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Sweden

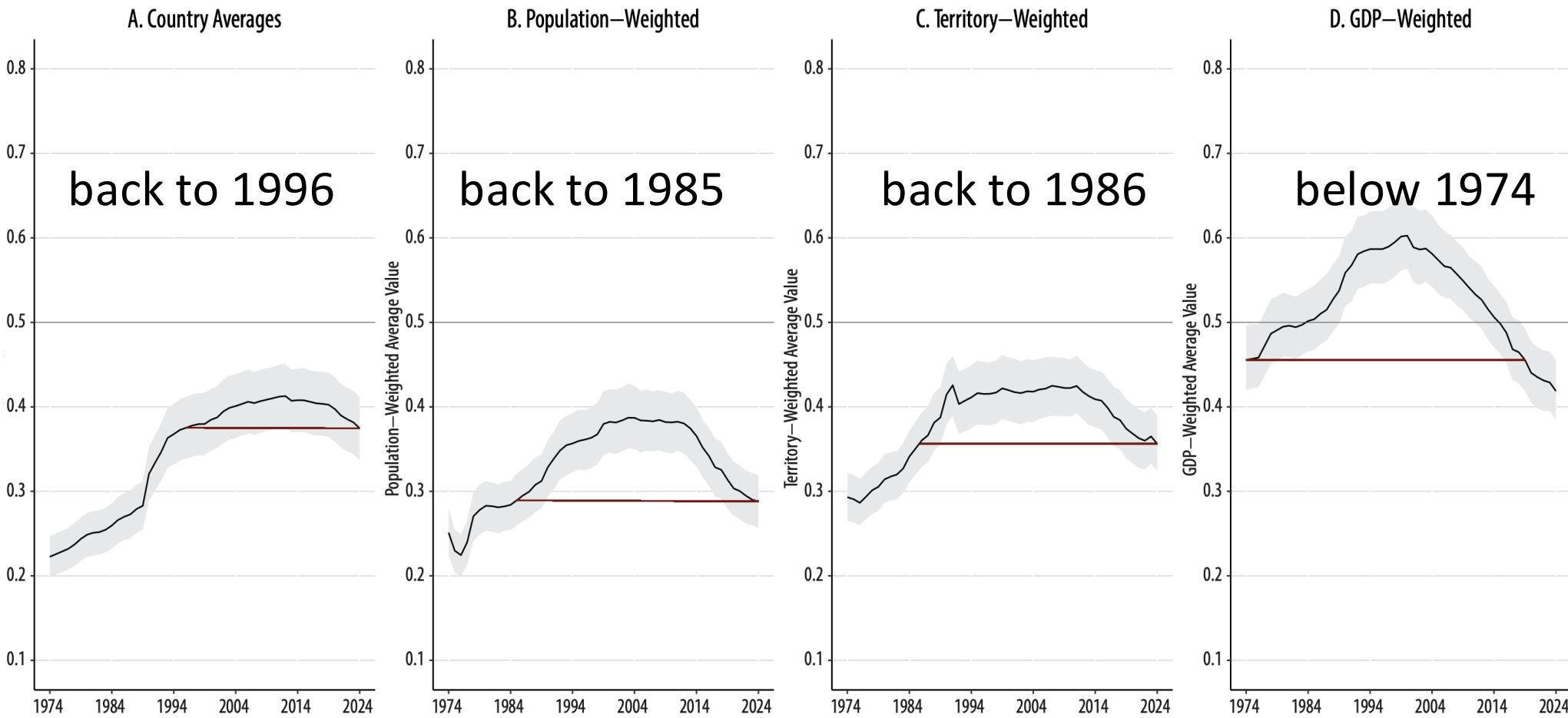
marina.nord@v-dem.net

1. Global Level of Democracy Continues to Decline

25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

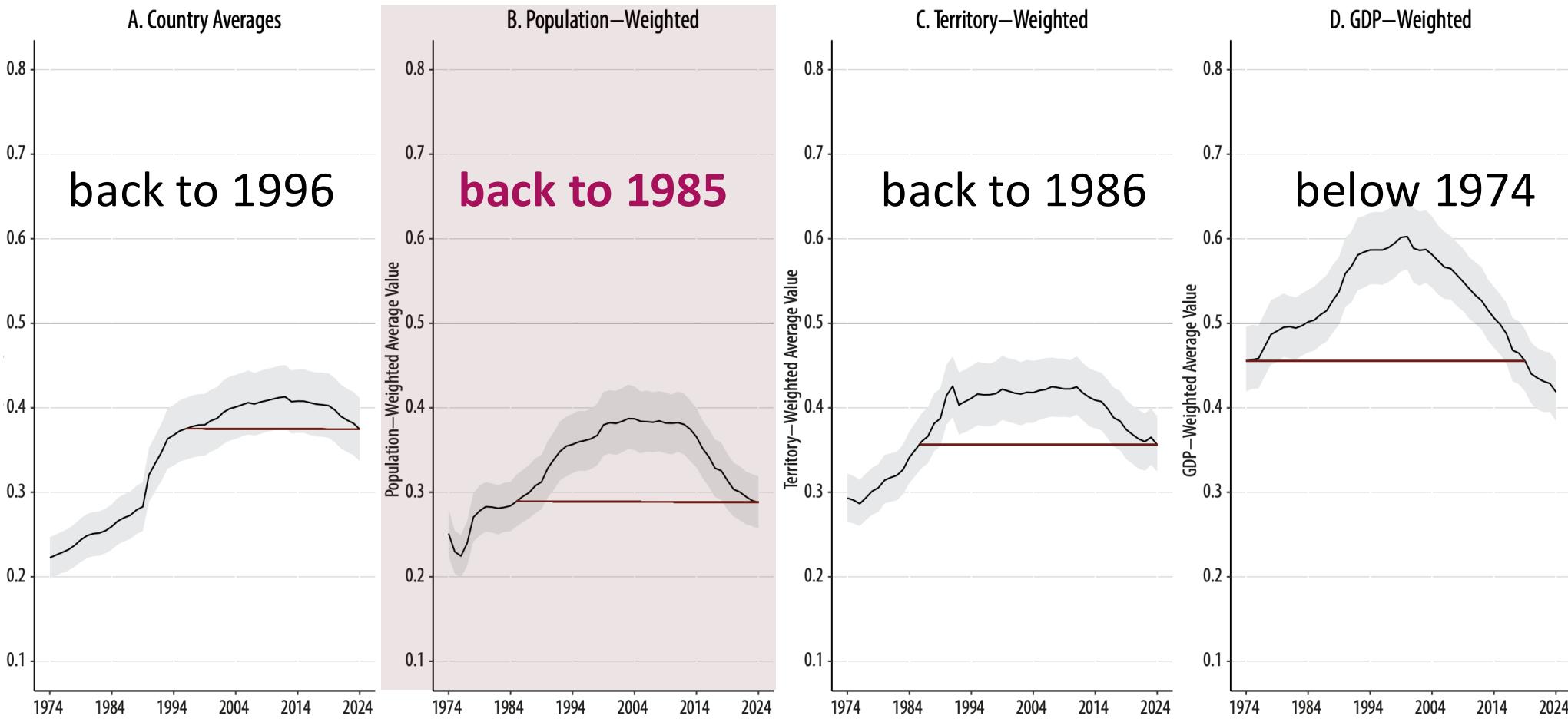
1. Global Level of Democracy Continues to Decline

