

Viral (un)freedom in the era  
of Covid-19: It is all about  
openness and rapid  
response

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**LOCKDOWN**

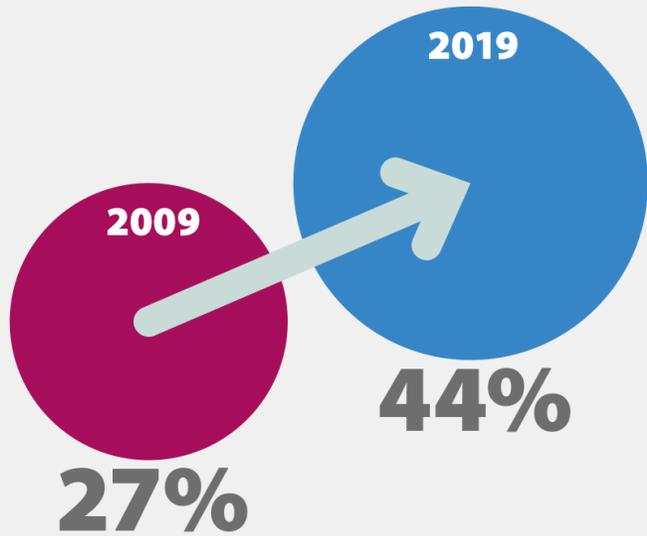
SOCIAL DISTAN~~S~~ING

SOCIAL DIS~~D~~ANCE~~E~~ING

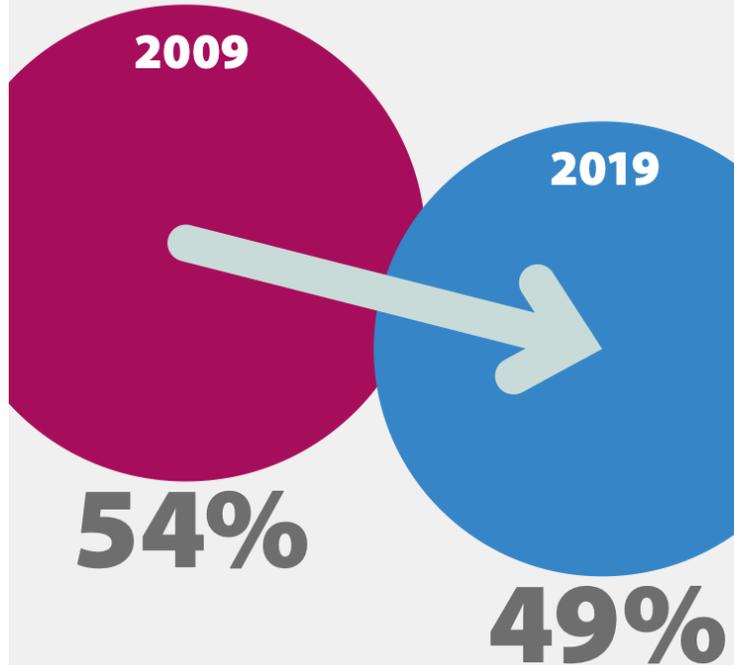




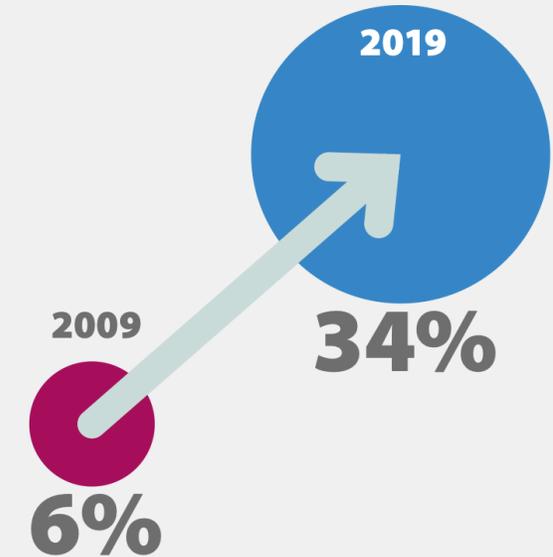
**SHARE OF COUNTRIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL  
PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS**



