Rating Philippine Democratization: A Review of Democratization Metrics

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To those intimately familiar with better-known democracy/democratization indices, the unique characteristics of the approach of the Consortium for the Asian Democracy Index (CADI) to analyzing democracy should be readily apparent after an examination of the project's methodology. To make those distinctions clearer, the following is a survey of some of the evaluations of democratization in the world, Asia, and the Philippines. The review of studies herein also serves to situate the 2011 CADI democratization assessments (included in this volume) in the current discourse of democratization measurement. The following review is by no means exhaustive; the State Fragility Index and Tatu Vanhanen's Polyarchy Index of Democracy are noticeably absent, while the World Values Survey (WVS) is only mentioned in passing. However, the author believes that it shows enough of the current state of the field of democratization measurement to serve its aforesaid purposes.

Global Democracy/Freedom Indices

Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" Surveys

US-based nongovernmental organization Freedom House seeks to measure freedom, which it defines as "the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination" (Freedom House 2011c). Specifically, it measures two categories of freedom—Political Rights, or the ability of people

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Table 1: Freedom House Ratings of Political Rights and Civil Liberties
in the Philippines, 2002-2011

Year	Political Rights	Civil Liberties
2002	2	3
2003	2	3
2004	2	3
2005	2	3
2006	3	3
2007	3	3
2008	4	3
2009	4	3
2010	4	3
2011	3	3

Sources: Freedom House 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011a.

> to participate freely in political process, including the right to vote
> freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for
> public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect
> representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are
> accountable to the electorate; (Freedom House 2011b)

and Civil Liberties, the exercise of which is ideally "without interference
from the state" (Freedom House 2011c). Apart from crafting descriptive
narratives of their subject countries' state of freedom, Freedom House gives
numerical ratings (from 1-7, with 1 being the most desirable rating) for a
country's political rights and civil liberties conditions. These ratings are the
basis of Freedom House's decision to designate a country as Free, Partly
Free, or Not Free (Freedom House 2011c). Freedom House gathers its data
through expert surveys, the findings of which "are reached after a multilayered
process of analysis and evaluation by a team of regional experts and scholars"
(Freedom House 2011c). As of this writing, readily available online are
"Freedom in the World" analyses from 2002-2011.

Freedom House lowered the status of the Philippines from "Free" from
2002-2005 to "Partly Free" status from 2006 onward. The change was due
to "credible allegations of massive electoral fraud, corruption, and the
government's intimidation of elements in the political opposition [all during
the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration (2001-2010)]" (Freedom

House 2006). Before the downgrade, Freedom House gave the Philippines a Political Rights score of 2 and a Civil Liberties score of 3. In 2006, the country's Political Rights score was lowered to 3, while the Civil Liberties score remained the same. In 2008, the country's Political Rights score was further lowered to 4, "as a result of serious, high-level corruption allegations; the pardon of former president Joseph Estrada [who Arroyo succeeded by virtue of constitutional succession, following Estrada's conviction for plunder after he was ousted by the military defection-cum-mass demonstration known as "People Power 2" (2001)]; and a spike in political killings in the run-up to legislative elections [in 2007]" (Freedom House 2008). The Political Rights score would remain at 4 until 2011, when it went up back to 3, due to "comparatively peaceful and credible presidential and legislative elections held in 2010," when automated voting machines were used for the first time in the Philippines (Freedom House 2011a). Table 1 shows these rating changes over the years more clearly.

In its country reports, Freedom House consistently characterizes the Philippines as "once one of the wealthiest countries in Southeast Asia" that fell from grace, so to speak, due to "economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, insurgencies, and 14 years of dictatorship under Ferdinand Marcos [1972-1986]" (Freedom House 2002; 2005; 2008). The administrations of Corazon Aquino (who became the country's chief executive after Marcos was ousted by the coup plotters-civil society revolt now referred to as "People Power 1") and her successor, Fidel Ramos (one of the aforementioned anti-Marcos coup plotters), are described as a period of steady gains after a lengthy period of significant losses—a time of national recovery.

