

# Democratic exclusion: Cross-sectional measures of voting rights restrictions in electoral democracies

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## *Introduction*

The history of democratization is strongly associated with the struggle for suffrage as democracy in the minimal sense was achieved only when the vote transcended divisions between classes and became independent of sex (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, 1992, 44; Caraway, 2004, 457). This observation fuels the widely accepted narrative, according to which the struggle for universal suffrage was eventually crowned with success in the countries now considered democratic. We are told that “legal apartheid” in the realm of electoral politics is “not a viable model anymore” (Schedler, 2002, 44). It is generally accepted proposition that suffrage is now “almost universal” and that universal suffrage is in place “virtually everywhere” (Przeworski, 2010, 46; Munck and Verkuilen, 2002, 11).<sup>1</sup>

However, this picture leaves certain anomalies of suffrage in contemporary democracies unaccounted for. A variety of exclusions from the vote remain in place despite the declared victory for the idea of universal suffrage. Age, citizenship, residence, mental status and criminal record are among the most commonly enforced conditions for the vote practiced

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<sup>1</sup> Restrictions on the vote based on class, sex and ethnicity are contrary to international human rights law and many regional conventions of human rights as well (see Wilson, 2009).

today. The existing grounds for exclusions are well documented (Katz, 1997; Massicotte et al. 2004; Blais and Yoshinaka, 2001; Paxton, 2003). Yet, the significance of remaining exclusions to the measurement of democracy is uncertain. Though many would agree that the extension of political rights among citizens is relevant from a democratic perspective, it is less clear whether each and every restriction subtracts from the democracy score of political systems. In the vast literature engaged either with the measurement of democracy or with the causes and effects of democratic institutions, “minor exclusions” from the vote are regularly ignored. As noted by Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008, 645) the “inclusiveness dimension has been neglected” in research on democracy. Given the undisputed centrality of suffrage in the historical narrative of democratization this is somewhat unexpected.

One reason for the neglect is that contemporary restrictions are perceived to be uncontroversial. This is perhaps most obvious in relation to restrictions based on age. It is usually taken for granted that adulthood is as a precondition for voting in national elections. Also, restrictions on the basis of mental status or criminal record are said to be “commonly accepted” (Kekic, 2006; Still, 1981). In this sense, contemporary restrictions differ from exclusions in the past that were clearly aligned to predominant dimensions of political conflict (e.g. Przeworski, 2008; Przeworski, 2010, 46; Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010).

But the perception that contemporary suffrage restrictions are uncontroversial is debatable. The distinctions on which they are based and the interests that purport to justify them are increasingly questioned in political as well as academic discourse. In times of migration and global inequalities, the legitimacy of exclusions based on citizenship and residence are challenged (Abizadeh, 2010). Human rights law is invoked to challenge legal restrictions based on criminal record and mental status (Plaxton and Lardy, 2010; Vyhnánek, 2010). And the voicelessness of children and young people is questioned by appeal to norms of democratic equality and equal treatment (Fowler, 2013; Rehfeld, 2011; Cohen, 2005). There is also evidence that minor restrictions are often introduced for partisan reasons and the result of strategic behavior (e.g. Manza & Uggen, 2006).

Yet, conceptual issues are likely to be more fundamental in accounting for the fact that minor restrictions from the vote are regularly overlooked. A common view is that “minor” exclusions “do not negate the principle of universal suffrage” (e.g. Doorenspleet, 2000, 390; Nohlen, 1995, 1353). This view is certainly possible to dispute. For example, if we were to

remain faithful to Dahl's criteria of a democratic process, inclusion requires participatory rights for "everyone forced to obey the law", exempting only children (Dahl, 2000). But in making the argument that everyone under the law should be granted participatory opportunities we need to make assumptions that are themselves ambiguous and controversial. Thus, the engagement may in the end serve to reinforce the perception that the status of minor restrictions is unclear, which is exactly the claim that justifies the neglect of minor restrictions on the vote.

The last point suggests that the decision to focus on minor restrictions on the vote compels us to engage the grander questions about the nature of democracy. Only by recourse to some credible argument to the effect that minor restrictions on the vote are pertinent to the democratic character of political systems are we entitled to conclude that they are worthy of our attention. The first section of this paper does offer an account that responds to this challenge. The position developed is that the voting rights of prisoners, mentally disabled, young people and other categories of citizens, constitute a dimension of democratic inclusion. Measures of the extent to which members of these categories of citizens are denied the vote consequently provide indices of "democratic exclusion". The emerging pattern refers to *exclusions* in the sense that it depicts barriers to rights and it refers to *democratic exclusions* in the dual sense that it depicts barriers to democratic rights that are enforced by nominally democratic nations.

