



Self-rule index for local authorities in the EU, Council of Europe and OECD countries, 1990-2020”

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Abstract

Local autonomy is a highly valued feature of good governance. The continuous attempts of many countries to strengthen the autonomy of local government shows the importance given to decentralisation and reinforcing competences at the lowest level of a state. This project¹ is an extension and update of the “Self-rule index for local authorities in the EU, 1990-2014”, applying the comprehensive methodology to 57 countries over 30 years (1990-2020), including almost all EU, CoE and OECD member states. A network of experts on local government assessed the local autonomy of their respective countries based on a common code book, which has been updated to include more precise measures of local autonomy. We also collected supplementary data to better understand the determinants and implications of local autonomy. The eleven variables measured are located on seven dimensions and can be combined to a “Local Autonomy Index” (LAI). The data shows an increase of local autonomy between 1990 and 2020, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries. Countries with a high degree of local autonomy include the Nordic countries, Switzerland, France, Portugal and the USA.

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1. The mandate

The aim of the study was to follow up the comparative analyses of local autonomy, its developments over time, causes, and effects, in complete accordance with the European Commission's call for tender 2019CE16BAT176.

From October 2014 to November 2015, an initial project, entitled "Self-rule index for local authorities in the EU, 1990-2014" and procured by the European Commission through contract No 2014.CE.16.BAT.031, was carried out by the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP), University of Lausanne, Switzerland. The mandate aimed at creating a comprehensive measure of local autonomy for European countries covering the period from 1990 to 2014. The project analysed 39 European countries and reported changes between 1990 and 2014, and the eleven variables measured were located on seven dimensions and combined to a "Local Autonomy Index" (LAI).²

The aim of the present mandate, which we name "LAI 2.0", was to:

- update and refine the existing data, from 1990 up to 2020;
- increase the number of countries covered, by including the European Union (EU) Member States as well as those of the Council of Europe (CoE), and of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- include additional variables to measure possible effects of local autonomy and to assess multilevel governance.

As the methodology of the first study has proved to be relevant, valid and usable, we have re-conducted a similar organisation and have relied on the same coding scheme as in the LAI Release 1.0, with some adaptations.

The present project has been co-ordinated by Prof. Dr. Andreas Ladner from the Graduate Institute of Public Administration (IDHEAP) at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland (Leading House). It has been conducted by relying on a broad network of local government specialists, which makes such a demanding study possible and guarantees the quality of the deliverables.

The tender specifications of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG Regio) requested a final report in which the methodology and the main results were to be presented. This document is part of the deliverables requested and includes:

- An abstract and an executive summary;
- The adopted methodology and organisation of the project;
- The list of countries included in the study, country group coordinators and external experts;
- The LAI 2.0 finalised code book and supplementary data questions;
- The results organised by variables and by countries (2015-2020), the main trends (1990-2020) and supplementary analyses on the causes and effects of local autonomy;
- The country profiles and datasets (in Appendix).

² Ladner, A., Keuffer, N. and Baldersheim, H. (2015). Local Autonomy Index for European countries (1990-2014). Release 1.0. Brussels: European Commission. Released from: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/studies/2015/self-rule-index-for-local-authorities-release-1-0

2. Executive summary

This report presents the methodology, the data gathered and some first results of the project "Self-rule index for local authorities in the EU, Council of Europe and OECD countries, 1990-2020" (Tender 2019CE16BAT176). The aim of the present mandate, which is named "LAI 2.0", is to update and refine the existing data, from 1990 up to 2020, increase the number of countries covered, by including the European Union (UE) Member States as well as those of the Council of Europe (CoE), and of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and to include additional variables to measure possible effects of local autonomy and to assess multilevel governance.

The 57 countries covered are all 27 EU member states together with 44 CoE member states (missing are Azerbaijan, Monaco and San Marino) as well as 36 OECD member states (New Zealand is missing, as is Costa Rica who joined the OECD in May 2021 when the project was already ongoing). Additionally, Argentina, Belarus as well as Kosovo and South Africa have been included. The years covered are 1990 to 2020.

To accomplish the task, we brought together a team of researchers familiar with the situation in the respective countries. The experts were requested to code their countries on the basis of a coding scheme which was developed by the project leaders and the country group coordinators. The code book draws upon theoretical considerations, empirical studies as well as basic ideas of the European Charter of Local-Self-Government. The final results were reviewed by two external experts.

This report presents the data and first findings of the project. First, it presents the results for the eleven variables as well as simple additive measures of self-rule (SR), interactive rule (IR) and local autonomy (LA) for the years 2015-2020. These variables can be used for further research in their own right. Second, we reduce complexity measured by the eleven variables to seven dimensions of local autonomy and look at the overall developments of said dimensions and the LAI for all 57 countries across 30 years (1990-2020). Finally, we look at the determinants and implications of the LAI by observing correlations between the LAI and size and number of local governments, their affiliations to the EU, CoE and OECD, as well as grouping them according to their politico-administrative systems. We also examine the relationship between Local Autonomy Index and the Regional Authority Index and confront our index and the different dimensions with other indices of decentralisation.

When we look at the individual LAI scores per country, on the average level, there has not been much evolution in the past six years (2015-2020). The biggest increases are Portugal and Norway, whereas the biggest decreases are to be found in Austria and Poland. The Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland belong to the highest scoring group together with Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein. There is also a group of countries in which local autonomy is very low. The countries here are Cyprus, Malta, Israel, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Moldova.

Regarding the development over 30 years of all 57 covered countries, there has been a general and progressive increase across all dimensions. When looking at the development of the LAI itself, we can observe a higher increase in the first decade, gradually slowing down and stabilising towards 2020. Over thirty years, the LAI has increased around 7-8%, that is +7.92 for 39 countries and +6.77 for the total of 57 countries.

When considering population, size and number of local governments, we find no correlations between this data and the LAI. We do observe a difference in scores for the various dimensions and the LAI depending on the affiliation of countries to the EU, CoE and OECD. The former two groups show a stronger increase over time but the OECD member states as a group remain the highest scorers. Federalist countries do

not seem to have more autonomous municipalities. Compared to non-federalist countries they have a little bit more financial and organisational autonomy but less legal autonomy.

On the implication side, based on the supplementary data we collected, we see that local autonomy could have a positive impact on citizen's satisfaction with services and democracy as well as on their political trust. We also observe a correlation between local autonomy and the implication of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. There are also slight correlations of the LAI (N=39) with the RAI self-rule index. The LAI somewhat correlates with the part of local governments' own tax in percent of general government tax income but does not correlate quite as much with the percentage of non-central government spending, at least not at a significant level. Financial autonomy correlates with both of the fiscal decentralisation indicators we used, as was expected.

Although this LAI 2.0 projects led to these interesting results, some limits emphasised by the external control should be mentioned, concerning the units of analysis, the units of aggregation, the overall index and the coding process. Despite these remarks, which are interesting avenues to take into account to further improve the results in future releases, the external experts reached the conclusions that the methodology is solid, the comprehensive set of variables, indicators and dimensions are relevant to measure the local autonomy, and the results plausible. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of local autonomy proved to travel well beyond the European continent. Additionally, the detailed country reports (in Appendix) are an additional and strong value added to the codification process.

We hope that the local autonomy index, which now includes a large number of new countries on five continents and a development over thirty years, will be a springboard to academics and policy-makers for a more comprehensive and empirically based understanding of local autonomy and its development over time.

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3. Methodology

3.1 Project organisation and milestones

The Leading House of the project is the Graduate Institute of Public Administration (IDHEAP) at the University of Lausanne (Prof. Dr. Andreas Ladner, tenderer, Dr. Nicolas Keuffer and MA Alexander Bastianen). Administration and financial matters have been dealt with the financial service of the University of Lausanne. The same applies also to the coordination of the project, the compilation and the control of the data and the final report.

A workshop took place from January 30 to 31, 2020, at the IDHEAP in Lausanne with all country group coordinators, whose responsibility involves the coding of the countries in their respective groups. The participants were informed prior to the meeting about the issues to be discussed and received a first draft of the LAI 2.0 project objectives and coding scheme. Relying on the initial project (the European Commission study on "Self-rule Index for local authorities in the EU 1990-2014") organisation, we were able to assemble a team of leading scholars in the field.

The country group coordinators are:

- Prof. Harald Baldersheim, University of Oslo
- Prof. Pawel Swianiewicz, University of Warsaw
- Prof. Nikos Hlepas, University of Athens
- Prof. Kristof Steyvers, Ghent University
- Prof. Carmen Navarro, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
- Prof. Sabine Kuhlmann, Potsdam University
- Prof. Andreas Ladner, Université de Lausanne

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country group coordinators were contacted late September 2020 online, in order to start contacting country experts. Thanks to their their knowledge of the local context, the country experts were entitled to carry out the coding of their respective country.³

On November 6, 2020, a kick-off meeting was organised with the DG Regio staff. The decisions related to the project and the modifications of the code book that were

³ List of country experts by country : 1. Albania: Orsiola Kurti; 2. Austria: Franz Fallend and Armin Mühlböck; 3. Belgium: Kristof Steyvers; 4. Bulgaria: Desislava Kalcheva; 5. Croatia: Mihovil Skarica; 6. Cyprus: Andreas Kirlappos; 7. Czech Republic: Jakyb Lysek; 8. Denmark: Kurt Houlberg; 9. Estonia: Georg Sottla; 10. Finland: Pekka Kettunen; 11. France: William Gilles; 12. Georgia: Natia Daghelishvili; 13. Germany: Angelika Vetter; 14. Greece: Nikos Hlepas; 15. Hungary: Gábor Dobos; 16. Iceland: Eva Hlynsdottir; 17. Ireland: Gerard Turley; 18. Italy: Annick Magnier; 19. Latvia: Iveta Reinholde; 20. Liechtenstein: Andreas Ladner; 21. Lithuania: Jurga Bucaite-Vilke; 22. Luxembourg: Raphaël Kies and Dan Schmidt; 23. Macedonia: Veli Kreci; 24. Malta: Natalino Caruana de Brincat; 25. Moldova: Alexandru Osadci; 26. Netherlands: Bas Denters; 27. Norway: Harald Baldersheim; 28. Poland: Pawel Swianiewicz; 29. Portugal: Miguel Angelo Rodriguez; 30. Romania: Cristina Stanus; 31. Serbia: Dusan Vasiljevic; 32. Slovak Republic: Jan Bucek; 33. Slovenia: Irena Baclija; 34. Spain: Carmen Navarro; 35. Sweden: Anders Lidström; 36. Switzerland: Andreas Ladner and Nicolas Keuffer; 37. Turkey: Ali Cenap Yologlu; 38. Ukraine: Markiyan Dacyshyn; 39. United Kingdom: Michael Goldsmith; 40. Andorra: Lluís Medir; 41. Argentina: Daniel Cravacuore; 42. Armenia: Arpi Sargsyan; 43. Australia: Roberta Ryan; 44. Belarus: Dmitry Sokol; 45. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Zdravko Miovcic and Marijana Galic; 46. Canada: Zack Taylor and Martin Horak; 47. Chile: Daniel Cravacuore; 48. Colombia: Pablo Sanabria; 49. Israel: Eran Razin; 50. Japan: Masao Kikuchi; 51. Kosovo: Memet Memeti; 52. Mexico: Ady Patricia Carrera; 53. Montenegro: Ana Đurnić; 54. Republic of Korea: Kwang-Hoon Lee; 55. Russian Federation: Emil Markwart und Alexander Larichev; 56. South Africa: Tinashe Chigwata; 57. United States of America: Harold L. Wolman and Jamie Boex.

discussed during the kick-off meeting have been sent out for revision and confirmation to all participants.

Furthermore, following milestones and schedule have been agreed and followed:

- End of November 2020: Comments on meeting report, code book and list of country experts were sent back to the project coordinator;
- End of December 2020: Inception report was sent to the European Commission's DG Regio staff;
- End of January 2021: An online training session was organised by the Leading House with all the country group coordinators and country experts involved in order to present the project, its objectives and the expected deliverables and deadlines as well as to answer the questions about the coding scheme;
- April 2021: The country group coordinators have controlled the country profiles and the excel-sheets with their coding for the countries that were already part of the LAI 1.0 project (2015-2020 update) and CoE member states;
- Mai 2021: Preliminary results on the 27 EU Member States were sent to DG Regio to be included in the 8th Cohesion Report;
- July 2021: The country group coordinators have controlled their country profiles and the excel-sheets with their coding for the remaining countries (i.e. OECD member states);
- September 2021: A conference call was done with DG Regio staff to organise the delivery of the final results on the 27 EU Member States and the last steps of the project;
- September 2021: A meeting with DG Regio on the state of play was organised;
- October 2021: The external control was conducted;
- End of December 2021: The final report was sent and the findings presented to Regio staff.

3.2 Terminology, units of analysis and units of aggregation

Terminology

As in the initial project, we decided to use the term "local autonomy" for the overall indicator. By doing so we follow Lidström (1998: 110f.)⁴ who distinguishes local government from other organisations through 4 criteria: a local government unit has a clearly defined territory, executes a certain amount of self-government, has authoritative power over its citizens and has directly elected decision-makers and/or municipal assemblies.

Local autonomy combines self-rule and interactive rule elements. The combination of self-rule and interactive rule can alternatively also be denoted local authority. We do not distinguish between local autonomy and local authority.

Units of analysis

Although there might be different levels/organisations of local government in some countries, we only looked at one of them to measure autonomy, in general the lowest

⁴ Lidström, A. (1998). The comparative study of local government systems – a research agenda, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 1(1), 97-115.

and the most important one where self-government is most effective, overlapping is to be avoided. The units we took into account were, furthermore, supposed to cover the whole territory of a country. Exotic exceptions of minor importance were left aside.

In some newly covered countries we had to discuss with the country experts and country group coordinators to decide which unit is taken into account.

Units of aggregation

The coding of the different dimensions measured were aggregated according to the following rules:

In a unitary country where all municipalities have the same degree of autonomy the unit of aggregation is the country.

In unitary countries with asymmetric arrangements there will be different units of aggregation (for example: "municipalities in general" and "cities with special competences").

In federal countries where all municipalities have the same degree of autonomy, the unit of aggregation will be the country.

In federal countries where the degree of autonomy varies from one subunit to another, the unit of aggregation will be the subunits (Länder, cantons).⁵

3.3 Selection of countries, organisation of data collection and quality control

Selection of countries

The initial LAI 1.0 project conducted by the IDHEAP of the University of Lausanne covered 39 countries: 28 EU member states together with the four European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). Additionally, Albania, Macedonia, Moldova, Georgia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine have been included. All of these countries have ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government as it is the case of the 47 countries members of the CoE.⁶ In the first release of the project, 8 countries members of the CoE were left aside (Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Montenegro, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russian Federation). In order to be systematic in the inclusion of the CoE Member states, the LAI 2.0 project was aimed at also covering these countries for the timespan 1990-2020.