Freedom House describes Joseph Estrada's administration as a step backward from achieving democracy, with Estrada being "dogged by allegations of both corruption and that it gave favourable treatment to the business interests of well-connected tycoons" almost at the beginning of his term (Freedom House 2002). His ouster is viewed uncritically. Arroyo is initially portrayed by Freedom House in a favorable light (i.e., during the first two years of her unelected term [2001-2004]). Come her term as an elected chief executive, Freedom House began to look at her much more negatively; her decision to run for the presidency despite her earlier promise not to— thereby being the first incumbent president running for a fresh mandate since Marcos in 1969—her pardoning of her predecessor—the country's first judicially declared plunderer—and the questionability of her win over a more popular candidate likely made it inconceivable for the Freedom House analysts to continue to view Arroyo favorably.

Table 2: EIU Democracy Indices for the Philippines, 2007-2011

Year	2007	2008	2010	2011
Rank (over 167)	63	77	74	75
Overall score	6.48	6.12	6.12	6.12
Electoral process and pluralism	9.17	8.33	8.33	8.33
Functioning of government	5.36	5.00	5.00	5.00
Political participation	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Political culture	3.75	3.13	3.13	3.13
Civil liberties	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12
Adjectival ranking	Flawed democracy	Flawed democracy	Flawed democracy	Flawed democracy

Sources: Taken from Kekic 2007, 4; EIU 2008, 6; 2010, 5; 2011, 5.

Given its age (it celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2011) and scope, as well as the accessibility of its analyses, Freedom House understandably set the global standard in democratization metrics. However, numerous other indices have come in its wake, with many of them criticizing Freedom House's focus on measuring "freedom" despite its raison d'être being the support of "democratic change, [the monitoring of] freedom, and [advocating] for democracy and human rights around the world" (Freedom House 2011b).

Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index

In 2007, the Economist Intelligence Unit set up a democracy index as a rival of Freedom House's freedom assessments, in the belief that Freedom House's subscription to the "thin" concept of democracy of Robert Dahl needed to be broadened "to include aspects of society and political culture in democratic societies" (Kekic 2007, 1). The EIU Democracy Index's categories of democratization are the following: "electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture" (EIU 2010, 1). It thus still bears some resemblance to the Freedom House framework, but it is more overtly a ranking tool than the Freedom in the World surveys.

Part of the EIU Democracy Index methodology involves conducting expert surveys to measure how well a country is doing in the aforesaid categories (Kekic 2007, 8). In addition to these expert surveys, according to the EIU, a "crucial, differentiating aspect of [their] measure is that [they] use, where available, public opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey" (Kekic 2007, 8). WVS data is used as "[indicators] based on the surveys predominate heavily in the political participation and political culture categories, and a few are used in the civil liberties and functioning of government categories" (Kekic 2007, 8). Apart from the World Values Survey, the EIU also consults "Eurobarometer surveys, Gallup polls, Latin American Barometer, and national [surveys; in] the case of countries for which survey results are missing, survey results for similar countries and expert assessment are used to fill in the gaps" (Kekic 2007,8). Table 2 summarizes what the EIU Democracy Index has been saying about Philippine democratization since 2007 until 2011.

Whether it was "democracy in stagnation" (2008), "democracy in retreat" (2010), or "democracy under stress" (2011), it seemed that (whoever) the experts consulted and (whatever) opinion surveys studied by the EIU team show that the country is not progressing at all toward becoming a "full democracy." Judging from the lack of any discussion on the Philippines in the EIU Democracy Index reports, the EIU seems to view the Philippines as an unremarkable "flawed democracy." But to be fair, one cannot expect the EIU Democracy Index to be a tool for conducting in-depth democratization diagnostics, as the index is more useful in tracking global/regional trends in democratization, as well as showing which democracies are better than others, according to EIU's limited criteria; given its name, EIU ironically excludes democratization in the economic field from its indicators of democratization.