The upshot is that many restrictions currently practiced in democracies should be considered as deviations from standards of democracy. The struggle for universal suffrage, defined as voting rights distributed without restriction based on class, gender or ethnicity, may have come to an end. But the struggle for the right to vote for other marginalized groups have barely begun.

The fertility of this approach is not demonstrated by conceptual exercises alone, however. The point in measuring democratic exclusion needs to be shown empirically and we intend to do so by answering how variation along this dimension is connected to the usual determinants of democracy. Here, we are facing two distinct possibilities. Either democratic exclusion is significantly correlated with democracy and its determinants or not. In case it is, democratic exclusion is *complementary* of the study of democracy proper. The study of democratic exclusion does not challenge what we already know but adds to it by providing greater detail

about how familiar relationships affects previously neglected dimensions of democracy. In case no significant correlation can be established between the determinants of democracy and measures of democratic exclusion, the conclusion is more appropriately characterized as *revisionary*. This would mean that predominant perspectives on democracy are hiding rather than revealing the mechanisms that explain the extent of democratic exclusion.

### *Conceptualizing democratic inclusion*

As noted above, it remains a matter of contention whether contemporary restrictions on suffrage capture any relevant aspect of democracy at all. The uncertain status of democratic exclusions of the kind identified here is partly due to the fact that the dimension of inclusion as such remains contested. The claim by Dahl and others that inclusion constitutes a fundamental dimension of the democratic ideal is rejected by others. The basis for the rejection is the conviction that democracy can be reduced to the question whether ‘rulers are selected by competitive elections’ (Przeworski, 2000, p.15). Thus, the extent to which democracy does at all depend on the extent of inclusion hits on fundamental questions about how the term ‘democracy’ is to be conceptualized.

In order to side-step this potentially irresolvable question it is tempting to side with Collier and Adcock’s (1999 and 2001) advice that the nature of the research question should guide conceptualizations of the object investigated. Hence, the way to define democracy would depend on what is a useful construct given the research problem addressed. The implication is that there is little point in debating what ‘democracy’ really means or what the core attributes of the concept of democracy are. In case a particular attribute, such as inclusion, is considered theoretically important – just include it!

Though methodological considerations play an important role in shaping conceptual tools, it would be hazardous to conclude that they alone determine the meanings attached to the words. There are many rules that apply to the art of conceptualization and the usefulness of the construct is but one of several competing aims to be pursued. A further aim is for the concept to “resonate” in the sense of adhering to linguistic conventions (Gerring, 2001, 40). In case inclusion is part of the established usage of “democracy”, then stipulations that ignores this dimension fail to capture significant elements of the phenomena.

Of course, this is a relevant point only if inclusion *is* embedded in conventional understandings of democracy. And this is arguably what proponents of minimal democracy deny. We should note, however, that to question this claim is to accept that the attributes of the concept of democracy should be sensitive to linguistic conventions. Moreover, in case we do believe that it makes sense to speak about some “basic” or “root” concept of democracy we will simply be unpersuaded by the claim that every definitional exercise can be settled by pragmatic considerations alone. It consequently seems as if the alternatives are either to engage the debate about on core meaning of democracy or to view the term as an empty vessel to be loaded with whatever content the individual researcher arbitrarily pleases.

Now, upon closer examination it is unlikely that minimalists fully deny the relevance of inclusion to democracy. Whereas full adult suffrage is not required for political competition to exist, some level of suffrage is (Coppedge, 2005, 11). Rather than rejecting the conceptual connection, minimalists can be understood as defending the claim that the dimension of inclusion lacks “leverage”. The reason why the dimension of inclusion is ignored is in other words not that suffrage does not matter to democracy but that suffrage does not matter for the purpose of answering important questions about democracy so long as major groups are included.

This approach is illustrated by the Polity IV dataset where legal barriers to voting are registered to the extent that they pertain to the institutionalization of participation and political rights. Yet restrictions on the right to vote are registered only if they affect groups that comprises more than 20 % of the population (Marshall, Gurr and Jaggers, 2002, 68). As noted many times before, this means that the exclusion from the vote of minor groups is not accounted for, making inclusion a largely irrelevant dimension in estimates of contemporary democracies (e.g. Moon et al., 2006, 8; Paxton et al., 2003, 106).

Given that inclusion is accepted as an inextricable dimension of democracy, the more difficult question is *how inclusive* political systems needs to be in order to be democratic. Any specific answer that seeks to identify some restrictions beyond those based on sex, class or ethnicity as necessary preconditions for democracy are likely to be contested. The very concept of democracy does not seem to provide a determinate answer on where precisely the threshold should be placed (Weale, 2007, 19). In addition, the normative justifiability of restrictions

based on criminal record or mental disability, to name just two examples, is unlikely to be settled anywhere soon.

