional rights that were denied in practice through state-level restrictions and extra-legal violence, but the federal regime did not territorially redefine citizenship by assigning Black populations to separate political entities or stripping them of national citizenship. The legitimation pattern of the broader American regime remained electoral, with racial exclusion in Southern states serving as instrumental mechanism for white elite power maintenance within the federal structure. This contrasts with apartheid South Africa's Bantustan system, which legally redefined Black South Africans as citizens of separate homelands, fundamentally restructuring the state's territorial and citizenship foundations along racial ideology {Fredrickson, 1981 #47208}. This demonstrates how citizenship redefinition versus suffrage restriction constitutes the decisive boundary between racist autocracy and electoral oligarchical autocracy with race-based restrictions.

4.4.3. Islamist Ideocracy

Conceptualization: Islamist ideocracies structure political authority through the fusion of religious doctrine and state institutions under the claim that legitimate rule must conform to divine law. Their legitimation pattern rests on the conviction that sovereignty belongs to God rather than to the people, and that rulers merely implement His commands through the state. Political authority is thus derived from and constrained by Islamic revelation and jurisprudence rather than popular will or secular law. The regime claims to represent a divinely mandated moral order that encompasses all aspects of life, political, social, and personal, and thereby asserts the right to reshape society in accordance with its interpretation of Islam. This fusion of religion and governance distinguishes Islamist ideocracies from religiously conservative autocracies, which rely on clerical legitimacy without seeking total ideological transformation,

and from secular ideocracies such as communism, which rest on non-religious teleological doctrines.

Islamist ideocracy represents a specific form of theocracy characterized by transformative ambition. While theocracy broadly refers to political systems where religious authorities exercise governmental power, not all theocracies are ideocratic. Traditional theocracies, such as Tibet under the Dalai Lama system or the Vatican, fuse religious and political authority but primarily preserve established religious orders rather than pursuing revolutionary social transformation. These systems derive legitimacy from religious tradition and hierarchical authority but lack the totalizing project to comprehensively reshape society according to an ideological interpretation of divine law. Islamist ideocracies, by contrast, mobilize religious doctrine as a revolutionary instrument for comprehensive social engineering. They do not merely preserve Islamic tradition but actively reconstruct social relations, legal systems, economic structures, and cultural practices according to their interpretation of how Islamic principles should organize modern life. This transformative character distinguishes ideocratic from traditional theocratic governance and aligns Islamist ideocracies with other ideocratic regime types such as communist regimes, which similarly pursue totalizing societal transformation, albeit through secular rather than religious doctrine.

In these regimes, ideology constitutes the architecture of rule rather than its ornamentation. The state functions as the instrument for realizing God's law (Sharia), which simultaneously defines legal codes, moral obligations, and political authority. The leadership claims legitimacy through religious knowledge and doctrinal purity, often institutionalized in clerical hierarchies or councils of scholars charged with interpreting and enforcing divine law. The boundary between political and theological authority collapses: religious institutions define legitimacy, and state institutions execute their rulings.

This structure shapes both institutional design and elite composition. Clerical or theological authority becomes the primary pathway to power. The legal system is either formally or substantively subordinated to Sharia; religious courts exercise jurisdiction over civil, criminal, and family law; and legislation inconsistent with divine law is either invalid or subject to clerical review. Educational, media, and cultural institutions are employed for doctrinal indoctrination and moral policing. The regime claims not only to govern society but to sanctify it by aligning human law with divine revelation {Esposito, 1998 #44658;Tibi, 2007 #5252}.

The boundary with One-Party Autocracy lies in the source and structure of legitimation. One-party regimes claim to embody the unified will of the nation; Islamist ideocracies claim to embody the divine will. The distinction from Religious Autocracy lies in the totalizing ambition

of the ideological project: religious autocracies preserve tradition, whereas Islamist ideocracies mobilize divine law to reconstruct society. The contrast with Personalist Autocracy lies in institutional anchoring: personalist regimes center on individual charisma, family, or coercion, whereas Islamist ideocracies organize authority around doctrinal authority and theocratic institutions. The boundary with Autocratic Monarchy turns on the basis of succession and ultimate authority: monarchies derive legitimacy from dynastic continuity and hereditary succession, while ideocracies derive legitimacy from clerical interpretation of divine law, with leadership positions determined by religious credentials rather than bloodline {Roy, 1994 #45058}.

Islamist ideocracy is empirically rare but conceptually and analytically indispensable. Only two regimes have sustained this pattern for extended periods: Iran since 1979 and Afghanistan under Taliban rule. This scarcity reflects substantial structural obstacles to establishing and maintaining clerical supremacy in modern states. Sunni Islam's decentralized authority structure, lacking hierarchical clerical institutions comparable to Shi'a marja systems, creates particular challenges for establishing theocratic governance. Most Islamist movements either fail to seize power, govern through military or personalist structures with Islamic legitimation rather than genuine ideocratic institutions, or face international pressures that prevent consolidation.

However, the conceptual significance of this regime type far exceeds its empirical frequency. Islamist ideocracy represents the explicit goal of numerous influential political movements across the Muslim world. The Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates across Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine have consistently articulated visions of Islamic governance. Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ennahda in Tunisia, various Salafi movements, Al-Qaeda affiliates, and the Islamic State's attempted caliphate (2014-2017) all share the aspiration to establish regimes where divine sovereignty supersedes popular sovereignty and Sharia becomes the comprehensive organizing principle of state and society. The pattern provides essential analytical purchase for understanding regime contestation, opposition strategies, and potential transitions in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia {Kepel, 2002 #45057; Roy, 2017 #47154}.

The forward-looking significance of this category parallels the early history of communist ideocracy. In 1920, only the Soviet Union embodied this regime type. Had scholars dismissed it as empirically insignificant, they would have missed the most consequential regime innovation of the twentieth century. Communist ideocracy subsequently proliferated across Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and parts of Africa, reshaping global

politics for decades. Similarly, failed or partial attempts at establishing Islamist ideocracies—Egypt's brief Muslim Brotherhood government (2012-2013), ISIS's short-lived caliphate, the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia (2006), and ongoing civil conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen—underscore both the appeal of this model among certain movements and the formidable obstacles to its realization. The rarity of successfully consolidated cases does not diminish the category's utility; rather, understanding why transformative religious governance remains aspirational despite its prominence in political discourse is itself analytically crucial. The category enables systematic analysis of regime contestation, the structural conditions that facilitate or prevent ideocratic consolidation, and the trajectories of Islamist movements when they do achieve power.

Operationalization: A regime qualifies as an Islamist Ideocracy when three necessary and jointly sufficient conditions are met.

First, the regime's legitimation explicitly asserts divine sovereignty (*hakimiyyat Allah*) as the foundation of authority. Rulers and institutions claim that sovereignty belongs to God and that their legitimacy derives from implementing divine law. This differs from regimes that invoke Islamic identity alongside nationalist, dynastic, or developmental claims. The assertion must be constitutive rather than ornamental: divine sovereignty must organize the institutional architecture of rule, not merely provide rhetorical justification {Ayubi, 1991 #47156}.

Second, Islamic law (*Sharia*) serves as the operative legal and policy framework. Religious scholars or councils of jurists hold binding interpretive authority over legislation, and state institutions are hierarchically subordinated to theological oversight. The enforcement of *Sharia* is institutionalized through religious courts, morality police, or ministries charged with enjoining virtue and forbidding vice. This criterion distinguishes regimes where *Sharia* is formally codified but remains subordinate to secular authority (as in Pakistan under Zia or Sudan under al-Bashir after 1999) from those where religious law genuinely constrains state action.

Third, the regime demonstrates transformative ambition: it seeks to reshape social relations, education, culture, and public morality according to Islamic principles. The regime claims the right and duty to transform society through a comprehensive ideological project based on religious revelation. This totalizing ambition distinguishes ideocracies from conservative religious monarchies that preserve traditional orders or military regimes that instrumentally deploy Islamic rhetoric without pursuing comprehensive social engineering.

These criteria are jointly necessary for classification. Regimes where Islamic references coexist with secular or pragmatic justifications without institutionalized doctrinal supremacy are not

ideocratic. Likewise, regimes in which divine authority becomes symbolic while real power resides in personal or military networks fall outside this category. Borderline cases typically involve either temporal thresholds (when does a revolutionary movement consolidate into stable ideocracy?) or the coexistence of electoral and ideocratic legitimation patterns within a single regime.

Quantitative indicators such as low pluralism or high religious control may corroborate qualitative assessments, but classification relies exclusively on de facto legitimation structures and ideological function. The decisive question is not whether a regime invokes Islam or implements elements of Sharia, but whether divine sovereignty functions as the constitutive organizing principle of political authority, whether clerical institutions exercise genuine veto power over state action, and whether the regime pursues comprehensive societal transformation according to religious doctrine.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases: Iran (1979–present) is the paradigmatic Islamist ideocracy. The Islamic Republic's doctrine of Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist) establishes that sovereignty belongs to God and is exercised through the Supreme Leader, a Shi'a cleric with ultimate religious and political authority. All state institutions, including the presidency, parliament, and judiciary, are constitutionally subordinate to this clerical office. The Guardian Council, composed of clerics and jurists, vets legislation and candidates for conformity with Islamic law. Elections occur within strict ideological boundaries, and all policy domains remain under clerical supervision. Sharia informs both civil and criminal codes, the education system enforces doctrinal conformity, and public morality is regulated by state institutions such as the morality police. This system fuses divine authority and state power in a comprehensive theocratic framework. The revolutionary period (1979–1982) involved intense mobilization and the violent consolidation of clerical supremacy, while subsequent decades have seen the routinization of theocratic governance through bureaucratic institutions, though the underlying legitimation pattern and institutional structure remain unchanged {Arjomand, 1988 #37043; Arjomand, 2009 #37044; Schirazi, 1997 #47158}.

Afghanistan under Taliban rule (1996–2001; 2021–present) represents a Sunni variant. The Taliban regime rejects democratic sovereignty and legitimizes authority solely through Deobandi interpretations of Islam. Political power derives from religious command, and law is equated with Sharia as interpreted by Taliban clerics. The ulema councils and religious police govern public morality, education, and media. The Taliban's comprehensive attempt to enforce religious doctrine in all spheres of life—gender relations, dress codes, cultural expression, and

education—illustrates the regime's totalizing ideological ambition. The two periods of Taliban rule differ in degree: the first (1996-2001) pursued maximalist enforcement with international isolation, while the second (2021-present) shows somewhat more pragmatic accommodation to international pressure, particularly regarding female education in some contexts. However, both periods share the foundational commitment to divine sovereignty, systematic Sharia enforcement, and transformative ambition, thereby fulfilling the defining features of an Islamist ideocracy {Maley, 2021 #47160; Rashid, 2000 #47159}.

Borderline Case: Iran represents a critical borderline case in relation to Electoral Autocracy. While the regime clearly fulfills all three criteria for Islamist ideocracy, it conducts regular competitive elections for president and parliament with genuine contestation between reformist and conservative factions within the system. Electoral outcomes have real policy consequences, turnout varies meaningfully, and voter mobilization shapes governance. The 1997 election of reformist Mohammad Khatami, the 2005 election of hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the 2013 election of moderate Hassan Rouhani each marked significant policy shifts. However, the Guardian Council vets all candidates for ideological conformity, excluding those deemed insufficiently committed to the Islamic Republic's principles. This creates a system analogous to satellite party arrangements in communist regimes, where multiple parties compete but within boundaries defined by a supreme ideological authority.

The decisive question is whether legitimation derives primarily from divine sovereignty implemented through clerical supremacy (ideocratic pattern) or from managed electoral authorization (electoral autocratic pattern). As long as the Supreme Leader retains ultimate authority through Velayat-e Faqih doctrine, unelected clerics hold veto power over legislation, and elections function within boundaries defined by divine law rather than popular sovereignty, the regime remains an Islamist ideocracy. The electoral elements enhance regime legitimacy and create space for policy contestation but do not supersede theocratic foundations. Observable shifts toward Electoral Autocracy would include the Guardian Council's transformation into a ceremonial body without genuine veto power, elections determining ultimate authority rather than operating within clerical constraints, or the Supreme Leader position becoming symbolic rather than exercising decisive power over foreign policy, military affairs, and constitutional interpretation {Buchta, 2000 #47161; Moslem, 2002 #47162}.

Contrasting Cases: Gaza under Hamas (2007–present) illustrates incomplete ideocratic institutionalization. Hamas invokes Islamist ideology and claims Sharia governance, yet religious law coexists with secular administrative frameworks inherited from the Palestinian Authority. Sharia courts function within a plural legal system without comprehensive

jurisdiction. Ideological enforcement is selective, applied more stringently to public morality than to economic or administrative spheres. Many state functions operate through pragmatic factional mechanisms rather than clerical oversight. Hamas thus represents Islamist-influenced authoritarianism rather than full ideocracy, demonstrating that partial Islamization and ideological rhetoric do not constitute systematic theocratic governance {Hroub, 2006 #47163}. Sudan (1989–2019) under Omar al-Bashir demonstrates military autocracy with Islamic legitimation. From 1989 to 1996, Hassan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front provided ideological direction, Sharia was comprehensively codified, and education was restructured around Islamic principles. However, ultimate authority remained with the military. The decisive 1999 test revealed this: al-Bashir dissolved parliament, marginalized Turabi, and unilaterally weakened Islamic institutions without systemic collapse. In genuine ideocracy, clerical structures exercise institutional veto power that survives leadership purges. Sudan demonstrates that systematic Islamization under military auspices does not constitute ideocracy when clerical institutions lack autonomy to constrain executive action {Burr, 2003 #35183; Gallab, 2008 #47165}.

Pakistan under General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) represents military autocracy with ideological coloration. Zia introduced Federal Sharia Courts, Hudood Ordinances, and religious education reforms, yet sovereignty remained vested in the military. Islamic doctrine justified rather than constrained military authority. Religious scholars validated executive decisions without independent institutional power. The absence of clerical supremacy and comprehensive transformation prevents ideocratic classification, demonstrating that even systematic implementation of Islamic law does not constitute ideocracy when operating under military authority {Nasr, 2001 #47166}.

Saudi Arabia and Gulf monarchies rest on dynastic legitimation reinforced by religious endorsement. The Saudi monarchy claims guardianship of holy places and enforces conservative norms but derives authority from hereditary succession, not divine sovereignty implemented through clerical governance. The ulema validate the regime but do not rule, lacking independent power to veto royal decisions. Religious law legitimates rather than limits monarchical power. These cases demonstrate that extensive Sharia implementation and clerical influence do not constitute ideocracy without transformative ambition, clerical institutional supremacy exercising genuine constraints on executive authority, and totalizing ideological project {Al-Rasheed, 2010 #47167; Herb, 1999 #35276}.

Tibet under the Dalai Lama system (prior to 1950) exemplifies traditional theocracy without ideocratic transformation. Religious and political authority fused through the institution of the

Dalai Lama as both spiritual leader and head of state, identified through reincarnation and recognized through Buddhist hierarchical procedures. Monastic institutions exercised substantial political influence, and Buddhist principles informed governance. However, the system preserved rather than revolutionized social orders, maintained traditional hierarchies rather than engineering new ones, and grounded authority in spiritual succession rather than activist reinterpretation of divine commands demanding comprehensive societal change. Va-PoReg classifies such regimes as Autocratic Monarchy when succession operates through recognized procedures (including religious identification systems like reincarnation) and authority derives from traditional religious legitimation rather than transformative ideological projects. The contrast demonstrates that religious rule alone does not constitute ideocracy; the decisive criterion is whether religious doctrine serves as blueprint for totalizing transformation or primarily legitimizes traditional authority structures {Goldstein, 1989 #47169}.

4.5 Regimes Based on Institutional Legitimation

Regimes grouped under this heading structure authority through organizational hierarchies in which legitimacy derives from institutional office and hierarchical rank rather than from personal attributes, electoral mandates, or ideological orthodoxy. This institutional legitimation pattern prescribes that the right to rule stems from membership in and position within an established organizational framework, whether military command chains or single-party structures. A defining feature shared across both variants is the claim to monistic authority: these regimes assert that their organization alone possesses the capacity and legitimacy to govern, rendering political pluralism unnecessary or harmful. Authority is exercised through hierarchical institutions that present themselves as embodying the collective wisdom or unified will necessary for effective governance, rejecting the premise that legitimate authority requires competitive procedures or ideological transformation. The pattern describes how authority is structured through institutional mechanisms and collective organizational identities, irrespective of whether these institutions genuinely function as collective bodies or concentrate power in practice. This distinguishes institutional regimes from those structured around personalist legitimation (where authority inheres in specific individuals), electoral legitimation (where authority derives from competitive procedures), or ideology-centered legitimation (where authority is primarily justified through doctrinal frameworks).