Democracy Ranking of the Quality of Democracy

The Democracy Ranking of the Quality of Democracy (DRQD) is in many ways very similar to the democracy assessments discussed. It is also in one way very similar to the CADI ADI. According to David F.J. Campbell, Academic Director of the Democracy Ranking Association, "the structure of the conceptual formula of the Democracy Ranking [of the Quality of Democracy] would be: quality of democracy = (freedom + other characteristics of the political system) + (performance of the non-political dimensions [e.g., socioeconomic development])" (2008, 41). This formulation echoes the CADI formulation of democratization as liberalization + equalization (leading to de-monopolization/citizen empowerment). The similarity is

Table 3: Democracy Ranking of the Philippines according to DRQD (2004-2009)

	2004-05	2005-06	2007-08	2008-09
Rank (out of ± 100 democracies)	49	45	64	56
Score (out of 100)	51.19	56.95	46.91	53.97

Sources: Based on Campbell, et al. 2010, 11 and Campbell and Pölzlbauer 2010, 2.

largely due to both assessment frameworks having the same theoretical foundations in the work of Guillermo O'Donnell. According to the CADI ADI guidebook,

> [as observed by Guillermo O'Donnell,] 'transition from authoritarianism' does not guarantee "transition to democracy.' Second, 'transition to democracy,' i.e., 'achievement in electoral democracy' does not involve 'realization of representative [democracy].' Third, transition to substantive [democracy,] i.e., ['socialization,'] does not directly follow 'transition to democracy' (CADI 2011, 3).

Drawn from these observations is the CADI notion that democratization must be seen involve "non-political" elements to make a comprehensive democratization assessment. The DRQD, meanwhile, based their approach to assessing democracy on O'Donnell's understanding of democratization as being based on the principles "human development," which "focuses on the basic conditions or capabilities that enable individuals to act (behave) as agents" (in Campbell 2008, 27), and "human rights," which are clustered into "political rights, civil rights, and social rights" (in Campbell 2008, 27). Even if their theoretical bases are the same, the CADI ADI and the DRQD cannot be assailed as identical, not only because the latter is based in Austria while the former is headquartered in South Korea. By the name itself, the DRQD is another ranking tool. It ranks democracies (i.e., countries classified by Freedom House as "Free" or "Partly Free") based on O'Donnell's guidelines for measuring democracy. DRQD highlights the top ten and the bottom ten democracies in a two-year period. Another key difference is methodological; the DRQD rankings are the result of investigating "what happens if the Freedom Ratings from Freedom House are [combined] with Human

Table 4: Philippine EAB Respondents' Support for Democracy

Democracy is...	Percent of respondents
Desirable for our country now	88.1
Suitable for our country now	80.2
Effective in solving the problems of society	60.7
Preferable to all other kinds of government	63.6
Equally or more important than development	21.8
None of the above	1.5
All of the above	6.7
Mean number of items supported	3.1

Source: Culled from the table in Chu et al. 2009, 144.

Development Index [indicator scores] of the United Nations Development Program" (Campbell 2010, 1). Using this method, comprehensive democracy scores are obtained. Table 3 shows DRQD rankings for the Philippines (with corresponding scores) within the years 2004-2009.

By far the most all-encompassing of the democracy indices discussed thus far—a fact wholly attributable to the type of data taken into consideration)—the DRQD is nevertheless not an ideal tool for pinpointing locally determined deficiencies in democratization, a weakness that all global democracy indices share. At best, like the Freedom in the World surveys and the EIU's Democracy Index, the DRQD can be used to show how the country is faring against other democracies in maintaining/improving its democratic status. Are the "Asian democracy" indices predating the conduct of the CADI ADI surveys any different?

"Asian Democracy" Indices

East Asia Barometer

The group of scholars known as the East Asia Barometer (EAB) "conducted national random-sample surveys in 2002 in five new democracies [including the Philippines, "new" apparently because it underwent decades under authoritarian rule before 1987], one old democracy (Japan), one quasi-democracy (Hong Kong), and one authoritarian system (China)" (Chu et al. 2009, 143). The survey was conducted again in 2005-2006 (Chu et al. 2009, 146). The EAB survey is also referred to as the Comparative Survey of

Table 5: Philippine EAB Respondents' Authoritarian Detachment

Item	Percent of respondents
Reject "strong leader"	69.4
Reject "military rule"	62.7
Reject "no opposition party"	69.6
Reject "experts decide everything"	76.8
Reject all authoritarian options	35.6
Reject no authoritarian options	4.1
Mean number of items rejected	2.8

Source: Culled from the table in Chu et al. 2009, 147.

Democratization and Value Changes in East Asia (SWS 2007), a name that should give a clue as to its purpose. In the Philippines, EAB surveys were conducted by Social Weather Stations (Guerrero 2004, 9; SWS 2007), a "non-stock, non-profit, and politically non-partisan social research institute" (Guerrero 2004, 1). 1,200 respondents (300 each in Manila, the Balance of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao) were interviewed in both survey rounds (SWS 2007).

