

# Democracies in Transition: a Comparative Perspective

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Archives and Democracies in Transition

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*„It is true: nowadays democracy has become  
the basic law of all the world!“*

Karl Renner, 30 October 1918

# What is democracy?

- Democracy is „*that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote*“ (Schumpeter, 1942)
- Minimalist concept
- No consensus on definition
- Representative vs. plebiscitary democracy
- Political vs. societal concepts of democracy

# Concepts of political democracy

- Minimalist concepts: election-based systems of political decision-making, protection of liberal human rights (e.g., Dahl)
- Participatory concepts: permanent inclusion of civil society in political decision-making through deliberative processes (e.g., Habermas)
- Concepts taking into account socio-economic conditions of participation (e.g., Rawls)

# „Polyarchy“ (Dahl, 1971)

- Elected representatives having control over government decisions
- Free and fair elections
- Universal (adult) active suffrage
- Universal (adult) passive suffrage
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of information
- Freedom of association

# Democratization

- Decay of non-democratic rule
- (Non-violent) transition to democracy
  - Liberalization
    - economic
    - political
  - Democratization i.t.n.s. (implementation of democratic institutions/procedures)
- Consolidation

# Transition

- Uncertainty about consequences of own action, and about action to be expected from other actors
- Normative system incapable of performing its main function of steering (inter)action through suggesting predictable behavior
- Parallel existence of decaying non-democratic and emerging democratic institutions/procedures – institutional vacuum

# Modes of transition

- Concession
- Compromise
- Concurrence
- Revolution
- Secession



# Reasons for democratization

- Modernization theory: economic development enhances transition to democracy (correlation wealth – education)
- Market liberalism approach: claim of correlation capitalism – democracy (economic freedom – political freedom)
- Civic culture approach: civic culture/public sphere prerequisite for democracy
- Cultural approach: democracy as a manifestation of European values

# Sustainable democratization

- Democratic evolution vs. revolution: chances for sustainable democratic development claimed to be higher in case of gradual evolution (and in case of past democratic experience)
- Endogenous vs. exogenous trigger (foreign intervention): sustainability claimed to be higher in case of internally triggered democratization

# Ecological vs. repressive stability

- Cybernetic model by Welzel
- Ecological stability: cybernetic circle enabling self-stabilisation in the relationship state – society
- Deviation of government from societal preferences  
→ negative feedback (loss of societal support) →  
correction → positive feedback (recovery of  
societal support) (or change in government)

# Ecological vs. repressive stability

- Repressive stability: non-democratic regimes use repression apparatus to make themselves independent of loss of societal support, and lose awareness of it
- Repression and splitting of costs and advantages lead to erosion of diffuse system support, and increase in discontent

# Ecological vs. repressive stability

- As soon as repressive stability is challenged, societal pressure for democratization becomes manifest
- Repressive stability may be challenged by
  - intra-elite conflicts
  - inter-elite conflicts (counter-elites)
  - economic breakdown
  - external models
  - external pressure
  - external defeat

# Waves of democratization

- Huntington, 1991: three-wave model

Years	Wave
1828-1926	First, long wave of democratization
1922-1942	First reverse wave
1943-1962	Second, short wave of democratization
1958-1975	Second reverse wave
Since 1974	Third wave of democratization

# Waves of democratization

Category	Number of Countries	First Wave	First Reverse	Second Wave	Second Reverse	Third Wave	Third Reverse?
L	3						
K	12						
J	6						
I	1						
H	9						
G	10						
F	3						
E	4						
D	5						
C	10						
B	1						
A	10						
Democratic Countries		33 (Max)	11 (Min)	52 (Max)	30 (Min)	65 (Max)	61 (Min)
Net Change		+33	-22	+41	-22	+35	-4
Total Countries = 74							

Democratic or semidemocratic phases  
 Nondemocratic phases of previously democratic countries

Figure 1.1. Democratization Waves and Reverse Waves

# „Third wave“ of democratization

- Transition to democracy in 30 countries between 1974 and 1990 (Southern Europe, Latin America, Central Eastern Europe)
- Major causative factors:
  - Deepening legitimacy problems
  - Global economic growth
  - Shift in Catholic Church
  - External actors (EC, USA, USSR)
  - „Snowballing“