After the initial project, the IDHEAP had fruitful collaborations with the Unit on Decentralisation, public investment and subnational finance of the OECD.⁷ An extension of the LAI to all the OECD members was considerate relevant. In the first database, 27 out of 36 OECD country members were covered. Missing were the Non-

⁵ Due to the complexity and scale of the coding of local autonomy in the USA (11 variables x 31 years x 50 states), a more quantitative approach was followed in order to integrate as many states as possible. However, this approach did not allow data to be collected for all states for all variables for all years.

⁶ Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 122, status as of 15/05/2020, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/122.htm>

⁷ The OECD organised together with the European Commission a workshop in 2018 focusing on the trends, challenges and implications of decentralisation and centralisation. This seminar was an opportunity to discuss the complementary of OECD fiscal decentralisation dataset and institutional databases (the Regional Authority Index and the Local Autonomy Index).

European states: Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, United States of America. As these countries are important in the global economy and have in general accessible databases, the LAI 2.0 project was aimed at also covering them.

The final database includes 57 countries, from 1990 to 2020, i.e. almost all the member States of the EU (27), of the CoE (47) and of the OECD (37). However, the inclusion of Azerbaijan has been an impossible endeavour given recent political issues. Monaco, San Marino and New Zealand have also been left aside. Instead, some interesting countries have been added during the process: Kosovo, Belarus as well as Argentina and South Africa (see Table 3.1).

Some countries are concerned with a time-related update from 2015-2020 (the 39 European countries already included in the initial project) whereas the coding of others covered the entire time span (1990-2020).

Table 3.1: Organisation of data collection, years covered, and units of aggregation/analysis (by CGC)

Country Group Coordinator (CGC)	Regional area	Years covered by the LAI 2.0	Country name and ID	Membership	Units of aggregation	Units of analysis
Prof. Harald Baldersheim, University of Oslo	5 Nordic countries	2015-2020	8. Denmark	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Kommuner)
			10. Finland	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Kunta)
			16. Iceland	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Sveitarfélag)
			27. Norway	CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Kommune)
			35. Sweden	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Kommuner)
Prof. Nikolaos Hlepas, University of Athens	4 Southern countries	2015-2020	6. Cyprus	UE, CoE	Country level	Communities (Koinotites) Municipalities (Dimoi)
			14. Greece	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Dimos)
			24. Malta	UE, CoE	Country level	Local Councils (Kunsill Lokali)
			37. Turkey	CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Belediye) Metropolitan cities Special Provincial Administrations
	2 Other countries	1990-2020	49. Israel	OECD	Country level	Municipalities
			55. Russian Federation	CoE	Country level	Settlements Urban obrags Federal cities
Prof. Carmen Navarro University of Madrid	4 Western countries (Iberian countries)	2015-2020	18. Italy	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Comuni)
			34. Spain	UE, CoE, OEC	Country level	Municipalities below/above 20000 inhabitants (Municipios)
			29. Portugal	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Municípios)
	4 Latin American countries	1990-2020	40. Andorra	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Paroisses)
		1990-2020	41. Argentina		Federal (23 Provincias)	Municipalities (Municipio)
		1990-2020	47. Chile	OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Municipio)
		1990-2020	48. Colombia	OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Municipio)
Prof. Kristof Steyvers, Ghent University	3 Western countries (Benelux countries)	2015-2020	3. Belgium	UE, CoE, OECD	Federal (3 Regions, Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia)	Municipalities (Gemeenten or Communes)
		2015-2020	26. Netherlands	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Gemeenten)
		2015-2020	22. Luxembourg	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Commune, Gemeng, Gemeinde)
	1 Oceanian country	1990-2020	43. Australia	OECD	Federal (6 states)	Municipalities
Prof. Andreas Ladner, University of Lausanne	4 Western countries (Middle countries)	2015-2020	36. Switzerland	CoE, OECD	Federal (26 cantons)	Municipalities (Gemeinden, Communes, Comune)
			20. Liechtenstein	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Gemeinden)
			39. United Kingdom	CoE, OECD	England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland	Local authorities

			17. Ireland	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities
	1 Other country	1990-2020	56. South Africa		Federal (9 provinces)	Municipalities
Prof. Pawel Swianiewicz, University of Warsaw	3 Baltic countries	2015-2020	9. Estonia	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Parishes and Urban municipalities)
		2015-2020	19. Latvia	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Novads)
		2015-2020	21. Lithuania	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Savivaldybė)
	5 Eastern Countries	2015-2020	7. Czech Republic	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Obec)
		2015-2020	28. Poland	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Gminy) Cities (Powiat)
		2015-2020	32. Slovakia	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Ocbe)
		2015-2020	33. Slovenia	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Občina) Cities (Mestna občina)
		2015-2020	15. Hungary	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (Települések)
		2015-2020	30. Romania	UE, CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Comune)
	5 Balkan countries	2015-2020	4. Bulgaria	UE, CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Obshtina)
		2015-2020	5. Croatia	UE, CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Općina) Cities (Grad)
		2015-2020	31. Serbia	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Opštine) Cities (Gradovi) Belgrade City
		1990-2020	45. Bosnia and Herzegovina	CoE	3 subjects (Republika Srpska, District Brcko and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which includes 10 cantons)	Municipalities (opština)
	9 Additional Eastern European countries	2015-2020	1. Albania	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Bashkia)
			25. Moldova	CoE	Country level	Districts (Raion)
			12. Georgia	CoE	Country level	64 Municipalities (Minucipaliteti)
			38. Ukraine	CoE	Country level	Villages (Sela) Towns (Selyshcha) Amalgamated Hromadas Cities (Mista)
		1990-2020	53. Montenegro	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Opština)
			23. North Macedonia	CoE	Country level	Municipalities (Opštini)
			42. Armenia	CoE	Country level	Communities (hamaynk) Yerevan capital
			44. Belarus		Country level	Municipalities (Raion) Cities (Oblast)
			51. Kosovo		Country level	Municipalities (Komuna, Opština)

Prof. Sabine Kuhlmann, University of Potsdam	3 Central European countries	2015-2020	6. Austria	UE, CoE, OECD	Federal (9 Länder)	Municipalities (Gemeinden)
			23. Germany	UE, CoE, OECD	Federal (16 Länder)	Municipalities (Gemeinden) Cities (Städte)
			21. France	UE, CoE, OECD	Country level	Municipalities (communes) Cities (Paris, Marseille, Lyon)
Dr. Nicolas Keuffer, University of Lausanne	2 North American countries	1990-2020	12. Canada	OECD	Federal (10 provinces and 3 territories)	Municipalities
			61. United States of America	OECD	Federal (50 states)	Local governments
Alexander Bastianen, University of Lausanne	2 East Asian countries	1990-2020	30. Japan	OECD	Country level	Towns/villages (Chō/Mura) Cities (Shi)
			47. Republic of Korea	OECD	Country level	Municipalities
Total	57 countries	1990-2020	6 continents	UE, CoE, OECD		

Supplementary data on the local level to assess the causes and effects of local autonomy

The present project represented a good opportunity to rely on country experts to have access to supplementary data on the local level. Subsequently, additional questions were asked to the country experts to collect primary data on the quality of democracy and on the performance of service delivery.

Country experts were requested to provide information on local government size and number (i.e., 1990-2020 but for the majority of the countries this only represented an update for the last 6 years). Concerning the effects of local autonomy, the country experts were asked to give their general impressions of the importance of local self-government in their country and whether local governments provide services satisfactorily (see chapter 4.2).

In regards to the assessment of multi-level governance, the updated RAI and fiscal decentralisation data have been combined with the data collected on the local level to highlight various patterns of multi-level governance.

Quality Control

As in the initial project, the coding of the countries have been controlled internally while compiling the data using existing data sets on fiscal decentralisation, local government expenditures and local government employees. On the basis of our knowledge about local government, the consistency of the coding have been checked in three steps:

- i. For each country (are there variables where the value coded does not fit into the overall pattern of the country?);
- ii. Within country groups (are there countries with a coding on special variables which do not fit into the overall pattern of the country group?);
- iii. For all countries compared (which are the outliers for each variable and for the total value?).

As for the external control, the country profiles, the coding of the different variables and a draft of the first results have been sent to the following international experts: Prof. Dr. Anders Lidström (Umeå University, Sweden) and Isabelle Chatry of the Unit on Decentralisation, public investment and subnational finance at the OECD. They stated to what extent they agree on the coding and explained their disagreement.

4. Operationalisation of local autonomy and coding scheme

The initial LAI 1.0 project suggested a comprehensive methodology to measure local autonomy. The coding scheme relied on the different aspects highlighted in the existing literature and in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of the Local Autonomy Index followed, where applicable, the methodology of the Regional Authority Index (RAI).⁸ Some adaptations, however, had to be made to capture the specific characteristics of local government: more variables had to be added, some revisions of variables had to be made in order to meet the realities on the local level in the respective countries, and the idea of “shared-rule”, difficult to apply to local government, was substituted by “interactive rule”. Consequently, a code book of 11 variables was created, which enables the measure of local autonomy to go beyond recording the share of funds managed by local authorities and also capture to what extent local authorities had a say in how these funds are spent.

The value of the results and of the data gathered within this fruitful collaborative research conducted across Europe was recognised by both practitioners and academic scholars. Regarding the practitioners, the OECD report on multi-level governance, for example, is partially based on the RAI and the LAI to emphasise 10 recommendations for policy-makers to make decentralisation work.⁹

Regarding the academic field, several examples show that the project has also been well received. After assessing 25 different decentralisation indexes through a large number of criteria, Harguindéguy et al. (2021) conclude for instance that “In terms of the robust character of their design, and their overall capacity for operationalization, the RAI and the LAI rankings are our favourite indexes. Both provide a clear definition of the concept of decentralisation, their sub-state units of analysis allow aggregating and disaggregating data, their coverage is balanced, their analyses rely on a broad range of items, their systems of scoring and results comply with the principle of validity and their methodology and datasets are available on the web”.¹⁰ Both the raw and weighted local autonomy indexes have been used by many academic scholars to test the effects of local autonomy on local democracy/efficiency, to develop typologies of local government systems, or to serve as a conceptual model to assess local autonomy at subnational levels.¹¹

Subsequently, a similar conceptualisation of local autonomy and coding scheme have been employed in the present project. However, discussions with country group coordinators resulted in a number of slight improvements of the coding scheme (underlined in the table below). These changes made it possible to collect more detailed information about several aspects of local autonomy, while guaranteeing the comparability of the results with the initial ones.¹²

⁸ Hooghe, L., Marks, G. and Schakel, A. H. (2010). *The Rise of Regional Authority: A Comparative Study of 42 Democracies (1950-2006)*. London: Routledge.

⁹ OECD (2019). *Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

¹⁰ Harguindéguy, J-B. P., Cole, A. and Pasquier, R. (2021). The variety of decentralization indexes: A review of the literature, *Regional & Federal Studies*, 31(2), 185-208.

¹¹ Ladner, A., Keuffer, N., Baldersheim, B., Hlepas, N., Swianiewicz, P., Steyvers, K. and Navarro, C. (2019). *Patterns of Local Autonomy in Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹² In order to have comparable results from 1990 to 2020, we adapted the LAI 1.0 coding to the information gathered in the 2.0 project.

4.1 Local Autonomy Index 2.0 and Coding Scheme

General Coding Instructions

Start with the most recent year (2020) and work backward. Find out whether there have been reforms which change the score. If there are no written sources available you may have to get in contact with officials or colleagues. Please, state when the score stems from such sources.

Half-scores are not permitted. Exceptions: policy scope and effective political discretion (please see coding instructions by fields of services below), organisational autonomy, and legal protection.

Self-rule

Institutional depth	<i>The extent to which local government is formally autonomous and can choose the tasks they want to perform</i> Additional coding instructions: The coding has to comply with the legal framework in the respective countries. This means that the coding refers to the status of local government according to the constitution and other relevant legislation. Whether a municipality is responsible for the different tasks and/or has the financial resources is not the question here. If there are deeply contradictory regulations, this should be reflected in the coding and also mentioned in the notes.	0-3	0 local authorities can only perform mandated tasks 1 local authorities can choose from a very narrow, predefined scope of tasks <u>2 local authorities can choose from a wide scope of predefined tasks</u> 3 local authorities are free to take on any new tasks (residual competencies) not assigned to other levels of government																		
Policy scope	<i>Range of functions (tasks) where local government <u>assumes responsibility for the delivery of the services (whether it is provided by municipal personnel or through other arrangements)</u></i> Additional coding instructions: Here we want to know whether local government <u>assumes responsibility for the delivery of these tasks and services</u>. How much they can decide is part of the next question. Half points can be used if local government is only partly involved (<i>i.e.</i> coding instructions by fields of services below).	0-4	Not at all, partly, or fully responsible for: <table><tr><td>Education</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td><td>Social assistance</td><td>(0-3)</td><td>Health</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td></tr><tr><td>Land use</td><td>(0-2)</td><td>Public transport</td><td>(0-1)</td><td>Housing</td><td>(0-1)</td></tr><tr><td>Police</td><td>(0-1)</td><td>Caring functions</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Education	<u>(0-3)</u>	Social assistance	(0-3)	Health	<u>(0-3)</u>	Land use	(0-2)	Public transport	(0-1)	Housing	(0-1)	Police	(0-1)	Caring functions	<u>(0-3)</u>		
Education	<u>(0-3)</u>	Social assistance	(0-3)	Health	<u>(0-3)</u>																
Land use	(0-2)	Public transport	(0-1)	Housing	(0-1)																
Police	(0-1)	Caring functions	<u>(0-3)</u>																		
Effective political discretion	<i>The extent to which local government <u>can make final decisions over these functions</u></i> Additional coding instructions: Here we want to know whether <u>municipal decision-makers are required by law to consult with, seek the permission, consent or cooperation of regional and national agencies before final decisions can be made or not</u>. Half points can be used if local government can only partly decide (<i>i.e.</i> coding instructions by fields of services below).	0-4	No, some, or real authoritative decision-making in: <table><tr><td>Education</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td><td>Social assistance</td><td>(0-3)</td><td>Health</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td></tr><tr><td>Land use</td><td>(0-2)</td><td>Public transport</td><td>(0-1)</td><td>Housing</td><td>(0-1)</td></tr><tr><td>Police</td><td>(0-1)</td><td>Caring functions</td><td><u>(0-3)</u></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Education	<u>(0-3)</u>	Social assistance	(0-3)	Health	<u>(0-3)</u>	Land use	(0-2)	Public transport	(0-1)	Housing	(0-1)	Police	(0-1)	Caring functions	<u>(0-3)</u>		
Education	<u>(0-3)</u>	Social assistance	(0-3)	Health	<u>(0-3)</u>																
Land use	(0-2)	Public transport	(0-1)	Housing	(0-1)																
Police	(0-1)	Caring functions	<u>(0-3)</u>																		

