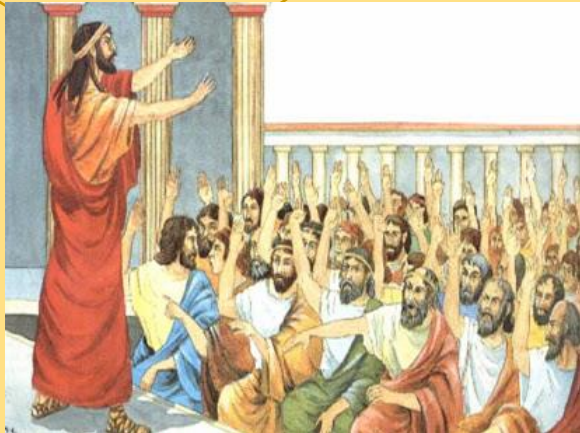


# Democratic Backsliding



# [ How Democracies Die ]

“In our time, democracies still die but by different means, less at the hands of men with guns and more by **elected leaders.**” (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019)



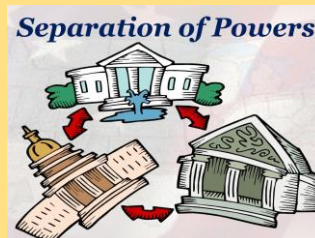
# Democracy as a way of life



visualizes the



John Dewey 19



Pluralism





HEY, MR. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, WHAT'S GOING ON UNDER THERE?

TRUST ME. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW.

