AUTOCRATS AND THE USE OF POWER

Graphic Images
Graphic Images

AUTOCRATS AND THE USE OF POWER
Diagnosing Democratic Decline

In 2015, the Bertelsmann Foundation launched its Disrupting Democracy series to investigate the causes of a global downward trend in democratic governance and public support for democracy. As we began this journey, the United Kingdom was still a member of the European Union, Donald Trump was best known for his work on "Celebrity Apprentice", and attention to public health concerns largely focused on the seasonal flu. So much has changed in such a short time.

We examined in the first volume of Disrupting Democracy the ways in which technological innovations transform countries at various stages of political and technological development. Our case studies — India, Germany, Israel, Cuba, and the United States — demonstrated distinct experiences at the intersection of technology and democracy. But there were common themes that cut across all the countries. Bridging the urban-rural access divide, combatting disinformation, and addressing the displacement of traditional media presented policy challenges with which each government had to contend in their own ways.

We probed deeper in the second volume of Disrupting Democracy by conducting our work within the crucible of election campaigns. Those pages tell the tales of the Democratic Party's "blue wave" in the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, history-making victories for populism in Mexico and Italy, and Russia's ongoing attempts to leverage limited resources to bolster nationalism, and effectively reshape the Middle East. And they highlight China's embrace of its superpower status to shape an international landscape reflecting its own value system, and thereby offer a counterexample to American governance.

We defied expectations in the third volume of Disrupting Democracy by using technology to explain democracy in the 21st century rather than looking at its impact on democracy. Through the use of carefully constructed algorithms by our partners at the Institute for Competitiveness, we collected data points that showed the driving forces of political instability and social unrest in case studies such as Brexit, the elections of Indian Prime Minster Narendra Modi and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and the 2016 U.S. general election. We took more than 10,000 pieces of raw data and converted them into a compendium of 100 visualizations that provided a degree of depth that went well beyond any written analysis.

Irene Braam
Executive Director
Bertelsmann Foundation, February 2022
Methodology

The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) analyzes and evaluates whether and how 137 developing and transformation countries are steering social change toward democracy and a market economy. Far more than being just a ranking, the BTI distinguishes itself from other international studies by:

Basing its numerical assessments on qualitative evaluations.
Each of the 7,124 individual indicator scores is backed up by a separate paragraph in more than 5,000 pages of country reports and allows for informed international comparison.

Analyzing processes of transformation comprehensively.
By studying political transformation, economic development and governance quality simultaneously, the BTI sheds light on their complex interplay in societal change.

Assessing governance with expert-based analyses.
Relying on an academic network of close to 300 country and regional experts in more than 120 countries, the BTI offers text-based evaluations to explain successes and failures in governance.

The BTI’s normative reference points for good governance – democracy under the rule of law and a market economy anchored in principles of social justice – are closely related both functionally and empirically. We understand transformation as politically driven change in which an authoritarian system and a state-dominated or clientelist economic order evolve in the direction of democracy and a market-based economy. However, this implies neither linear, irreversible development nor a predetermined path of transformation, nor does it suggest that there is an ideal sequence of milestones to be passed. While the BTI holds that freedom of choice and freedom from want are universal aspirations best achieved in a democratic system and a market-based economic setting, it does not adhere to any particular existing institutional model.

COUNTRY SELECTION

Transformation management toward more open societies differs from reform management in long-consolidated democratic systems with well-advanced economies and thus requires a different set of assessment criteria. In the absence of a clearly defined “threshold of consolidation,” the Transformation Index excludes all countries that were members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) by the year 1989. This is not to suggest that these countries have achieved a static end-state, but that good governance and the resulting reform agenda are not centered around the systemic component of overcoming a closed regime.

Small states with fewer than 1 million residents are also not examined in the BTI, except Bhutan and Montenegro as particularly interesting cases of transformation. Since 2003, the number of countries surveyed has increased from 116 to 137. They are divided into seven regional groups: Latin America and the Caribbean (22 countries), West and Central Africa (22), Southern and Eastern Africa (22), Middle East and North Africa (19), East-Central and Southeast Europe (17), Post-Soviet Eurasia (13), and Asia and Oceania (22).
INDEX AGGREGATION

The Status Index is formed by calculating the average of the total scores given for the dimensions of political and economic transformation. The state of transformation in each analytic dimension is equivalent to the average of the scores of the associated criteria. Criterion scores are, in turn, based on the average scores of the equally weighted indicators that comprise the criterion. Combining the two analytical dimensions into a Status Index follows the normative premise of the BTI, under which transformation is always conceived of as a comprehensive transition toward democracy and a market-based economy. The Governance Index is formed by calculating the average of scores given for the governance criteria, which is subsequently offset against the assigned level of difficulty.