Within this shared monistic foundation, regimes differ in the source and nature of their institutional claims to exclusive authority. Military autocracies derive legitimacy from the armed forces as an institution, grounding their monistic claim in technocratic and security

expertise. These regimes justify rule through narratives of national crisis and assert that only the military possesses the organizational discipline, hierarchical command structure, and apolitical rationality necessary to restore order where civilian governance has failed. Authority is organized through military command hierarchies, with the officer corps functioning as a collective decision-making body distributed according to rank rather than concentrated in a single ruler. Military regimes typically frame their monopoly on power as temporary guardianship responding to extraordinary circumstances, though this temporality claim often proves false in practice. One-party autocracies structure authority through party organizations, grounding their monistic claim in political representation of a unified popular will. Operating under a doctrine of monist popular sovereignty, these regimes assert that the party embodies the common interest of the people, making competitive pluralism divisive rather than necessary. Unlike ideocracies, one-party autocracies do not pursue comprehensive societal transformation according to utopian visions but maintain power through party structures that monopolize access to political office and organize society vertically through party cells. In both variants, legitimacy is claimed to reside in the organization as a collective entity possessing unique capacity to govern, distinguishing these regimes from personalist autocracies where organizational structures are subordinated to individual rulers.

4.5.1. One-Party Autocracy

Conceptualization: One-party autocracies structure authority through party-organizational monopoly justified by claims of monist popular sovereignty. The ruling party claims to embody the unified will of the nation or people, rendering political pluralism fundamentally illegitimate. Authority flows through party structures that monopolize access to political power, penetrate state institutions, and control elite recruitment through membership requirements and internal hierarchies.

The institutional architecture distinguishes one-party autocracies from adjacent regime types. Unlike ideocracies, these regimes do not pursue utopian societal transformation guided by comprehensive doctrine. The party monopoly serves to maintain political control and facilitate development rather than to implement systematic ideological restructuring of society, economy, and consciousness. Unlike corporatist autocracies, authority does not flow through organized occupational intermediation structures. Unlike racist autocracies, the regime does not rest on legal racial hierarchies. The party monopoly itself constitutes the primary organizational logic.

Ideological content varies substantially across one-party autocracies without constituting different legitimation patterns. Some articulate nationalist-developmental rhetoric (Kenya under KANU), others employ socialist-inflected unity discourse (Tanzania under CCM, Algeria under FLN), still others invoke pan-Arab or pan-African solidarity. These ideological formulations function as legitimating narratives for party monopoly rather than as comprehensive doctrines requiring total societal control. Post-colonial developmentalism provides common context where party monopoly is justified as necessary for national unity, state-building, and economic modernization {Zolberg, 1985 #5730: 64-87}.

Party institutionalization exists on a spectrum with implications for boundary maintenance with personalist autocracy. Strongly institutionalized variants feature autonomous party organs that make substantive decisions, control elite advancement, and possess organizational capacity independent of individual leaders (Tanzania under Nyerere). Party structures could survive leadership transitions and succession occurs through party processes. Weakly institutionalized variants shade toward personalism, where party structures become increasingly nominal (Malawi under Banda). The boundary with personalist autocracy is crossed when party organs lose all autonomous capacity and authority flows entirely through personal loyalty networks.

Elite composition is shaped by party membership requirements functioning as gatekeeping mechanisms. Access to state positions and economic opportunities flows through party affiliation. Cohesion mechanisms include party discipline enforced through internal organs, patronage networks routed through party hierarchies, and shared commitment to maintaining party supremacy. In strongly institutionalized variants, elite circulation occurs through party organs operating according to institutional procedures; in weakly institutionalized variants, personal networks increasingly supplant formal structures even as party affiliation remains formally necessary {Brownlee, 2007 #35620: 45-67}.

Operationalization: A regime qualifies as one-party autocracy when it satisfies four cumulative criteria. First, it must not meet criteria for ideocracy, lacking a utopian transformation agenda requiring comprehensive restructuring according to systematic doctrine. Second, de facto single-party monopoly must exist through either legal prohibition of opposition parties or complete suppression rendering opposition entirely ineffective. The decisive indicator is whether opposition parties possess any meaningful capacity to organize, compete for power, or access institutional authority. Legal existence of opposition parties without such capacity does not preclude one-party classification when parties function purely as controlled satellites.

Third, party structures must retain at least minimal autonomous capacity distinguishing the regime from personalist autocracy. Party organs must participate in decision-making beyond merely ratifying individual leader preferences, control at least some aspects of elite recruitment beyond personal networks, and maintain organizational coherence that could theoretically persist without the current leader. When party structures become purely nominal facades with all authority flowing through personal loyalty networks, classify as personalist autocracy. Fourth, authority must not be structured primarily through corporatist intermediation or racial legal hierarchies, indicating corporatist or racist autocracy respectively.

V-Dem indicators provide quantitative guidance. Variable *v2psparban* (party ban) with scores of 0 or 1 indicates opposition parties are banned or severely restricted. Variable *v2psbars* (barriers to parties) with scores of 3 or 4 indicates significant obstacles to party formation. Cross-reference *v2x_partipdem* (participatory component index), where low scores suggest minimal autonomous organization outside the ruling party. To assess party institutionalization versus personalism, examine *v2xlg_legcon* (legislative constraints on executive) and *v2psoppaut* (opposition party autonomy): very low scores on both combined with single-party dominance suggest weak institutionalization approaching personalist threshold.

The boundary with electoral autocracies requires attention. Electoral autocracies maintain multi-party systems and ground legitimation in electoral dominance, preserving pluralist fiction. One-party autocracies either legally prohibit opposition or suppress it so completely that no multi-party framework exists, grounding legitimation in monist claims that party embodies the nation. Syria in 1990 represents a borderline case: the National Progressive Front included multiple parties functioning purely as Ba'ath satellites. Code as one-party autocracy when satellite parties are entirely controlled appendages lacking independent decision-making. Post-1990 Uzbekistan, where multiple pro-government parties exist with minimal but non-zero independence, codes as electoral autocracy because the legitimation structure maintains pluralist forms.

The boundary with personalist autocracy hinges on party institutionalization assessment. When party organs retain capacity to make decisions beyond leader ratification, control elite recruitment through institutional criteria supplementing personal networks, or maintain organizational coherence independent of the leader, classify as one-party autocracy. When party structures are purely nominal and all decisions flow from personal networks, classify as personalist autocracy. Diagnostic indicators include: Can party organs theoretically constrain the leader? Does elite advancement require party endorsement beyond personal loyalty? Could

the party survive leader removal? Negative answers suggest personalist classification {Bratton, 1997 #664: 61-96}.

Examples

Paradigmatic Cases

Tanzania under CCM (1965-1992) exemplifies strongly institutionalized one-party autocracy with socialist-developmental coloring. The 1965 Interim Constitution established TANU (merged with Zanzibar ASP in 1977 to form Chama Cha Mapinduzi) as sole legal party. Party structures deeply penetrated state institutions through systematic cadre placement, with CCM cells organized in villages, workplaces, and state agencies. The party exercised oversight over government ministries, and advancement in state bureaucracy required party membership and approval from party organs including the National Executive Committee.

Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa ideology framed party rule as embodying national unity for African socialist development. However, this remained distinct from communist ideocracy: villagization programs were coercive but did not constitute systematic transformation of consciousness characteristic of Maoist collectivization. Economic control remained incomplete with informal sectors persisting, and civil society retained partial autonomy. Party organs maintained institutional capacity distinct from Nyerere personally, enabling orderly succession to Ali Hassan Mwinyi in 1985 and eventual multi-party transition in 1992 through party-managed processes {Bienen, 1970 #47101;Hyden, 1980 #47100}.

Kenya under KANU (1982-1991) represents moderate institutionalization with nationalist-developmental legitimation. The 1982 constitutional amendment formalized KANU's (Kenya African National Union) legal monopoly following an attempted coup. President Daniel arap Moi's "Nyayo philosophy" articulated generic unity discourse emphasizing stability and national cohesion without specific socialist content, justifying party monopoly through claims that multi-party competition would exacerbate ethnic divisions.

KANU structures organized through district and branch networks, controlled parliamentary nominations through party primaries, and structured access to state resources. However, Moi increasingly consolidated personal control through patronage distribution and strategic use of ethnic networks. By the late 1980s, KANU functioned more as vehicle for presidential authority than autonomous institution, though it retained sufficient organizational capacity to distinguish the regime from pure personalism. Intra-party elections for parliamentary seats continued, providing limited competition within the monopoly framework {Widner, 1992 #47103;Throup, 1998 #47102}.

Borderline Cases

Malawi under MCP (1966-1994) illuminates the boundary with personalist autocracy. The 1966 constitution established Malawi Congress Party as sole legal party under Hastings Kamuzu Banda's presidency-for-life. While party organs formally existed with district committees and national executive, these were heavily subordinated to Banda's personal authority. MCP structures functioned primarily as mobilization instruments serving Banda's rule rather than autonomous decision-making bodies.

All significant political decisions flowed through Banda's personal networks rather than party deliberation. Cabinet ministers served at presidential pleasure with frequent arbitrary dismissals, and party positions were distributed through personal loyalty. The regime maintained minimal party institutionalization in early decades sufficient for one-party classification, but this eroded substantially over time. By the 1980s, MCP structures were so thoroughly personalized that the regime approached the personalist threshold. The diagnostic test clarifies: Could MCP function without Banda? The answer shifted from "minimally" in the 1970s to "no" by the 1980s. Lack of institutional succession mechanisms was revealed when democratization pressure led to rapid regime collapse {Kaspin, 1995 #47109}.

Guinea under PDG (1958-1984) shows progressive degradation from one-party to personalist rule. The Parti Démocratique de Guinée was established as sole party following independence, with Sékou Touré's radical anti-colonial stance providing initial legitimation. Party structures initially featured institutional robustness with local committees and mass mobilization distinguishing Guinea from purely personalist rule. However, progressive personalization through paranoid purges and Touré's cult degraded party institutionalization substantially by the 1970s. Party structures increasingly served surveillance functions rather than autonomous decision-making. By the late 1970s, Guinea approached the personalist threshold. The regime's complete collapse following Touré's death in 1984 with immediate military coup revealed absence of institutional succession mechanisms, validating borderline classification that shifted toward personalism over time.

Contrasting Cases

Turkmenistan under Niyazov (1990-2006) contrasts as personalist autocracy masquerading as one-party rule. While the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan was sole legal party, it possessed zero autonomous capacity. All authority flowed through Saparmurat Niyazov's personal cult of "Turkmenbashi," with party structures serving purely as administrative appendages. Unlike Tanzania where CCM organs retained capacity to deliberate and make institutional decisions, Turkmenistan's party structures were hollow shells. No party congress exercised real authority, no central committee constrained presidential decisions, and party

membership meant nothing beyond formal affiliation. Elite recruitment occurred through personal loyalty networks rather than party channels. The regime's extreme personalization was manifest in renaming months after Niyazov and erecting personality cult monuments. The absence of institutional succession mechanisms was evident in chaotic transition following Niyazov's death in 2006.

Post-1990 Uzbekistan under Karimov and successors contrasts as electoral autocracy maintaining multi-party façade. The 1992 constitution established multi-party system with five parties currently in parliament: Liberal Democratic Party, People's Democratic Party, Social Democratic Party "Adolat," Democratic Party "Milliy Tiklanish," and Ecological Party. While all parties are effectively pro-government and opposition severely repressed, the regime maintains pluralist forms rather than asserting explicit single-party monopoly. This differs from Syria's National Progressive Front where satellite parties were formally subordinated to Ba'ath Party in defined hierarchy. Uzbekistan's parties nominally compete in elections, maintain separate organizational identities, and are not constitutionally designated as satellites. The legitimation structure preserves fiction of multi-party democracy and grounds authority in electoral dominance rather than monist party-nation unity claims {McGlinchey, 2011 #47117}.

China under CCP contrasts as communist ideocracy through comprehensive Marxist-Leninist transformation agenda. While both China and Tanzania feature single-party monopoly, the Chinese Communist Party pursues systematic ideological transformation across all societal domains through nomenclatura systems, thought reform campaigns, and comprehensive economic planning. CCP legitimation rests not merely on embodying national unity but on implementing communist ideology to transform Chinese society according to Marxist historical materialism. Party-state fusion operates through elaborate cadre systems penetrating every institution, with party committees exercising authority parallel to and superior to state structures at all levels. This differs qualitatively from Tanzania's limited Ujamaa programs or Kenya's generic unity discourse. CCP organizational penetration and ideological ambitions mark it as ideocracy rather than pragmatic party monopoly {Schurmann, 1968 #47122}.

4.4.2. Military Autocracy

Conceptualization: Military autocracy is a form of institutionalized military rule where political power is concentrated in the hands of the military as a corporate body. The defining legitimation strategy of military autocracies is the claim to guardianship authority based on national crisis and the alleged incapacity of civilian institutions. Unlike electoral regimes that

derive legitimacy from popular consent, monarchies that claim dynastic succession, or ideocracies that invoke utopian transformation, military autocracies justify their rule through a narrative of emergency intervention and national salvation. The military presents itself as possessing the unique capacity to restore order, defend national interests, and rescue the nation from existential threats, whether economic, social, or political {Stepan, 1971 #26845}. This legitimation pattern distinguishes military autocracy from non-electoral transitional autocracies, where the military may hold power but legitimates itself exclusively as a temporary facilitator of political transition rather than as a necessary guardian of the nation. This regime type is characterized by the suspension of democratic processes and the imposition of martial law, ostensibly to restore order and stability. The military leadership, typically composed of high-ranking officers operating within established military hierarchies, assumes control over the state apparatus and often marginalizes or eliminates civilian political participation {Finer, 2002 #1548; Nordlinger, 1977 #3938}. Crucially, military autocracies maintain the institutional character of military rule, with decision-making embedded within military structures and professional hierarchies. This institutional foundation distinguishes military autocracies from personalist regimes, where a single leader may have military origins but dismantles institutional structures in favor of personal loyalty networks {Geddes, 1999 #1773}. However, the procedural justification of military regimes is notably vague and lacks consistency. Unlike constitutional democracies, which have clear and established processes for governance and accountability, military regimes often operate with broad and ill-defined mandates. This can be seen in the example of the Chilean Junta in 1978, which asserted its authority to implement „whatever regulations, norms, and instructions“ it deemed necessary for the common good and national interest {Chilean Junta, 1978 #37974: 198}. This expansive and ambiguous justification allows military regimes to exercise unchecked power, often leading to the erosion of civil liberties and the suppression of political opposition.

Operationalization: A political regime is coded as a military autocracy if the regime starts with a military coup and military officers form a military junta or a military officer serves as the ruler and is selected by the military {for more or less similar definitions of a military regime see Ezrow, 2011 #9253: 166; Geddes, 1999 #1773: 124; Linz, 2000 #3182: 172}. Military autocracy requires that the military retains its institutional character as the locus of power, even if authority is concentrated in a single senior officer within the military hierarchy. The regime is coded as military autocracy so long as decision-making remains embedded within military institutional structures and professional hierarchies, rather than being subordinated to personal loyalty networks or dynastic succession plans.

If a junta chooses a civilian (who has not been elected by the population) as a figurehead president, like in Uruguay 1976, the regime is still coded as a military autocracy as long as a military junta de facto rules the country. However, preconditions for coding a regime as a military autocracy are that (1) it cannot be coded as a monarchy or an ideocracy; and (2) there are no popular multi-party or multi-candidate elections for president. Military autocracies may hold multi-party parliamentary elections provided the executive remains under military control and these elections do not determine the composition of the ruling authority. If parliamentary elections result in a prime minister or cabinet with genuine executive authority independent of the military, the regime transitions beyond military autocracy.

Boundary with Non-Electoral Transitional Autocracy: The decisive criterion distinguishing military autocracy from non-electoral transitional autocracy is the pattern of legitimation. Military autocracy is characterized by guardianship legitimation, invoking national crisis, civilian incapacity, and the military's necessary role in rescuing the nation. Non-electoral transitional autocracy, by contrast, employs exclusively caretaker or facilitator legitimation, presenting the regime as a temporary mechanism for organizing political transition without claiming substantive authority to rule. If a military regime employs both guardianship and transitional legitimation (for example, claiming both to save the nation and to organize elections), the regime is coded as military autocracy, as the presence of guardianship claims reveals a substantive legitimation of rule rather than purely procedural facilitation. Observable indicators include official statements, constitutional preambles, and the regime's self-designation. A regime explicitly designating itself as a „transitional government,” „caretaker administration,” or „provisional authority“ while eschewing crisis-management or national-salvation rhetoric may be coded as non-electoral transitional autocracy. If guardianship rhetoric is present, the regime is coded as military autocracy regardless of announced elections or transition timelines.