THE PUBLIC

CLOAK  
of  
SECRECY



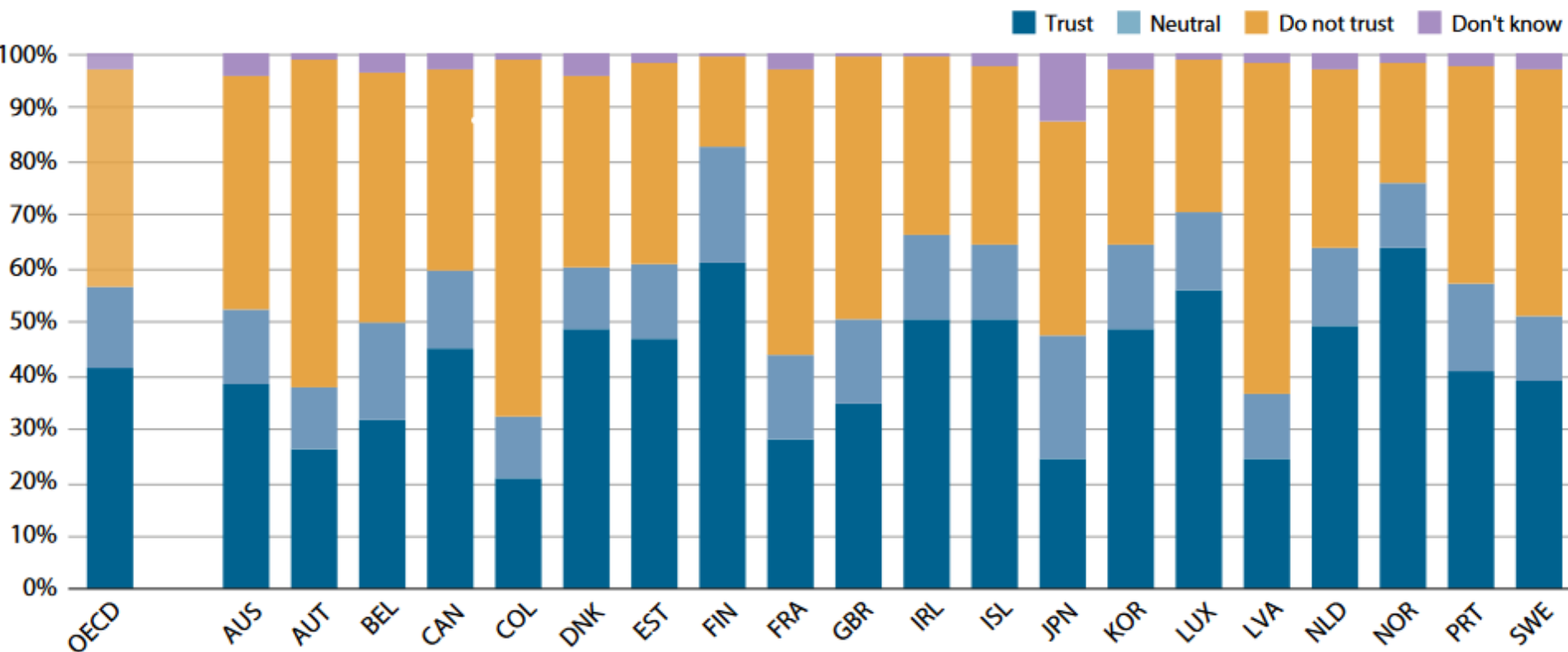
©2009  
FLORIDA  
TODAY

JEFF  
PARKER

# Measuring Public Trust in national government

**FIGURE 1. Just over four in ten people trust their national government**

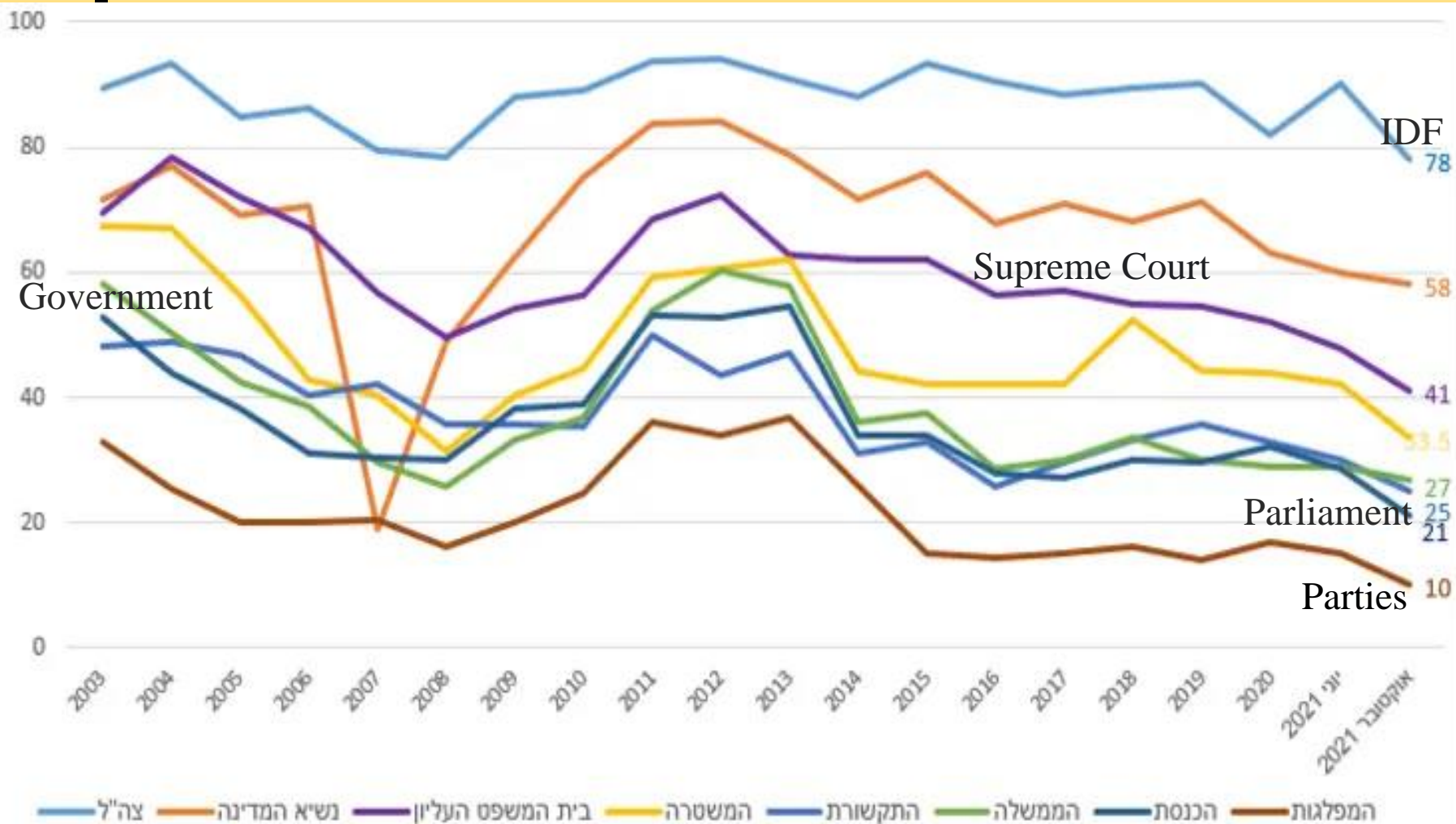
Share of respondents who indicate different levels of trust in their national government (on a 0-10 scale), 2021



**Note:** Figure presents the within-country distributions of responses to the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely, how much do you trust the national government?" Mexico and New Zealand are excluded from the figure as the question "trust in national government" is not asked. For more detailed information, please find the survey method document at <http://oe.cd/trust>. For access to data see <https://stat.link/jlkt6v>.

**Source:** OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>)

# Public Trust in Israel 2003-2021



# Measuring Democracy

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a unique approach to measuring democracy.

It is an international collaboration involving more than 4,200 scholars from over 180 countries.

