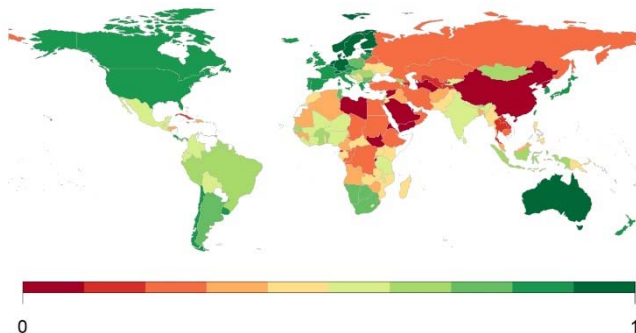


Democracy Matrix (DeMaX) in a nutshell

3 Dimensions, 5 Institutions, 15 Matrix Fields

Global distribution of democratic quality 2017
(Context Measurement)



The Democracy Matrix (DeMaX) is a tool for measuring democratic quality of more than 170 countries in the period between 1900 and 2017. It differs from other measurement concepts in the field by its innovative conceptualization. Therefore, it is of high analytical value – not only in the field of democratic research and neighboring disciplines but also for political praxis. Additionally, it is directed at the interested public.

The DeMaX objectives

The DeMaX strives for an **intercultural and historical comparison of a large variation of cases**. It is based on the comprehensive data-set of the **Varieties-of-Democracy-Project** (<https://www.v-dem.net/en/>), which is well-received in the scientific community. The construction of the DeMaX does not exhaust in a rough regime classification, it also makes apparent at a glance where **democratic strengths and weaknesses** occur.

Moreover, the **innovative conceptualization** and differing **measurement levels** present new perspectives on patterns of democracy: On the one hand, the analysis of such detailed **quality profiles** shed light on divergent configurations of cases between autocracy and democracy. For instance, one

Why You should Use the Democracy Matrix:

- long time-series, wide coverage (freely available)
- transparent conceptualization, grounded in political theory
- three measurement levels (core, context and trade-off) allow distinct perspectives
- quality profiles and democracy profiles
- online-analysis on our homepage
- ➔ innovation with high analytical value

country holds free and fair elections regularly, but the standards of the rule of law are not assured. Whereas another country realizes both institutions to a certain degree, but they are affected by high levels of political inequality.

On the other hand, the DeMaX deals with **democracy profiles** as the result of so-called **trade-offs**, which express an irresolvable conflict of political values on which a society has to take a position. This is based on the assumption that a perfect democracy is a utopian idea, since the potentially conflicting relations between democratic principles prevent their concurrent realization at once.

Finally, the DeMaX serves as a basis for the validation or falsification of theories and thus contributes to new empirical evidence.

The DeMaX middle-range concept

There is no consensus in politics, science and society about what democracy means in detail. Where does democracy begin and where does it end? The **middle-range concept** of the DeMaX draws its strength in large part from **comprehensive reflection** of democracy theory and offers some advantages: Minimal definitions are considerably too limited for differentiated analysis whereas maximal definitions

overextend the concept of democracy in the sense of a conceptual stretching.

Definition

Democracy means “a legal form of rule, which makes possible self-determination for all citizens, in the sense of popular sovereignty, by securing their significant participation in filling political decision-making positions (and/or in the decision itself) in free, competitive and fair processes (e.g. elections) and securing opportunities for continuously influencing the political process, and by, in general, guaranteeing political rule is subject to oversight. Democratic participation in political rule thus gets expressed in the dimensions of political freedom, political equality and political and legal control (Lauth 2004: 100).”

3 dimensions

Whereas **political freedom** offers the opportunity to take part in the political process without restriction, and thus represents an active component, **political equality** is conceived in the sense of equal treatment as a passive component. Control, in turn, is mainly directed toward the holders of government. **Legal control** takes place within a legal and constitutional framework, whereas **political control** is oriented toward softer criteria like efficiency and the realization of political objectives.

5 institutions

The **procedures of decision** focus on the democratic quality of elections. **Regulation of the intermediate sphere** studies the functioning of the interest aggregation and articulation by political parties, interest groups and civil society. **Public communication** is concerned with the public communicative space and the media. **Guarantee of rights** comprises the investigation of the courts and the rule of law. Finally, **rules settlement and implementation** illuminate the democratic level of the government or the parliament, as well as the separation of powers in the political system itself.

15 Matrix fields

The dimensions constitute the horizontal pillars and the institutions cut across them. Consequently, we derive 15 matrix fields, which demarcate the relevant areas of investigation for democracy quality. Thus, the concept of the DeMaX allows exclusive perspectives on the complementary interaction of normative principles and institutions.

