

Democracy in Latin America

Third Session

The size of Brazil



Democracy now: V-Dem

- Liberal democracies peaked in 2012 with 42 countries and are now down to the lowest levels in over 25 years.
- Dictatorships are on the rise and harbor 70% of the world population (5.4 billion people).
- The democratic decline is especially evident in parts of Latin America. Brazil and El Salvador are among the 10 major autocratizers.

V-Dem definitions 1

- **Electoral democracy:** countries with sufficiently high levels of free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage, freedom of expression and association. Hence, solely holding elections does not suffice for a country to be considered democratic.
- **Liberal democracy:** countries in which liberal aspects (executive constraint by the legislature and high courts, rule of law and individual rights) are respected on top of the requirements for electoral democracy.

V-Dem definitions 2

- **Electoral autocracy:** there are institutions emulating democracy but falling substantially below the threshold for democracy in terms of authenticity or quality.
- **Closed autocracy:** an individual or group of people exercise power largely unconstrained by the people.

Liberal Democracy Index (V-Dem)

FIGURE 3: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX, GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES 1971–2021

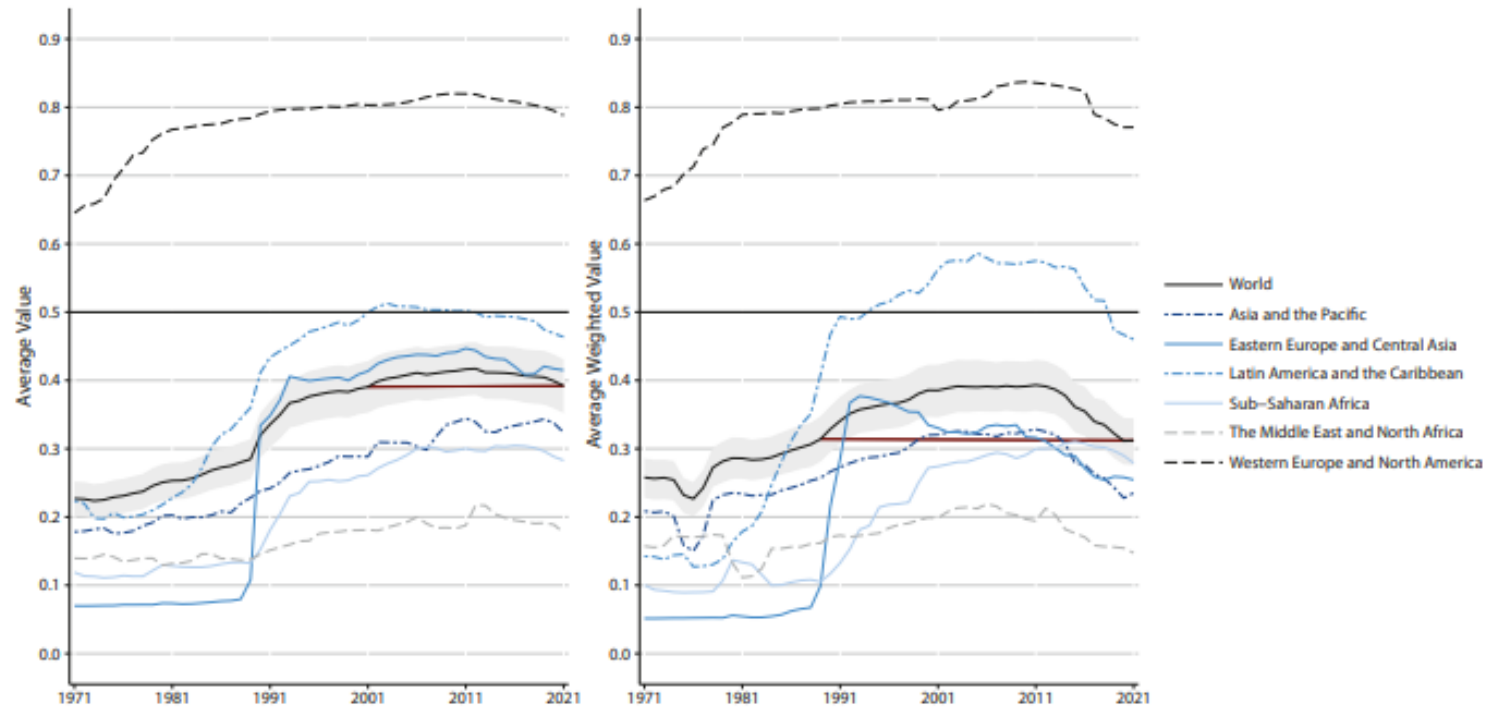


Figure 3 compares the state of the world in 2021 to global and regional trends since 1971. The black lines represent global averages on the LDI with the grey area marking the confidence intervals. The left panel is based on conventional country averages. The right-hand panel instead shows average levels of democracy weighted by population.