**FIGURE A1.2: EXPLANATION OF THE V-DEM LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX**

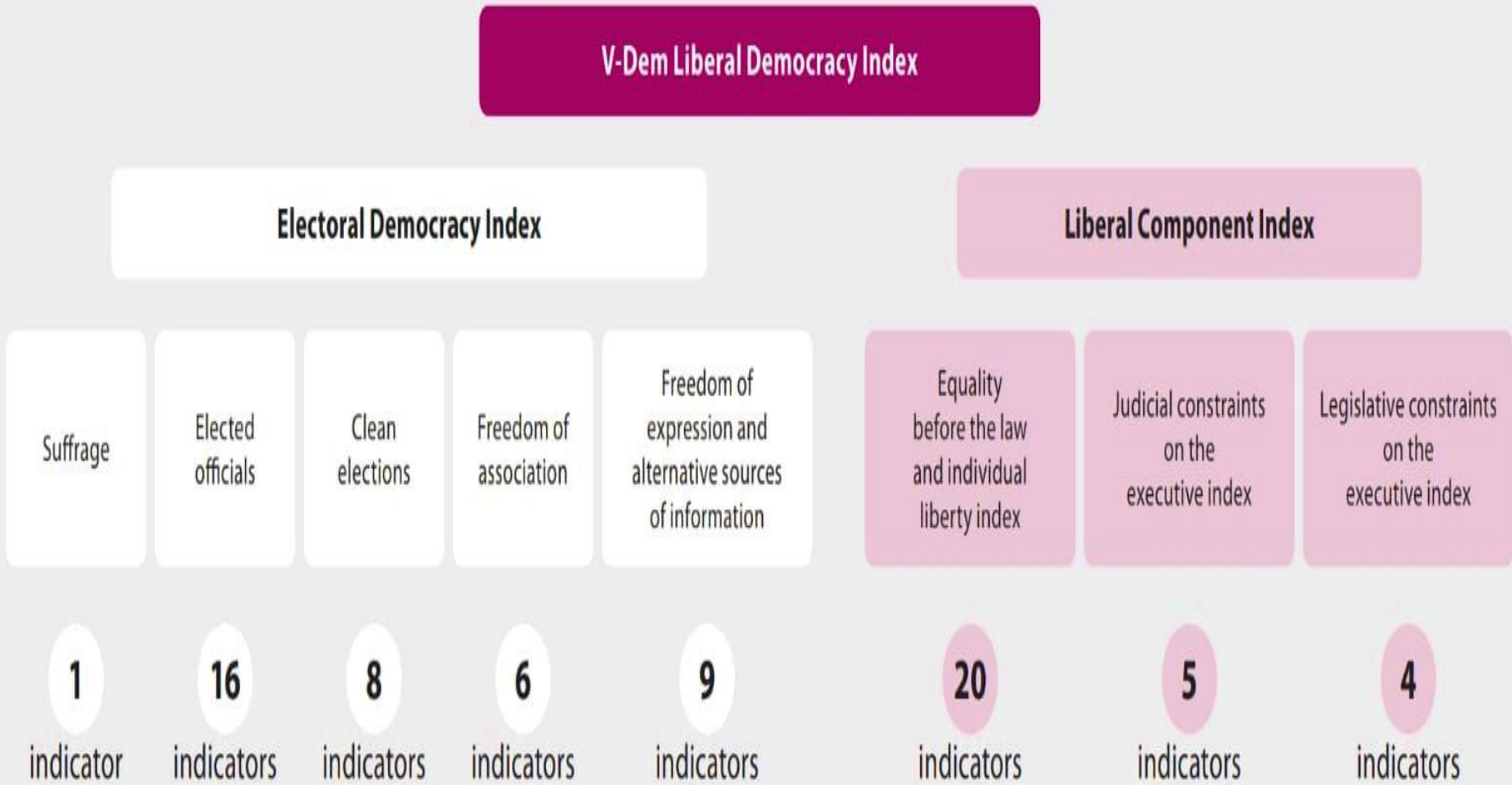
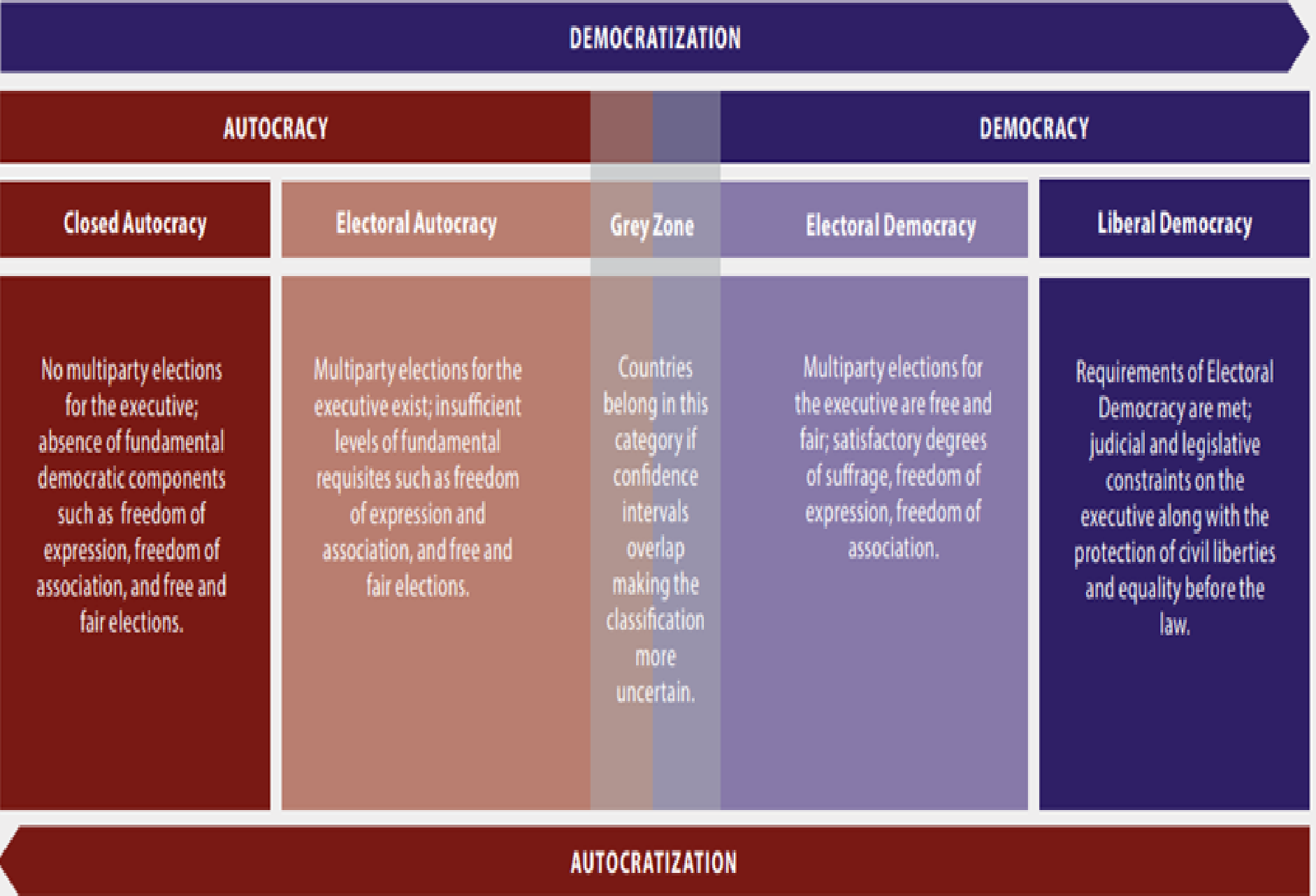