The high level of aggregation of individual scores and the use of rankings are primarily means of providing orientation and communicating findings to a broader public. Rankings necessarily reduce complexity in order to highlight particular differences between individual countries, call attention to trends in development, and make factors key to progress more readily identifiable. For a more thorough analysis of a country’s strengths and weaknesses, please consult the BTI’s non-aggregated individual scores as well as the country reports and regional analyses – all available online at www.bti-project.org.
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Democratization precondition criterion
Stateness
Democratic core criteria
Political participation
Rule of law
Democratic consolidation criteria
Stability of democratic institutions
Political and social integration

The state of political transformation is measured in terms of five criteria, which are derived from assessments made in response to 18 questions. Stateness, which is seen as a precondition to democracy, is included in the BTI’s definition of political transformation and examined through questions specifically dealing with the state’s monopoly on the use of force and basic administrative structures. The BTI’s concept of democracy goes well beyond other definitions of democracy, which are limited primarily to basic civil rights and the conduct of free elections. It also entails an evaluation of the rule of law, including the separation of powers and the prosecution of corruption. It assesses the quality of representation with regard to the party system and interest groups, and also measures social capital and the approval of democratic norms and procedures.

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Inclusive and sustainable development criteria
Level of socioeconomic development
Welfare regime
Sustainability
Organization of the market and competition
Private property
Economic policy and output criteria

The state of economic transformation is measured in terms of seven criteria, which are based on a total of 14 indicators. The BTI explicitly puts elements of social inclusion, such as social safety nets and equality of opportunity, as well as sustainability on an equal footing with market and competition criteria. In BTI terms, comprehensive development not only aims at sustainable growth, but also requires successful poverty alleviation and the freedom of action and choice for as many citizens as possible. The BTI’s concept of a socially inclusive market economy thus distinguishes itself from those that allow for socioeconomic intervention only if it conforms with market rules and primarily accentuate the importance of market organization and property rights.

GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Constraints criterion
Level of difficulty
Authority criteria
Steering capability
Inclusiveness criteria
Consensus building
International cooperation

The Governance Index is comprised of five criteria, which are based on a total of 20 indicators. It focuses on how effectively policymakers facilitate and steer development and transformation processes. The BTI holds that successful governance must guarantee inclusive participation of all relevant interests, ideas and identities, and have the authority to facilitate agreement among stakeholders and implement joint decisions. Authority requires that governments are consistent in pursuing their goals and use their resources wisely and effectively. Inclusion implies that decision-makers cultivate the broadest possible consensus for their transformation goals and work reliably with external supporters and neighboring states. Governance performance is weighted with the level of difficulty, which is derived from three qualitative and three quantitative indicators. It reflects the observation that each country’s quality of transformation is influenced by structural constraints. In this way, difficult conditions and the scarcity of resources in a given country are factored in. The BTI is the only index to analyze and compare governance performance in developing countries with self-collected data.
MEASUREMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Transformation Index is based on a qualitative expert survey in which written assessments are translated into numerical ratings and examined in a multistage review process so as to make them comparable both within and across regions. This method enables those factors of political and economic development that elude purely quantitative assessments to be captured in the experts’ qualitative appraisals. The resulting country assessments render the reasons behind each of the BTI’s 7,124 individual scores fully transparent and verifiable.

Nevertheless, this type of qualitative expert survey will always contain a degree of subjectivity. The BTI survey process takes this into account during the preparation of reports and evaluations, as well as during the review of the data. It is designed to minimize subjective factors as far as possible throughout the process.

A standardized codebook serves as the foundation of the survey process, providing a single reference framework for the experts when answering the questions. The process of country assessment has both a qualitative and quantitative component, in each case performed by two country experts. As a rule, one foreign and one local expert are involved in the evaluation process; this ensures that both external and internal perspectives are taken into account in the course of assessment. In total, 272 experts from leading research institutions around the world contributed to the production of the country reports for the BTI 2022.