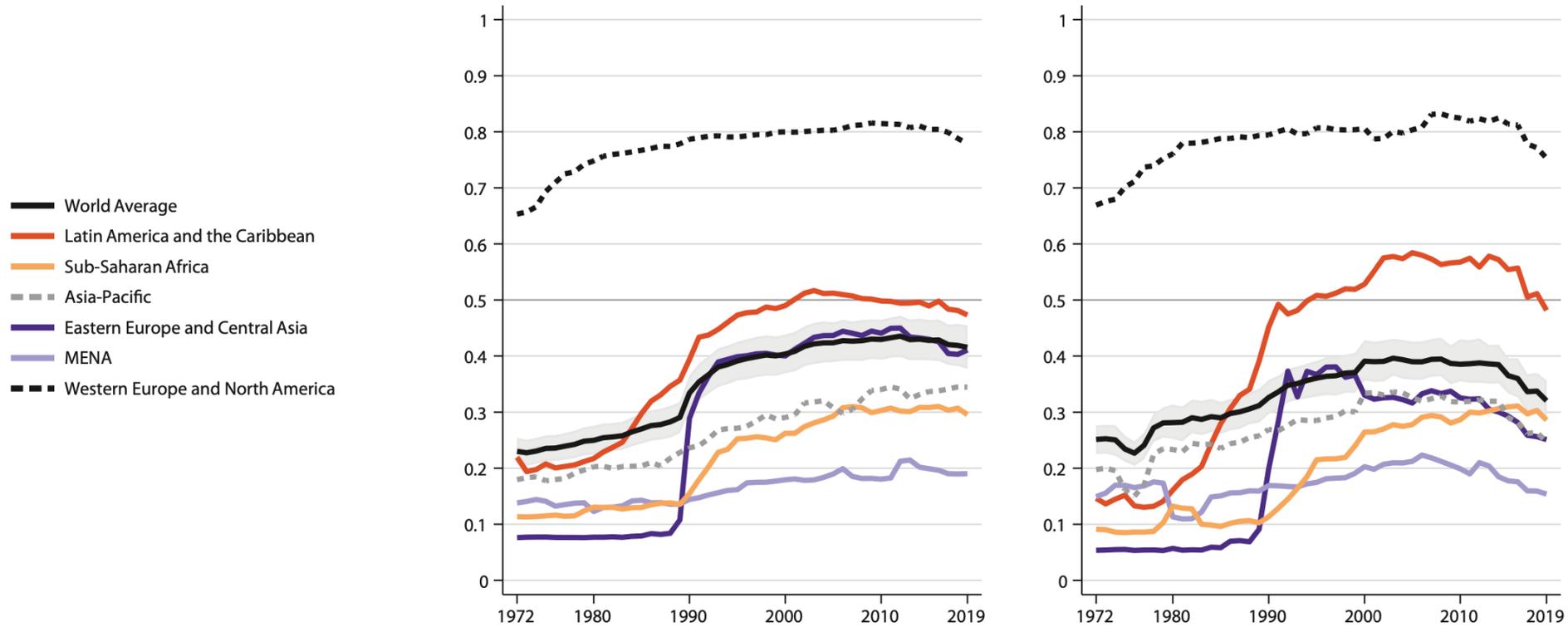
**GLOBAL SHARE OF DEMOCRACIES**



**SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION  
LIVING IN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES**



Globally, democracy is in crisis – see a mass wave of autocratisation that that undermine democratic gains



V-Dem data demonstrates a general decline in democracy globally

## Raises key questions

- The sustainability of democracy in the era of COVID-19
- The use of a pandemic to further curtail rights in the wake of a global health crisis
- The level of trust citizens have in their institutions
- Privacy, transparency, mobility/movement, and accountability