FIGURE 1. REGIMES AND REGIME CHANGE

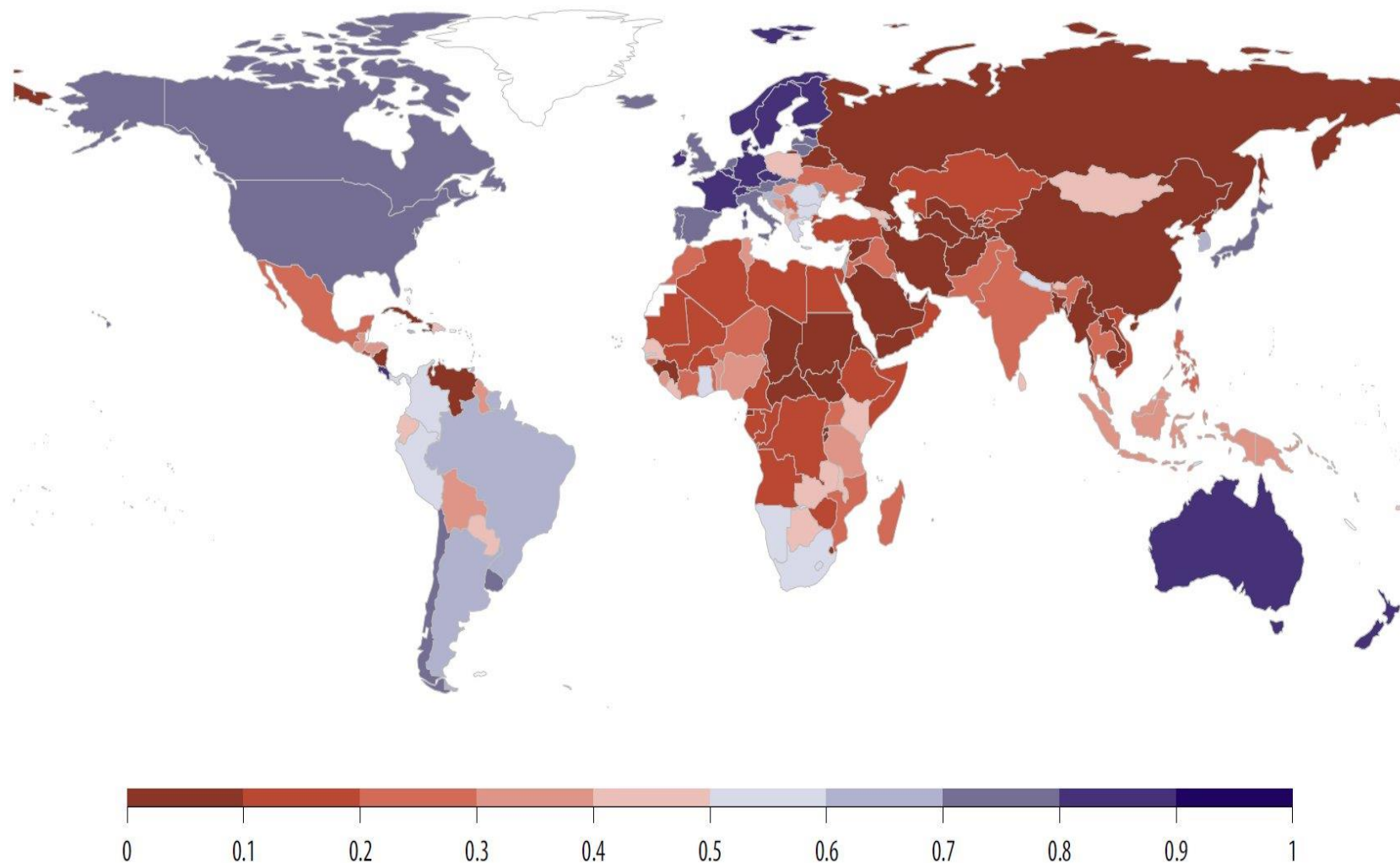


# [ Regime transformation 2023 ]

**Autocratization** is ongoing in **42** countries, home to 2.8 billion people, or **35%** of the world's population.

**Democratization** is taking place in **18** countries, harboring only 400 million people, or **5%** of the world's population.

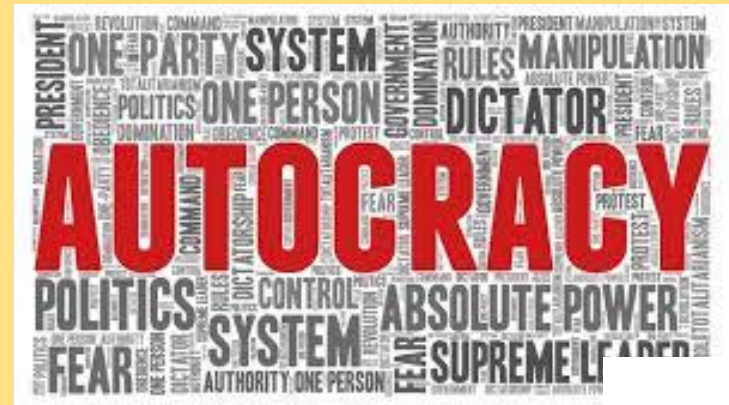
**FIGURE 1. STATE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY (LDI), 2023**



1 The Democracy Report 2024 is based on V-Dem dataset v14. With each annual update, V-Dem improves the quality of the data and engages a large number of experts, which may lead to correction of scores reported in previous years' reports. V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) captures both electoral and liberal aspects of democracy and goes from the lowest (0) to the highest (1) levels of democracy. The electoral component is measured by the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) that captures the extent to which all elements of Robert Dahl's (1971) famous articulation of "polyarchy" are present, including the quality of elections, individual rights, as well as freedoms of expression, the media, and association. The Liberal Component Index (LCI) captures the liberal aspects including checks and balances on the executive, respect for civil liberties, the rule of law, and the independence of the legislature and the judiciary. Dahl, R.A. 1971. *Polyarchy: participation and opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

