

The Governance Report 2017

Looking at recent developments around the world, it seems that democratic values -- from freedom of association and speech to fair and free elections and a system of checks and balances -- have come under threat. Experts have, however, disproportionately focused on the problems of democracy in the West, and pointed to familiar sets of shortcomings and emerging deficiencies. By contrast, and with few exceptions, there is less attention to assessing the numerous efforts and innovative activities that are taking place at local, national and international levels. They seek to counteract backsliding and subversion by improving resilience and consolidation and by promoting the expansion of democracy, especially in an era of limited sovereignty and, frequently also, statehood. The Governance Report 2017 focuses on those policies, programs, and initiatives meant to address the causes of the current democratic malaise, to foster democratic resilience, and to stimulate the (re-)consolidation and development of democratic regimes. The Report's ambition, reflecting its evidence-based approach, is to shed light on how to manage and care for democracy itself. Specifically, against the backdrop of an assessment of the state of democracy and enriched by cross-national, comparative indicators and case studies, the Report emphasizes solutions geared toward enhancing citizen participation and improving institutions in various contexts, including the rise of neo-populism. Going beyond descriptions of best practices, the Report also examines their origins, identifies the actual and potential trade-offs these solutions entail, and makes concrete recommendations to policymakers.



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