Boundary with Personalist Autocracy: The decisive criterion is whether the military retains its institutional character or becomes subordinated to personal rule. If the regime leader dismantles military institutional structures, replaces professional hierarchies with personal loyalty networks, introduces dynastic succession planning, purges the officer corps to eliminate rivals, or transforms the military into a personal power base rather than maintaining it as a corporate institution, the regime transitions to personalist autocracy. Observable indicators include: the continued existence and functioning of a military junta or command council; regular rotation or consultation among senior officers; maintenance of professional promotion criteria; absence of familial appointments to key military positions; and preservation of institutional military

prerogatives. A regime remains military autocracy even if a single officer dominates, provided that dominance operates within rather than against military institutional structures. If there are elections for a president and a person with military background is elected, the regime is not coded as a military autocracy.

Example

Core Cases: Chile under General Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990) exemplifies a military autocracy. After the coup of 09/11/1973, a junta of armed forces leaders suspended democratic institutions and assumed full control. Pinochet, as army chief, soon concentrated significant authority in his hands while maintaining the institutional framework of collective military rule. The regime justified its rule through explicit guardianship legitimation, invoking a national crisis and portraying the military as the only force capable of restoring order and defending the nation from Marxist threats. Civil liberties were suppressed, opposition repressed, and political parties banned or tightly controlled. Although a new constitution was adopted in 1980, it entrenched military dominance rather than limiting it. Throughout the period, the military junta remained institutionally intact, with Pinochet exercising authority within rather than outside military hierarchies. Senior officers from all branches of the armed forces retained institutional roles and decision-making input. The regime ruled largely by decree, without procedural constraints, illustrating the arbitrary nature of military autocracy while maintaining its institutional character.

Uruguay (1973-1985) provides another clear example of military autocracy. Following a coup on 06/27/1973, the military dissolved Congress and ruled through a junta composed of the commanders of the army, navy, and air force. The regime employed classic guardianship legitimation, claiming that only the armed forces could confront the threat of Marxist subversion and restore order. In 1976, the military appointed a civilian, Aparicio Méndez, as figurehead president, but the junta retained de facto control over all major decisions through the Council of the Nation and the Junta of General Officers. The regime maintained the institutional character of military rule throughout, with power residing in the armed forces as a corporate body rather than in any individual leader. This case illustrates that the appointment of a civilian figurehead does not alter the classification when the military junta retains effective executive control.

Borderline Cases: Thailand (2014-2019) illustrates the boundary between military autocracy and constitutional monarchy. After the coup of 05/22/2014, the military established the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), suspended the constitution, and assumed executive power under General Prayuth Chan-ocha. The regime employed guardianship legitimation,

claiming to resolve political crisis and restore stability. However, the continued presence of the Thai monarchy as a parallel and arguably superior source of traditional authority creates analytical complexity. The case is coded as military autocracy because the decisive criterion is institutional control over executive authority: the military, not the monarchy, exercised day-to-day executive power, made policy decisions, and controlled the coercive apparatus. The monarchy's presence as a legitimating symbol does not negate the military's institutional control. This case demonstrates that military autocracy can coexist with traditional authority structures, provided the military retains effective executive power.

Egypt (02/11/2011-06/30/2012) illustrates the boundary between military autocracy and non-electoral transitional autocracy. After President Hosni Mubarak's resignation, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed executive power. The regime's legitimation pattern combined elements of both types: SCAF initially employed caretaker rhetoric, describing itself as managing a transition and organizing elections. However, SCAF simultaneously invoked guardianship legitimation, claiming authority to protect Egypt's national interests and presenting the military as the guardian of the revolution and national stability. Because guardianship elements were present alongside transitional rhetoric, the regime is coded as military autocracy. This case demonstrates that when legitimation patterns are mixed, the presence of guardianship claims is decisive for classification as military autocracy. Had SCAF employed exclusively caretaker legitimation without invoking the military's special role as national guardian, classification as non-electoral transitional autocracy would be warranted.

4.6. Regimes Based on External Legitimation

Regimes grouped under this heading derive their authority from foreign powers rather than from the governed population or any domestic source of legitimation. The defining feature of this external legitimation pattern is the fundamental separation between rulers and ruled across sovereign boundaries: those who govern belong to a different political community than those who are governed, and authority is structured to be accountable to the foreign power rather than to the local population. This creates a distinctive form of political domination characterized in its purest form by exploitation without representation. The colonial or occupying power extracts resources, imposes taxes, conscripts labor, and enforces laws upon the governed population while systematically denying that population meaningful political participation, representation in decision-making processes, or the rights and protections extended to citizens of the ruling

power. This structural exclusion is not an aberration but a constitutive feature of external legitimation: the governed are subjects of foreign rule rather than citizens of a shared polity, and their systematic exploitation without corresponding political voice is justified through doctrines of civilizational hierarchy, developmental guardianship, security imperatives, or legal frameworks that distinguish between metropolitan citizens and colonial subjects or occupied populations. This legitimation pattern operates fundamentally differently from all forms of domestic legitimation. In electoral regimes, authority derives from procedures that at least claim to reflect the will of the governed population. In personalist and institutional regimes, rulers and ruled belong to the same political community, however unequal the power distribution. In ideology-centered regimes, the doctrine claims to serve the interests of the governed population, however falsely. In externally legitimated regimes, by contrast, authority explicitly serves the interests of a foreign power, and the governed population's consent or interests are neither necessary nor relevant to the regime's legitimation claims. The colonial or occupying power answers to its own metropolitan government, not to the governed territory. This creates a unique accountability structure in which rulers are institutionally oriented toward external rather than internal constituencies, making policies designed to benefit the foreign power through resource extraction, strategic positioning, or geopolitical objectives rather than the welfare of the governed population. Some colonial powers claim to rule for the benefit of the colonized population through civilizing missions, developmental guardianship, or liberation narratives, presenting foreign domination as beneficial tutelage or temporary protection. Other colonial and occupation regimes make no such claims, openly pursuing exploitation and strategic interests. However, regardless of whether benevolent intentions are claimed, the fundamental structure remains unchanged: political authority derives from and is accountable to the foreign power rather than to the governed population, and the colonized or occupied population lacks the political voice to determine whether foreign rule serves their interests or to withdraw consent from governance they experience as exploitative or oppressive. Within this pattern, regimes differ in the claimed permanence of foreign control and the nature of justification for external rule. Colonial regimes are structured as permanent systems of foreign domination designed to indefinitely maintain control over territories for purposes of economic exploitation, resource extraction, and strategic advantage. The colonial power denies sovereignty to the colonized territory and structures governance through laws and practices that institutionalize the subordinate status of the indigenous population. Colonial rule operates through legitimation claims rooted in civilizational hierarchy (the colonizer as more advanced), developmental guardianship (colonial rule as preparation for eventual self-governance), or imperial mandate

(the right to rule derived from conquest or treaty with other imperial powers rather than from the governed). Occupation regimes present themselves as temporary arrangements justified by security imperatives, conflict resolution, or international mandates. The occupying power claims authority through narratives of restoring order, preventing violence, or executing internationally sanctioned missions, framing foreign control as extraordinary measures responding to specific crises. External authority may operate under various legal frameworks and labels, including international mandates such as League of Nations mandates or United Nations administrations. Classification as colonial or occupation regime depends on the substantive structure of authority—specifically, whether the foreign power exercises control over domestic policy formulation and execution—rather than on formal labels or diplomatic designations. Arrangements framed as international mandates are coded as colonial regimes when they exhibit permanent control structures and comprehensive administrative domination over internal affairs, or as occupation regimes when they present themselves as temporary responses to crises. Entities that retain genuine domestic sovereignty over internal governance while delegating foreign policy and defense to an external power fall outside the external legitimization pattern and are classified as semi-sovereign rather than as colonial or occupation regimes. Despite differing temporal claims and justifications, both colonial and occupation regimes share the fundamental characteristic that political authority derives from external sovereignty, is structured to serve external interests, and operates through systematic control over domestic policy without accountability or representation for the governed population. Both may operate through direct rule, where the foreign power governs through its own officials and exercises comprehensive control over all policy domains, representing pure external legitimization, or through indirect rule, in which the local population elects a parliament with genuine, though circumscribed, legislative authority over defined spheres of domestic governance. Indirect rule introduces a hybrid legitimization structure: while ultimate sovereignty and accountability remain vested in the foreign power (external legitimization), the elected indigenous parliament derives its authority from domestic electoral procedures within its circumscribed spheres (internal legitimization component). This creates a gradient from pure external legitimization (direct rule) toward arrangements incorporating limited domestic legitimization (indirect rule), though regimes remain classified as externally legitimated as long as the foreign power retains ultimate sovereignty and control over core policy domains.

4.6.1. Colonial Regime

Conceptualization: Colonial regimes constitute the permanent variant of external legitimation, designed to indefinitely maintain foreign control over territory and population. Unlike occupation regimes, which frame external authority as temporary responses to crises, colonial regimes are structured as enduring systems of foreign domination serving the economic, strategic, and political interests of the metropolitan power. The defining feature uniting all colonial arrangements, whether direct or indirect rule, is the permanent subordination of the colonized territory to external sovereignty, with the colonial power retaining ultimate control over fundamental questions of governance, foreign affairs, and resource allocation.

The historical label „protectorate“ (German *Schutzgebiet*, French *protectorat*) was frequently applied by colonial powers to diverse arrangements that varied substantially in their substantive structure of authority. Many regimes bearing the protectorate label involved comprehensive external control over domestic policy and are therefore classified as colonial regimes despite the nomenclature. German Schutzgebiete such as Deutsch-Südwestafrika (Namibia) or Deutsch-Ostafrika (Tanzania) operated as colonial regimes with the German Reich exercising complete control over domestic governance. Similarly, certain French protectorats involved extensive colonial administration despite the formal designation. The decisive criterion for classification is not the label but whether the foreign power exercised control over domestic policy formulation and execution. Entities that retained genuine domestic sovereignty over internal governance while delegating only foreign policy and defense to an external power are classified as semi-sovereign rather than colonial, regardless of the protectorate designation. This distinction ensures that classification reflects the substantive accountability structure rather than diplomatic or legal terminology.

Colonial regimes vary along a legitimation gradient reflecting different administrative strategies for organizing authority within the overarching framework of external sovereignty. This variation does not alter the fundamental accountability structure, which remains oriented toward the metropolitan government rather than the governed population, but introduces differing degrees of indigenous participation in governance. Direct rule colonial regimes operate through pure external legitimation, where the foreign power governs through its own officials with comprehensive control over all policy domains and no indigenous legislative authority. The colonial administration exercises direct control without mediation through local elected institutions, and all political authority flows exclusively from the metropolitan power. Indirect rule colonial regimes introduce a hybrid legitimation structure while maintaining ultimate external sovereignty. In these arrangements, the local population elects a parliament with genuine, though circumscribed, legislative authority over defined spheres of domestic

governance such as local administration, education, or infrastructure. This elected indigenous parliament derives its authority from domestic electoral procedures within its limited jurisdiction, creating a partial internal legitimation component alongside the overarching external authority structure. However, ultimate sovereignty, control over foreign affairs, defense, and core economic policy, and the capacity to override or dissolve indigenous institutions remain vested in the colonial power. The metropolitan government retains the authority to intervene in domestic matters when deemed necessary and maintains comprehensive control over the fundamental political architecture of the colony.

This gradient from direct to indirect rule represents movement along a continuum of legitimation hybridization within colonial arrangements. Direct rule exemplifies pure external legitimation with authority flowing exclusively from the metropolitan power. Indirect rule permits limited internal legitimation through elected indigenous parliaments operating within circumscribed spheres, creating a dual-source legitimation structure in which domestic electoral procedures confer authority for local governance while external sovereignty governs fundamental questions. This hybrid structure positions indirect rule colonial regimes between direct rule arrangements (pure external legitimation) and semi-sovereign entities (genuine domestic sovereignty over internal affairs), though they remain classified as colonial regimes due to the metropolitan power's retention of ultimate sovereignty and control over core policy domains. The introduction of elected parliaments in indirect rule arrangements represents a significant shift in governance structure, as indigenous populations gain limited voice in defined governance spheres, yet this does not constitute a transfer of sovereignty or fundamentally alter the external orientation of ultimate political authority.

In our detailed classification, we distinguish between two types of colonial regimes: direct rule and indirect rule. This distinction is not made in the compact version of the classification.

4.6.1.1 Direct Rule Colonial Regime

Conceptualization: Direct rule colonial regimes represent the purest form of external legitimation within colonial arrangements, characterized by comprehensive foreign control over all domains of governance without mediation through indigenous elected institutions. Authority flows exclusively from the colonial metropolitan power, which governs the territory through its own officials and administrative structures. No indigenous legislative bodies with genuine authority exist, and the local population possesses no institutional channels for political

participation in governance decisions. All significant political, economic, and legal decisions are made by colonial administrators accountable solely to the metropolitan government, creating a total accountability asymmetry in which rulers answer exclusively to external constituencies.

Direct rule instantiates the external legitimation pattern through complete exclusion of the governed population from authority structures. Colonial officials, appointed by and responsible to the metropolitan power, exercise direct control over policy formulation and execution across all domains including local administration, taxation, justice, education, and economic regulation. Indigenous populations may occupy subordinate administrative positions (clerks, interpreters, low-level functionaries) but these roles carry no decision-making authority and function purely as extensions of colonial control rather than as channels for indigenous political agency. The absence of elected indigenous institutions ensures that no domestic legitimation component exists; authority derives entirely from external sovereignty without any hybrid elements.

Elite structures under direct rule consist exclusively of metropolitan officials and settlers, with indigenous elites either excluded from governance or co-opted into purely advisory roles without formal power. Cohesion among colonial elites operates through metropolitan institutional hierarchies (colonial service, military command) and shared identification with the colonial power rather than through domestic constituencies. This pure external legitimation structure maximizes metropolitan control but often generates high costs in terms of administrative capacity (requiring large numbers of foreign officials) and indigenous resistance (due to complete political exclusion).

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, a colonial regime is classified as direct rule when actual control structures meet the following criteria: (1) no popularly elected indigenous parliament or legislative body exists with genuine authority over any sphere of domestic governance, (2) all significant policy decisions across domains are made by officials appointed by and accountable to the colonial metropolitan power, and (3) indigenous populations lack institutional channels for political participation beyond purely consultative or advisory roles without decision-making capacity. Classification is based on de facto control structures rather than formal provisions. The presence of indigenous institutions without genuine decision-making capacity (assessed by examining actual practice rather than formal constitutional documents) does not alter classification. Token advisory councils, appointed native authorities, or traditional leaders operating under colonial supervision do not constitute elected parliaments and do not qualify as indirect rule, as these arrangements lack

independent authority and electoral legitimacy. The decisive criterion is whether indigenous populations exercise genuine legislative authority through elected representatives; under direct rule, no such authority exists in practice.

Borderline cases arise along two dimensions. First, franchise restrictions may create ambiguity when elections limited to small indigenous elites or property owners involve some indigenous participation but exclude the majority. Following the established threshold, elections must allow a significant portion of the indigenous autochthonous population to participate; highly restrictive franchise based on ethnicity, property, or legal status that effectively excludes indigenous majorities maintains direct rule classification. Second, authority limitations create ambiguity when elected indigenous bodies exist formally but function as purely consultative organs without genuine decision-making capacity. Token parliaments whose decisions are routinely overridden by colonial administrators, or councils with only advisory powers despite electoral legitimacy, lack the genuine authority required for indirect rule. Both dimensions must be satisfied for indirect rule classification: meaningful franchise AND genuine authority. Cases failing either criterion remain classified as direct rule. Where formal autonomy provisions exist but are systematically overridden or ignored in practice, classification follows factual rather than nominal authority structures.

Transitions from occupation regimes to direct rule colonial regimes occur when temporary military administration is replaced by permanent civil colonial administration without establishing elected indigenous institutions. Transitions from indirect to direct rule (rare but historically documented) occur when colonial powers dissolve or suspend elected indigenous parliaments and reassume direct administrative control. The July 1st temporal anchor applies: the regime structure in place on July 1st determines the classification for that year, with transitions recorded through separate start and end variables.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: French Algeria under direct rule (1830-1898, before the Délégations Financières) and German Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1884-1915) exemplify pure direct rule colonial regimes. In Algeria during this period, French governors-general appointed by Paris exercised comprehensive control over all governance domains. Indigenous Algerians possessed no representation in decision-making bodies, and all authority flowed from French metropolitan institutions. German Southwest Africa operated similarly, with German Imperial officials administering the colony through direct command structures without indigenous participation. Both cases demonstrate pure external legitimation with complete political exclusion of

indigenous populations and authority structures accountable exclusively to European metropolitan governments.

