# Trade-Off Measurement in the Democracy Matrix

Core measurement and context measurement depict the elements that are constitutive for a democracy and relevant influential contexts, in the sense of reciprocal support of the dimensions. Trade-off measurement, on the other hand, aims at the measurement of the **conflicting impact of the dimensions** within the democracy matrix. Nine trade-offs are identified and measured here. These stretch a web across the individual fields of the democracy matrix and, with their help, it is possible to determine **democracy profiles**. The decision to adopt a particular institutional design is not tied to a higher democracy quality, but rather what is at issue are **normatively equal and justifiable decisions on preferences**. The difference lies in the ratio of democracy quality between the individual dimensions. This is described in greater detail here.
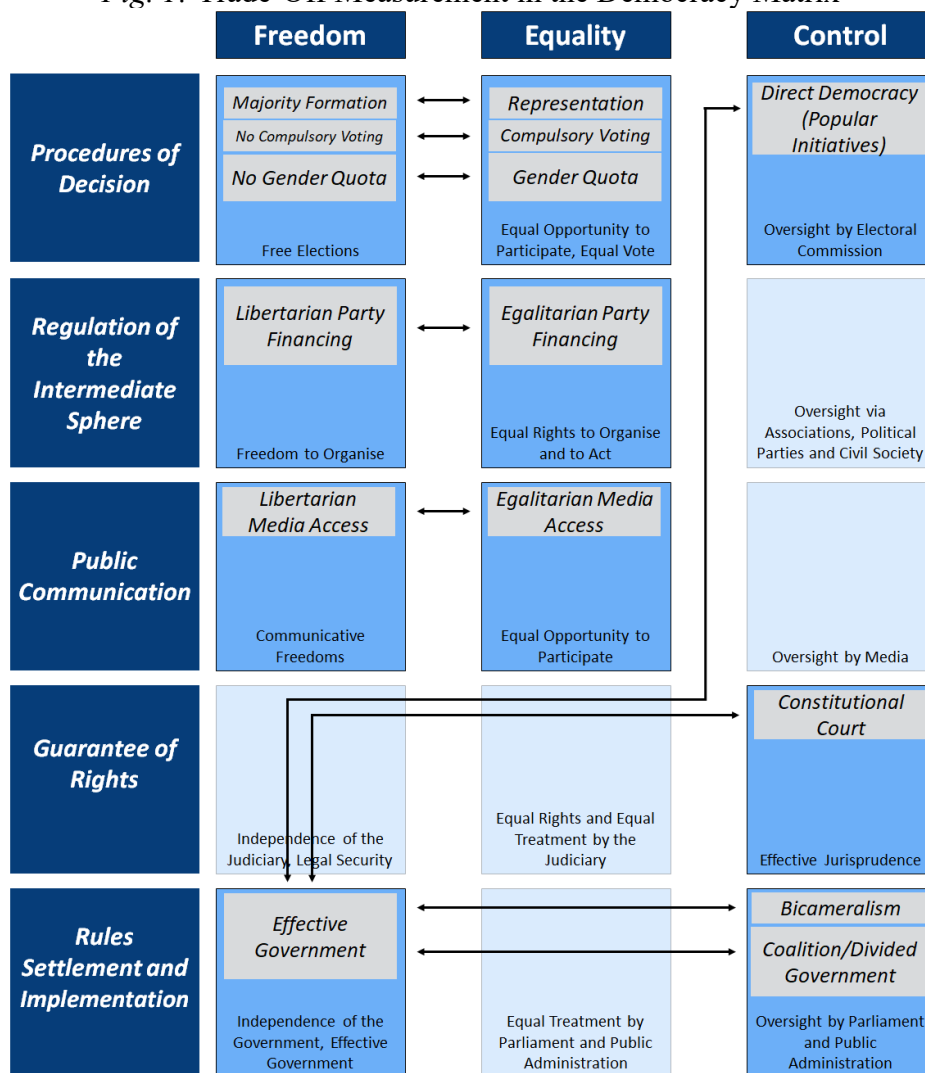
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Fig. 1: Trade-Off Measurement in the Democracy Matrix



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# 1. Adjusted Calculation of Core Measurement Taking Trade-Off Elements into Account

In trade-off measurement, the individual trade-off elements are combined with core measurement. What is at issue now is no longer quality-measuring indicators, but rather trade-off indicators, which only still cover the domain of democracies. The scale of the trade-off elements is between *0.75 and 1.* Since a trade-off element refers to two dimensions, it is taken into account twice: once with respect to the first reference dimension, and then inverted with respect to the other reference dimension. Via **multiplication**, the influence of the trade-off element is maximum 25%. The values that are thus generated are not to be understood in the sense of regime classification, but rather only for the development of the democracy profile. Since the quality of democracy does not change via trade-off measurement, the regime classifications of the core or context measurement remain unchanged.