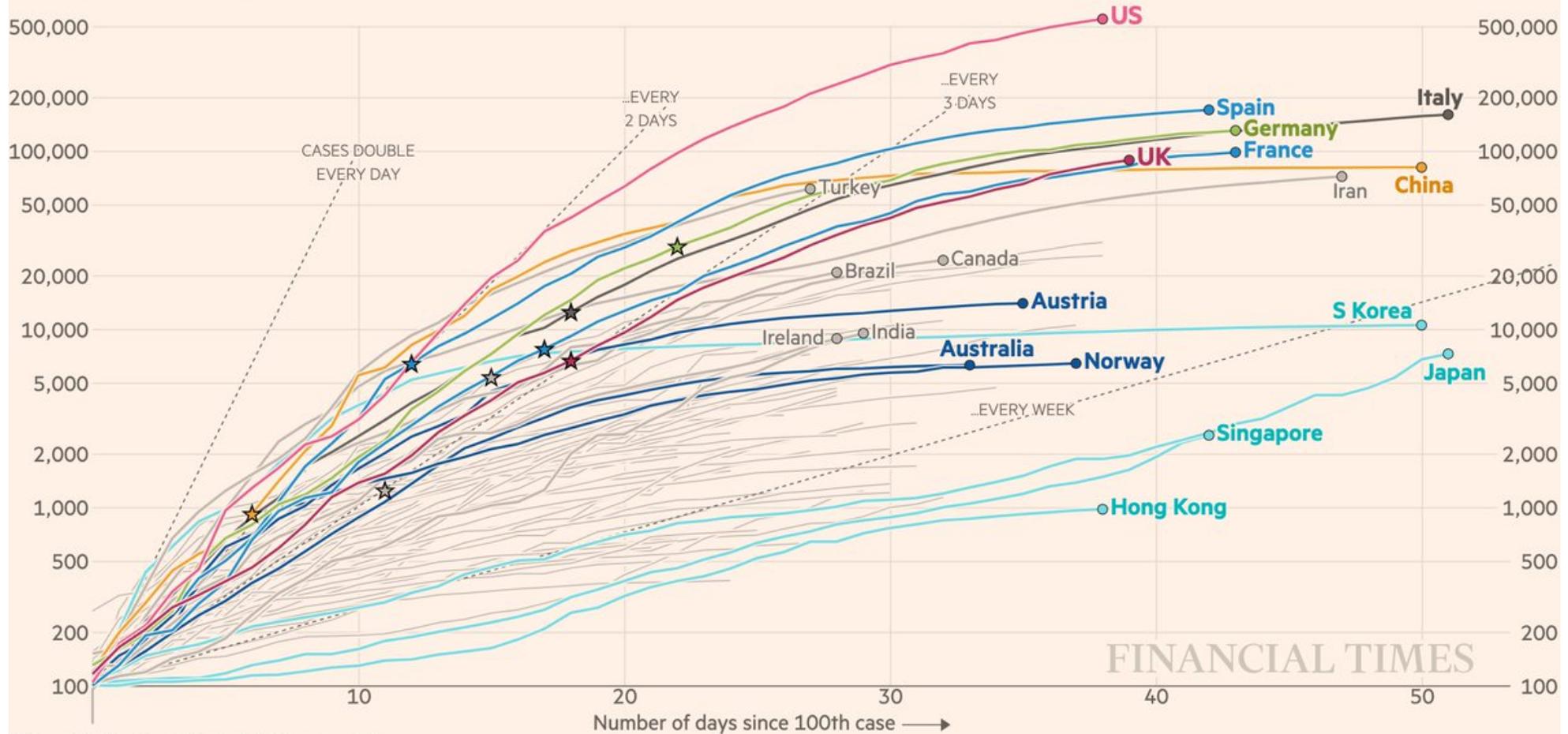


## Transparency

- Transparency seen as a key socio-political attribute and value to combat pandemics and epidemics
- Democracies are generally regarded as more open and transparent than their authoritarian counterparts

# Most western countries are on the same coronavirus trajectory, but some have slowed the spread of virus

Cumulative number of cases, by number of days since 100th case  
Stars represent national lockdowns ★



FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch  
Source: FT analysis of European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; FT research. Data updated April 13, 19:00 GMT  
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FINANCIAL TIMES



- Key areas of concern for democracy's future as highlighted by DemDigest (2020)
  - Centralizing power
  - Curtailing fundamental rights
  - Expanded state surveillance
  - Banishing protest