FIGURE 2. LIBERAL DEMOCRACY



1. Global Level of Democracy Continues to Decline

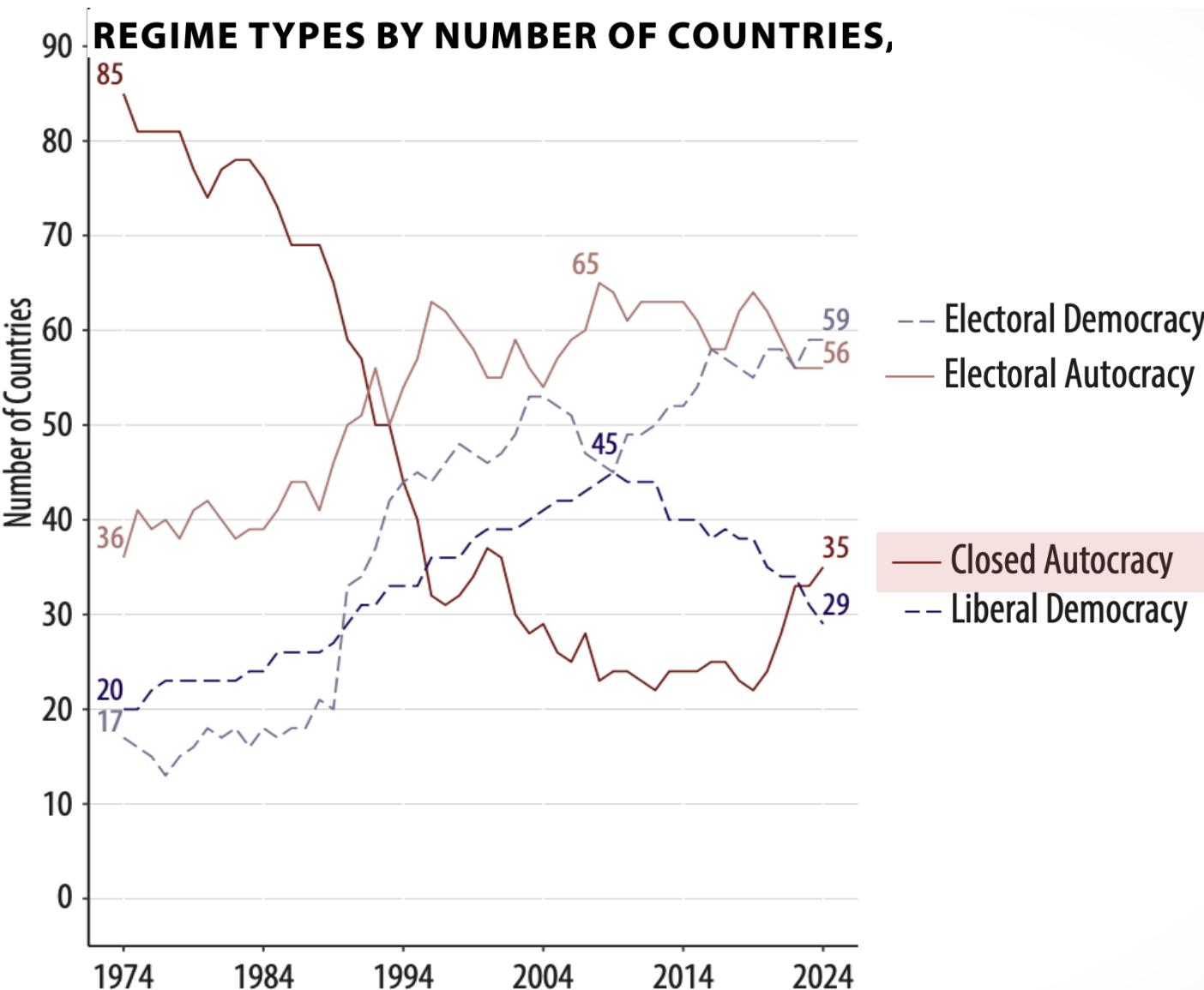
FIGURE 2. LIBERAL DEMOCRACY



2. Dictatorships are on the Rise

25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

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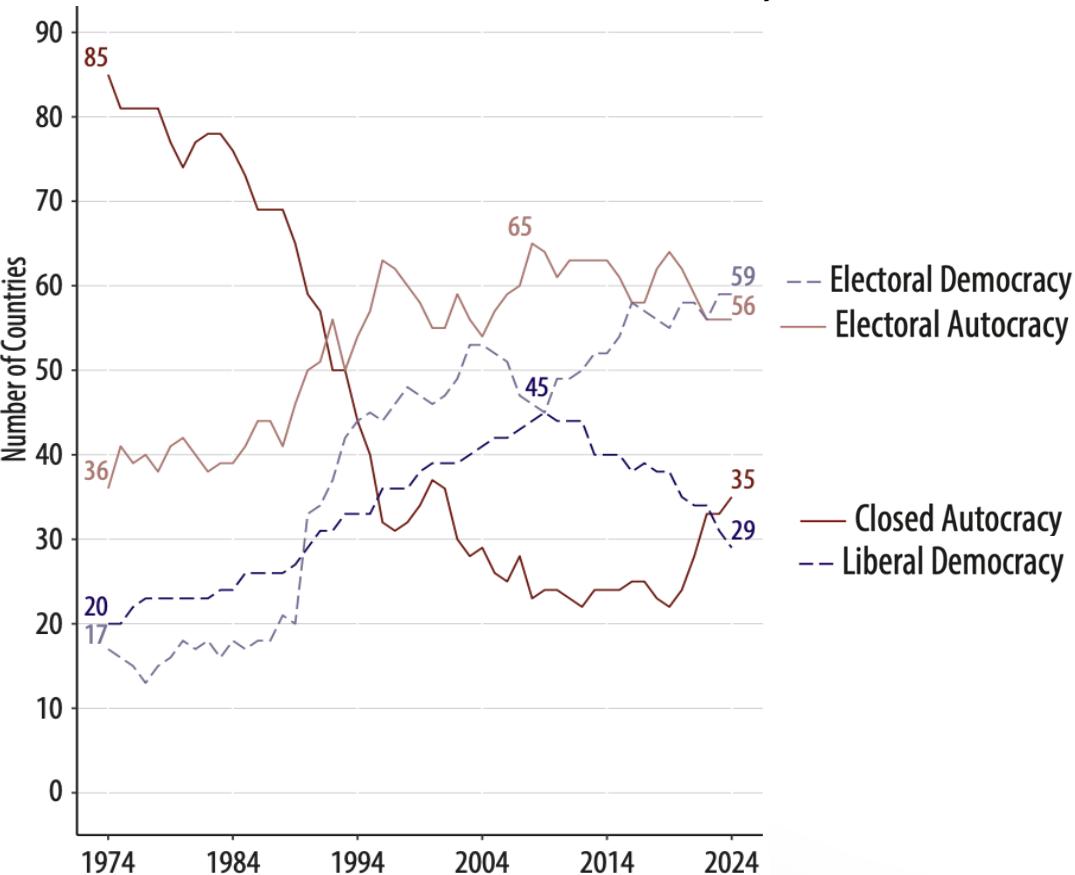
3. Autocracies Outnumber Democracies

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The world has fewer democracies ($N=88$) than autocracies ($N=91$) for the first time in over 20 years.

REGIME TYPES BY NUMBER OF COUNTRIES,

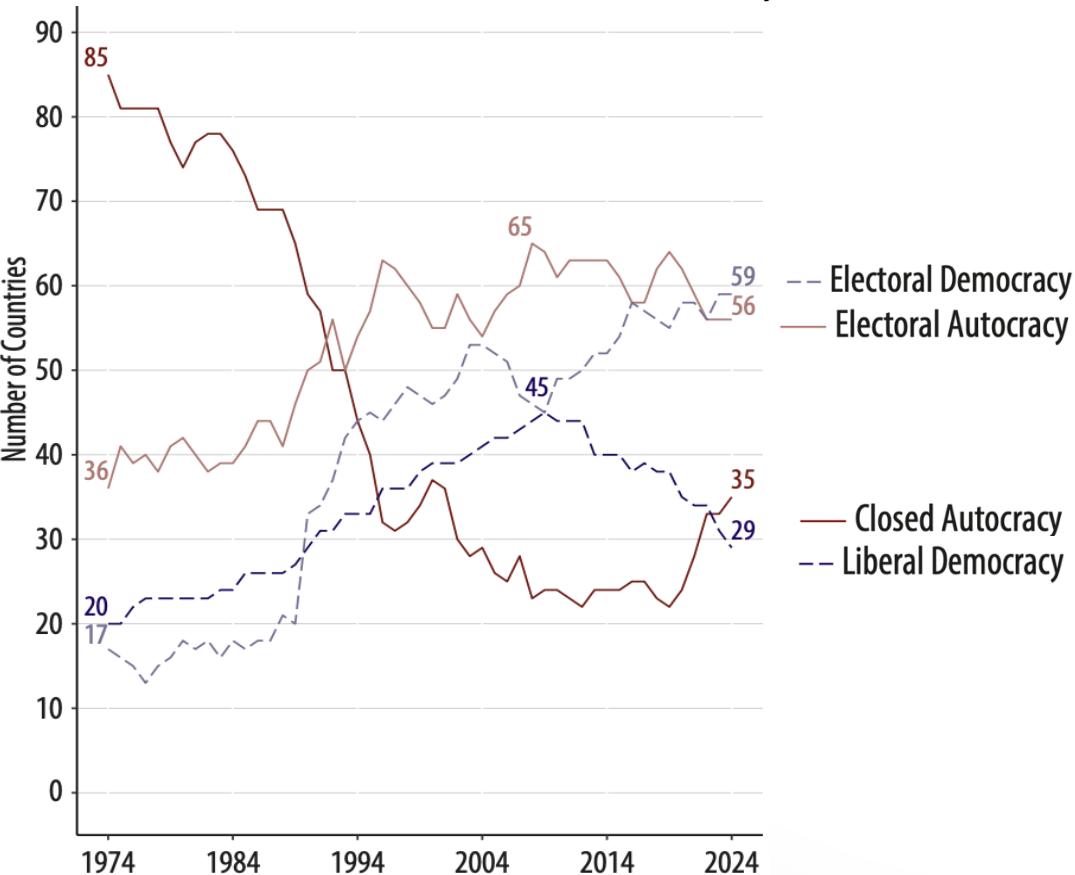


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REGIME TYPES BY NUMBER OF COUNTRIES,



SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION
LIVING IN AUTOCRACIES



2004:
49%

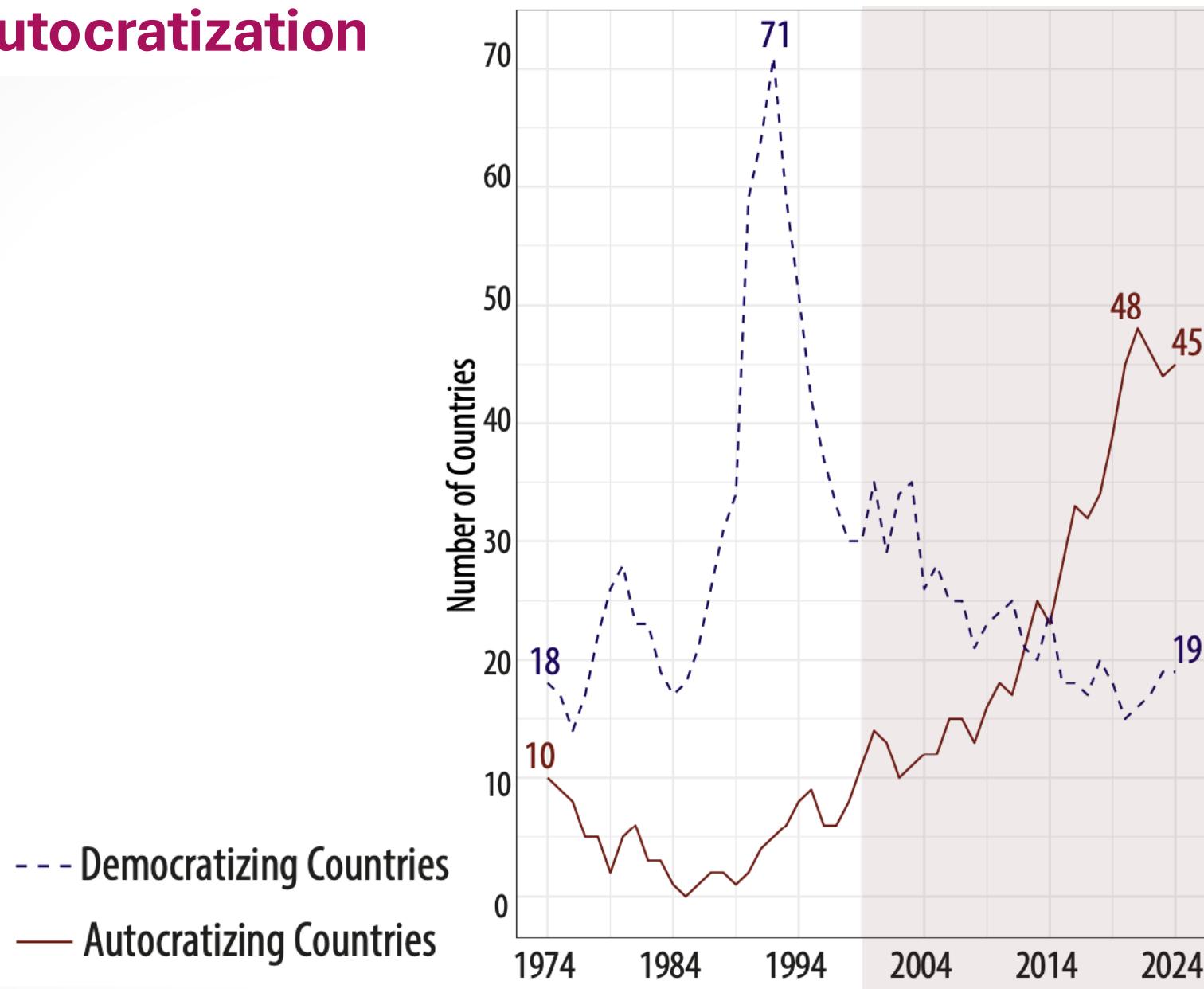


2024:
72%

4. 25 Years of Autocratization

25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

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4. 25 Years of Autocratization