To ensure the validity, reliability and comparability of the assessment, each individual score undergoes a multistep process of review by the country experts, the regional coordinators, the project team and the BTI board.

The scores and responses provided by the experts for each of the 49 indicators are initially reviewed by regional coordinators, who examine the content to ensure it is both complete and consistent. The regional coordinators, all political scientists with expertise in comparative studies, participate in each step of the report-creation process and apply their regional expertise to ensure the high quality of the country reports. They subsequently perform an intraregional calibration of their countries’ scores, and then they join with the project team to carry out an interregional score calibration for all 137 countries, this time checking for across-the-board comparability and viability. Finally, all scores are discussed once again by the BTI Board before being adopted.

The BTI Board, a panel of scholars and practitioners with long-term experience in the field of development and transformation, provides the project with ongoing support and advice.

DEMOCRACIES AND AUTOCRACIES

The systemic classification of a country as a democracy or an autocracy is not determined by the aggregate political transformation score, but by specific indicator scores. In accordance with the BTI’s comprehensive concept of democracy, seven threshold values marking minimum requirements are considered. The country is classified as an autocracy if even one score falls short of the relevant threshold.

### Political participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free and fair elections</td>
<td>Free elections are not held or are marked by serious irregularities and restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective power to govern</td>
<td>Democratically elected leaders de facto lack the power to govern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association and assembly rights</td>
<td>The freedom of association or assembly does not exist, or civil society organizations are suppressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of expression</td>
<td>Freedom of expression or media freedom does not exist, or severe restrictions are in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rule of law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation of powers</td>
<td>Constitutional oversight of the executive, legislature or judiciary does not exist, or exists only on paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>Civil rights are systematically violated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stanneness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monopoly on the use of force &amp; Basic administration (average)</td>
<td>The state has no control over large parts of the country and fails to fulfill basic civil functions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Failing states with a severely limited capacity to act are also considered autocracies.
# A Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHINA</th>
<th>IRAN</th>
<th>RUSSIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A New Superpower Has Arrived</strong></td>
<td><strong>With Crisis Comes Opportunity</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Politics of Revanchism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 10</td>
<td>Page 38</td>
<td>Page 66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many describe China as a rising power, but that description is outdated. The country has already taken its place alongside the United States as a world leader with the capability and influence to shape the political, economic and security landscape in its neighborhood and beyond. China flexes its military muscle to intimidate neighbors while trumpeting territorial claims in regional waters. It asserts economic dominance to coerce others around the world into financial dependency.

A domestic consolidation of power enables Beijing to project its strength abroad. Over the past decade, President Xi Jinping has steadily corralled the levers of influence to solidify his control over the ruling Chinese Communist Party. At the same time, he has eroded democracy in Hong Kong, shrugged off criticism of human rights abuses in Xinjiang province, and taken increasingly provocative measures towards Taiwan.

This chapter offers a collection of visuals designed to illuminate Beijing’s evolving 21st-century domestic and foreign policy goals. Understanding them, and China’s tactics for achieving them, are key to crafting strategies to capitalize on the most constructive aspects of the country’s rise while mitigating those that undermine global stability.
Democracy Failing to Take Flight

China's ranking on the Democracy Index.

Hybrid regimes

Authoritarian regimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RANKING DEMOCRACY INDEX

1 — Most Democratic (Norway)
167 — Most Authoritarian (North Korea)
Monopoly on the Use of Force

To what extent does the state's monopoly on the use of force cover the entire territory of the country?

10 - State monopoly on use of force
9 - State monopoly challenged in territorial enclaves
8 - State monopoly limited to key parts of the country
7 - No state monopoly on use of force
One Nation Under Xi

To what extent are legal order and political institutions defined without interference by religious dogmas?
Putting Democracy Through the Shredder

To what extent are political representatives determined by general, free and fair elections?

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

- No constraints on free and fair elections
- Some constraints including registration, campaigning and media access exist
- Serious irregularities during voting process occur
- Elections are entirely unfree and unfair

2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

2 2
The Limits of People Power

To what extent can individuals form and join independent political or civic groups?

To what extent can these groups operate and assemble freely?
Freedom to be Silent

To what extent can citizens, organizations and the mass media express opinions freely?