The EAB asked questions designed to "estimate [their respondents'] level of support for democracy" and to obtain their respondents' assessments of the "suitability of democracy for their country" (Chu et al. 2009, 144). In one set of questions, the respondents were asked to indicate their answers using a ten-point scale, with 1 expressing either their preference for "complete dictatorship" or their belief that democracy is completely unsuitable in their country, and 10 expressing either their preference for "complete democracy" or their belief that democracy is perfectly suitable in their national society (Chu et al. 2009, 144). In another set of questions, EAB determined citizens' "apathy for authoritarian alternatives" by asking respondents whether or not they would favor "strongman rule, military rule, single-party rule, and technocratic rule by 'experts'" (Chu et al. 2009, 146). Tables 4 and 5 show the results of SWS's 2002 survey (as published in an article in The Washington Quarterly) in the Philippines.

According to EAB, when their survey was conducted in 2005-2006, support for democracy in the Philippines dramatically decreased. Like Freedom House, EAB (implicitly) attributes this loss to the apparent shenanigans of the Arroyo regime (Chu et al. 2009, 146).

EAB also asked their respondents, "[if] you had to choose between democracy and economic development, which would you say is more important?" to which most respondents chose the latter; according to EAB, less than one-fifth of those polled in the Philippines wanted democracy over economic development (Chu et al. 2009, 145). This is rather unsurprising, given how many people in the country are mired in poverty. What is surprising is that EAB found that many people in the Philippines (more than a third of the respondents in their last survey) still find military rule acceptable (Chu et al. 2009, 146). This seems incredible given the publicized horrors thousands suffered under Marcos's martial law regime. (According to Rigoberto T. Tiglao, "Marcos unleashed one of the bloodiest eras in Philippine history. Salvaging [extrajudicial killing], 'hamletting' and torture became bywords that characterized the reign of terror under the regime" (1988, 56).) Also unexpectedly, EAB found the Philippines to be unique as, after a "correlation analysis," they found that the Philippines is the only country where democracy is looked upon positively, but authoritarian alternatives to providing solutions to society's dilemmas are not disfavored by the majority (Chu et al. 2009,147). Apparently, in the Philippines, there is no increase in the rejection of authoritarianism when a democratic regime is "performing well in providing democratic rights and freedoms" (Chu et al. 2009, 153). Nevertheless, EAB suggests that "democratic governments must win citizens' support through better performance, both in political and policy [terms,]" i.e., they must show their citizens that "democracy works" (Chu et al. 2009, 154-155).

Clearly, EAB considers democracy and development as connected, but does not subscribe to the notion of economic democratization, indeed positioning democracy against economic development in its surveys. It essentially looks into citizens' support for democracy as a type of government, as a way of assessing one level of "democratic consolidation" according to Larry Diamond (i.e., the "mass public's" belief in and valuation of democracy) (Chu et al. 2009, 153-154).

The ARDA Asia Democracy Index

The Asia (at times styled by the media as "Asian") Democracy Index of the Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia (ARDA) was claimed by the researchers behind it to be the first democracy assessment that allows people in Asia to internally "assess and evaluate the political situations of their own countries (ARDA c2004)." According to Paul D. Scott, the project director of the Asia Democracy Index, the survey "is the first of its kind where 'politically aware' individuals have been asked to assess the level of democratic

Table 6: The Results of the 2005 ARDA ADI

Country by Rank	Score
1. Japan	62.41%
2. Hong Kong	62.01%
3. Taiwan	55.47%
4. Bangladesh	53.21%
5. Philippines	51.18%
6. Thailand	50.85%
7. Indonesia	50.38%
8. Mongolia	50.33%
9. Sri Lanka	50.19%
10. South Korea	47.30%
11. Pakistan	46.88%
12. Cambodia	44.17%
13. Malaysia	41.93%
14. Nepal	32.13%
15. Singapore	30.42%
16. Myanmar	19.16%

Source: From Scott c2007.

development of their respective political systems (Scott c2007). Apart from the departure from the "Western canon" of measuring democracy, Scott lists the following deficiencies of previous democracy assessments that the ARDA ADI sought to address: first, the "excessive reliance on information provided by governments;" second, the "over-reliance on economic indicators" (although "[ARDA acknowledges] that democratic development may well enhance economic growth and vice versa"); third, the "adoption of a non-prescriptive approach;" and fourth, the "polling [of] communities that may have little understanding and knowledge of the countries being studied" (Scott c2007).