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AUTOCRATIZING

2004 12 COUNTRIES

2024 45 COUNTRIES

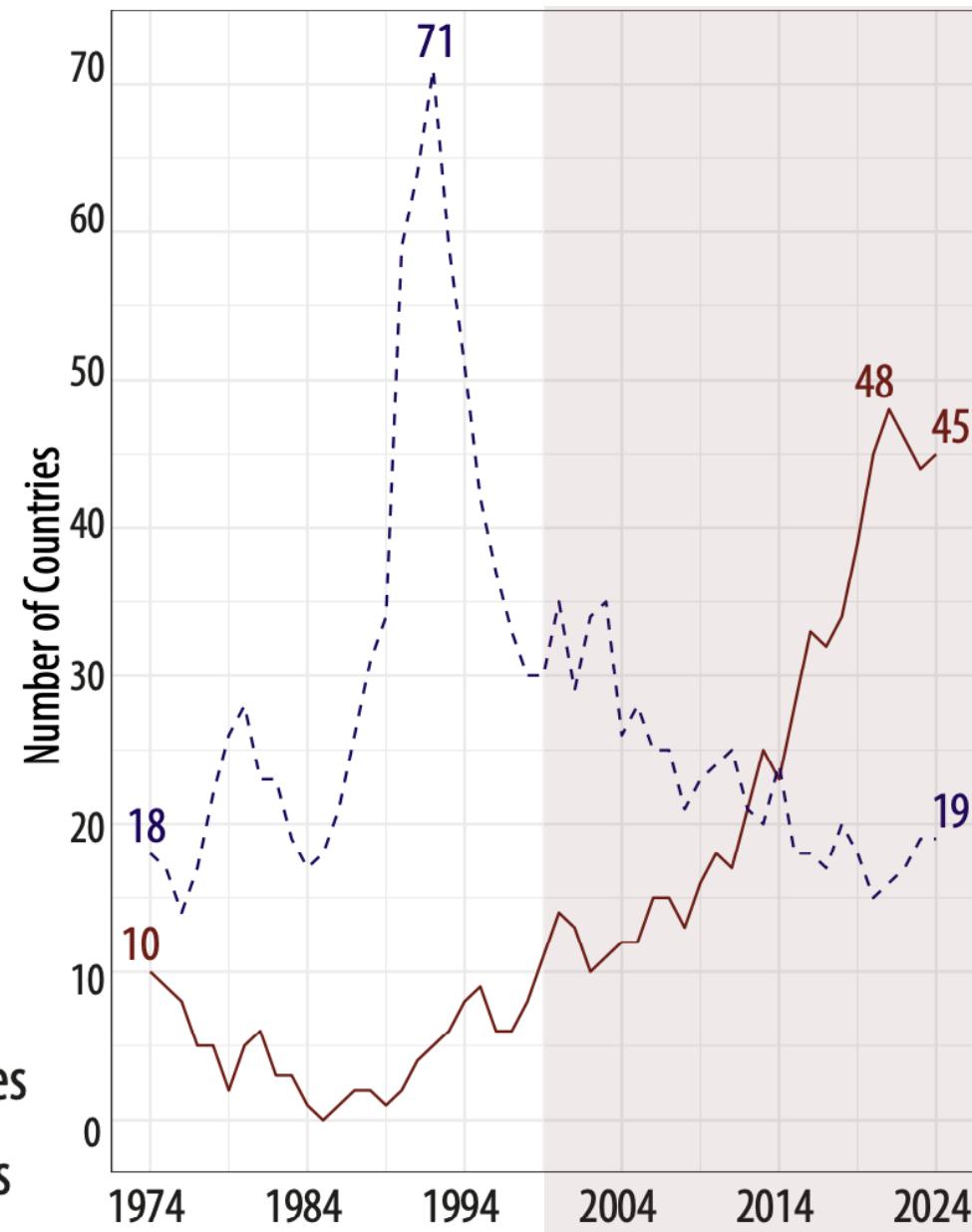
SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES



2004:
7%



2024:
38%



25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

4. 25 Years of Autocratization

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AUTOCRATIZING

2004 12 COUNTRIES

2024 45 COUNTRIES

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES DEMOCRATIZING

2004 26 COUNTRIES

2024 19 COUNTRIES

SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES



2004: 7%



2024: 38%

SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN DEMOCRATIZING COUNTRIES

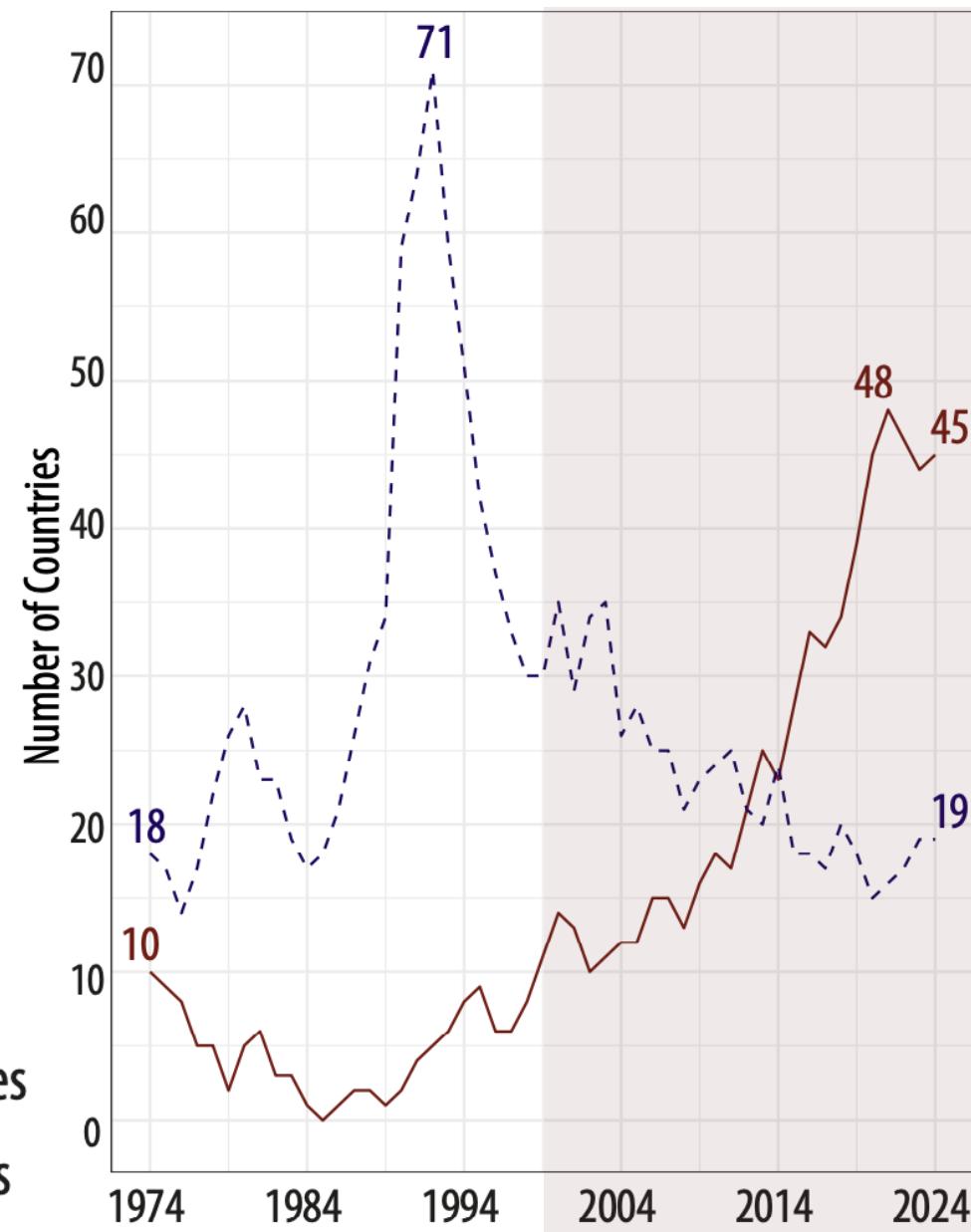


2004: 13%



2024: 6%

--- Democratizing Countries
— Autocratizing Countries



25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

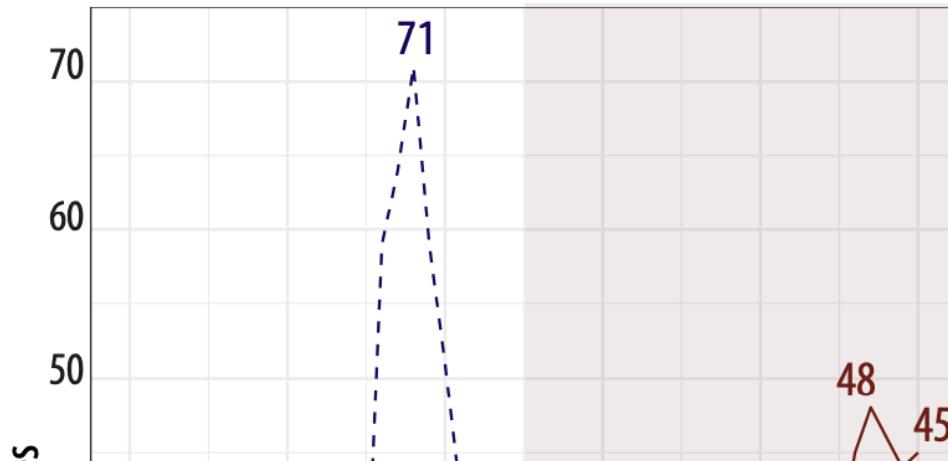
4. 25 Years of Autocratization

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AUTOCRATIZING

2004 12 COUNTRIES

2024 45

SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES



The wave of autocratization has been going on for at least 25 years and shows no signs of cresting.