*Fig. 2:* Example of Adjusted Calculation of Core Measurement Taking Trade-Off Elements into Account
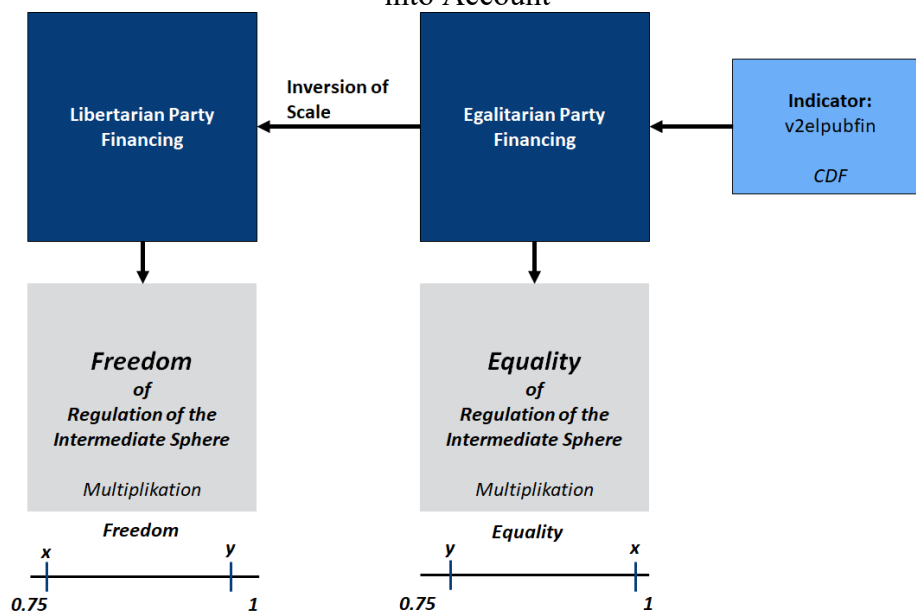


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# 2. Trade-offs Between Freedom and Equality (Libertarian vs. Egalitarian Democracy)

## Procedures of Decision: Forming Majorities vs. Representation (Freedom vs. Equality)

Electoral systems can be classified along two " **principles of representation**" (Nohlen 2010: 243-244). Proportional elections increase parties' chances to have parliamentary representation. This leads to the formation of a government by coalitions. On the other hand, majority elections lead to clear majorities and hence to stable governments, so that the preferences of the majority can be better implemented. Moreover, the voter has greater freedom in determining the government, because in proportional electoral systems, coalition-building is more decisive. Here the rule applies that an electoral system with an increasing degree of disproportionality tends toward the majority vote pole and makes possible a simple and transparent formation of a majority. Thus, whereas disproportional electoral systems stress the freedom dimension of decision-making procedures, proportional electoral systems increase the equality dimension.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2ellovtlg, v2ellovtsm, v2ellostsl and v2ellostsm

**Aggregation rules applied:** Gallagher index formula

## Procedures of Decision: Compulsory Voting vs. No Compulsory Voting (Freedom vs. Equality)

A key finding of electoral research is that voter turnout is socially skewed: citizens with a higher social status take part in elections more frequently than citizens with a lower social status. This is problematic to the extent that it can lead to discrimination of lower social strata in the sense that their interests are less taken into consideration. Compulsory voting offers a solution, since it **limits the social selection mechanism by way of increasing voter turnout** (Lijphart 1997). This reinforces the equality dimension, but the freedom dimension would be impaired, since compulsory voting takes away citizens' right to abstain from voting. We do not here plead for regarding compulsory voting as undemocratic and for resolving the value conflict between freedom and equality in favour of freedom, but rather for regarding it as a trade-off within the procedures of decision and hence as a form of normative positioning of a society.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2elcomvot

**Aggregation rules applied:** dichotomisation

# Procedures of Decision: Gender Quotas vs. No Gender Quotas (Freedom vs. Equality)

The discussion about the introduction of quotas for women can be described using two conceptions of equality. There is agreement between the two conceptions that the representation of women must be increased. But they regard different means as the solution: on the one hand, there is the liberal conception of equality, which relies on "**equal opportunity**" or "competitive equality" (Dahlerup 2005: 144) and hence regards the removal of formal hurdles as sufficient and sees [the source of?] the lower representation of women in the resources at the disposal of women themselves (e.g. education); and, on the other hand, there is substantive equality as "notion of '**equality of result**'" (Dahlerup 2005: 144), for which the removal of formal hurdles is not sufficient and hence which demands, in addition, a quota for women, in order to overcome discrimination and social barriers.

