



AUTOCRATS AND THE USE OF POWER

Bertelsmann
FOUNDATION

Graphic Images

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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 influence electoral outcomes in neighboring Latvia. These cases revealed an unbalanced ledger of costs and benefits for technology on campaigning, elections systems and 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 Minister 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.

In *Graphic Images: Autocrats and the Use of Power*, the series’ fourth and final installment, we examine the ways in which three undemocratic regimes undermine the prospects for democracy and stability in their respective regions. We do this by drawing on more than 15 years of country- and regional-level data from the Bertelsmann (Stiftung) Transformation Index to produce illuminating infographics. They shed light on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s assault on domestic democratic institutions, which has strengthened his capacity to intervene militarily and through disinformation campaigns in post-Soviet Eurasia. The infographics also show the ability of Iran’s weak government to leverage limited resources to bolster nationalism, and effectively reshape the Middle East. And they highlight China’s embrace of its superpower status to mold, through economic influence, an international landscape reflecting its own value system, and thereby offer a counterexample to American governance.

The images you find in the following pages often present a bleak picture for democracy’s prospects in 2022. We could react with despair. Or we can treat this book as a clarion call to begin reversing the steep democratic decline that we have observed since launching *Disrupting Democracy*. Our hope is that your choice will be clear by the time you turn the final page of this volume.

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.

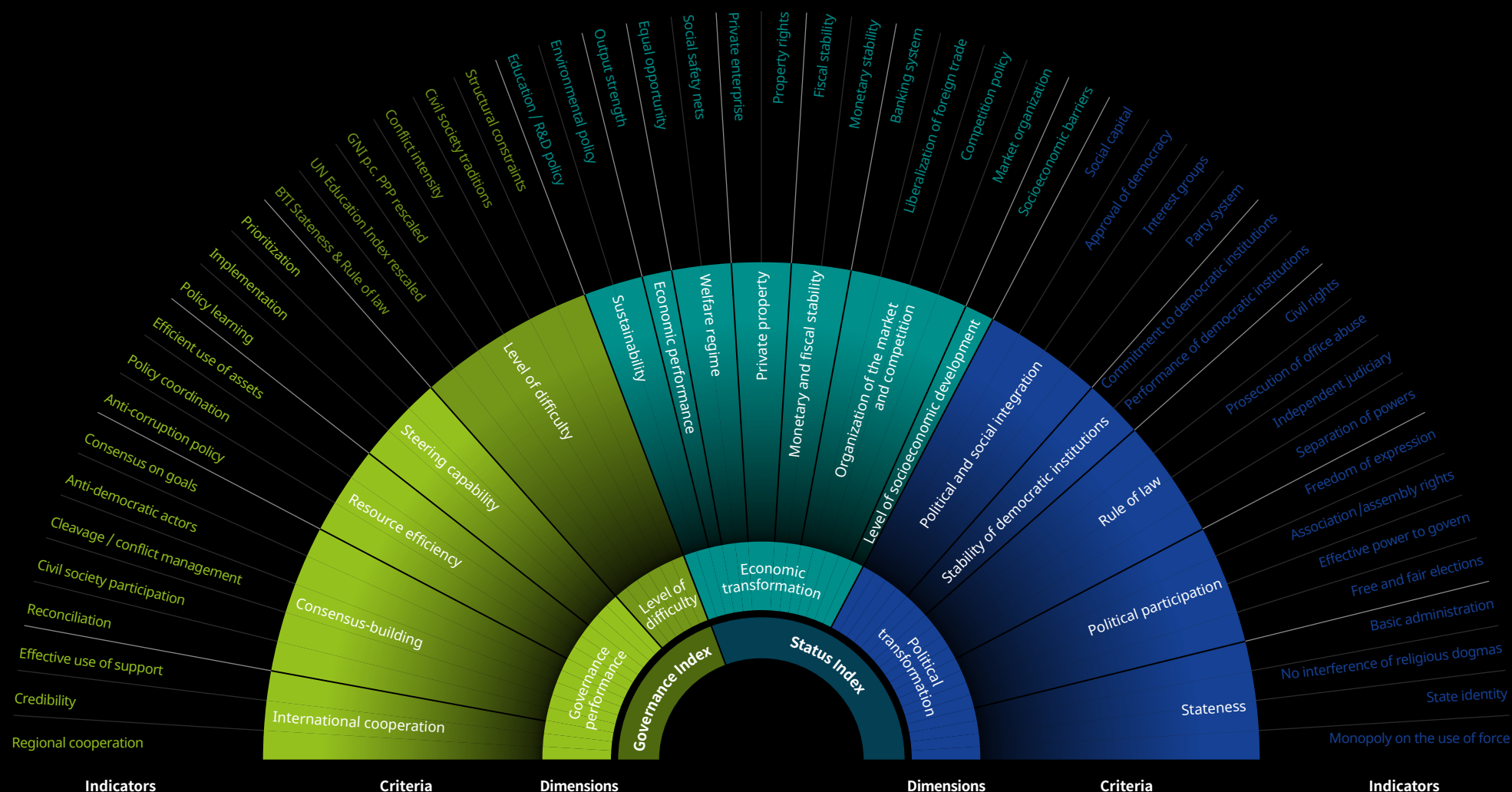
The BTI's normative reference points for good governance – democracy under the rule of law and a market economy anchored in principles of social justice – are closely related both

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

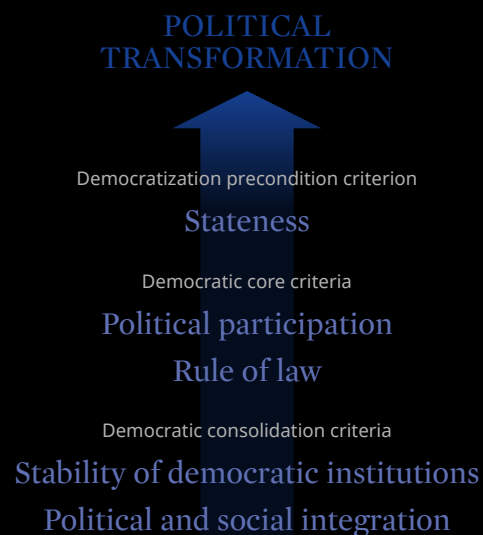
into a Status Index follows the normative premise of the BTI, under which transformation is always conceived of as a comprehensive transition toward democracy and a market-based economy. The Governance Index is formed by calculating the average of scores given for the governance criteria, which is then 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



The state of political transformation is measured in terms of five criteria, which in turn 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 office abuse. The BTI puts a special emphasis on the evaluation of democratic consolidation. 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.



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.



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.

The first expert drafts a detailed report on the basis of the criteria outlined in the codebook, referencing the

qualitative indicators associated with each criterion. The second expert reviews, comments on and adds to this country report. Independently of one another, the two country experts translate the assessment into a numerical rating on a scale of one (the lowest value) to 10 (the highest value), structured by four levels of score-based categories contained in the codebook. In this way, countries are evaluated on the basis of whether and to what extent they comply with the specified rating levels and fulfill the BTI criteria.

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

Free and fair elections	Free elections are not held or are marked by serious irregularities and restrictions.	< 6 points
Effective power to govern	Democratically elected leaders de facto lack the power to govern.	< 4 points
Association and assembly rights	The freedom of association or assembly does not exist, or civil society organizations are suppressed.	< 4 points
Freedom of expression	Freedom of expression or media freedom does not exist, or severe restrictions are in place.	< 4 points

Rule of law

Separation of powers	Constitutional oversight of the executive, legislature or judiciary does not exist, or exists only on paper.	< 4 points
Civil rights	Civil rights are systematically violated	< 4 points

Stateness

Monopoly on the use of force & Basic administration (average)	The state has no control over large parts of the country and fails to fulfill basic civil functions.	< 3 points
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Failing states with a severely limited capacity to act are also considered autocracies.



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CHINA

中国

A New Superpower Has Arrived

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 globe 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.

CHINA 中国

Democracy Failing to Take Flight

China's ranking on the Democracy Index.

*Hybrid
regimes*



**RANKING
DEMOCRACY
INDEX**

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

*Authoritarian
regimes*

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?

MONOPOLY ON USE OF FORCE

- 10 — State monopoly on use of force
- 9 — State monopoly challenged in territorial enclaves
- 8 — State monopoly limited to key parts of the country
- 1 — No state monopoly on use of force





One Nation Under Xi

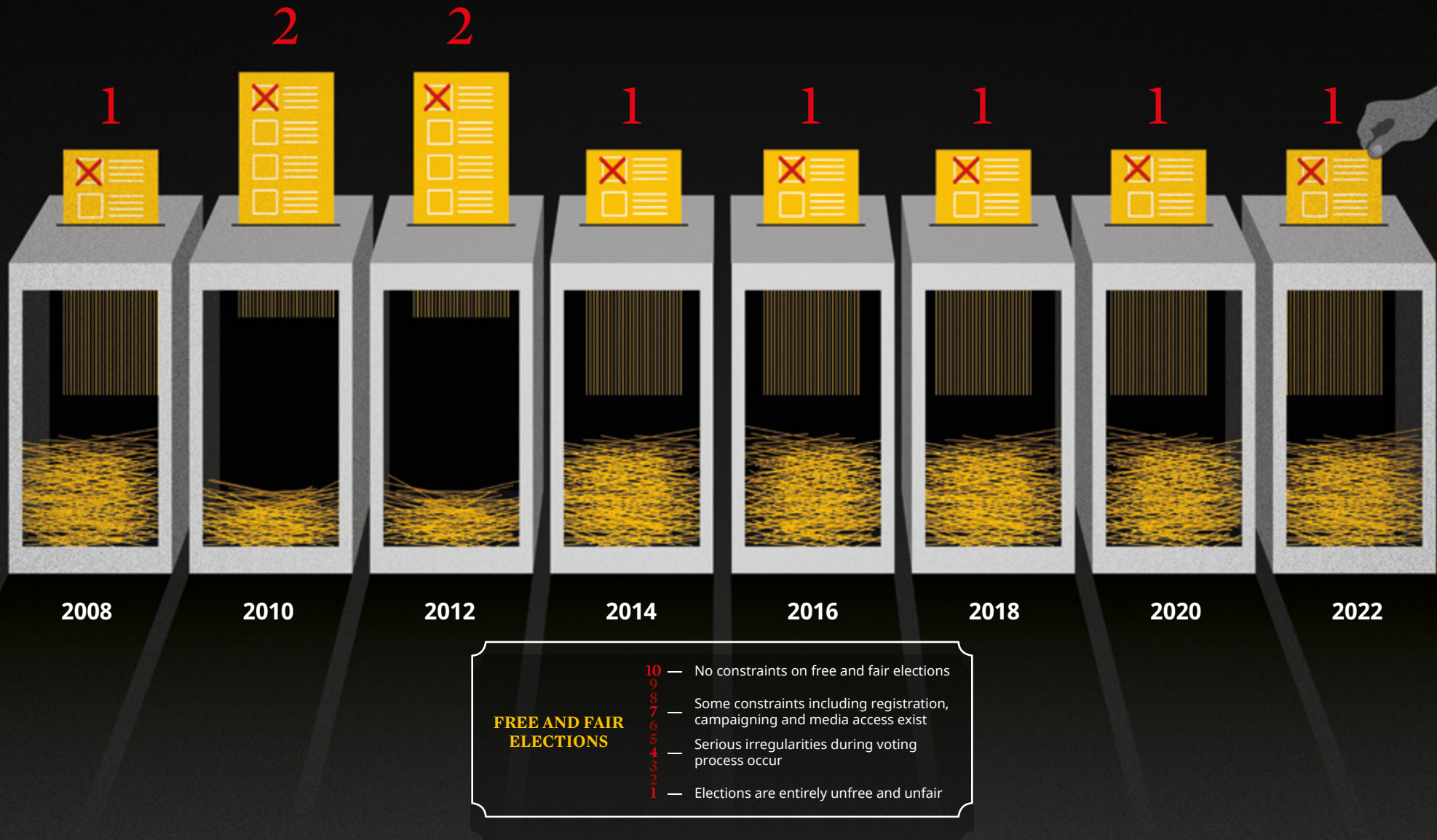
To what extent are legal order and political institutions defined without interference by religious dogmas?

INTERFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS DOGMA

- 10 — The state is secular
- 9 — The state is largely secular
- 8 — Secular and religious norms are in conflict
- 7 — The state is theocratic

Putting Democracy Through the Shredder

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



The Limits of People Power

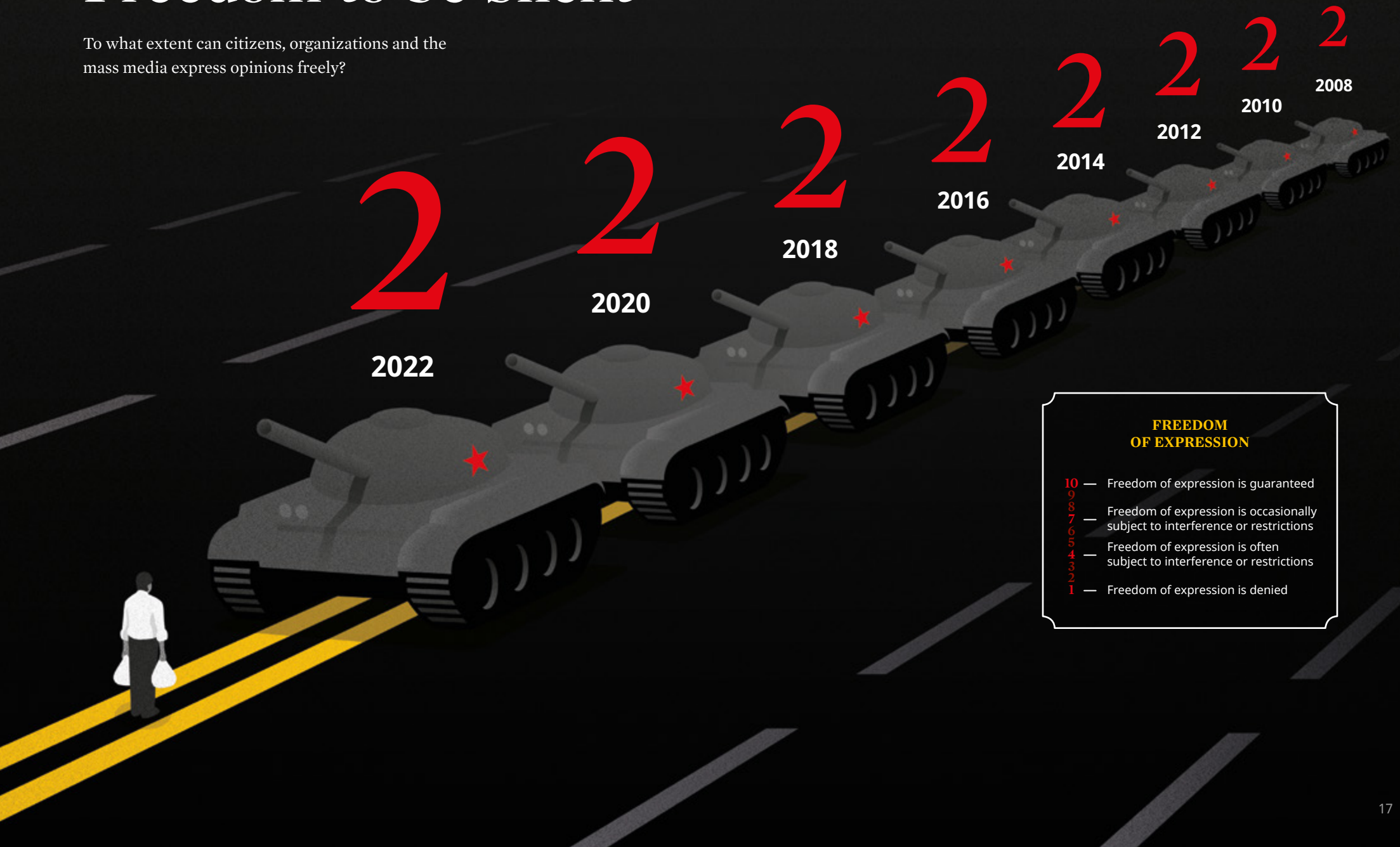
To what extent can individuals form and join independent political or civic groups?

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?

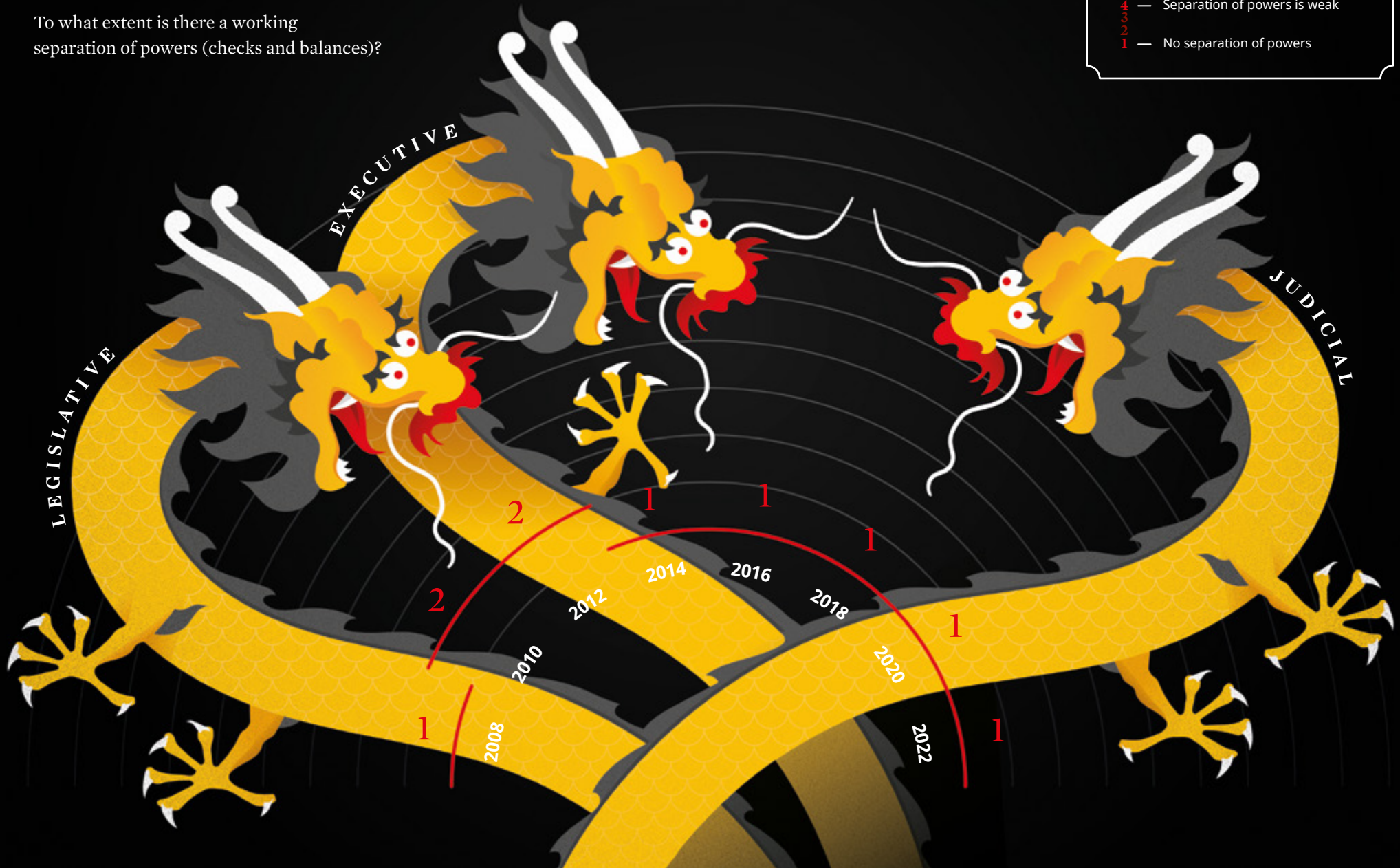


Intertwined Institutions

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

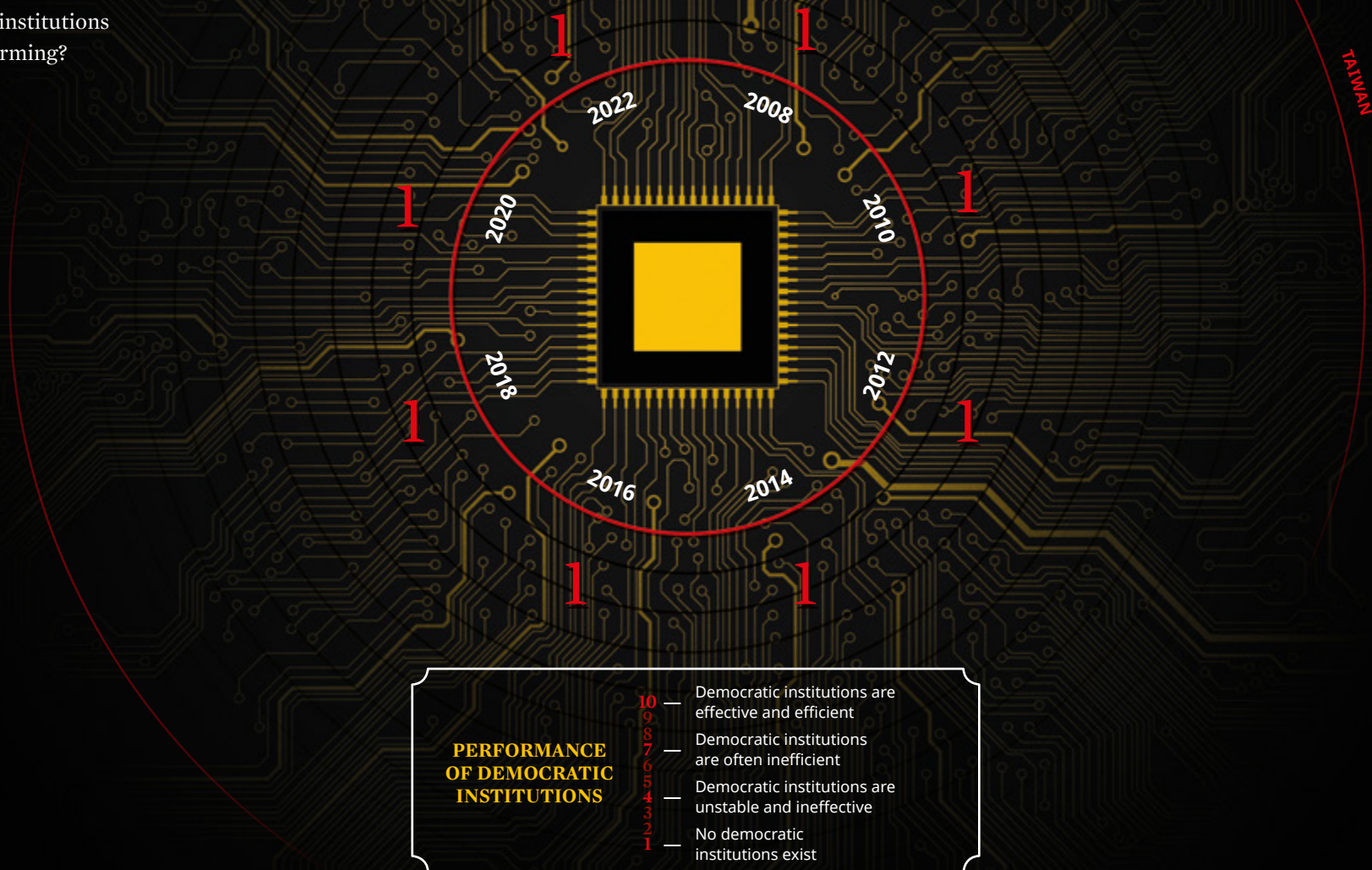
SEPARATION OF POWERS

- 10 — Clear separation of powers
 9 — Separation of powers occasionally subject to interference
 8 — Separation of powers is weak
 1 — No separation of powers



Design Flaws

Are democratic institutions
capable of performing?