2004 20 COUNTRIES

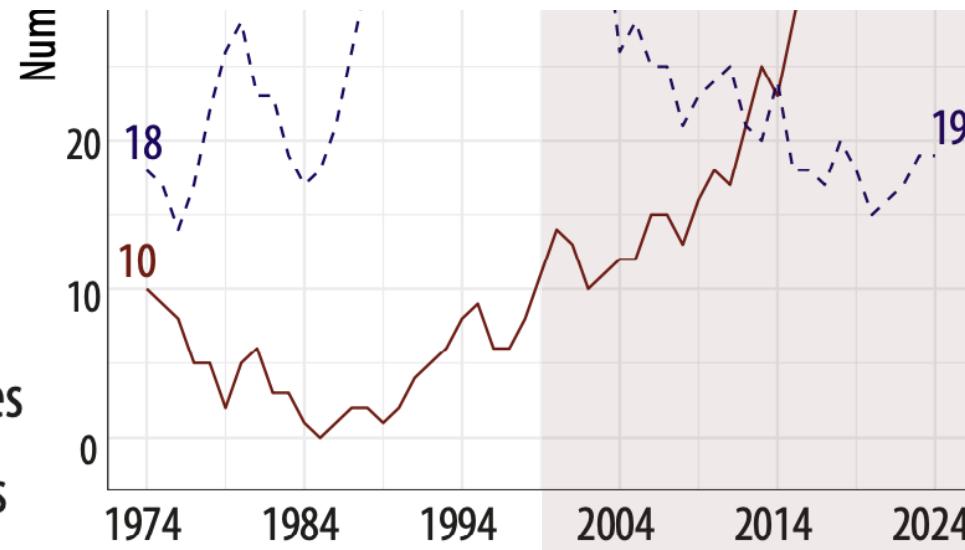
2024 19 COUNTRIES



2004: 13%



2024: 6%



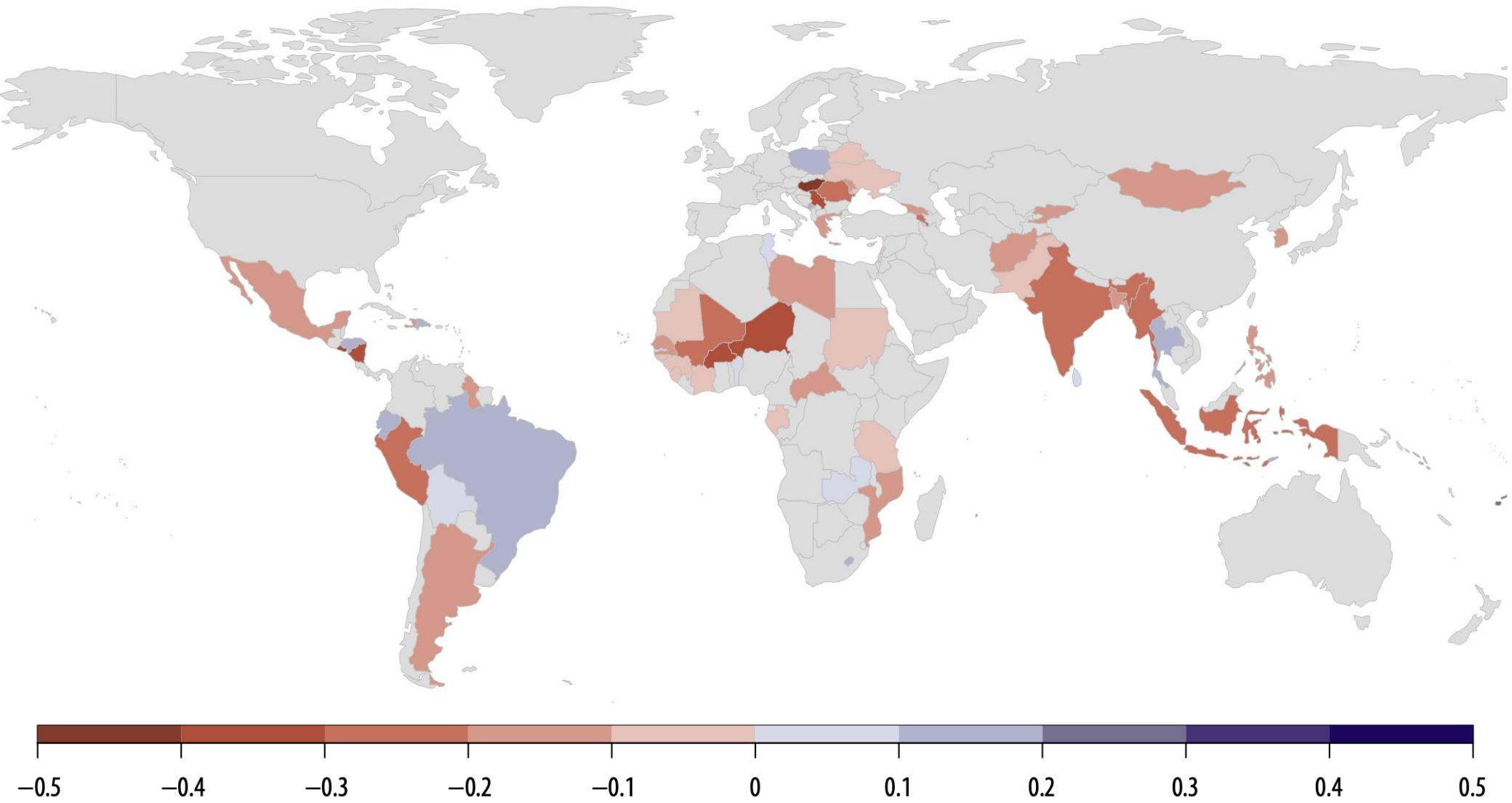
--- Democratizing Countries
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5. Global Trend of Autocratization

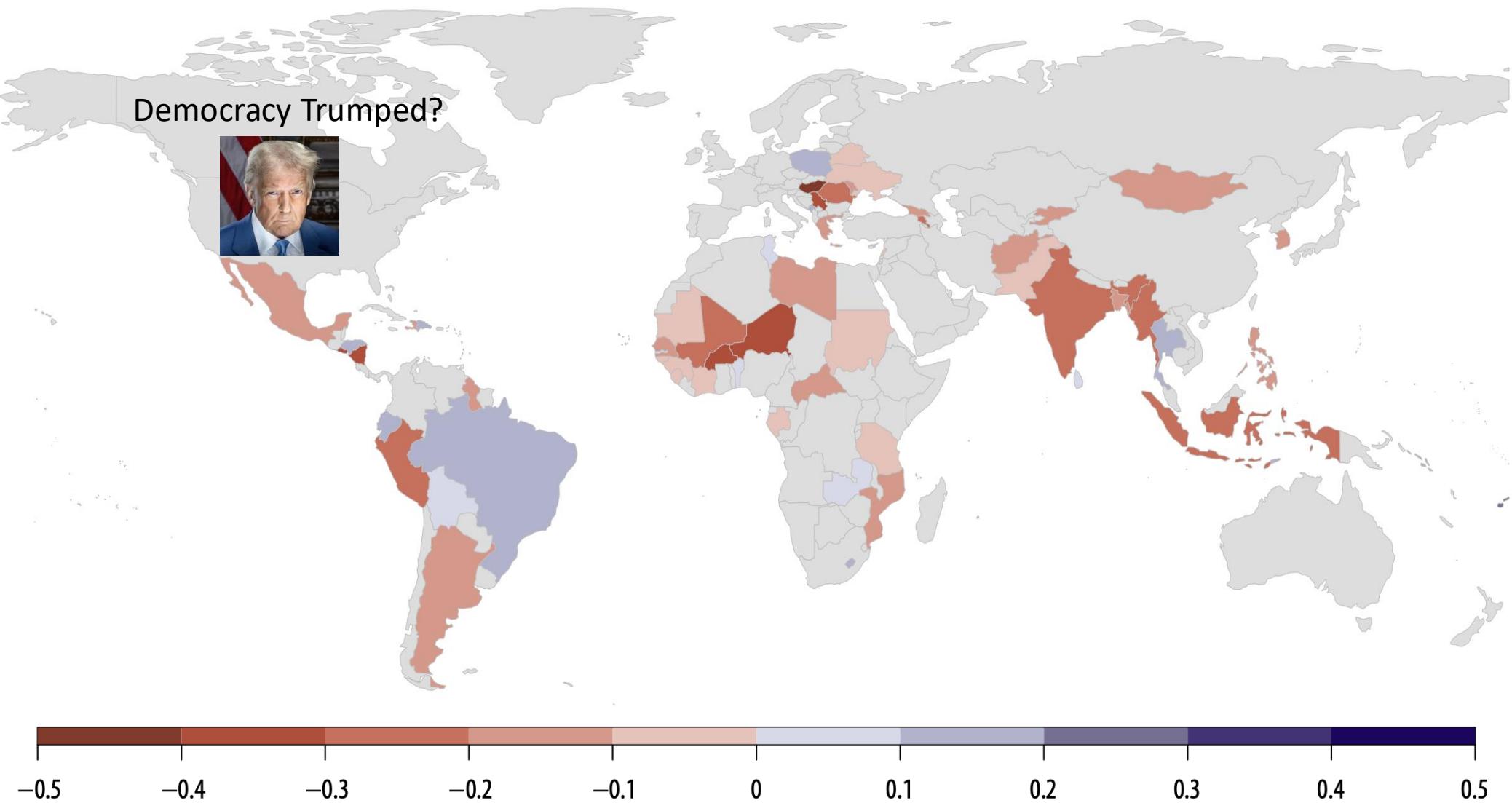
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5. Global Trend of Autocratization



25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

5. Global Trend of Autocratization



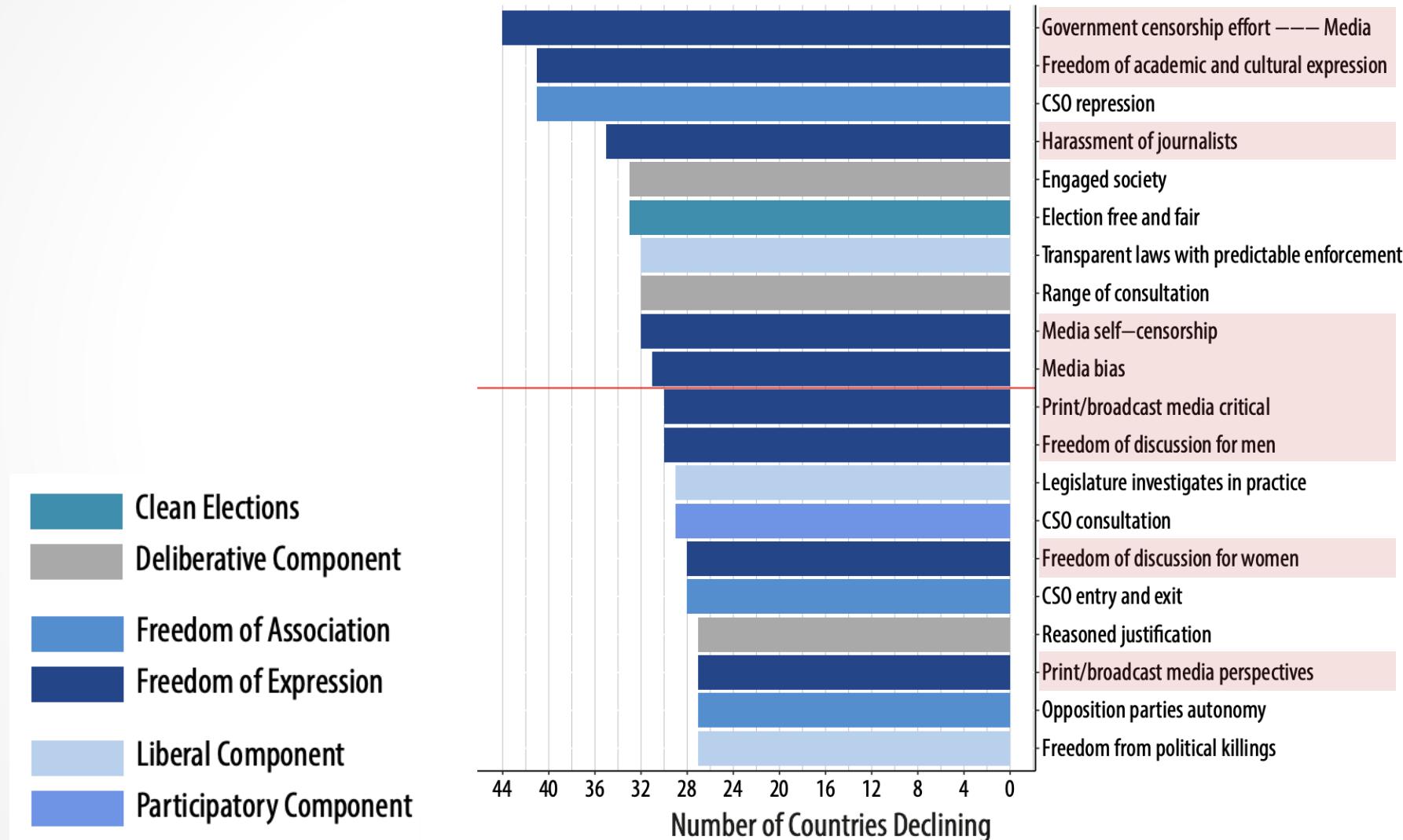
25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?