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- Freedom of expression is guaranteed
- Freedom of expression is occasionally subject to interference or restrictions
- Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- Freedom of expression is denied

2022 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Intertwined Institutions

To what extent is there a working separation of powers (checks and balances)?

*SEPARATION OF POWERS*

- Clear separation of powers
- Separation of powers occasionally subject to interference
- Separation of powers is weak
- No separation of powers
Design Flaws

Are democratic institutions capable of performing?
The Only Game in Town

To what extent is there a stable and socially rooted party system able to articulate and aggregate societal interests?
Strength in Numbers

To what extent have social self-organization and the construction of social capital advanced?
Movin’ on Up

The World Bank’s method for classifying economies.

GROSS NATIONAL INCOME RESCALED
1  High income
2  Upper middle income
3  Lower middle income
4  Low income

2008  7
2010  7
2012  6
2014  5
2016  4
2018  4
2020  3
2022  3

China
A Future Up in the Air

Does an educated population demand more from its government?
Do We Have Any Volunteers?

To what extent are there traditions of civil society?

CIVIL SOCIETY TRADITIONS
- Traditions of civil society are very weak
- Traditions of civil society are fairly weak
- Traditions of civil society are fairly strong
- Traditions of civil society are very strong

No Place for Persuasion

Can reformers exclude or co-opt anti-democratic actors?

Reformers successfully exclude or co-opt anti-democratic actors
Reformers cannot completely control anti-democratic actors
Reformers have little control over anti-democratic actors
Reformers have no control over anti-democratic actors
Partners Around the Table

To what extent does the political leadership use the support of international partners to implement a long-term strategy of development?

**EFFECTIVE USE OF SUPPORT**

- Well-focused use of international assistance for long-term strategy
- Use of international assistance without a long-term strategy
- Use of international assistance for short-term expediency
- Considers international assistance as undesired political interference
Won't You Be My Neighbor?

To what extent is the political leadership willing and able to cooperate with neighboring countries?
Keeping the Government on Target

The government manages reforms effectively and can achieve its policy priorities.

**STEERING CAPABILITY**

- **10** - Government implements its policies effectively
- **9** - Government fails to implement some of its policies
- **8** - Government fails to implement many of its policies
- **7** - Government fails to implement its policies
Navigating the Structure of Government

In the end, Chinese institutions report to one man.

Party
- General Secretary
- Politburo Standing Committee
- Politburo
- Central Committee
- Commissions and Departments
- National Party Congress

State
- President and Vice President
- State Council
- Ministries and Commissions
- National People's Congress
- Supreme People's Procuratorate
- Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
- Supreme People's Court
- National Supervisory Commission
- State Central Military Commission
- Central Commission for Discipline Inspection
- Party Central Military Commission

In the end, Chinese institutions report to one man.
Mapping China's Economic Influence

Infrastructure spending by amount and category

Rail contracts

Other transportation contracts
Something's Fishy

The high cost of the Nobel Prize.

1. Norway awards Nobel Prize to human rights activist Liu Xiaobo
2. Chinese cut off Norwegian salmon imports
3. Loss of $1.3 billion to Norway 2011-2013
An Eye for an Eye
Retribution in the case of Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou.

1. Canada arrests Huawei Executive
2. China cuts Canadian pork, peas and soy imports
3. Canada’s exports to China fell by $3.5 billion in 2019
Where's the Beef?

Economic retaliation for challenging Beijing's COVID-19 narratives.

1. Australia calls for COVID investigation
2. China sanctions Australian exports
3. Australia loses $3 billion in exports in 2020
It Takes Two to Trade

China’s 15 largest trading partners (figures in US$):

- United States: $452.6B (17.5%)
- Hong Kong: $272.7B (10.5%)
- Japan: $142.6B (5.5%)
- Vietnam: $113.8B (4.4%)
- South Korea: $112.5B (4.3%)
- Germany: $86.8B (3.4%)
- The Netherlands: $79B (3%)
- United Kingdom: $72.6B (2.8%)
- India: $66.7B (2.6%)
- Taiwan: $60.1B (2.3%)
- Singapore: $57.5B (2.2%)
- Malaysia: $56.4B (2.2%)
- Australia: $53.5B (2.1%)
- Russia: $50.6B (2%)
- Thailand: $50.5B (2%)
Spreading the Wealth

Tracking Chinese investment in Asia (figures in US$).