Share of population by regime type (V-Dem)

FIGURE 5: SHARE OF POPULATION IN TYPE OF REGIME, BY REGION



Each "person" represents 1% of population in the region. The colors represent the 4 regime types (Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy).

Top democratizers and autocratizers

FIGURE 14: TOP 10 DEMOCRATIZING VS. AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES (10-YEAR)

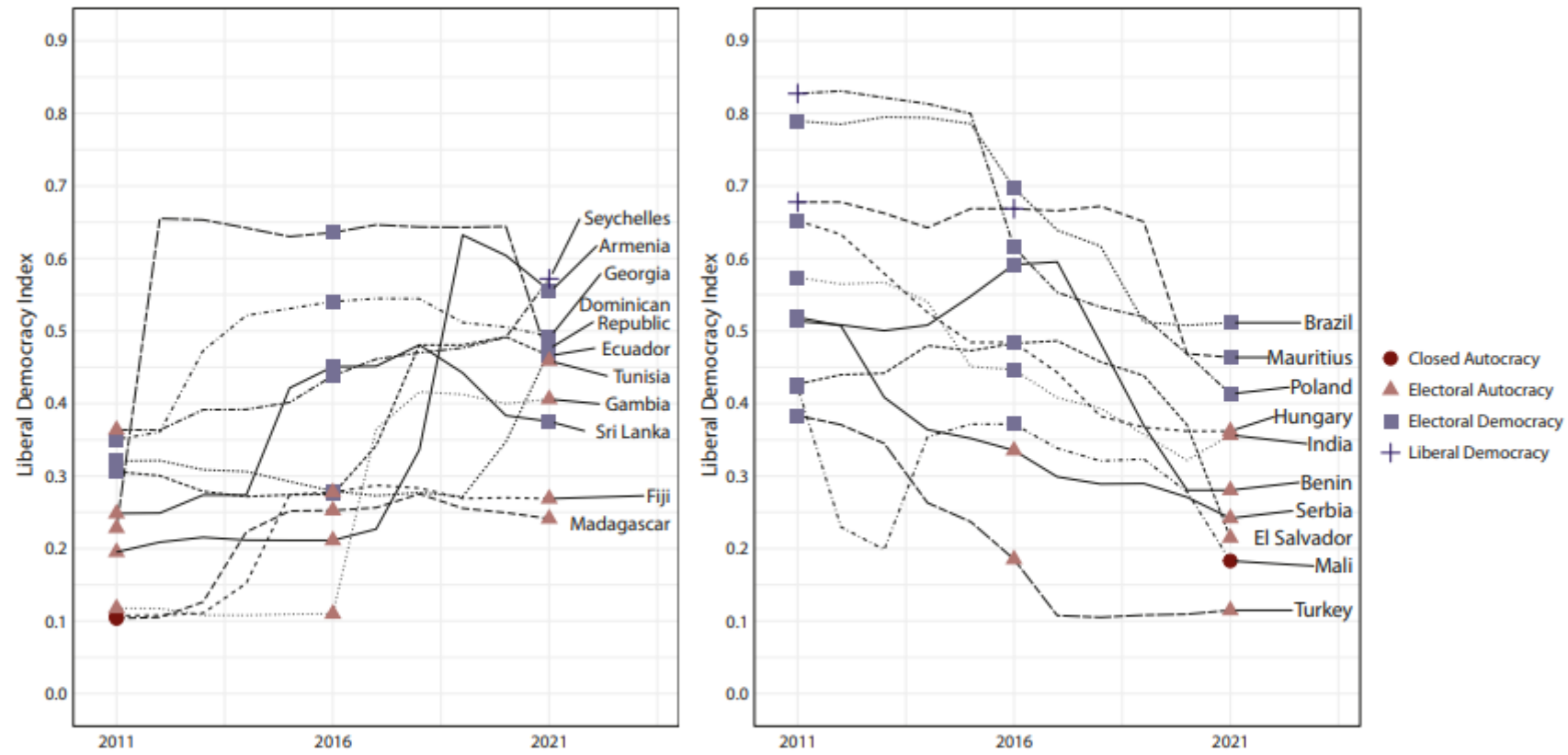


Figure 14 plots values of the liberal democracy index (LDI) for the 10 countries with the highest amount of LDI increase (left panel) and decrease (right panel) in the last 10 years.

Using V-Dem

- https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/

Why is democracy eroding in Latin America?

- Economist:
 - Polarization (but is it? What does Murillo say?)
 - Commodity cycles/economic stagnation (last paragraph – the role of policies)
 - Frustration with democracies, especially the younger generation
 - Pandemic
 - Fragmentation and weakness of political parties (next week 😊)
 - Social media and increase of tribal politics
 - Organized crime
 - Influence of China (main trade partner and major infrastructure investor)
 - Appeal of autocracies (why?)