Borderline Cases: Belgian Congo (1908-1957) under direct rule represents a variant where some consultative mechanisms existed but lacked genuine authority. Local indigenous councils (conseils de chefferie) operated under Belgian supervision but functioned as administrative instruments rather than elected legislative bodies. These advisory structures did not constitute indirect rule because they possessed no independent decision-making capacity, were not elected by indigenous populations through meaningful franchise, and could be overridden at will by Belgian administrators. The divergence between formal consultative structures and actual authority distribution demonstrates Va-PoReg's de facto principle: classification follows actual control patterns. This illustrates that the existence of indigenous advisory mechanisms does not itself create indirect rule; genuine legislative authority through elected institutions with meaningful franchise is required.

Contrasting Cases: British Nigeria under indirect rule (post-1922) and French Algeria under the Délégations Financières system (1898-1945) represent indirect rule colonial arrangements rather than direct rule. In British Nigeria, indigenous authorities and eventually elected councils exercised genuine, though circumscribed, legislative authority over defined local governance spheres. The presence of elected indigenous representatives with actual decision-making capacity in specified domains distinguishes these from direct rule, despite ultimate sovereignty remaining with the colonial power. The contrast demonstrates that the key differentiator is not the degree of colonial control over ultimate sovereignty (which remains external in both) but whether indigenous populations participate in governance through elected institutions with genuine authority in practice rather than merely on paper.

4.6.1.2 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime

Conceptualization: Indirect rule colonial regimes represent a significant modification of pure external control by introducing limited indigenous political participation within the overarching framework of permanent colonial domination. The indigenous population gains gewissen Einfluss (certain influence) through elected representatives, recognized governmental structures, or traditional elite participation, transitioning from pure subjects of colonial rule to limited political actors. Indigenous parliaments or legislative councils exercise genuine, though fundamentally circumscribed, authority over defined spheres of domestic governance such as

local administration, education, infrastructure, health services, or specified areas of taxation. These elected or recognized indigenous institutions derive their authority partially from domestic legitimation sources (whether through electoral procedures with universal or restricted franchise, traditional authority structures, or elite networks with indigenous standing), creating a partial internal legitimation component alongside the external legitimation structure embodied in continued metropolitan sovereignty {Mamdani, 1996 #47066: 16-23}.

However, this participation remains fundamentally circumscribed: ultimate sovereignty, control over foreign affairs and defense, authority over core economic and fiscal policy, and capacity to override or dissolve indigenous institutions remain vested in the colonial metropolitan power. This creates a dual legitimation structure where domestic political participation and indigenous authority coexist with external sovereignty and colonial control. Indigenous parliaments answer to their domestic electorates or derive legitimacy from indigenous elite networks within their limited spheres, while ultimate authority remains accountable to the metropolitan government. The hybrid nature positions indirect rule colonial regimes between direct rule arrangements (pure external legitimation, indigenous population as pure subjects) and semi-sovereign entities (full domestic control over all internal affairs, foreign control limited exclusively to external relations and defense).

The upper boundary of indirect rule is defined by the domain threshold. Indirect rule colonial regimes, despite granting elected indigenous parliaments authority over specified domestic spheres, retain metropolitan control over at least some core domestic policy domains (such as overall economic policy, monetary policy, ultimate judicial authority, or control over key resources) in addition to foreign affairs and defense. When indigenous governments exercise full autonomous authority over all domestic domains (economy, fiscal policy, internal administration, justice) and the metropolitan power controls only foreign affairs and security policy without veto capacity over internal matters, the arrangement transitions from colonial indirect rule to semi-sovereign status. The distinction is not the presence of elected indigenous institutions (both may have them) but whether the metropolitan power retains *de facto* control over any domestic policy sphere beyond external relations {Young, 1994 #47067}.

Elite structures under indirect rule become more complex than under direct rule. Indigenous political elites gain positions through electoral competition, parliamentary participation, or traditional authority structures with domestic legitimacy bases, creating domestic legitimation sources for their authority within limited domains. However, these indigenous elites coexist with metropolitan administrators who retain control over core sovereignty questions and fundamental policy domains. Elite cohesion operates through two distinct mechanisms:

indigenous elites cohere through domestic political processes (party formation, electoral coalition-building, parliamentary factions, or traditional hierarchies), while metropolitan officials maintain cohesion through colonial service hierarchies accountable to the metropole. This dual elite structure reflects the hybrid legitimation pattern, with potential for conflict between indigenous representatives pressing for expanded authority and metropolitan officials defending external control.

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, a colonial regime is classified as indirect rule when actual control structures meet the following criteria: (1) indigenous governmental institutions (elected parliaments, legislative councils, or recognized traditional authorities) exist that possess genuine, though limited, authority over defined spheres of domestic governance, (2) these indigenous institutions derive authority at least partially from domestic legitimation sources rather than functioning purely as appointed instruments of colonial administration, and (3) ultimate sovereignty, control over foreign affairs and defense, and control over at least some core domestic policy domains remain vested in the colonial metropolitan power. All three conditions must be satisfied: indigenous institutions without domestic legitimation sources (puppet councils deriving authority solely from colonial appointment), or indigenous institutions without genuine authority (purely consultative bodies), or complete domestic sovereignty (metropolitan power controls only foreign affairs and defense) disqualify the regime from this classification.

The domestic legitimation criterion is decisive for distinguishing indirect from direct rule. Indigenous institutions must derive authority from domestic sources (whether through electoral procedures with universal suffrage, restricted elite elections with participants possessing indigenous standing, traditional authority structures with domestic legitimacy, or elite networks recognized within indigenous society), not purely from colonial appointment. The criterion is not franchise breadth or democratic quality but the presence of an internal legitimation component creating dual legitimation structures: metropolitan power retains ultimate sovereignty while indigenous institutions possess domestic legitimacy bases. Appointed advisory councils whose members lack independent standing within indigenous society, or puppet legislatures deriving authority exclusively from colonial designation without indigenous recognition, lack the domestic legitimation component required for indirect rule classification. The franchise criterion, while important, is not mechanically deterministic. A transition from direct to indirect rule requires that indigenous institutions possess domestic legitimation sources, which may manifest through various forms. Elections with universal male suffrage clearly establish domestic legitimation through broad participation. Elections with restricted

franchise (property qualifications, literacy requirements, or limited to certain social strata) can also establish domestic legitimation if participants constitute recognized elites with indigenous standing whose authority derives from their position within indigenous society rather than solely from colonial appointment. The decisive test is whether indigenous representatives exercise authority recognized by domestic constituencies or elite networks, or whether they function purely as colonial appointees lacking independent legitimacy. Traditional authorities permitted to exercise governance roles may also provide domestic legitimation components if their authority derives from indigenous recognition rather than purely from colonial designation.

Legislative authority must be genuine in practice, not merely consultative on paper. Indigenous parliaments must possess actual decision-making capacity within their designated spheres, including ability to pass binding legislation, control specified budgets, or make governance decisions that colonial administrators implement rather than routinely override. Advisory councils that merely recommend actions subject to metropolitan approval, or bodies whose decisions can be routinely nullified by governors or colonial offices, lack the genuine authority required for indirect rule classification. The criterion is whether the parliament exercises binding authority in at least some defined spheres rather than offering non-binding recommendations, assessed through examination of legislative records, budget implementation, and instances of metropolitan override.

Borderline cases arise when either domestic legitimation sources are weak or ambiguous, or when legislative authority falls at lower thresholds. Franchise borderlines occur when elections involve substantial but restricted participation, such as property qualifications that include significant indigenous segments but exclude majorities. The criterion is whether participants constitute recognized elites whose authority derives from indigenous standing rather than purely from colonial appointment. Authority borderlines occur when elected indigenous parliaments possess genuine but severely circumscribed powers, such as control over minor budget items or purely local matters while colonial administrators retain veto power over significant decisions. Where formal autonomy provisions exist but indigenous decisions are systematically vetoed or ignored by colonial authorities in practice, the arrangement lacks genuine authority for classification purposes. Cases at these lower thresholds, where domestic legitimation sources are present but limited and authority covers at least some binding decisions, qualify as minimal indirect rule, distinguishing them from direct rule arrangements where domestic legitimation is entirely absent.

The temporal anchor (July 1st) determines classification for each year. Transitions from direct to indirect rule are coded when indigenous parliaments or governmental institutions with genuine authority and domestic legitimation sources are established. Late-colonial transitions often involved gradual expansions of indigenous legislative authority, coded as transitions when thresholds for genuine authority and domestic legitimation presence are crossed. Transitions from indirect rule to semi-sovereign status occur when metropolitan control over domestic policy domains ends and becomes limited exclusively to foreign affairs and defense.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: British India under the Government of India Acts (particularly 1935-1947) exemplifies indirect rule colonial regime with elected indigenous legislatures possessing genuine though circumscribed authority within dual legitimation structures. Following the 1935 Government of India Act, provincial legislatures elected through expanded (though not universal) franchise exercised real legislative authority over provincial subjects including education, health, local administration, agriculture, and public works, while the British retained control over defense, foreign affairs, overall economic policy, and reserve powers permitting intervention in provincial matters. Indigenous representatives derived authority from domestic electoral procedures and possessed recognized standing within Indian society, creating internal legitimation components, while ultimate sovereignty remained with the British Crown through the Viceroy and provincial governors who retained override capacity. The elected ministries made binding decisions on provincial subjects that British authorities generally respected within designated spheres, though the reserve powers and British control over fundamental domains maintained colonial sovereignty. This demonstrates dual legitimation: domestic electoral procedures legitimized indigenous representatives within their circumscribed spheres, while external sovereignty governed fundamental questions and retained intervention capacity.

Borderline Cases: French Algeria under the Délégations Financières system (1898-1945) represents a restrictive variant of indirect rule where both domestic legitimation sources and authority dimensions approached lower thresholds. The Délégations included elected indigenous Muslim representatives (délégués indigènes) alongside French settler representatives (délégués colons), possessing genuine authority over budgetary matters and some local governance questions affecting both populations. However, franchise restrictions severely limited indigenous participation through property qualifications, French citizenship requirements for broader voting rights, and exclusion of the vast majority of Muslims from full political participation. Despite restricted franchise, elected Muslim representatives possessed some domestic legitimacy through their standing within Algerian elite networks and limited

electoral mandate. French administrators retained extensive override capacity through the Governor-General and maintained control over fundamental policy domains beyond the Délégations' budgetary jurisdiction. This illustrates the lower boundary of indirect rule: indigenous representatives exercised real authority through elected positions and possessed some domestic legitimation, meeting minimal thresholds, but restrictions on participation and metropolitan control were extensive. The case demonstrates that indirect rule exists along a spectrum from minimally inclusive arrangements with narrow indigenous authority to more expansive systems approaching self-governance. The divergence between formal provisions granting authority and actual practice of frequent French intervention illustrates Va-PoReg's de facto principle: classification follows actual rather than nominal authority structures.

Contrasting Cases: German Deutsch-Südwestafrika (Namibia) under direct rule colonial regime lacked elected indigenous institutions with genuine authority or domestic legitimation sources, operating through pure direct rule with all decisions made by German Imperial administrators. Indigenous populations possessed no representative institutions, and appointed native authorities functioned as instruments of German control without independent legitimacy or decision-making capacity. This absence of indigenous political participation through institutions with domestic legitimation distinguishes direct rule from indirect rule. Semi-sovereign protectorates such as entities retaining genuine domestic sovereignty over all internal matters while delegating only foreign affairs and defense position themselves beyond indirect rule colonial status. The threshold is domain-based: indirect rule retains metropolitan control over at least some domestic policy spheres beyond foreign affairs and defense, while semi-sovereign arrangements limit external control exclusively to external relations without veto capacity over domestic governance. British Nigeria's transition from indirect rule under various constitutions to independence in 1960 illustrates the boundary crossing: when Nigerian governments assumed full control over all domestic domains and British authority became limited to transitional arrangements pending sovereignty transfer, the arrangement moved beyond indirect rule colonial classification toward independence rather than remaining colonial despite continued British presence.

Aggregation rules for colonial regimes

vaporeg_regtype_reports / vaporeg_regtype_detailed

100 Direct Rule Colonial Regime

110 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime

vaporeg_regtype_compact

100 Colonial Regime → Combines Direct Rule Colonial Regime (100) and Indirect Rule Colonial Regime (110) into a single category for simplified typologies.

vaporeg_regtype_triple

3 Non-Democracy → Colonial Regimes (100, 110) are merged into the broad 'Non-Democracy' family for the threefold typology (Democracy, Hybrid Regimes, Autocracy).

vaporeg_regtype_bindem

0 Non-democracy → Colonial Regimes are classified as 'Non-democracy' in the basic dichotomy.

4.6.2. Occupation Regime

Conceptualization: Occupation regimes constitute the temporary variant of external legitimation, framed as provisional responses to military conflict, security crises, or state collapse rather than as permanent systems of foreign domination. Unlike colonial regimes, which are designed to indefinitely maintain control, occupation regimes justify external authority through narratives of restoring order, preventing violence, executing internationally sanctioned missions, or addressing extraordinary circumstances requiring temporary foreign intervention. The defining feature uniting all occupation arrangements, whether direct or indirect rule, is the claimed temporality of external control, with the occupying power presenting its authority as transitional measures pending resolution of the crisis, establishment of stable governance, or completion of specific objectives.

The temporal framing distinguishes occupation from colonial legitimation despite structural similarities in external control. Occupying powers claim authority through crisis narratives (post-conflict stabilization, security threats, humanitarian intervention) rather than through doctrines of permanent civilizational hierarchy or imperial mandate. This temporal claim may or may not correspond to actual practice; many occupations extend far beyond their initially claimed duration, and some transition into de facto permanent control resembling colonial arrangements. Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, the distinction between occupation and colonial regime rests not solely on stated intentions but on the legitimation narrative deployed and the institutional framework established. Occupations typically operate through military governance structures or international administration frameworks rather than through permanent colonial civil administrations, reflecting the provisional framing even when control proves enduring in practice.

Occupation regimes vary along the same legitimation gradient as colonial regimes, reflecting different strategies for organizing authority within the overarching framework of external sovereignty. This variation does not alter the fundamental accountability structure, which remains oriented toward the occupying power rather than the governed population, but introduces differing degrees of indigenous participation in governance. Direct rule occupation regimes operate through pure external legitimation, where the occupying power governs through its own military or administrative officials with comprehensive control over all policy domains and no indigenous legislative authority. Indirect rule occupation regimes introduce a hybrid legitimation structure while maintaining ultimate external sovereignty, permitting elected indigenous institutions with genuine though circumscribed authority over defined governance spheres while the occupying power retains control over core domains including security, foreign affairs, and fundamental constitutional questions.

The upper boundary of occupation regimes is defined by the same domain threshold as colonial regimes. Occupation regimes, whether direct or indirect rule, retain control over at least some domestic policy domains beyond foreign affairs and security. When indigenous governments exercise full autonomous authority over all domestic domains and external control is limited exclusively to foreign affairs and defense without veto capacity over internal matters, the arrangement transitions beyond occupation status toward semi-sovereign or independent classification, regardless of whether the transition occurs through formal peace treaties, international recognition, or gradual withdrawal of occupying forces.

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

The detailed version of our classification differentiates between direct and indirect rule within occupation regimes, whereas the compact version does not make this distinction.

4.6.2.1. Direct Rule Occupation Regime

Conceptualization: Direct rule occupation regimes represent the purest form of external legitimation within occupation arrangements, characterized by comprehensive foreign control over all governance domains exercised through military administration or occupation authorities without mediation through indigenous institutions possessing genuine authority or domestic legitimation sources. Authority flows exclusively from the occupying power, which governs the territory through its own military governors, occupation administrators, or appointed officials rather than through pre-existing national institutions or newly established indigenous bodies. The indigenous population remains in the status of pure subjects of foreign rule, lacking institutional channels for political participation in governance decisions beyond potential advisory or consultative roles without decision-making capacity. No domestic legitimation component exists during direct rule occupation; authority derives entirely from external sovereignty without hybrid elements.

