

The great convergence: post-Cold War transitions to hybrid regimes across waves and ebbs

Supplementary material

The analysis presented in the paper is conducted using Freedom House data (FH) based on the operational rules described in section “Tracing the great convergence”. To check the robustness of the empirical evidence presented in this paper, I replicate the analysis according to three alternative measurement approaches. The first replication is based on Varieties of Democracy (VD) data and, specifically, the Regimes of the World indicator, which distinguishes closed autocracies, electoral autocracies, electoral democracies and liberal democracies, but also identify ambiguous ‘borderline’ cases (*v2x_regime_amb*). The main challenge with VD’s fourfold regime typology is that the hybrid regime category does not perfectly overlap with VD’s electoral autocracy and electoral democracy intermediate categories: some of the cases falling in the latter categories are hybrid regimes; others are autocratic and democratic, respectively. To operate such distinctions, I proceed as follows.

I classify all liberal democracies and ‘upper-bound’ electoral democracies as democratic and all closed autocracies and ‘lower-bound’ electoral autocracies as autocratic. To establish if extant electoral democracies are democratic or hybrid, and if extant electoral autocracies are autocratic or hybrid, I rely on the VD’s 5-level ordinal versions of the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI-5, *e_v2x_polyarchy_5C*) and of the Liberal Component Index (LCI-5, *e_v2x_liberal_5C*). In both cases, the five levels are: 0 = closed autocratic; 0.25 = autocratic; 0.5 = ambivalent; 0.75 = minimally democratic; 1 = democratic. I use both these indexes because the proposed regime definitions refer both to Dahl’s requisites for democracy and to principles such as checks and balances and individual freedoms.

Concerning non-upper-bound electoral democracies, I classify as democratic countries that score at least 0.75 (minimally democratic) in both EDI-5 and LCI-5. The remaining electoral democracies, scoring 0.5 (ambivalent) or less in either EDI-5 or LCI-5 are classified as hybrid. Concerning non-lower-bound electoral autocracies, I classify as autocratic countries that score 0.25 (autocratic) or less in both EDI-5 and LCI-5. The remaining electoral autocracies, scoring at least 0.5 (ambivalent) in

either EDI-5 or LCI-5 are classified as hybrid. Based on these rules, about 30% of non-upper-bound electoral democracies and about 40% of non-lower-bound electoral autocracies are coded as hybrid. As in the main analysis, I work on 174 countries observed from 1990 to 2023 and track regime changes without considering regime spells enduring less than five years.

The second replication combines VD and FH data (VD-FH) to address the existing disagreement in the measurement of hybrid regimes. Even in this case, I use the VD's Regimes of the World indicator, and classify liberal democracies as democratic and closed autocracies as autocratic. To establish if electoral democracies are democratic or hybrid, and if electoral autocracies are autocratic or hybrid, I rely on FH's ratings. Specifically, I classify as hybrid regimes those electoral autocracies and electoral democracies rated 'partly free'. Extant electoral autocracies and electoral democracies are classified as autocratic and democratic, respectively. Based on these rules, about 45% of electoral democracies and about 49% of electoral autocracies are coded as hybrid. As in the main analysis, I work on 174 countries observed from 1990 to 2023 and track regime changes without considering regime spells enduring less than five years.

The third replication is based on FH data. I follow the same operational rules that I apply in the main analysis, but I change the regime duration requirement from five to three years (FH-3y). In other words, in this replication, I track regime changes without considering regimes spells enduring less than three years (instead of less than five years). As in the main analysis, I work on 174 countries observed from 1990 to 2023.

I identify 136, 140 and 201 regime transitions using the VD, VD-FH and FH-3y measurements, respectively. As a reminder, I counted 156 transitions using FH data. As expected, using a lower regime duration threshold (FH-3y, from five to three years) tends to inflate the overall number of regime transitions. To show that, overall, my conclusions regarding the great convergence toward hybrid regimes withstand the employment of different data and operational rules, I extrapolate from section "Tracing regime convergence" in the paper five main findings, which I re-examine using the three alternative regime indicators (FH; VD; VD-FH; FH-3y). A fuller report of the robustness analysis is available in the Appendix.

Finding 1: During the past three decades, transitions to hybrid regimes outnumbered transitions in other directions.