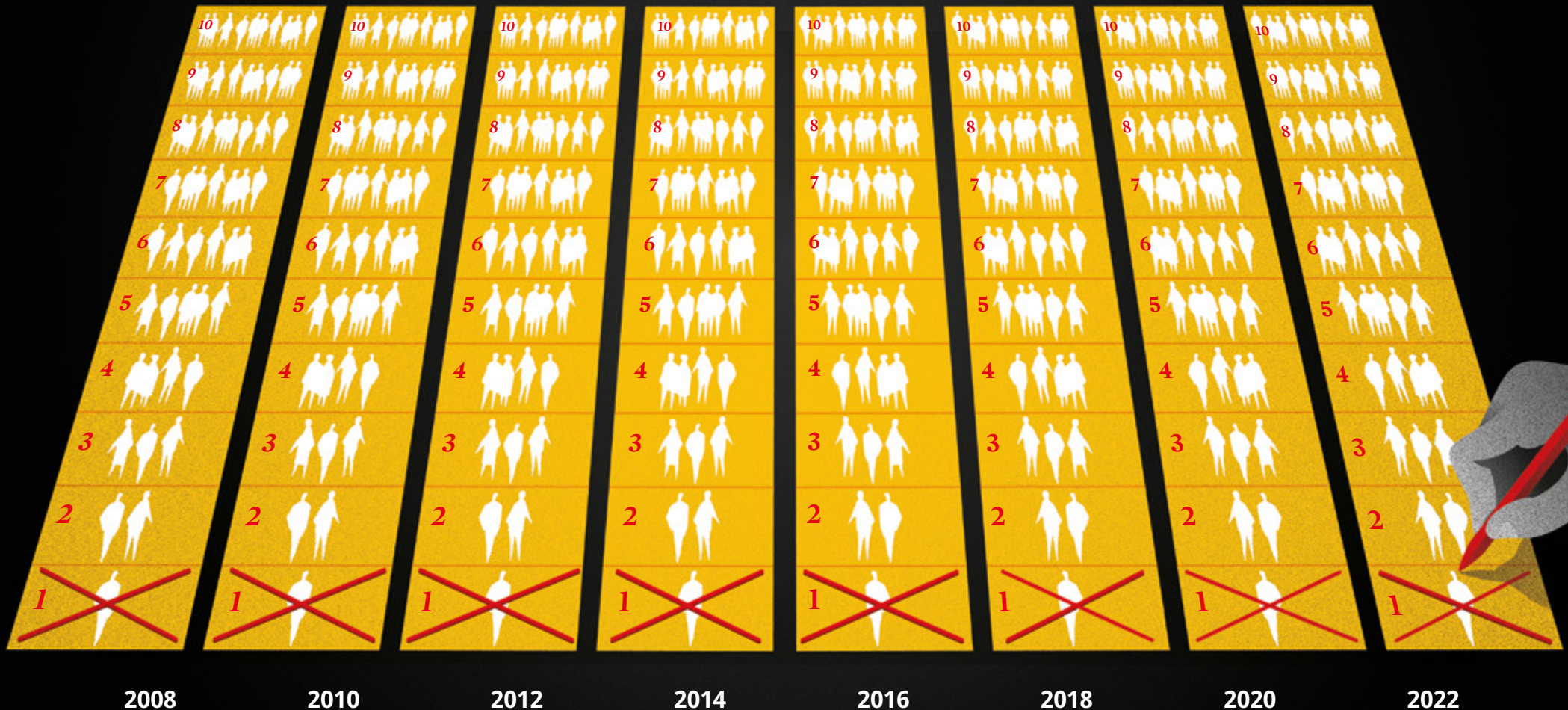
PARTY SYSTEM

- 10 — Party system is stable and socially rooted
- 9 — Party system is fairly stable and socially rooted
- 8 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 7 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 6 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 5 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 4 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 3 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 2 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 1 — No party system exists

CHINA 中国

The Only Game in Town

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

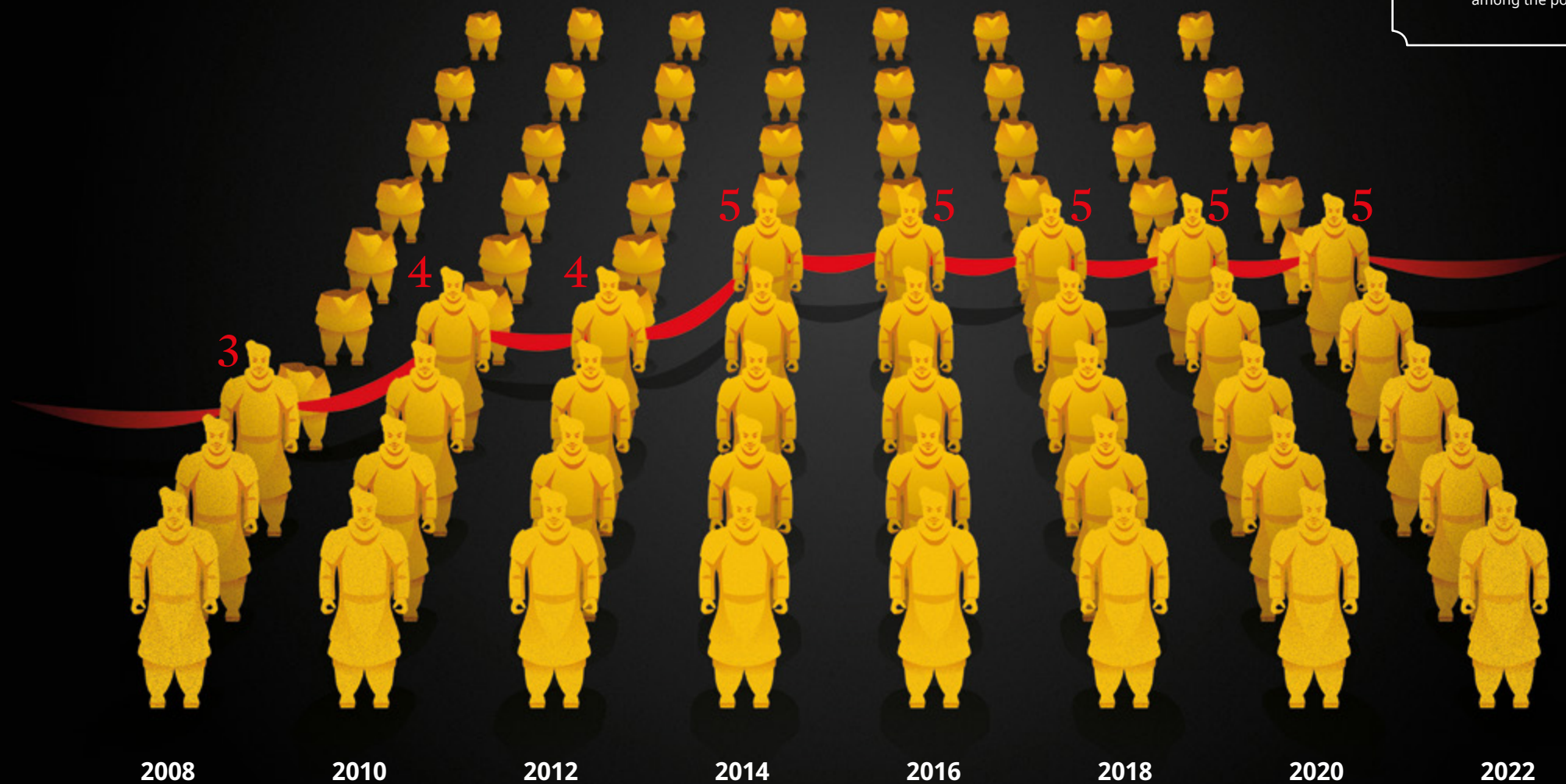


Strength in Numbers

To what extent have social self-organization and the construction of social capital advanced?

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- 10 — High level of trust among the population
- 9 — Fairly high level of trust among the population
- 8 — Fairly high level of trust among the population
- 7 — Fairly high level of trust among the population
- 6 — Fairly high level of trust among the population
- 5 — Fairly low level of trust among the population
- 4 — Fairly low level of trust among the population
- 3 — Fairly low level of trust among the population
- 2 — Very low level of trust among the population
- 1 — Very low level of trust among the population



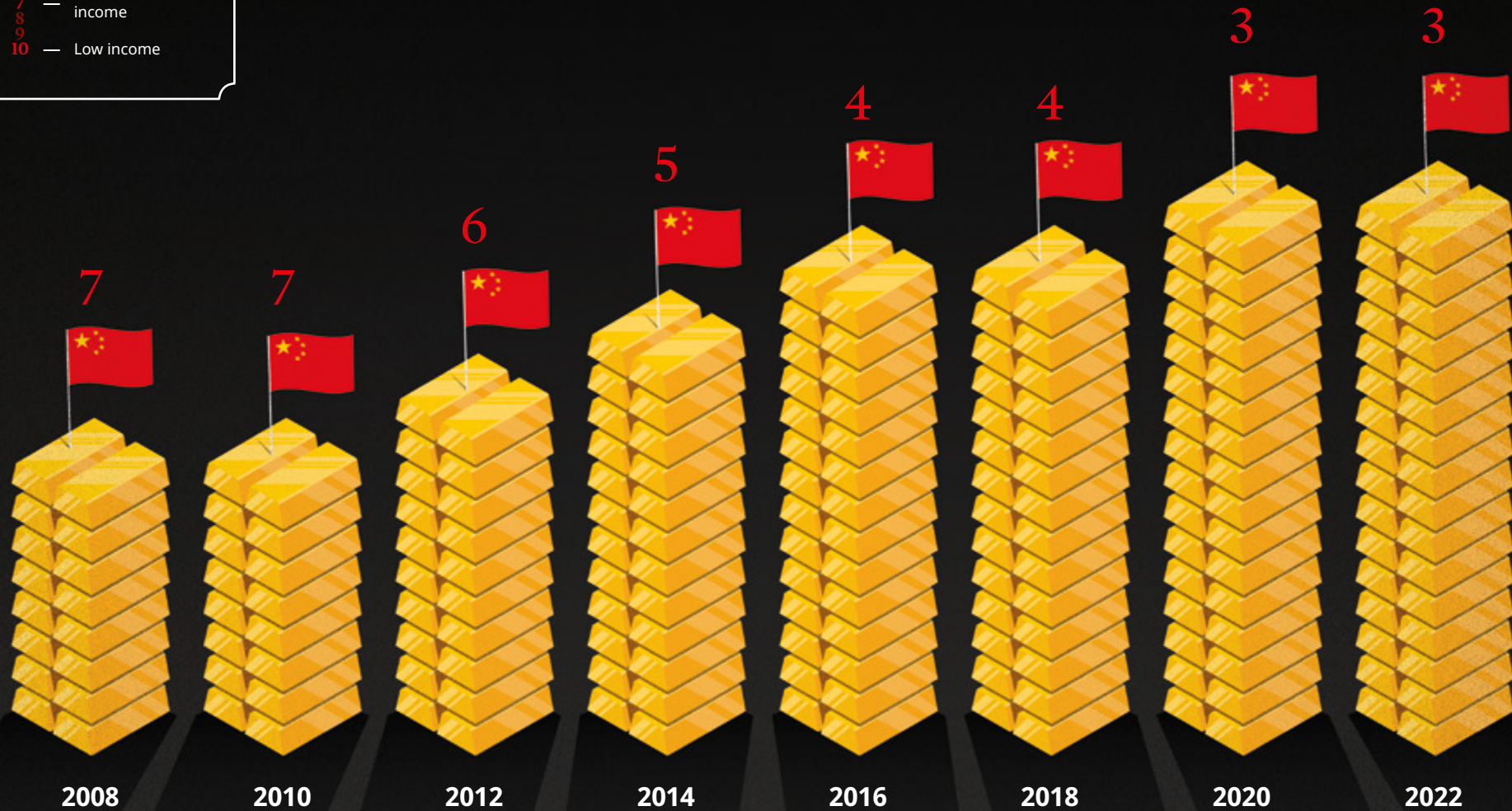
CHINA 中国

GROSS NATIONAL
INCOME RESCALED

- 1 — High income
- 2 — Upper middle income
- 3 — Lower middle income
- 10 — Low income

Movin' on Up

The World Bank's method for classifying economies.



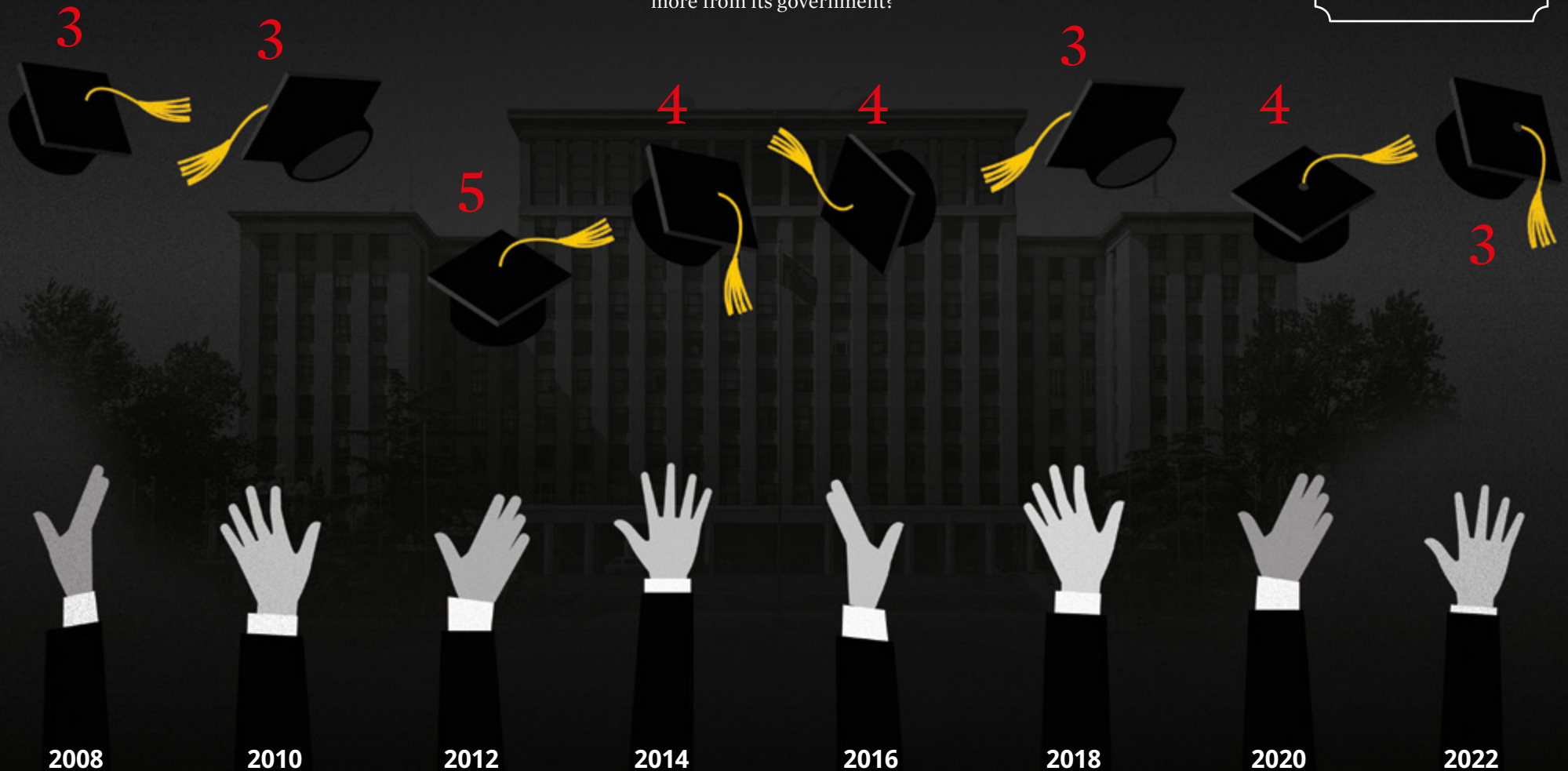
CHINA 中国

A Future Up in the Air

Does an educated population demand
more from its government?

UNITED NATIONS
EDUCATION
INDEX RESCALED

1 — Most
educated
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 — Least
educated

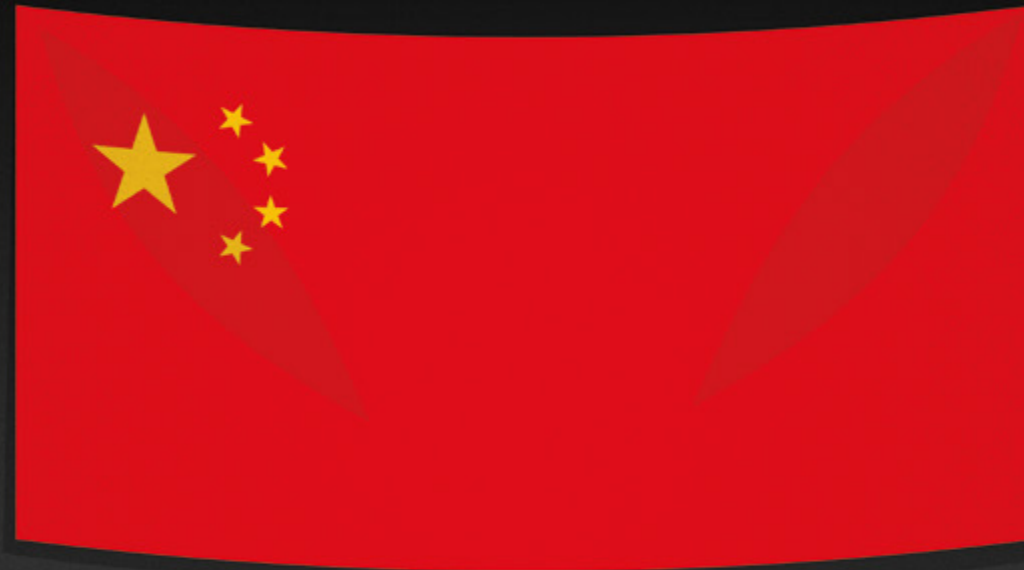


Do We Have Any Volunteers?

To what extent are there traditions of civil society?

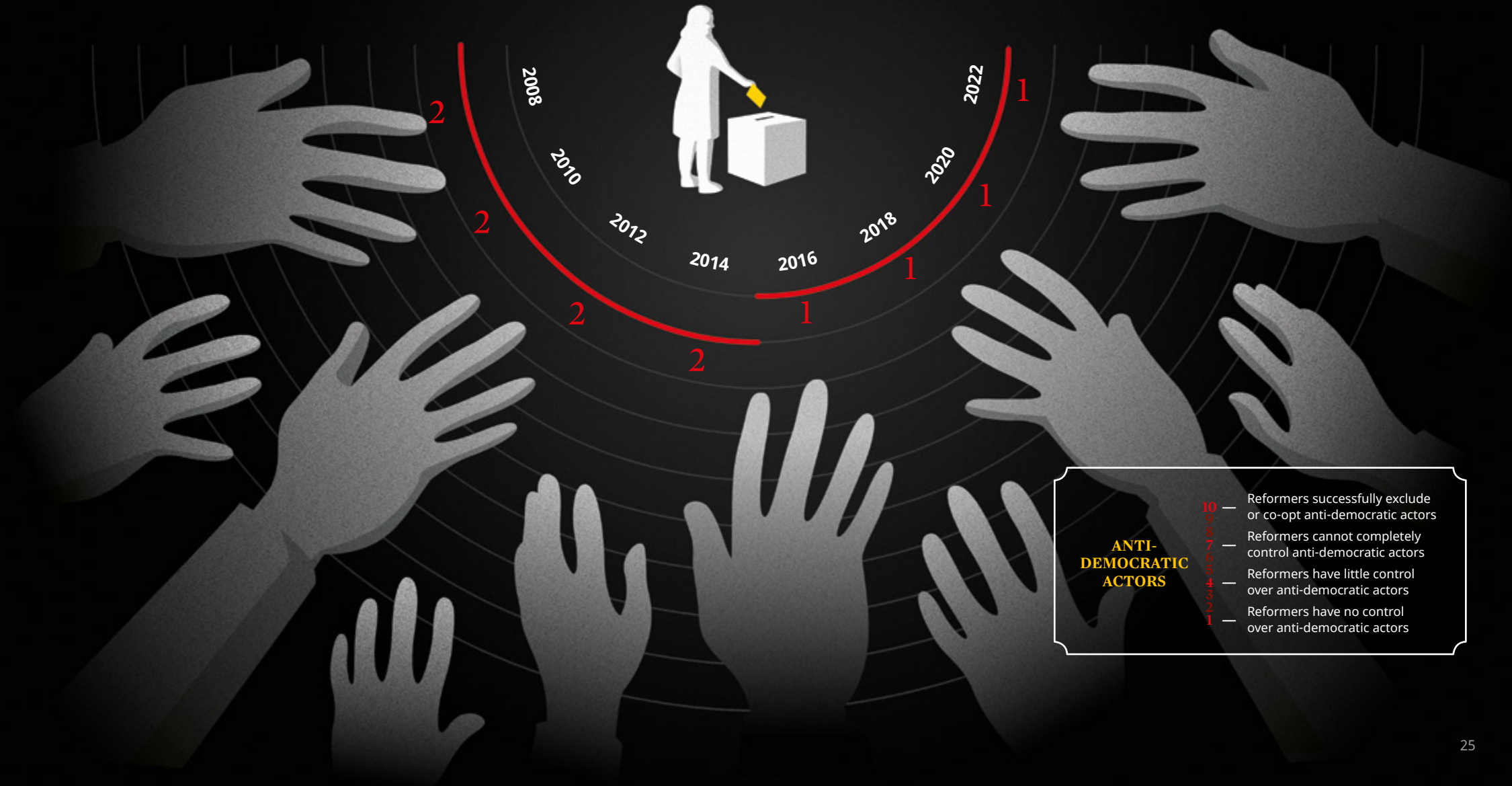
CIVIL SOCIETY TRADITIONS

- 10 — Traditions of civil society are very weak
- 9 — Traditions of civil society are fairly weak
- 8 — Traditions of civil society are fairly strong
- 7 — Traditions of civil society are very strong
- 6 — Traditions of civil society are very weak
- 5 — Traditions of civil society are fairly weak
- 4 — Traditions of civil society are fairly strong
- 3 — Traditions of civil society are very strong
- 2 — Traditions of civil society are very weak
- 1 — Traditions of civil society are very strong



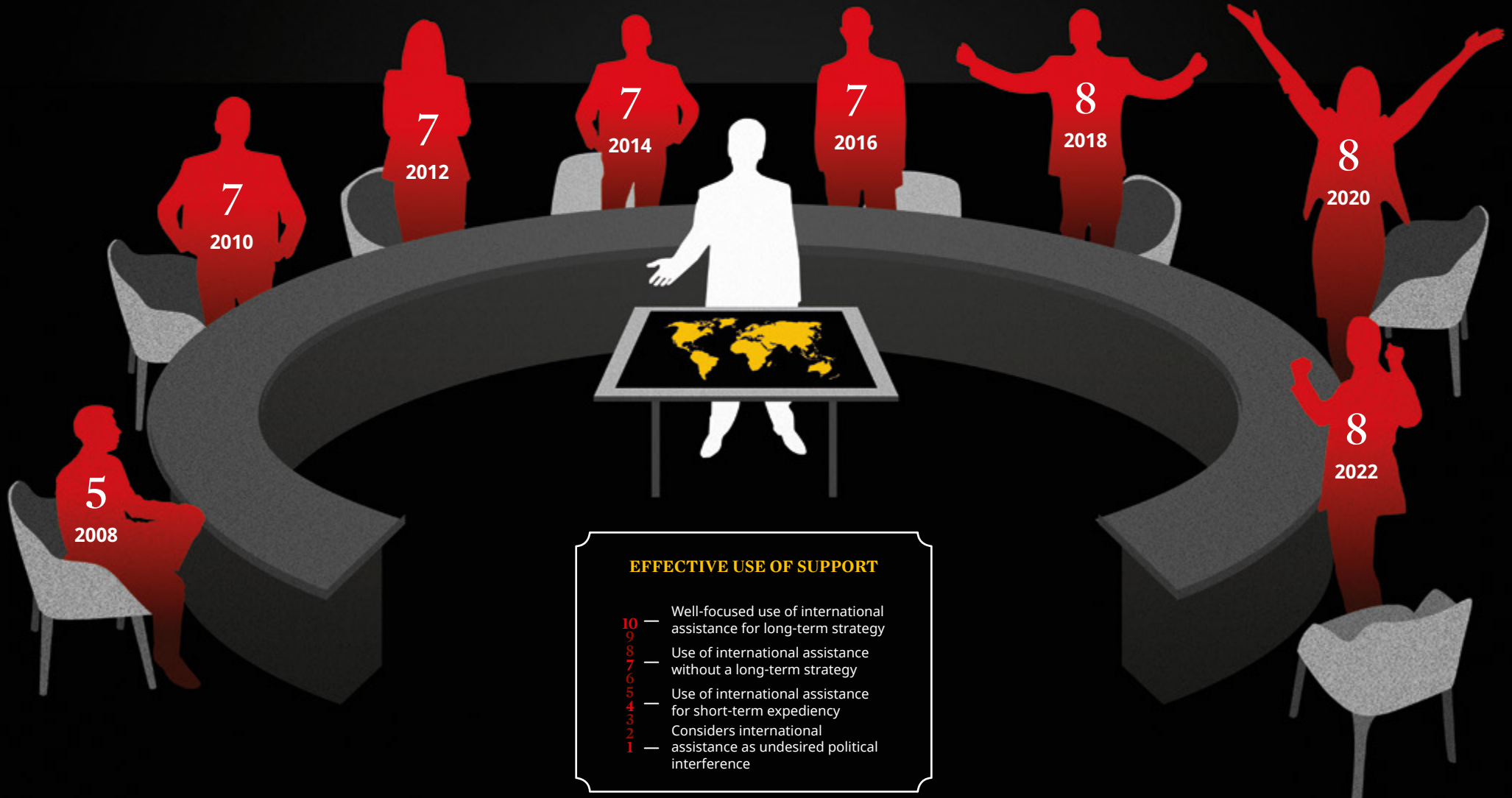
No Place for Persuasion

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



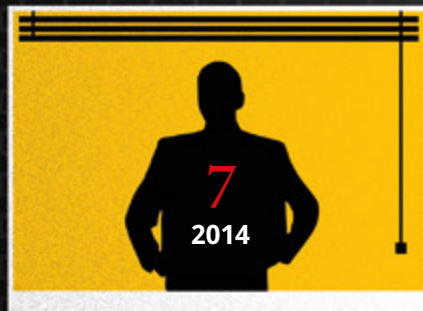
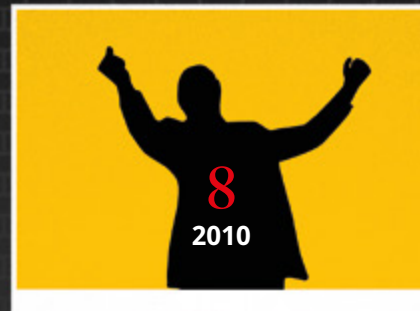
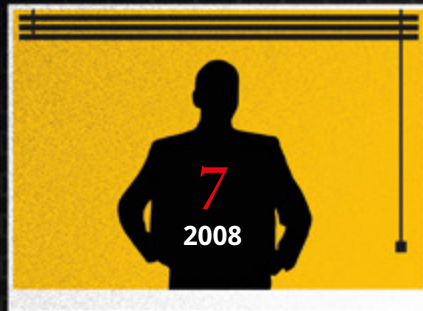
Partners Around the Table

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



Won't You Be My Neighbor?