The Democracy Matrix

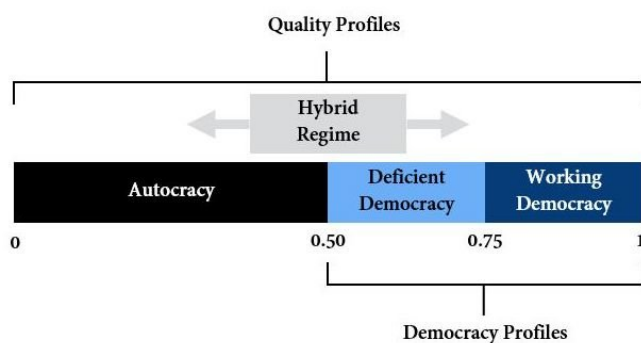
	Freedom	Equality	Control
Procedures of Decision	Free Elections	Equal Opportunity to Participate, Equal Vote	Oversight by Electoral Commission
Regulation of the Intermediate Sphere	Freedom to Organise	Equal Rights to Organise and to Act	Oversight via Associations, Political Parties and Civil Society
Public Communication	Communicative Freedoms	Equal Opportunity to Participate	Oversight by Media
Guarantee of Rights	Independence of the Judiciary, Legal Security	Equal Rights and Equal Treatment by the Judiciary	Effective Jurisprudence
Rules Settlement and Implementation	Independence of the Government, Effective Government	Equal Treatment by Parliament and Public Administration	Oversight by Parliament and Public Administration

Methodological Procedures

Comprehensive information regarding the conceptualization, measurement and aggregation is available on the homepage ensuring an **optimum transparency**. It comprises concept trees about the vertical ordering, the selection of indicators from V-Dem and the rules of aggregation including theoretical justifications.

The Regime Classification of the DeMaX

The DeMaX distinguishes between two **basic types**: As per its definition of the democracy matrix, **democracies** preserve of all three dimensions as well as a democratic functional logic in all five key institutions (≥ 0.5). In contrast, the root concept of **autocracy** shows the opposite, a weak democratic functioning regarding at least seven out of eight institutional and dimensional values (< 0.5).



In addition, the basic type of democracy is further differentiated: Whereas **working democracy** realizes all features (≥ 0.75), the diminished subtype of **deficient democracy** is distinguished by the fact that it exhibits all the characteristics of the basic type, but at least one of its characteristics is not completely developed (≤ 0.75).

Finally, **hybrid regimes** are taken into account which exhibit a mixture of characteristics of both basic types, democracy and autocracy. A case is classified as a hybrid regime if at least two institutions or dimensions display a democratic functional logic (≥ 0.5), whereas the other ones comply with an autocratic one (< 0.5).

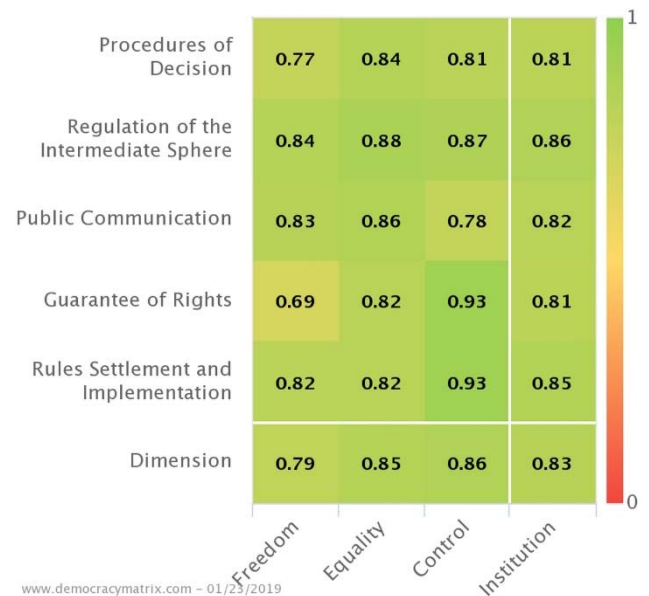
Measurement levels for democracy profiling

The democracy matrix recognizes **three levels of measurement**, offering differing perspectives on the democracy quality of a country, which build on one another.

The **core measurement** represents the basic point of departure of the measurement and aims at the functioning of key democratic institutions and hence at the quality of endogenous characteristics of democracy.

For instance, the matrix representation produced by the online-analysis on our homepage shows that Bulgaria 2015 is classified as a working democracy. However, the levels for the dimension of freedom are by far lower than for equality and control. Especially, the independence of judiciary and legal security are not fully guaranteed.