China

North Korea
$873M

South Korea
$239B

Taiwan
$101B

Vietnam
$161B

Myanmar
$34.1B
Wrapped in the Flag

There is clarity about the nation’s existence as a state with adequately established and differentiated power structures.

STATENESS

- All individuals and groups enjoy citizenship without discrimination
- Some groups are denied full citizenship rights
- Significant aspects of citizenship are withheld from certain groups
- Different groups compete for hegemony and deny citizenship to others
Democracy on Unstable Ground

Democratic institutions are capable of performing, and they are adequately accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North Korea</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval of democratic norms and procedures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With Crisis Comes Opportunity

The security vacuum in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in 2003 has paved the way for Iran to expand its Middle East reach. Tehran has increased assistance to regional allies and financed new militant groups that act as its surrogates. The 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, which saw anti-government protests and rebellions from Yemen to Syria to Tunisia, and the subsequent, if short-lived, victories of the Islamic State have reinforced Tehran’s desire to devote itself to using non-state militant actors to broaden its authority. Iran’s religious leaders have considered the strategy to be the best way to defend the country’s external interests.

Domestic critics of this proxy model, however, argue that it cannot sustainably project Iranian power. The policy may be inexpensive, at least relative to recent regional military campaigns, but its considerable indirect costs are potentially lethal to the staying power of the Islamic Republic’s regional allies. The 2017 and 2018 protests in Iran, which were driven by socio-economic grievances, highlighted the ongoing gap between the Iranian public and Tehran’s ruling elite. Left unaddressed, this and other similar grievances could challenge the Islamic Republic’s political stability. This chapter examines such domestic drivers and their potential impact on Iranian adventurism in the Middle East.
Democracy's Downward Slope

The erosion of democratic institutions continues unabated.

RANKING DEMOCRACY INDEX

1 — Most Democratic (Norway)
167 — Most Authoritarian (North Korea)

Hybrid regimes (Authoritarian with some democratic features)
Go Directly to Jail

To what extent does the state's monopoly on the use of force cover the entire territory of the country?
Where Religion and Politics are One

To what extent are legal order and political institutions defined without interference by religious dogmas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS DOGMA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beneath the Democratic Façade

To what extent are political representatives determined by general, free and fair elections?

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS
- No constraints on free and fair elections
- Some constraints including registration, campaigning and media access exist
- Serious irregularities during voting process occur
- Elections are entirely unfree and unfair


1 2 3 4 5 4 4 3
The Limits of People Power

To what extent can individuals form and join independent political or civic groups?

To what extent can these groups operate and assemble freely?

Assembly Rights

- Assembly rights are guaranteed
- Assembly rights are occasionally subject to interference or restrictions
- Assembly rights are often subject to interference or restrictions
- Assembly rights are denied
An Attack on Expression

To what extent can citizens, organizations and the mass media express opinions freely?

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- Freedom of expression is guaranteed
- Freedom of expression is occasionally subject to interference or restrictions
- Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- Freedom of expression is denied

- 2008: 4
- 2010: 3
- 2012: 2
- 2014: 1
- 2016: 1
- 2018: 2
- 2020: 2
- 2022: 2
When Unstoppable Force Meets Immovable Objects

Are democratic institutions capable of performing?

Democratic institutions are effective and efficient
Democratic institutions are often inefficient
Democratic institutions are unstable and ineffective
No democratic institutions exist

Performance of Democratic Institutions

Limited Options

To what extent is there a stable and socially rooted party system able to articulate and aggregate societal interests?
Stuck in the Middle

Stagnant growth and its consequences for development.
Putting Education to Work

A young and educated workforce in search of opportunities.
Putting the Pieces in Place

Government coherently coordinates conflicting objectives
Government tries to coordinate conflicting objectives
Government often fails to coordinate conflicting objectives
Government fails to coordinate conflicting objectives
Fighting Corruption is a Heavy Lift

To what extent does the government successfully contain corruption?
Marching into Peril

To what extent does the political leadership enable the participation of civil society in the political process?

Political leadership actively enables civil society participation
Political leadership permits civil society participation
Political leadership neglects civil society participation
Political leadership obstructs civil society participation

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION
A Table for One?

To what extent does the political leadership use the support of international partners to implement a long-term strategy of development?
To what extent is the political leadership willing and able to cooperate with neighboring countries?