The way out of this impasse involves two steps.<sup>2</sup> The first is to distinguish between inclusion as a precondition of democracy and inclusion as a dimension of democracy. While the identification of a threshold is essential to the study of regime shifts there is no need to settle this question in order to defend the proposition that more inclusion entails more democracy everything else being equal. What we need is rather a graded measure of inclusion. Thus, our focus should be with the relative democratic character of political systems otherwise considered as democratic. In order to defuse the threshold issue we consequently attend only to countries with some minimal level of democracy. This is making a lot of sense also if we acknowledge that the focus here is literally on *minor* exclusions. The fact that Iran used to be more inclusive of young people than any Western state and the fact that prisoners are permitted to vote in China, which they are rarely permitted to in the United States, does not really seem to be significant if the question asked is if these countries are at all democratic.<sup>3</sup> Our approach, therefore, is not to study suffrage exclusions as such but to study suffrage exclusions in democracies (cf. Paxton, 2003). According to this approach, the extent of inclusion adds to or detracts from the democraticness of a political system only when some level of political competition is provided for.

The second step is to separate the descriptive and normative meaning of democratic inclusion. If our definition of ‘democracy’ neither involve judgments about the goodness or fairness of restrictions on participation, the concept of democracy we use does not reflect normative claims subject to contestation. With respect to inclusion, this means creating conceptual space for judgments about how restrictions on the vote affects the extent of democracy without relying on explicit or implicit assumptions about the desirability of any specific restrictions on the vote. The separation of descriptive and normative meaning is not necessarily the only way forward to achieve a concept that is normatively ecumenical. A different approach would be to measure inclusion in the broadest way possible and to leave the conceptual work to be

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<sup>2</sup> These arguments are developed also in Beckman (2012) and Beckman (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Iran is among the few countries that ever had a voting rights age below 16 but it is also among the few countries to have risen the voting rights age in contemporary times (though it used to be common practice in Western Europe at the time when universal suffrage for men was introduced). In 2007 Iran’s Guardian Council decided to rise the voting rights age to 18.

sorted out by the user of the index (Coppedge, Gerring, et al. 2011). But this approach is bound to fail. Conceptual work *is* necessary in order to identify the attributes to be measured by an index. Even broad measures require that choices are made between the kind of restrictions on the vote that are considered pertinent and those that are not. The question is just how these choices are justified. The obvious danger is that unargued normative premises influence the way democracy and its dimensions are conceptualized. These hazards are avoided by the approach adopted here. By being clear about the descriptive meaning of democratic inclusion, we are able to employ a clear and unambiguous concept without prejudging the relevant normative issues.

It remains to be shown that the descriptive concept is methodologically sound and sensitive to established linguistic conventions. In the case of inclusion, these further demands are satisfied by a definition according to which suffrage is more democratic the less restrictive it is. That is, democracy is conceptualized as a function of a number of dimensions, one of them being inclusion, specified as the extension of voting rights. This formula is in tune with Lipset's (1959, 71) claim that democracy requires "the largest possible part of the population to influence major decision" as well as with Huntington's (1989, 16) stipulation that democracy is reduced in proportion to restrictions on "voting participation to any one group in its society". Kenneth Bollen (1995, 820) embraces the same basic idea when pointing out that democracy requires participatory rights for the "largest possible proportion of the adult population of a country". Dahl at times adopted the same view and argued that "the larger the proportion of citizens who enjoy the right, the more inclusive the regime" (Dahl, 1971, 4).

Thus conceptualized, every restriction on the vote diminishes the democratic character of the political system. Since the definition is considered here to be descriptive, not normative, it does not follow from this stipulation that restrictions are necessarily either unjust or bad. The justifiability of restrictions is a normative issue and therefore answerable only by argument from normative premises.<sup>4</sup> The position taken here is in other words that the extent of defensible suffrage restrictions is not answerable by "definitional fiat".

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<sup>4</sup> The study of good democracy and democratic quality is premised on judgments of the "goodness" or "quality" added by specific dimensions of democracy. Yet, the normative reasons upon which these judgments depend are rarely either made explicit or justified. E.g. Morlino 2004, 24.