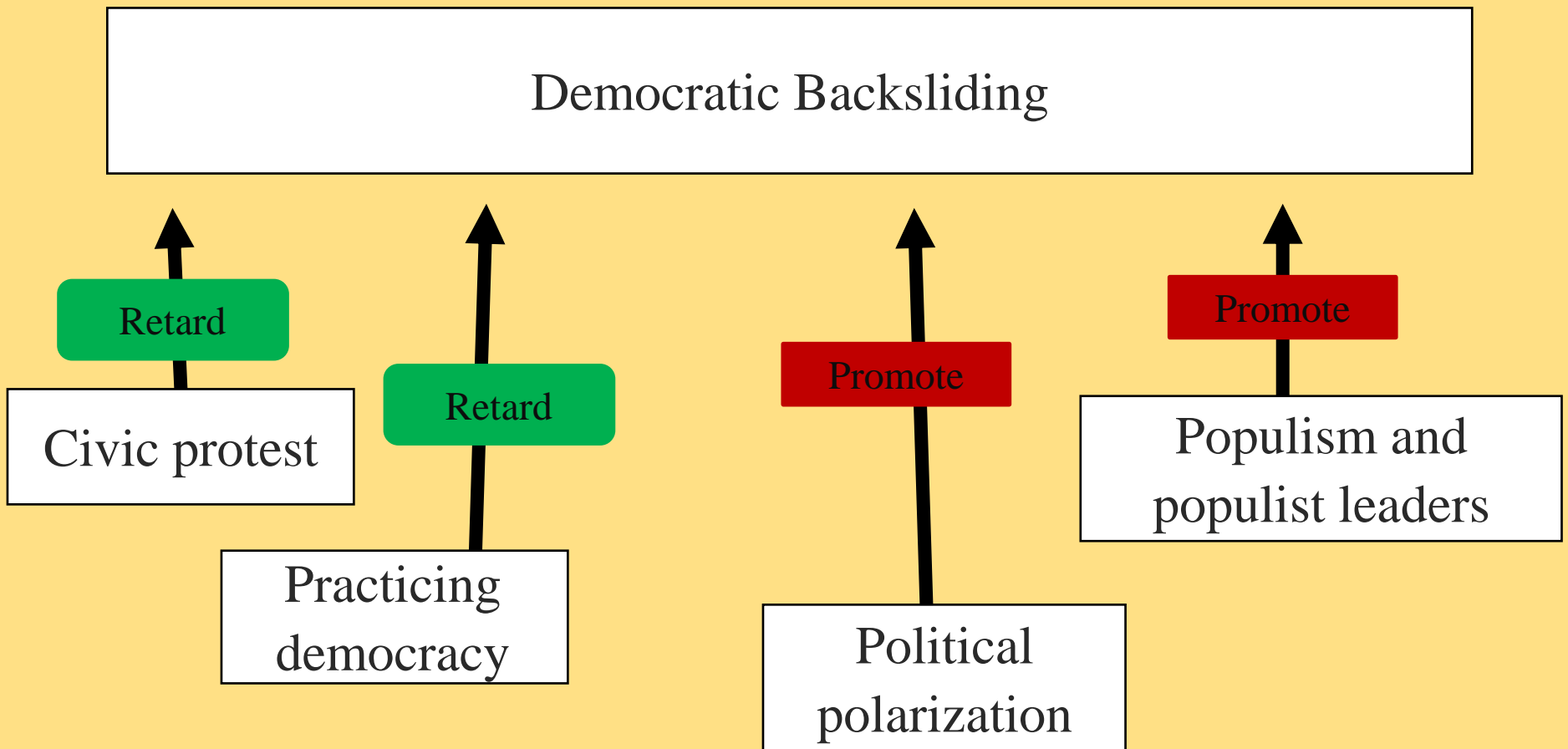
## L

The level of democracy enjoyed by the average person in the world in 2023 is down to 1985-levels.





# Factors promoting and retarding democratic backsliding



# Populism and populist leaders

Populism is a specific set of ideas that has three core concepts – the pure people, the corrupt elite and the general will (Kaltwasser 2014).



Populist leaders operate in a post-truth era that enables them to lie, to create “fake news,” and spread disinformation and conspiracy theories.

# Populist leaders in democracies

The twenty-first century has witnessed more populist leaders as heads of democracies



# Political polarization

The divergence of political attitudes away from the center towards ideological extremes

## **Ideological polarization**

Differences between the policy positions.