# „Third wave“ of democratization

- Trend continued in 1990s (Africa)
- Doorenspleet, 2000: „Third wave“ (1976-1990) followed by „Explosive wave“ (1990-1994)
- Explicit reference to Central Eastern European transition model, e.g., in South Africa (De Klerk)

# Measuring democracy

- Polity democracy index (based on Gurr, 1974): level of political freedom (+10/-10), as indicated, e.g., by regulations on political/electoral participation, and normative constraints on executive
- Freedom House index (based on Gastil, 1978): score of political rights and civil liberties protection (1/7, not free/partly free/free)

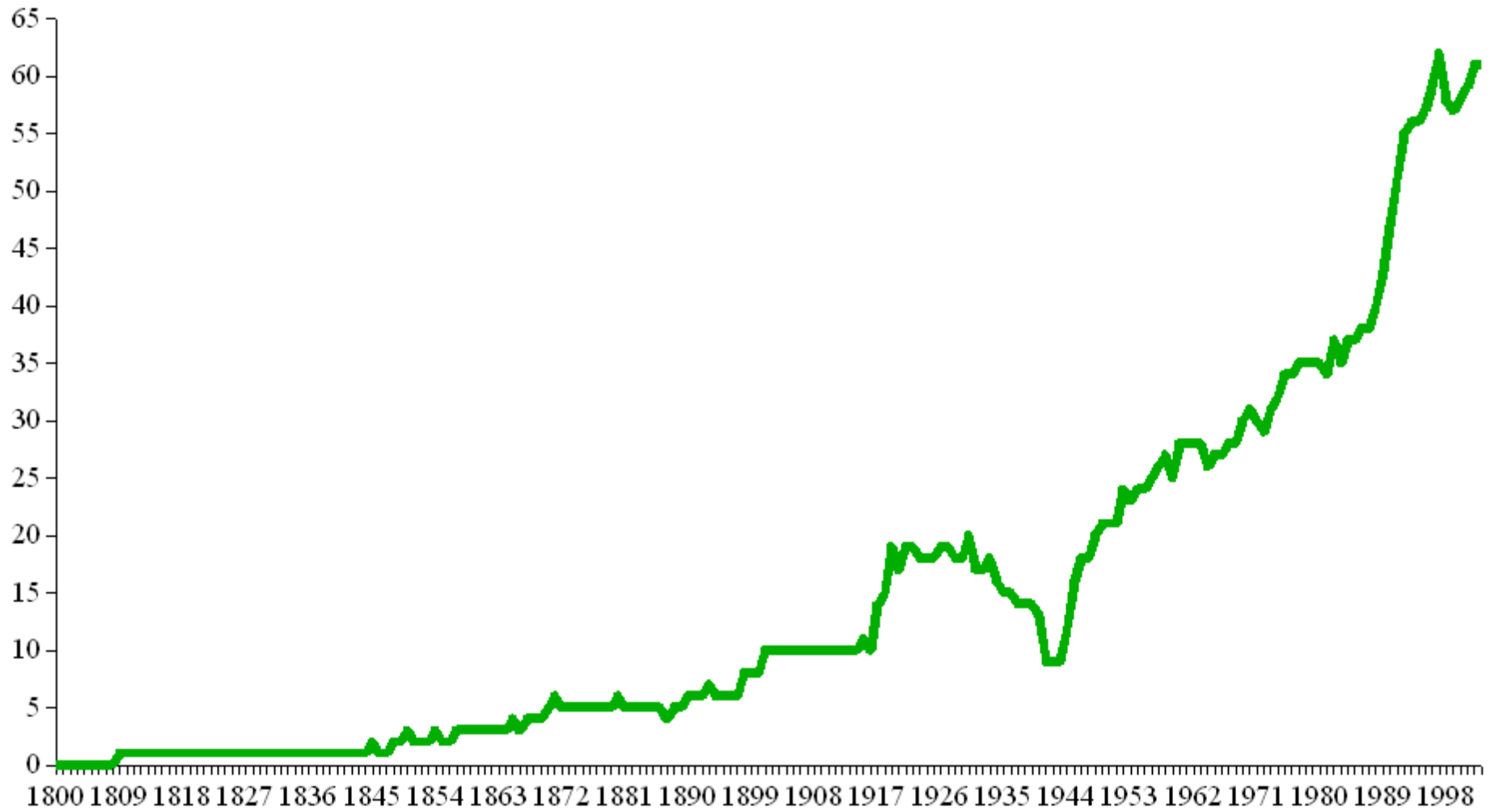
# Measuring democracy

- Regime classification index by Przeworski et al., 1996, 2000: binary classification of regimes as democratic/autocratic, applying a minimalist democracy concept
- Democracy Barometer (Bühlmann et al., 2008): 100 indicators referring to three fundamental principles (freedom, equality, control), nine functions, and 18 components, visualization in diagrams