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

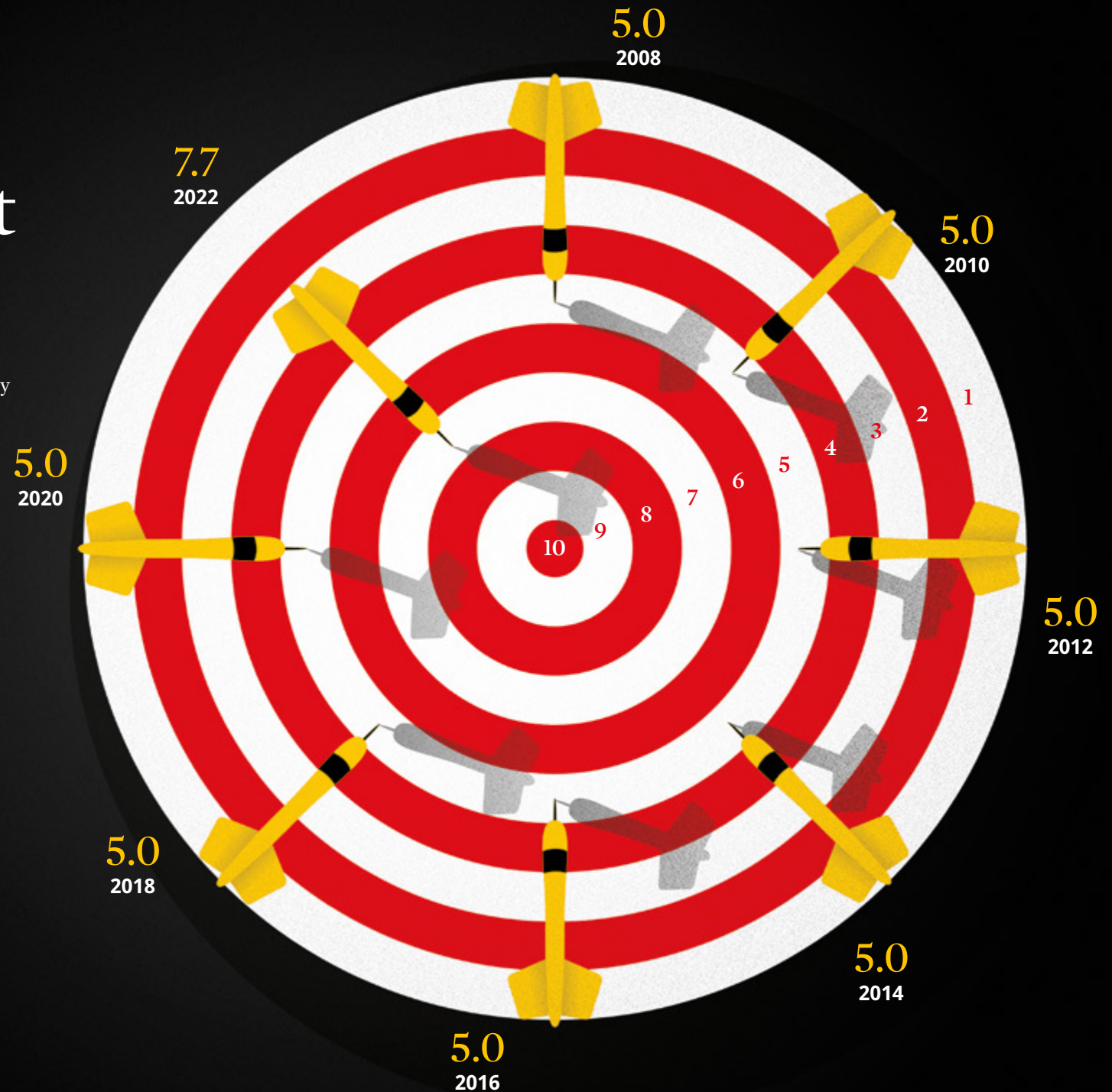


REGIONAL COOPERATION

- 10 — Government actively builds relationships with neighbors
- 9 —
- 8 — Government
- 7 — cooperates with neighbors
- 6 —
- 5 — Government
- 4 — cooperates selectively with neighbors
- 3 —
- 2 — Government is
- 1 — uncooperative with neighbors

Keeping the Government on Target

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

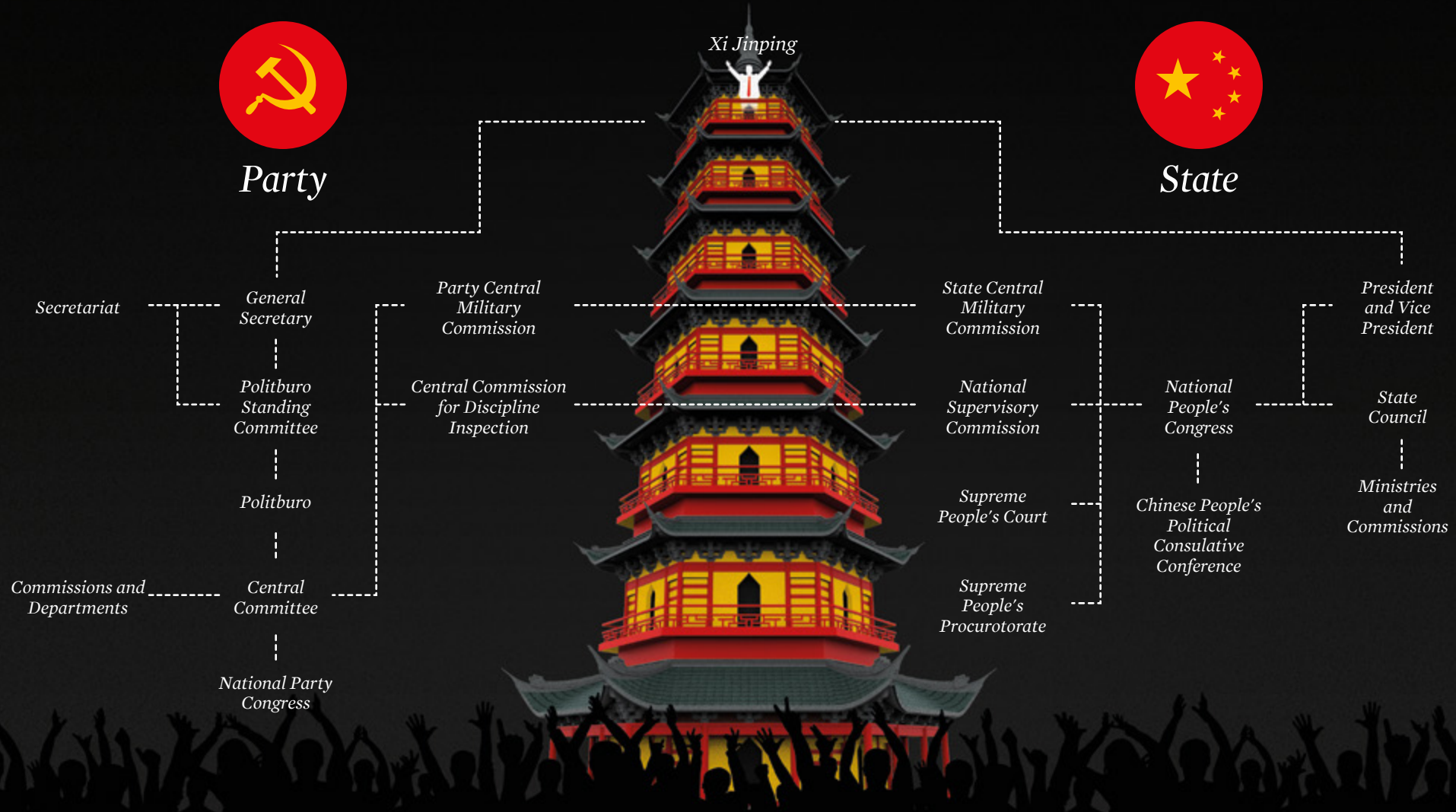


STEERING CAPABILITY

- 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
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

Navigating the Structure of Government

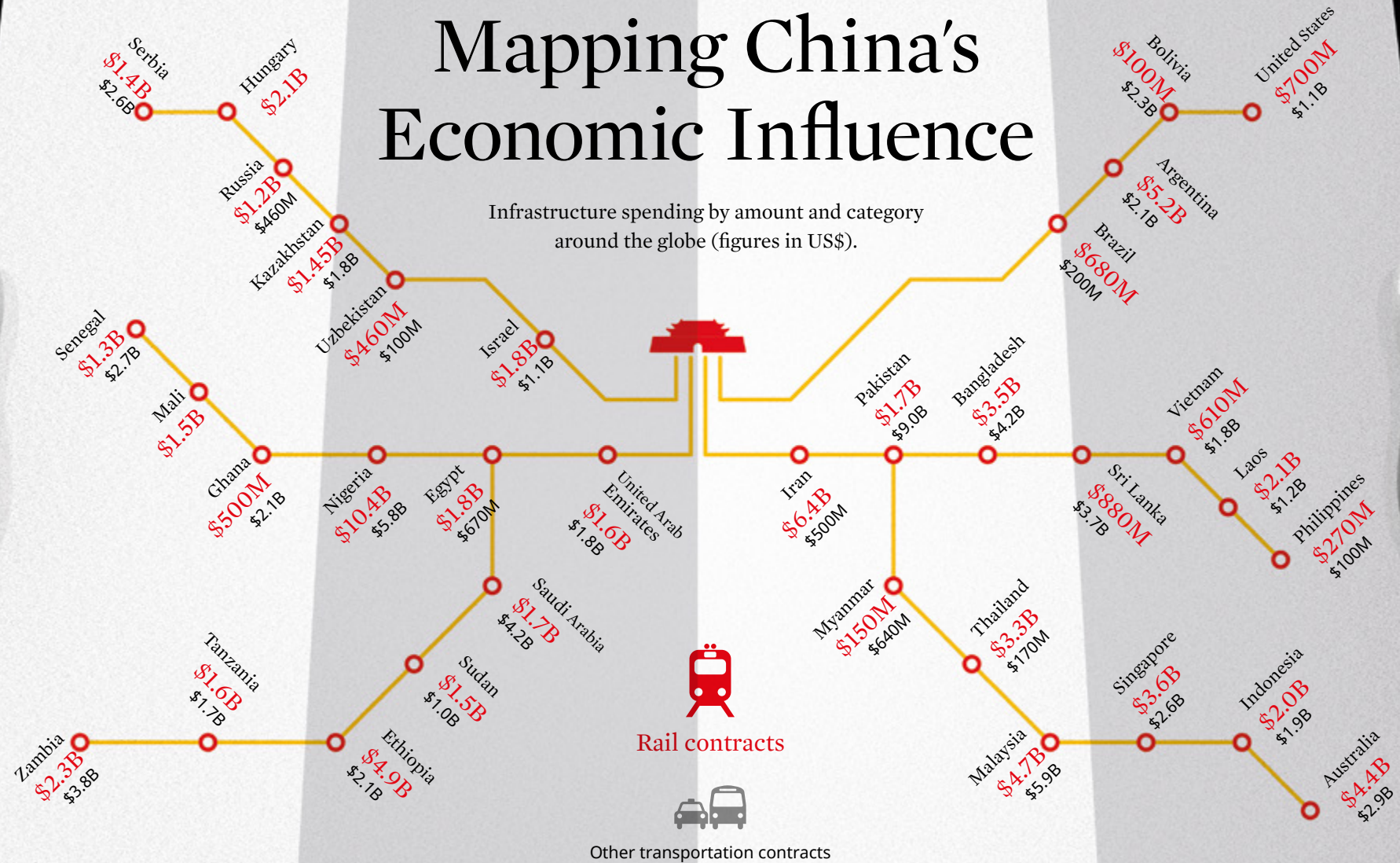
In the end, Chinese institutions report to one man.



CHINA 中国

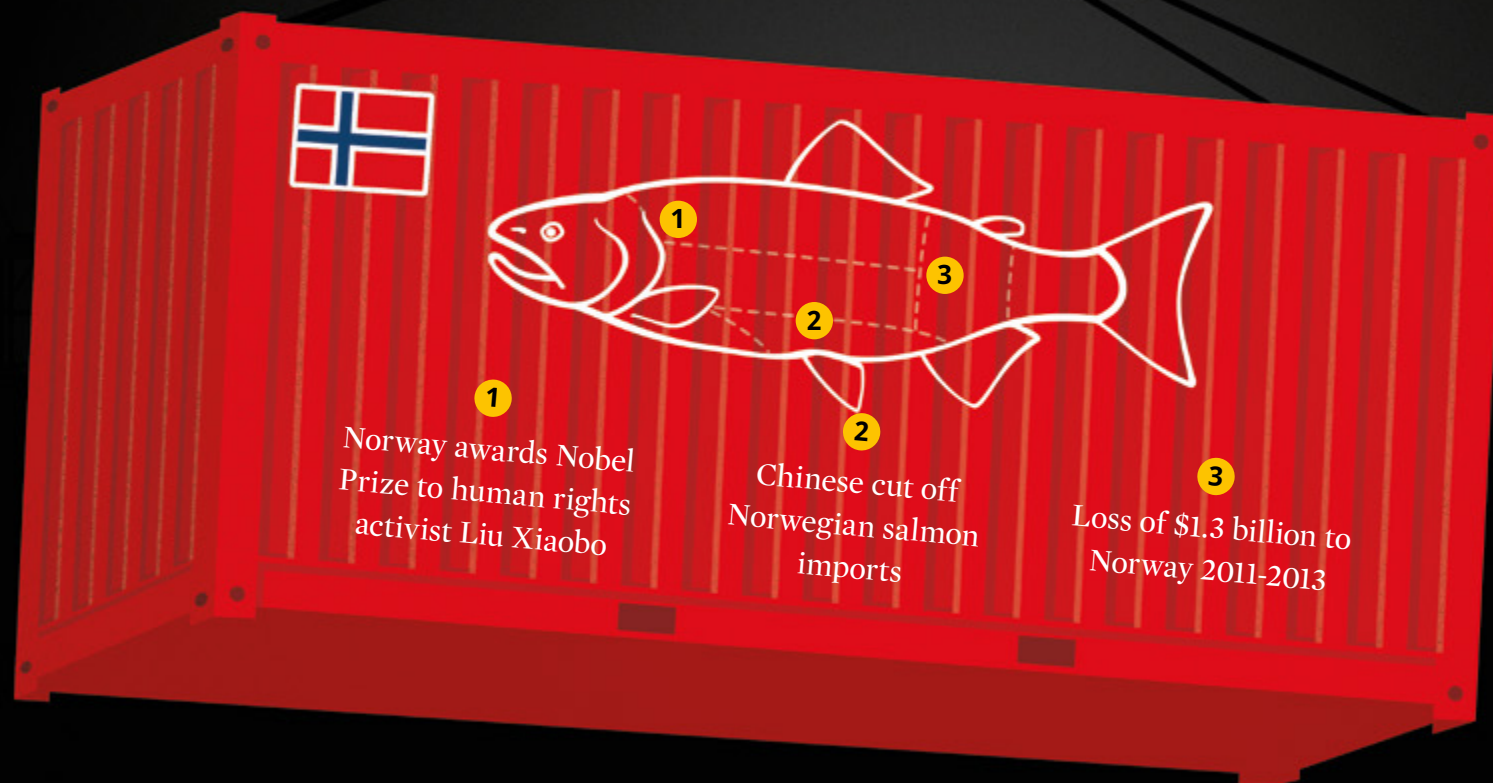
Mapping China's Economic Influence

Infrastructure spending by amount and category around the globe (figures in US\$).



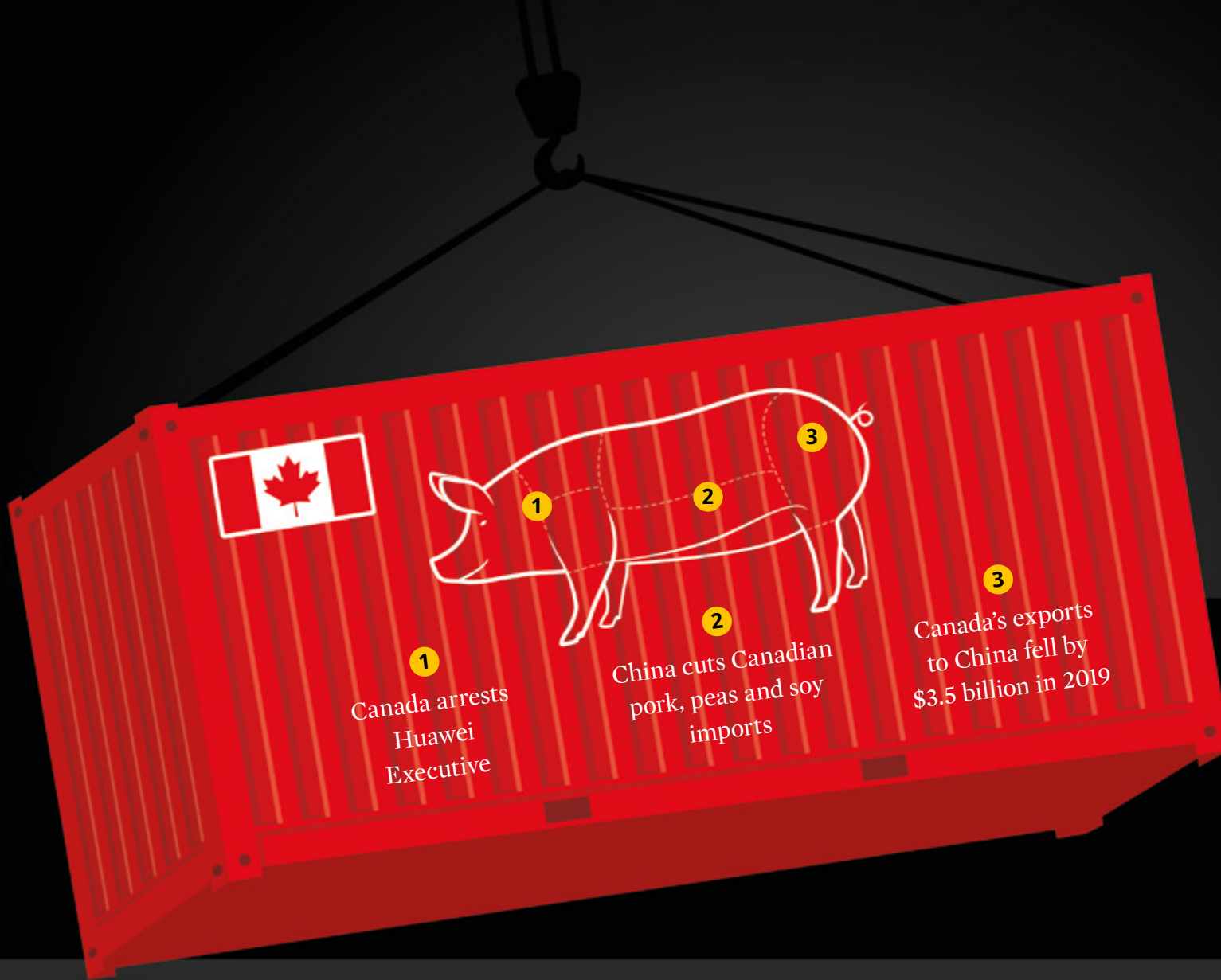
Something's Fishy

The high cost of the Nobel Prize.



An Eye for an Eye

Retribution in the case of Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou.