6. Alarming Loss of Freedom of Expression

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FIGURE 8. TOP 20 DECLINING INDICATORS, 2014–2024

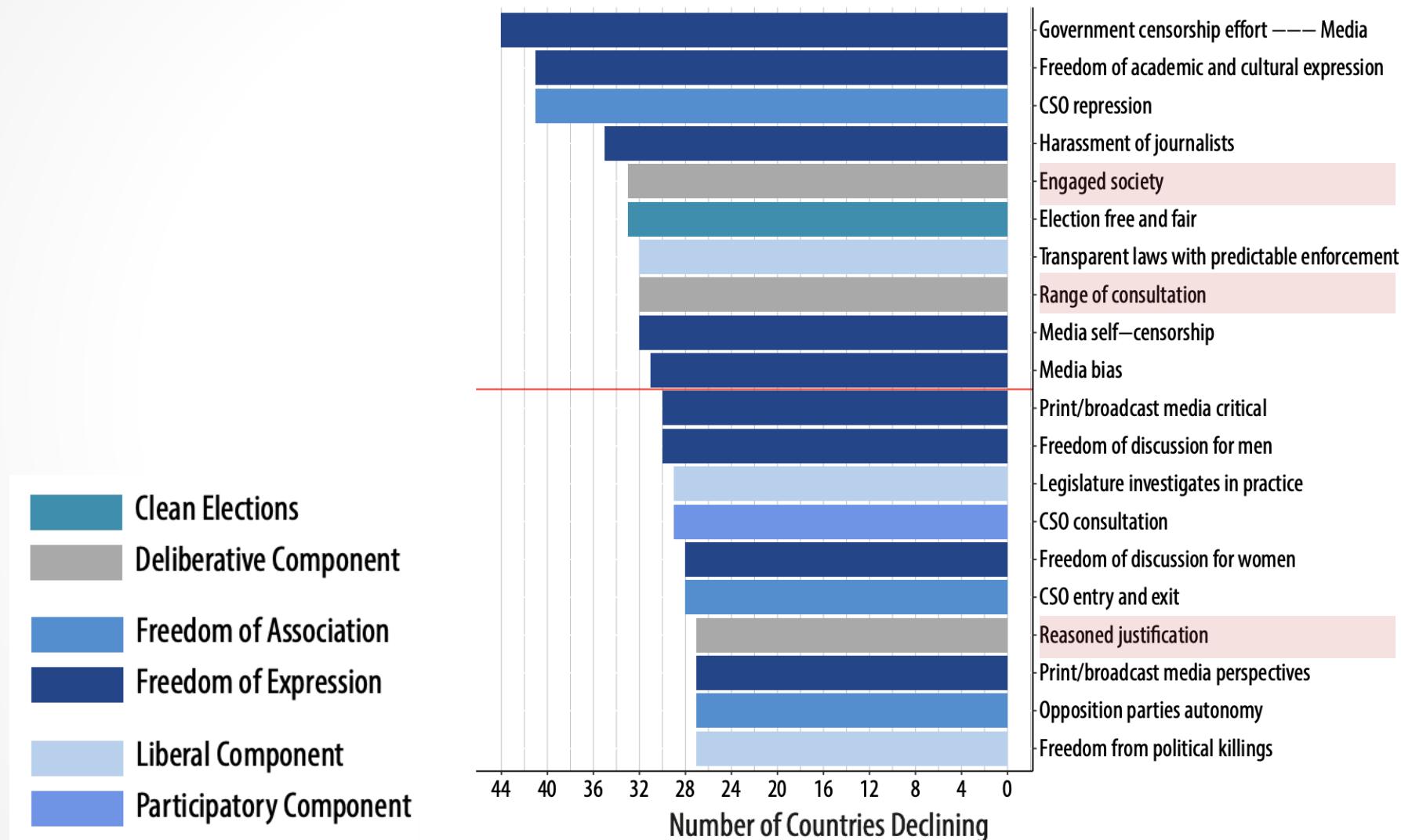


7. Deliberation is Decreasing

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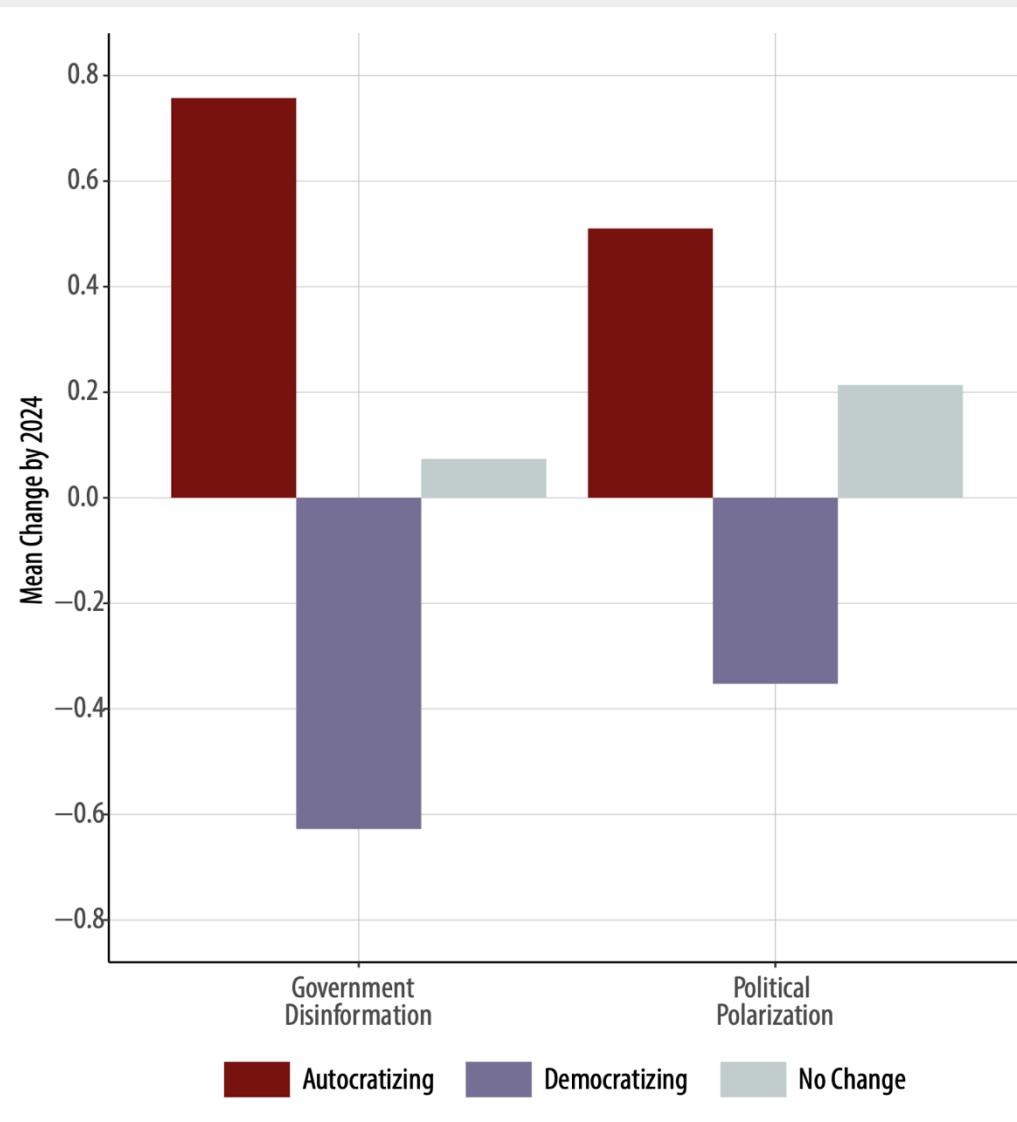
FIGURE 8. TOP 20 DECLINING INDICATORS, 2014–2024