The sole ARDA ADI study was conducted in 2005. Sixteen countries in Asia were studied. ARDA's criteria for assessing democratization are the following: civil rights, elections and electoral processes, governance and corruption, the media, rule of law, and participation and representation (Scott c2007). Local nongovernmental organizations were tapped to conduct the survey in each of the sixteen countries (Scott c2007). Readily available online information does not disclose who conducted the ARDA ADI survey in the Philippines, though the ARDA website reveals that J.R. Nereus O. Acosta, erstwhile member of the Philippines's House of Representatives and current

Secretary-General of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, was one of the signatories of ARDA's "Resolution of Formation" (ARDA c2000). A standardized, twenty-two item questionnaire was the instrument utilized for surveying at least 100 "politically aware" respondents per country (Scott c2007); each local affiliate was given the leeway to formulate their own definition of "politically aware" (such as familiarity with political parties or political occurrences) (Au Waipang 2007).

Table 6 shows where the Philippines places among the sixteen countries surveyed by ARDA in 2005.

The Philippines placed remarkably high in this ranking, with a score that is nearly a point higher than Indonesia's and several points higher than South Korea's, both of which outrank the Philippines in other recent democracy rankings. Even in the criteria-specific rankings, it scores higher than both countries (Au Waipang 2007). Scott acknowledged worries of their potential affiliates that the ARDA ADI's methodology might cause some countries to appear "unrealistically democratic" (Scott c2007). Criticism of objectivity of the ARDA affiliate assessors has also been made; regarding the Singapore study, one blogger pointed out that the members of the Singapore assessment team were all human rights activists vehemently opposed to the current regime (Au Waipang 2007). The local assessors of Philippine democracy described in the next section appear to have ensured that such criticism cannot be hurled against them by ensuring that their bases for assessment are data from a wide variety of sources.

Philippine Assessments of Democracy

The "Philippine Democracy Agenda" Series

In 1997, a set of studies on sectoral perspectives on democracy and citizenship were published in the book Philippine Democracy Agenda [PDA]: Volume 1 - Democracy and Citizenship in Filipino Political Culture. Among these studies are Anna Marie A. Karaos's "Perceptions and Practices of Democracy and Citizenship among Urban Middle Class Families," Wahab Ibrahim Guialal's "Perceptions on Democracy and Citizenship in Muslim Mindanao," Renato M. Lee's "Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship in the Philippine Business Sector," and Arturo C. Nuera's "Workers' Political Culture: Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship." These particular studies are mentioned here because of the similar methodologies the researchers behind them utilized to obtain their data—all of them conducted key informant interviews and/or surveys (some also consulted

readily available data from pollster groups). In addition, these studies collectively show how citizens outside of the government from various socioeconomic classes considered their role in their allegedly democratic state.

Diverse class/cluster opinions regarding democracy in the Philippines were collected through these studies (albeit with the common caveat that the sample sizes for surveys or the number of key informants interviewed were small). For example, Karaos found that while most middle class Philippine citizens believed that democracy can work in the Philippines, members of this class were "more cynical of electoral politics than the lower classes" (1997, 127); meanwhile, Guialal discovered that "the concept of democracy and citizenship enshrined among the Muslims [in Southern Philippines] is reduced to mere participation in elections, except among the educated" (1997, 161). The PDA studies thus call attention to the sheer diversity of the national population of the archipelagic state called the Philippines. They thus also alert national survey takers to review their stratification categories to conform with the realities of divisions in Philippine society.