The implications of our approach is to make the extent of democracy sensitive to minor restrictions that are often overlooked. The exclusion from the vote of prisoners or the mentally disabled obviously results in a less democratic suffrage. More radically, our approach challenges the conventional claim that democratic participation applies exclusively to the adult members of the association (e.g. Coppedge, Gerring et al., 2011, 255; Morlino, 2009, 277; Merkel, 2004, 49). But if adulthood is accepted as a precondition for democratic participation, the age of voting is by definition immaterial to the inclusiveness of democracy (unless, of course, adulthood is defined independently of the voting rights age, which would follow given international norms on the definition of childhood but is rarely the case in national legislation). By contrast, the descriptive definition of democratic inclusion adopted here opens up for a larger set of variation in the way suffrage rules affect the degree of democracy. Expanding the vote to young people or perhaps even children is here conceptualized as extensions of democracy, though we are not assuming that expanding the vote in this direction is necessarily normatively required.

### *Measuring exclusion*

The extent of democratic exclusion is contingent upon two distinct decisions. The first is concerned with the conditions for membership in the demos and the second with the extension of participatory rights among the members of the demos. Membership is typically decided on the basis of either residence or citizenship, or both. The extent of participation among members depend on a more disparate set of decisions, concerned with age, mental condition and criminal record. In what follows we shall attend exclusively to restrictions of the latter kind, or what I term “internal exclusions”. The reason for this delimitation is that cross-sectional variation in the other dimension of inclusion, i.e. “external exclusions”, is very limited. For all practical purposes, New Zealand is the only nation that grants resident non-citizens voting rights in national elections.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, variations in external exclusions between countries is more prominent in two cases: the incidence of voting rights for non-citizens in local elections and the incidence of voting rights for non-resident citizens (expatriate voting). The latter evokes fundamental issues in democratic theory concerned with

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<sup>5</sup> New Zealand grants resident non-citizens the right to vote in national elections after just one year of residence. There are other countries where resident non-citizens are able to vote but only after a more prolonged time of residence. The value of this opportunity clearly diminishes with the time required (e.g. 10 years in Uruguay).

the extent to which voting by non-residents is ever required by the “all-affected” principle (Lopez-Guerra, 2005; Beckman, 2009). In any case, cases of external exclusions have been thoroughly studied previously (e.g. Earnest, 2009).

Given the decision to focus exclusively on internal restrictions, we need to identify the variables that best captures the relevant conceptual attributes, the scale for their measurement and the rules for their aggregation (Munck, 2009, 74). The choice of variables may seem self-evident given that inclusion is defined as the extent of suffrage. In focus should be legal restrictions on the right to vote as they appear in constitutional documents, electoral laws, or in other statutes or administrative rules. Against this decision speaks the dominant strategy employed in previous studies of inclusion. Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008, 633; also Coppedge, 2005, 31) insist that the right to vote “logically corresponds to the proportion of the population entitled to participate”. This approach is practiced by Paxton and others (2003) in their extensive study of suffrage restrictions. To them, restrictions on suffrage are defined in terms of the percentage of the adult population entitled to vote. Accordingly, restrictions on the voting rights of the mentally disabled are translated into a fixed percentage of the adult voters excluded (estimated to 0.25 percent). Compared to previous measures of inclusion, our index is consequently unorthodox.

One advantage in terms of reliability of the approach pursued here is that it is immune to fluctuations in the demographic composition of the population. We can imagine a country, A, where the voting rights age is lower than in country B but where the enfranchised portion of the population is nevertheless smaller due to lower fertility rates in the past. Another possibility is that incarceration rates are profoundly volatile over time which would result in divergent enfranchisement rates although restrictions on prisoner voting remains the same. As these examples illustrate the restrictiveness of the right to vote and the proportion of people enfranchised are not equivalent properties. The focus on restrictions rather than on the proportion of the population enfranchised does seem to offer more reliable indices of exclusion: it always yields the same score of inclusion for similar levels of legal restriction. There are also reasons in terms of validity speaking in favor of our approach.

The normative backdrop for suffrage restrictions is that they deny political rights to certain categories of people. When workers or women mobilized for the vote, they did so largely on the basis of the perceived injustice of income and sex as conditions for the vote. The fact that

exclusions based on income and sex affected large numbers of the population clearly added political weight to their claims. Yet, the number of people to whom a legal disadvantage applies is not automatically relevant if the question is concerned with the normative acceptability of the norm. If the fairness of legally sanctioned disadvantages depend on their justifiability, understood as reasonable acceptability, the number of people for whom the legal norm could not reasonable be accepted is less salient. If the norm is unreasonable to anyone, it is unreasonable to everyone. To illustrate, it would clearly be ludicrous to hold that the disenfranchisement of children and young people is more unjust than the disenfranchisement of prisoners simply because of the fact that the number of children in the population by far exceeds the number of prisoners. The fairness of exclusions from suffrage depends on the force of the reasons that seek to justify them. And those reasons are concerned with the attributes of categories of people and the extent to which these attributes can be connected to normatively relevant properties of the political system. The actual number of people with the attributes picked out by the categories is of secondary importance. It is therefore plausible to conclude that the categories excluded from political rights, rather than the number of the people excluded, constitutes the more valid measure of democratic exclusion.