8. Disinformation and Polarization fuel Autocratization

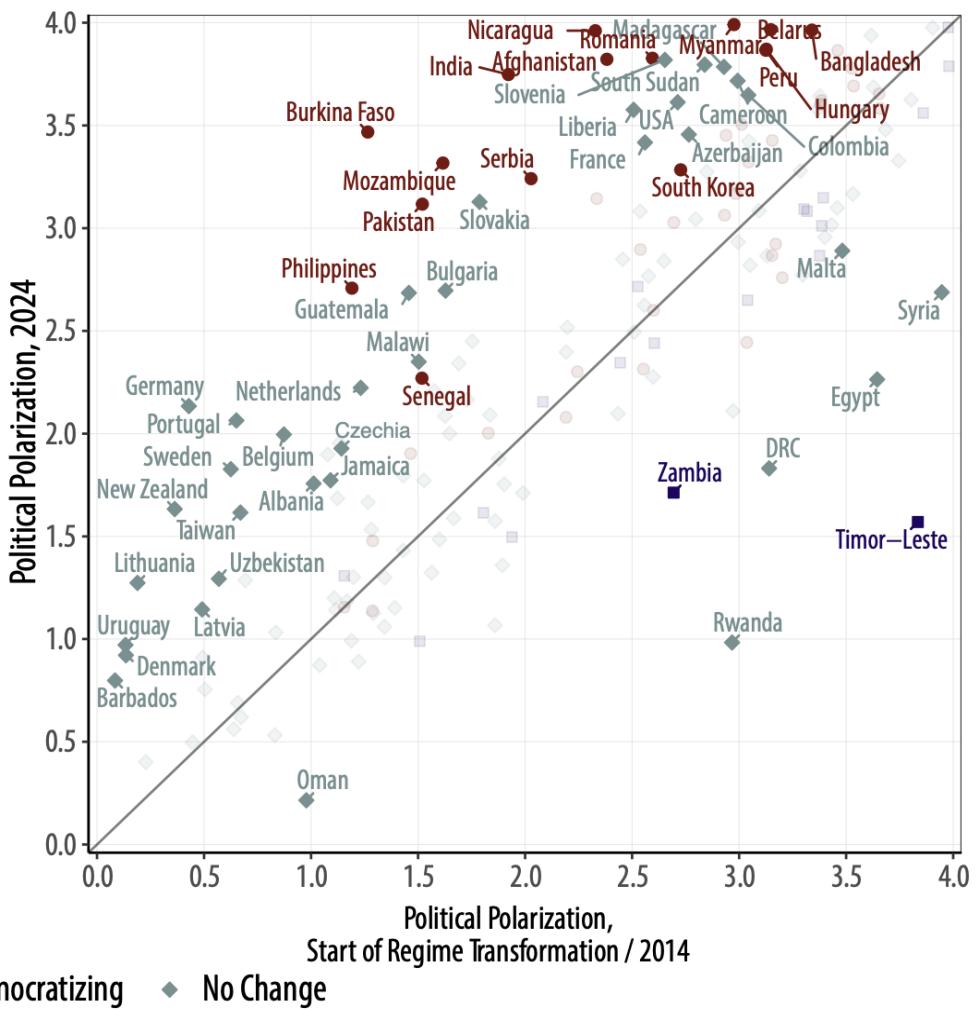
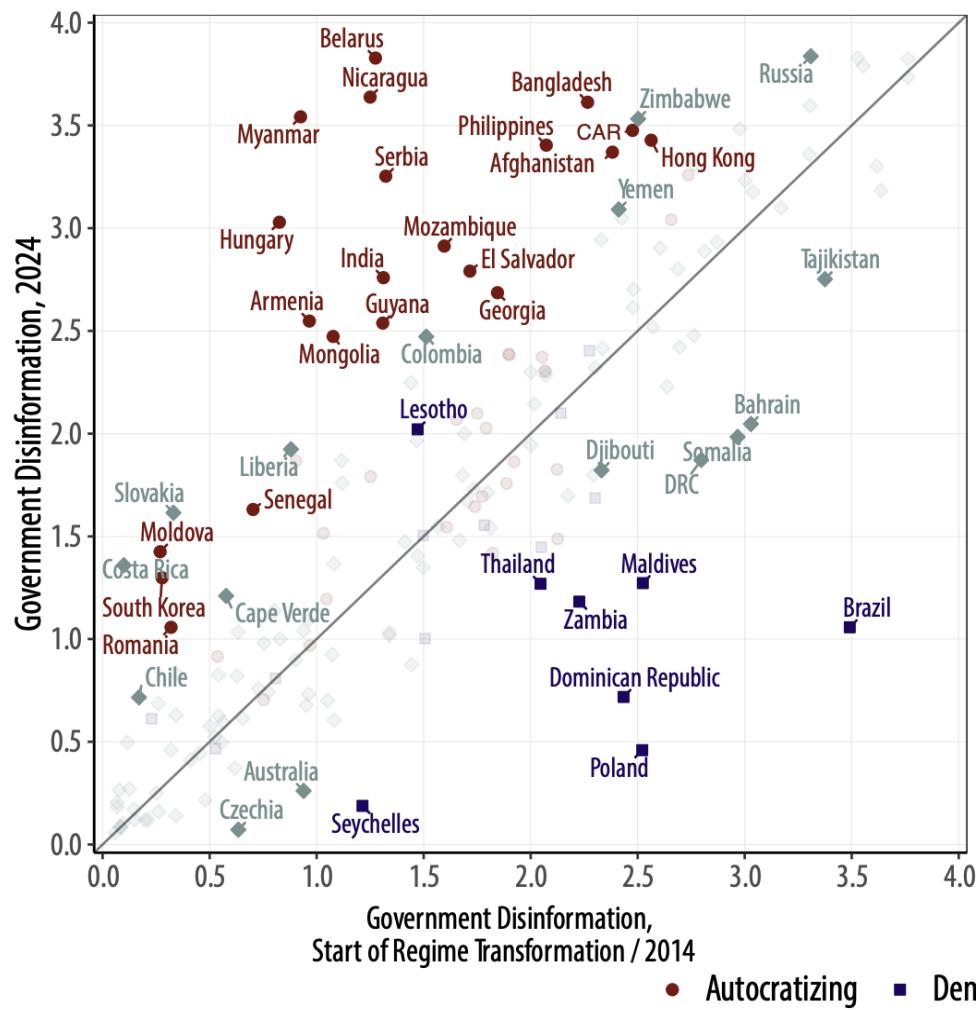
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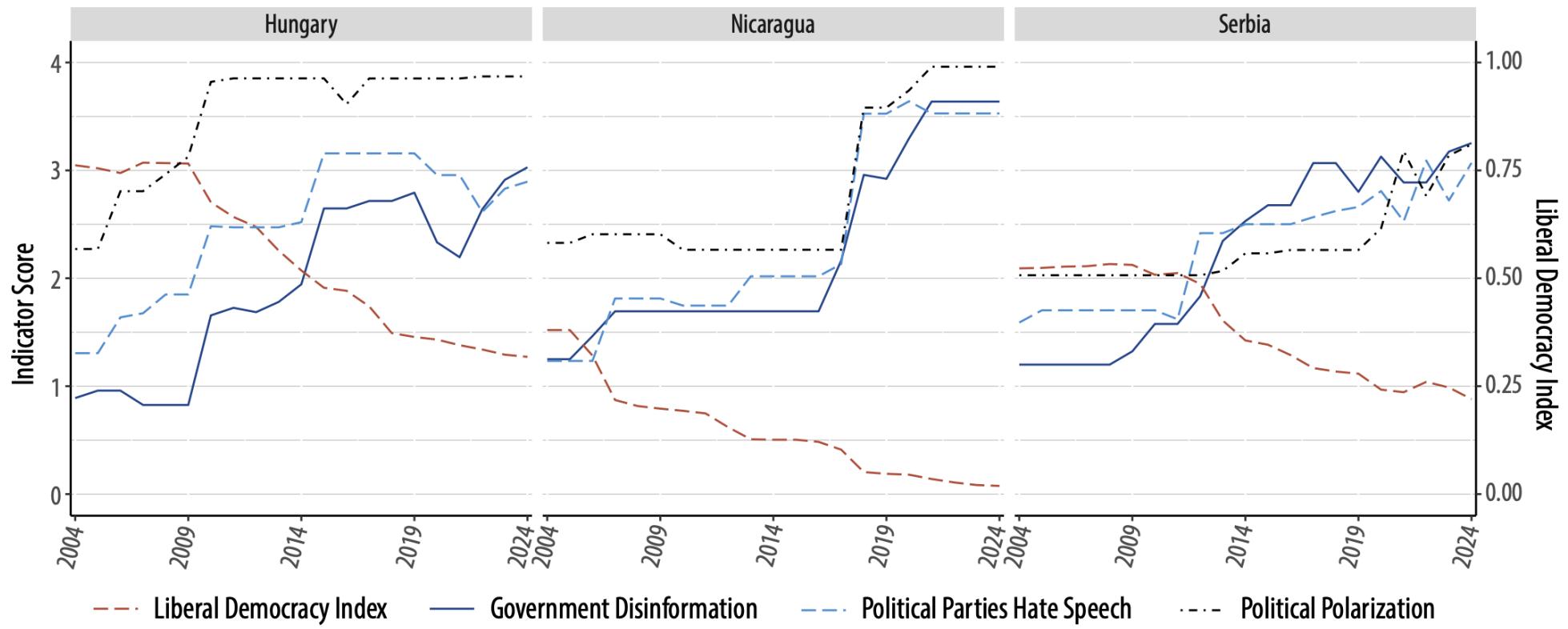


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8. Disinformation and Polarization fuel Autocratization



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9. Autocratization Has Consequences

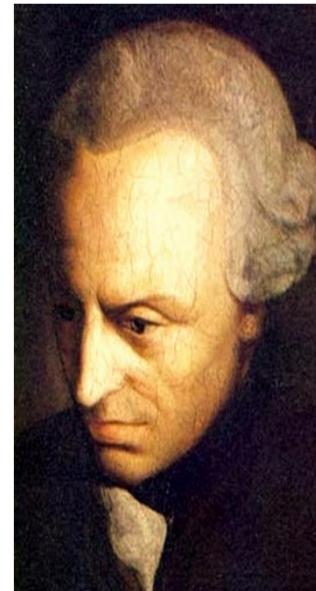
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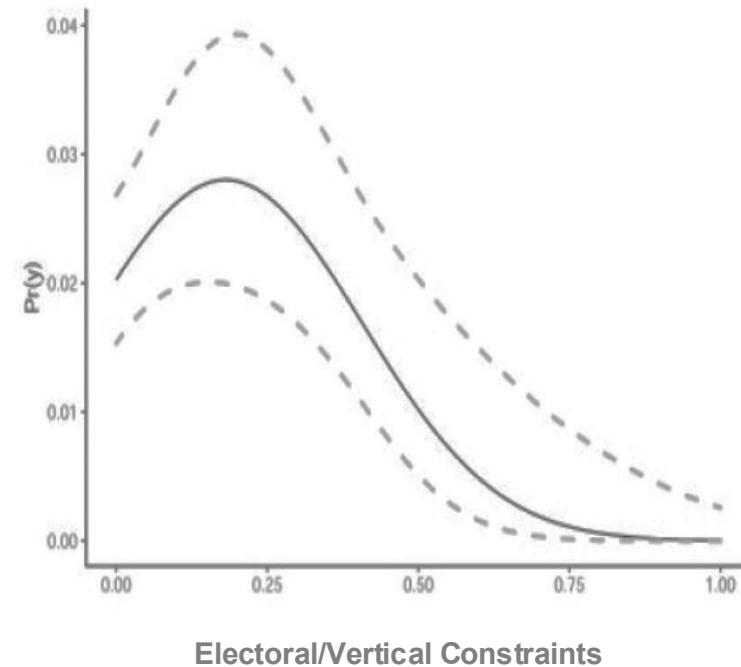
Democracies do not fight wars with each other

(e.g. Fjelde et al. 2021; Hegre et al., 2001; Hegre, 2014)