Fiscal autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government can independently tax its population</i> Additional coding instructions: For this dimension the level of contribution of the tax for local authorities (how much the tax actually yields) has to be clarified in the explanations.	0-4	0 local authorities do not set base and rate of any tax 1 local authorities set base or rate of minor taxes 2 local authorities set rate of one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax) under restrictions stipulated by higher levels of government 3 local authorities set rate of one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax) with few or no restrictions 4 local authorities set base and rate of more than one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax)
Financial transfer system	<i>The proportion of unconditional financial transfers to total financial transfers received by the local government</i>	0-3	0 conditional transfers are dominant (unconditional = 0-40% of total transfers) 1 there is largely a balance between conditional and unconditional financial transfers (unconditional = 40-60%) 2 unconditional financial transfers are dominant (unconditional = 60-80%) 3 nearly all transfers are unconditional (unconditional = 80-100%)
Financial self-reliance	<i>The proportion of local government revenues derived from own/local sources (i.e. taxes, fees, charges over which local government has influence)</i> Additional coding instructions: A shared tax collected by central government and over which local government has no influence individually (cannot e.g. set base or rate), has to be regarded as financial transfer. Please, make a note in your country report if this is the case.	0-3	0 own sources yield less than 10% of total revenues 1 own sources yield 10-25% 2 own sources yield 25-50% 3 own sources yield more than 50%
Borrowing autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government can borrow</i> Additional coding instructions: When borrowing under restrictions applies (code 1 or 2), please make a note in your country report as to which restriction(s) apply: a. golden rule (e. g. no borrowing to cover current account deficits) b. no foreign borrowing or borrowing from the regional or central bank only c. no borrowing above a ceiling, absolute level of subnational indebtedness, maximum debt-service ratio for new borrowing or debt brake mechanism d. borrowing is limited to specific purposes	0-3	0 local authorities cannot borrow 1 local authorities may borrow under prior authorisation by higher-level governments <u>and with borrowing restrictions imposed by higher-level authorities</u> 2 local authorities may borrow without prior authorisation <u>but with restrictions imposed by higher-level authorities</u> 3 local authorities may borrow <u>without authorisation or restriction</u> imposed by higher-level authorities
Organisational autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government is free to decide about</i>	0-4	Local executives and election system (0-2): <u>(0-1) local executives are elected by the municipal</u>

	<i>its own organisation and electoral system</i> Additional coding instructions: If the status of staff (e.g. possibility to hire contract workers) is largely determined by national norms a maximum score of 0.25 is obtainable.		<u>council or directly by citizens</u> <u>(0-1) local government can decide core elements of the political system (electoral districts, number of seats, electoral system)</u> Staff and local structures (0-2): Local authorities: Hire their own staff (0-0.5) Fix the salary of their employees (0-0.5) <u>Choose their organisational structure and status of staff (0-0.5)</u> Establish legal entities and municipal enterprises (0-0.5)
Self-rule		0-28	The overall self-rule enjoyed by local government in X country (the sum of all the indicators above)
Interactive rule			
Legal protection	<i>Existence of constitutional or legal means to assert local autonomy</i>	0-3	<u>(0-1) constitutional clauses or other statutory regulations protect local self-government</u> <u>(0-1) local authorities have recourse to the judicial system through constitutional courts to settle disputes with higher authorities</u> <u>(0-1) local authorities have recourse to the judicial system through administrative courts or ordinary courts to settle disputes with higher authorities or other means that protect local autonomy exist (e.g. listing of all municipalities in the constitution or the impossibility to force them to merge)</u>
Administrative supervision	<i>The extent to which administrative supervision of local government is (un)obtrusive</i>	0-3	0 administrative supervision reviews legality as well as merits/expediency of municipal decisions 1 administrative supervision covers details of accounts and spending priorities 2 administrative supervision only aims at ensuring compliance with law (legality of local decisions) 3 there is very limited administrative supervision (<u>e.g. the higher authorities cannot suspend a decision</u>)
Central or regional access	<i>The extent to which local authorities have channels to influence higher level governments' policy-making</i> Additional coding instructions: Please clarify the channels and assess the extent of influence exercised upon the higher level.	0-3	<u>(0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through formal consultation procedures and mechanisms</u> <u>(0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through formal representation structures</u> <u>(0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through more informal channels (e.g. through trade unions that try to set the legislative agenda, party political networks, dual mandate holding, etc.)</u>
Interactive rule		0-9	The overall interactive rule enjoyed by local government in X country (the sum of all the three indicators above)
LA		0-37	The combined autonomy of local authorities (the sum of all indicators)

Additional coding instructions by fields of services

Policy scope (0-4)

Range of functions (tasks) where local government assumes responsibility for the delivery of the services (whether it is provided by municipal personnel or through other arrangements)

You can use half of the points if local government assumes only a part of the responsibility – 0.5 in Land use and 0.25 in Education, Social assistance, Health, Public transport, Caring functions and Police.

Fields	Services	Codes
Education (0-3)	Pre-school (age 1-6)	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the delivery of services + 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Primary school (age 6-15)	
	Secondary school (age 15-18)	
Social assistance (0-3)	Economic assistance (distress relief)	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full for the organisation and/or delivery of services +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Work training/rehabilitation	
	Integration of refugees	
Health (0-3)	Primary health	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the delivery of services +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Hospitals	
	Dental services	
Land use (0-2)	Building permits	+ 1 point if local government assumes full responsibility for administering building permits
	Zoning	+ 1 point if local government assumes full responsibility for administering zoning
Public transport (0-1)	Bus transport services	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for bus transport services
	Railway transport services	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for railway transport services
Housing (0-1)	Housing and town development	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for housing and town development
	Social housing	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for social housing
Police (0-1)	Public Order	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for public order
	Traffic police	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for traffic police
Caring functions (0-3)	General caring services	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the availability of the service +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Services for special groups	
	Child protection	

Effective political discretion (0-4)

The extent to which local government can make final decisions over these functions

Fields	Services	Codes
Education (0-3)	Pre-school (age 1-6)	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Primary school (age 6-15)	
	Secondary school (age 15-18)	
Social assistance (0-3)	Economic assistance (distress relief)	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Work training/rehabilitation	
	Integration of refugees	
Health (0-3)	Primary health	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Hospitals	
	Dental services	
Land use (0-2)	Building permits	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Zoning	
Public transport (0-1)	Bus transport services	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Railway transport services	
Housing (0-1)	Housing and town development	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Social housing	
Police (0-1)	Public Order	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Traffic police	
Caring functions (0-3)	General caring services	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Services for special groups	
	Child protection	

4.2 Supplementary data

The number of local governments and the population were collected (for each covered year) through the coding sheets (see Appendix A). Additionally, in order to comply with the objective to collect supplementary data on potential causal mechanisms and effects of local autonomy, we added series of questions to be answered by the country experts in their respective country profile reports.

Here below are the coding instructions for the supplementary data that we sent out to all the country experts at the end of the country profile template documents:

Country profile: Additional questions (2020 only)

With these additional questions on the potential causal mechanisms and effects of local autonomy, we want to collect a current perception. More concretely, it means that it would be great if you could give us your answers to these questions directly here (i.e. no coding sheet), without considering any possible asymmetries in your country (i.e. national level only) or any changes over time (i.e. 2020 only). Any interesting (legal) indication may be also mentioned/added.

To better understand how an external shock may cause a change in local autonomy in a given country, a question is asked about the implication of Covid-19 pandemic.

The effects of local autonomy concern the satisfaction with local government service delivery, the importance of local government for citizens, the satisfaction with local democracy, the turnout at local elections and the trustworthiness of local politicians.

Implication of Covid-19 Pandemic

Implication of Covid-19 pandemic	<i>The extent to which the autonomy of local government has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic</i>	0-3	0 local government autonomy has generally decreased with the Covid-19 pandemic 1 local government autonomy has not been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic 2 local government autonomy in health has increased with the Covid-19 pandemic 3 local government autonomy in health and in other fields related to the Covid-19 pandemic has increased
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Satisfaction with local government service delivery

Satisfaction with local government service delivery	<i>The extent to which the citizens are satisfied with local government service delivery</i>	0-3	0 citizens are generally not satisfied at all with local government service delivery 1 citizens are generally moderately satisfied with local government service delivery 2 citizens are generally mostly satisfied with local government service delivery 3 citizens are generally entirely satisfied with local government service delivery
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Importance of local government for citizens

Importance of local government	<i>The extent to which local government has an important role in the daily life of citizens</i>	0-3	0 local government is not important at all in the daily life of citizens 1 local government is somewhat important in the daily life of citizens
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	2 local government is important in the daily life of citizens
	3 local government is very important in the daily life of citizens

Satisfaction with local democracy

Satisfaction with local democracy	<i>The extent to which the citizens are satisfied with local democracy</i>	0-4	0 citizens are not at all satisfied with local democracy 1 citizens are rather not satisfied with local democracy 2 citizens are neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with local democracy 3 citizens are rather satisfied with local democracy 4 citizens are entirely satisfied with local democracy
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Turnout at local elections

Turnout at local elections	<i>Electoral turnout at local elections (approximately, last general elections)</i>	0-4	0 no elections 1 between 1 and 25 % 2 between 26 and 50 % 3 between 51 and 75 % 4 between 76 and 100 %
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Electoral participation on local level compared to electoral participation on national level	<i>The extent to which electoral participation on local level is higher than on national level</i>	0-2	0 electoral participation on local level is generally lower than electoral participation on national level 1 electoral participation on local and on national level are very much the same 2 electoral participation on local level is generally higher than electoral participation on national level
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Trustworthiness of local politicians

Perception of trustworthiness of local politicians	<i>The extent to which local politicians are trustworthy</i>	0-4	0 local politicians are not at all trustworthy 1 local politicians are rather not trustworthy 2 local politicians are moderately trustworthy 3 local politicians are rather trustworthy 4 local politicians are very much trustworthy
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Perception of trustworthiness of local politicians compared to national politicians	<i>Whether local politicians are more trustworthy than national politicians</i>	0-2	0 local level politicians are generally less trustworthy than national politicians 1 local and national politicians are similar in terms of trustworthiness 2 local level politicians are generally more trustworthy than national politicians
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5. Presentation of the results

In the first part of this chapter, we present the results for the different variables or components of local autonomy. We distinguish between variables measuring the capacity of local government to organise themselves and to execute tasks or provide services independently (self-rule) and variables which relate to the vertical dimension and look at the relation of local government with higher state levels (interactive rule).

The timespan of the index covers 30 years from 1990 to 2020. In ten countries, Latvia (1991), Ukraine (1991), Albania (1992), Romania (1992), Andorra (1993), Malta (1993), South Africa (1994), Armenia (1996), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996) and Kosovo (2000), the series start a few years later.

In this report we concentrate on country level results. Subnational variations due to federalism or asymmetric solutions within countries are not presented.

5.1 The variables of local autonomy: country level results

5.1.1 Self-rule (SR)

Local self-rule is measured with eight different variables. Two of them (policy scope and effective political discretion) contain 8 components each. In the following section we present for each of the eight variables the descriptive statistics, the mean scores for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. We also present the values per country and the mean values over these six years.¹³ This allows for presenting the overall picture for each variable as well as the development of each country compared to other countries.

Institutional depth (ID)

Institutional depth looks at the formal autonomy (cf. the “Constitutional and legal foundation for local self-government” according to art. 2 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government) and, more concretely, at the extent local authorities can choose the tasks they want to perform. The variable ranges between “local authorities can only perform mandated tasks” and local authorities with “residual competences”, which means that they are free to take on any new tasks not assigned to higher levels. This variable thus contrasts municipalities which are mere agents of execution and municipalities with residual competences. It touches upon the legal framework and where practicable the constitutional foundation of local government.

¹³ For the justifications of the scores of the different countries and substantial changes over time refer to the country profiles submitted with this report.

The coding instructions were as follows:

Institutional depth	<i>The extent to which local government is formally autonomous and can choose the tasks they want to perform</i> Additional coding instructions: Whether a municipality is responsible for, the different tasks and/or has the financial resources is not the question here. Indeed, the coding has to comply with the legal framework in the respective countries. This means that the coding refers to the status of local government according to the constitution and other relevant legislation; if there are deeply contradictory regulations, this should be reflected in the coding and also mentioned in the notes.	0-3	0 local authorities can only perform mandated tasks 1 local authorities can choose from a very narrow, predefined scope of tasks 2 local authorities can choose from a wide scope of predefined tasks 3 local authorities are free to take on any new tasks (residual competencies) not assigned to other levels of government
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Taken altogether, the value for institutional depth is quite high with overall means slightly increasing from 2.22 to 2.25 and the range of scores can be observed all across the entire scale from 0 to 3 (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

When standardised and ranked, one can observe a high number (N=26) of maximum scores, among which Colombia figures as the only non-European country. Only two countries report a score of 0 for institutional depth, those being the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation (see Figure 5.1).