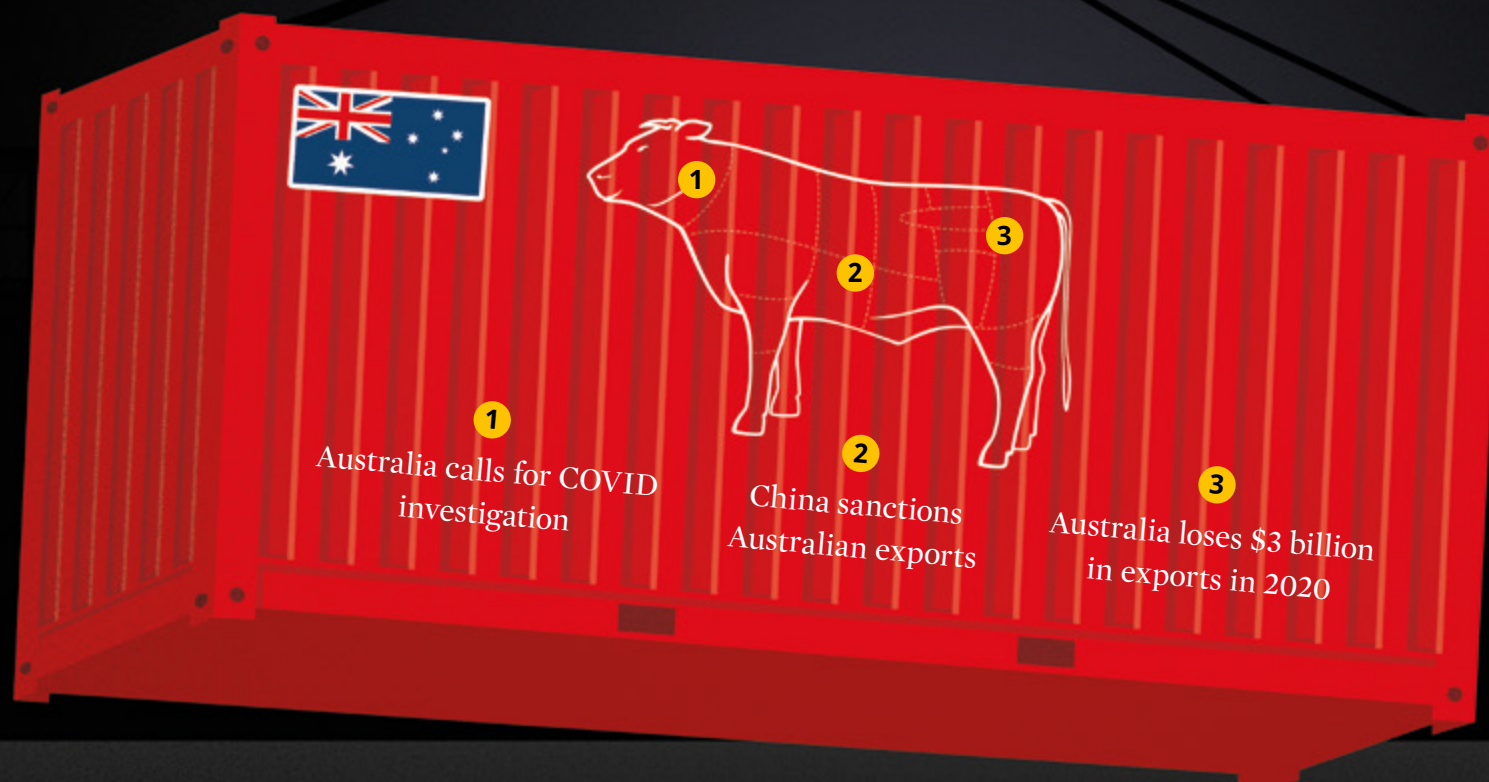


STOP



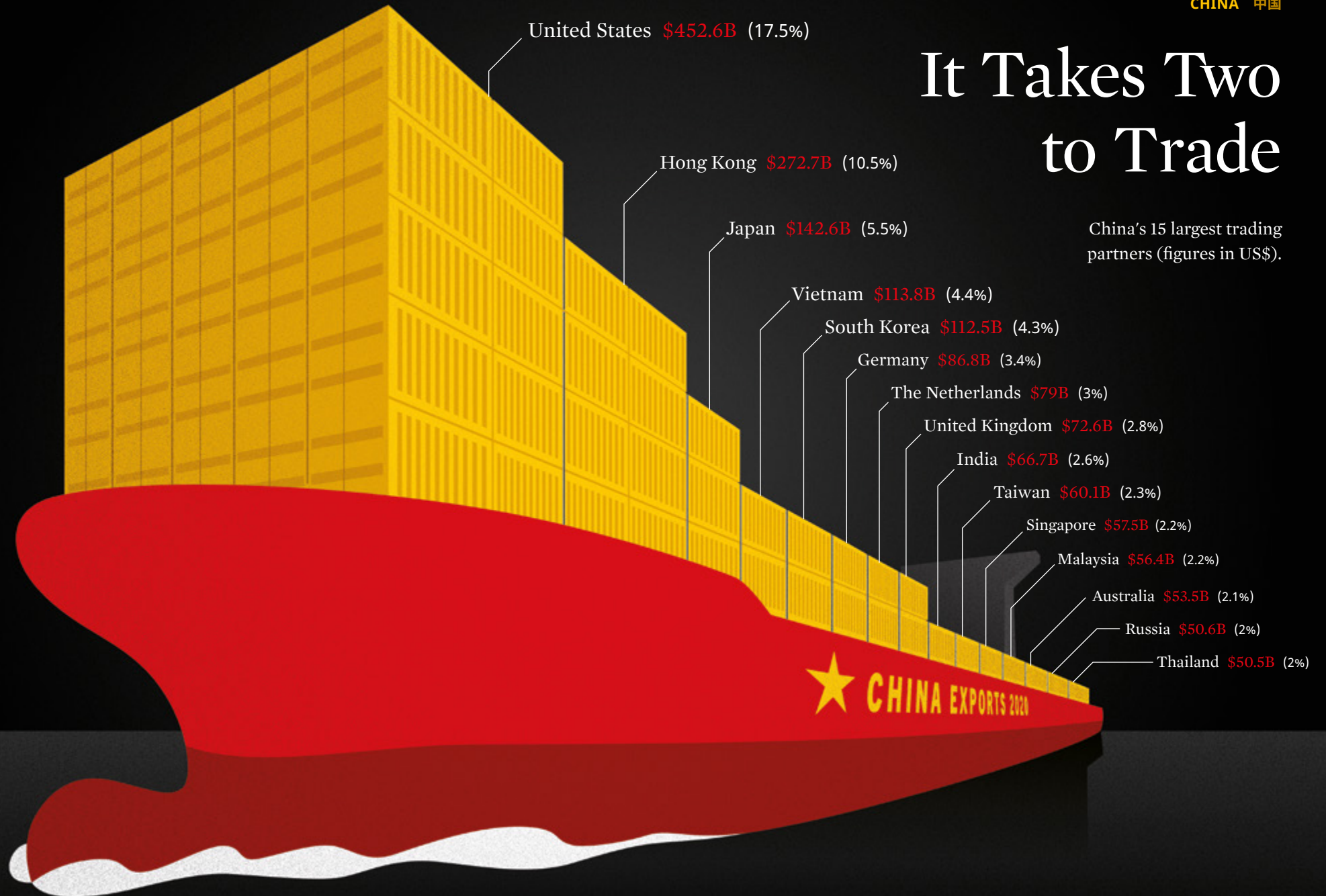
Where's the Beef?

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



It Takes Two to Trade

China's 15 largest trading partners (figures in US\$).



CHINA 中国

Spreading the Wealth

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



Wrapped in the Flag

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

10.0
Taiwan

9.0
North Korea

8.8
Vietnam

8.5
China

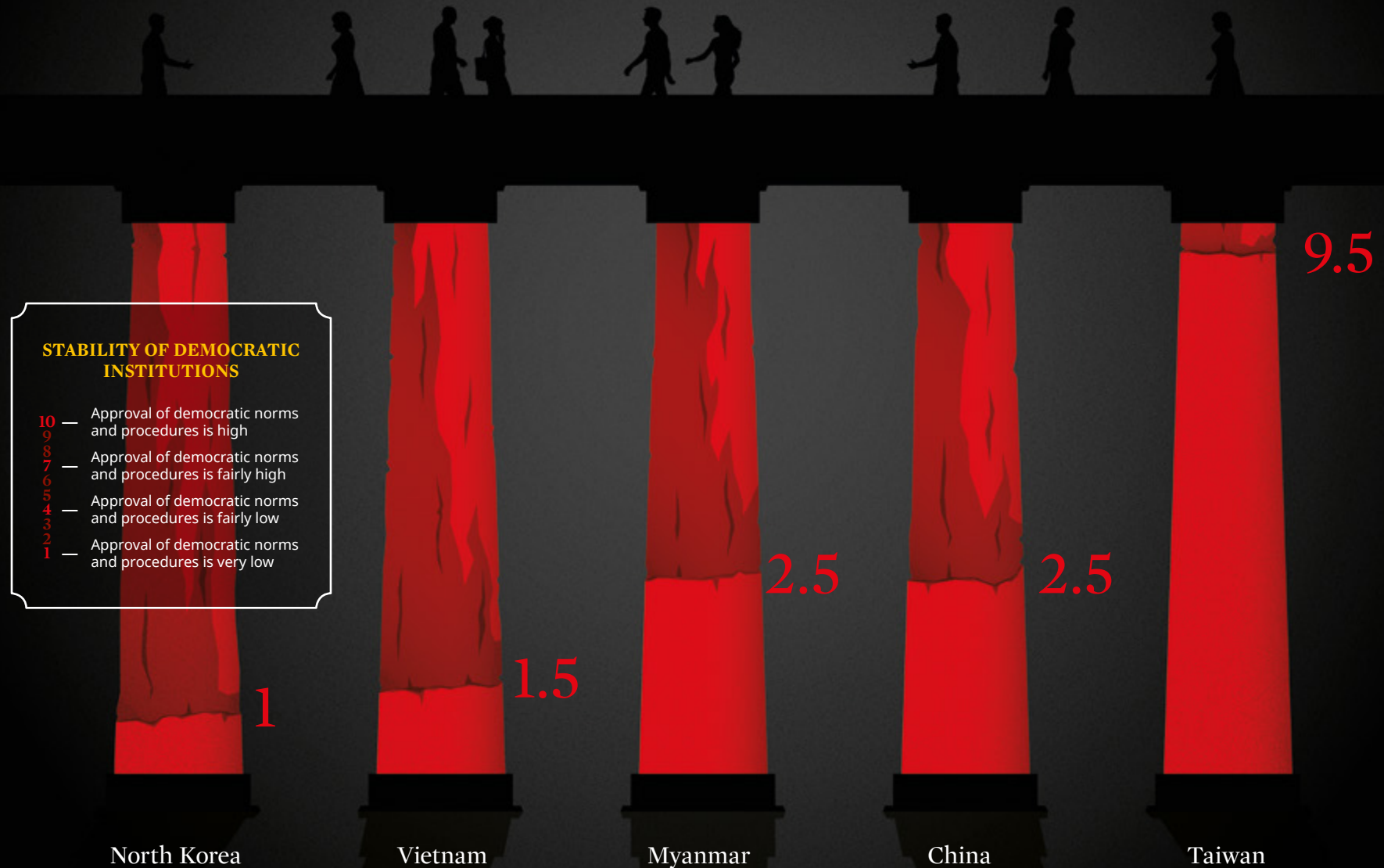
3.8
Myanmar

STATENESS

- 10 — All individuals and groups enjoy citizenship without discrimination
- 9 — Some groups are denied full citizenship rights
- 8 — Significant aspects of citizenship are withheld from certain groups
- 7 — Different groups compete for hegemony and deny citizenship to others
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

Democracy on Unstable Ground

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





IRAN

ایران

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 influence. The domestic political ramifications are also significant. Many Iranians view their country's military interventions in Iraq and in Syria as ideologically driven wars of choice that are not critical to national security. Demonstrators at nationwide socio-economic protests that shook Iran in 2017 and 2018 expressed anger and frustration at, above all, the government's prioritizing foreign ideological pursuits over people's everyday needs.

Such incidents highlight 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)

100
2008

Hybrid regimes
(Authoritarian with some
democratic features)

112
2010

114
2012

118
2014

119
2016

118
2018

126
2020

127
2022

Authoritarian
regimes

Go Directly to Jail

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

MONOPOLY ON USE OF FORCE

- 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



Where Religion and Politics are One

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

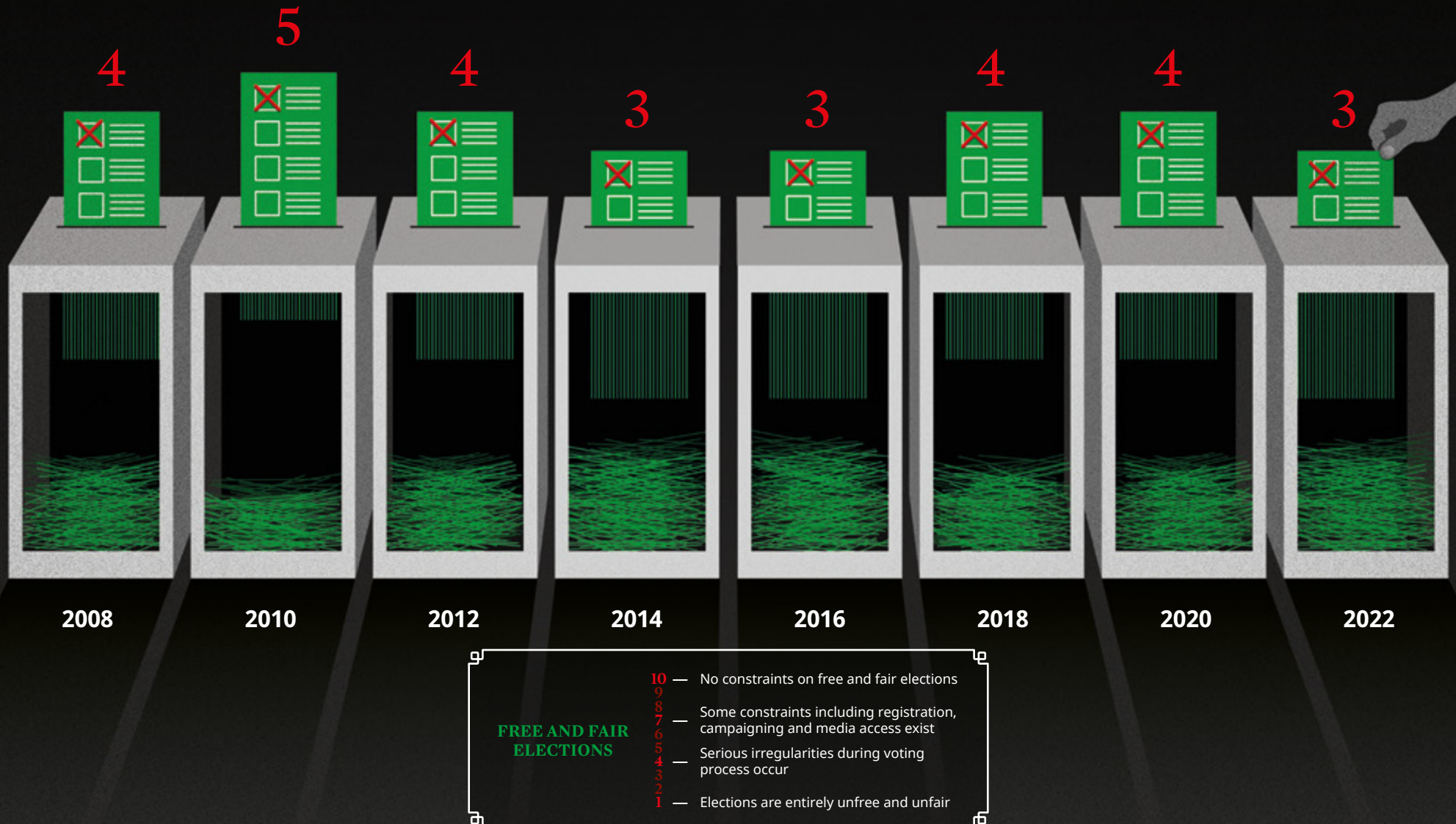
INTERFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS DOGMA

- 10 — The state is secular
- 9 — The state is largely secular
- 8 — The state is largely secular
- 7 — The state is largely secular
- 6 — The state is largely secular
- 5 — The state is largely secular
- 4 — Secular and religious norms are in conflict
- 3 — Secular and religious norms are in conflict
- 2 — Secular and religious norms are in conflict
- 1 — The state is theocratic



Beneath the Democratic Façade

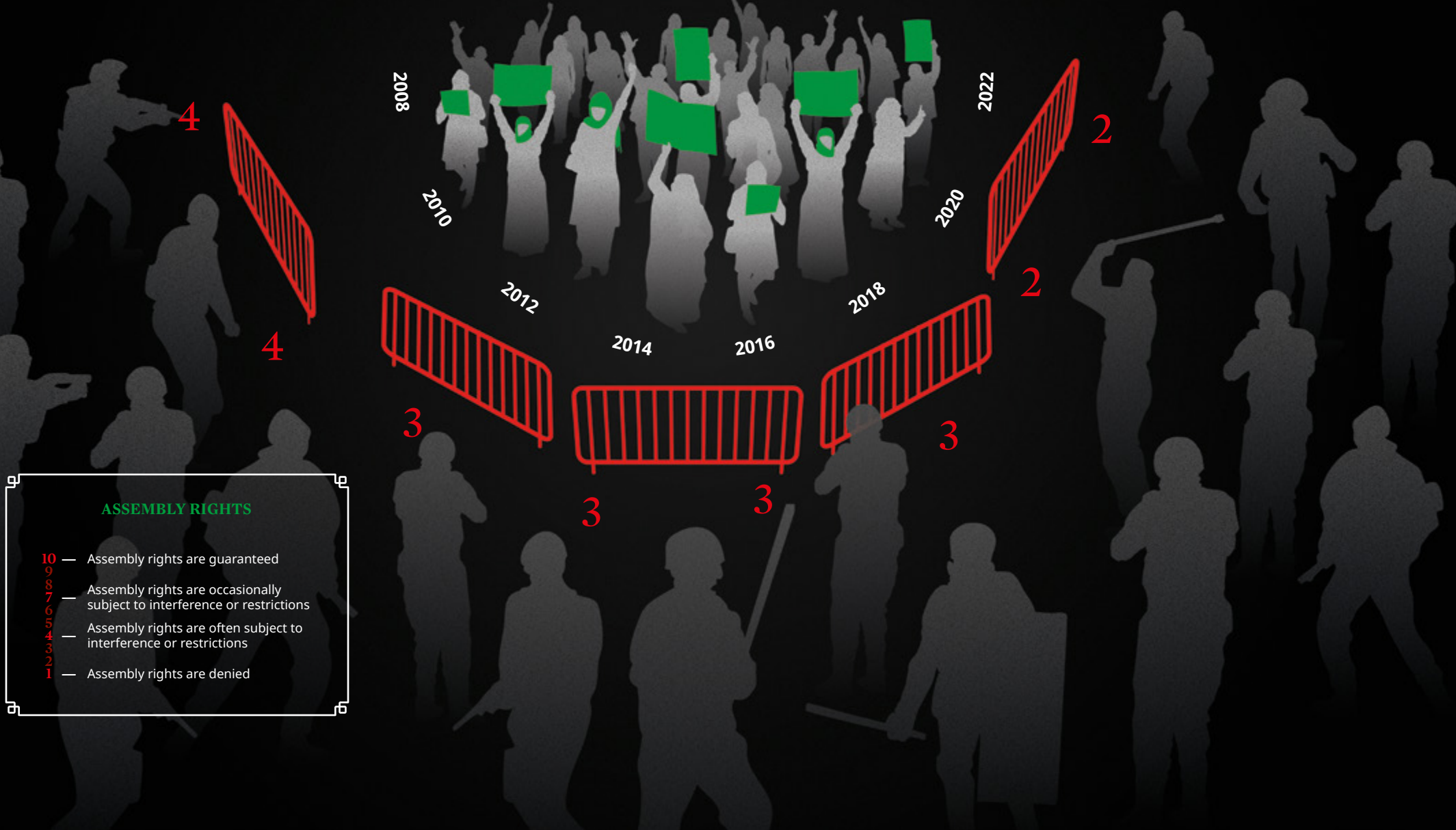
To what extent are political representatives determined by general, free and fair elections?



The Limits of People Power

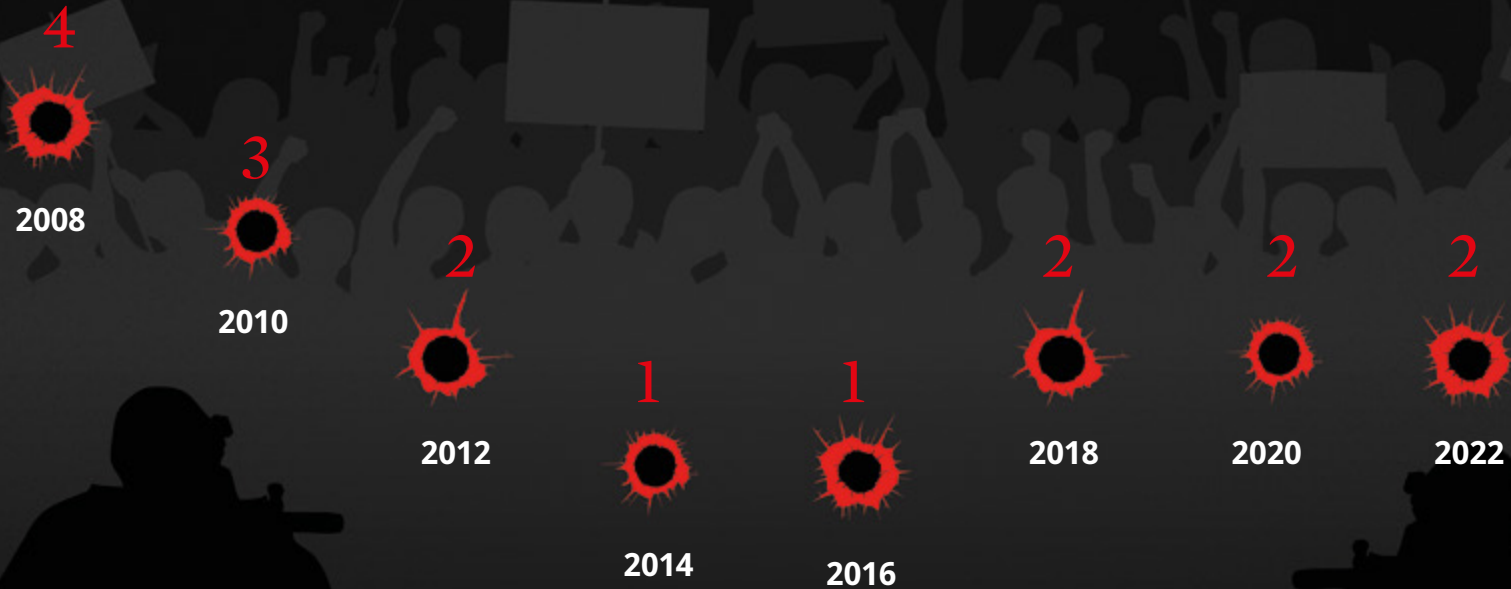
To what extent can individuals form and join independent political or civic groups?

To what extent can these groups operate and assemble freely?