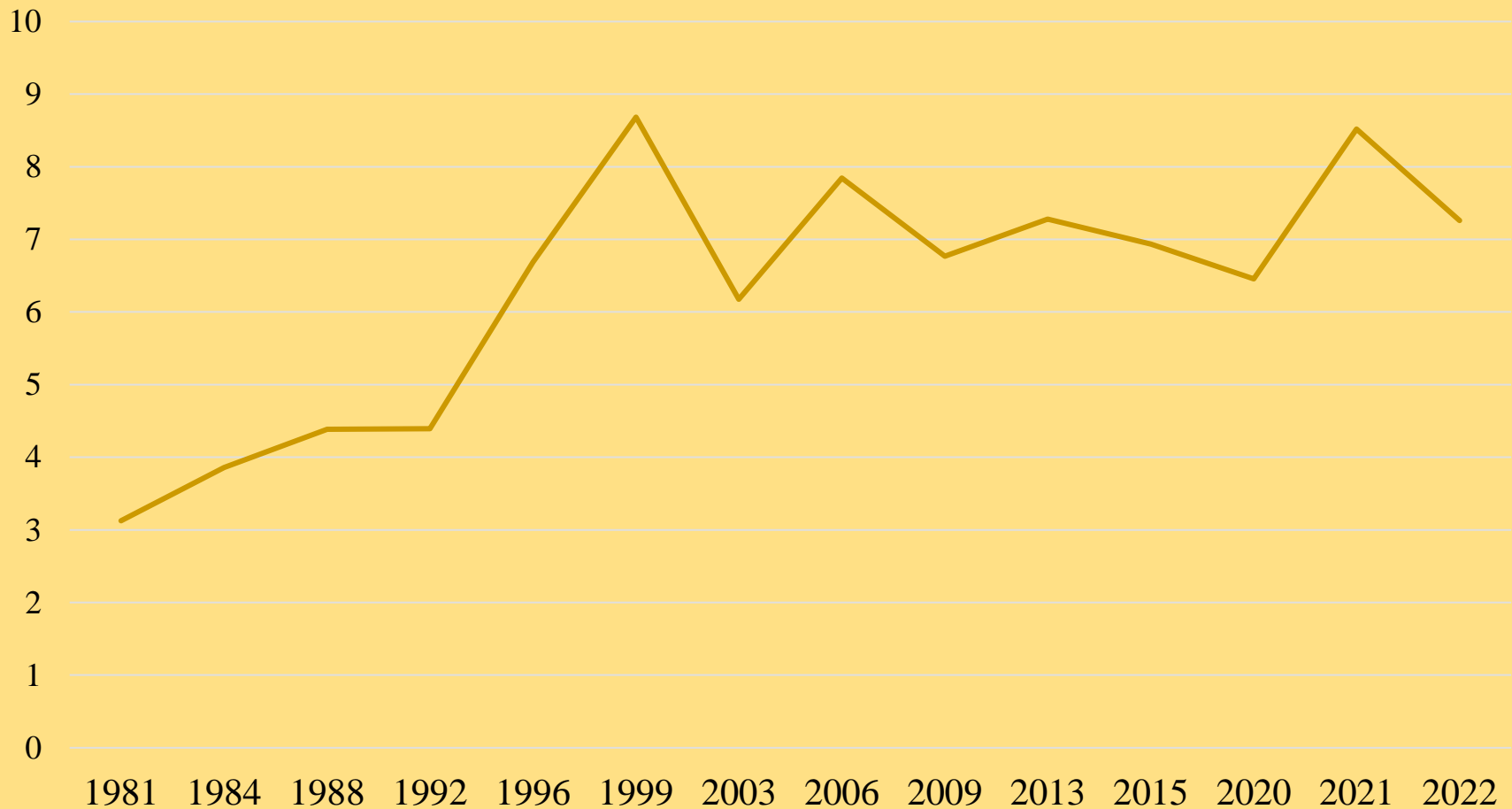
## **Affective polarization**

An emotional dislike and distrust of political out-groups.<sup>1</sup>



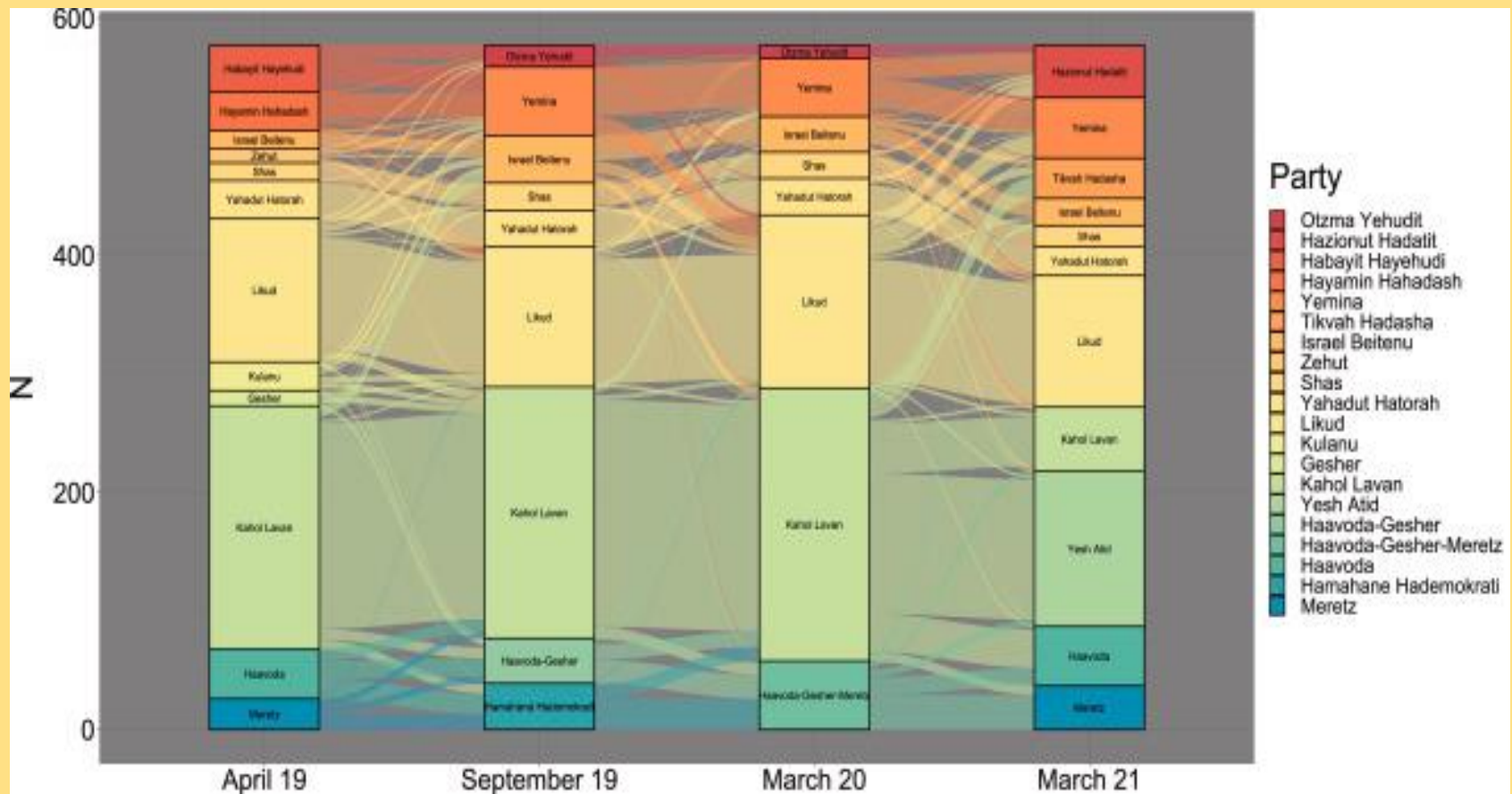
# Ideological polarization

The Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties in Israel



# Affective polarization

The Israel Polarization Panel Dataset, 2019–2021



# Civic protests

Civic protests are an essential component of democratic and non-democratic countries

Two main parameters of protests were analyzed by scholars: whether they are **violent**  
and  
their **size**

[ ]

The more violent and extreme a demonstration is, the more it appeals to a very limited audience (Shuman et al. 2022).

