



# VARIATIONS IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

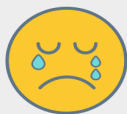
## SUMMARY

New research using data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) examines the effectiveness of democracy assistance in countries with different regime types.

While the research finds that overall democracy assistance has a positive effect across countries, specific types of democracy assistance vary in effectiveness depending on regime type.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

- Democracy assistance is examined in the areas of civil society, elections, media, and human rights, and excludes the DRG areas of governance and rule of law.
- Data are drawn from V-Dem mid-level indices (Clean Elections Index, Civil Liberties Index, Core Civil Society Index...) and the OECD.
- Regimes are categorized into five types:



Closed Autocracies

Minimal democratic principles not achieved

No multiparty elections for the head of the executive

Jordan 2012



Electoral Autocracies

Multiparty elections for the head of the executive

Nigeria 2011



Electoral Democracies

Minimal democratic principles achieved

Executive is not constrained

Civil society is constrained

Bolivia 2012



Liberal Democracies

Executive is constrained

Civil society is not constrained

Ghana 2012



Regimeless Countries

Polity interrupted, collapsed, or in substantial transition

Libya 2012

## Effective Democracy Assistance

### Key Findings



Regime Type

	Aggregate Democracy Assistance	Civil Society	Elections	Media	Human Rights
Closed Autocracies			✓		
Electoral Autocracies	✓		✓		✓
Electoral Democracies		✓		✓	✓
Liberal Democracies					
Regimeless Countries	✓		✓		

Note: Effects represent changes in the direction of democracy, not changes between regime types. For example, if election assistance in closed autocracies is effective in increasing the quality of elections, it does not necessarily generate broader regime change.

- Overall democracy assistance has a statistically significant positive effect across countries.

- Aggregate democracy assistance is effective in electoral autocracies and countries lacking a regime, but less effective in closed autocracies and liberal democracies.

- Results demonstrate a positive and statistically significant effect of election aid in closed autocracies

- Election and human rights assistance is successful in electoral autocracies, although the influence of human rights assistance is weaker.

- Assistance to bolster civil society, media, and human rights works in electoral democracies.

- Election and media assistance are effective in countries essentially lacking a regime.

- Any type of democracy assistance tends to be ineffective at moving the needle in already liberal democracies.

### Major Takeaways



- Democracy aid appears to have a causal effect on levels of democracy.

- A specific type of aid is more likely to be effective when the aid does not pose a threat to regime survival and when the aid matches the particular democratic deficits in a country.

- Specific regime type (and the absence of a regime) should be taken into account for each type of DRG assistance portfolio.

- Electoral assistance to autocracies should be treated with caution as it has limited transformative impact and might stabilize authoritarian rule.

- Some redirection of future democracy assistance may increase impact. For example, the highest amounts of election, human rights, civil society, and media aid per capita have gone to regimeless countries. Yet, the research finds that only election and media assistance to these countries have tended to be successful in the short-term.

### About the Research



The Effectiveness of Democracy Aid to Different Regime Types and Democracy Sectors

Anna Lührmann, Kelly McMann and Carolien van Ham  
V-Dem Institute Working Paper  
January 2017  
<https://www.v-dem.net/en/>

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For additional information on DRG research visit:  
<https://pages.usaid.gov/DCHA/DRG/learning-l-division>