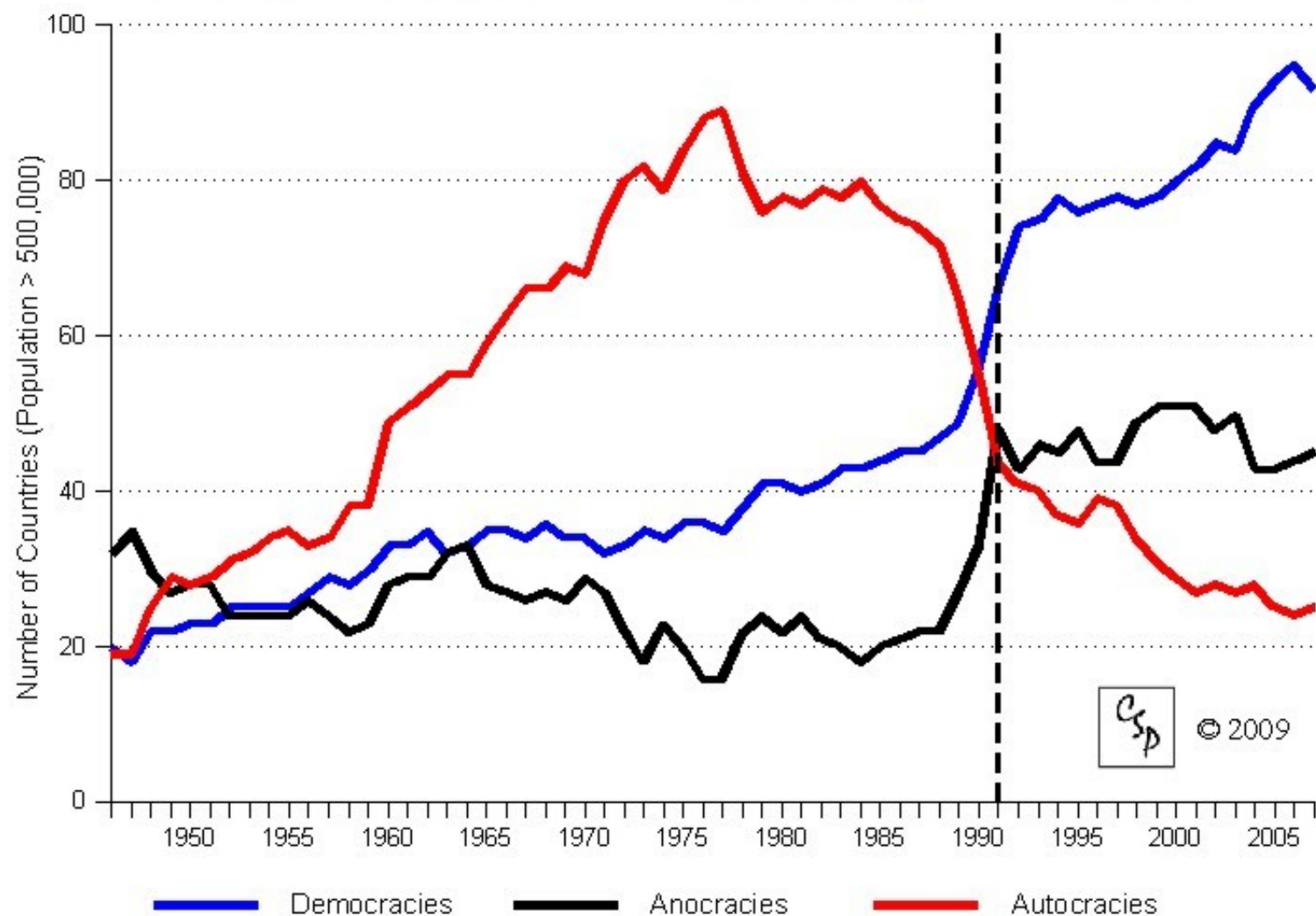
# Measuring democracy

- Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index (Kekic, 2006): 60 indicators grouped in five categories (electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, political culture), average scores of the five category indexes (1-10) are used to rate countries within one of four regime types (full democracies/flawed democracies/hybrid regimes/authoritarian regimes)