Decisions concerned with the scale of measurement and rules of aggregation are less controversial. In this study, restrictions based on similar grounds for exclusion are treated as a single variable that can take on values between zero and one, where zero is equal to “least restrictive” and one is equal to “most restrictive”. For each variable, the number of possible scores will be different depending on the existence of partial exclusions. For example, restrictions on the voting rights of prisoners may in some places apply only to certain sub-categories of incarcerated citizens whereas they in other places apply to anyone incarcerated. Because the logical extension of rules that apply to anyone within a category is greater than the extension of rules that apply only to sub-sets of the category, rules of the former kind must be considered as more restrictive than rules of the latter kind. To avoid confusion, we should note that this observation does not depend on the number of people to whom the rule does in fact apply. From the fact that the logical extension of one rule is greater than another we cannot infer that the number of objects or individuals to whom it refers is also greater. The extension of the rule that denies voting to anyone in prison is greater than the rule that denies voting only to prisoners sentenced for life whatever the number of prisoners and sentences may be (there may be no prisoners at all).

In order to account for rules that are restrictive but not necessarily most restrictive we need to allow for at least two scores above zero (where zero is equal to no restrictions at all). The values on individual variables are then standardized and summarized for each case to an overall average score that varies between zero and one. The aggregation rule used to create the index is consequently additive and this arguably makes more theoretical sense than a multiplicative index given that the aim is to measure the variety of exclusions within democracies and not to identify the necessary preconditions for democracy.

*The index of democratic exclusions*

Data of suffrage restrictions is collected from all countries defined as electoral democracies by Freedom House in 2012.<sup>6</sup> The internal restrictions measured fall into four categories: restrictions based on mental status, criminal record, age and other (e.g. special occupation such as the military) The Democratic Exclusion Index (DEI) equals the normalized average sums of the scores on the four variables. Since each variable varies between 0 and 1 DEI theoretically varies from 0 to 1 as well. The theoretical interpretation of the minimum and maximum value of DEI is straightforward. The minimum value (zero) corresponds to the absence of restrictions on the vote based on criminal record, mental disability and other specific categories, and where the voting rights age is 16 or lower. The maximum value (one) refers to restrictions on the vote for anyone with a criminal record, mental disability and other specific categories, and where the voting rights age is 20 or higher.

Table 1. Democratic Exclusion Index (DEI).

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
DEI	90	,06	,75	,3548	,13135
Valid N	90				

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<sup>6</sup> There were 118 electoral democracies in 2012, as defined by Freedom House. Among them 27 countries with a population below 1 m were excluded. Of the remaining 92 countries, data is available for all but two (Niger and Liberia) – leaving the total sample to 90 countries. Electoral democracy is interpreted as corresponding to minimalist democracy absent civil liberties and rule of law (Möller and Skaaning, 2010, 271). An alternative interpretation is that electoral democracy refers to hybrid regimes that are less than minimally democratic (Morlino, 2009, 278).

As is shown by table 1, the empirical values of DEI do not cover the full range of theoretically possible values. The minimum observed value is 0.06 and the maximum observed value is 0.75 with a mean value for all observations of 0.36. This is to say that the distribution of observations is somewhat skewed towards inclusion. Whereas no electoral democracy is neither fully inclusive nor fully exclusive, the number of countries approximating inclusion by far exceeds the number of countries that approximates exclusion, as defined by DEI.

By our measures, the least exclusive suffrage rules are found in Ireland, Israel and Sweden. In these countries, there is no exclusion based on either criminal record or mental disability and no other internal restrictions are enforced except the voting rights age. Only the fact that people below 18 are not allowed to vote prevents these countries from attaining the lowest DEI score.

The highest DEI scores are assigned to Libya and Mauritius. These countries restrict the vote for prisoners and people with mental disabilities as well as to military personnel or special categories thereof. Libya exemplifies restrictions of unusual severity as it disenfranchises anyone with a past tarnished criminal record.

The breaking year of the index is affecting the result to a considerable extent. Recent years have seen a new trend towards the extension of voting rights to mentally disabled people. Previous studies identified only four countries (Canada, Ireland, Italy and Sweden) without restrictions on the vote for people with mental disabilities (Blais, Massicotte and Yoshinaka, 2000, 51). A little more than a decade later, 21 countries have abolished every restriction on the vote based on mental disability (Beckman, 2013). The importance of the specific year of measurement is further illustrated by the rapid and radical changes in democratic inclusion of Indonesia. Until 2012 Indonesian elections were among the most restrictive of any electoral democracy.<sup>7</sup> However, the Electoral Law of October 2012 introduces voting rights for members of the military and the police, prisoners and the mentally disabled. In addition, the voting rights age is lowered to 17 for all citizens (previously only married citizens could vote at 17 which meant that only women could since the age of marriage is 16 for women but 18 for men in Indonesia).

