Democracy Dies in Darkness without Official Statistics

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Agenda - Questions?

- Is there a quantitative relationship between democracy and official statistics?
- How can a democratic country organize an election without official statistics?
New Global Statistical Governance?

Only Full Democracy

LUCA DI GENNARO SPLENDORE - DEMOCRACY & OFFICIAL STATISTICS
Democracy Index - Statistical Performance Indicator

Only Europe
Latin America and the Caribbean

Full Democracy
Democracy Index - Statistical Performance Indicator

LUCA DI GENNARO SPLENDORE - DEMOCRACY & OFFICIAL STATISTICS
69%  41%  56%

The correlation between the Democracy Index and the Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) for 2022 for 167

The correlation between the Democracy Index and Gender Data Compass for 2022/2023

The correlation between the Democracy Index and Open Data Inventory (ODIN) for 2022
‘In a democratic society, the independence of official statistics has the same status as the freedom of speech for the citizens.’

Jeskanen-Sundström, 2007

Constitutional guardians (UK)

‘For example, if the government is seen to have undue influence over the Electoral Commission, or the UK Statistics Authority, then trust in fair elections or accurate statistics will be undermined.’
NSOs are crucial to archive the SDG data

The SDG 17 promote the official statistics: Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (Indicator 17.18.2)

Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding (Indicator 17.18.3)

Build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries (Target 17.19)

‘Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government...’

• Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
  • UN (2014)

NSOs are in Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 17.18 and 17.19
‘The statistics from which to build up these estimates are very inadequate. Every government since the last war has been unscientific and obscurantist, and has regarded the collection of essential facts as a waste of money’
The Official Statistics under Attack (small list)

The official statistics can be a threatening for the political system

- The NSO of El Salvador was incorporated in the Central Bank

- In Ecuador in 2021 an unforeseen resignation by the NSO’s (INEC in Ecuador) Director, took place just one week before the election day. Every NSO has a statistical calendar, normally pre-established and disseminated a few years in advance.


- The Greek government prosecuted the former director of NSO Greece (ELSTAT)

- INDEC (NSO Argentina) suffered a lot of political interference especially on the inflation rate
Moving Forward

- **Official Statistics Awareness**

- **No scientific literature? Democracy does cause a good statistical system?**

- **Who produces the data?**

- **Governance?**

*Thank you!*
DATA

- **Democracy** Index and Freedom House
- **Statistical** Performance Indicators
- Open data and subcategories
- **Statistical Capacity Index** (only Developing countries)
- **Who produces the data?** Central bank, NSO, Gov
- Gender data, minority and representation of minority group
Reference Image

• https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2024
• https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index
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