The majority of direct rule occupation regimes historically have been hostile wartime occupations characterized by military conquest, suppression of indigenous resistance, economic exploitation, and governance structures designed to serve occupying power interests rather than occupied population welfare {Mazower, 2008 #47070}. These hostile occupations typically emerge from interstate war, with occupying forces imposing comprehensive control through military administration, dissolving or subordinating pre-existing governmental structures, and governing through coercion rather than consent. Economic exploitation, forced labor, resource extraction, and policies serving occupying power strategic objectives dominate hostile occupation governance. A minority of direct rule occupations, primarily post-World War II Allied occupations and some international peacekeeping missions, have operated as state-building or stabilization projects with stated objectives of democratization, reconstruction, or conflict resolution rather than permanent subjugation or exploitation. These state-building occupations differ in legitimation narratives and governance approaches but share the structural feature of comprehensive external control without indigenous institutions possessing genuine authority or domestic legitimation bases.

Direct rule occupation instantiates the external legitimation pattern through complete exclusion of the governed population from authority structures during the occupation period. Occupation officials, appointed by and responsible to the occupying power or international bodies authorizing the occupation, exercise direct control over policy formulation and execution across all domains including security, justice, economic regulation, and civil administration. Pre-existing national institutions are typically dissolved, suspended, or subordinated to occupation

authority. Indigenous populations may occupy subordinate administrative positions under occupation supervision, but these roles carry no independent decision-making authority and function as extensions of occupation control rather than as channels for indigenous political agency.

Elite structures under direct rule occupation consist primarily of occupation personnel (military officers, occupation administrators, appointed officials) accountable to the occupying power or mandating international bodies. In hostile wartime occupations, pre-existing indigenous elites are typically removed from power through arrest, exile, execution, or forced subordination. In state-building occupations, indigenous elites may be co-opted into advisory roles or retained in subordinate positions without autonomous authority pending establishment of new political structures. Cohesion among occupation elites operates through military command hierarchies or international administrative structures rather than through domestic constituencies. This pure external legitimation structure is employed during active military campaigns, in territories where occupying powers distrust or actively suppress indigenous populations, or in immediate post-conflict periods before indigenous institutions with domestic legitimation are established.

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, an occupation regime is classified as direct rule when actual control structures meet the following criteria: (1) no indigenous governmental institutions exist with genuine authority over any sphere of domestic governance during the occupation, (2) all significant policy decisions across domains are made by occupation officials appointed by and accountable to the occupying power or mandating international bodies, and (3) indigenous populations lack institutional channels for political participation beyond purely consultative or advisory roles without decision-making capacity, and indigenous figures lack domestic legitimation sources independent of occupation appointment. Classification is based on de facto control structures rather than formal provisions or stated intentions.

Pre-existing national institutions (parliaments, governments, courts) that are dissolved, suspended, or rendered ineffective by occupation authority do not constitute indigenous governance for classification purposes. The decisive criterion is whether indigenous institutions with genuine authority and domestic legitimation sources are established or permitted to function during the occupation, not whether such institutions existed before occupation commenced. Token advisory councils, appointed local administrators under occupation supervision, or consultative bodies without binding decision-making capacity do not alter direct rule classification. Appointed indigenous figures who derive authority exclusively from

occupation designation and lack independent standing within indigenous society or recognition by domestic constituencies do not constitute domestic legitimation components.

Borderline cases arise along two dimensions. First, domestic legitimation ambiguity creates borderline situations when indigenous participation exists but domestic legitimation sources are weak or absent. Indigenous figures in advisory roles who possess some personal standing within indigenous society but lack institutional authority or electoral mandate represent borderline cases requiring assessment of whether genuine domestic legitimation components exist. Second, authority limitations create ambiguity when indigenous bodies exist formally but lack genuine decision-making capacity in practice. Councils whose recommendations are systematically ignored or overridden by occupation authorities, or bodies with purely advisory functions despite claims of authority, lack the genuine authority required for indirect rule classification. Cases must fail both dimensions (no domestic legitimation AND no genuine authority) to remain classified as direct rule. When either domestic legitimation sources or genuine authority emerge, transition to indirect rule occurs.

Transitions from direct to indirect rule occupation are coded when indigenous institutions with genuine authority and domestic legitimation sources are established, typically through elections (universal or restricted franchise with participants possessing indigenous standing), recognition of traditional authorities with domestic legitimacy, or establishment of governmental structures with elite participation deriving authority from indigenous society. Transitions to semi-sovereign status occur when indigenous governments assume full control over all domestic domains and occupation control becomes limited exclusively to foreign affairs and security. The July 1st temporal anchor applies: the regime structure in place on July 1st determines classification for that year, with transitions recorded through separate variables.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Nazi occupation of Poland through the Generalgouvernement (1939-1945), Soviet occupation of the Baltic States (1940-1941, 1944-1991 initial phases), and Japanese occupation of China (1937-1945) exemplify hostile direct rule occupation regimes characterized by comprehensive external control and complete exclusion of indigenous populations from authority structures {Mazower, 2008 #47070}. The Generalgouvernement operated under German military and civilian administration headed by Hans Frank, exercising total control over Polish territory with all governance decisions made by German authorities {Gross, 1979 #47071: 40-73}. Pre-existing Polish governmental institutions were dissolved, Polish elites systematically targeted for elimination or subjugation, and the occupation served German strategic and economic interests through forced labor, resource extraction, and

territorial reorganization without any indigenous political participation or domestic legitimation components. Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania involved comprehensive Soviet control through military administration and Communist Party structures, dissolution of indigenous governments, and imposition of Soviet governance systems without indigenous institutions possessing genuine authority or domestic legitimation during initial occupation phases {Applebaum, 2012 #47072: 3-31}. Japanese occupation of China operated through nominal puppet regimes lacking genuine authority or domestic legitimation, with Japanese military administration exercising comprehensive control {Mazower, 2008 #47070}. These hostile wartime occupations represent the historically dominant form of direct rule occupation, demonstrating pure external legitimation through military conquest with governance structures designed to serve occupying power interests through coercion and political suppression.

Borderline Cases: Afghanistan under US-led occupation (2001-2004) and Iraq under the Coalition Provisional Authority (2003-2004) represent borderline and transitional cases between direct rule and indirect rule occupation. In Afghanistan from 2001 until presidential elections in September 2004, US and coalition forces exercised comprehensive control through military administration and appointed transitional authorities. The Afghan Interim Administration and Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, while including Afghan figures, derived authority primarily from international designation and coalition support rather than from domestic legitimation sources such as elections or traditional authority recognition covering the entire territory. Indigenous participation existed but lacked the electoral mandate or broad-based traditional legitimacy required for indirect rule classification during this initial phase. Iraq under CPA (2003-2004) operated through appointed Iraqi Governing Council comprising Iraqi figures who provided input to occupation authorities but possessed no independent legislative or executive powers, with key decisions remaining with CPA administrator Paul Bremer. Despite different legitimation narratives (liberation and state-building versus conquest and exploitation in paradigmatic hostile cases), the structural features align with direct rule during these phases: absence of indigenous institutions with binding authority derived from domestic legitimation sources, comprehensive occupation control over all policy domains, and indigenous participation limited to advisory roles or transitional administration pending establishment of elected institutions.

Contrasting Cases: Afghanistan transitioned from direct rule occupation to indirect rule occupation in September 2004 when presidential elections with universal suffrage established an elected Afghan government with genuine authority over domestic civil administration, education, and social policy, while US and coalition forces retained control over security

operations, foreign affairs, and capacity to intervene in governance. The elected government derived legitimacy from domestic electoral procedures, creating an internal legitimation component and establishing dual legitimation structures characteristic of indirect rule. Cuba under US occupation (1899-1902) similarly exemplifies indirect rule occupation, with municipal elections in June 1900 enabling Cuban ruling elites to participate in government with genuine authority over local administration despite restricted franchise. Indigenous elite participation created domestic legitimation components even under restricted franchise, as Cuban officials derived authority from their standing within Cuban society rather than purely from US appointment. These transitions and cases illustrate the decisive boundary: direct rule involves pure external legitimation with indigenous population as subjects lacking political participation channels and domestic legitimation sources, while indirect rule involves dual legitimation structures where indigenous institutions possess domestic legitimacy bases (through elections, elite participation with indigenous standing, or traditional authority) and genuine authority within circumscribed spheres despite continued occupation sovereignty. The establishment of indigenous institutions with domestic legitimation sources and genuine decision-making capacity marks the threshold crossing from direct to indirect rule occupation.

4.5.2.2 Indirect Rule Occupation Regime

Conceptualization: Indirect rule occupation regimes represent a significant modification of pure external control by introducing limited indigenous political participation within the overarching framework of occupation authority. The indigenous population gains certain influence through elected representatives, recognized governmental structures, or traditional elite participation, transitioning from pure subjects of foreign rule to limited political actors. Indigenous governments or parliaments exercise genuine, though fundamentally circumscribed, authority over defined spheres of domestic governance such as civil administration, education, local economic policy, health services, or social welfare. These indigenous institutions derive their authority partially from domestic legitimation sources (whether through electoral procedures with universal or restricted franchise, traditional authority structures, elite networks with indigenous standing, or continuation of pre-occupation governmental recognition), creating a partial internal legitimation component alongside the external legitimation structure embodied in continued occupation control {Mamdani, 1996 #47066}.

However, this participation remains fundamentally circumscribed: ultimate sovereignty, control over security and foreign affairs, authority over at least some core domestic policy

domains, and capacity to override indigenous decisions on matters deemed essential to occupation objectives remain vested in the occupying power. This creates a dual legitimization structure where domestic political participation and indigenous authority coexist with external sovereignty and occupation control. Indigenous parliaments or governments answer to their domestic constituencies or derive legitimacy from indigenous elite networks within their limited spheres, while occupation authorities retain ultimate control and answer to the occupying power or mandating international bodies. The hybrid nature positions indirect rule occupation between direct military government (pure external legitimization, indigenous population as pure subjects) and semi-sovereign status (full domestic control over all internal affairs, foreign control limited exclusively to external relations and defense).

The upper boundary of indirect rule occupation is defined by the domain threshold. Indirect rule occupation regimes, despite permitting indigenous governments or elected institutions to exercise authority over specified domestic spheres, retain occupation control over at least some core domestic policy domains (such as overall economic policy, monetary policy, aspects of internal security, or control over strategic resources) in addition to foreign affairs and defense. When indigenous governments exercise full autonomous authority over all domestic domains and occupation control is limited exclusively to foreign affairs and security policy without veto capacity over internal matters, the arrangement transitions from indirect rule occupation to semi-sovereign status. The distinction is not the presence of elected indigenous institutions (both may have them) but whether the occupation retains control over or intervention capacity in any domestic policy sphere beyond external relations.

Elite structures under indirect rule occupation become more complex than under direct rule. Indigenous political elites gain or retain positions through electoral competition during occupation, participation in recognized governmental structures, or traditional elite standing with domestic legitimacy bases, creating domestic legitimization sources for their authority within limited domains. However, these indigenous elites operate under occupation oversight, with occupation authorities retaining ultimate control and intervention capacity including removal of indigenous officials deemed uncooperative or threatening to occupation objectives. Elite cohesion operates through two distinct mechanisms: indigenous elites cohere through domestic political processes (party formation, governmental continuity, traditional hierarchies, or elite networks) or derive legitimacy from indigenous constituencies, while occupation authorities maintain separate command structures accountable to occupying powers or international mandates.

Operationalization: Following Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle, an occupation regime is classified as indirect rule when actual control structures meet the following criteria: (1) indigenous governmental institutions exist that possess genuine, though limited, authority over defined spheres of domestic governance, (2) these indigenous institutions derive authority at least partially from domestic legitimation sources rather than functioning purely as appointed instruments of occupation administration, and (3) ultimate sovereignty, control over security and foreign affairs, and control over at least some core domestic policy domains remain vested in the occupying power or mandating international bodies. All three conditions must be satisfied: indigenous institutions without domestic legitimation sources (puppet regimes deriving authority solely from occupation appointment), or indigenous institutions without genuine authority (purely consultative bodies), or complete domestic sovereignty (occupation controls only foreign affairs and security) disqualify the regime from this classification.

The domestic legitimation criterion is decisive for distinguishing indirect from direct rule occupation. Indigenous institutions must derive authority from domestic sources (whether through electoral procedures with universal suffrage, restricted elite elections with participants possessing indigenous standing, traditional authority structures with domestic legitimacy, elite networks recognized within indigenous society, or continuation of pre-occupation governmental structures with indigenous recognition), not purely from occupation appointment. The criterion is not franchise breadth or democratic quality but the presence of an internal legitimation component creating dual legitimation structures: occupation retains ultimate sovereignty while indigenous institutions possess domestic legitimacy bases. Appointed councils or puppet regimes whose members derive authority exclusively from occupation designation, lacking independent standing within indigenous society or recognition by domestic constituencies, lack the domestic legitimation component required for indirect rule classification.

Authority must be genuine in practice, not merely consultative on paper. Indigenous parliaments or governments must possess actual decision-making capacity within their designated spheres, including ability to make binding decisions on domestic administration, implement policies within their jurisdiction, and exercise governance functions that occupation authorities respect rather than routinely override. Puppet regimes that exist nominally but whose every significant decision requires occupation approval or is dictated by occupation authorities lack the genuine authority required for indirect rule. The criterion is whether indigenous institutions exercise binding authority in at least some defined spheres in actual practice, assessed through policy implementation patterns, occupation intervention frequency, and

indigenous capacity to make decisions without occupation pre-approval on matters within their jurisdiction.

Borderline cases arise when either domestic legitimation sources are weak or ambiguous, when indigenous authority is severely circumscribed, or when the boundary with semi-sovereign status becomes unclear. Domestic legitimation borderlines occur when indigenous institutions possess some legitimacy within restricted segments of society but lack broader recognition, or when elections involve substantial but restricted participation with ambiguous indigenous standing of participants. Authority borderlines occur when indigenous governments exercise genuine authority over routine domestic administration but face occupation override on any matter deemed significant by occupiers, representing minimal indirect rule. The upper boundary borderline arises when indigenous governments exercise increasingly autonomous authority over most domestic domains and occupation control becomes primarily limited to foreign affairs and security, requiring assessment of whether occupation retains control over or veto capacity in any domestic policy sphere beyond external relations. Cases at the lower threshold, where domestic legitimation sources are present but limited and authority covers at least some binding decisions, qualify as minimal indirect rule. Cases approaching the upper threshold, where domestic control is extensive but occupation retains some domestic policy influence beyond security and foreign affairs, remain indirect rule until the domain threshold to semi-sovereign status is crossed.

The temporal anchor (July 1st) determines classification for each year. Transitions from direct to indirect rule occupation are coded when indigenous institutions with genuine authority and domestic legitimation sources are established or permitted to resume functioning. Transitions from indirect rule to semi-sovereign status occur when occupation control over domestic policy domains ends and authority becomes limited exclusively to foreign affairs and security without veto capacity over internal governance. Transitions from indirect rule back to direct rule occur when occupation authorities dissolve or suspend indigenous institutions and reassume comprehensive direct control.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Afghanistan under US-led occupation (2004-2009) and Cuba under US occupation (1899-1902) exemplify indirect rule occupation regimes where indigenous institutions with domestic legitimation exercised genuine though circumscribed authority under occupation oversight. In Afghanistan following presidential elections in September 2004 with universal suffrage and parliamentary elections in 2005, an elected Afghan government operated with real authority over domestic civil administration, education, health services, and social

policy, while US and NATO forces retained control over security operations, foreign affairs, overall economic policy affecting international aid and reconstruction, and capacity to intervene in Afghan governance when deemed necessary for counterterrorism or stabilization objectives. The elected government derived legitimacy from domestic electoral procedures, creating an internal legitimization component, while ultimate sovereignty and control over core domains remained with occupation forces. Cuba under US military government (1899-1902) operated through municipal elections in June 1900, where despite restricted suffrage limited to a small fraction of the population, the Cuban ruling elite participated in government of the country with genuine authority over local administration, taxation within municipalities, and routine civil governance. Indigenous elite participation created a domestic legitimization component even under restricted franchise, as Cuban officials derived authority from their standing within Cuban society rather than purely from US appointment, while US military government retained control over foreign affairs, defense, overall economic policy, and capacity to intervene in Cuban governance. Both cases demonstrate dual legitimization structures characteristic of indirect rule: occupation retention of ultimate control and authority over core domains combined with indigenous institutions possessing domestic legitimacy bases and genuine authority within circumscribed spheres.