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<sup>7</sup> Indonesia is also known for the disenfranchisement of all ex-member of the Indonesian Communist party or affiliated organizations from 1969 until recently.

### *Patterns of exclusion*

For the purpose of placing exclusions from suffrage in a richer empirical context, we now turn to the patterns that emerge once DEI is connected to various determinants of democracy. In the following we look briefly at three sets of factors that we have reason to expect to be associated with DEI: democracy, political system and inequality. Aware of the limitations of cross-sectional analysis, the purpose here is not to identify causal relations or to find connections that are generalizable over time (Coppedge, 2012, 274).

The most obvious expectation would be that the level of democratic exclusion is negatively correlated with degree of democracy. Conversely, the more democratic the political system is, the less likely it should be that marginalized groups are excluded from the exercise of the right to vote. Though the question seems an obvious one, it is not answered by existing cross-sectional measures of democracy due to the fact that they only register major exclusions from the vote (as discussed above). On the other hand, our expectations should not be too high as it has been previously established that democratic inclusion constitutes an empirically distinct dimension of democracy. Though Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008) and Coppedge (2012) use much broader measures of inclusion that only partly overlaps with our construct, they present overwhelming evidence that inclusions constitutes an empirically distinct dimension of political regimes generally.<sup>8</sup>

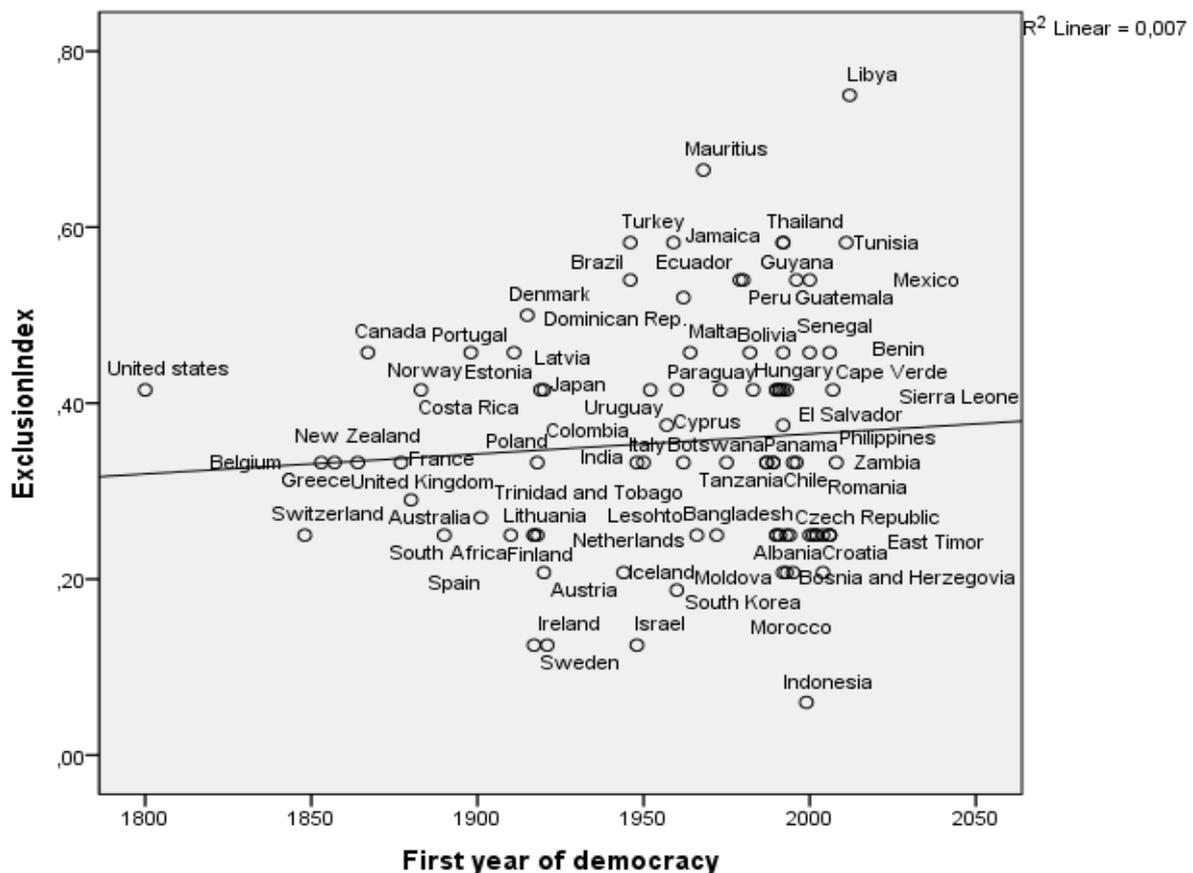
When DEI is correlated to various measures of democracy, we find a weak negative relationship. Polity IV democracy score shows significant negative coefficients ( $r = -0.237$ ,  $p < 0.03$ ) just as does Vanhanen's democracy index and ( $r = -0.268$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).<sup>9</sup> The robustness of this relationship between such disparate indices of democracy bolsters confidence in the conclusion that more democratic countries are somewhat less exclusionary (more inclusive) than less democratic countries.