**Consensus-Building**

- All major actors agree on consolidating democracy and market economy
- Major political actors agree on either consolidating democracy or market economy
- Major political actors conflict on consolidating democracy or market economy
- No major political actors want to establish a democracy or market economy

- **Iran**: 5.3
- **Iraq**: 1.8
- **Syria**: 1.0
- **Lebanon**: 3.6
- **Yemen**: 54
People Power

Public confidence in the Iranian government.

- 2011: 80%
- 2012: 72%
- 2013: 69%
- 2014: 75%
- 2015: 75%
- 2016: 71%
- 2018: 55%
- 2019: 52%
- 2020: 47%

* 2017 data not available
Taking Their Seats

Representation by political orientation in the Iranian parliament.

Conservatives/Hardliners: 221 Seats
Independents: 38 Seats
Reformists/Centrists: 19 Seats

2020 Parliamentary election results
What's in the Briefcase?

Iran and the scourge of corruption, Corruption Perception Index, 2020.

Iran 149

Iraq 160

Yemen 176

Russia 129

China 78

Syria 178

Less corrupt

Highly corrupt

180
The Forever Regime?

A timetable of theocratic rule (Hijri and Gregorian calendars).

Ali Khamenei as Supreme Leader of Iran
Under the Dome

A breakdown of religious groups in Iran (2011 census est.).

99.4%

7_JVSWYPMSKV

90%-95%
Shia

5-10%
Sunni

0.3%
Other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, etc.)
More Bang for the Buck

Iran's influence operations across the Middle East (figures in US$).

**Iraq**
- Support for Shia militants (exact figures unknown)

**Palestinian Territories**
- $100 million for Palestinian groups (per year)

**Syria**
- $16 billion for Assad regime (2012-2020)

**Lebanon**
- $1 billion for Hezbollah (per year)

**Yemen**
- Hundreds of millions of dollars since 2012 for Houthi aid (exact figures unknown)

**Teheran**
- $700 million for Hezbollah (per year)
Iran has spread its influence throughout the Middle East via its proxy militia model. Here is a snapshot of how this tactic has taken shape throughout the region.
There is clarity about the nation’s existence as a state with adequately established and differentiated power structures.
A Paucity of Popular Power

The populace decides who rules, and it has other political freedoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Political Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Democratically elected representatives have the power to govern
- Democratically elected representatives have considerable power to govern
- Democratically elected representatives have limited power to govern
- Political decision-makers are not elected
Flaming Out

The government makes optimum use of available resources.
Flying Solo?

The political leadership is willing and able to cooperate with external supporters and organizations.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Well-focused use of international assistance for long-term strategy
- Use of international assistance without a long-term strategy
- Use of international assistance for short-term expediency
- Considers international assistance as undesired political interference

Scores:
- Iraq: 7.0
- Lebanon: 4.7
- Yemen: 2.0
- Iran: 1.3
- Syria: 1.3
in 2005, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the collapse of the Soviet Union “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century”. He aimed three years later to reverse some of the Soviet empire’s loss by invading the Republic of Georgia. Annexing Crimea followed that misadventure, as did a subsequent prolonged standoff between Russian and Ukrainian forces in eastern Ukraine. The West pondered Moscow’s intentions.

While Putin waxed nostalgic about the Soviet era, his consolidation of domestic power is perhaps more reminiscent of the tsars who once occupied the Winter Palace. At the conclusion of his second presidential term in 2008, Putin maintained control by choosing a successor, Dmitry Medvedev, who promptly named him prime minister. Putin returned to the presidency four years later to steer his country through economic crises, orchestrate crackdowns on domestic human rights groups, poison and assassinate opposition figures, and even implicated in downing a passenger airliner. By 2020, the on-and-off Russian president had the constitution amended to keep himself in power, potentially through 2036. Trading places with another senior official would no longer be necessary.

As Putin extinguishes the few remaining embers of democracy at home, the Kremlin’s cyber forces and conventional military assets continue to seek to redefine the map of post-Soviet Eurasia. The Baltic countries and Poland have sounded the alarm, and the European Union and the United States struggle to find effective tools to frustrate Russian revanchism. This chapter illustrates the disturbing trendlines that have been the hallmarks of Putin’s Russia. Can the West still facilitate democratic reform and constructive engagement, or has the die already been cast?
Poisoning the Well

Crackdowns on dissidents and independent organizations reduce space for democratic actors.