Borderline Cases: Vichy France (1940-1944, particularly before Operation Anton on 11/11/1942) represents a complex borderline case between indirect rule occupation and protectorate-type semi-sovereign status, illuminating the critical upper boundary of indirect rule occupation. The Vichy government under Marshal Pétain exercised comprehensive control over domestic policy domains including justice, internal security (police and milice), economic administration, fiscal policy, and civil governance in the unoccupied zone, with genuine decision-making capacity and implementation authority across these spheres. This extensive domestic control suggests semi-sovereign status under the domain threshold, as Vichy retained authority over virtually all internal governance matters. However, German military presence in the occupied zone, capacity to intervene in French governance across zones, control over strategic resources and key industries, influence over economic policy through armistice terms, and the fundamental occupation context created by military defeat and armistice agreement argue for indirect rule occupation classification. The case illuminates the critical question defining the upper boundary: when does genuine domestic control under foreign military presence and strategic subordination constitute semi-sovereign protectorate versus indirect rule occupation? The distinction hinges on assessing whether the occupying power retains control over or systematic intervention capacity in domestic policy domains beyond security and

foreign affairs. Vichy's extensive domestic autonomy, particularly in the period before Operation Anton when the unoccupied zone functioned with greater independence from direct German administrative control, positions it at the upper boundary of indirect rule occupation, approaching the semi-sovereign threshold. After Operation Anton, when Germany occupied the entire French territory, Vichy's status became more clearly indirect rule occupation with more circumscribed indigenous authority and more direct German oversight, though the government retained administrative functions and domestic governance capacity distinguishing it from direct rule.

Contrasting Cases: Afghanistan under US-led occupation (2001-2004) and Iraq under Coalition Provisional Authority (2003-2004) represent direct rule occupation arrangements lacking the dual legitimization structures characteristic of indirect rule. During these phases, occupation authorities exercised comprehensive control without indigenous institutions possessing genuine authority derived from domestic legitimization sources. Afghanistan during 2001-2004 operated through appointed transitional authorities deriving authority primarily from international designation rather than from domestic electoral mandate or traditional authority recognition covering the territory. Iraq under CPA operated through appointed Iraqi Governing Council lacking independent legislative or executive powers, with authority residing in occupation administration. The absence of domestic legitimization components (no elections, no recognized traditional authority structures with governance capacity, no continuation of pre-occupation governmental legitimacy) and lack of genuine indigenous authority distinguish these direct rule phases from the subsequent indirect rule periods after elections established indigenous governments with domestic legitimization. Allied occupation of West Germany transitioned to semi-sovereign status after establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949, when the elected German government assumed full authority over all domestic domains (economy, fiscal policy, justice, internal administration) while Allied powers retained control only over foreign affairs and security through the Occupation Statute. Similarly, Japan transitioned to semi-sovereign status after the 1947 constitution, with the elected Diet and government exercising complete domestic authority while SCAP retained control over external relations. These cases crossed the domain threshold beyond indirect rule occupation to semi-sovereign status by achieving full domestic autonomy, demonstrating the upper boundary: when occupation control becomes limited exclusively to foreign affairs and security without retention of authority over any domestic policy sphere, the arrangement transitions beyond occupation classification. The distinction between indirect rule occupation (which retains some domestic policy control beyond foreign/security) and semi-sovereign status (external control limited

exclusively to foreign/security) defines the critical upper boundary of occupation regimes within the external legitimation pattern.

4.7. Special Cases

The category Special Cases encompasses political situations that fall outside the legitimation pattern framework structuring regime classification. Unlike regimes based on electoral, personalist, institutional, ideological, or external legitimation, these cases represent conditions where the organizing logic of authority cannot be assessed because either no effective central authority exists to structure political power (No Central Authority) or the territory functions as an integrated administrative unit within another sovereign state (Part of Other Country). Special Cases do not constitute legitimation patterns in the analytical sense employed throughout this typology. They represent instead the absence of conditions required for regime analysis: either the collapse of central governance structures or the lack of separate political entity status necessary for independent regime classification.

These cases differ fundamentally from all legitimation-based regime types in lacking the institutional architecture that legitimation patterns describe. Electoral regimes structure authority through competitive procedures and representative institutions. Personalist regimes organize power around individual rulers and patron-client networks. Institutional regimes operate through organizational hierarchies such as military command or party structures. Ideological regimes structure authority through doctrinal blueprints and belief systems. External legitimation regimes derive authority from foreign powers through colonial or occupation arrangements, maintaining separate governing structures (colonial administrations, occupation authorities) that constitute distinct political entities requiring regime classification despite external control. Each of these patterns, however varied in their organizing logic, presupposes the existence of identifiable authority structures that can be analyzed according to their legitimation basis. Special Cases lack this prerequisite: either central authority has fragmented beyond meaningful analysis or no separate governing structures exist warranting independent regime assessment.

The two Special Cases categories represent fundamentally different situations precluding regime classification. No Central Authority designates state collapse, extreme fragmentation, or civil war conditions where no unified governing body exercises effective control over the capital and substantial portions of national territory. Multiple factions, warlords, militias, or local authorities control different regions without overarching coordination, creating

governance vacuums characterized by political chaos and competing power centers unable to implement consistent policies. These situations typically emerge during severe civil conflicts when central state institutions cease to exist or become so ineffective that they cannot claim authority over the polity. Part of Other Country designates territories politically and administratively integrated into another sovereign state's governance structures, functioning as administrative units (provinces, regions, constituent republics) within that state's regime system rather than as separate political entities with distinct governing structures requiring independent regime analysis. While both categories preclude regime classification, they represent opposite conditions: No Central Authority involves the disintegration of governance structures, while Part of Other Country involves integration into another state's governance framework.

4.7.1. No Central Authority

Conceptualization: No Central Authority designates political situations characterized by the collapse or fragmentation of central governing structures to a degree that precludes meaningful regime classification. Unlike regime types based on legitimation patterns (electoral, personalist, institutional, ideological, or external), this category represents the absence of unified authority capable of exercising control over the capital and substantial portions of national territory. Authority has disintegrated into competing power centers without coordination, each controlling discrete territorial segments through coercive capacity rather than through institutionalized legitimation claims. Multiple factions, warlords, militias, or local authorities exercise de facto control over separate regions without overarching political framework, shared institutions, or coordination mechanisms.

This condition differs fundamentally from all regime types in representing political disorganization rather than political organization. Even weak or repressive regimes maintain identifiable institutional architectures: electoral regimes operate through competitive procedures, personalist regimes through patronage networks from recognizable centers, institutional regimes through organizational hierarchies, ideological regimes through doctrinal frameworks, and external legitimation regimes through colonial or occupation administrations. No Central Authority lacks these basic prerequisites: no center from which authority emanates, no coordination mechanisms implementing policies, and no institutional structures organizing power according to legitimation logic {Rotberg, 2004 #11152}.

Elite structures fragment along territorial and factional lines. Multiple competing elite networks (warlords, militia commanders, faction leaders) control specific regions through military

capacity and local alliances rather than through participation in national institutions. Cohesion operates only within discrete factions through personal loyalty, ethnic ties, or material incentives (loot, protection, resource access), not through institutional hierarchies spanning the polity. No mechanisms coordinate elites across factions, and competition manifests as armed conflict over territorial control rather than political contestation within institutional frameworks {Reno, 1999 #47076}.

Operationalization: A political situation is classified as No Central Authority when: (1) no unified governing body exercises effective control over both the national capital and at least one-third of national territory, (2) territory is divided among multiple competing factions controlling discrete regions without coordination or mutual recognition, and (3) no functioning central state institutions exist capable of implementing policies or coordinating administrative functions across the polity. All three conditions must be satisfied. Weak states maintaining nominal control over capitals and symbolic authority despite limited territorial reach do not qualify if functioning national institutions exist and are recognized by significant portions of the polity.

The territorial control threshold (capital plus one-third of territory) distinguishes extreme state weakness from complete authority collapse. Central authority exercising effective control over the capital and substantial minority of territory retains sufficient institutional capacity to constitute a weak regime rather than complete collapse, provided central institutions continue functioning within their zones. The criterion reflects that even limited but functioning central governance with territorial base differs fundamentally from complete fragmentation into uncoordinated power centers.

The coordination criterion distinguishes No Central Authority from federalism, regionalism, or partition arrangements where multiple authorities maintain coordination mechanisms or mutual recognition. No Central Authority involves complete absence of such frameworks: competing factions relate purely through armed competition without shared institutional structures or recognition of mutual authority.

Borderline cases arise when weak central governments maintain minimal institutional functions while lacking majority territorial control, or when one faction dominates the capital while others control peripheries. Assessment must determine whether functioning national institutions exist capable of policy implementation across their zones, or whether authority has fragmented into uncoordinated power centers. Internationally recognized governments controlling capitals and maintaining bureaucracies despite limited reach typically remain classified as weak regimes.

Cases where multiple factions control roughly equal territories without any claimant maintaining functioning national institutions constitute No Central Authority.

The July 1st temporal anchor applies: the control situation on 07/01 determines classification. Transitions out occur when one faction establishes control over capital and substantial territory, reconstituting functioning central institutions. Transitions in are coded when central governments collapse under civil war or regime breakdown.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Somalia following Siad Barre's overthrow (01/26/1991) and Afghanistan after Najibullah's ouster (04/16/1992) exemplify paradigmatic No Central Authority {Menkhaus, 2007 #47077}. In Somalia post-1991, no unified body controlled Mogadishu or provided national governance. Clan-based factions fragmented into competing warlord militias controlling discrete regions (divided Mogadishu, independent Puntland and Somaliland, various southern factions) without coordination. No functioning national institutions implemented policies, and factions competed through armed conflict over ports, aid, and trade routes. Afghanistan 1992-1996 experienced similar fragmentation after Mujahideen victory. Multiple factions (Jamiat-e Islami, Hezb-e Islami, Junbish-i Milli, Hezb-e Wahdat) controlled different regions and fought over Kabul without establishing coordinated national administration. Both demonstrate complete fragmentation: no unified capital control, multiple uncoordinated factions, absent central institutions, sustained armed competition without institutional frameworks.

Borderline Cases: Libya post-2011 and Yemen during civil war phases represent borderline No Central Authority situations at the lower threshold of the category, approaching but not crossing into civil war between weak competing regimes. Libya after Gaddafi's overthrow featured competing authorities (Tripoli-based GNA, Tobruk-based House of Representatives with Haftar forces) both claiming legitimacy and maintaining minimal governmental functions, combined with multiple independently operating armed groups controlling discrete territories. Despite rival authorities maintaining some bureaucratic structures and international recognition, neither controlled majority territory or provided coordinated governance across substantial portions of the polity, and their institutional capacity remained insufficient to constitute functioning regimes even of weak type. The minimal bureaucratic functions and symbolic authority of competing claimants position Libya at the borderline: sufficient fragmentation and absence of effective central institutions to qualify as No Central Authority, yet closer to the threshold of weak competing governments than paradigmatic complete collapse cases. Yemen with rival authorities (internationally recognized government controlling limited

southern territory, Houthi forces controlling Sanaa and northern regions, Southern Transitional Council, various militias) similarly qualifies as borderline No Central Authority. Competing claimants maintain minimal governmental functions within their zones and receive external recognition, yet none exercises effective control over capital and substantial territory simultaneously, and no coordination mechanisms span the competing authorities. These borderline cases illuminate the lower threshold of No Central Authority: when competing authorities maintain minimal institutional functions and territorial concentrations but lack sufficient control and coordination to constitute even weak regimes, the situation qualifies as No Central Authority despite differences from paradigmatic total collapse scenarios.

Contrasting Cases: Syria during civil war maintained continuous Damascus control and functioning governmental institutions despite severe territorial losses, distinguishing it from No Central Authority despite state weakness. The Assad regime continued implementing policies and exercising coordinated governance within its territory throughout conflict. Iraq under US occupation (2003-2009) avoided No Central Authority because occupation authorities provided external governance structures coordinating policy implementation despite instability. External authority provision distinguishes occupation regimes from No Central Authority even when indigenous institutions are weak. DRC during Second Congo War (1998-2003) retained minimal Kinshasa governmental functions while eastern regions came under rebel control with quasi-governmental structures, creating weak government with de facto partition rather than complete authority collapse.

4.7.2. Part of Other Country

Conceptualization: Part of Other Country designates territories that are politically and administratively integrated into another sovereign state's governance structures, functioning as administrative units (provinces, regions, constituent republics, overseas departments) within that state's regime system without separate regime-level governance. These territories do not constitute independent political entities requiring regime analysis, as they are governed through the metropolitan state's own institutional structures rather than through separate governing apparatus. The decisive criterion distinguishing Part of Other Country from colonial and occupation regimes is the degree of administrative integration: colonial and occupation regimes maintain separate governing structures (colonial administrations, occupation authorities, separate legal systems) constituting distinct political entities requiring regime classification according to external legitimation patterns, while Part of Other Country involves governance

through the metropolitan state's unified institutional framework without separate regime-level apparatus warranting independent classification.

This category addresses a fundamental methodological issue in cross-national regime research. When scholars analyze regime distributions across states (how many democracies exist globally, what percentage of states in a region are autocracies, what is the global trend in democratization), the unit of analysis must be sovereign states to avoid double-counting and maintain valid enumeration. A territory integrated into another state (such as Lithuania within the Soviet Union from 1940-1990, Tibet within the People's Republic of China post-1959, or Newfoundland within Canada after 1949) does not constitute a separate unit for regime enumeration, as only the sovereign state (USSR, PRC, Canada) represents the relevant analytical case for cross-national comparison. Including integrated territories as separate cases would artificially inflate regime counts (counting both USSR and Lithuanian SSR as separate ideocracies, both PRC and Tibet as separate regimes) and distort quantitative analysis of regime distributions, transitions, and trends. A researcher analyzing how many communist regimes existed in 1980 must count the USSR as one case, not sixteen cases (USSR plus fifteen constituent republics), to produce accurate enumeration.

Therefore, Part of Other Country is excluded from Va-PoReg's primary regime classification variables (from `vaporeg_regtype_detailed` to `vaporeg_regtype_binaut`), which are designed for cross-national quantitative analysis requiring accurate sovereign state counts. However, this category is retained in `vaporeg_regtype_reports`, which serves a distinct purpose: documenting complete historical trajectories for territories that gained or lost sovereignty during the dataset's temporal scope (1900-2024). For territories like Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia, historical documentation of periods under Soviet sovereignty (including specification that they were Part of USSR and that USSR was classified as ideocracy during those periods) provides crucial context for understanding paths toward and away from independence, even though these periods do not constitute separate cases for regime enumeration in quantitative variables. This dual-variable approach resolves the tension between accurate cross-national quantitative analysis (requiring sovereign state units only) and comprehensive historical documentation (requiring complete territorial trajectories including periods without sovereignty). Researchers using classification variables for quantitative analysis obtain correct sovereign state counts, while researchers examining specific countries' historical trajectories through reports variables obtain complete documentation including integration periods.

Operationalization: A territory is classified as Part of Other Country when: (1) it is fully integrated into another sovereign state's political and administrative system, governed through

that state's institutions rather than through separate governing structures, (2) it does not possess separate regime-level governance requiring independent legitimation pattern analysis, and (3) it either subsequently gained independence or previously existed as a sovereign entity or remote colony during the dataset's temporal scope (1900-2024), warranting historical trajectory documentation. All three conditions must be satisfied. Territories that never possessed sovereignty and remain integrated throughout the dataset period, or that integrated during the dataset period but never subsequently gained sovereignty, are not coded in `vaporeg_regtype_reports`, as they lack the historical sovereignty transition relevance this documentation serves. The third criterion ensures that coding focuses on territories with sovereignty trajectories (toward or away from independence) rather than on all integrated regions regardless of historical relevance.

The integration criterion distinguishes Part of Other Country from colonial and occupation regimes. Colonial regimes maintain separate colonial administrations with distinct governing structures (governors-general, colonial legislatures, separate legal systems, colonial civil services) constituting political entities requiring regime classification despite external control and lack of sovereignty. Occupation regimes establish separate occupation authorities or permit indigenous governments to function as distinct entities under occupation oversight. Part of Other Country involves governance through the metropolitan state's own institutional structures: the territory functions as a province, region, or constituent unit within the sovereign state's unified administrative system, applying the same legal framework, institutional processes, and bureaucratic hierarchies as other regions of that state, without separate regime-level governance apparatus. Assessment focuses on whether separate governing structures exist requiring independent regime classification, or whether the territory is governed through integrated metropolitan institutions.