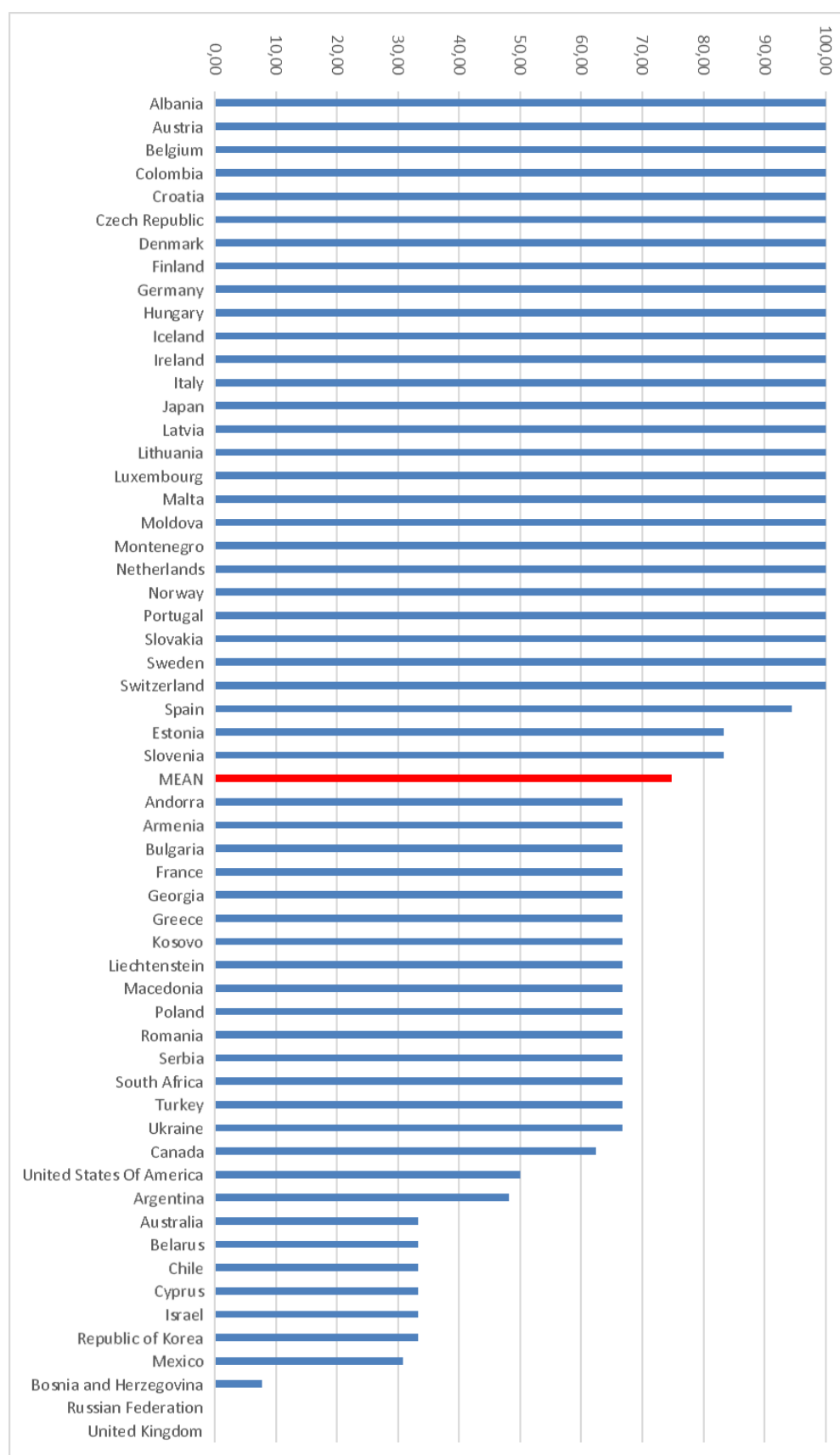
Table 5.1: Institutional depth, descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Institutionaldepth_2015	57	0,00	3,00	2,22	0,88
Institutionaldepth_2016	57	0,00	3,00	2,24	0,89
Institutionaldepth_2017	57	0,00	3,00	2,25	0,87
Institutionaldepth_2018	57	0,00	3,00	2,25	0,87
Institutionaldepth_2019	57	0,00	3,00	2,25	0,87
Institutionaldepth_2020	57	0,00	3,00	2,25	0,87
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Table 5.2: Institutional depth, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	mean (2015-2020)
Albania	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Andorra	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Argentina	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,45
Armenia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Australia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Austria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,00	0,00	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,23
Bulgaria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Canada	1,70	1,70	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,87
Chile	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Colombia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Croatia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Cyprus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Czech Republic	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Denmark	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Estonia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Georgia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Germany	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Greece	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Hungary	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Iceland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Ireland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Israel	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Italy	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Japan	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Kosovo	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Latvia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Liechtenstein	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Lithuania	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Luxembourg	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Macedonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Malta	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Mexico	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93
Moldova	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Montenegro	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Netherlands	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Norway	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Poland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Romania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Russian Federation	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Serbia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovakia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Slovenia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
South Africa	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Spain	2,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,83
Sweden	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Switzerland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Turkey	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ukraine	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United Kingdom	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
United States Of America	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Mean (N=57)	2,22	2,24	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,24

Figure 5.1: Institutional depth, country ranking, mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised



Policy scope (PS)

Policy scope measures the extent to which local government is effectively involved in the delivery of services, be it through its own financial resources or its own staff, in accordance with the principle of the European Charter of Local Self-Government saying that “public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are the closest to the citizen” (art. 4.3). How much these authorities can decide is part of the next question.

Policy scope	Range of functions (tasks) where local government assumes responsibility for the delivery of the services (whether it is provided by municipal personnel or through other arrangements)	0-4	Not at all, partly, or fully responsible for:			
			Education (0-3)	Social assistance (0-3)	Health (0-3)	
			Land use (0-2)	Public transport (0-1)	Housing (0-1)	
			Police (0-1)	Caring functions (0-3)		
	Additional coding instructions: Here we want to know whether local government assumes responsibility for the delivery of these tasks and services. How much they can decide is part of the next question. Half points can be used if local government is only partly involved (i.e. coding instructions by fields of services below).					

We were interested in eight different tasks and gave detailed coding instructions in relation to these tasks:

Additional coding instructions by fields of services

Policy scope (0-4)

Range of functions (tasks) where local government assumes responsibility for the delivery of the services (whether it is provided by municipal personnel or through other arrangements)

You can use half of the points if local government assumes only a part of the responsibility – 0.5 in Land use and 0.25 in Education, Social assistance, Health, Public transport, Caring functions and Police.

Fields	Services	Codes
Education (0-3)	Pre-school (age 1-6)	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the delivery of services + 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Primary school (age 6-15)	
	Secondary school (age 15-18)	
Social assistance (0-3)	Economic assistance (distress relief)	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full for the organisation and/or delivery of services +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Work training/rehabilitation	
	Integration of refugees	
Health (0-3)	Primary health	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the delivery of services +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Hospitals	
	Dental services	
Land use (0-2)	Building permits	+ 1 point if local government assumes full responsibility for administering building permits
	Zoning	+ 1 point if local government assumes full responsibility for administering zoning

Public transport (0-1)	Bus transport services	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for bus transport services
	Railway transport services	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for railway transport services
Housing (0-1)	Housing and town development	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for housing and town development
	Social housing	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for social housing
Police (0-1)	Public Order	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for public order
	Traffic police	+ 0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for traffic police
Caring functions (0-3)	General caring services	For each of the services: +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for infra-structure and/or the availability of the service +0.5 point if local government assumes full responsibility for personnel, including staffing and salaries
	Services for special groups	
	Child protection	

Eight tasks were already measured in the first project, but there the maximum number of points to receive was only 12 compared to 17 in the LAI-2.0 project. Accordingly, the number of points was divided by 4.25 and not by 3 as in the first project. To arrive at the final value for policy scope the number of points achieved was divided by 3, allowing for a score between 0 and 4.

The mean values between 2015 and 2020 basically remain unchanged between 1.93 and 1.94, as do the minimal and maximal values, at respectively 0.41 and 3.17. At no point the absolute minimal and maximal (0 and 4) are reached, meaning that every country in this study benefits from some autonomy in one or multiple policy fields, but never the full amount in all policy fields (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

Table 5.3: Policy scope, descriptive statistics

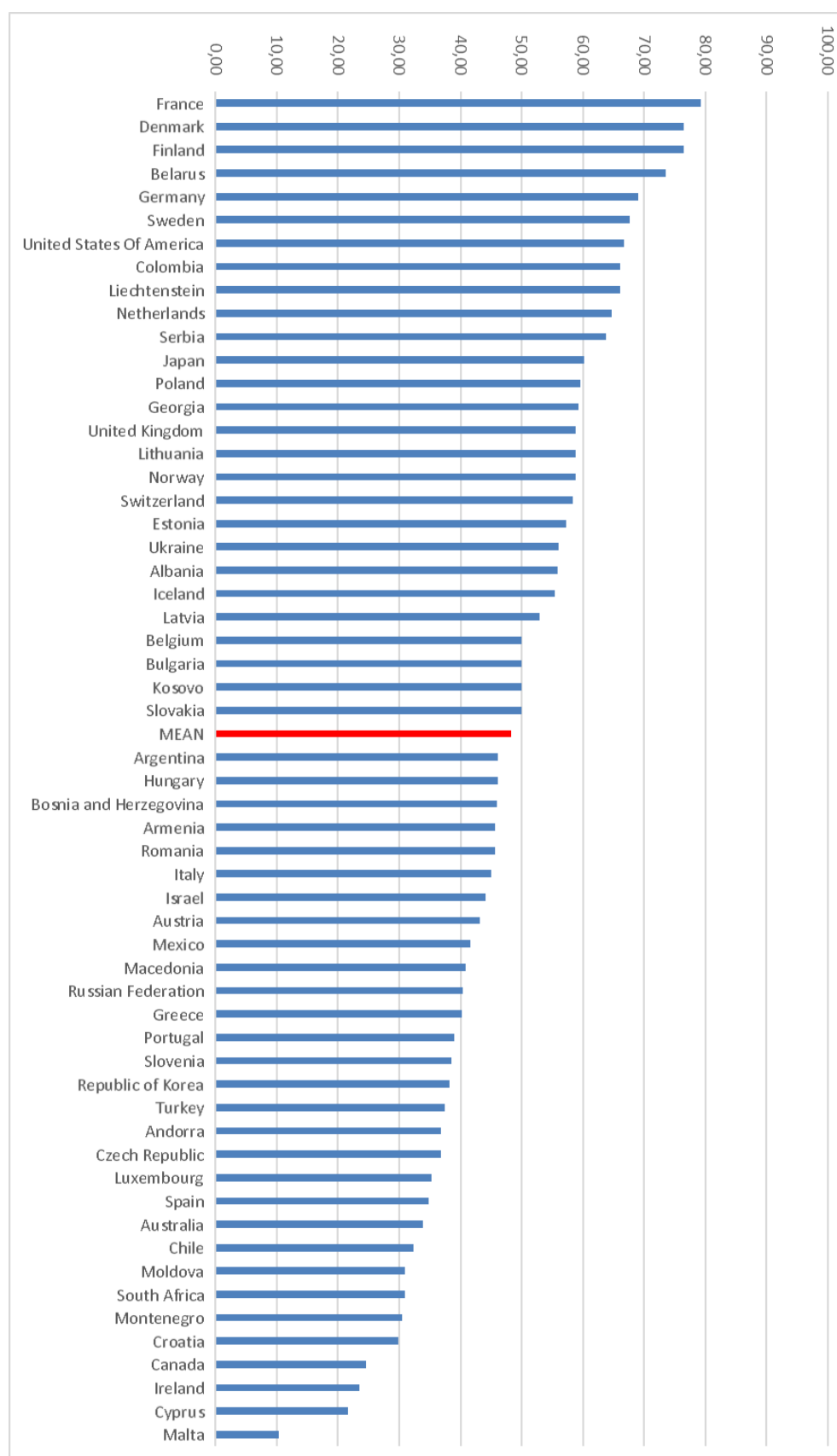
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PS_Total_2015	57	0,41	3,17	1,93	0,61
PS_Total_2016	57	0,41	3,17	1,93	0,61
PS_Total_2017	57	0,41	3,17	1,93	0,62
PS_Total_2018	57	0,41	3,17	1,94	0,61
PS_Total_2019	57	0,41	3,17	1,93	0,61
PS_Total_2020	57	0,41	3,17	1,93	0,61
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Here, the country ranking shows a more even distribution of scores than for institutional depth. France, Denmark and Finland score the highest, closely followed by Belarus, Germany and Sweden. Among the newly added countries, USA, Colombia and Japan can also be found in the top tier clearly above average (see Figure 5.2).

Table 5.4: Policy scope, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24
Andorra	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47
Argentina	1,83	1,84	1,84	1,85	1,85	1,85	1,85
Armenia	1,82	1,83	1,83	1,83	1,83	1,83	1,83
Australia	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35
Austria	1,72	1,72	1,72	1,73	1,73	1,73	1,73
Belarus	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94
Belgium	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,85	1,85	1,85	1,83	1,83	1,85	1,84
Bulgaria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Canada	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,98
Chile	1,29	1,29	1,29	1,29	1,29	1,29	1,29
Colombia	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65
Croatia	1,19	1,19	1,20	1,20	1,20	1,20	1,20
Cyprus	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86
Czech Republic	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47
Denmark	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06
Estonia	2,29	2,29	2,29	2,29	2,29	2,29	2,29
Finland	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06
France	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17
Georgia	2,18	2,18	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,37
Germany	2,76	2,76	2,76	2,76	2,76	2,76	2,76
Greece	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,53	1,53	1,61
Hungary	1,88	1,88	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,84
Iceland	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,12	2,22
Ireland	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94
Israel	1,76	1,76	1,76	1,76	1,76	1,76	1,76
Italy	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,76	1,76	1,80
Japan	2,41	2,41	2,41	2,41	2,41	2,41	2,41
Kosovo	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Latvia	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12
Liechtenstein	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65
Lithuania	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,35
Luxembourg	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41
Macedonia	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64
Malta	0,41	0,41	0,41	0,41	0,41	0,41	0,41
Mexico	1,75	1,62	1,63	1,64	1,67	1,69	1,67
Moldova	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24
Montenegro	1,53	1,53	1,06	1,06	1,06	1,06	1,22
Netherlands	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59
Norway	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35
Poland	2,39	2,39	2,39	2,39	2,39	2,39	2,39
Portugal	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,56
Republic of Korea	1,53	1,53	1,53	1,53	1,53	1,53	1,53
Romania	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82
Russian Federation	1,62	1,62	1,62	1,62	1,62	1,62	1,62
Serbia	2,54	2,54	2,55	2,55	2,55	2,59	2,55
Slovakia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovenia	1,51	1,51	1,51	1,57	1,57	1,57	1,54
South Africa	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,24
Spain	1,39	1,39	1,39	1,39	1,40	1,40	1,39
Sweden	2,71	2,71	2,71	2,71	2,71	2,71	2,71
Switzerland	2,33	2,33	2,33	2,33	2,33	2,33	2,33
Turkey	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Ukraine	2,09	2,12	2,28	2,38	2,27	2,29	2,24
United Kingdom	2,36	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35
United States Of America	2,67	2,67	2,67	2,67	2,67	2,67	2,67
Mean (N=57)	1,93	1,93	1,93	1,94	1,93	1,93	1,93

Figure 5.2: Policy scope, country ranking, mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised



Effective political discretion (EPD)

With the variable effective political discretion we measure the extent to which municipalities have some influence and can decide on aspects of the different functions enumerated by the previous variable. Executing policies is one thing, but effectively deciding on aspects of the services delivered is a further sign of local autonomy: "Local authorities shall, within the limits of the law, have full discretion to exercise their initiative with regard to any matter which is not excluded from their competence nor assigned to any other authority" (European Charter of Local-Self-Government, art. 4.2).