→ Table 1 confirms that transitions to hybrid regimes represent more than half of total regime transitions by any measurement.

Table 1. Transitions to hybrid, democratic and autocratic regimes

	Transitions to hybrid	Transitions to democracy	Transitions to autocracy
FH	55%	28%	17%
FH-3y	53%	25%	22%
VD	52%	34%	14%
VD-FH	52%	29%	19%

Notes: Types of regime transitions as percentages of total transitions (1990-2023), using alternative measures.

Finding 2: Transitions to hybrid regimes outnumbered transitions in other directions both in the period immediately following the end of the Cold War and in the first quarter of the new century.

→ Table 2 confirms that, by any measurement, transitions to hybrid regimes represent about half of total regime transitions (or more) in each considered period.

→ Figure 5, in turn, shows that measurement decisions do not alter significantly the way historical trends in transitions to hybrid regimes can be depicted.

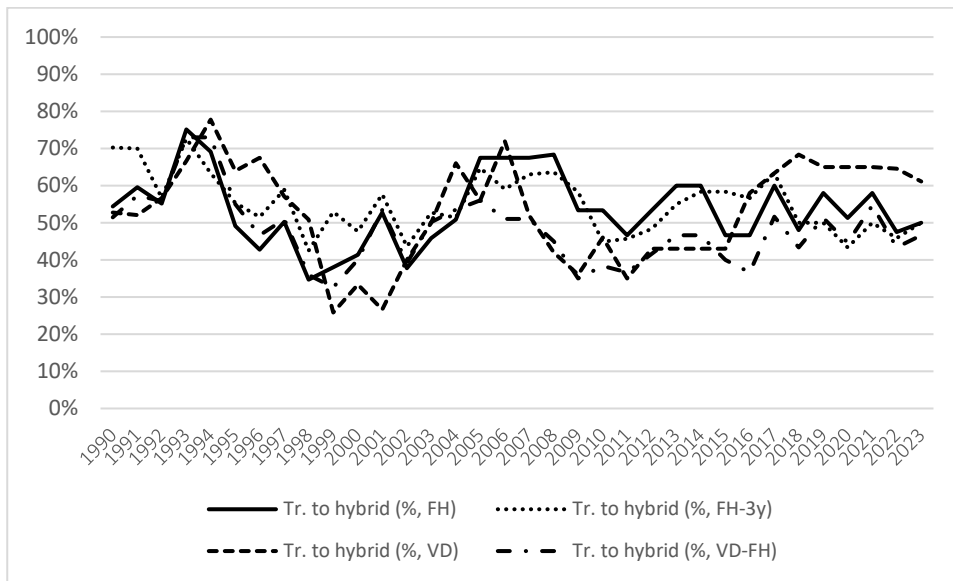
→ See also Figures A1-A4 in the Appendix.

Table 2. Transitions to hybrid by period

	1990-2006	2007-2023	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	2010-2023
FH	54%	56%	58%	49%	59%	53%
FH-3y	54%	51%	59%	48%	55%	50%
VD	49%	51%	53%	50%	50%	52%
VD-FH	52%	52%	55%	48%	53%	51%

Notes: Transitions to hybrid as percentages of total transitions in each period, using alternative measures and periodization. The last column considers recent transitions that do not fulfil the five-year duration rule.

Figure 5. Transitions to hybrid over time, 1990-2023



Notes: 5-year moving average of the annual percentage of transitions to hybrid, using alternative measures.

Finding 3: The majority of transitions to hybrid regimes involved previously autocratic countries.

→ Table 3 confirms that transitions to hybrid regimes mostly occurred under autocracy by any measurement.

Table 3. Transitions to hybrid by regime of departure

	Democracy-to-hybrid	Autocracy-to-hybrid
FH	35%	65%
FH-3y	34%	66%
VD	30%	70%
VD-FH	32%	68%

Notes: Percentages of total transitions to hybrid (1990-2023), using alternative measures.

Finding 4: The share of transitions to hybrid regimes involving previously democratic countries increased over time.

→ Table 4 confirms that, by any measurement, the share of transitions to hybrid regimes occurred under democracy is larger in the more recent considered periods than in the earlier considered periods.