The sovereignty trajectory criterion ensures that only historically relevant cases receive documentation in `vaporeg_regtype_reports`. Territories currently independent that experienced periods under another state's sovereignty (Baltic states under USSR, many African and Asian countries during brief integration periods before or after colonial status) warrant historical documentation of integration phases. Territories that were remote colonies or protectorates and subsequently integrated (Newfoundland joining Canada from prior Dominion status, Sikkim joining India from prior protectorate status) do not receive Part of Other Country coding after integration if they never subsequently gained sovereignty, as their historical trajectory ends with integration rather than continuing through cycles of sovereignty loss and restoration. Only territories with ongoing sovereignty relevance (either currently sovereign having experienced

prior integration, or potentially sovereign in future having experienced integration) receive Part of Other Country documentation.

Borderline cases arise when territories possess substantial autonomy while remaining integrated, when the boundary between protectorate-type arrangements and full integration becomes ambiguous, or when contested sovereignty creates classification uncertainty. Territories with autonomous governance structures creating quasi-separate regimes (elected regional governments with extensive powers over domestic policy approaching protectorate-type semi-sovereign characteristics) represent upper borderlines where classification must assess whether autonomy creates separate regime-level governance or remains within integrated administrative framework. Territories with separate administrations but unclear status (such as arrangements transitioning from protectorate-type to full integration) represent borderlines requiring assessment of whether separate governing structures constitute protectorate-type semi-sovereign classification or represent integration. Contested integrations where international recognition is withheld or where integration occurs through force rather than voluntary processes create borderlines requiring assessment of whether territories function as integrated units despite contested status.

The July 1st temporal anchor applies. Transitions into Part of Other Country status are coded when territories lose sovereignty through integration, annexation, or absorption into another state. Transitions out are coded when territories gain or regain independence, establishing sovereign status requiring regime classification.

Examples:

Paradigmatic Cases: Newfoundland's integration into Canada (1949) and Sikkim's integration into India (1975) exemplify paradigmatic Part of Other Country situations where territories integrated into sovereign states without subsequently regaining independence, resulting in exclusion from `vaporeg_regtype_reports` despite integration occurring within the dataset's temporal scope. Newfoundland, previously a British Dominion with self-governing status (and coded as such when sovereignty existed), joined Canada following referendums in 1948, becoming a Canadian province in 1949. After integration, Newfoundland functioned as a province within Canada's federal system, governed through Canadian federal and provincial institutions without separate regime-level governance. Because Newfoundland has not subsequently gained sovereignty and remains integrated as a Canadian province, it does not receive Part of Other Country coding in `vaporeg_regtype_reports`: its historical trajectory as relevant to sovereignty questions ended with integration, and documenting it as Part of Canada throughout subsequent decades provides no analytical value for understanding sovereignty

transitions or regime trajectories. Similarly, Sikkim transitioned from protectorate status (coded as protectorate-type semi-sovereign under Indian protection) to full integration as an Indian state in 1975 following a referendum. Post-1975, Sikkim functions as a state within India's federal system, governed through Indian constitutional structures without separate regime-level governance. Sikkim's lack of subsequent sovereignty trajectory means it is not coded as Part of Other Country in reports variables after 1975, as its relevance to sovereignty analysis ended with integration. These paradigmatic cases illustrate that Part of Other Country coding applies selectively: not all integrated territories receive this designation, but only those with ongoing sovereignty relevance through subsequent independence or current sovereign status having experienced prior integration periods.

Borderline Cases: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia within the Soviet Union (1940-1990, excluding 1941-1944 German occupation periods) represent contested borderline cases between Part of Other Country and potential alternative classifications, complicated by international non-recognition of Soviet annexation and forced rather than voluntary integration. The Baltic republics functioned de facto as constituent Soviet Socialist Republics within the USSR federal structure, governed through Soviet institutions (Communist Party hierarchies, Soviet governmental structures, centralized planning apparatus) without separate regime-level governance distinguishing them from other Soviet republics. However, many Western states never recognized Soviet annexation as legitimate, maintaining diplomatic recognition of Baltic governments-in-exile and treating the territories as occupied rather than legitimately integrated. This contested status creates classification ambiguity: de facto governance structures resembled Part of Other Country (full integration into USSR administrative system), but contested sovereignty and international non-recognition argue for alternative treatment. Va-PoReg's de facto classification principle prioritizes actual governance structures, leading to Part of Other Country classification based on factual integration into Soviet administration, with the contested nature and subsequent independence restoration (1990-1991) warranting this borderline designation. The Baltic case illuminates tensions between de facto control structures and normative sovereignty claims in integration contexts.

Tibet within the People's Republic of China presents a complex case requiring reassessment of classification boundaries. Following the Seventeen Point Agreement (10/24/1951), Tibet maintained the Dalai Lama's government (Kashag), traditional Tibetan institutions, and control over domestic affairs including justice, religion, and internal administration, while China retained control over foreign affairs, defense, and ultimate sovereignty. This structure closely parallels protectorate-type semi-sovereign arrangements (such as Vichy France under German

control or Saarland under French protection) where separate indigenous governments exercise comprehensive domestic authority under external control limited to foreign affairs and security. The preservation of Tibet's existing political system (explicitly guaranteed in Agreement Point 4) and functioning Tibetan governance structures suggest classification as protectorate-type semi-sovereign during 1951-1959 would be more consistent with Va-PoReg's domain threshold criteria than the current Part of Other Country coding. However, Chinese military presence throughout Tibet and interference in some regions (socialist reforms in Kham and Amdo during 1956-1958 violating Agreement provisions, leading to resistance and the Xunhua Incident) create ambiguity about whether Chinese control remained limited to foreign affairs and defense or extended into domestic policy domains. Following the 1959 Tibetan uprising (03/10/1959-03/23/1959), the Dalai Lama's government dissolved with his flight to India, traditional structures were dismantled through Democratic Reforms, and Tibet was progressively integrated into PRC administrative structures as the Tibet Autonomous Region, governed through standard provincial party-state institutions identical to other Chinese provinces. Post-1959 Tibet clearly constitutes Part of Other Country with full administrative integration and no separate regime-level governance. However, the 1951-1959 period represents a borderline between protectorate-type classification (emphasizing separate Tibetan governance structures maintaining domestic control and Agreement provisions preserving political system) and Part of Other Country classification (emphasizing Chinese military control, integration rhetoric declaring Tibet „part of Chinese territory,“ and violations of autonomy provisions), with protectorate-type arguably more consistent with the domain threshold framework applied to comparable cases like Vichy France or Saarland.

French overseas territories with substantial autonomy (such as French Polynesia classified as Defective Democracy [as protectorate-type of France] from 2003) represent borderlines between Part of Other Country and protectorate-type semi-sovereign status requiring separate regime classification. French Polynesia possesses elected territorial government with extensive autonomous powers over domestic policy including education, health, and economic development, while France retains control over foreign affairs, defense, and maintains override capacity through French state representative. This autonomy level warranted reclassification from colonial indirect rule to protectorate-type with separate internal regime coding (Defective Democracy due to French override capacity affecting executive constraints), illustrating that substantial territorial autonomy can create separate regime-level governance requiring protectorate-type classification rather than Part of Other Country treatment. The boundary depends on whether autonomous governance reaches the threshold where distinct legitimation

patterns operate with sufficient independence from metropolitan control to constitute separate regime analysis, or whether integration within metropolitan regime structures predominates despite autonomy provisions.

Contrasting Cases: Colonial regimes such as Hawaii under US territorial administration (1900-1959) and Alaska Territory (1912-1959) maintained separate territorial governing structures requiring independent regime classification despite US sovereignty. Hawaii operated through territorial government with appointed governors and elected territorial legislatures, constituting separately governed colonial entities classified as indirect rule colonial regimes rather than as integrated US territory. Hawaii's transition to statehood in 1959 and Alaska's transition in 1959 marked shifts from colonial regime (separate territorial governance) to Part of Other Country (full integration as US states governed through federal-state framework identical to other states), illustrating the boundary between separate colonial administration and full integration. Other US territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, US Virgin Islands) maintaining territorial status with separate governance structures throughout the dataset period receive colonial regime classification rather than Part of Other Country designation. British India and French Algeria during colonial periods similarly maintained separate colonial administrations with governors-general, colonial civil services, and distinct legal frameworks, warranting colonial regime classification rather than treatment as integrated British or French territory.

Independent sovereign states obviously contrast with Part of Other Country through possession of sovereignty requiring independent regime classification. The Baltic states after independence restoration (1990-1991) transitioned from Part of Other Country (USSR) to sovereign status with independent regime classification, illustrating the boundary between integrated administrative status and sovereign statehood. Numerous African and Asian territories that experienced brief Part of Other Country periods during integration phases subsequently gained independent sovereignty and regime classification, demonstrating transitions across the sovereignty threshold. Saarland's trajectory illustrates complex status transitions: French occupation regime (1945-1949), protectorate-type semi-sovereign (1949-1957) with own government under French control of foreign affairs, then integration into West Germany (1957) transitioning to Part of Other Country status, demonstrating how territories may pass through multiple statuses before final integration.

5. Overview of Regime Variables

Va-PoReg distinguishes political regimes according to a reports, detailed and a compact version of the classification. The reports version is identical detailed classification is the most fine-grained variant in our dataset, while the compact classification merges related types for research purposes. The regime categories are listed below:

Country Reports Classification (vaporeg_regtype_reports)

- 10 Liberal Democracy
- 20 Defective Democracy
- 30 Electoral Oligarchy
- 40 Democratizing Regime
- 50 Electoral Hybrid Regime
- 60 Electoral Autocracy
- 70 Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy
- 80 Non-Electoral Transitional Regime
- 90 Constitutional Monarchy
- 100 Autocratic Monarchy
- 110 One-Party Autocracy
- 120 Right-Wing Autocracy
- 130 Communist Ideocracy
- 140 Islamist Ideocracy
- 150 Military Autocracy
- 160 Personalist Autocracy
- 170 Direct Rule Colonial Regime
- 180 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime
- 190 Direct Rule Occupation Regime
- 200 Indirect Rule Occupation Regime
- 210 No Central Authority
- 220 Part of Other Country

Detailed Classification (vaporeg_regtype_detailed):

- 10 Liberal Democracy
- 20 Defective Democracy
- 30 Electoral Oligarchy
- 40 Democratizing Regime

50 Electoral Hybrid Regime
 60 Electoral Autocracy
 70 Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy
 80 Non-Electoral Transitional Regime
 90 Constitutional Monarchy
 100 Autocratic Monarchy
 110 One-Party Autocracy
 120 Right-Wing Autocracy
 130 Communist Ideocracy
 140 Islamist Ideocracy
 150 Military Autocracy
 160 Personalist Autocracy
 170 Direct Rule Colonial Regime
 180 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime
 190 Direct Rule Occupation Regime
 200 Indirect Rule Occupation Regime
 210 No Central Authority

Compact Classification (vaporeg_regtype_compact)

The Compact Classification merges closely related regime types into broader categories (e.g., Liberal and Defective Democracy into Democracy), resulting in fewer, more general categories.

10 Democracy

Encompasses: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy

20 Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime

Encompasses: Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime

30 Electoral Autocracy

Encompasses: Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy

40 Ruling Monarchy

Encompasses: Autocratic Monarchy, Constitutional Monarchy

50 One-Party Autocracy

Encompasses: One-Party Autocracy, Non-Electoral Transitional Regime

60 Right-Wing Autocracy

Encompasses: Right-Wing Autocracy

70 Communist Ideocracy

Encompasses: Communist Ideocracy

80 Islamist Ideocracy

Encompasses: Islamist Ideocracy

90 Military Autocracy

Encompasses: Military Autocracy

100 Personalist Autocracy

Encompasses: Personalist Autocracy

110 Colonial Regime

Encompasses: Direct Rule Colonial Regime, Indirect Rule Colonial Regime

120 Occupation Regime

Encompasses: Direct Rule Occupation Regime, Indirect Rule Occupation Regime

130 No Central Authority

Encompasses: No Central Authority

Quadruple Classification (vaporeg_regtype_quadruple)

This classification scheme provides an analytically streamlined fourfold typology of political regimes, distinguishing democracy, hybrid regime, electoral autocracy, and closed autocracy. It is designed to facilitate broad cross-national and longitudinal comparisons by aggregating detailed regime types into conceptually coherent categories. While structurally similar to the fourfold regime classification used by V-Dem, the boundaries between categories are deliberately drawn differently to better reflect distinctions emphasized in the Varieties of Political Regimes dataset.

1 Democracy

Encompasses: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy

2 Hybrid Regime

Encompasses: Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime, Constitutional Monarchy

3 Electoral Autocracy

Encompasses: Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy

4 Closed Autocracy

Encompasses all types on non-electoral autocracies like military or one-party autocracy.

Cases which are No Central Authority or Part of Other Country are excluded and coded as missing.

Triple Classification (vaporeg_regtype_triple)

This classification scheme provides an analytically streamlined threefold typology of political regimes, distinguishing between democracy, hybrid regime, and autocracy. In contrast to the quadruple classification, it merges electoral and closed autocracies into a single autocracy category, thus simplifying the distinction between regime types while retaining the hybrid category as an intermediate form.

1 Democracy

Encompasses: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy

2 Hybrid Regime

Encompasses: Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime, Constitutional Monarchy

3 Autocracy

Encompasses: Electoral Autocracy and all forms of non-electoral autocracy, including one-party, military, personalist, monarchic, and ideocratic regimes, as well as colonial and occupation regimes.

Cases coded as No Central Authority or Part of Other Country are excluded and assigned missing values.

Binary classification democracy (vaporeg_regtype_bindem)

This variable classifies all regimes into democracy (1) and non-democracy (0).

1 Democracy Includes: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy

0 Non-democracy Includes: Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime, Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy, Non-Electoral Transitional Regime, Constitutional Monarchy, Autocratic Monarchy, One-Party Autocracy, Right-Wing Autocracy, Communist Ideocracy, Islamist Ideocracy, Military Autocracy, Personalist Autocracy, Direct Rule Colonial Regime, Indirect Rule Colonial Regime, Direct Rule Occupation Regime, Indirect Rule Occupation Regime. While cases with No Central Authority have no non-democratic regime they are still coded as Non-democracy.

Cases which are Part of Other Country are excluded and coded as missing.

Binary classification autocracy (vaporeg_regtype_binaut)

This variable classifies all regimes into autocracy (1) and non-autocracy (0).

1 Autocracy Includes: Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy, Non-Electoral Transitional Regime, Autocratic Monarchy, One-Party Autocracy, Right-Wing Autocracy, Communist Ideocracy, Islamist Ideocracy, Military Autocracy, Personalist Autocracy, Direct Rule Colonial Regime, Indirect Rule Colonial Regime, Direct Rule Occupation Regime, Indirect Rule Occupation Regime

0 Non-autocracy Includes: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy, Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime, Constitutional Monarchy

Cases coded as missing (.) No Central Authority (due to the absence of a functioning central government) and Part of Other Country (subordinate to another sovereign regime and not independently coded)

All codings for `vaporeg_regtype_reports`, `vaporeg_regtype_detailed`, `vaporeg_regtype_compact`, `vaporeg_regtype_quadruple`, `vaporeg_regtype_triple`, `vaporeg_regtype_bindem`, and `vaporeg_regtype_binaut` refer to the political regime as of July 1 each year.

Table 1 shows how the detailed classification aggregates into the compact, quadruple, and triple variants. The binary variables provide simple dichotomies for large-N analysis. Notably, hybrid regimes (Electoral Oligarchy, Electoral Hybrid, Constitutional Monarchy, Non-Electoral Liberal Transitional) are coded as non-democracy (0) in the democracy binary but as non-autocracy (0) in the autocracy binary, reflecting their ambiguous intermediate position. Researchers analyzing autocratic diversity or legitimization patterns should use the detailed or compact classification. Those studying broad regime transitions or requiring compatibility with V-Dem's fourfold scheme should use the quadruple classification. The compact classification maintains legitimization-based distinctions, while the quadruple classification adopts a democracy-distance logic that prioritizes institutional features over legitimization sources. This structural similarity to V-Dem's fourfold regime typology facilitates comparison between the two datasets while preserving Va-PoReg's more granular detailed and compact classifications for analyses focused on autocratic diversity. For colonial and occupation regimes, the dominant political authority variables (`vaporeg_dpa_detailed`, `vaporeg_dpa_compact`) record the regime type of the governing power.