Why is democracy eroding in Latin America?

- Underground parliamentarism: legislatures are increasingly holding the cards of politics.
- Why is this problematic?

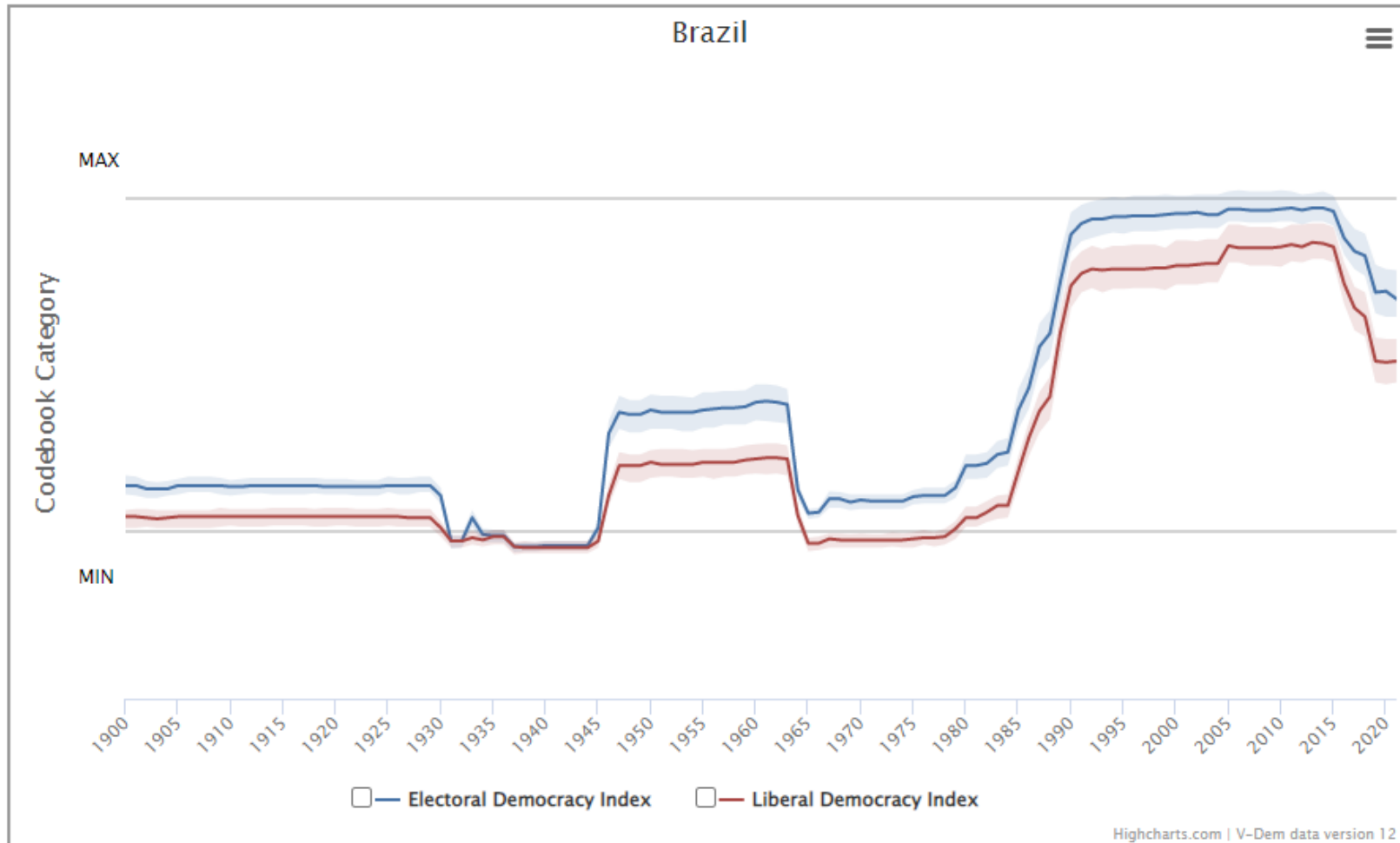
How about Central America?

- El Salvador and Nayib Bukele.
- Guatemala and Alejandro Giammattei.
- Honduras and Juan Orlando Hernandez. Election on Nov 28th.
- Nicaragua and Daniel Ortega.
- What is common across these cases?

Autocratization

- Coup d'état: in 2021, there were 5 military and 1 self-coup – this was a sharp break from the average of 1.2 coups per year in prior years.
- But this is only one way through which autocratization occurs. Democracy in Central American countries has been eaten from the within.
- This would arguably happen if Jair Bolsonaro were elected last month in Brazil.