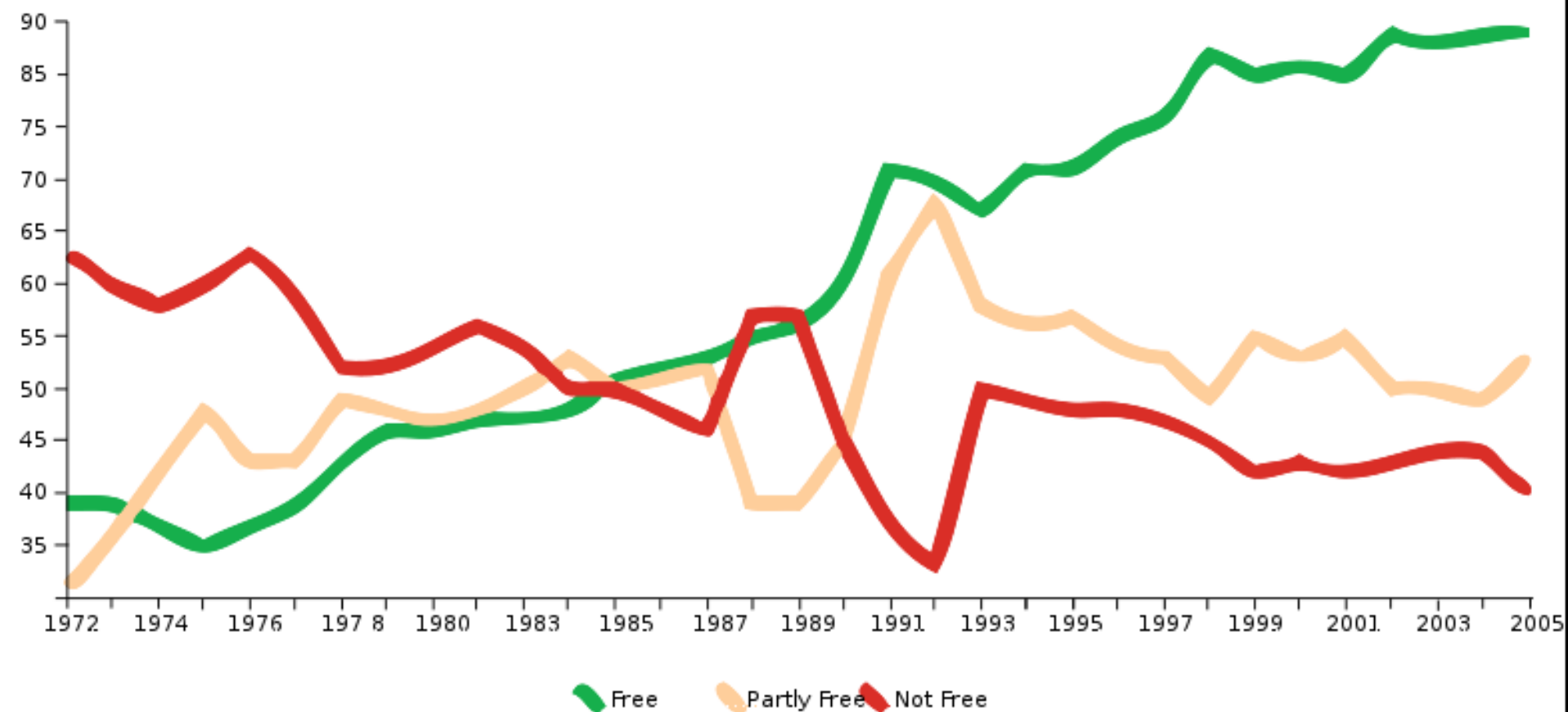
**Number of nations scoring 8 or higher on the Polity IV scale 1800-2003**

