In-Class Activity: Exploring Regime Measurement Data Using Freedom House and V-Dem

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Assignment originally designed for POL 201: Introduction to Political Studies at the American University of Sharjah

Learning Objectives
- Understand the trade-offs between using categories and scales to classify regime types
- Conduct a preliminary investigation into country case study's regime classification
- Gain a foundation with which to analyze varieties of democracy and autocracy in more fine-grained detail in future lessons

Time: 30 minutes

Instructions

1. Use your assigned semester-long country case study for the following assignment.
2. Open the Freedom House data tool (https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2022) and methodology page (https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology)
3. What is the Freedom House score? How do political rights and civil liberties affect your country's score?
4. Open the Varieties of Democracy project graphing and map tools (https://www.v-dem.net/graphingtools.html).
   a. Choose 2 or more indicators from VDEM (any level of your choosing) and produce country graphs using the tool at the link provided.
   b. Screenshot the graphs
   c. Why are the indicators you chose important for regime classification?
5. Did anything surprise or interest you about the Freedom House or V-Dem scores? Explain.
6. Submit graphs and brief response to questions on iLearn discussion board (your learning management system's forum discussion).

Variations
- For more advanced courses, have students provide more specific critiques of these scores. This could also be the foundation for a paper assignment.
- Students in Introduction to Political Studies extended their work from this exercise to compare and contrast their countries in group presentations (of their own accord when assigned to discuss political regimes). This could also be the basis of a comparative group presentation by assignment.