Demonstrations that are **larger**, make more demands (especially **universalistic** demands), target the national government, attract more **organizations** (especially umbrella organizations), and mobilize cohesive groups win broad public support (Somma and Medel 2019).



[

“In a nonviolent struggle, the only weapon that you’re going to have is numbers” (Popovic and Miller 2015).



# [ Democratic Backsliding in Israel ]

In the V-Dem report for 2024 Israel falls out of the liberal democracy category for the first time in over 50 years

It is now classified as an electoral democracy

This is primarily due to the government attacks on the judiciary

# The Hungarian protocol for “constitutional reform” includes five stages

Abolishing the  
independence of the  
judiciary

Israeli  
democracy

Violation of good governance  
and election procedures

Gaining control of public  
media and free media

Violation of individual rights  
(minorities, women, LGBT)  
and religious coercion

Violation of freedom of expression  
(culture, art and academia)

**Political scientists  
forum**

Since November 15 2022 (the beginning of the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset term)  
Until April 7, 2024

The coalition tabled **275** bills to fulfill the Hungarian protocol

**Prohibiting Judicial Review  
of Basic Laws**

**90 bills**

Abolishing the  
independence of  
the judiciary

**Politicizing Judicial  
Appointments**

Granting the coalition  
absolute control over the  
appointment of judges and  
justices to all courts

**7 bills**

Gaining control of  
public media and  
free media

**35 bills**

Violation of good  
governance  
and election  
procedures

**17 bills**

Violation of  
freedom of  
expression  
(culture, art  
and academia)

**126 bills**

Violation of  
individual rights  
(minorities,  
women, LGBT)  
and religious  
coercion



# Separation of powers

Government



Judiciary



Knesset



The only question we need to ask about the government's suggestions is

**who will oversee the government**

Professor Yuval Noah Harari



# The Supreme Court decisions

In January 2024, the Supreme Court made **three** significant decisions regarding the democratic backsliding in Israel:



**First**, 12 of its 15 judges ruled that it has the authority to conduct judicial reviews of the Basic Laws and to intervene in cases where the Knesset exceeded its authority

[

**Second**, for the first time from the establishment of Israel the Supreme Court invalidated a Basic Law that abolished the criterion of reasonableness for its decisions



[

]

**Third**, the Supreme Court determined that the amendment to Basic Law: The Government regarding the prime minister's inability to fulfill his position would be in effect starting only in the next Knesset term

Because it was aimed at a particular individual, which constituted an abuse of the Knesset's authority

# What can be done against democratic backsliding?

**First, Nonviolent large civic demonstrations**

The civic protests in Israel inspired the Polish people to renew their civil protests against their government, which was promoting democratic backsliding.

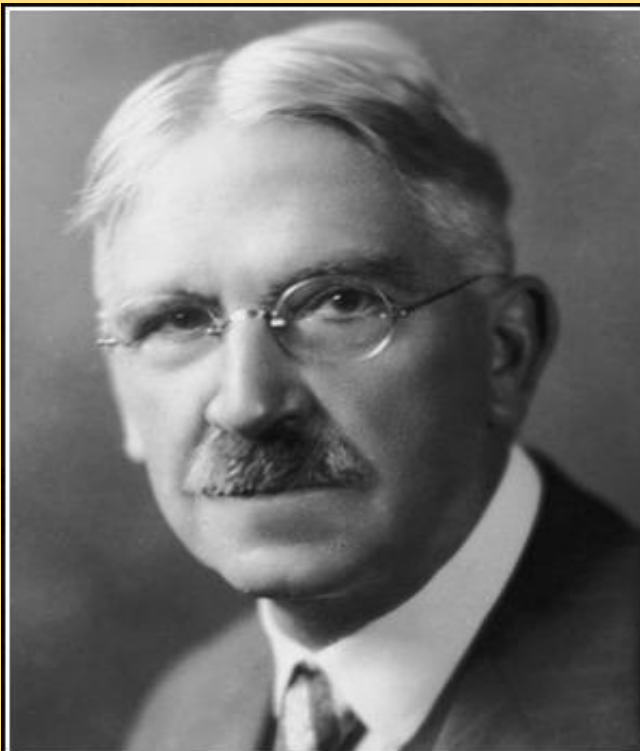




[

]

**Second**, teach, study and practice democracy on a daily base



Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature.... This faith may be enacted in statutes, but it is only on paper unless it is put in force in the attitudes which human beings display to one another in all the incidents and relations of daily life.

— *John Dewey* —

[

]



for listening