An Attack on Expression

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

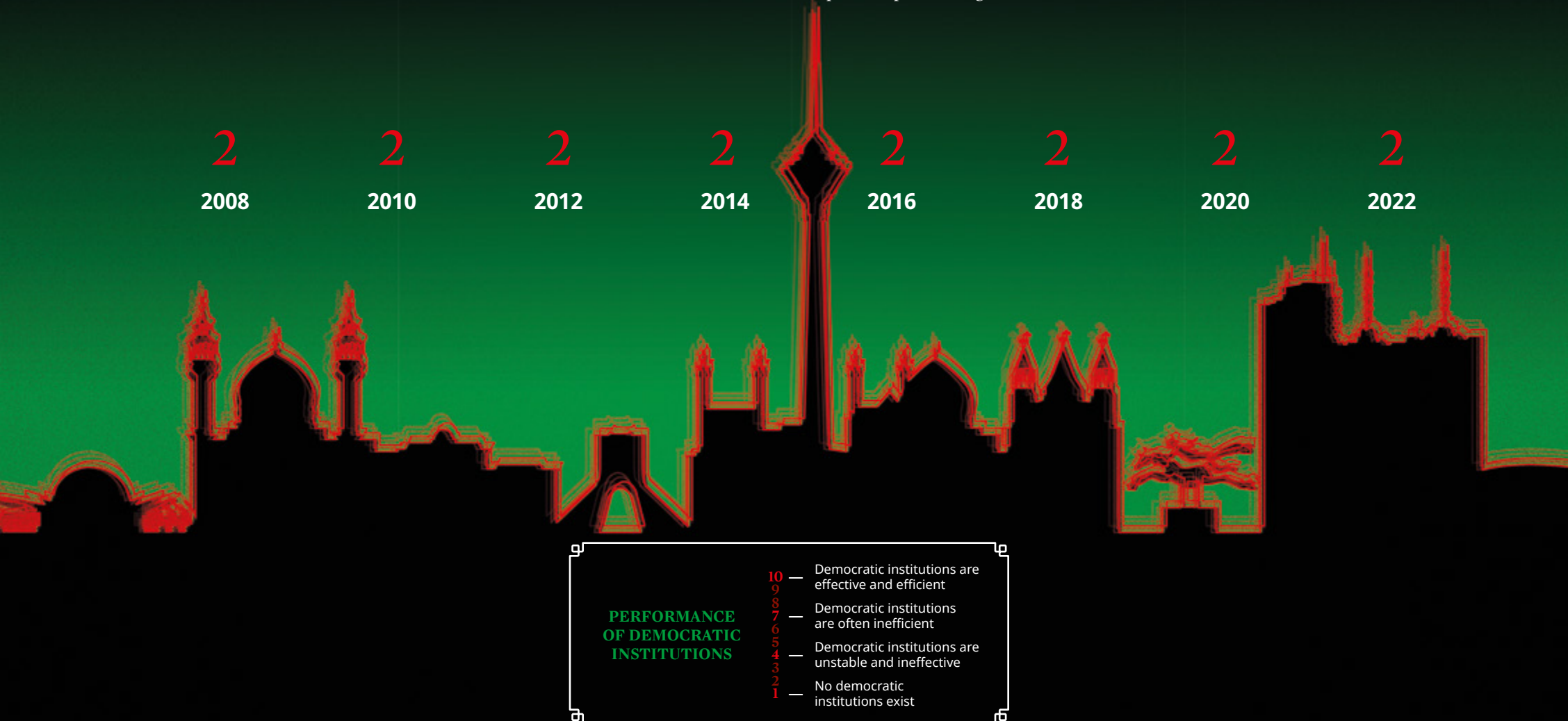


FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- 10 — Freedom of expression is guaranteed
- 9 — Freedom of expression is occasionally subject to interference or restrictions
- 8 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 7 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 6 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 5 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 4 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 3 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 2 — Freedom of expression is often subject to interference or restrictions
- 1 — Freedom of expression is denied

When Unstoppable Force Meets Immovable Objects

Are democratic institutions capable of performing?



Limited Options

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

PARTY SYSTEM

- 10 — Party system is stable and socially rooted
- 9 — Party system is fairly stable and socially rooted
- 8 — Party system is unstable with shallow roots
- 1 — No party system exists



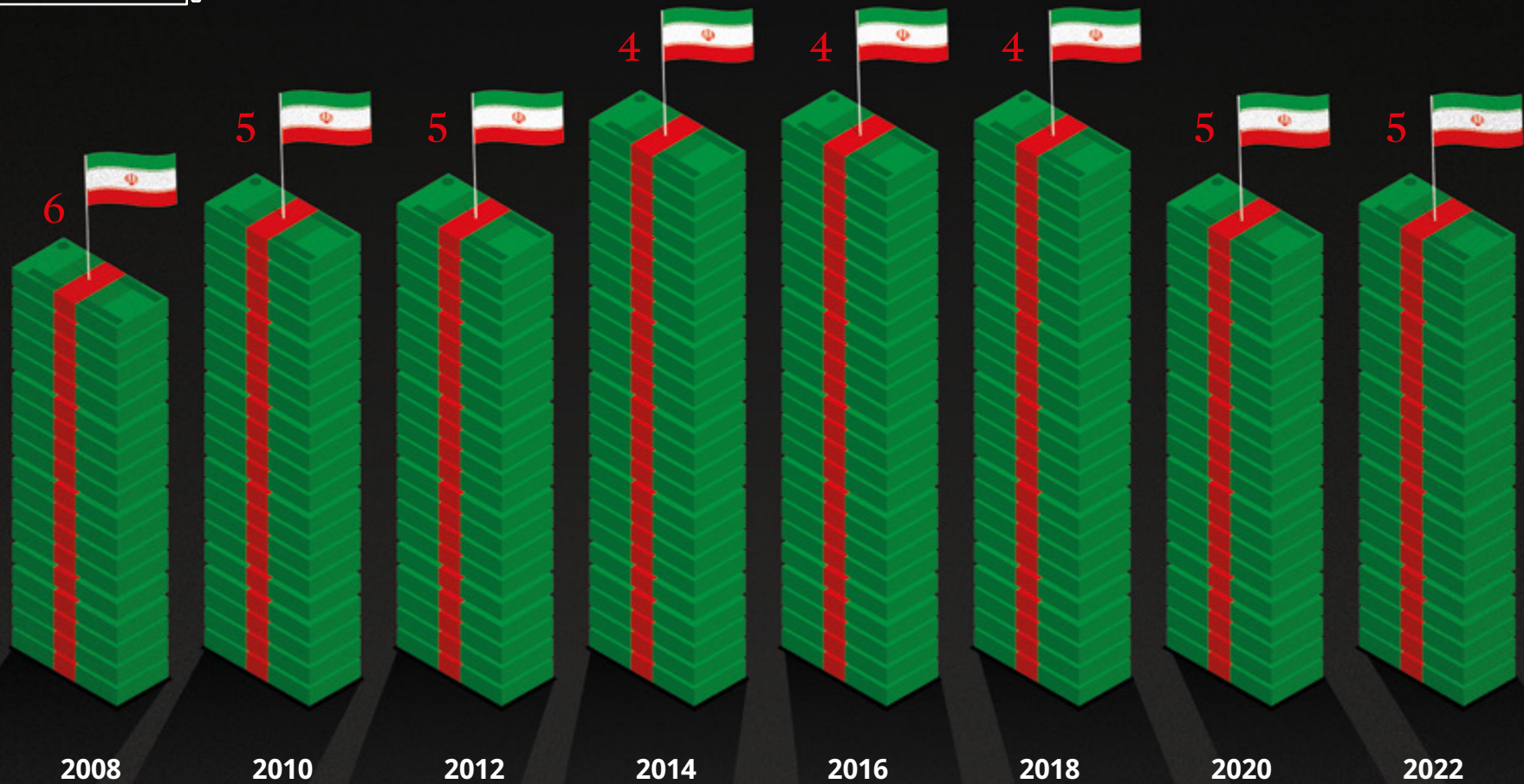
IRAN ایران

GROSS NATIONAL
INCOME RESCALED

- 1 — High income
- 2 — Upper middle income
- 3 — Lower middle income
- 4 — Low income

Stuck in the Middle

Stagnant growth and its consequences for development.

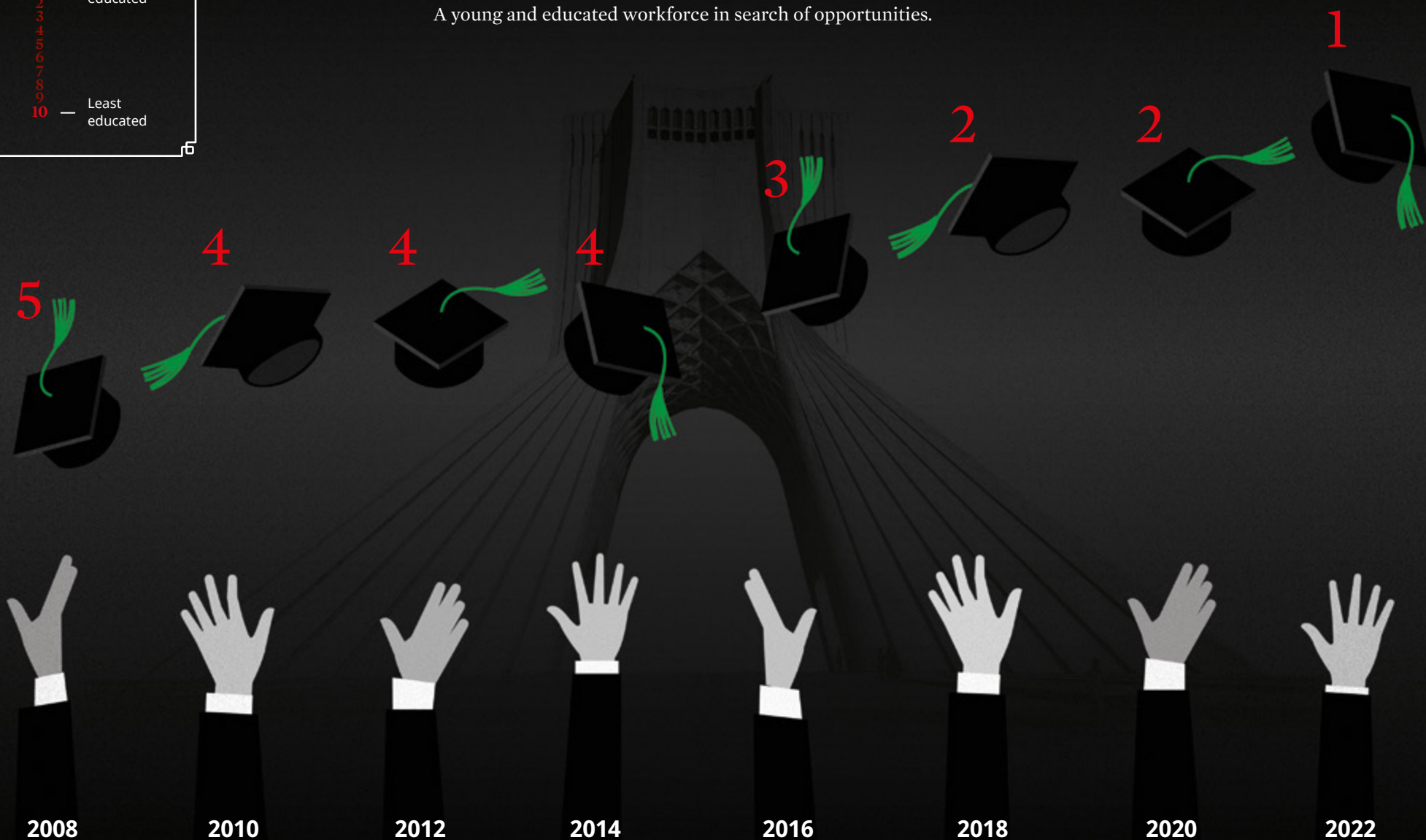


UNITED NATIONS
EDUCATION
INDEX RESCALED

1 — Most
educated
10 — Least
educated

Putting Education to Work

A young and educated workforce in search of opportunities.



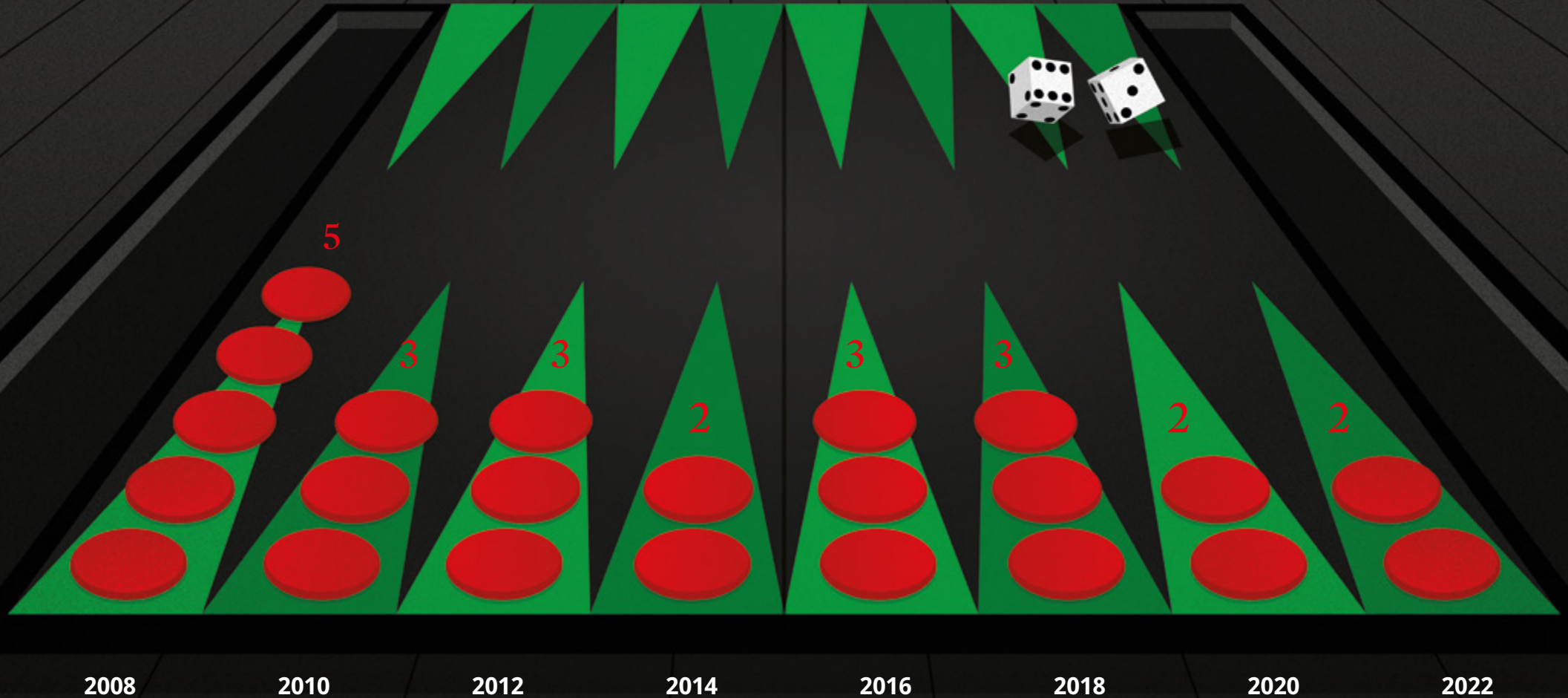
POLICY COORDINATION

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

- Government coherently coordinates conflicting objectives
- Government tries to coordinate conflicting objectives
- Government often fails to coordinate conflicting objectives
- Government fails to coordinate conflicting objectives

Putting the Pieces in Place

To what extent can the government coordinate conflicting objectives into a coherent policy?

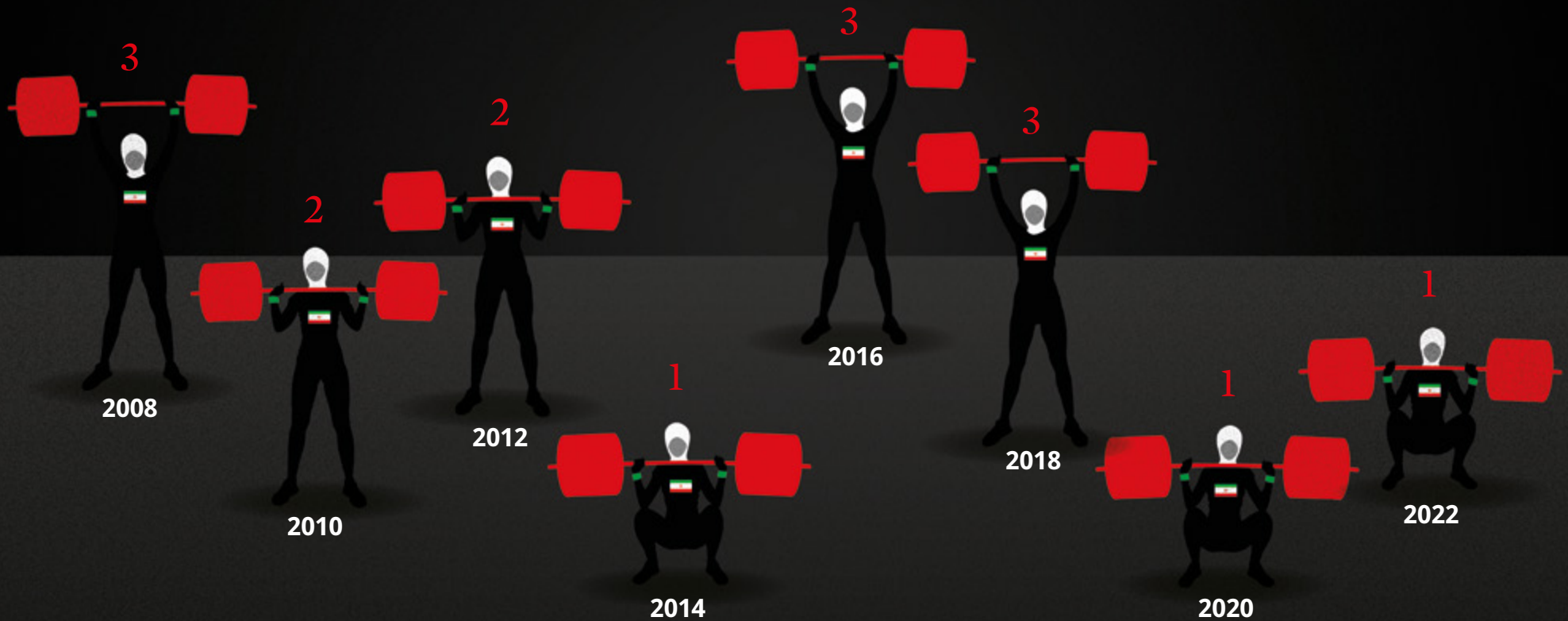


Fighting Corruption is a Heavy Lift

To what extent does the government successfully contain corruption?

ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY

- 10 — Government is successful at containing corruption
- 9 — Government is often successful at containing corruption
- 8 — Government is partly willing and able to contain corruption
- 7 — Government fails to contain corruption



Marching into Peril

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



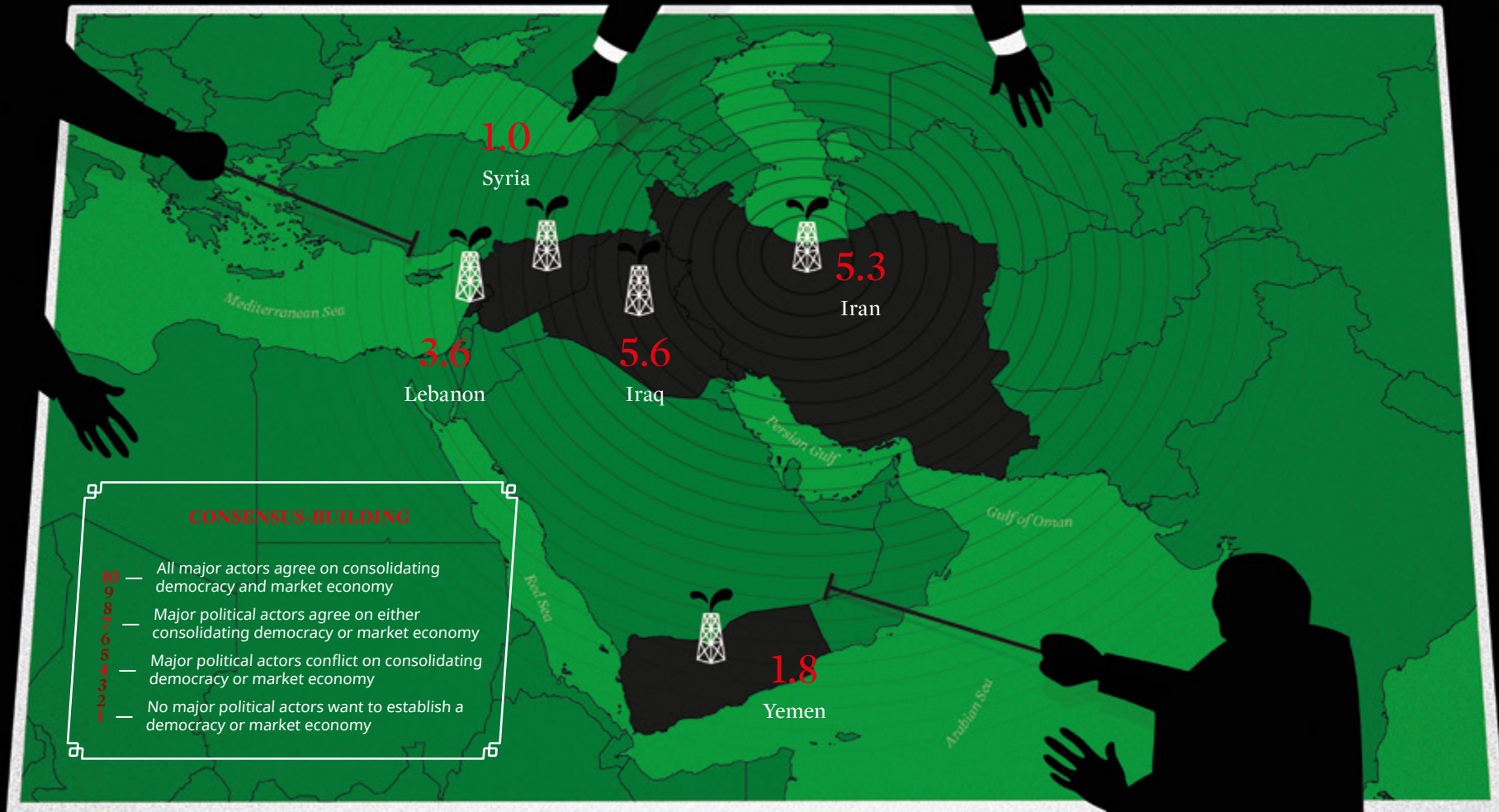
A Table for One?

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



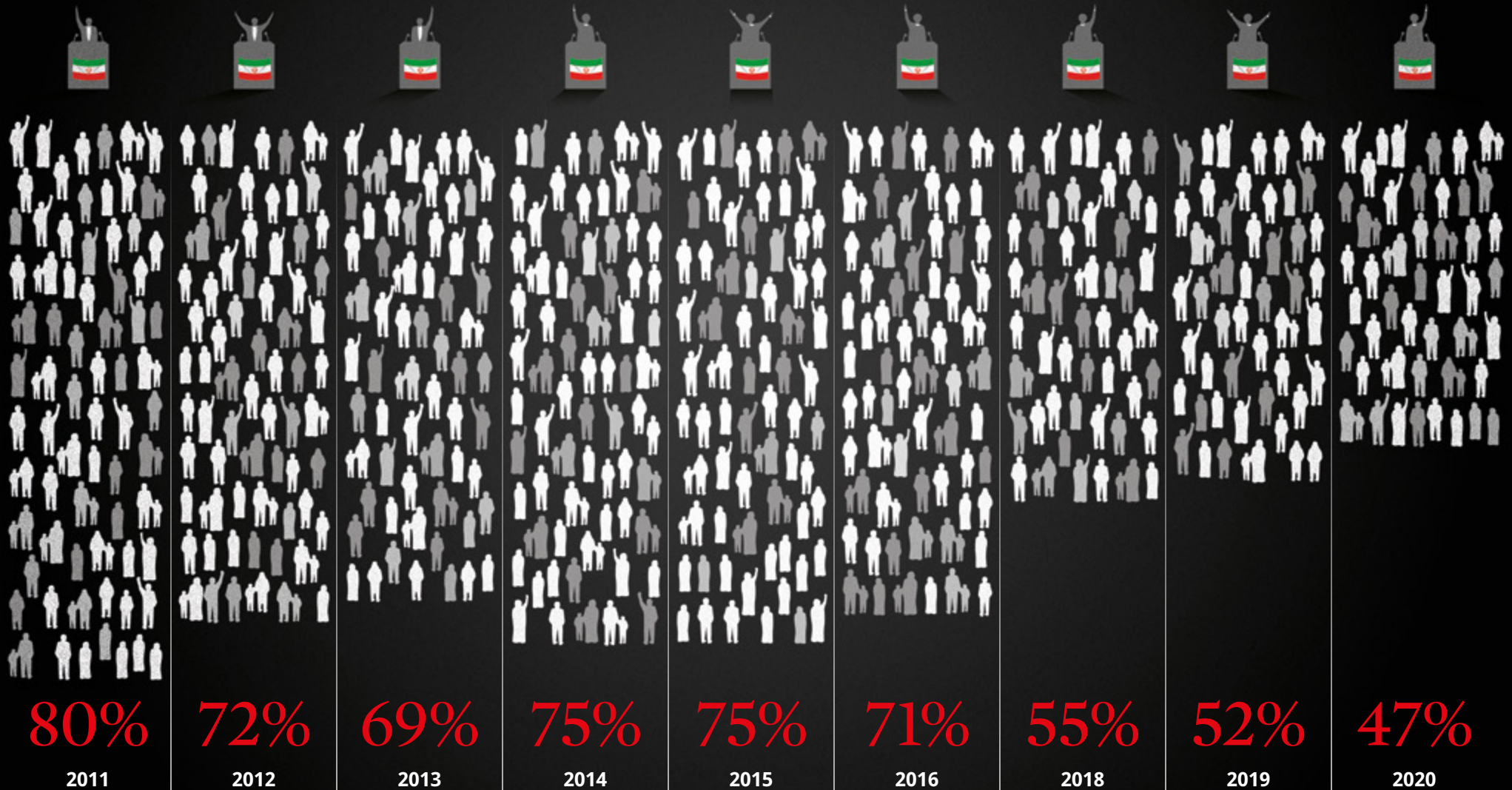
Cascading Cooperation or Conflict?