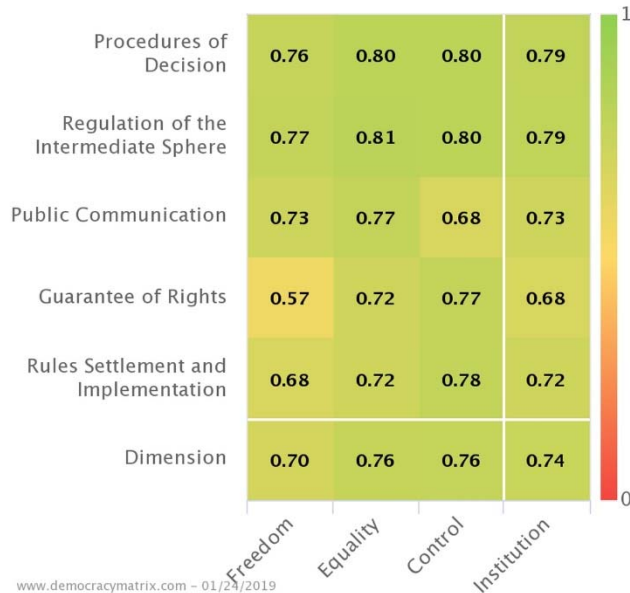
Core Measurement
Bulgaria (2015) – Functioning Democracy



The **context measurement** is more comprehensive but also more realistic. Exogenous factors (e.g. corruption, level of violence and socio-economic conditions) are included as either qualitatively change the functioning of formal institutions or give rise to political inequality by way of social inequality in the sense of necessary conditions. Due to their status as necessary conditions, context factors are multiplied with the results of the core measurement. Both measurement levels provide the basis for the identification of patterns of democracy which coalesce in specific clusters in the meaning of quality profiles.

The context measurement reveals a contrasting picture, since Bulgaria is classified as a deficient democracy now. The diminished values for the guarantee of rights plus rules settlement and implementation point out the damaging effects of corruption. Moreover, the public communication, especially media oversight is not completely ensured.

Context Measurement
Bulgaria (2015) – Deficient Democracy



Finally, the **trade-off level of measurement** studies the conflicting effects of dimensions only in democracies. 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. But, seen from the perspective of democracy theory, this preference for one dimension comes at the expense of another dimension, such that democracy quality is distributed over different dimensions. This is reflected in the irresolvable trade-off.

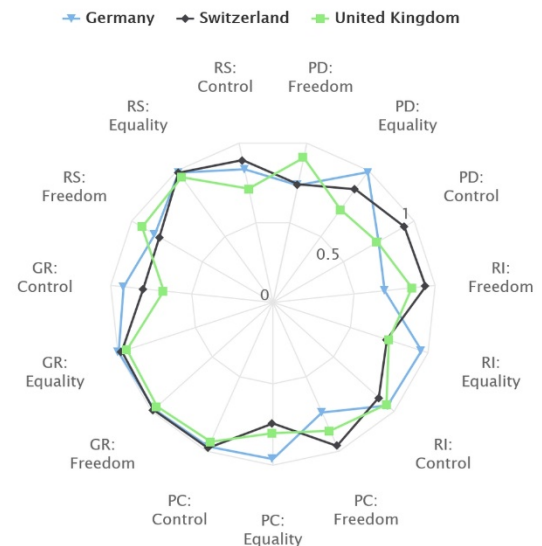
The radar graph shows the pronunciation of freedom in the UK, whereas Switzerland tries to balance freedom and control, but both attach less importance on equality. In contrast, Germany gives priority to equality and control.

Learn more about the DeMaX!

Visit the [homepage of the democracy matrix](#) for more information and benefit from the [online-analysis](#) conducting own comparisons. In addition, the download of the DeMaX dataset and codebook is available free of charge.

In the future **democratic notes** will be published online presenting insights of the research project and comments on recent developments of (de-)democratization.

Trade-off Measurement 2005
Democracy Profiles (radar graph)



PD=procedures of decision; RI=Regulation of the intermediate sphere; PC=Public communication; Guarantee of rights=GR; RS=rules settlement and implementation

Configurations of quality and democracy profiles

On the one hand, the **follow-up project** sheds light on the variety of quality profiles in the gray area between autocracy and democracy as well as the constellations of differing democracy profiles as result of trade-offs between normative principles. On the other hand, the project will determine causes for the emergence of these profiles within the framework of a **mixed methods design**.

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