# Demystifying the World Economic Forum (WEF) via Visualizations

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Fig. 1. WEF logo from Wikipedia (see url in footnote)

**Abstract**—Understanding of the membership structure, agendas of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and their impact on Western society's democratic ideals is obscure among the general population. In 2020, WEF had 627 self-selected, not elected, member corporations. Over 3,000 invitation-only participants attended the flagship annual Davos Meeting in Switzerland, including 410 public figures. Since WWII, the United Nations (U.N.) has served as the foremost international body for geopolitical and economic issues for many countries, primarily those with Western democratic ideals. WEF members could pose serious concerns to members' democratic nations when many such nations already have economic representation through the democratic process within the United Nations (U.N.). The main cause of concern is the makeup of the members of WEF compared to those of the United Nations. World citizens, especially Westerners, may be interested in knowing who WEF is by the current makeup of corporate members by national representation. Providing a visualization of the current makeup of WEF could inform citizens of those types of corporate entities that join WEF and those that do not, including industry sector. Then citizens will be able to further their investigation of WEF, any members of interest, and the scope of impact WEF has in their individual lives. The tasks at hand will attempt to provide means whereby world citizens can be informed of the current membership structure and history of annual meeting agendas since WEF inception in 1971 via visualizations.

**Index Terms**—Global Governance, Elite Organizations, Big Business, Western Democracy.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The following includes an outline of three specific tasks to be completed via visualizations, relevant literature review, data sources and references.

## 2 TASKS

1. International Representation of Member Entities

   - In this task, viewers will be able to not only see the current makeup of WEF members, but also the international representation of the membership and industry sector.

2. Comparing the Membership of the UN to WEF

   - Next, viewers will be able to compare current WEF membership by nationality against the current membership of the world's foremost international governance body, the United Nations.

3. WEF Agendas

   - Lastly, viewers will see a timeline of annual WEF Davos Meeting agendas since its inception in 1971. The timeline will aid viewers in seeing agenda changes over time and understand their relevancy to the contemporary issues of each year.

## 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, two areas of focus during the literature review surfaced, including enhanced forms of geographic maps; necklace maps and choropleth maps. The large number of data points to be mapped creates a problem for displaying representation and clear comparisons as in tasks 1 and 2. The following articles will be explored for their potential applications in tasks 1 and 2.

- a. Speckmann and K. Verbeek, "Necklace Maps," in IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics, vol. 16, no. 6, pp. 881-889, Nov.-Dec. 2010, doi: 10.1109/TVCG.2010.180.

- M. Jern, J. Rogstadius and T. Åström, "Treemaps and Choropleth Maps Applied to Regional Hierarchical Statistical Data," 2009 13th International Conference Information Visualisation, 2009, pp. 403-410, doi: 10.1109/IV.2009.97.

## 4 DATA SOURCES

Data will be sourced from several locations as follows:

- WEF website (scraped for membership data) `https://www.weforum.org/partners`

- Wikepida (for annual agenda topics) `https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Economic_Forum`

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- *WEF logo:*
  `https://en.wikipedia.orgwiki/World_Economic_Forum`