Democracies least prone to domestic violent conflicts



In 1795, Immanuel Kant wrote
Zum Ewigen Frieden

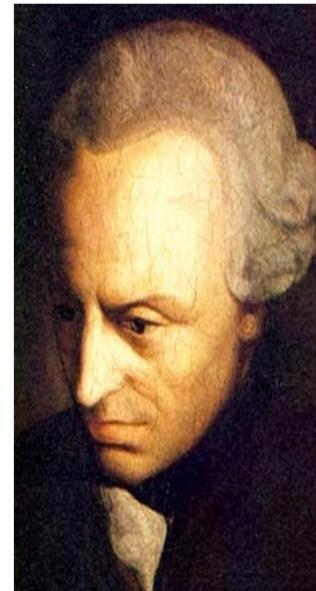


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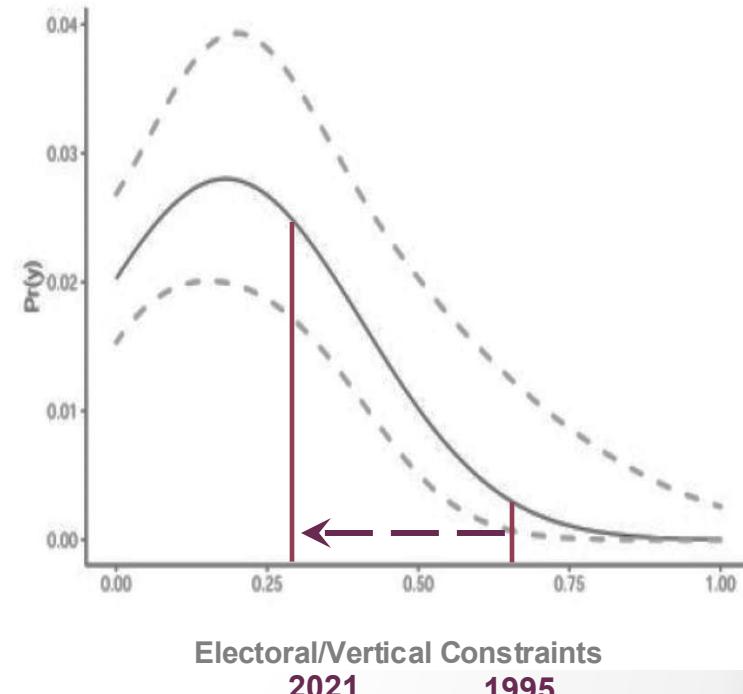
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RUSSIA

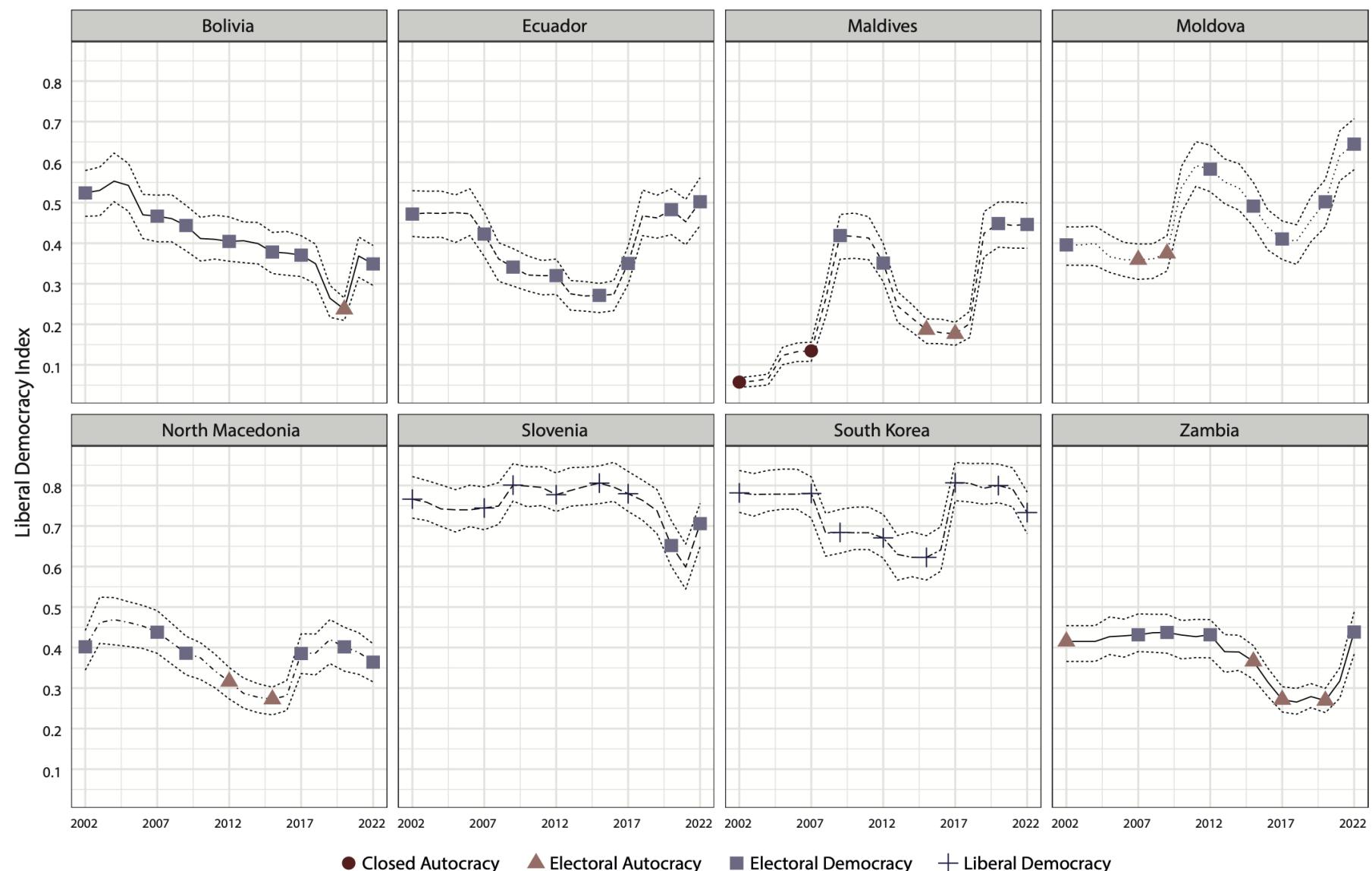
10. Autocratization Can Be Stopped and Reversed!

DEMOCRACY REPORT 2023

Defiance in the Face of Autocratization



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DEMOCRATIZATION

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2024.2448742>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS



When autocratization is reversed: episodes of U-Turns since 1900

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POLICY BRIEF

No. 42, January 2025

Marina Nord and Staffan I. Lindberg

U-turns – The Hope for Democratic Resilience

Top-Level Insights

- Contemporary democracies are fairly resilient to the onset of autocratization: Since 1994, 54% have not experienced backsliding.
- Yet, democracies rarely survive if autocratization sets in: Roughly 80% break down.
- Breakdown does not prevent a return of democracy: Roughly 50% recover shortly after a democratic breakdown in a U-turn episode.
- Recovering of democracy in U-turns – or "bounce back" resilience – is the most common type of democratic resilience.
- Active, stiff, and coordinated resistance against autocratization from pro-democracy actors and institutions is key to making a U-turn.
- Acting in early stages of autocratization seems critical – within one electoral cycle (4-6 years) after the onset.

Threats to Democracy are Growing

From 1900 to 2023, there were 99 episodes of autocratization that originated in democracies. Only 35 of those episodes took place from 1900 to 1993.

Two-thirds of all recorded autocratization episodes affecting democracies occurred in the last 30 years, from 1994 to 2023: 64 episodes of backsliding in 54 countries.

The main drivers of this process are democratically elected leaders who deliberately dismantle democratic norms and institutions. Gradually, political power is concentrated in one party or in one person (Bermeo 2016).

Media freedom and civil society spaces are typically attacked first and the most. Attempts to make constitutional changes that undermine the democratic process are common (Williamson et al. 2024).



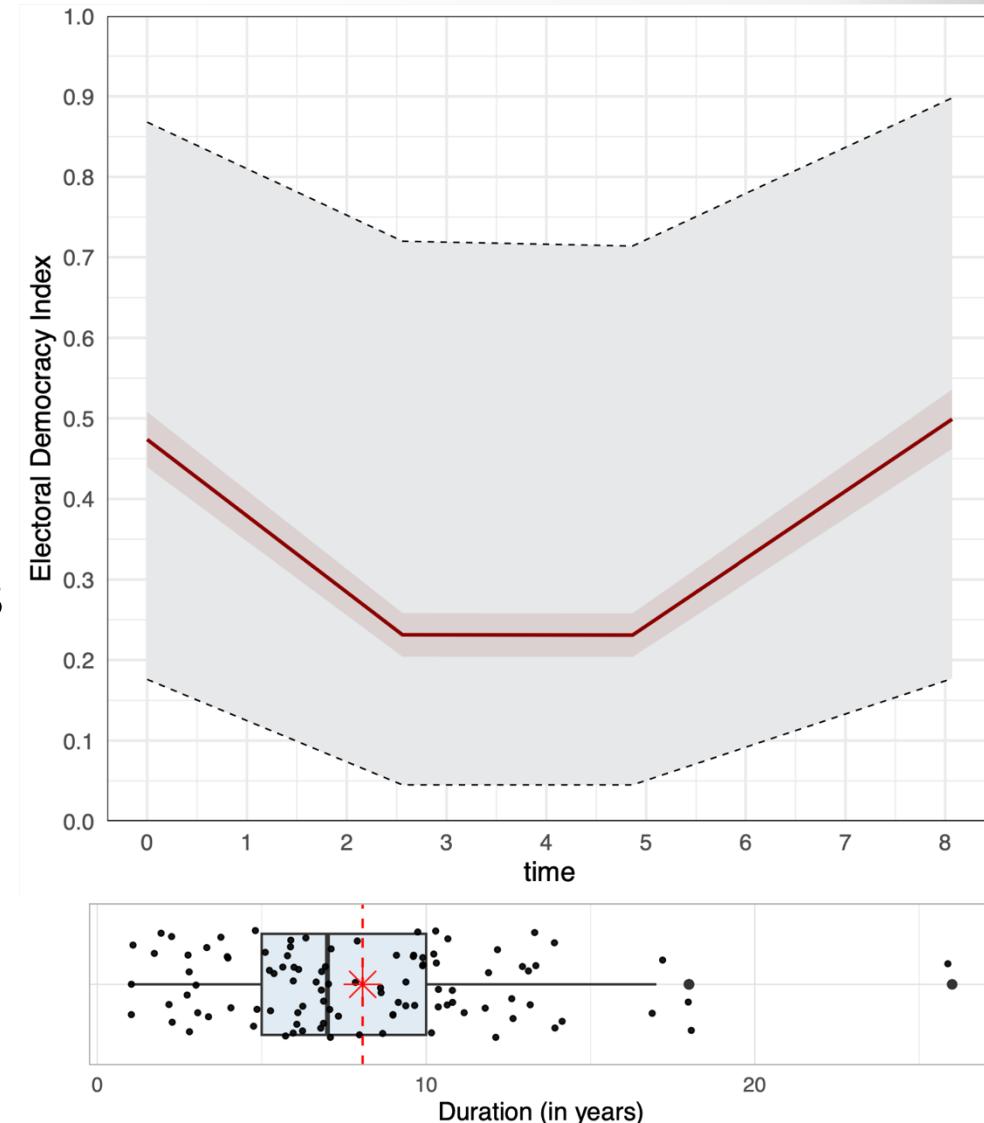
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Descriptive results