## Hungary

Enacted decree to allow rule for indefinite periods

Like South Africa, criminalized the spreading of false information on COVID-19



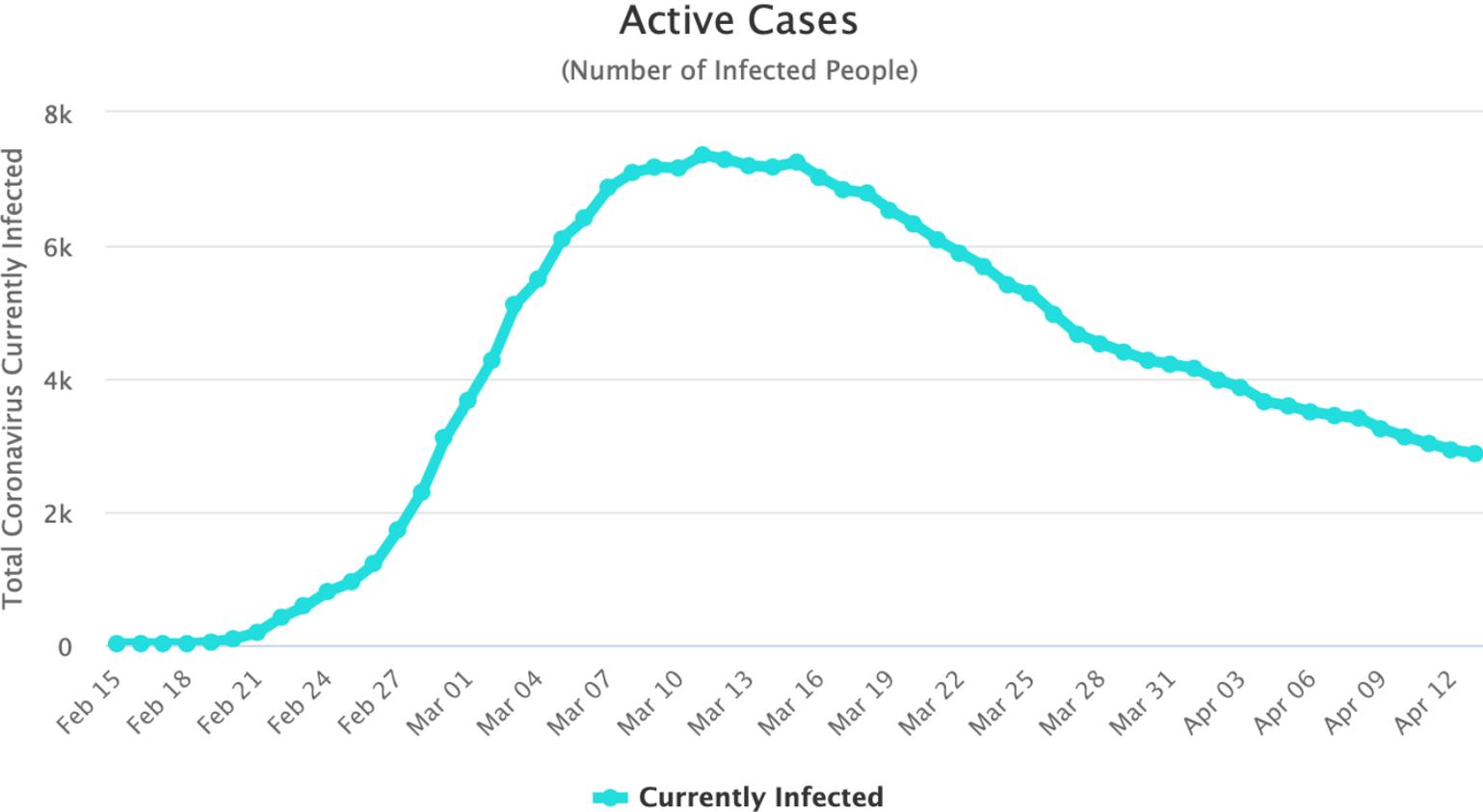
- Most states curtailed freedom of movement
- Boundaries closed
- Military and police patrol the streets to make sure everyone stays inside
- Shops closed



Softer measures?  
Greater success?