Effective political discretion	<i>The extent to which local government can make final decisions over these functions</i>	0-4	No, some, or real authoritative decision-making in:							
			Education	(0-3)	Social assistance	(0-3)	Health	(0-3)		
			Land use	(0-2)	Public transport	(0-1)	Housing	(0-1)		
			Police	(0-1)	Caring functions	(0-3)				

Additional coding instructions:
Here we want to know whether municipal decision-makers are required by law to consult with, seek the permission, consent or cooperation of regional and national agencies before final decisions can be made or not. Half points can be used if local government can only partly decide (i.e. coding instructions by fields of services below).

We were interested in same eight tasks and gave detailed coding instructions in relation to these tasks:

Fields	Services	Codes
Education (0-3)	Pre-school (age 1-6)	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Primary school (age 6-15)	
	Secondary school (age 15-18)	
Social assistance (0-3)	Economic assistance (distress relief)	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Work training/rehabilitation	
	Integration of refugees	
Health (0-3)	Primary health	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Hospitals	
	Dental services	
Land use (0-2)	Building permits	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Zoning	
Public transport	Bus transport services	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making

(0-1)	Railway transport services	0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
Housing (0-1)	Housing and town development	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Social housing	
Police (0-1)	Public Order	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Traffic police	
Caring functions (0-3)	General caring services	For each of the services: 0 if local government has no authoritative decision-making 0.5 if local government has some authoritative decision-making 1 if local government has real authoritative decision-making
	Services for special groups	
	Child protection	

Eight tasks were already measured in the first project, but there the maximum number of points to receive was only 12 compared to 17 in the LAI-2.0 project. Accordingly, the number of points was divided by 4.25 and not by 3 as in the first project.

The mean value for effective political discretion is with 1.67 slightly lower than the one for policy scope and it hardly changes over time (see Table 5.5). Further analyses also reveal that effective policy discretion is strongly related to policy scope (Pearson corr. = .793; sig. = .000; N=57), which in general means that if municipalities are involved in the delivery of services they also seem to have the possibility to decide on some aspects of the service delivery.

Table 5.5: Effective political discretion, descriptive statistics

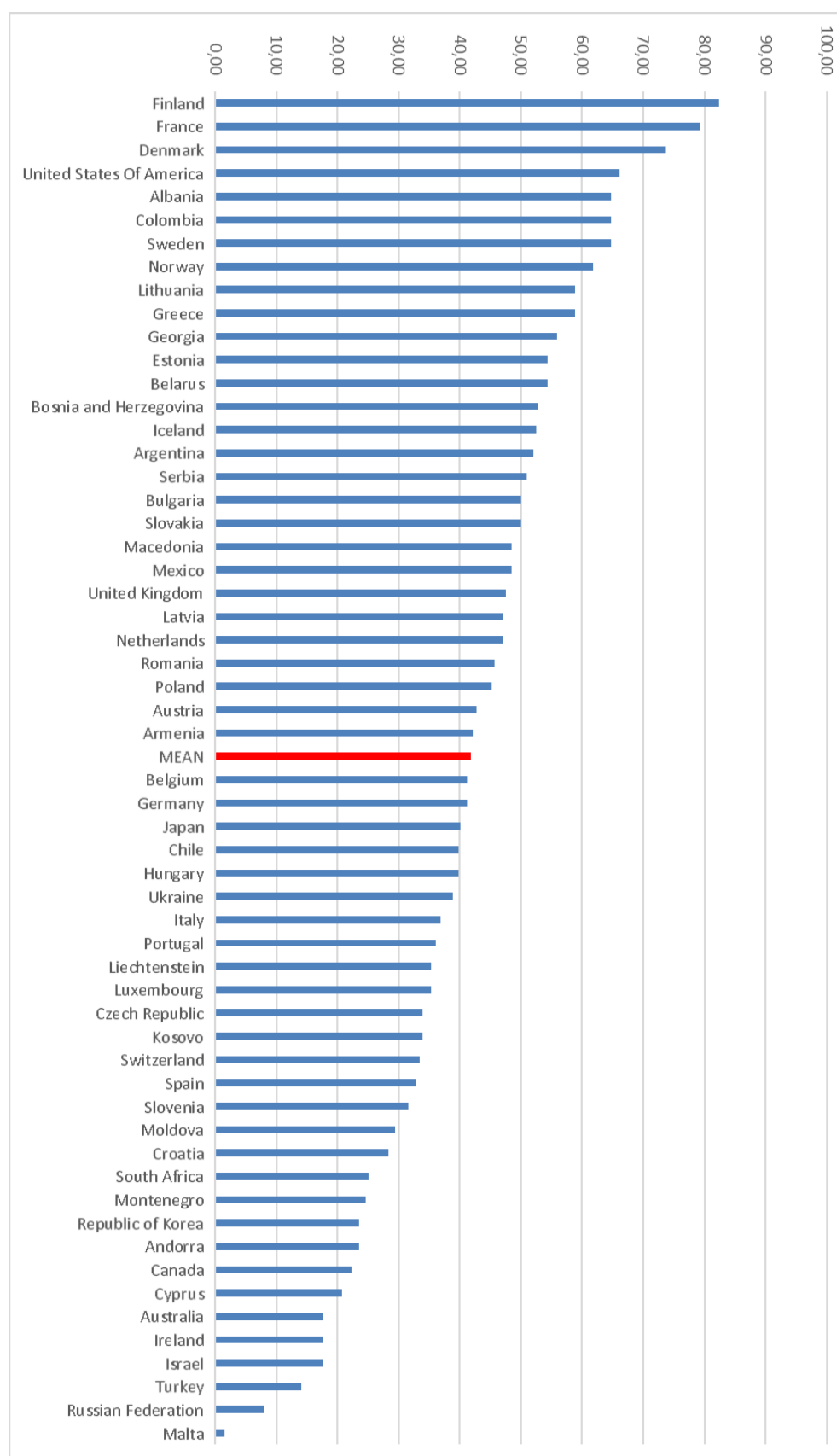
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EPD_Total_2015	57	0,06	3,29	1,68	0,692
EPD_Total_2016	57	0,06	3,29	1,68	0,691
EPD_Total_2017	57	0,06	3,29	1,67	0,698
EPD_Total_2018	57	0,06	3,29	1,67	0,694
EPD_Total_2019	57	0,06	3,29	1,67	0,694
EPD_Total_2020	57	0,06	3,29	1,67	0,693
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Looking at the different countries, Finland appears at the top with a score of 3.29, followed by France and Denmark, as well as the USA, Albania, Colombia and Sweden. Germany, Luxembourg and the Czech Republic have all dropped below the average (see Table 5.6 and Figure 5.3). The low-scoring countries are very much the same as for policy scope. In Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Turkey, municipalities have very little influence when it comes to deciding on the services they are responsible for. They merely execute what has been decided on higher levels.

Table 5.6: Effective policy discretion, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59
Andorra	1,06	1,06	1,06	0,82	0,82	0,82	0,94
Argentina	2,08	2,08	2,08	2,08	2,08	2,08	2,08
Armenia	1,67	1,68	1,68	1,68	1,68	1,73	1,69
Australia	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71
Austria	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71
Belarus	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18
Belgium	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,11	2,11	2,11	2,11	2,11	2,13	2,11
Bulgaria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Canada	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,89
Chile	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59
Colombia	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59
Croatia	1,13	1,13	1,13	1,13	1,14	1,14	1,13
Cyprus	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,83
Czech Republic	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35
Denmark	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94
Estonia	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18	2,18
Finland	3,29	3,29	3,29	3,29	3,29	3,29	3,29
France	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17	3,17
Georgia	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,24
Germany	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65	1,65
Greece	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35	2,35
Hungary	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59	1,59
Iceland	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,12	2,00	2,10
Ireland	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71
Israel	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71	0,71
Italy	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47	1,47
Japan	1,60	1,61	1,61	1,61	1,61	1,61	1,61
Kosovo	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35	1,35
Latvia	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,88
Liechtenstein	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41
Lithuania	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,24	2,24	2,24	2,35
Luxembourg	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41	1,41
Macedonia	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94
Malta	0,06	0,06	0,06	0,06	0,06	0,06	0,06
Mexico	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94	1,94
Moldova	1,18	1,18	1,18	1,18	1,18	1,18	1,18
Montenegro	1,29	1,29	0,82	0,82	0,82	0,82	0,98
Netherlands	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88
Norway	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,47	2,47
Poland	1,96	1,78	1,78	1,78	1,78	1,78	1,81
Portugal	1,18	1,18	1,18	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,44
Republic of Korea	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94	0,94
Romania	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82	1,82
Russian Federation	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32	0,32
Serbia	2,04	2,04	2,04	2,04	2,04	2,04	2,04
Slovakia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovenia	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,29	1,29	1,29	1,26
South Africa	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Spain	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,32	1,31
Sweden	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59	2,59
Switzerland	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34
Turkey	0,56	0,56	0,56	0,56	0,56	0,56	0,56
Ukraine	1,48	1,50	1,53	1,59	1,61	1,62	1,55
United Kingdom	1,90	1,90	1,90	1,90	1,90	1,90	1,90
United States Of America	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65	2,65
Mean (N=57)	1,68	1,68	1,67	1,67	1,67	1,67	1,67

Figure 5.3: Effective political discretion, country ranking, mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised



Fiscal autonomy (FA)

Fiscal autonomy can be seen as a basic element of local autonomy even if the European Charter of Local Self-Government does not go very far in its specification of local rights when stating in its article 9.3: "Part at least of the financial resources of local authorities shall derive from local taxes and charges of which, within limits of statute, they have the power to determine the rate".

Fiscal autonomy is measured by the extent to which local government can independently tax its population. The variable ranges from no autonomy at all to local government sets rate and base of more than one major tax (such as personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax).

The degree of fiscal autonomy has been established as follows:

Fiscal autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government can independently tax its population</i>	0-4	0 local authorities do not set base and rate of any tax 1 local authorities set base or rate of minor taxes 2 local authorities set rate of one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax) under restrictions stipulated by higher levels of government 3 local authorities set rate of one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax) with few or no restrictions 4 local authorities set base and rate of more than one major tax (personal income, corporate, value added, property or sales tax)
Additional coding instructions: For this variable the level of contribution of the tax for local authorities (how much the tax actually yields) has to be clarified in the explanations.			

Considering the possibility that the autonomy to set base and rate of important taxes leads to inequalities, it is hardly astonishing that the scores on this variable are rather low. The overall fiscal autonomy amounts to 1.64 (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: Fiscal autonomy, descriptive statistics

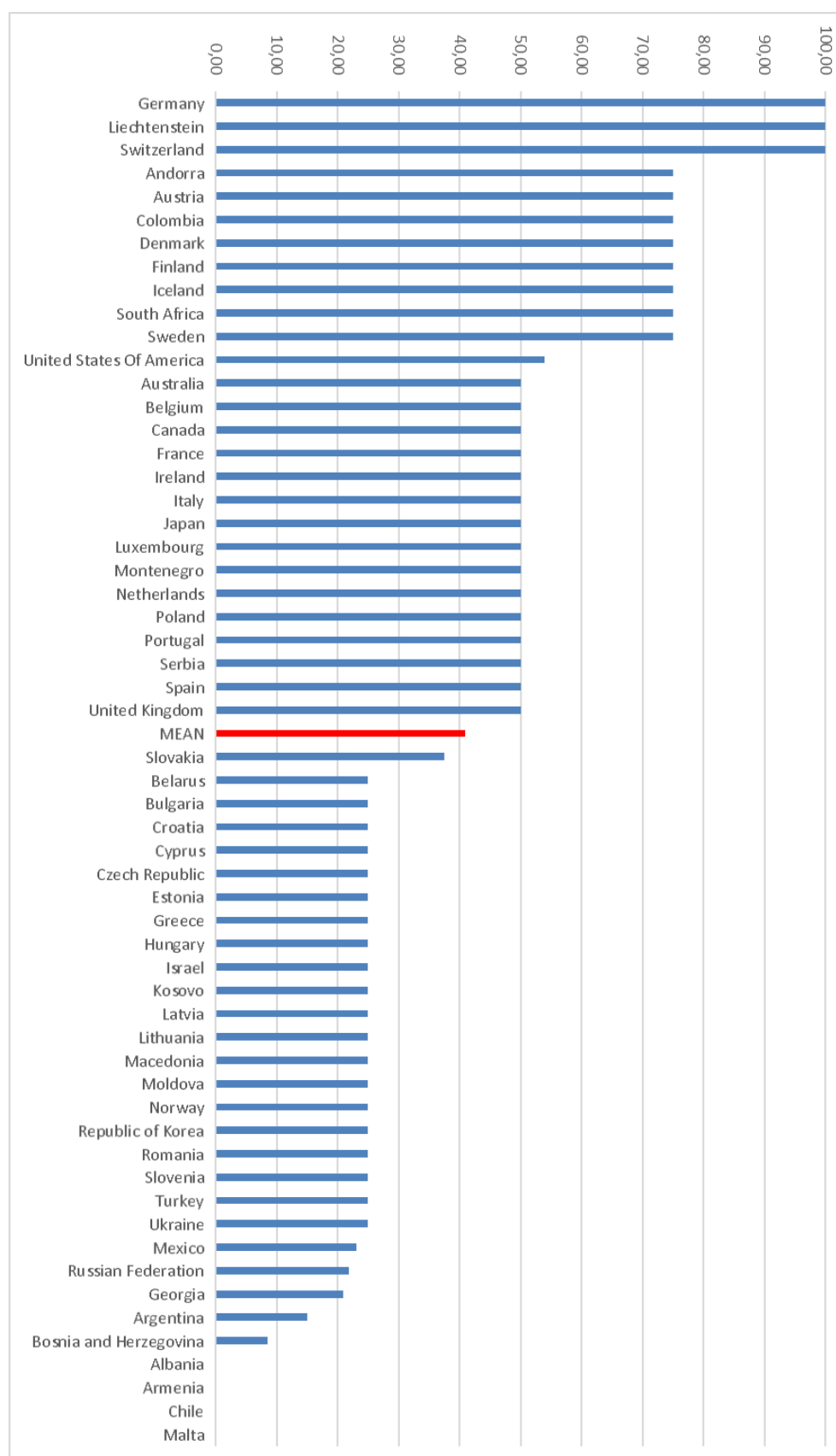
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
fiscalautonomy_2015	57	0,00	4,00	1,63	1,016
fiscalautonomy_2016	57	0,00	4,00	1,63	1,016
fiscalautonomy_2017	57	0,00	4,00	1,64	1,008
fiscalautonomy_2018	57	0,00	4,00	1,64	1,008
fiscalautonomy_2019	57	0,00	4,00	1,64	1,008
fiscalautonomy_2020	57	0,00	4,00	1,64	1,008
Valid N (listwise)	57				

The differences between individual countries, however, are quite important (see Table 5.8). In some countries local government can only set base and rate of minor taxes or does not have the possibility to decide on tax matters at all (as it is still the case in Malta for example) whereas in other countries they set base and rate of more than one major tax. There is, however, a limited number of countries in which local government has the possibility to set rate and base of a major tax without any restrictions from higher levels of government, those being Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Germany (see Figure 5.4).