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<sup>8</sup> The notion favored by Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008, 637) comprises the rate of electoral participation and the occurrence of elections but is not sensitive to exclusions based on age, mental disability or criminal record.

<sup>9</sup> No significant relationship is found between DEI and the more broadly defined index of democracy provided by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

However, the level and stability of democracy in one country is not the same thing and we might expect that exclusions should decline with the time experienced of democratic institutions. Whereas democratic rule has in some places existed since the early 1800's (USA) it is a most recent phenomenon elsewhere (e.g. Libya since 2012).<sup>10</sup> Now, the time passed since the introduction of democracy is known to contribute positively to a range of desirable “structural properties” of political systems (Persson, 2004, 157). More specifically, Keman (2008, 38) showed that old democracies protect basic rights more than more recent democracies. A case could also be made for expecting the contrary. Teri Caraway suggests that timing is more important than time in explaining variations in democratic inclusion. She points out that whereas in old democracies general elections preceded universal suffrage, countries that became democratic after the Second World War almost always introduced universal suffrage and general elections at the same time (Caraway, 2004, 444). Given that the premise of recent democracies has been more inclusive at the point of time of when broad and equal suffrage was first introduced, we might expect them to be more, not less, inclusive than old democracies.



<sup>10</sup> By number of voters in national elections, democracy expanded from 1 million in 1820, to 125 million in 1950 and to 730 million in 1996 (Przeworski, 2010, 54)

Fig. 1. DEI plotted against first year of democracy as measured by Polity IV.

However, there is no significant relationship between the age of the democratic regime and the degree of democratic exclusion. We are just as likely to find minor suffrage exclusions in countries that have experienced democratic institutions in two centuries as in countries with a democratic history no longer than a few years. This means that the level of democracy rather than the time experienced with democratic institutions is the more solid predictor of when marginalized groups are likely to be included in the demos. Yet, we can observe that the spread in DEI scores is greater among more recent democracies.<sup>11</sup> If time does not make democratic suffrage either more or less inclusive, it does seem associated with a more narrow range of exclusions. More prominent than time in accounting for variations in DEI score is the geography. Disentangling European electoral democracies from all other countries reveals that the latter are significantly more exclusive in the average. The mean DEI scores for European countries is 0.30 but 0.39 for non-European countries ( $p < 0.002$ )

The nature of the institutionalized relationship between the executive and the parliament as well as the type of election system is regularly considered pertinent to the performance of democracies and the level of democracy as such. There are various reasons to hypothesize that these aspects of the political system would exert an impact on the willingness or capacity of the legislators to extend voting rights to marginalized groups in society too.

Representative electoral systems are designed to mirror the diversity of views and experiences present in society. In that sense, representative electoral systems are more inclusive than its alternatives. Though representative systems are inclusive of opinions rather than of groups the argument can be made that we should expect them to recognize the value of inclusion also in a broader sense. The expectation would thus be that democracies with representative election systems are less exclusive than other democracies. However, the expectation is frustrated by the fact that the mean DEI value for countries with representative election systems is higher than for other political systems, albeit the difference is not significant (mean  $DEI_{rep} = 0,37$  to mean  $DEI_{other} = 0,35$ ).

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<sup>11</sup> Standard deviations for the mean DEI score of old democracies (< 1945) is significantly ( $p < 0.1$  lower than standard deviations for the mean DEI score of new democracies (> 1945).

More is perhaps to be expected from the relationship between the executive and the parliament. Comparisons between parliamentary and presidential political systems sometimes yield the result that the former is more conducive to democracy (Casper and Tufis, 2003, 201; Foweraker and Landman, 2002). Indeed, looking at the mean DEI scores for presidential and parliamentary systems, divided by unitary and non-unitary systems, the latter show significantly lower mean values ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 2. Political system and DEI scores.