Flawed democracies

Hybrid regimes (Authoritarian with some democratic features)

RANKING DEMOCRACY INDEX

1 Most Democratic (Norway)

167 Most Authoritarian (North Korea)
Do Not Pass Go

To what extent does the state's monopoly on the use of force cover the entire territory of the country?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MONOPOLY ON USE OF FORCE**

- State monopoly on use of force
- State monopoly challenged in territorial enclaves
- State monopoly limited to key parts of the country
- No state monopoly on use of force
Power of the Pulpit

To what extent are legal order and political institutions defined without interference by religious dogmas?

INTERFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS DOGMA

- The state is secular
- The state is largely secular
- Secular and religious norms are in conflict
- The state is theocratic
Vote for Putin…or Putin

To what extent are political representatives determined by general, free and fair elections?

- No constraints on free and fair elections
- Some constraints including registration, campaigning and media access exist
- Serious irregularities during voting process occur
- Elections are entirely unfree and unfair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent do democratically elected political representatives have the effective power to govern, or to what extent are there veto powers and political enclaves?
On Increasingly Shaky Ground

Democratic institutions are capable of performing, and they are adequately accepted.
A Potemkin Democracy

To what extent are democratic institutions accepted as legitimate by the relevant actors?

- 10: All democratic institutions are accepted as legitimate
- 9: Most democratic institutions are accepted as legitimate
- 8: Only individual institutions are accepted as legitimate
- 7: No democratic institutions exist

Commitment to Democratic Institutions

- 2008: 5
- 2010: 4
- 2012: 5
- 2014: 2
- 2016: 2
- 2018: 3
- 2020: 3
- 2022: 3
Democracy's Signal Gone Silent

How strong is the citizens’ approval of democratic norms and procedures?
The Dangers of Disobedience

To what extent are there traditions of civil society?

CIVIL SOCIETY TRADITIONS

- Traditions of civil society are very weak
- Traditions of civil society are fairly weak
- Traditions of civil society are fairly strong
- Traditions of civil society are very strong
No Room for Opposition

Can reformers exclude or co-opt anti-democratic actors?

- Reformers successfully exclude or co-opt anti-democratic actors
- Reformers cannot completely control anti-democratic actors
- Reformers have little control over anti-democratic actors
- Reformers have no control over anti-democratic actors
Power from Prosperity

Can Putin retain a monopoly on power without growing the economy?
High Levels of Higher Education

What will an educated population demand?
Controlling the Airwaves

The reach of Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik.

30 Languages

100 Countries

270M

Annual budget (in Euros)
Men on a Mission

80 Staff / US$ 1 Million per Month
Building a Nest Egg

Economic development in post-Soviet Eurasia.

Integral parts of the Eurasian Economic Union (figures in US$)

- **Eurasian Economic Union**: $1.738B, 164 Million People
- **Russian Federation**: $1.661B, 146.3 Million People
- **Republic of Kazakhstan**: $179.3B, 17.4 Million People
- **Republic of Belarus**: $59.6B, 9.5 Million People
- **Republic of Armenia**: $124B, 3 Million People
- **Kyrgyz Republic**: $8.1B, 5.9 Million People
- **Republic of Armenia**: $124B, 3 Million People
- **Kyrgyz Republic**: $8.1B, 5.9 Million People
Russian leadership since 1999.

Vladimir Putin
1999-2008

Dmitry Medvedev
2008-2012

Vladimir Putin
2012-
Monitoring the Heart of the Russian Economy

Will Russia's economic strategy put the country on life support?
Of Tundra and Time Zones

Unique challenges governing the largest country on Earth.
Power Projection in Putin's Russia

Countries with a Russian presence by mission type:

- **Russia**: Current basing agreement
- **Kazakhstan**: Current basing agreement
- **Azerbaijan** (Nagorno-Karabakh): Conventional peacekeeping
- **Georgia** (South Ossetia): Conventional peacekeeping
- **Ukraine** (Crimea, Donetsk): Covert insurgent support
- **Belarus**: Current basing agreement
- **Moldova** (Transnistria): Conventional peacekeeping
- **Georgia** (Abkhazia): Conventional peacekeeping
- **Armenia**: Conventional peacekeeping
- **Central African Republic**: Indirect regime support
- **Sudan**: Indirect regime support
- **Egypt**: Current basing agreement
- **Libya**: Current basing agreement
- **Korea**: Current basing agreement
- **Kyrgyzstan**: Current basing agreement
- **Eritrea**: Potential basing agreement
- **Egypt**: Current basing agreement
- **Syria**: Conventional regime support
- **Tajikistan**: Current basing agreement
- **Trinidad and Tobago**: Current basing agreement