Table 5.8: Fiscal autonomy, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	mean (2015-2020)
Albania	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Andorra	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Argentina	0,60	0,60	0,60	0,60	0,60	0,60	0,60
Armenia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Australia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Austria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,34	0,34
Bulgaria	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Canada	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Chile	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Colombia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Croatia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Cyprus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Czech Republic	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Denmark	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Estonia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Georgia	0,50	0,50	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,83
Germany	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Greece	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Hungary	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Iceland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Ireland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Israel	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Italy	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Japan	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Kosovo	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Latvia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Liechtenstein	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Lithuania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Macedonia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Malta	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Mexico	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93
Moldova	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Montenegro	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Netherlands	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Norway	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Poland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Portugal	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Republic of Korea	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Romania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Russian Federation	0,88	0,88	0,88	0,88	0,87	0,87	0,88
Serbia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovakia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Slovenia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Sweden	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Switzerland	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Turkey	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Ukraine	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
United Kingdom	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United States Of America	2,16	2,16	2,16	2,16	2,16	2,16	2,16
Mean (N=57)	1,63	1,63	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64	1,64

Figure 5.4: Fiscal autonomy, country ranking, mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised



Financial transfer system (FTS)

Any local authority depends to some extent on transfers. Some of the transfers are unconditional and some of the transfers are conditional, meaning that local governments can only use the money received for policies specified by national (or regional) government. The higher the percentage of unconditional transfers is, the more autonomy local government has: "As far as possible, grants to local authorities shall not be earmarked for the financing of specific projects. The provision of grants shall not remove the basic freedom of local authorities to exercise policy discretion within their own jurisdiction" (European Charter of Local Self-Government, art. 9.7).

The following instructions were given to the coders:

Financial transfer system	<i>The proportion of unconditional financial transfers to total financial transfers received by the local government</i>	0-3	0 conditional transfers are dominant (unconditional = 0-40% of total transfers) 1 there is largely a balance between conditional and unconditional financial transfers (unconditional = 40-60%) 2 unconditional financial transfers are dominant (unconditional = 60-80%) 3 nearly all transfers are unconditional (unconditional = 80-100%)
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The average value of this variable oscillates between 1.55 and 1.62 which is slightly closer to more unconditional transfers than to a balance between the two forms of transfers. On the aggregate level, no clear trend to more unconditional transfers can be identified (see Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Financial transfer system, descriptive statistics

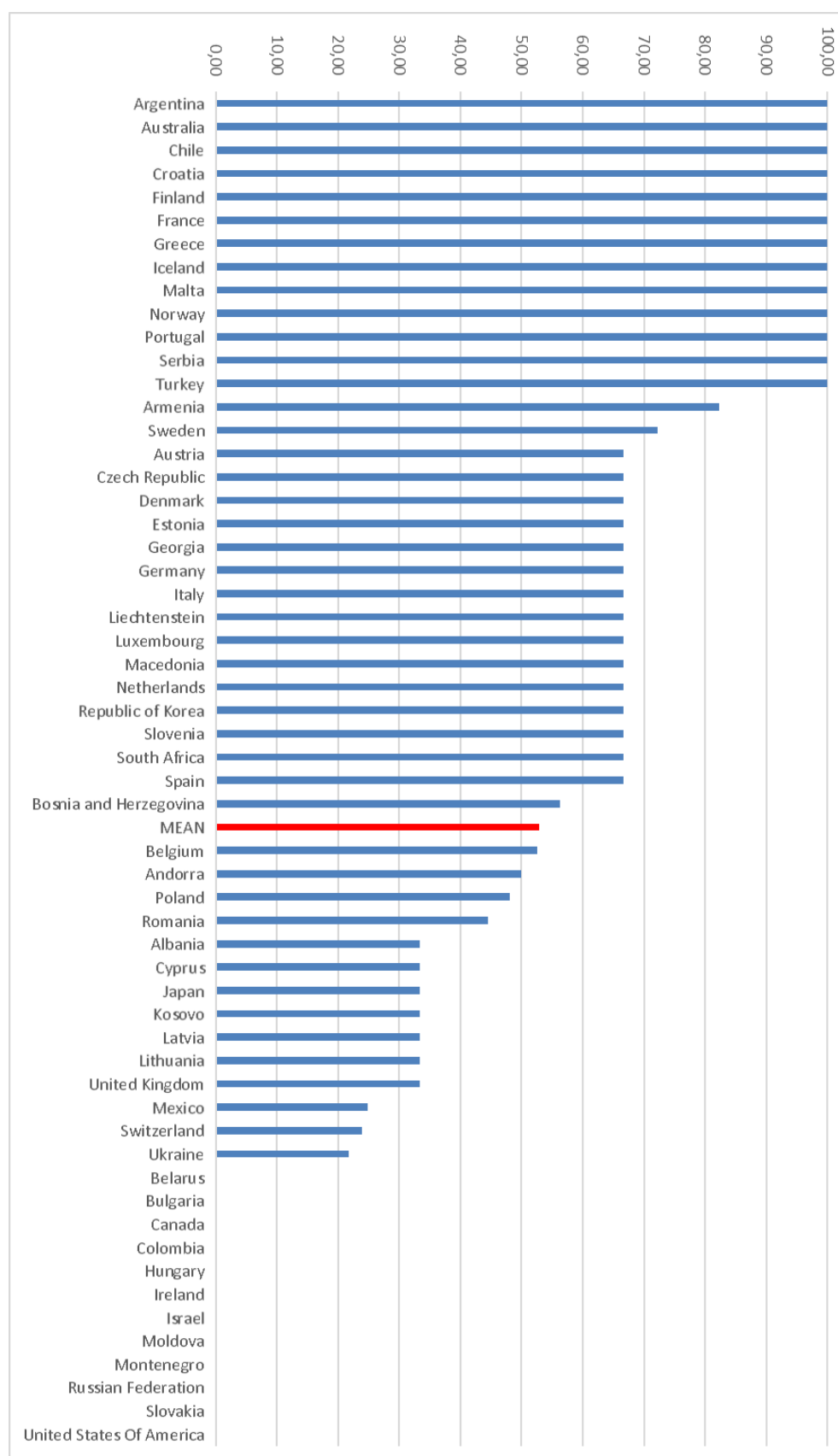
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
financialtransfersystem_2015	57	0,00	3,00	1,57	1,107
financialtransfersystem_2016	57	0,00	3,00	1,55	1,095
financialtransfersystem_2017	57	0,00	3,00	1,55	1,093
financialtransfersystem_2018	57	0,00	3,00	1,62	1,086
financialtransfersystem_2019	57	0,00	3,00	1,62	1,086
financialtransfersystem_2020	57	0,00	3,00	1,60	1,119
Valid N (listwise)	57				

For the majority of countries the transfer systems with respect to the ratio between balanced and unbalanced transfers remained unchanged, except for Albania, Mexico and Poland (see Table 5.10). The importance of unconditional transfers depends, of course, on the total amount of transfers. If the municipalities only receive very little transfers, then, in terms of autonomy, it is of lesser importance whether they are earmarked or not. Most Scandinavian countries score the maximum, whereas a low proportion of unconditional transfers can be found amongst North and Central American countries as well as a few Eastern European countries. Colombia is the only South American country in our list to have a low amount of unconditional transfers (see Figure 5.5).

Table 5.10: Financial transfer system, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Andorra	0,00	0,00	0,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,50
Argentina	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Armenia	3,00	2,36	2,36	2,36	2,37	2,37	2,47
Australia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Austria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Belarus	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Belgium	1,57	1,57	1,58	1,58	1,58	1,58	1,58
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,69	1,69	1,68	1,69	1,69	1,69	1,69
Bulgaria	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Canada	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Chile	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Colombia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Croatia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Cyprus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Czech Republic	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Denmark	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Estonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Georgia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Germany	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Greece	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Hungary	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Iceland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Ireland	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Israel	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Italy	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Japan	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Kosovo	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Latvia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Liechtenstein	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Lithuania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Macedonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Malta	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Mexico	0,86	0,81	0,94	0,96	0,91	0,00	0,75
Moldova	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Montenegro	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Netherlands	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Norway	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Poland	2,00	1,33	1,33	1,33	1,33	1,33	1,44
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Romania	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,33
Russian Federation	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Serbia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Slovakia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Slovenia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
South Africa	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Spain	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Sweden	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	3,00	2,17
Switzerland	0,72	0,72	0,72	0,72	0,72	0,72	0,72
Turkey	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Ukraine	0,57	0,59	0,63	0,69	0,72	0,72	0,65
United Kingdom	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
United States Of America	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Mean (N=57)	1,57	1,55	1,55	1,62	1,62	1,60	1,58

Figure 5.5: Financial transfer system, country ranking, mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised



Financial self-reliance (FSR)

In addition to taxes and transfers, local government also generates revenue through fees and charges. The variable financial self-reliance tries to establish the proportion of local government revenues derived from own or local sources (taxes, fees, charges without transfers and subsidies).

It is usually argued that the more important the municipalities' own resources are for financing their budgets, the higher is their degree of autonomy. This is definitely the case when they are able to generate the resources needed to fulfil their functions and if they are not bound by far-reaching regulations specifying their duties in great details. This is reflected in article 9.1 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government: "Local authorities shall be entitled, within national economic policy, to adequate financial resources of their own, of which they may dispose freely within the framework of their powers". In times of crisis, however, financial self-reliance can bring municipalities into difficult situations, if they find themselves without support from higher levels and without the possibility to gather the resources needed.

Financial self-reliance	<i>The proportion of local government revenues derived from own/local sources (i.e. taxes, fees, charges over which local government has influence)</i>	0-3	0 own sources yield less than 10% of total revenues 1 own sources yield 10-25% 2 own sources yield 25-50% 3 own sources yield more than 50%
Additional coding instructions: A shared tax collected by central government and over which local government has no influence individually (cannot e.g. set base or rate), has to be regarded as financial transfer. Please, make a note in your country report if this is the case.			

The average value for all countries across all years oscillates between 1.94 and 2.02 (see Table 5.11). The varying means can be explained by yearly fluctuations (around the 10%, 25% and 50% thresholds) in countries such as Armenia, Austria and Ukraine. The decrease in 2020 can be explained by the fact that figures for 2020 were not yet available for certain countries (e.g. Austria, see Table 5.12). In a quite large number of countries own sources yielded more than 50% of local government revenues throughout the whole period. In Moldova, Slovenia and Ukraine, local government hardly has any own revenues (see Figure 5.6).

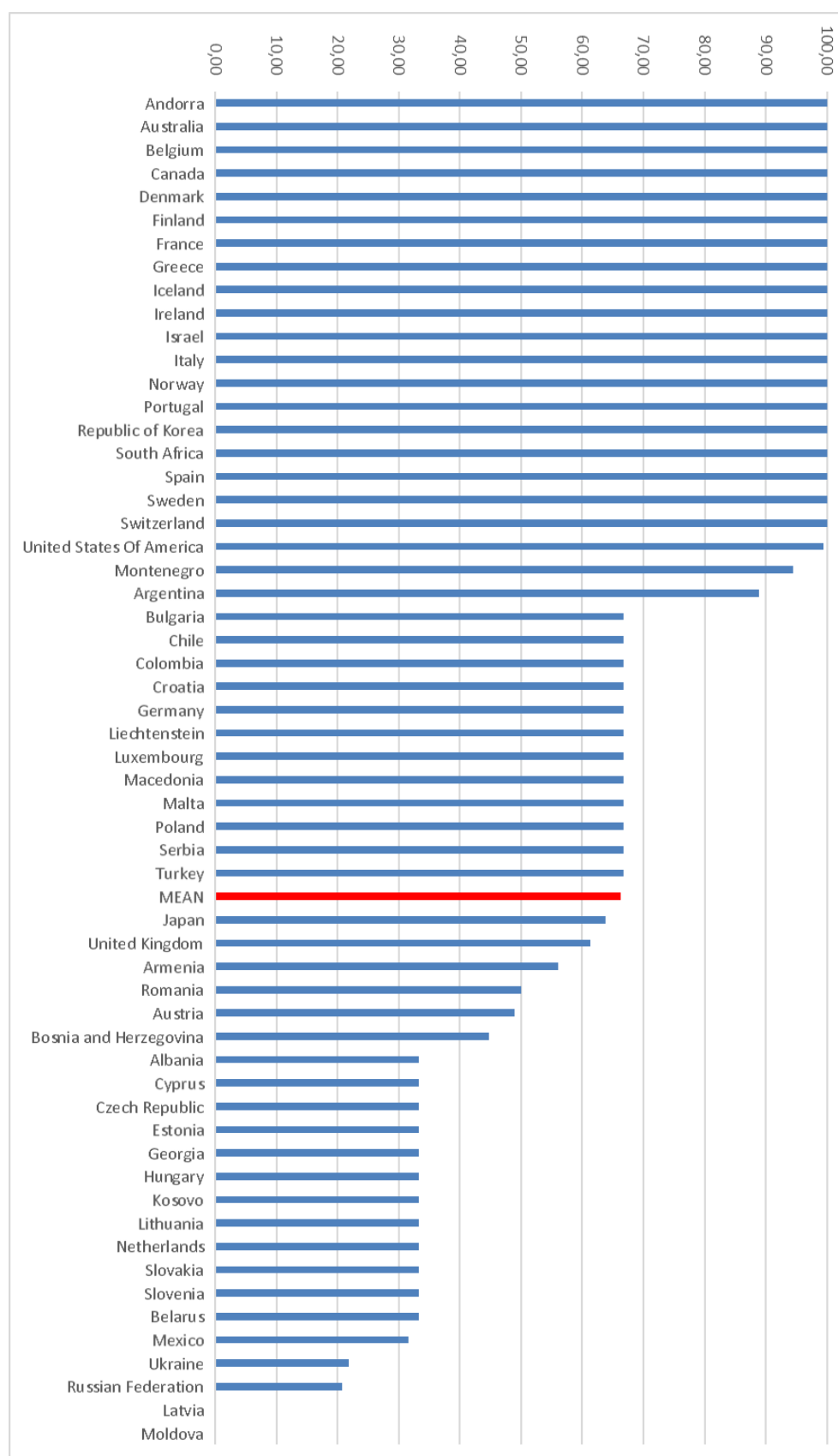
Table 5.11: Financial self-reliance, descriptive statistics:

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
financialselfreliance_2015	57	0,00	3,00	1,97	0,902
financialselfreliance_2016	57	0,00	3,00	1,99	0,918
financialselfreliance_2017	57	0,00	3,00	2,01	0,926
financialselfreliance_2018	57	0,00	3,00	2,02	0,915
financialselfreliance_2019	57	0,00	3,00	2,01	0,917
financialselfreliance_2020	57	0,00	3,00	1,94	0,993
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Table 5.12: Financial self-reliance, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Andorra	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Argentina	2,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,67
Armenia	1,36	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,37	1,37	1,68
Australia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Austria	1,76	1,76	1,94	1,66	1,68	0,00	1,47
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34	1,34
Bulgaria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Canada	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Chile	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Colombia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Croatia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Cyprus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Czech Republic	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Denmark	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Estonia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Georgia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Germany	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Greece	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Hungary	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Iceland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Ireland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Israel	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Italy	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Japan	1,91	1,91	1,91	1,91	1,91	1,91	1,91
Kosovo	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Latvia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Liechtenstein	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Lithuania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Macedonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Malta	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Mexico	1,14	1,11	1,08	1,15	1,19	0,00	0,95
Moldova	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Montenegro	2,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,83
Netherlands	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Norway	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Poland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Romania	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,50
Russian Federation	0,62	0,62	0,62	0,62	0,62	0,62	0,62
Serbia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovakia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Slovenia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Sweden	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Switzerland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Turkey	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ukraine	0,57	0,59	0,63	0,69	0,72	0,72	0,65
United Kingdom	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84
United States Of America	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98
Mean (N=57)	1,97	1,99	2,01	2,02	2,01	1,94	1,99

Figure 5.6: Financial self-reliance, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Borrowing Autonomy (BA)

An important variable regarding financial issues is the extent to which local government can borrow. In addition to transfers, taxes and fees, borrowing is a fourth possibility to increase local government resources, be it for specific projects or to balance deficits. Sanctioning that “local authorities shall have access to the national capital market within the limits of the law”, the European Charter of Local Self-Government also envisages the possibility for a local authority to borrow money to finance local activities (art. 9.8).

Since municipalities provide vital services to their citizens, bankruptcy is far more problematic than for private companies, and bailout measures are normally provided by higher state levels. The question is: How strong are the restrictions set by higher-level government regarding municipal borrowing?

The coding instructions were formulated as follows:

Borrowing autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government can borrow</i>	0-3	0 local authorities cannot borrow 1 local authorities may borrow under prior authorisation by higher-level governments and with borrowing restrictions imposed by higher-level authorities 2 local authorities may borrow without prior authorisation but with restrictions imposed by higher-level authorities 3 local authorities may borrow without authorisation or restriction imposed by higher-level authorities
	Additional coding instructions: When borrowing under restrictions applies (code 1 or 2), please make a note in your country report as to which restriction(s) apply: a. golden rule (e. g. no borrowing to cover current account deficits) b. no foreign borrowing or borrowing from the regional or central bank only c. no borrowing above a ceiling, absolute level of subnational indebtedness, maximum debt-service ratio for new borrowing or debt brake mechanism d. borrowing is limited to specific purposes		

Borrowing autonomy has a stable mean of 1.58 over the past five years (see table 5.13), the latest recorded increase being from the 1.56 mean in 2015, which can be accounted for by Japan’s abolishment of consultation for borrowing (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.13: Borrowing autonomy, descriptive statistics

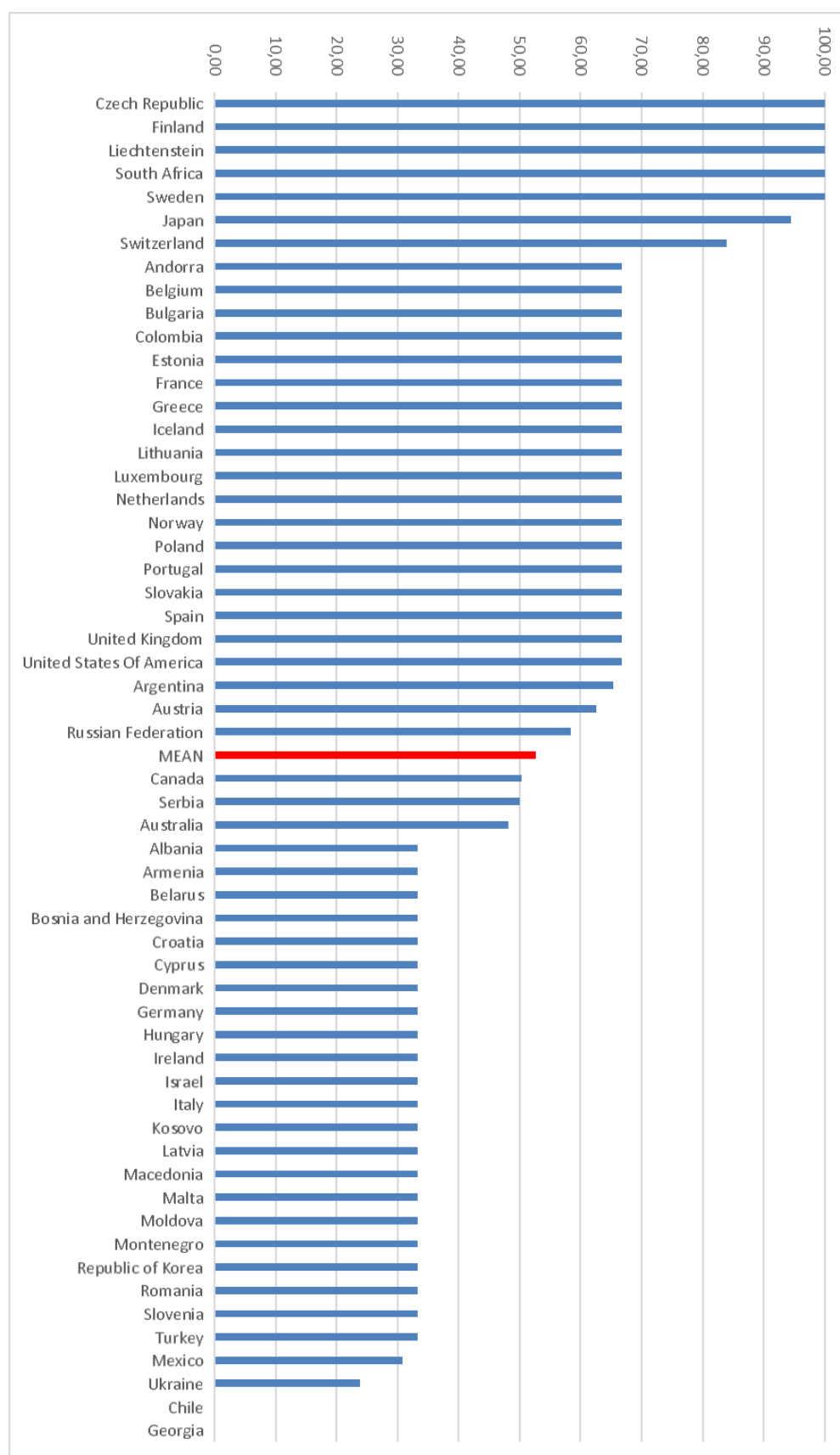
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
borrowingautonomy_2015	57	0,00	3,00	1,56	0,711
borrowingautonomy_2016	57	0,00	3,00	1,58	0,733
borrowingautonomy_2017	57	0,00	3,00	1,58	0,733
borrowingautonomy_2018	57	0,00	3,00	1,58	0,732
borrowingautonomy_2019	57	0,00	3,00	1,58	0,731
borrowingautonomy_2020	57	0,00	3,00	1,58	0,731
Valid N (listwise)	57				

There are only a few countries where there are almost no restrictions on borrowing: Czech Republic, Finland, Liechtenstein, South Africa and Sweden (see Figure 5.7).

Table 5.14: Borrowing autonomy, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Andorra	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Argentina	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,96	1,96
Armenia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Australia	1,44	1,44	1,44	1,44	1,44	1,44	1,44
Austria	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88	1,88
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Bulgaria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Canada	1,51	1,51	1,51	1,51	1,51	1,51	1,51
Chile	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Colombia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Croatia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Cyprus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Czech Republic	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Denmark	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Estonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Georgia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Germany	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Greece	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Hungary	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Iceland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ireland	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Israel	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Italy	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Japan	2,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,83
Kosovo	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Latvia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Liechtenstein	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Lithuania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Macedonia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Malta	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Mexico	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,92	0,92
Moldova	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Montenegro	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Netherlands	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Norway	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Poland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Portugal	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Republic of Korea	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Romania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Russian Federation	1,76	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75
Serbia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Slovakia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Slovenia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Sweden	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Switzerland	2,52	2,52	2,52	2,52	2,52	2,52	2,52
Turkey	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Ukraine	0,65	0,66	0,69	0,74	0,77	0,77	0,71
United Kingdom	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United States Of America	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Mean (N=57)	1,56	1,58	1,58	1,58	1,58	1,58	1,58

Figure 5.7: Borrowing autonomy, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Organisational autonomy (OA)

A last variable concerning self-rule capacities focuses on the extent to which local government is free to decide on its own organisation and on its political system. It involves therefore both political and administrative elements. Regarding the political system, the European Charter of Local Self-Government includes a general recommendation, saying that local self-government “shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them” (art. 3.2). This formulation does not stipulate any rights regarding local discretion in drawing up features of the electoral and executive system, but national governments are, of course, free to grant some leeway for local decision-making, and some, in fact, do so, especially when it comes to the local executive system.

The charter is more outspoken as to the rights of local decision-making when it comes the organisation of administrative bodies: “(...) local authorities shall be able to determine their own internal administrative structures in order to adapt them to local needs and ensure effective management” (art. 6.1). Here, freedom may not only include administrative organisation but also salaries and hiring and firing of staff and other aspects of employment. Such powers may of course also influence control over other aspects of service delivery and, in general, increase local autonomy.

The coding has quite changed regarding the local executives and election system in order to obtain more comprehensive answers (see later chapter on codebook changes).

The following coding instructions were given to the country experts:

Organisational autonomy	<i>The extent to which local government is free to decide about its own organisation and electoral system</i>	0-4	Local executives and election system (0-2): (0-1) local executives are elected by the municipal council or directly by citizens (0-1) local government can decide core elements of the political system (electoral districts, number of seats, electoral system) Staff and local structures (0-2): Local authorities: Hire their own staff (0-0.5) Fix the salary of their employees (0-0.5) Choose their organisational structure and status of staff (0-0.5) Establish legal entities and municipal enterprises (0-0.5)
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Additional coding instructions: If the status of staff (e.g. possibility to hire contract workers) is largely determined by national norms a maximum score of 0.25 is obtainable.

The mean value is stable and high (see Table 5.15), showing that most countries benefit from an important degree of organisational autonomy. Almost no changes are recorded of the six-year period. Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland score the maximum values on this variable whereas South Korea, Ireland, Malta and Belarus are to be found at the bottom en of the country ranking (see Table 5.16 and Figure 5.8).

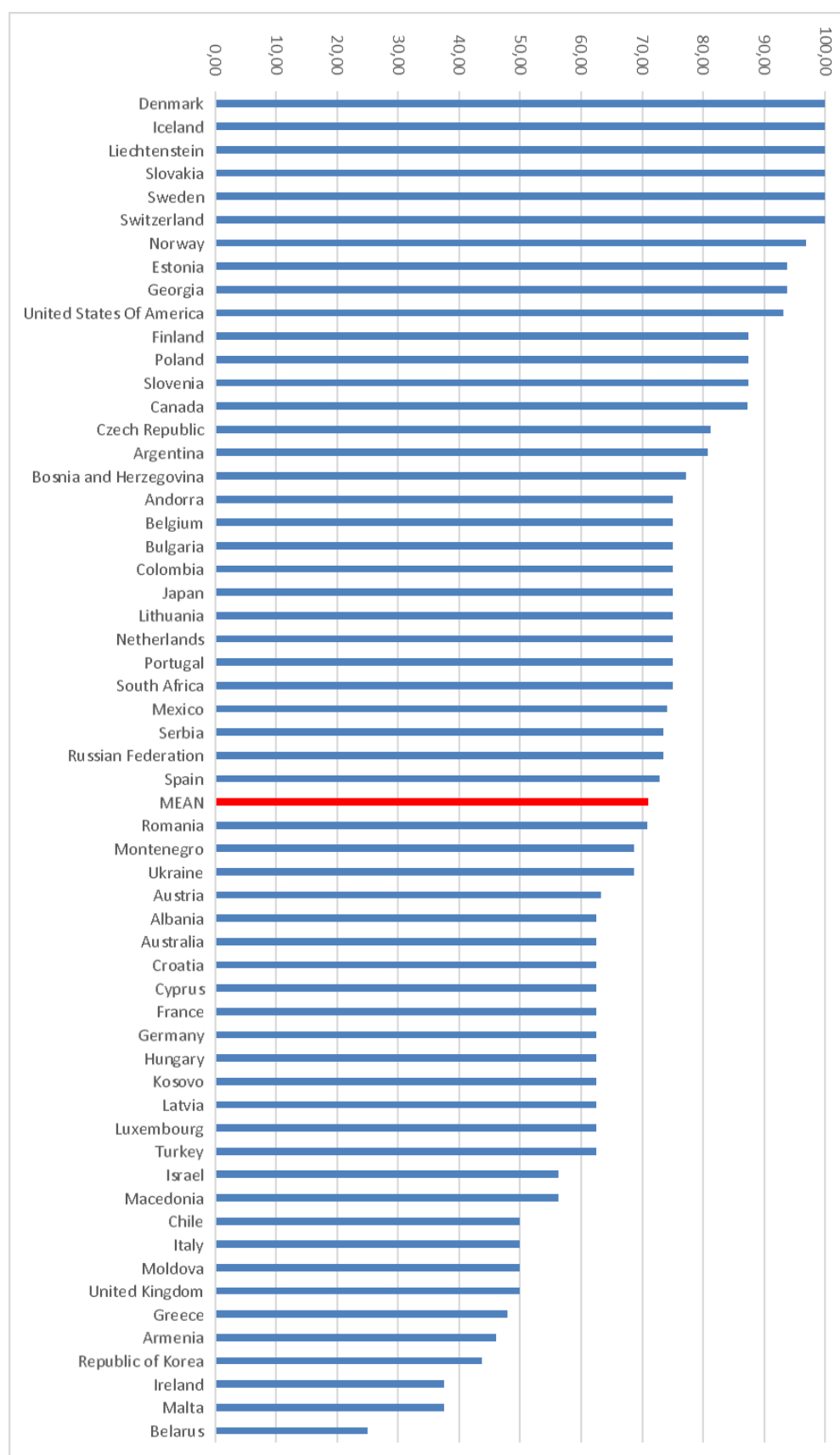
Table 5.15: Organisational autonomy, descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
organisationalautonomy_2015	57	1,00	4,00	2,83	0,727
organisationalautonomy_2016	57	1,00	4,00	2,83	0,727
organisationalautonomy_2017	57	1,00	4,00	2,85	0,720
organisationalautonomy_2018	57	1,00	4,00	2,84	0,714
organisationalautonomy_2019	57	1,00	4,00	2,84	0,714
organisationalautonomy_2020	57	1,00	4,00	2,84	0,714
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Table 5.16: Organisational autonomy, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Andorra	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Argentina	3,23	3,23	3,23	3,23	3,23	3,23	3,23
Armenia	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,84
Australia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Austria	2,53	2,53	2,53	2,53	2,53	2,53	2,53
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,09	3,09	3,09	3,09	3,09	3,09	3,09
Bulgaria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Canada	3,49	3,49	3,49	3,49	3,49	3,49	3,49
Chile	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Colombia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Croatia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Cyprus	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Czech Republic	3,25	3,25	3,25	3,25	3,25	3,25	3,25
Denmark	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Estonia	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75
Finland	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50
France	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Georgia	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,75
Germany	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Greece	1,75	1,75	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,92
Hungary	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Iceland	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Ireland	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Israel	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25
Italy	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Japan	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Kosovo	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Latvia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Liechtenstein	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Lithuania	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Luxembourg	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Macedonia	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25	2,25
Malta	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Mexico	2,96	2,96	2,96	2,96	2,96	2,96	2,96
Moldova	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Montenegro	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75
Netherlands	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Norway	4,00	4,00	4,00	3,75	3,75	3,75	3,88
Poland	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75
Romania	2,50	2,50	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,83
Russian Federation	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94
Serbia	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94	2,94
Slovakia	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Slovenia	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	2,75	2,75	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,92
Sweden	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Switzerland	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Turkey	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Ukraine	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75
United Kingdom	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United States Of America	3,73	3,73	3,72	3,72	3,72	3,72	3,72
Mean (N=57)	2,83	2,83	2,85	2,84	2,84	2,84	2,84