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



People Power

Public confidence in the Iranian government.



* 2017 data not available

IRAN ایران

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





IRAN ایران

The Forever Regime?

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

✗ Ali Khamenei as Supreme Leader of Iran

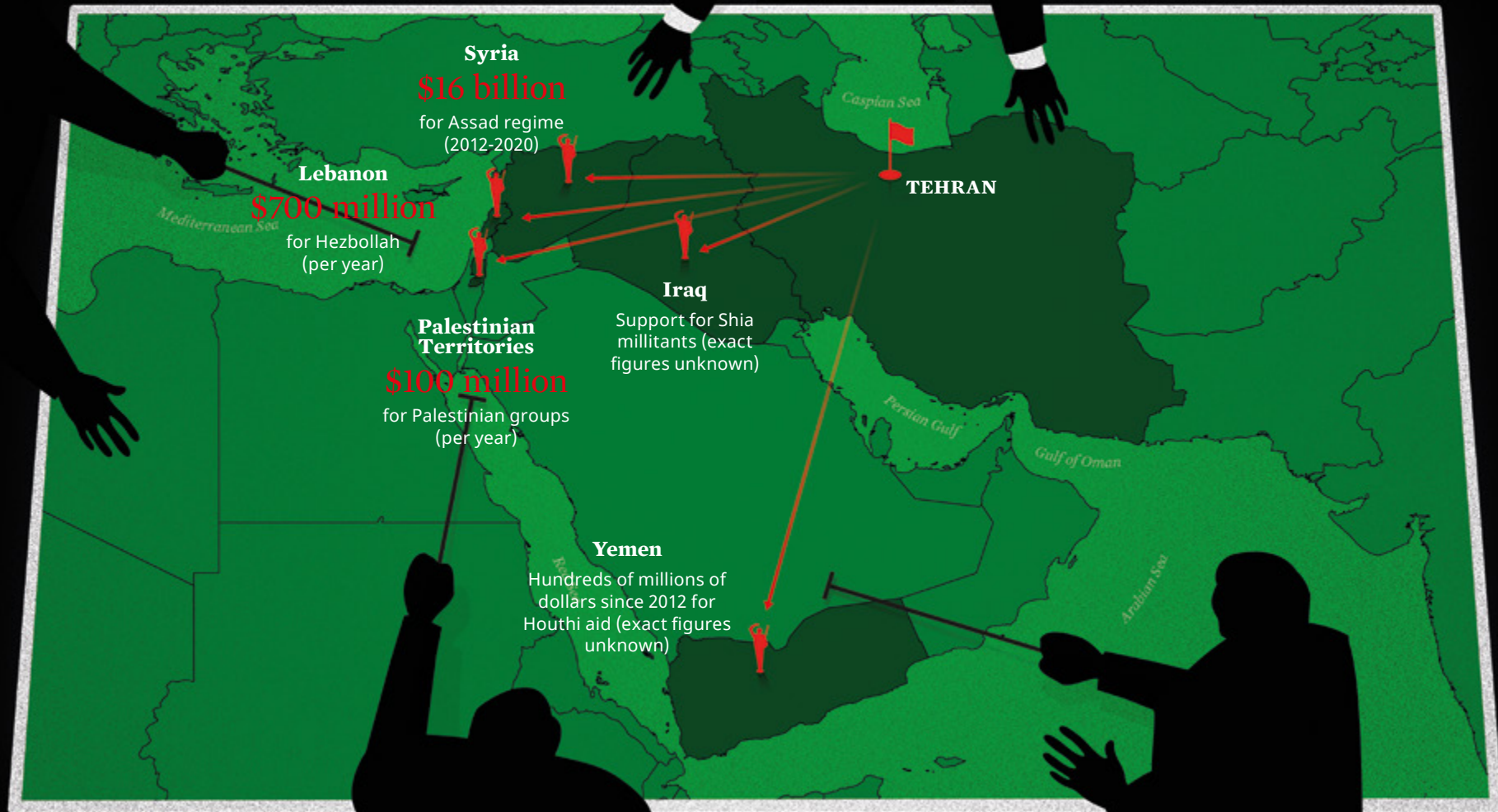
Under the Dome

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



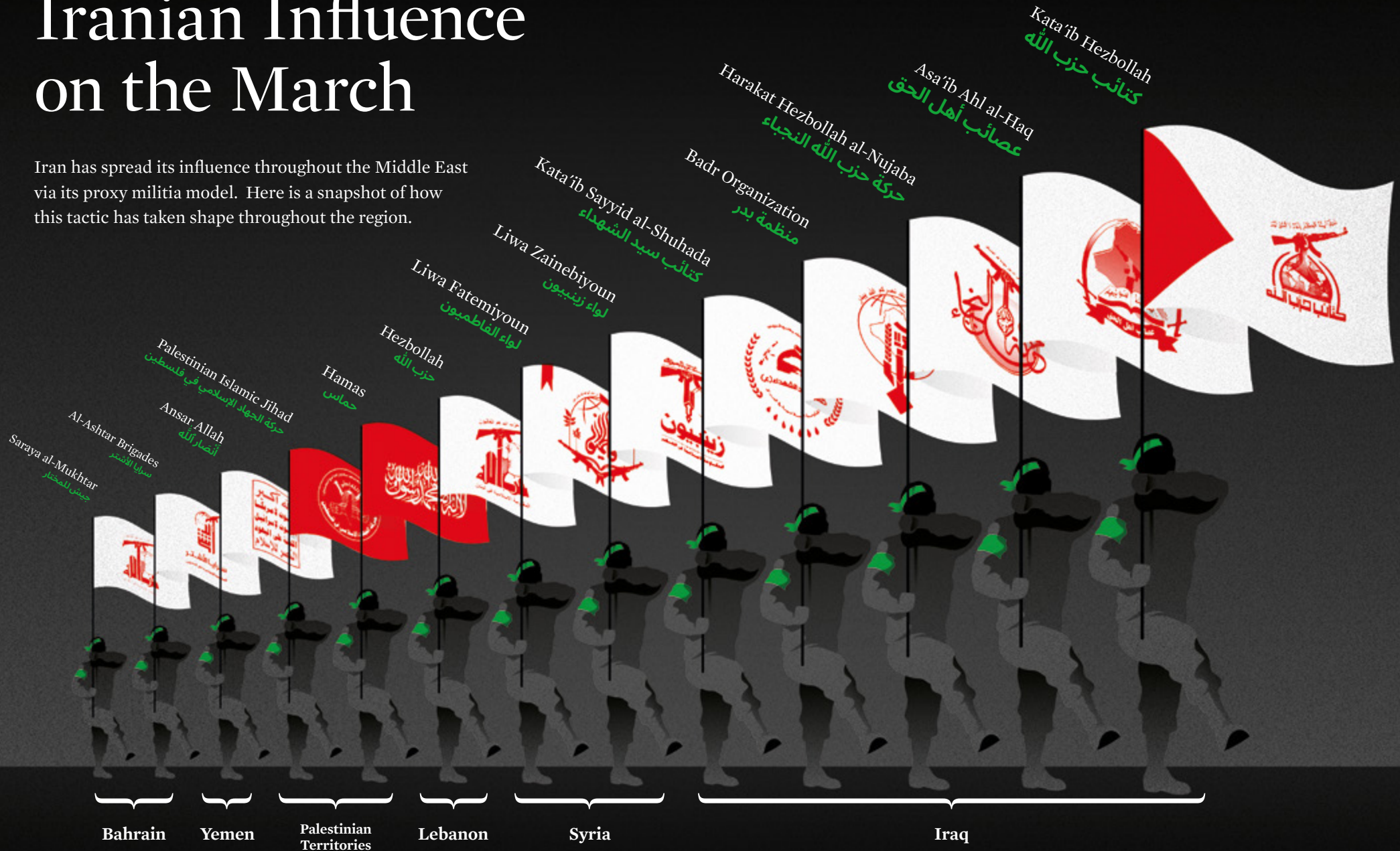
More Bang for the Buck

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



Iranian Influence on the March

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.



A State of Fragmentation

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

5.5

Lebanon

5.3

Iran

4.5

Iraq

3.0

Syria

2.0

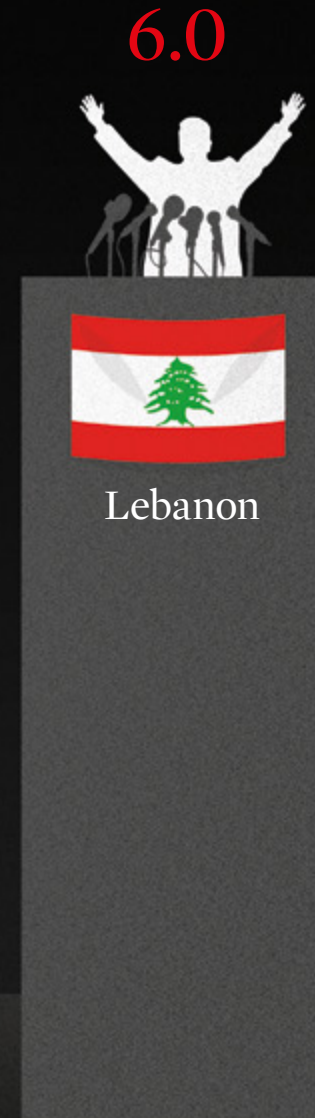
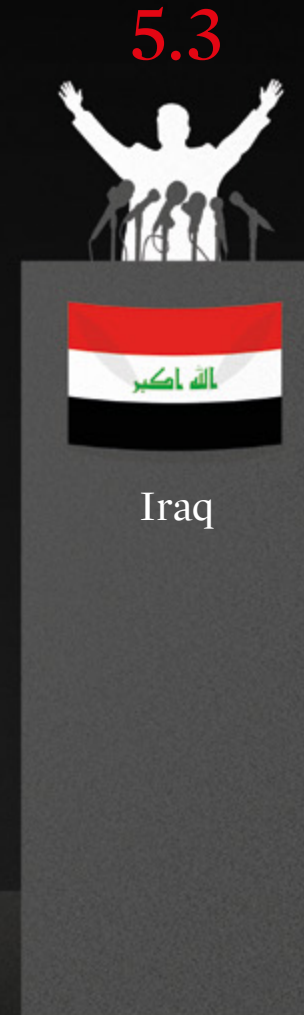
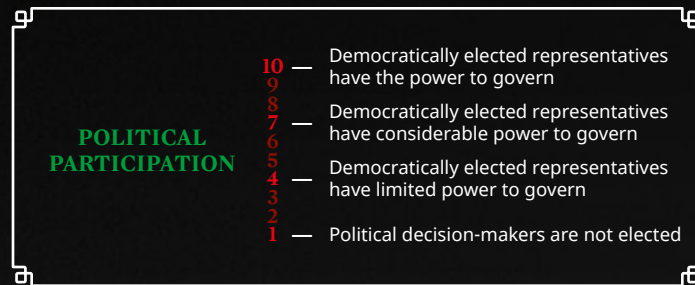
Yemen

STATENESS

- 10 — All individuals and groups enjoy citizenship without discrimination
- 9 — Some groups are denied full citizenship rights
- 8 — Significant aspects of citizenship are withheld from certain groups
- 7 — Different groups compete for hegemony and deny citizenship to others
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

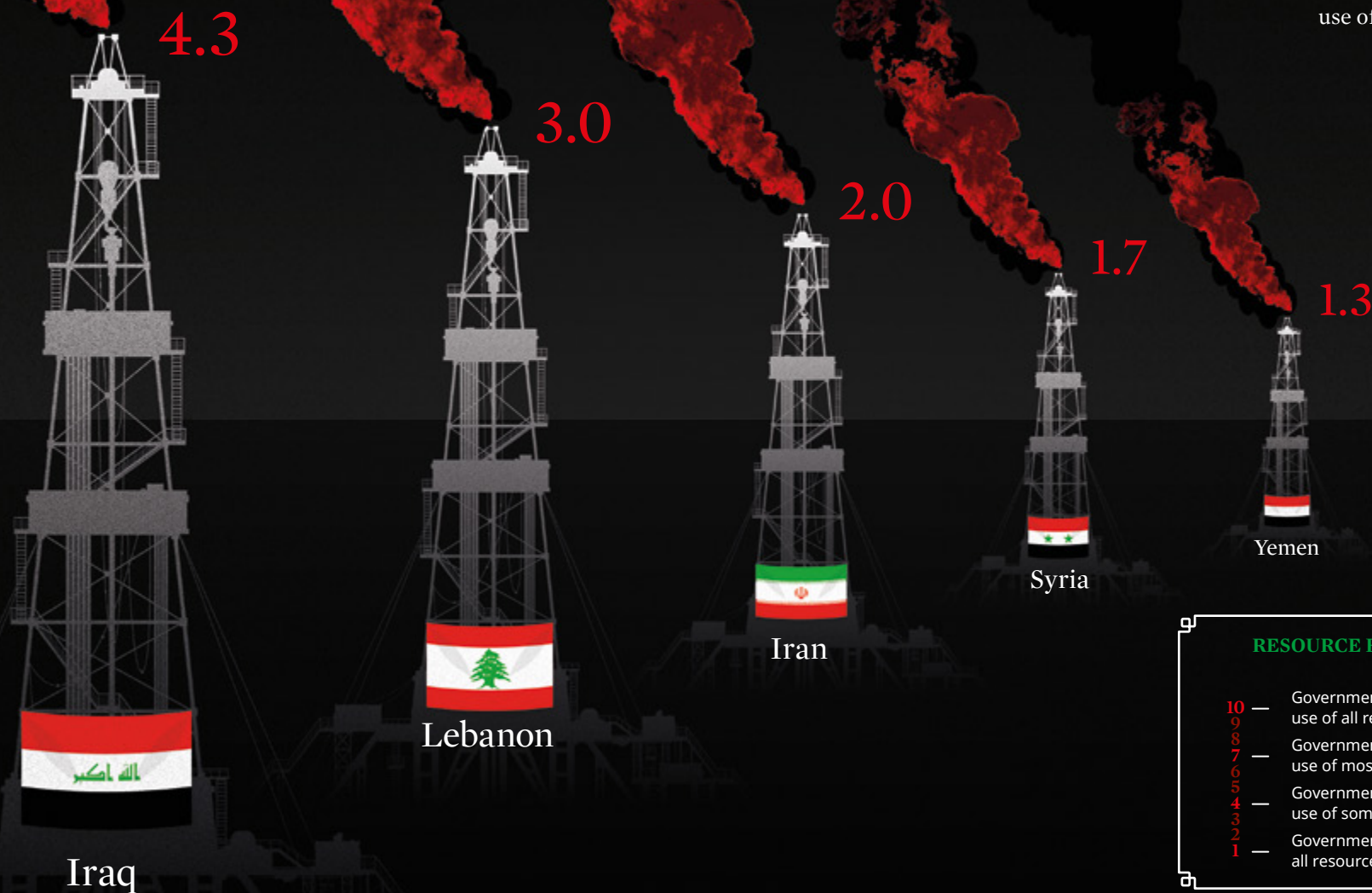
A Paucity of Popular Power

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



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.

7.0
Iraq

4.7
Lebanon

2.0
Yemen

1.3
Iran

1.3
Syria

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

- 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



RUSSIA

РОССИЯ

The Politics of Revanchism

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 cri-

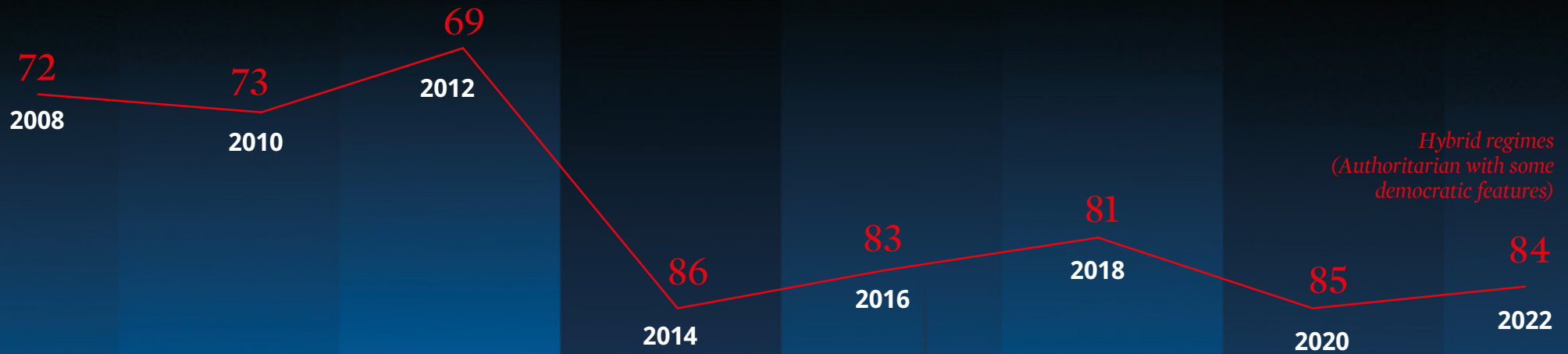
ses, orchestrate crackdowns on domestic human rights groups, poison and silence opposition figures, and even implicated in downing a passenger airliner. By 2020, the on-and-off Russian president had the constitution amended to keep himself in power, potentially through 2036. Trading places with another 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

Flawed democracies

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



**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?

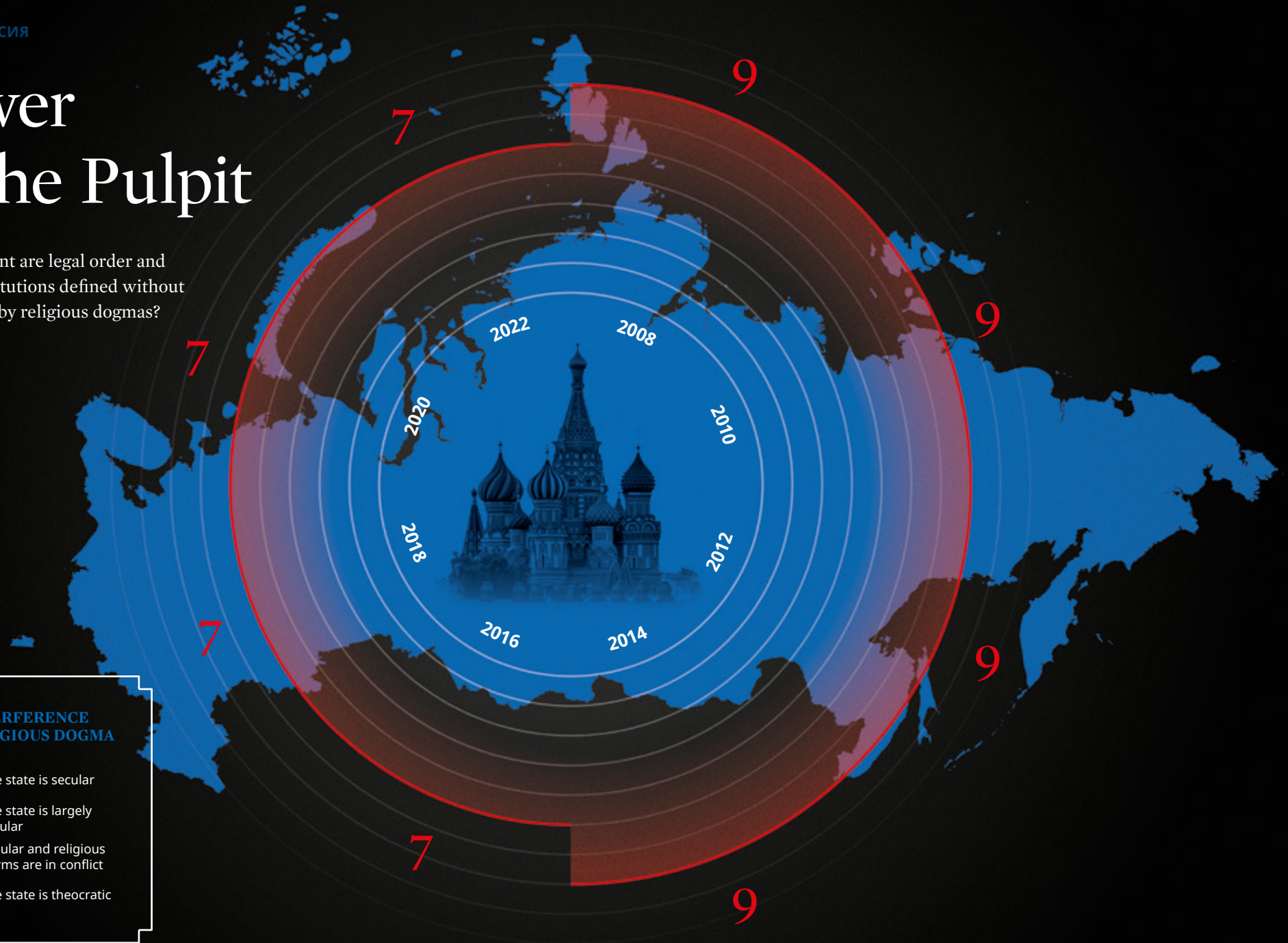
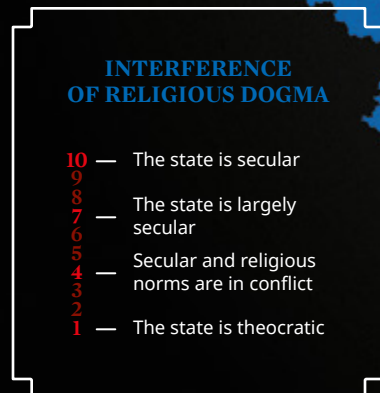
MONOPOLY ON USE OF FORCE

- 10 — State monopoly on use of force
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- 8 — State monopoly limited to key parts of the country
- 7 — No state monopoly on use of force