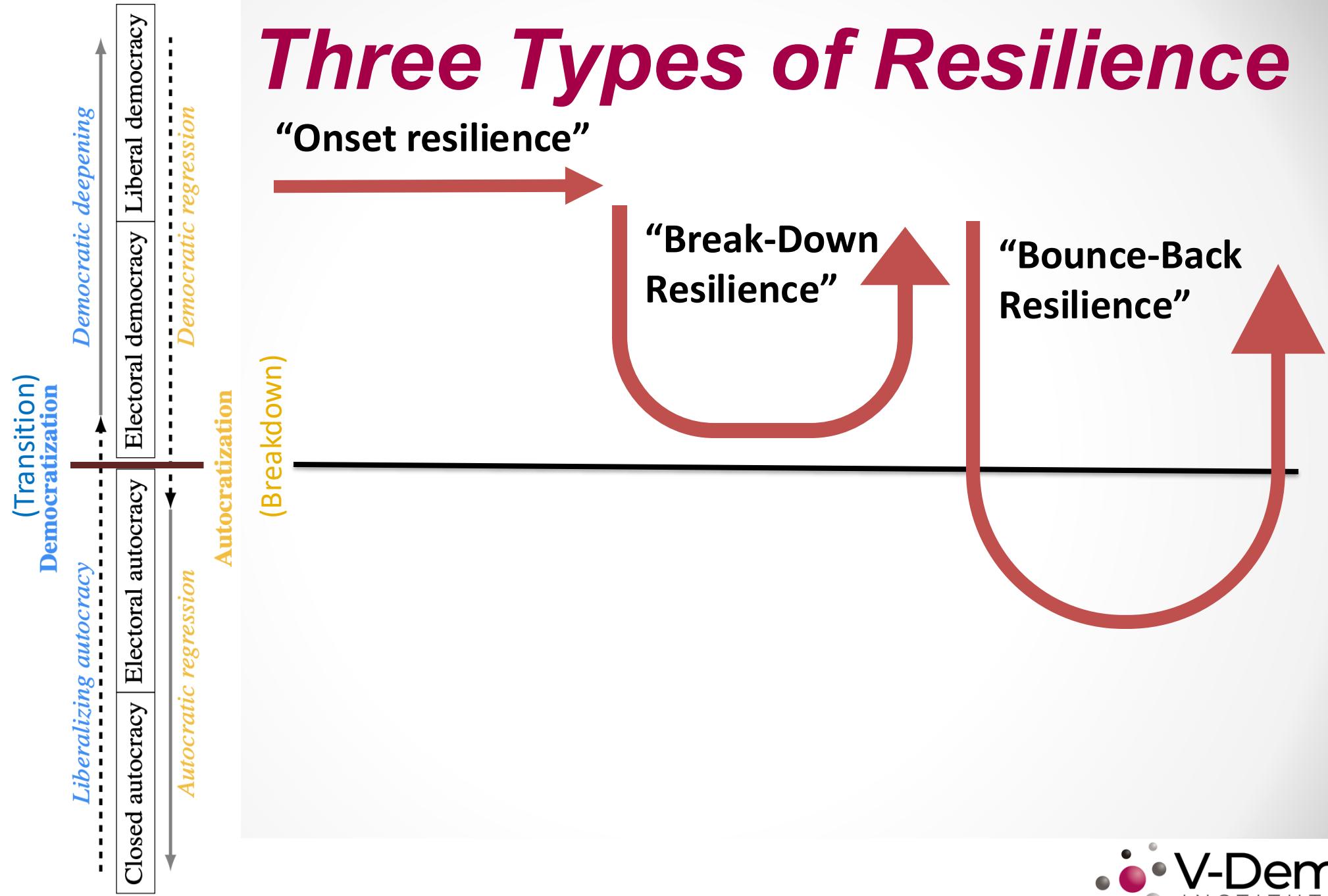
- 1900 – 2023:
 - **198 episodes of autocratization**

→ **102 U-Turns**

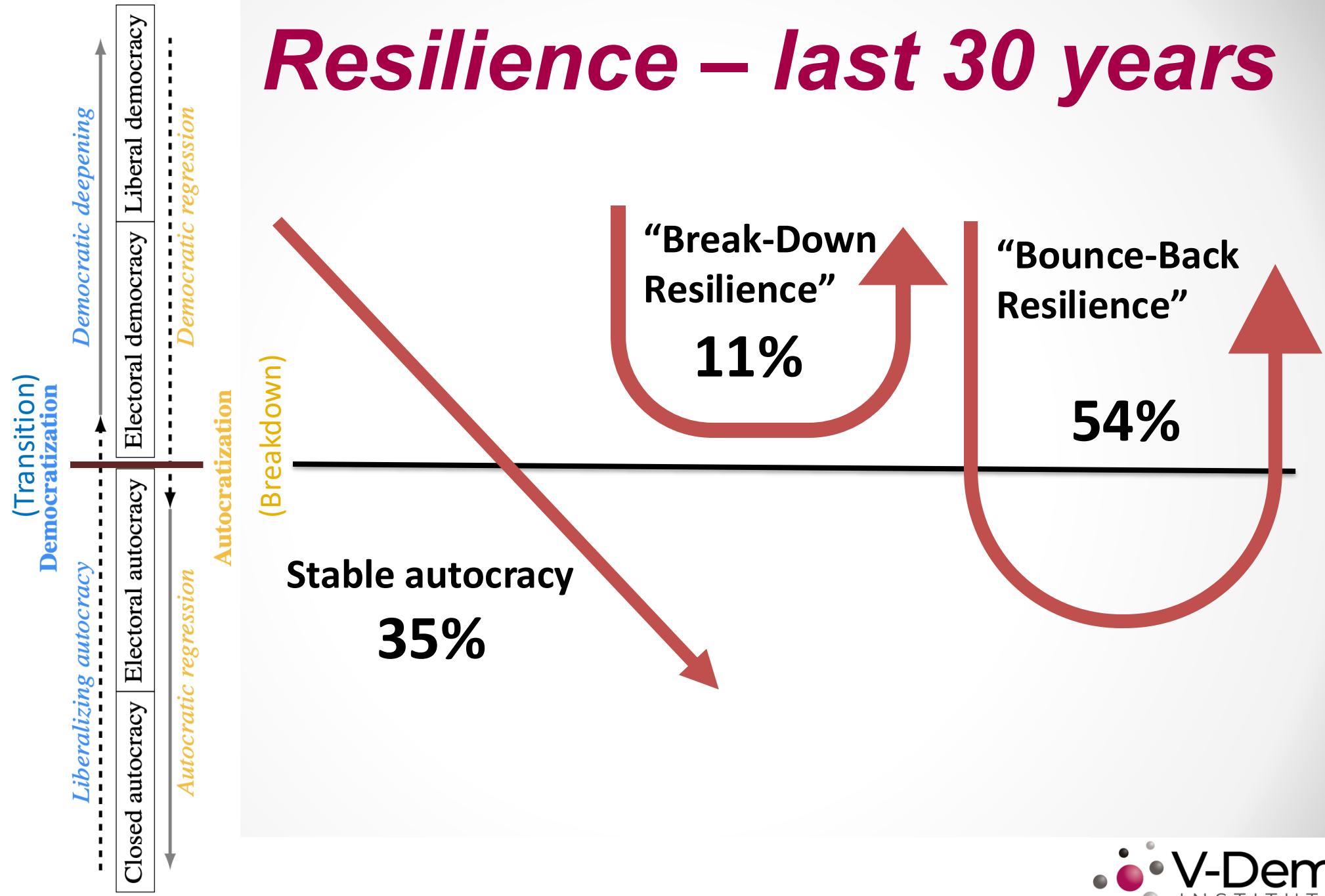
52% of autocratization episodes



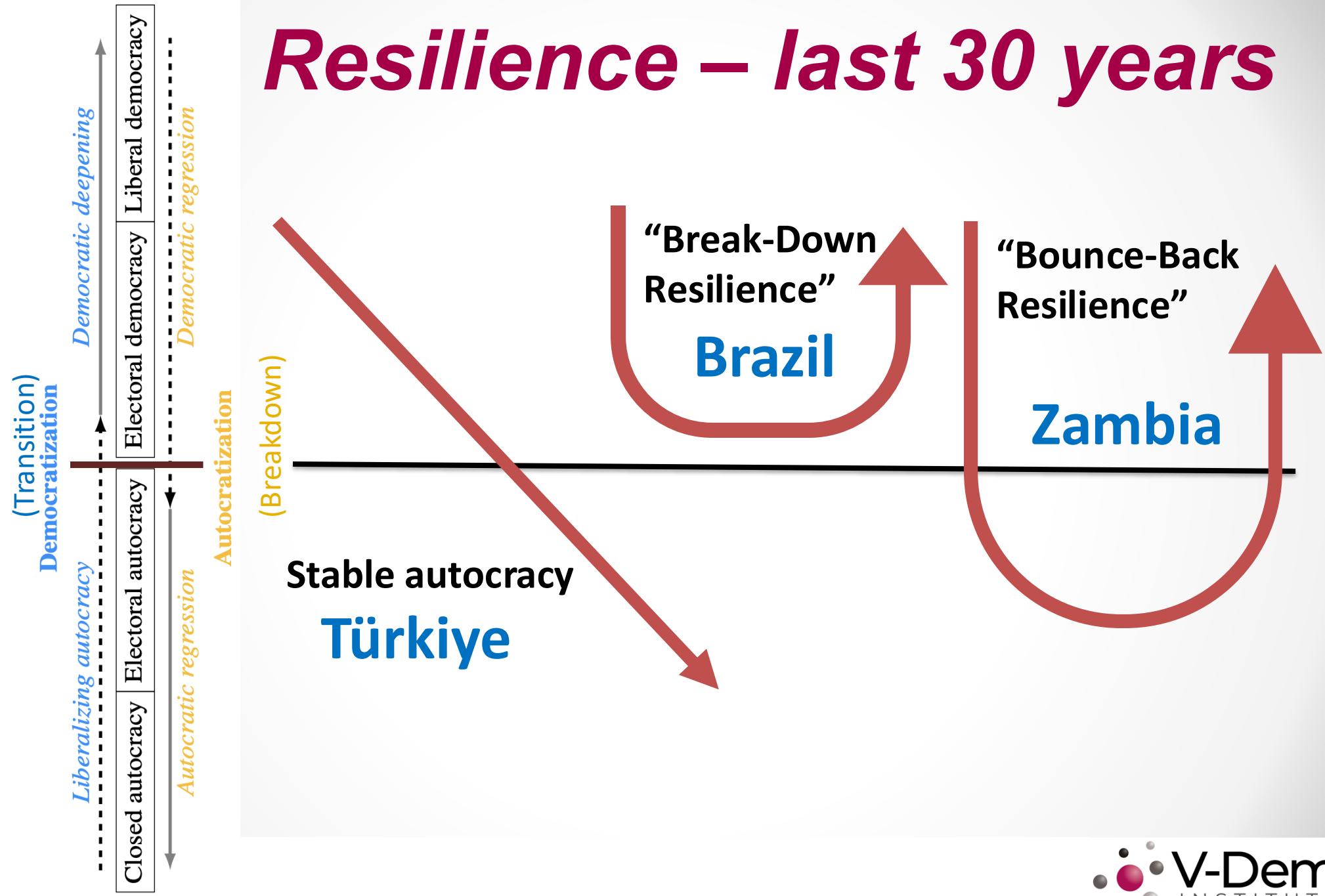
Three Types of Resilience



Resilience – last 30 years



Resilience – last 30 years





Thanks for
listening