**Note**: The map shows the countries with a Russian presence and the type of mission in which they are involved.
Up, Up and Away

Military spending in Russia

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<td>$61.4B</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$64.1B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Slaying the Dragon

State powers check and balance one another and ensure civil rights.
Doing a Delicate Dance

The political leadership establishes a broad consensus on reform with other actors in society without sacrificing its reform goals.
Acknowledgements

Five years ago, the Bertelsmann Foundation created the Disrupting Democracy series to uncover the factors that have eroded democracy worldwide over the past decade. We have since covered 16 country case studies using print, animation, documentary films and infographics. In this final installment of the series, we take an in-depth look into the influence of regional powers on their neighborhoods, for better or for worse.

Throughout the series the secret to our success has been the data. In this edition, we were privileged to work with our distinguished colleagues from the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Bertelsmann Transformation Index team, who provided the lion's share of the data points upon which the infographics were built. Thanks to the hard work and ingenuity of Hauke Hartmann, Sabine Donner, Sabine Steinkamp, Claudia Härterich and Hannah Kickert, we could examine country case studies and regions to uncover nuggets of information that provide deeper insight than conventional wisdom often allows.

Once we had the data in hand, we turned our attention to bringing the numbers to life. That task was led by the Bertelsmann Foundation's Anthony Silberfeld and Puntoaparte Editores' Mateo Zúñiga, who figured out how to tell complex geopolitical stories through visuals that incorporate art, analysis and even some humor.

I also express sincere gratitude to my other Bertelsmann Foundation colleagues for their contributions: Brandon Bohrn, Nathan Crist, Chesney Garnos, Samuel George, Faith Gray, Chloe Laird, Sara Leming, Megan Long and Daniela Medina. In our boutique think tank, every team member plays an important role in ensuring our projects' successes.

Irene Braam
Executive Director
Bertelsmann Foundation, February 2022
About the Bertelsmann Foundation

The Bertelsmann Foundation (North America), Inc., established in 2008, was created to promote and strengthen the transatlantic relationship. Through research, analysis, forums, and audio and multimedia content, we seek to educate and engage a transatlantic audience on the most pressing economic, political, and social challenges facing the United States and Europe. We are the U.S. arm of the Germany-based Bertelsmann Stiftung.

About the Bertelsmann Transformation Index

Since 2006, the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) has regularly analyzed and evaluated the quality of democracy, market economy and governance in currently 137 developing and transition countries. The assessment is based on over 5,000 pages of detailed country reports produced in cooperation with close to 300 experts from leading universities and think tanks in more than 120 countries. The BTI is the only cross-national comparative index that uses self-collected data to measure the quality of governance and provide a comprehensive analysis of countries’ policymaking success during transformation processes.

As such, it is one of the prime sources to assess development and transformation in international comparison, integral part of the Worldwide Governance Indicators, the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International) and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance and used by policymakers as well as civil society activists around the world to broaden and substantiate the discourse on reform and democratization.

Datasets, visualizations as well as country, regional and global analyses are available at www.bti-project.org.

The BTI is a project of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, one of Germany’s largest private, nonpartisan foundations. Founded in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to ensuring that everyone can participate in society - politically, economically and culturally.
Anthony Silberfeld is the Director of Transatlantic Relations at the Bertelsmann Foundation, and leads our research and multimedia initiatives at the intersection of technology and democracy. To date, Tony has published three volumes in the Disrupting Democracy series, and has produced a wide range of documentary films and animated shorts that tell the story of political transformation in a volatile world.

Mateo L. Zuñiga is the Art Director at Puntoaparte Editors in Bogotá, Colombia. He has been the lead designer on multiple Bertelsmann Foundation publications including The No Collar Economy and Our Digital World.
Graphic Images

AUTOCRATS AND THE USE OF POWER

Disrupting Democracy
Volume IV

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