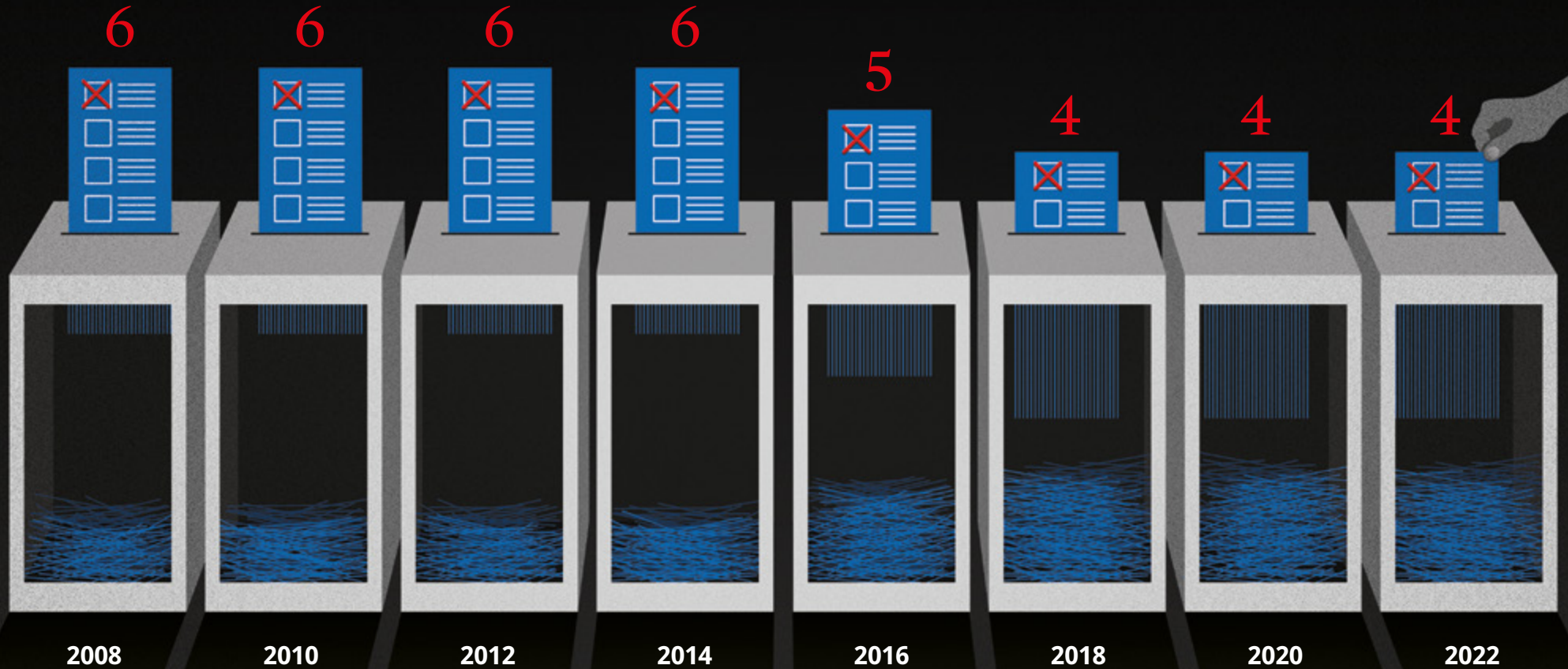
Power of the Pulpit

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



Vote for Putin...or Putin

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

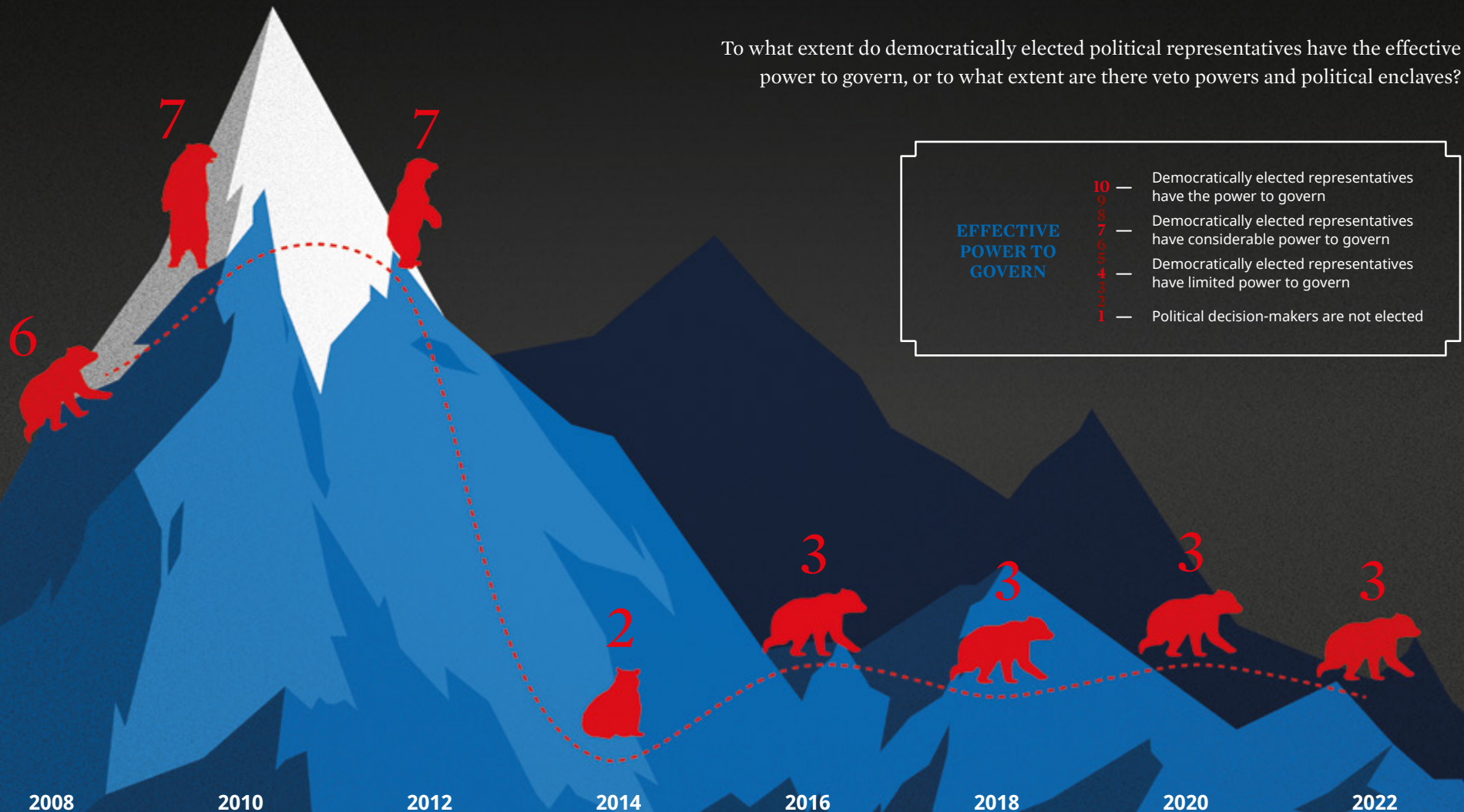


FREE AND FAIR
ELECTIONS

- 10 — No constraints on free and fair elections
- 9
- 8
- 7 — Some constraints including registration, campaigning and media access exist
- 6
- 5
- 4 — Serious irregularities during voting process occur
- 3
- 2
- 1 — Elections are entirely unfree and unfair

Bears in the Wilderness

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?

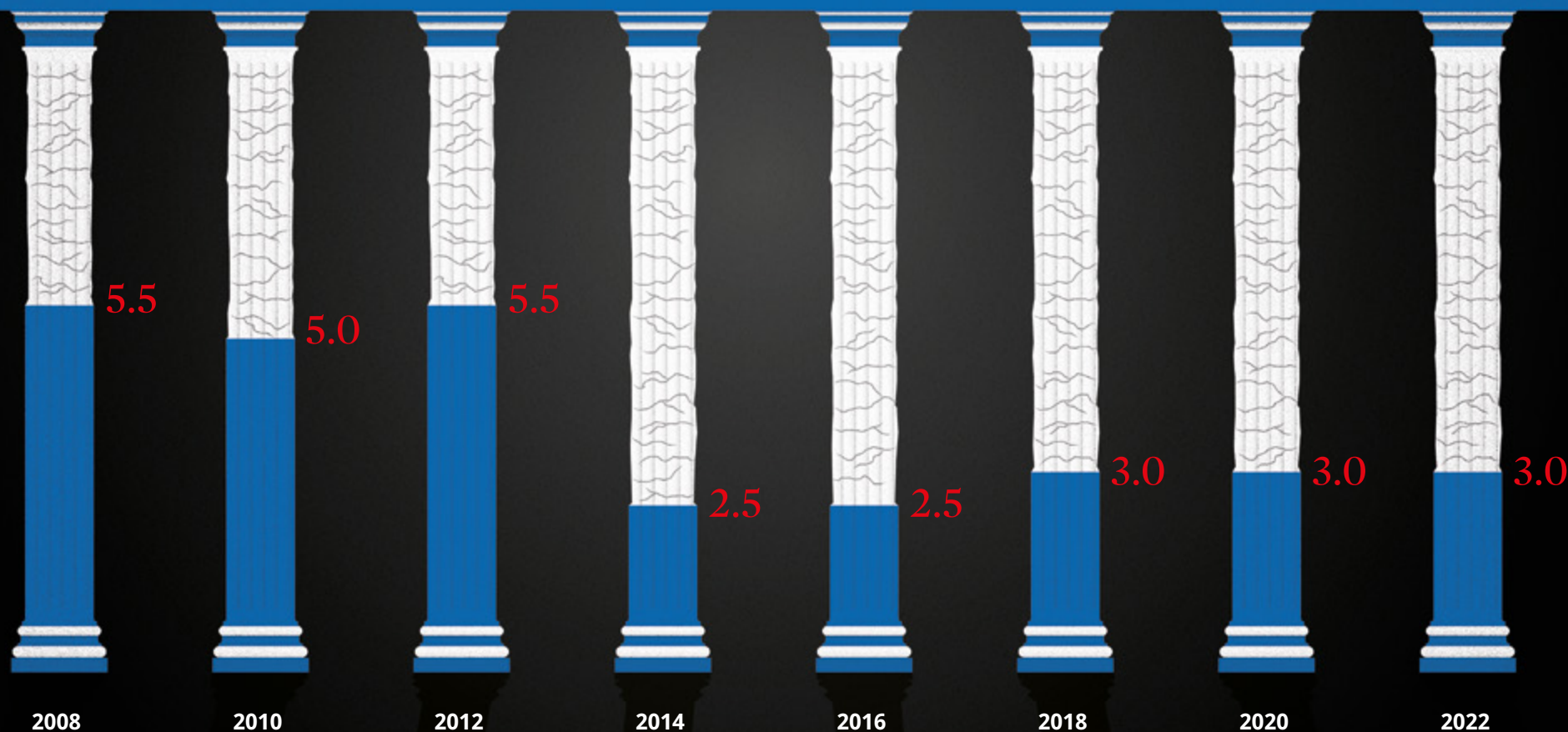


On Increasingly Shaky Ground

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

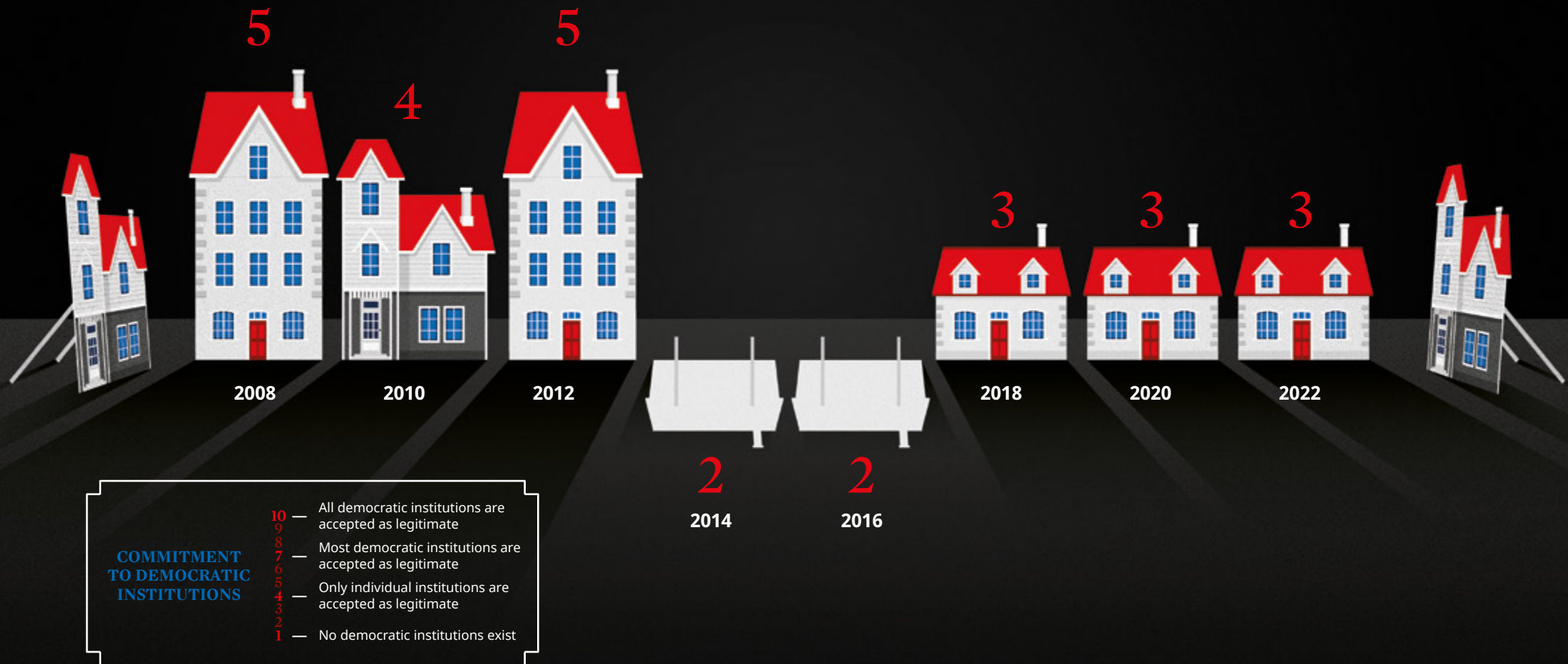
STABILITY OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

- 10 — Approval of democratic norms and procedures is high
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 — Approval of democratic norms and procedures is very low



A Potemkin Democracy

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



Democracy's Signal Gone Silent

How strong is the citizens' approval of democratic norms and procedures?

RUSSIA РОССИЯ

APPROVAL OF DEMOCRACY

- 10 — Approval of democratic norms and procedures is high
- 9
- 8 — Approval of democratic norms and procedures is fairly high
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4 — Approval of democratic norms and procedures is fairly low
- 3
- 2
- 1
- N.A. — Authoritarian regime

✗
(N.A.)

✗ 4

✗ 4

✗ 4

✗
(N.A.)

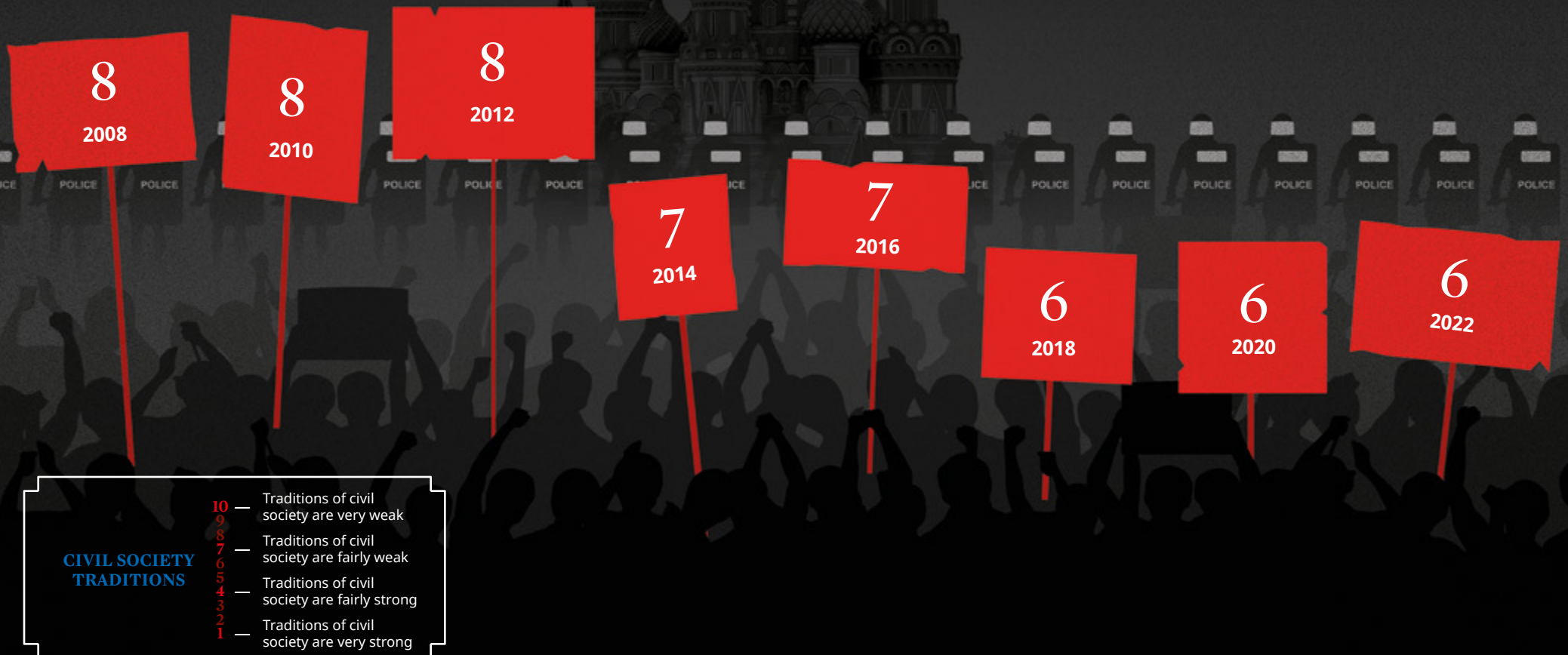
✗
(N.A.)

✗
(N.A.)

✗
(N.A.)

The Dangers of Disobedience

To what extent are there traditions of civil society?



No Room for Opposition

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

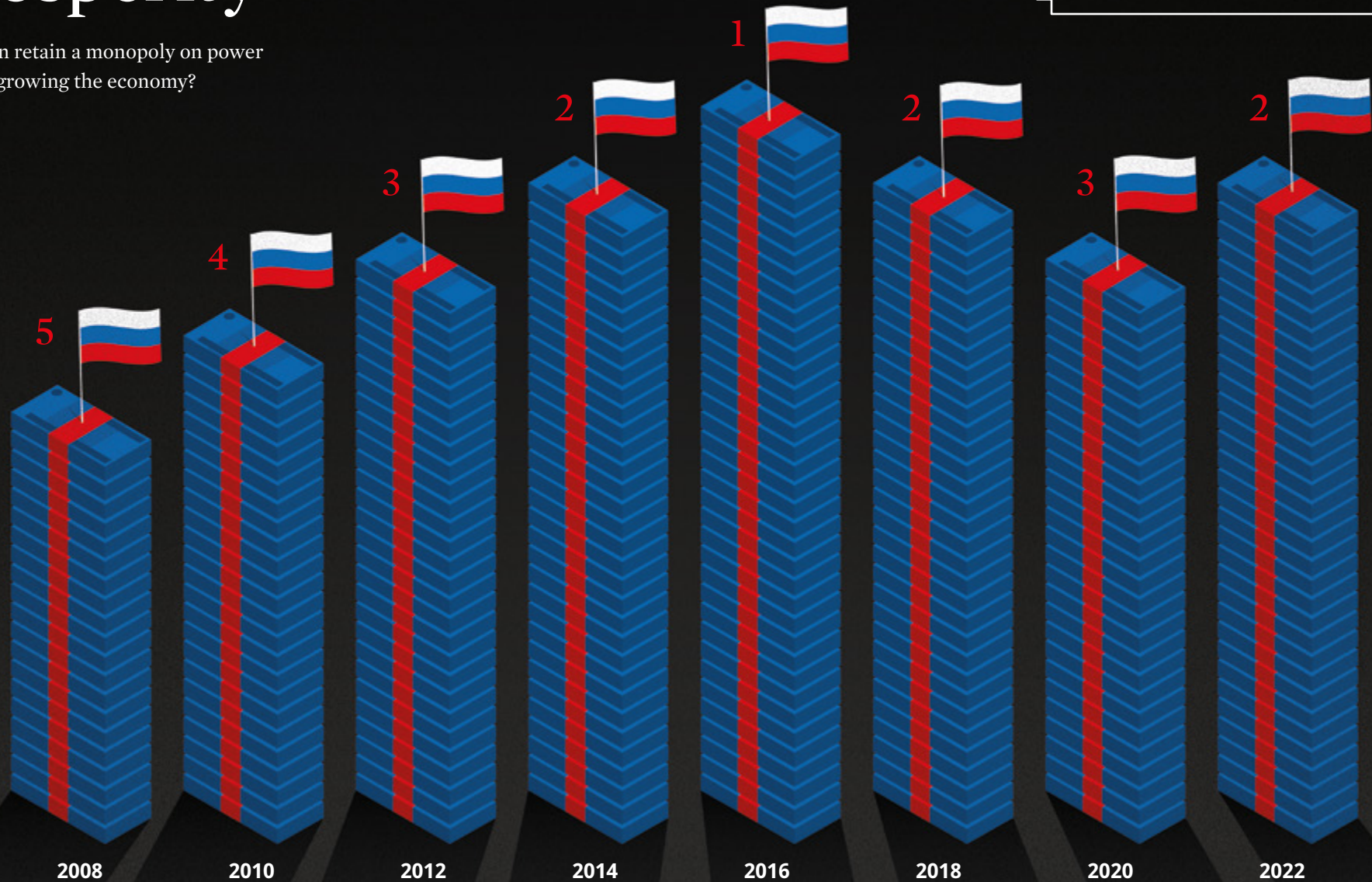


Power from Prosperity

Can Putin retain a monopoly on power without growing the economy?

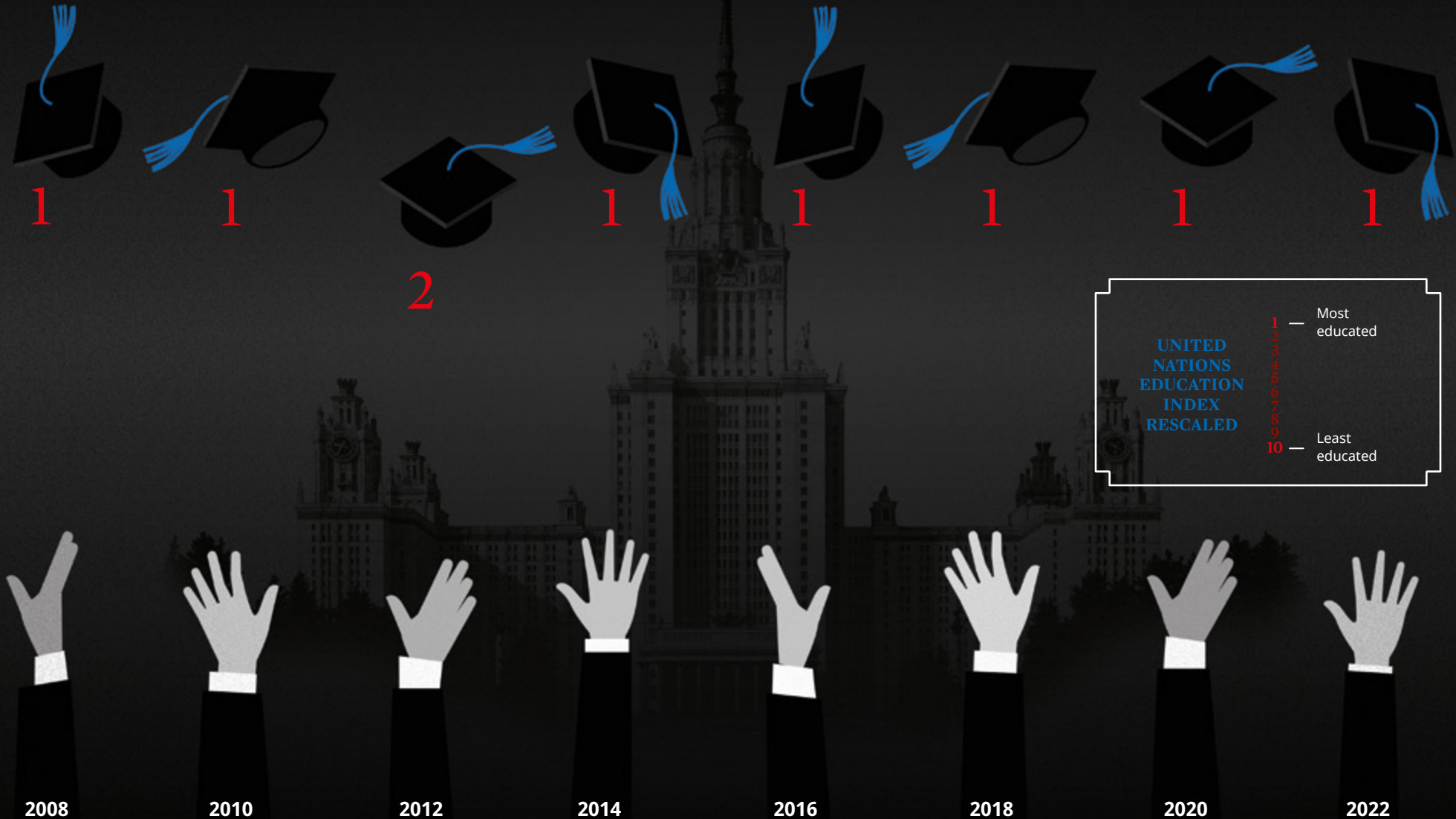
GROSS NATIONAL
INCOME
RESCALED

- 1 — High income
- 2 — Upper middle income
- 3 — Lower middle income
- 4 — Middle income
- 5 — Low income



High Levels of Higher Education

What will an educated population demand?