Presidentialism	federal or unitary state	N	Mean
	non-unitary	11	,376
Presidentialism	unitary	33	,399
	Total	44	<b>,393</b>
	non-unitary	15	,309
Parliamentarism	unitary	29	,338
	Total	44	<b>,328</b>
	non-unitary	26	,337
Total	unitary	62	,370
	Total	88	,361

A final hypothesis to be explored is the connection between equality and democratic exclusion. The disenfranchisement of marginalized groups can be interpreted as acceptance of a specific form of political inequality. Though it has been argued that the relationship between economic inequality and democracy is spurious once the level of economic development is accounted for (Jackman and Bollen, 1985) there seems to be good theoretical reasons for looking anew at the relationship in the case of democratic exclusion. Because democracy is only weakly related to democratic exclusion there is no reason not to think that economic inequalities would be associated with the latter but not with the former. In fact, when the binary relationship between economic inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient) and democratic exclusion is plotted, a specific pattern emerges.

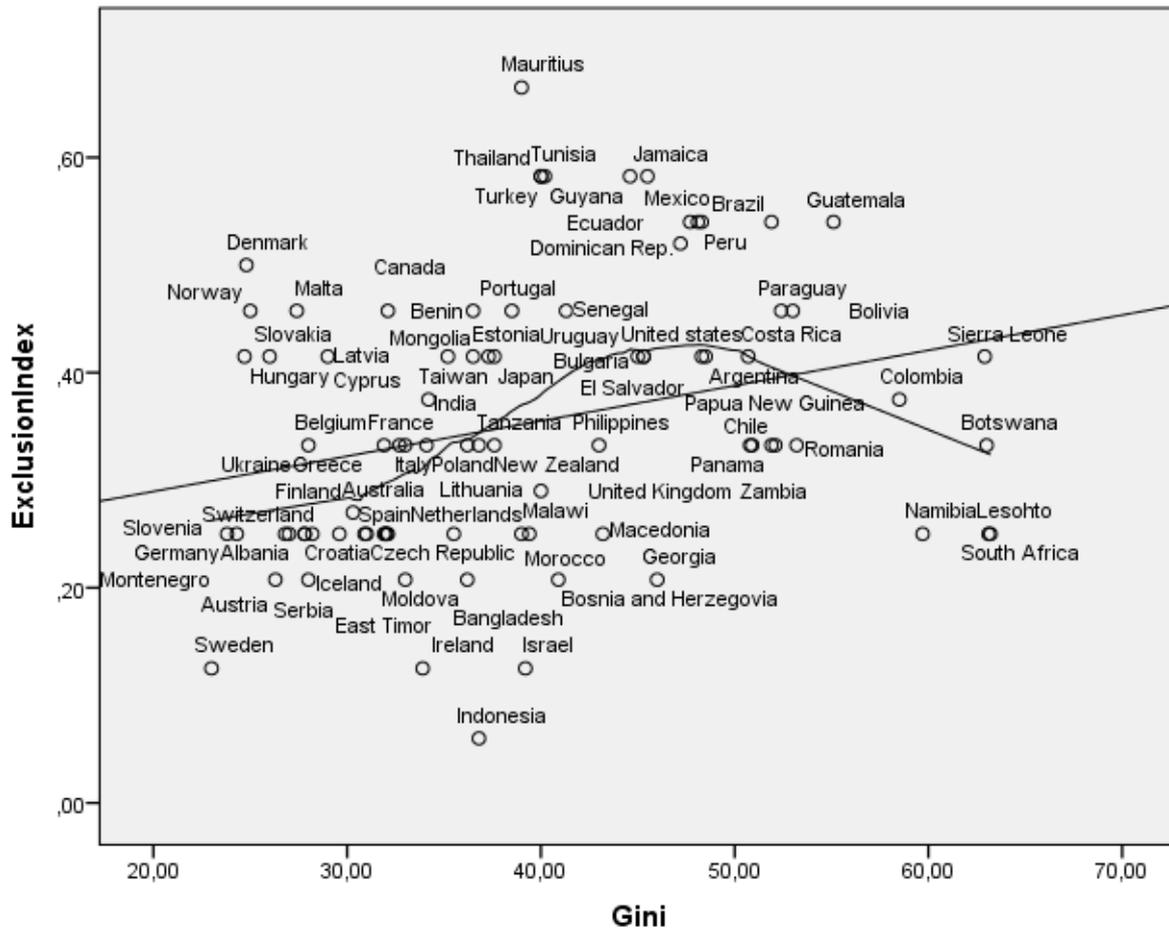


Fig. 2. Fig. 1. DEI (2012) plotted against national Gini values (World Bank, CIA Factbook, 2008-2012).

Increasing levels of economic inequality is associated with increasing levels of democratic exclusion ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

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