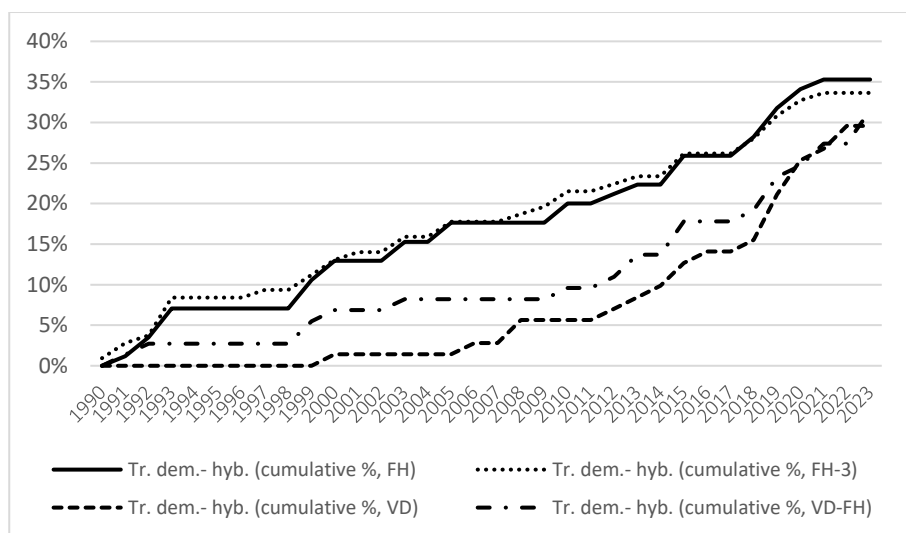
→ Figure 6, in turn, shows that measurement decisions do not alter significantly the way historical trends in democracy-to-hybrid transitions can be depicted.

Table 4. Democracy-to-hybrid transitions by period

	1990-2006	2007-2023	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	2010-2023
FH	26%	54%	21%	32%	63%	65%
FH-3y	26%	50%	23%	33%	52%	55%
VD	5%	68%	0%	29%	65%	71%
VD-FH	13%	63%	11%	13%	69%	74%

Notes: Democracy-to-hybrid transitions as percentages of total transitions to hybrid in each period, using alternative measures and periodization. The last column also considers recent transitions that do not fulfil the five-year duration rule.

Figure 6. Democracy-to-hybrid transitions over time, 1990-2023

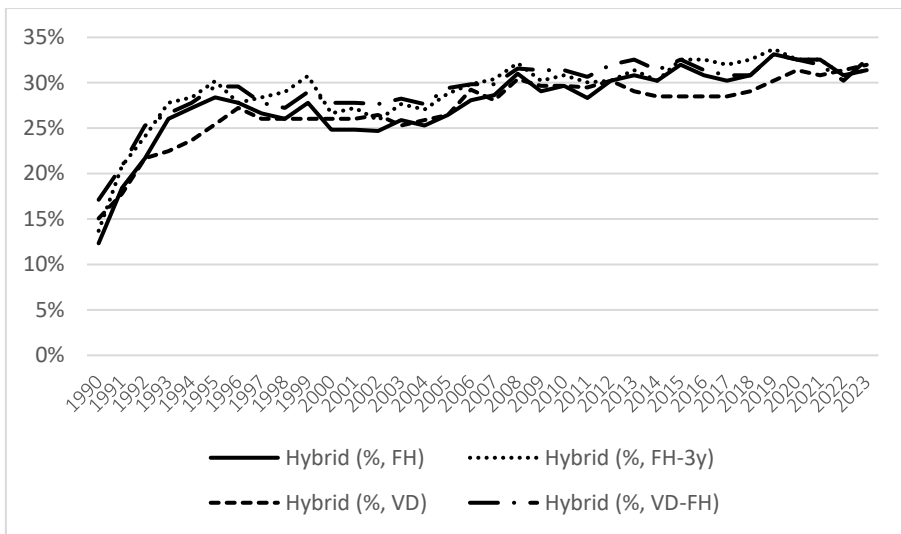


Notes: Cumulative share of democracy-to-hybrid transitions relative to total transitions to hybrid, using alternative measures.

Finding 5: The share of hybrid regimes increased significantly during the 1990s and continued to grow throughout the 2000s and 2010s; hybrid regimes currently represent about one-third of total regimes.