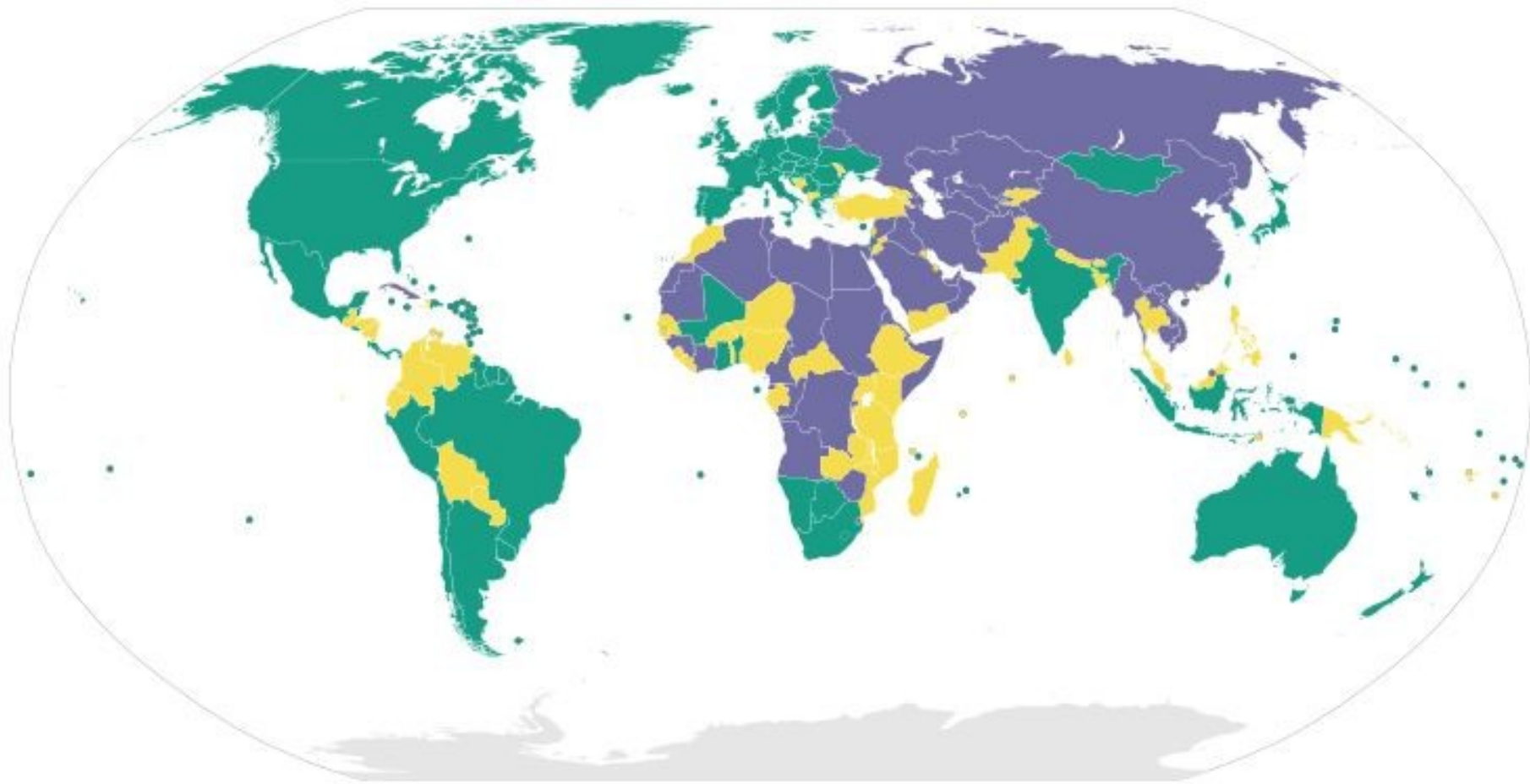


## Global Trends in Governance, 1946-2007



## Freedom in the World 1972-2005 Country Rankings

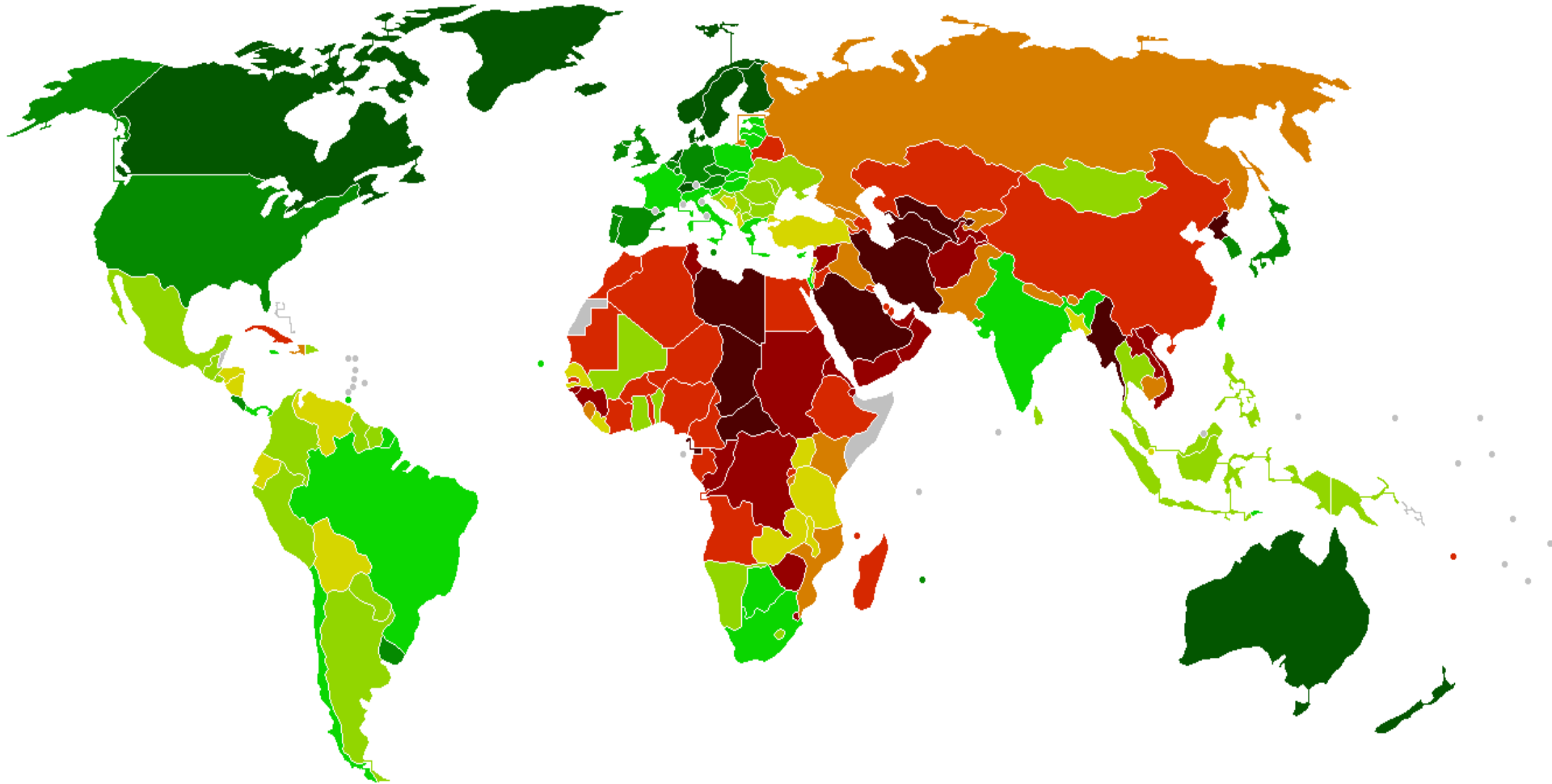




Political ratings of countries according to Freedom House's Freedom in the World survey, 2009:

- Free
- Partly Free
- Not Free





EIU democracy index 2010

# Democracy in retreat?

- EIU democracy index 2010, in comparison with 2008, indicates decline in democracy
- Decrease of democracy score in 91 (out of 167) countries, increase in 48 countries
- Most significant regional change: decrease of score in 19 countries in Eastern Europe
- Change of regime type in 13 countries, in 11 of them regression

# Democracy in retreat?

- 26 „full democracies“, 53 „flawed democracies“, 33 „hybrid regimes“, 55 „authoritarian regimes“
- Highest individual score: Norway
- Half of the world's population live in democracies, 12 % in „full democracies“
- Explanation for alleged retreat of democracy: global economic crisis

Thank you for your attention!

Further information:

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