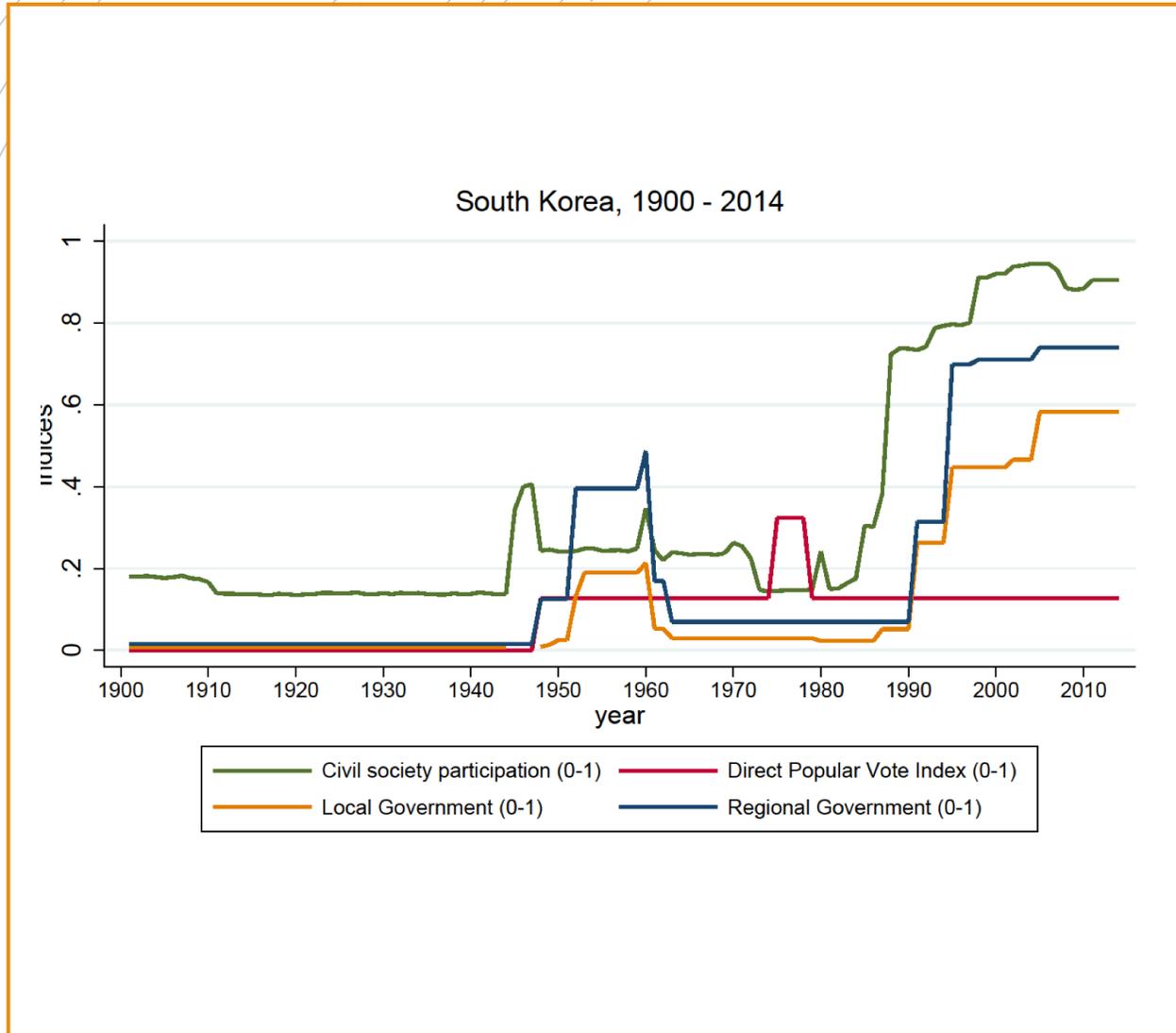
- **South Korea and Taiwan**
- **State-civil society relationships**
- **Voluntary compliance with lockdown regulations**

# Active Cases in South Korea



## South Korean Democratic Development

- **Civil Society participation high**
  - Especially after mass democratisation in the 80s





## Public deliberation key

- **Quality and inclusive public deliberations**
- **Wide consultation at societal level**
- **Political elites engage from the starting point of the common good**
- **Engaged society – high level of awareness on public debates**

(V-Dem)



- South Korean response not so harsh...but showing success
- Mass testing
- Soft measures to restrict movement
- Testing with low or no economic burden
- Identification of hotspots
- Public and mass text message campaign to warn citizens to highlight movements of infected persons – including shops and other public places
- Voluntary compliance

## Strong state surveillance on citizens

- Tracking and surveillance of citizens that “dodge” quarantine
- Tracking bracelets and technology
- Monitor movements of people under quarantine
- No obligation to wear them...thus may see possible legislation or policy to allow the state to actively track citizens





- **Lessons from past epidemics**
- **Fast response and mass testing**
- **Build relationships with civil society and citizens**
- **Transparency and openness**
- **Economic safety net for citizens to lessen the economic burden**
- **A culture of protest born with the 1987 June Democracy Movement and the Candlelight Vigils of 2016**
- **A strong tracking and tracing that may potential violate civil and political liberties**