IDEA-NCPAG Philippine Democracy Assessments

According to the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an "intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide" that is based in Sweden (Landman 2008, 31; 32), their democracy assessment framework revolves around the question, "[how] democratic is [a subject country] and its government [from the perspective of its citizens]?" (Landman 2008, 9) IDEA lists numerous unique characteristics of their assessment approach, such as "insider" assessors and the use of the assessors' qualitative judgements "strengthened by" quantitative data (Landman 2008, 9-10). The key democratic principles of IDEA are "popular control over decision makers and political equality of those who exercise that control" (Landman 2008, 10-11). The main purpose of a democracy assessment using the IDEA approach is "to contribute to public debate and consciousness raising," allowing for "the expression of popular understanding as well as any elite consensus" (Landman 2008, 10). The assessment's results must also be prescriptive (Landman 2008, 10), with policy implications—which is probably why the policy study-oriented University of the Philippines' National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), through Dr. Edna E.A. Co, led the conduct of the assessments in the Philippines.

IDEA allows the local affiliate assessors using their framework to choose which among their indicators of democracy to assess (Landman 2008, 10). The first Philippine assessment, published in 2005, was about "Free and Fair Elections and the Democratic Role of Political Parties." In 2007, there were two concurrent assessments published, one on "Minimizing Corruption," and another on "Economic and Social Rights." The 2010 assessment—the latest in the series—is about "The Rule of Law and Access to Justice." The analyses conducted by IDEA-NCPAG are meticulous, given the amount of data their assessors need to process. It shares the previous PDA studies' push for greater introspection to defeat anti-democratic forces instead of focusing on providing indices of democracy. All four studies agree on one point—in the Philippines, the means toward further democratization (legal or otherwise institutional) as well as guaranteeing the unhindered exercise of civil, political, and human rights exist, but the proper implementation or integrity of these means is dismal or questionable.

Synthesis

The last fifteen years of studies on the state of the Philippines' progress toward democratization—qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both—collectively paint a portrait of a nation struggling to prove itself worthy of its claims to be a democratic state. The aforedescribed studies agree that that struggle was approaching a stalemate about a decade after the country's current, anti-authoritarian constitution (1987) was ratified; more recent assessments are inclined to conclude that Philippine democratization has stalled, or that anti-democratic backsliding repeatedly occurs in the country. Nevertheless, all the assessments discussed are unanimous that democracy still exists in the Philippines and is strongly desired by most of its citizens; the local anti-dictatorship chant "never again to martial law!"—first heard during the waning years of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship—still appears to resonate with the majority.

All the assessments discussed also have their share of notable strengths in measuring democratization, as with all democracy metrics. the Philippine CADI survey team believes that the CADI ADI reflects many of the merits of the above assessments, such as the great weight given by the Freedom in the World analyses and the EIU Democracy Index to political and civil liberties; the identification of human development as an index of democratization by the DRQD; the highlighting of the rejection of authoritarianism as a means of assessing democratic consolidation by the EAB surveys; the emphasis given on the "insider's" perspective by the ARDA ADI; the surfacing of local multi-sectoral perspectives on democracy by the

TWSC PDA studies; and the IDEA-NCPAG assessments' identification of, thereafter recommending solutions to the hindrances to further democratization in the Philippines.

The survey results of the CADI ADI project, besides adding to or updating the above described data (especially those of discontinued democracy/democratization level perception studies), were expected by the 2011 Philippine survey team to fill many of the gaps unaddressed by the assessments discussed, notably the lack of focus on the majority of assessments on economic democratization. The Philippine CADI members also had no desire to emulate the researchers behind most democracy indices in their aim to package their work mainly as contributions to the field of comparative democracy/democratization. Indeed, as the author of this research note states elsewhere, the CADI researchers "advocate what can be metaphorically illustrated as scientifically gazing at the detritus in [the] navels [of the countries subjected to ADI evaluation] in order to clean them thoroughly" (2011).

Of course, no democratization index can ever show a complete portrait of democratization in any country; there are always a few "elements of democracy" that are disregarded or undervalued. They can also be subject to usage contrary to their stated function; they can be utilized for not so academic ends, or any purpose that is a far cry from the objective examination variety. A government may use such measurements to say that the nation's citizenry or the international "community" believes that all is right with the way it manages the country, or to attack "outsiders" as grossly misinformed democratization assessors. At worst, they can be used by the rulers of a not so well-run state (or even what can be referred to as an "internally terroristic" regime) to disregard local or international constructive criticism of their country's political/socioeconomic system. In short, as are many things, no democratization index is perfect. But as long as they can fire up debates on democratization, then these indices can be considered invaluable assistants in bringing societies closer to attaining lasting democracy.

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