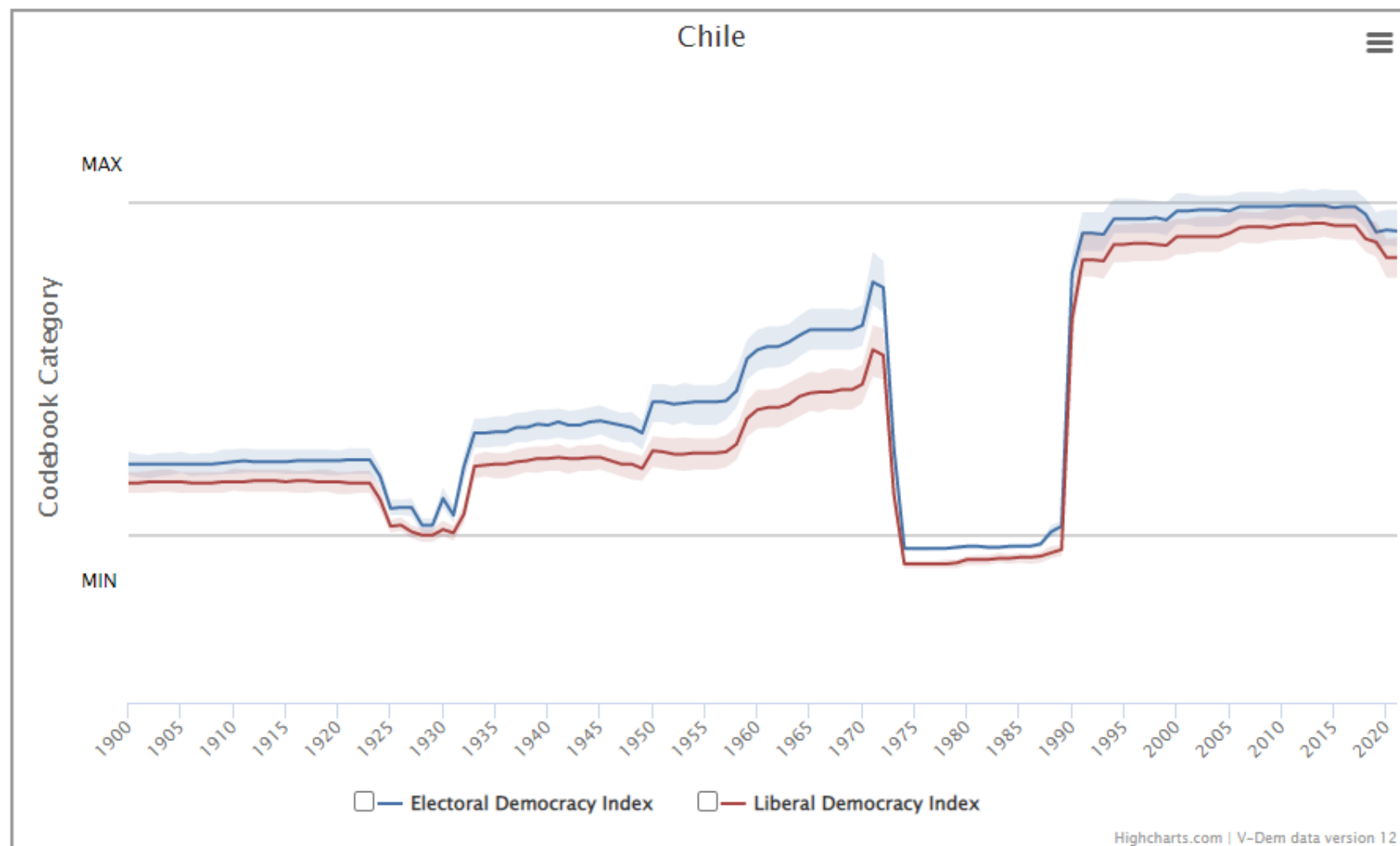
Brazil



Brazil

- Protests in 2013 after increase in bus fares.
- Impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016.
- Extreme polarization (but again, was it?).
- Election of an “antiestablishment” president with authoritarian tendencies.

Chile



Chile

- Protests in 2019 after the rise of metro fares.
- In 2020, Chileans decide to establish a Constitutional Assembly to reform its constitution.
- What was the problem with the Constitutional Assembly? And the Constitution that was rejected?
- Why is Stuenkel arguing that the rejection is still good news for democracy?

Comparing Brazil and Chile

- Why is it that Chile was able to channel frustration through the political system and Brazil elected an “antiestablishment” president with authoritarian tendencies?

Latin America in 2022

- Leftists Lula in Brazil, Boric in Chile and Petro in Colombia were elected by forming alliances with the center. Has Latin America turned left or is this shift a consequence of the mishandling of the pandemic by right-wing governments?
- All presidents face or will face governability issues with divided countries and economic crises. The same can be said about Castillo in Peru (who is now facing his third impeachment process).