- Figure 7 shows that measurement decisions do not alter significantly the way historical trends in the diffusion of hybrid regimes can be depicted.
- See also Figures A5-A8 in the Appendix.

Figure 7. Hybrid regimes over time, 1990-2023



Notes: Annual percentage of hybrid regimes, using alternative measures.

Appendix

Full replication of the graphs presented in the paper using alternative measurements

Figures A1-A4: Replication relative to Finding 2.

Figures A1-A4 replicate Figure 2 in the paper (“Regime transitions over time, 1990-2023”, 5-year moving average of the annual percentage of regime transitions, by type) using alternative sources and operational rules.

Figure A5-A8: Replication relative to Finding 5.

Figures A5-A8 replicate Figure 4 in the paper (“Political regimes over time, 1990-2023”) using alternative sources and operational rules.

Figure A1

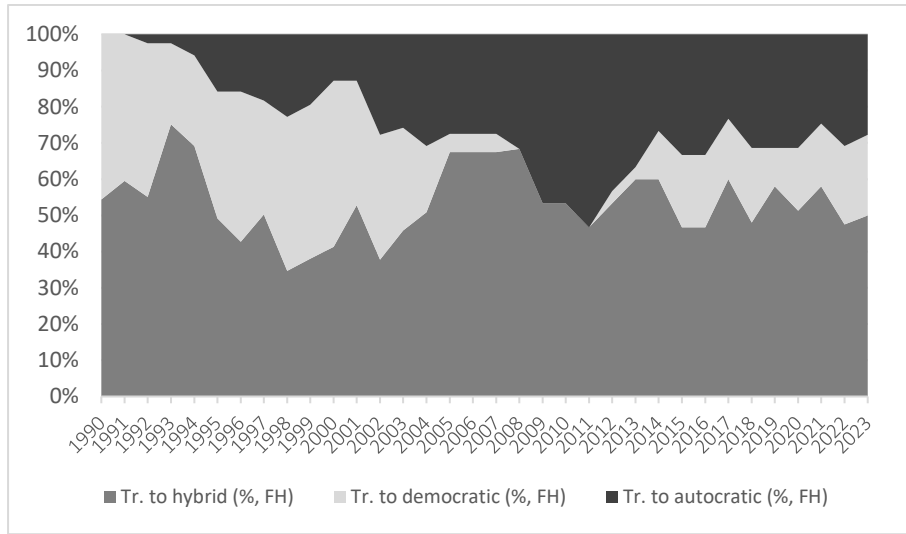


Figure A3

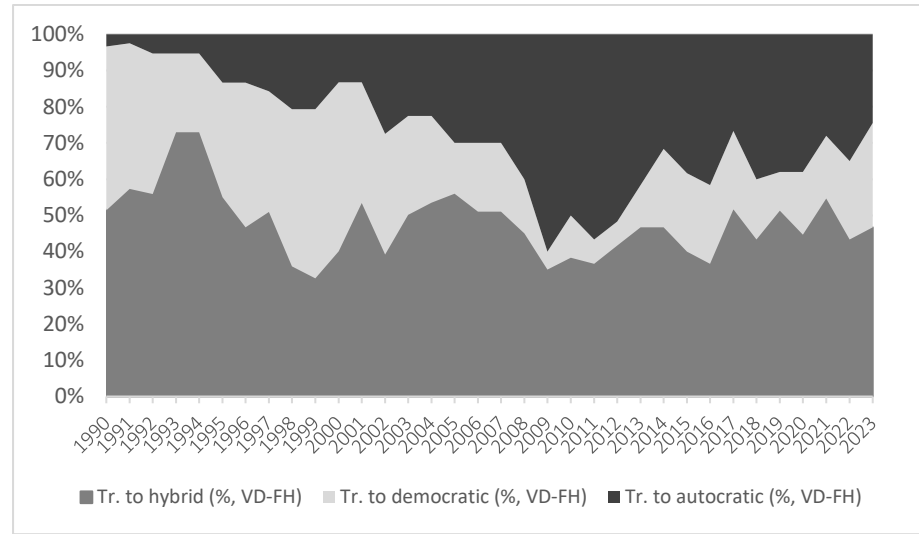


Figure A2

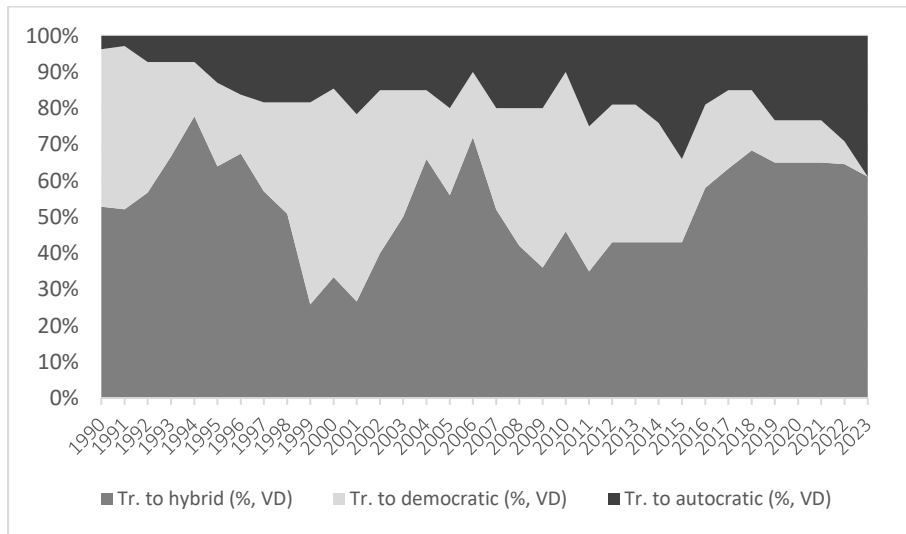


Figure A4

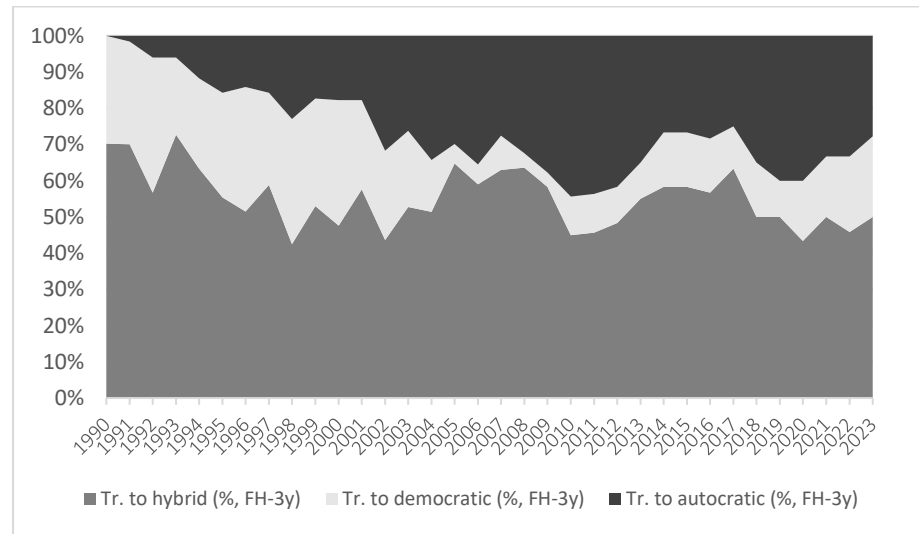


Figure A5

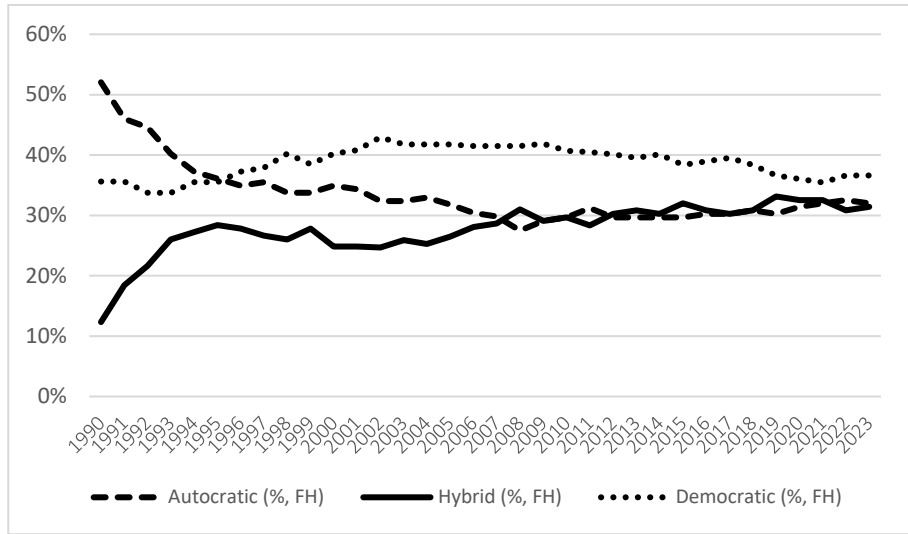


Figure A7

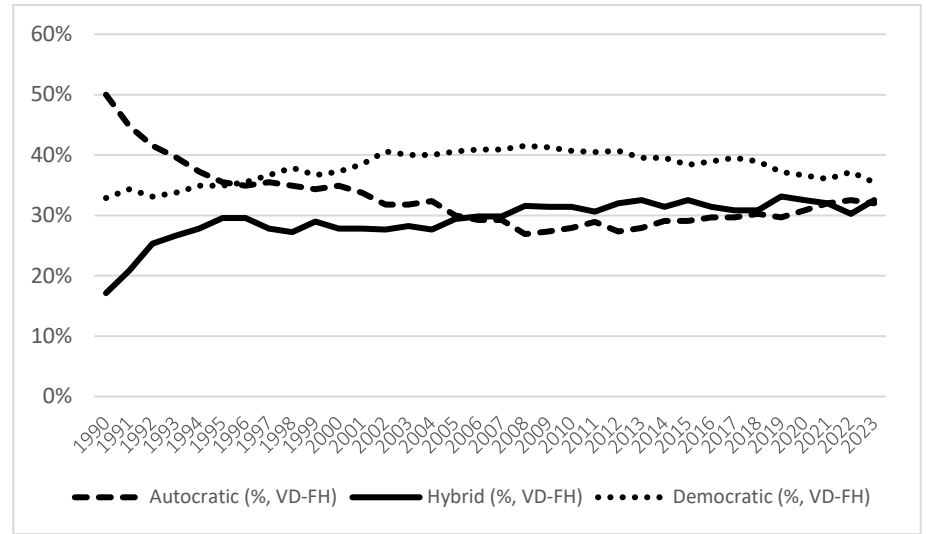


Figure A6

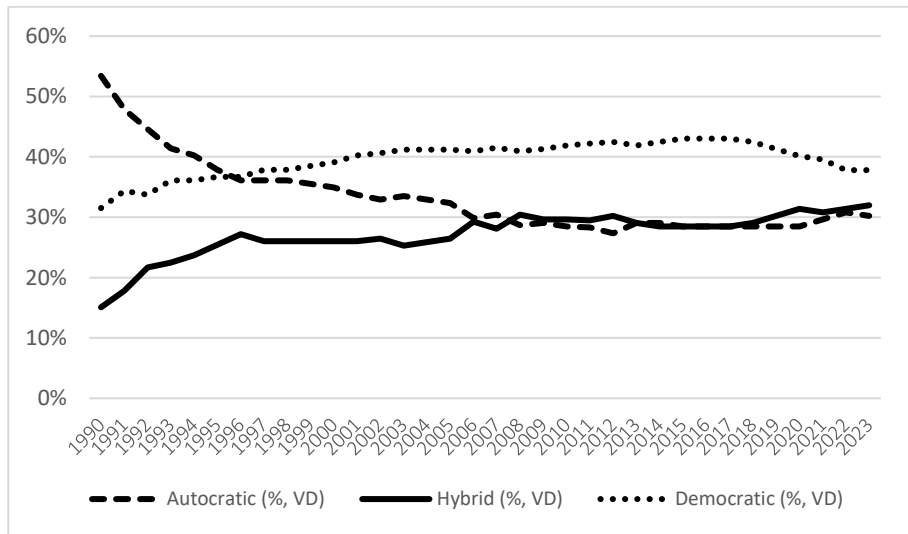


Figure A8

