Cautionary Notes

- V-Dem is firmly committed to full transparency and release of the data we have. Yet, please note this: The *V-Dem Methodology* assumes five or more coders for the "contemporary" period starting from 1900, originally coded to 2012. With the updates covering 2013–2017, it has for a few country-variable combinations, been impossible to achieve that target. We have found that this at times result in significant changes in point estimates as a consequence of self-selected attrition of Country Experts, rather than actual changes in the country. We therefore strongly advise against using point estimates for country-variable-years with three or fewer (≤ 3) ratings for the period 2013-2017. We suggest to filter these out before conducting any type of analysis. For this purpose, a special count-variable for each Country-Expert coded variable, which is suffixed with "_nr", is included in the dataset from v7 and onwards.

- While the country-date estimates for Disclosure of campaign donations (v2eldonate), Election other electoral violence (v2elpeace), and Party branches (v2psprbrch) reached a stationary distribution according to our standard diagnostic procedures, population-level thresholds (gamma_-mu) did not. As a result, all estimates from these variables should be treated with caution. In particular, _osp and _ord values are potentially misleading, as they incorporate population thresholds in their estimation procedure.

- While the country-date estimates converged in the factor models for the following Mid-Level indices: Freedom of Association (thick) index (v2x_frassoc_thick), Political Civil Liberties index (v2x_clpol), and Core civil society index (v2xcs_ccsi), some of the parameters, although near convergence, did not converge according to the standard V-Dem criteria.

- While estimates of the latent variable Vertical Accountability (v2x_veracc) converged according to standard V-Dem criteria, some parameters involved in the estimation process for this variable did not. As a result, this variable should be used with caution. All other Accountability indices — the overall Accountability index (v2x_accountability), Diagonal Accountability index (v2x_diagacc), Vertical Accountability index (v2x_vertacc), and Horizontal Accountability index (v2x_horacc) — met V-Dem criteria for convergence.

- We further ask you to use the following percentage % variables with caution:

    - Female journalists (v2mefemjrn)
    - Weaker civil liberties population (v2clsnlpct)

- We have also excluded certain percentage % variables, since data for these variables have not gone through full quality control with thorough cross-referencing yet. We hope to be able to do so for the version 9 of the dataset. This concerns the following variables:

    - Resident noncitizens who cannot vote (v2elnoncit)
    - Election male suffrage in practice (v2elmalsuf)
    - Election female suffrage in practice (v2elfemsuf)
    - Subnational election area less free and fair population (v2elsnlpop)
    - Subnational election area more free and fair population (v2elsnmpop)
    - Party switching (v2psswitch)
    - Stronger civil liberties population (v2clsnmpct)
    - State authority over territory (v2svstterr)
    - State authority over population (v2svstpop)
    - Media access (v2meaccess)

- We have not included the following quota variable for version 8. We have discovered mistakes in the time series and hope to be able to correct them for version 9 of the dataset.

    - Lower chamber quota for social groups (v2lgqumin)

- Given the sparsity of affirmative responses to some binary variables, specifically some of those which took the form of multiple selection questions, we now estimate their values using the mean across country experts, as opposed to using the standard measurement model. These variables are:

  - HOS control over (v2exctlhs)
  - HOG removal by other in practice (v2exrmhgnp)
  - HOS removal by other in practice (v2exrmhsol)

- *Historical V-Dem:* In the coding of several Historical V-Dem A type variables, the historical part of the time series — including 20 years of overlap with the "contemporary" time series (typically 1900–1920) — were conducted completely independently from the existing coding in the original V-Dem dataset, by one or more new coders. For many of these historical variables, we have gone through and checked the consistency of the coding, further scrutinized the sources, and determined which coding represents the most appropriate score after deliberation. We have subsequently made the appropriate adjustments to the data.

  For other historical A variables we have yet to finalize this process, and this will be done before the release of version 9 of the V-Dem dataset. For these variables, the scores reported for the overlap period (typically 1900–1920) in version 8 of the dataset are the "contemporary" V-Dem scores, by default. This means that for some countries, where there is disagreement in the historical and contemporary coding in the starting year for the contemporary time series (typically 1900), there may be artificial changes between that year and the year before that do not necessarily reflect a real-world change in the political system in the country. Hence, we advise users to exert caution before running analysis on the entire time series extending across both the historical and contemporary coding periods.

  Please also note that for the variables where there is not full correspondence between the historical (1789–1920) and contemporary (1900-2017) coding, the historical coding of the variables will also be provided in their original form as separate variables, carrying a "v3" rather than a "v2" prefix on the variable tag. These "v3" variables are gathered together with a number of new (A and C type) variables that are currently only coded for the Historical V-Dem sample, in a separate section of the codebook.