Table 1: Aggregation of Va-PoReg Regime Types Across Classification Variants

Detailed Classification (vaporeg_regtype_detailed)	Compact Classification (vaporeg_regtype_compact)	Quadruple Classification (vaporeg_regtype_quadruple)	Triple Classification (vaporeg_regtype_triple)
10 Liberal Democracy	10 Democracy	1 Democracy	1 Democracy
20 Defective Democracy	10 Democracy	1 Democracy	1 Democracy
30 Electoral Oligarchy	20 Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime
40 Democratizing Regime	20 Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime
50 Electoral Hybrid Regime	20 Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime
60 Electoral Autocracy	30 Electoral Autocracy	3 Electoral Autocracy	3 Autocracy
70 Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy	30 Electoral Autocracy	3 Electoral Autocracy	3 Autocracy
80 Non-Electoral Transitional Regime	50 One-Party Autocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
90 Constitutional Monarchy	40 Ruling Monarchy	2 Hybrid Regime	2 Hybrid Regime
100 Autocratic Monarchy	40 Ruling Monarchy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
110 One-Party Autocracy	50 One-Party Autocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
120 Right-Wing Autocracy	60 Right-Wing Autocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
130 Communist Ideocracy	70 Communist Ideocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
140 Islamist Ideocracy	80 Islamist Ideocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
150 Military Autocracy	90 Military Autocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
160 Personalist Autocracy	100 Personalist Autocracy	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
170 Direct Rule Colonial Regime	110 Colonial Regime	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy

180 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime	110 Colonial Regime	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
190 Direct Rule Occupation Regime	120 Occupation Regime	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
200 Indirect Rule Occupation Regime	120 Occupation Regime	4 Closed Autocracy	3 Autocracy
210 No Central Authority	130 No Central Authority	Missing	Missing

The compact classification uses the label 'Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime' to signal the conceptual breadth of this category, which encompasses regimes with electoral institutions but restricted participation (Electoral Oligarchy), regimes with liberal protections but no elections yet (Non-Electoral Liberal Transitional), and regimes with both electoral and liberal deficits (Electoral Hybrid). In the quadruple and triple classifications, Constitutional Monarchy joins this group, warranting the more generic label 'Hybrid Regime.'

Beyond the main classification variants shown in Table 1, Va-PoReg includes specialized variables for specific analytical purposes. The monarchy type variable (`vaporeg_monarchy_type`) provides detailed distinctions among monarchy types and identifies cases governed by monarchies. The ideology variable (`vaporeg_ideology_rwa_subtype`) differentiates fascist from corporatist right-wing autocracies. For colonial and occupation regimes, the dominant political authority variables allow systematic analysis of how a colonizer's domestic regime type relates to its style of foreign rule.

6. Sources for the Coding of Variables in the Va-PoReg Dataset

In developing our comprehensive dataset, we embarked on an ambitious journey akin to standing on the shoulders of giants, drawing inspiration from the monumental efforts of our predecessors. However, a more apt metaphor might be that of an industrious anthill, where countless tiny yet significant contributions have collectively formed a robust and intricate structure. Our dataset's coding is meticulously crafted, anchored in a thorough examination of both the research literature and a wealth of online resources about various countries. In doing so, we not only provide by far the most extensive collection of country reports ever assembled

for a political regime dataset but also build upon earlier documentation efforts. Particularly valuable for cross-checking facts and ensuring consistency were the country reports produced by Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz on autocracies from 1945 to 2014, the country reports of the CHISOL dataset, and the work of Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way on revolutionary regimes. These resources, alongside our own documentation, enabled systematic validation of coding decisions across a wide temporal and geographical scope.

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

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

We owe a special acknowledgment to a particular series of volumes on global elections organized by Dieter Nohlen {Nohlen, 1999 #26933;Nohlen, 2001 #3883;Nohlen, 2001 #3882;Nohlen, 2005 #13159;Nohlen, 2005 #3869;Nohlen, 2010 #6235}, which were instrumental in cross-verifying our data on legislative and executive elections. The ongoing digital updates of these volumes would significantly benefit future research. From May 1999 to March 2022 Psephos¹, Adam Carr's election archive, was the largest, most comprehensive and most up-to-date archive of electoral information in the world. It is a great loss for science that this archive is no longer being updated.¹ Interestingly, we found Wikipedia's² election result data to be exceptionally reliable, meriting more recognition as a valid academic resource.

As can easily be seen in our comprehensive country reports, we have consulted extensively articles in Wikipedia² and Encyclopædia Britannica.² Wikipedia has its own system of checks and balances, including a community of volunteer editors who monitor changes and correct errors. However, the quality can vary significantly from one article to another, depending on the vigilance of these volunteers. It should be noted that we have the basic rule that a fact should

¹ <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>

² <https://www.wikipedia.org/>; <https://www.britannica.com/>

be confirmed by at least two sources. Therefore, Wikipedia in particular is never the only source on which the presentation is based. The Encyclopædia Britannica is renowned for its high-quality content and is often regarded as one of the most reliable and authoritative sources of general knowledge. The Encyclopædia Britannica, in its 15th edition, consists of 32 volumes. The text of the English Wikipedia alone is as of the end of July 2024 equivalent to 3.493 volumes of Encyclopædia Britannica. In view of this difference in quantity, Wikipedia addresses numerous topics in their own articles that are not covered in Encyclopædia Britannica, or only in passing.

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

5. Other Variables in the Dataset

year

Calendar year, values 1900-2025

country_name

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

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

vaporeg_identifier

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

Geonames_identifier

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

cross-referencing of geographical information, it enhances research and operational efficiency across diverse fields.

cow_identifier

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

vaporeg_dominant_pol_authority

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

vaporeg_dpa_detailed

This variable classifies the regime type of the dominant political authority for colonial regimes, occupation regimes, and territories under another country, according to the detailed version of our regime classification (vaporeg_regtype_detailed).

- 10 Liberal Democracy
- 20 Defective Democracy
- 30 Electoral Oligarchy
- 40 Democratizing Regime
- 50 Electoral Hybrid Regime
- 60 Electoral Autocracy
- 70 Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy
- 80 Non-Electoral Transitional Regime
- 90 Constitutional Monarchy
- 100 Autocratic Monarchy
- 110 One-Party Autocracy
- 120 Right-Wing Autocracy
- 130 Communist Ideocracy
- 140 Islamist Ideocracy
- 150 Military Autocracy

160 Personalist Autocracy
 170 Direct Rule Colonial Regime
 180 Indirect Rule Colonial Regime
 190 Direct Rule Occupation Regime
 200 Indirect Rule Occupation Regime
 210 No Central Authority

vaporeg_dpa_compact

This variable categorizes the political regime of a dominant political authority for colonial regimes, occupation regimes, and territories under foreign control, based on the compact version of our regime classification (vaporeg_regtype_compact).

10 Democracy

Encompasses: Liberal Democracy, Defective Democracy

20 Electoral and Liberal Hybrid Regime

Encompasses: Electoral Oligarchy, Democratizing Regime, Electoral Hybrid Regime

30 Electoral Autocracy

Encompasses: Electoral Autocracy, Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy

40 Ruling Monarchy

Encompasses: Autocratic Monarchy, Constitutional Monarchy

50 One-Party Autocracy

Encompasses: One-Party Autocracy, Non-Electoral Transitional Regime

60 Right-Wing Autocracy

Encompasses: Right-Wing Autocracy

70 Communist Ideocracy

Encompasses: Communist Ideocracy

80 Islamist Ideocracy

Encompasses: Islamist Ideocracy

90 Military Autocracy

Encompasses: Military Autocracy

100 Personalist Autocracy

Encompasses: Personalist Autocracy

110 Colonial Regime

Encompasses: Direct Rule Colonial Regime, Indirect Rule Colonial Regime

120 Occupation Regime

Encompasses: Direct Rule Occupation Regime, Indirect Rule Occupation Regime

130 No Central Authority

Encompasses: No Central Authority

vaporeg_monarchy

The variable differentiates between autocratic monarchies, constitutional monarchies, and ceremonial monarchies. All non-monarchical regimes are coded as republics. The regime type of the dominant political authority of colonies and occupation regimes are coded according to the same scheme.

10 Autocratic Monarchy

20 Governed by Autocratic Monarchy

30 Constitutional Monarchy

40 Governed by Constitutional Monarchy

50 Ceremonial Monarchy

60 Governed by Ceremonial Monarchy

70 Republic

80 Governed by Republic

vaporeg_regtype_rwasubtype

This variable specifies subtypes of *Right-Wing Autocracy* as defined in the detailed regime classification (vaporeg_regtype_detailed). It only applies to cases coded as *Right-Wing Autocracy (110)* in vaporeg_regtype_detailed. The categories are:

0 Not applicable

1 Fascist

2 Corporatist

3 Racist

un_continent

1 Africa

2 Americas

3 Asia

4 Europe

5 Oceania

un_region

- 1 Australia and New Zealand
- 2 Caribbean
- 3 Central America
- 4 Central Asia
- 5 Eastern Africa
- 6 Eastern Asia
- 7 Eastern Europe
- 8 Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia
- 9 Middle Africa
- 10 Northern Africa
- 11 Northern America
- 12 Northern Europe
- 13 South America
- 14 South-Eastern Asia
- 15 Southern Africa
- 16 Southern Asia
- 17 Southern Europe
- 18 Western Africa
- 19 Western Asia
- 20 Western Europe

vaporeg_regstart_detailed

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

vaporeg_regend_detailed

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

vaporeg_regchange_detailed

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

vaporeg_regduration_detailed

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

vaporeg_regstart_compact

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

vaporeg_regend_compact

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

vaporeg_regchange_compact

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

vaporeg_regduration_compact

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

vaporeg_regchange_quadruple

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

vaporeg_regduration_quadruple

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

vaporeg_regchange_triple

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

vaporeg_regduration_triple

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

vaporeg_regchange_binaut

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

vaporeg_regduration_binaut

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

vaporeg_regchange_bindem

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

vaporeg_regduration_bindem

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

vaporeg_regchange_reports

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

vaporeg_regduration_reports

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

vaporeg_population

The population from the original and calculated data based on the Gapminder and UN datasets. Countries coded as „part of other country“ are excluded. For full transparency on manipulated data, see our data manipulations document.

vaporeg_population_sources

Provides a source description for the vaporeg_population variable and indicates which values were manipulated based on which source (UN or Gapminder).

- 1: Modified based on Gapminder
- 2: Modified based on UN
- 3: UN Data
- 4: Gapminder Data

UN_pop_partothercountry

Includes the UN population data exclusively for the countries coded as part of other country.

gapminder_pop_partothercountry

Includes the Gapminder population data exclusively for the countries coded as part of other country.

vdem_e_v2xlg_legcon_labeled

The variable is adapted from V-Dem's e_v2xlg_legcon. It is an indicator for the capacity of the legislature and government agencies (e.g., comptroller general, general prosecutor, or ombudsman) to question, investigate, and exercise oversight over the executive. V-Dem's index ranges from 0-1. We used the 5C categorization provided by V-Dem for interpretation and assigned the following labels:

- 0.00 Absent
- 0.25 Limited

0.50 Moderate
 0.75 Robust
 1.00 Comprehensive

vdem_e_v2x_jucon_labeled

The variable is adapted from V-Dem's e_v2x_jucon. It is an indicator of the extent to which the executive respects the constitution and complies with court rulings, as well as to which the judiciary is able to act independently. V-Dem's index ranges from 0-1. We used the 5C categorization provided by V-Dem for interpretation and assigned the same labels as e_v2xlg_legcon:

0.00 Absent
 0.25 Limited
 0.50 Moderate
 0.75 Robust
 1.00 Comprehensive

vaporeg_freedom_fhtotal

The variable is a recoded measure based on Freedom House's annual assessments of Political Rights (1–7) and Civil Liberties (1–7). We sum both dimensions to create a scale ranging from 2 (most free) to 14 (least free). According to our secondary reconstruction of Freedom House's classification practice, taking into account the not fully transparent coding rules in their codebooks, this scale broadly maps onto three categories: 2–5 free 6–10, partly free 11–14 not free. However, we use the following alternative interpretation. In this interpretation specifically regarding electoral regimes, *free* points in the direction of a liberal democracy, *rather free* in the direction of a defective democracy, *rather not free* in the direction of an electoral hybrid regime, and *not free* in the direction of an electoral autocracy:

2–4 free
 5–7 rather free
 8–10 rather not free
 11–14 not free

Note on temporal coverage: Freedom House's Freedom in the World dataset has applied different reporting periods over time and in its current version uses December 31 as the cut-off date. By contrast, all Va-PoReg codings are based on a uniform cut-off date of July 1.

Researchers should be aware of this discrepancy when comparing Va-PoReg variables with Freedom House data.

vaporeg_freedom_changes

The dichotomous variable is based on the categorization of vaporeg_freedom_fhttotal (*free, rather free, rather not free, not free*). The variable notes category changes from i.e. *free* to *rather free* using the following interpretation:

0 no freedom category change

1 freedom category change

vdem_PCLI

The variable corresponds to V-Dem's Political Civil Liberties Index (PCLI) and measures the extent to which individuals and groups enjoy fundamental political and civil liberties on a scale from 0 (no liberties) to 1 (full protection of liberties). We used the 5C categorization provided by V-Dem for interpretation and assigned the following labels:

0.00 none

0.25 not really

0.50 ambiguous

0.75 somewhat

1.00 yes

vdem_EFFI

This variable corresponds to V-Dem's Election free and fair Index. By considering all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process, it assesses if national elections were free and fair. We assigned the following labels to the data based on V-Dem's categorization:

0 none

1 not really

2 ambiguous

3 somewhat

4 yes

vdem_CEI

The variable corresponds to V-Dem's Clean Election Index. It measures the extent to which elections are free and fair, based on indicators such as the absence of registration fraud, systematic irregularities, government intimidation of the opposition, vote buying, and election violence. We used the 5C categorization provided by V-Dem for interpretation and assigned the following labels:

0.00 none

0.25 not really

0.50 ambiguous

0.75 somewhat

1.00 yes

polity5_xconst

The variable from the Polity5 dataset measures the constraints on the executive, assessing the extent to which institutionalized checks limit executive authority. It ranges from 1 (unlimited executive power) to 7 (strong executive constraints, such as independent judiciary and legislative oversight).

1 Unlimited Authority: No formal restrictions on executive power, aside from irregular threats (e.g., coups). Evidence includes ignoring constitutional limits, dissolving or controlling the legislature, appointing and removing accountability groups at will, and ruling by decree. Temporary emergency powers that are relinquished afterward do not count.

2 Intermediate Category (Unlimited Authority to Slight Limitations)

3 Slight to Moderate Limitations: Some real but limited constraints exist. Evidence includes a legislature with some legislative power, blocked executive actions, failed attempts to extend executive power, independent judiciary, and cases where civilian executives defer to military demands.

4 Intermediate Category (Moderate to Substantial Limitations)

5 Substantial Limitations: The executive has more power than accountability groups but faces significant checks. Evidence includes legislative or party modifications to executive actions, funding refusals, independent administrative appointments, and restrictions on executive travel.

6 Intermediate Category (Substantial Limitations to Executive Parity)

7 Executive Parity or Subordination: Accountability groups have equal or greater authority than the executive. Evidence includes legislatures or councils initiating key legislation, executives dependent on accountability group support (e.g., parliamentary systems), and chronic cabinet instability in multi-party democracies.

lied_executive_elections

The variable from the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (LIED) indicates whether the chief executive is elected directly or indirectly (i.e., selected by elected representatives) and considers whether the executive is accountable to an elected parliament when not directly elected.

1 present

0 absent

lied_legislative_elections

The variable from LIED indicates whether a legislative body, such as a parliament, enacts at least some laws and does not perform executive functions. The lower house (or unicameral chamber) of the legislature is at least partially elected, and the legislature remains operational.

1 present

0 absent

lied_multiparty_legislative_elec

The variable from LIED indicates whether the lower house (or unicameral chamber) of the legislature is (at least in part) elected by voters who have more than one choice. Specifically, either (a) multiple parties, including opposition parties, are allowed to compete, or (b) candidates run without party labels but represent distinct political positions.

1 present

0 absent

lied_political_liberties

The variable from the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (LIED) indicates whether political liberties are respected. It considers whether freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association are guaranteed and exercised, and whether all groups that are not openly anti-democratic are allowed to organize and assemble freely.

1 present

0 absent

7. Data Maintenance and Updates

Va-PoReg is continuously updated on an annual basis. Each year, we update the dataset to reflect regime changes, state dissolutions, new state formations, and major shifts in sovereignty status through July 1st of the corresponding year. The primary aim of the updating process is to capture and classify all relevant changes in accordance with the conceptual framework and coding principles established in this codebook.

Beyond regime updates, Va-PoReg is systematically expanded to deepen its analytical scope. New variables are continuously developed to enhance the ability to capture the complexity and diversity of political regimes across historical periods and world regions. In addition, the information basis for existing variables is continuously refined to increase the precision, reliability, and validity of regime codings. All extensions and improvements are transparently documented in the updated versions of the codebook and the associated country reports.