RUSSIA РОССИЯ

Controlling the Airwaves

The reach of Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik.

30

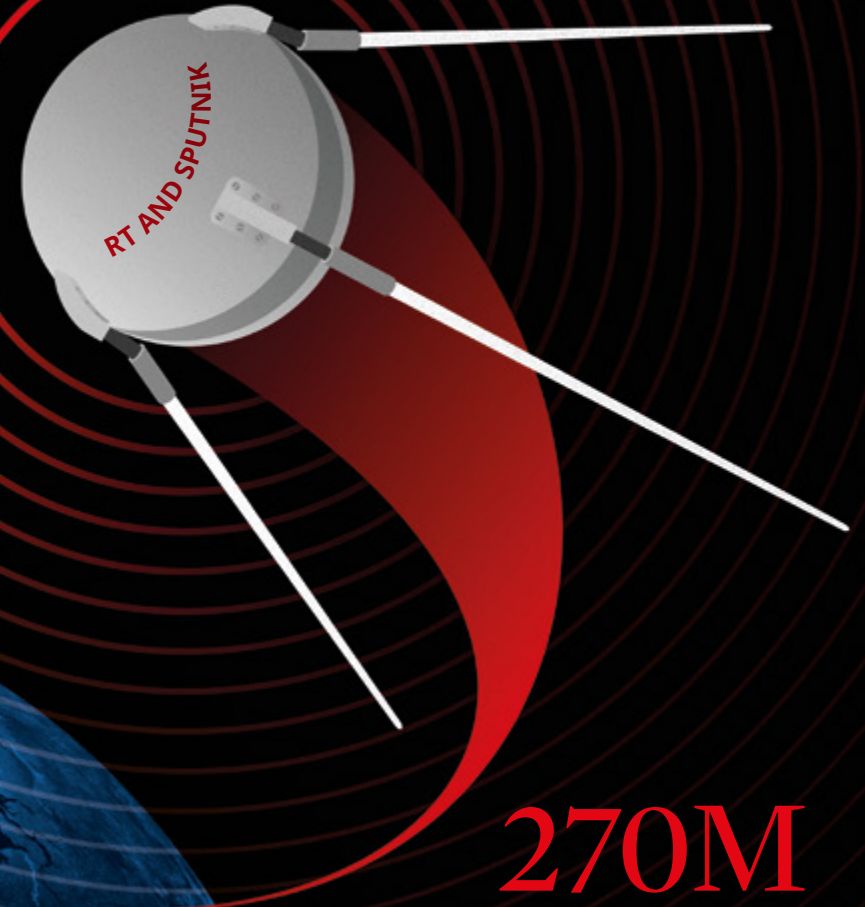
Languages

100

Countries

270M

Annual budget (in Euros)



Men on a Mission

Russia's Internet Research Agency projecting its influence.

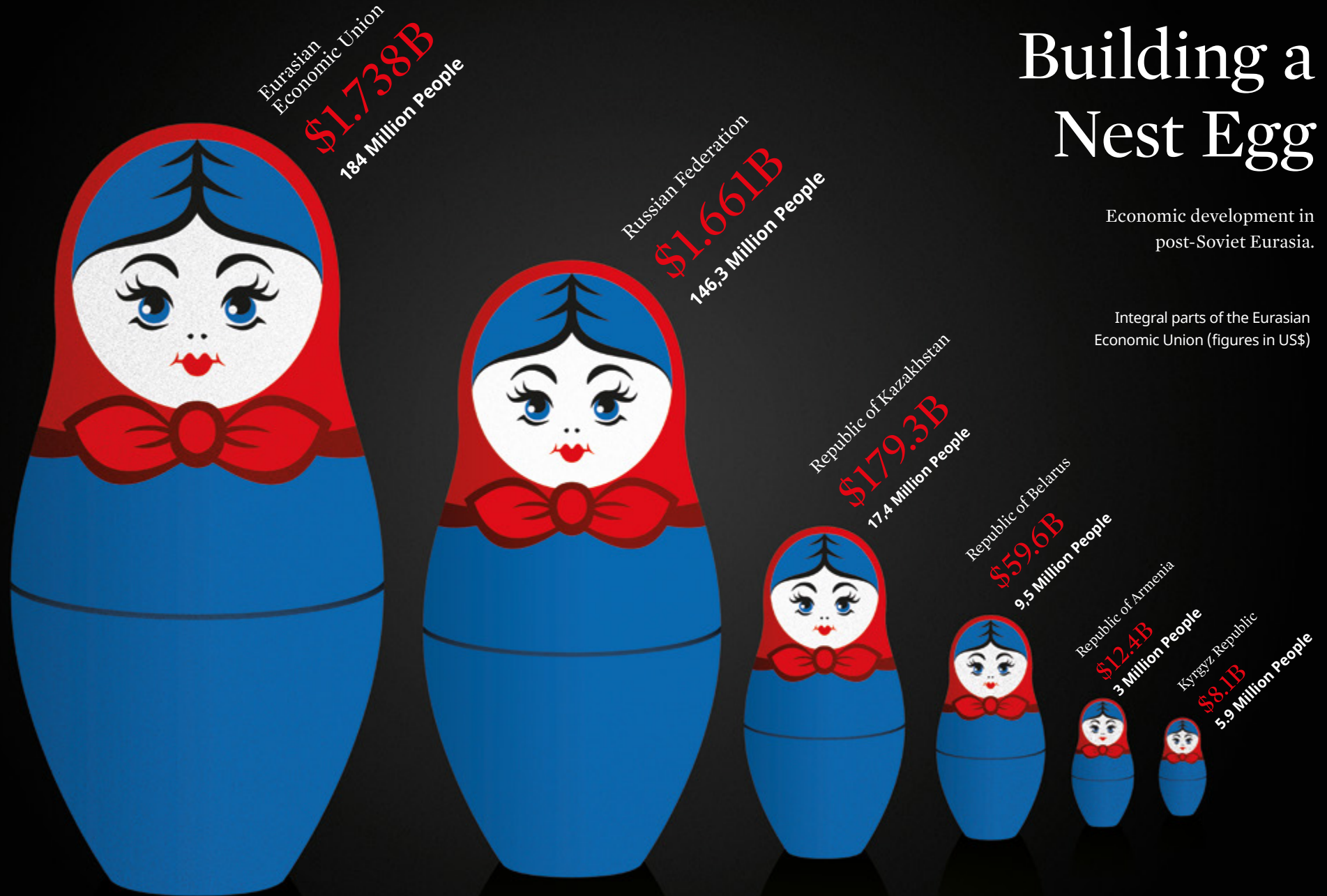


80 Staff / US\$ 1 Million per Month

Building a Nest Egg

Economic development in post-Soviet Eurasia.

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



RUSSIA РОССИЯ

Profiles in Power

Russian leadership since 1999.



Vladimir Putin

1999-2008



Dmitry Medvedev

2008-2012

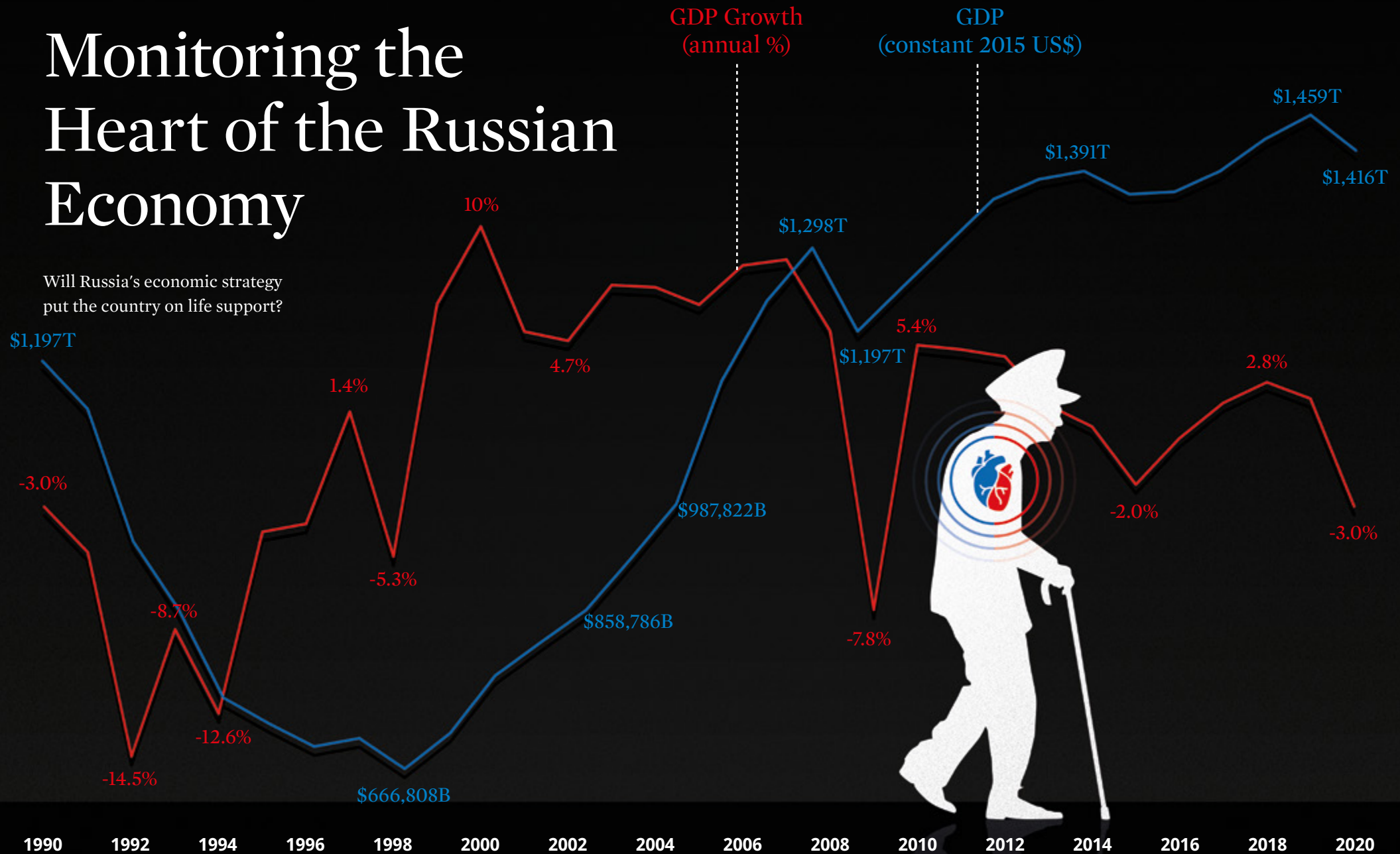


Vladimir Putin

2012-

Monitoring the Heart of the Russian Economy

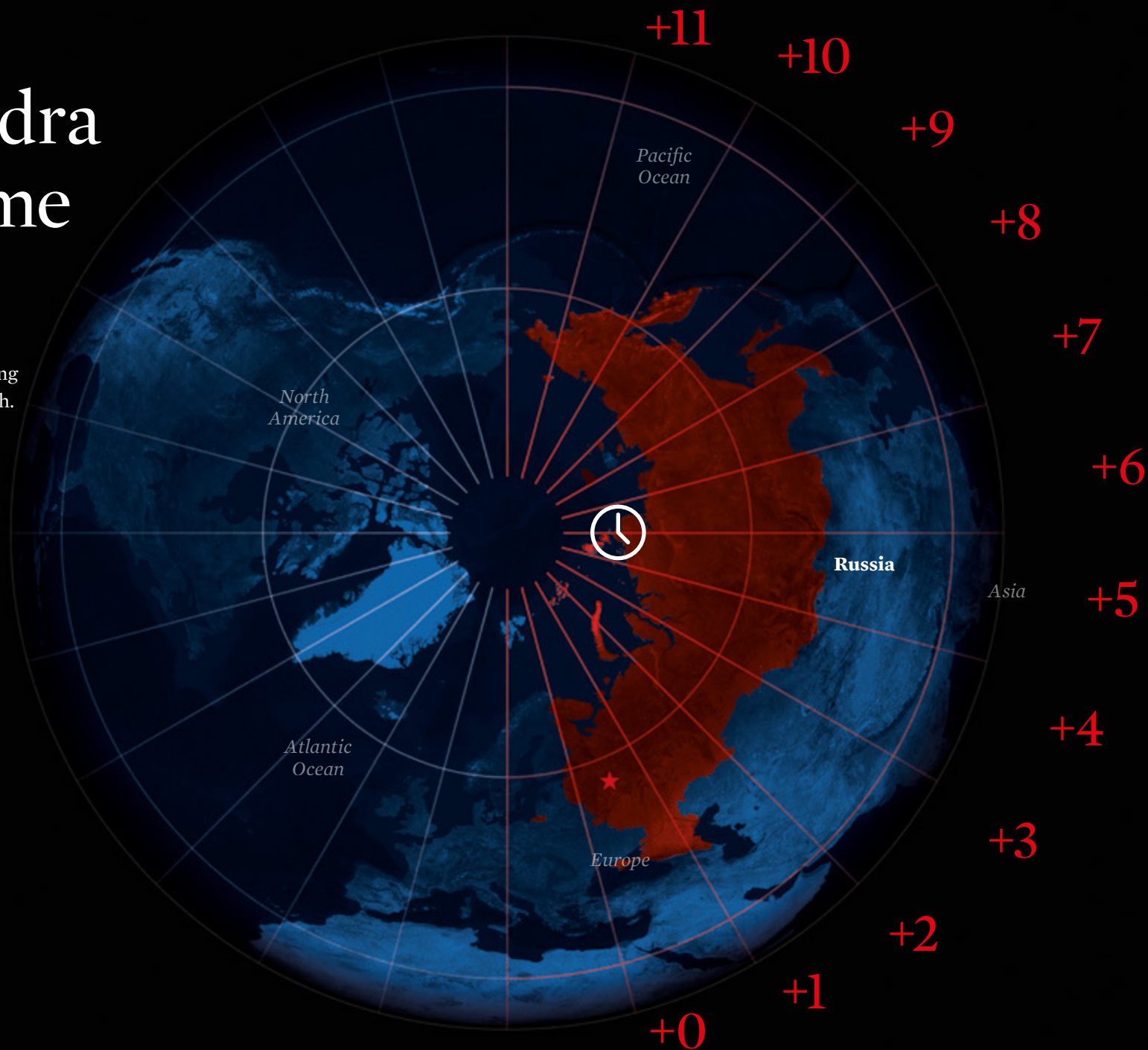
Will Russia's economic strategy put the country on life support?



RUSSIA РОССИЯ

Of Tundra and Time Zones

Unique challenges governing
the largest country on Earth.



Power Projection in Putin's Russia

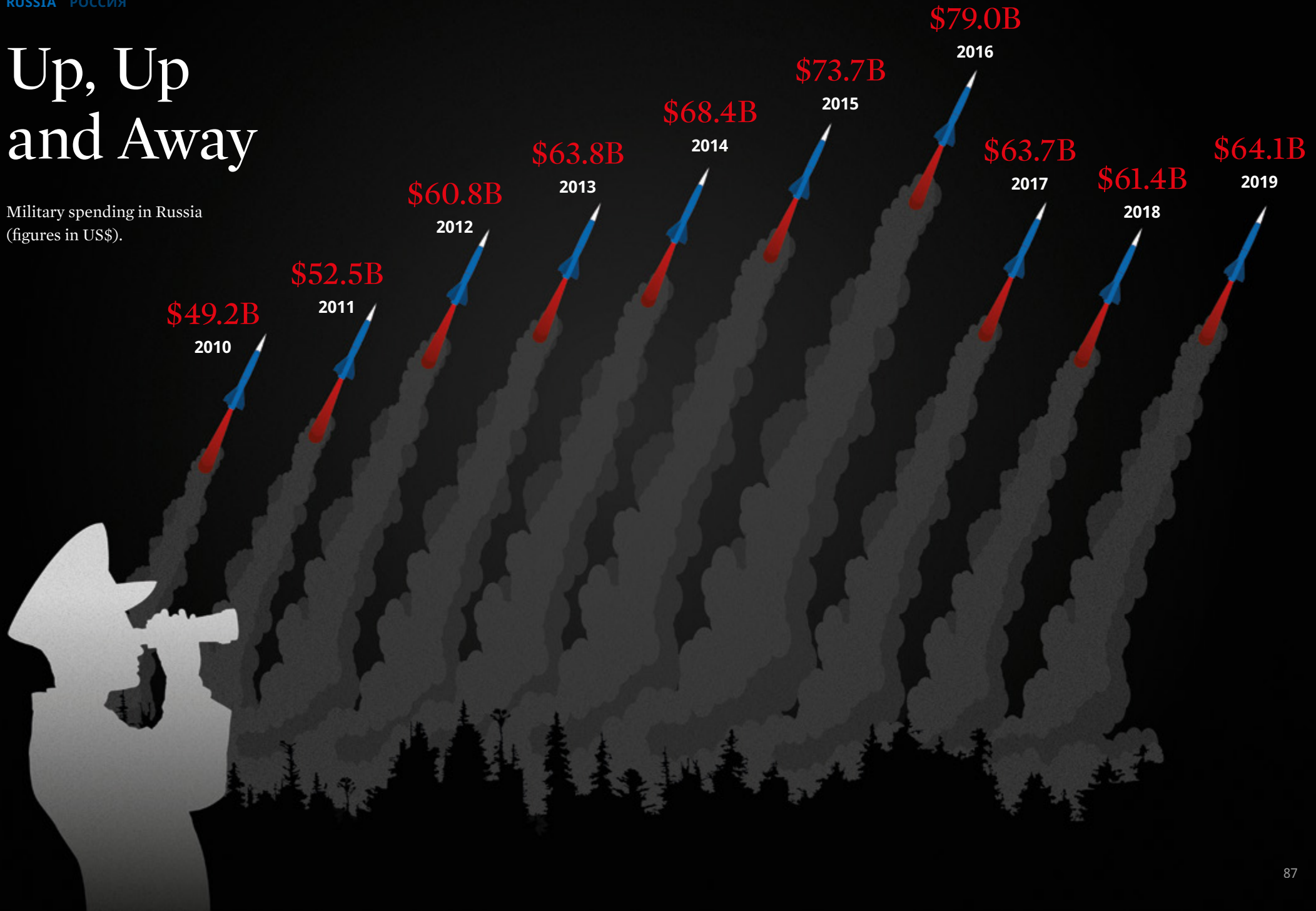
Influencing events in the post-Soviet space and beyond.



Countries with a Russian presence by mission type

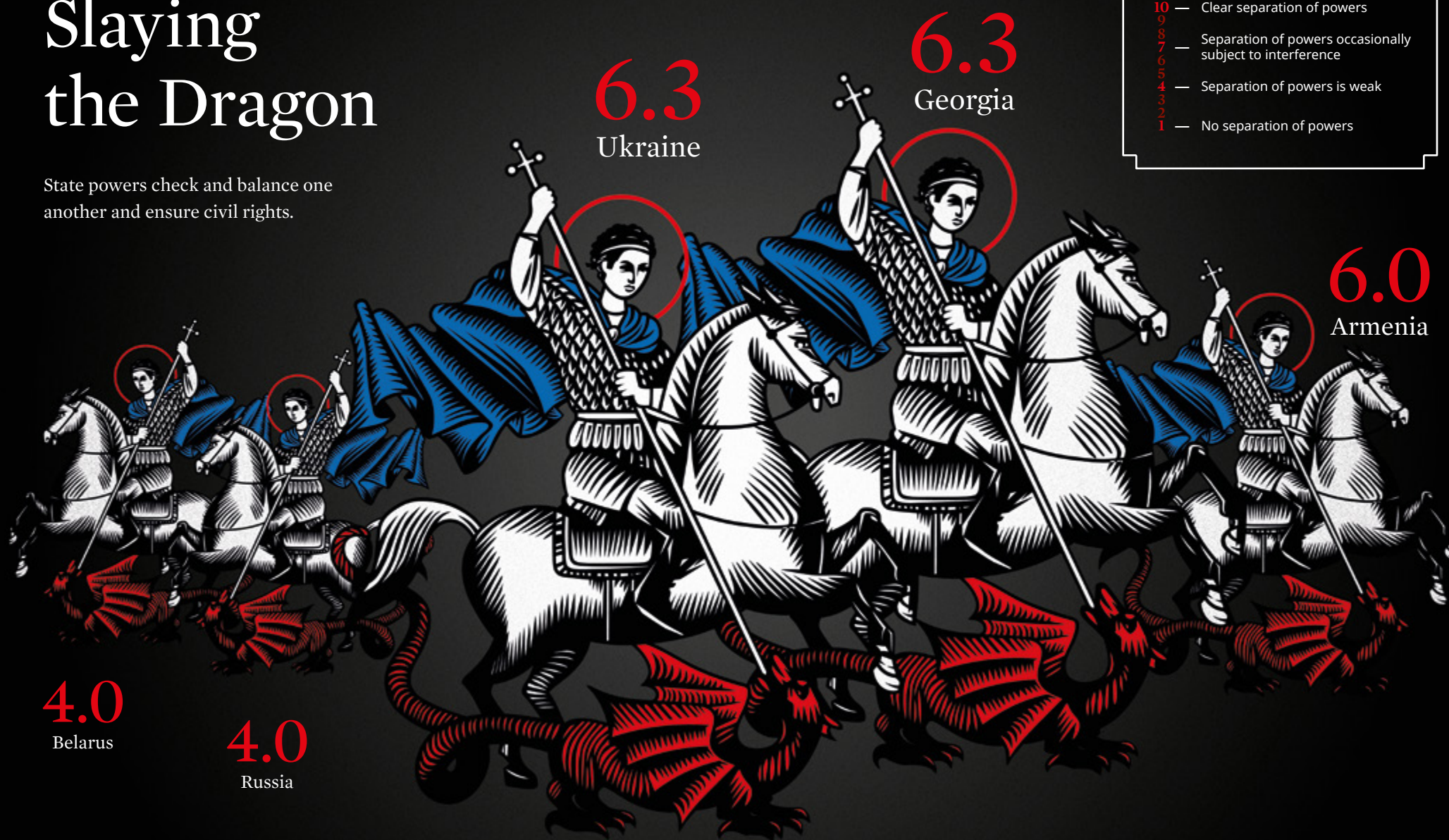
Up, Up and Away

Military spending in Russia
(figures in US\$).



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.



CHINA

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Democracy Failing
to Take Flight
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Monopoly on the
Use of Force
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Strength in Numbers
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Movin' on Up
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Taking their Seats
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What's in the Briefcase?
Transparency.org

The Forever Regime?
Indexmundi.com

Under the Dome
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Wilsoncenter.org
Thenounproject.com

Iranian Influence
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Art Direction
and Graphic Design
Mateo L. Zúñiga

Illustrations
Guillermo Torres
Dylan Quintero
Michael Ramirez

Print
Chromagraphics, Inc.

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 including 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.

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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.

About the Creators



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.



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Graphic Images

AUTOCRATS AND THE USE OF POWER

Disrupting Democracy
Volume IV



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