Both concepts can be situated in the equality dimension of the procedures of decision. However, for its realisation, substantive equality calls for the freedom dimension to be restricted through the introduction of a gender quota, in order to more strictly regulate "those, who control the recruitment process, first and foremost the political parties" (Dahlerup 2005: 141)

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2lgqugen

**Aggregation rules applied:** dichotomisation

# Regulation of the Intermediate Sphere: Liberal Party Financing vs. Egalitarian Party Financing (Freedom vs. Equality)

A normative conflict can also be detected in the way in which party financing is structured (Ohman 2014: 16): How should political parties and election campaigns be organised? Two ideal-typical financing models can be distinguished here. Whereas the egalitarian model emphasises equal chances of candidates and/or parties by way of **public funding**, in particular, the libertarian model is distinguished by a "lack of restrictions on expenditure and contributions, market principles of access to the media [and] no public funding" (Smilov 2008: 3), such that **monetary contributions to the financing of parties/candidates is grasped as freedom of expression**. Therefore, the libertarian financing model reinforces the freedom dimension within the institution of regulation of the intermediate sphere, whereas the egalitarian financing model places the focus on the equality dimension.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2elpubfin

**Aggregation rules applied:** CDF

# Public Communication: Liberal Media Access vs. Egalitarian Media Access (Freedom vs. Equality)

This trade-off is based on the same considerations as in the case of party financing. Liberal media access is characterised by the fact that "it only provides for *market* access to the media" (Smilov 2008: 9, emphasis in the original), whereas the egalitarian model relies on **free airtime and restrictions on the purchase of additional airtime**. Due to the relation to the media, this trade-off is placed in the institution of public communication.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2elpaidig, v2elpdcamp, v2elfrcamp

**Aggregation rules applied:** weighted average, CDF

# 3. Trade-Offs Between Freedom and Control (Majoritarian vs. Consensus Democracy)

## Procedures of Decision - Rules Settlement and Implementation: Direct Democracy vs. Effective Government (Control vs. Freedom)

Direct democracy is not understood as a specific form of government, but rather as a supplement to representative bodies like parliaments, such that at certain times and under certain conditions, citizens can decide political issues themselves. Various direct democratic means can be distinguished, which give citizens possibilities of influencing politics to different degrees; here, however, we only consider the direct democratic instrument of **popular initiatives**, which allows citizens to introduce legislative propositions "from below" and to vote on them. For this represents citizens' strongest opportunity for participation. Moreover, there is not only this direct effect by way of popular initiatives, but also an indirect effect, since "the threat of the referendum hovers, like the sword of Damocles, over the entire legislative process" (Kriesi 2012: 42). Direct democracy thus increases the control dimension of the procedures of decision, whereas, cutting across institutions, it reduces the freedom dimension in the field of rules settlement and implementation by restricting the freedom of decision of the government.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2xdd_cic

**Aggregation rule applied:** "citizen-initiated component of direct popular vote index", an index that was created by V-Dem

# Guarantee of Rights - Rules Settlement and Implementation: Constitutional Jurisdiction vs. Effective Government (Freedom vs. Control)

In contrast to the concept of a majoritarian democracy, constitutional democracy is distinguished by a separation of powers with a **strong constitutional court** (Munck 2012), in order, in particular, to prevent abuse of power and, overall, to protect minorities. Nonetheless, critics of constitutional democracy suggest that democracy has its own internal structures of power limitation and hence can do without an additional control instance. Moreover, critics point to the illegitimacy of judges' decisions as opposed to parliamentary decisions (Waldron 2006). Instead of seeing the concept of a constitutional democracy as undemocratic, these opposing models can rather be described as a trade-off: a constitutional court raises the value for the control dimension of guarantee of rights and, cutting across institutions, reduces the freedom values for the institution of rules settlement and implementation.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2jureview

**Aggregation rule applied:** CDF

# Rules Settlement and Implementation: Unicameralism vs. Bicameralism (Freedom vs. Control)

At the level of the institution of rules settlement and implementation, an additional separation of powers can come into being within the legislative branch by way of the establishment of a two chamber system. Whereas the "pure majoritarian model calls for the concentration of legislative power in a single chamber; the pure consensus model is characterized by a bicameral legislature in which power is divided equally between two differently constituted chambers" (Lijphart 2012: 187). Political systems can be distinguished along an axis between unicameralism and strong bicameralism. A **strong second chamber** establishes an additional veto player, which leads to limiting the power of the majority and assures that the interests of minorities are also taken into consideration. Normative conceptions concerning how the systems of government should function are to be found behind these two models. Thus, unicameral systems stress the freedom dimension in the institution of rules settlement and implementation, whereas bicameral systems reinforce the control dimension.

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2lgdomchm

**Aggregation rule applied:** CDF

# Rules Settlement and Implementation: One Party Cabinets vs. Coalitions/Divided Government (Freedom and Control)

On the one hand, one-party cabinets increase the freedom values of a government within the institution of rules settlement and implementation, but they reduce the control values, since the coalition partner is to be regarded as an additional **veto player** in the sense of veto player theory (Tsebelis 2002). This is also evident in oversized coalitions. A particularly powerful veto player emerges through divided government – in other words, through the presence of various parties within the executive (semi-presidential systems) or between the executive and legislative branches. Overall, the rule applies that "the difference between one-party majority governments and broad multiparty coalitions epitomizes the contrast between the majoritarian principle of concentrating power in the hands of the majority and the consensus principle of broad power sharing" (Lijphart 2012: 79).

**V-Dem indicators used:** v2elncbpr, v2psnatpar

**Aggregation rule applied:** weighted average

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