Figure 5.8: Organisational autonomy, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Self-rule (SR)

Self-rule of local government is measured as the sum of the eight variables presented so far. The highest value possible is 28. The average value across years and countries amounts to 15.47 (see Table 5.17).

Table 5.17: Self-rule 2015 – 2020 descriptive statistics

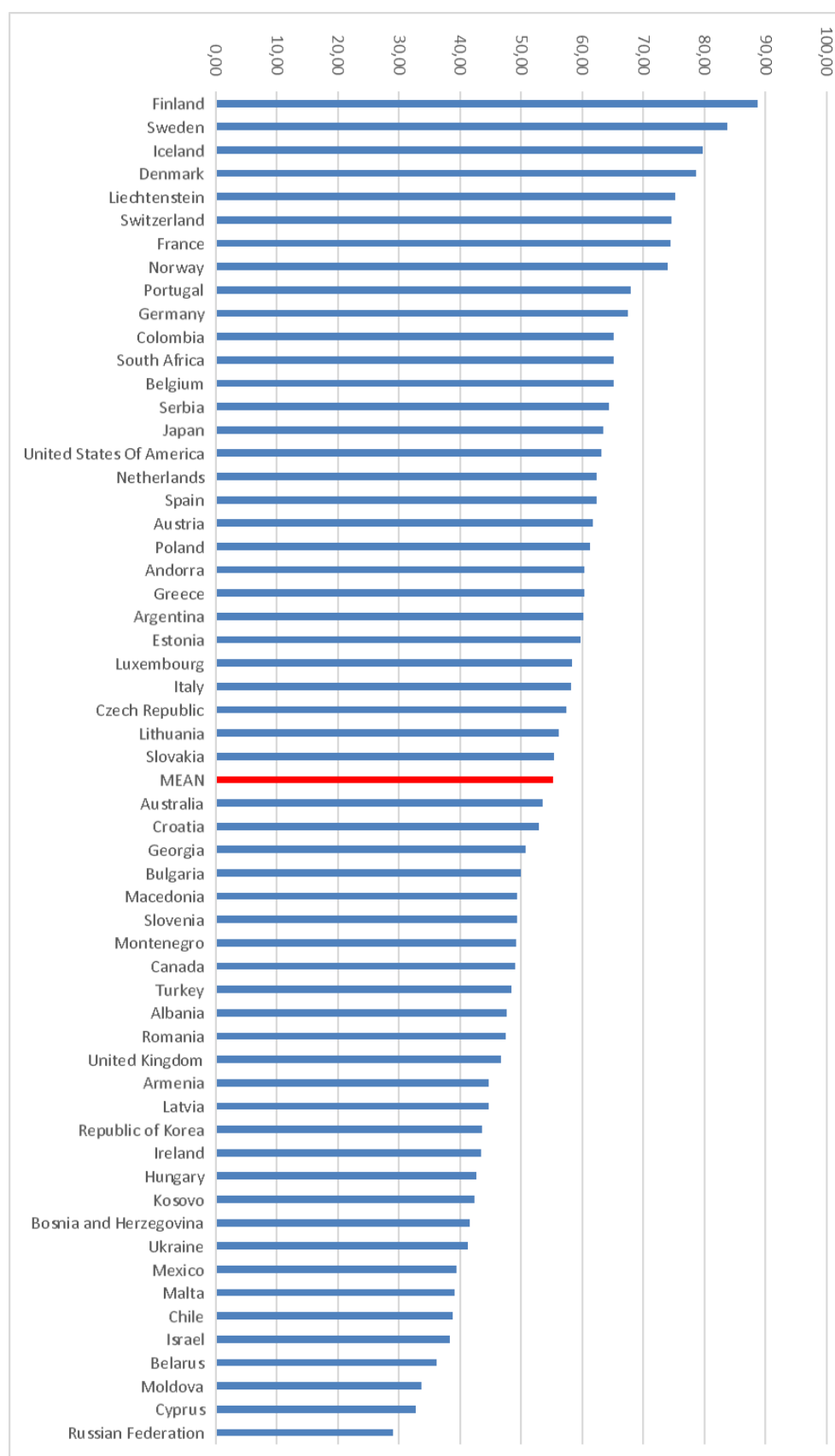
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
selfrule_2015	57	8,13	24,85	15,3959	3,80447
selfrule_2016	57	8,13	24,85	15,4146	3,82213
selfrule_2017	57	8,13	24,85	15,4670	3,81216
selfrule_2018	57	8,12	24,85	15,5612	3,81626
selfrule_2019	57	8,12	24,85	15,5483	3,82440
selfrule_2020	57	8,12	24,85	15,4636	3,91094
Valid N (listwise)	57				

If we look at the different countries, the variation turns out to be considerable (see Table 5.18). The highest scoring countries reach values around 25 whereas the low scoring group scores between 8 and 10. Countries with particularly high scores are the Nordic countries Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Norway, and the German speaking countries Switzerland, Germany and Liechtenstein, with the mean (N=57) situated around the 55 percent mark of the highest possible score (see Figure 5.9).

Table 5.18: Self-rule, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015- 2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	13,32	13,32	13,32	13,32	13,32	13,32	13,32
Andorra	15,53	15,53	15,53	18,29	18,29	18,29	16,91
Argentina	16,16	16,17	17,17	17,18	17,18	17,18	16,84
Armenia	12,70	12,70	12,71	12,72	12,09	12,13	12,51
Australia	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00	15,00
Austria	17,59	17,60	17,78	17,50	17,53	15,84	17,31
Belarus	10,11	10,11	10,11	10,12	10,12	10,12	10,12
Belgium	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11,42	11,42	11,75	11,74	11,74	11,78	11,64
Bulgaria	14,00	14,00	14,00	14,00	14,00	14,00	14,00
Canada	13,57	13,58	13,83	13,83	13,83	13,84	13,75
Chile	10,88	10,88	10,88	10,88	10,88	10,88	10,88
Colombia	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24
Croatia	14,82	14,82	14,83	14,83	14,84	14,84	14,83
Cyprus	9,19	9,19	9,19	9,19	9,19	9,19	9,19
Czech Republic	16,07	16,07	16,07	16,07	16,07	16,07	16,07
Denmark	22,00	22,00	22,00	22,00	22,00	22,00	22,00
Estonia	16,72	16,72	16,72	16,72	16,72	16,72	16,72
Finland	24,85	24,85	24,85	24,85	24,85	24,85	24,85
France	20,84	20,84	20,84	20,84	20,84	20,84	20,84
Georgia	13,66	13,66	14,46	14,46	14,46	14,46	14,19
Germany	18,91	18,91	18,91	18,91	18,91	18,91	18,91
Greece	16,75	16,75	17,00	17,00	16,88	16,88	16,88
Hungary	11,97	11,97	11,91	11,91	11,91	11,91	11,93
Iceland	22,35	22,35	22,35	22,35	22,35	22,12	22,31
Ireland	12,15	12,15	12,15	12,15	12,15	12,15	12,15
Israel	10,72	10,72	10,72	10,72	10,72	10,72	10,72
Italy	16,29	16,29	16,29	16,29	16,24	16,24	16,27
Japan	16,92	17,92	17,93	17,93	17,93	17,93	17,76
Kosovo	11,85	11,85	11,85	11,85	11,85	11,85	11,85
Latvia	12,56	12,56	12,56	12,44	12,44	12,44	12,50
Liechtenstein	21,06	21,06	21,06	21,06	21,06	21,06	21,06
Lithuania	15,94	15,94	15,94	15,47	15,47	15,47	15,71
Luxembourg	16,32	16,32	16,32	16,32	16,32	16,32	16,32
Macedonia	13,83	13,83	13,83	13,83	13,83	13,83	13,83
Malta	10,97	10,97	10,97	10,97	10,97	10,97	10,97
Mexico	11,42	11,22	11,32	11,43	11,45	9,37	11,03
Moldova	9,41	9,41	9,41	9,41	9,41	9,41	9,41
Montenegro	13,57	14,57	13,63	13,63	13,63	13,63	13,78
Netherlands	17,47	17,47	17,47	17,47	17,47	17,47	17,47
Norway	20,82	20,82	20,82	20,57	20,57	20,57	20,70
Poland	17,84	16,99	16,99	16,99	16,99	16,99	17,13
Portugal	18,41	18,41	18,41	19,59	19,59	19,59	19,00
Republic of Korea	12,22	12,22	12,22	12,22	12,22	12,22	12,22
Romania	13,15	12,15	12,65	14,65	14,65	12,65	13,31
Russian Federation	8,13	8,13	8,13	8,12	8,12	8,12	8,13
Serbia	18,02	18,02	18,02	18,02	18,02	18,06	18,03
Slovakia	15,50	15,50	15,50	15,50	15,50	15,50	15,50
Slovenia	13,75	13,75	13,75	13,86	13,86	13,86	13,81
South Africa	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24	18,24
Spain	16,44	17,46	17,70	17,70	17,71	17,71	17,45
Sweden	23,29	23,29	23,29	23,29	23,29	24,29	23,46
Switzerland	20,91	20,91	20,91	20,91	20,91	20,91	20,91
Turkey	13,56	13,56	13,56	13,56	13,56	13,56	13,56
Ukraine	11,11	11,21	11,51	11,83	11,83	11,87	11,56
United Kingdom	13,10	13,09	13,09	13,09	13,09	13,09	13,09
United States Of America	17,68	17,68	17,68	17,68	17,68	17,68	17,68
Mean (N=57)	15,40	15,41	15,47	15,56	15,55	15,46	15,48

Figure 5.9 Self-rule, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



5.1.2 Interactive rule (IR)

The Regional Authority Index of Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010) distinguishes between self-rule and shared-rule variables of regional autonomy. Shared-rule denotes a situation where regions can take part in the overall governance of a country. This cannot be applied to municipalities. They can influence national decision-making regarding their own jurisdiction or that of the status of local government in general if they act collectively, but they are not implied in decisions concerning the whole country. We therefore use the term “interactive rule”. Interactive rule points to ways and means of mutual influence between local and central government, and highlights opportunities for local government as an active player vis a vis central government.

Interactive rule is measured with 3 different variables: legal protection, administrative supervision and central or regional access. Again, we present for each of the three variables the mean values for each year between 2015 and 2020; for each country we give, furthermore, the average score across all years and the scores for separate years. This allows for presenting the overall picture for each variable as well as the development of each country compared to other countries. Each section starts again with the presentation of the coding instructions.

Legal protection (LP)

Legal protection asks for the existence of constitutional or legal means to assert local autonomy. This variable is related to article 11 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government: “Local authorities shall have the right of recourse to a judicial remedy in order to secure free exercise of their powers and respect for such principles of local self-government as are enshrined in the constitution or domestic legislation”.

The passage in the code book here reads:

Legal protection	<i>Existence of constitutional or legal means to assert local autonomy</i>	0-3	(0-1) constitutional clauses or other statutory regulations protect local self-government (0-1) local authorities have recourse to the judicial system through constitutional courts to settle disputes with higher authorities (0-1) local authorities have recourse to the judicial system through administrative courts or ordinary courts to settle disputes with higher authorities or other means that protect local autonomy exist (e.g. listing of all municipalities in the constitution or the impossibility to force them to merge)
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More legal protection for local government was first of all an issue in the 1990s and until the middle of the years 2000. It mostly concerned the new European democracies. Since then, the overall level of legal protection remains constant (see Table 5.19). However, Armenia and Norway have seen an important rise in improvement of legal remedies and tools in recent years (see Table 5.20). In general, municipalities have recourse to the judicial system (constitutional courts, administrative courts, ordinary courts) to settle disputes with higher authorities.

Ranking-wise, a plethora of very diverse countries find themselves at the top with the maximum possible score, which include Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech republic for some of the European countries and Chile, Colombia, Republic of Korea and South Africa among the non-European states. Interesting to note are the Nordic countries who still find themselves very low on this particular scale (see Figure 5.10). Despite the high importance of local government, the legal protection (apart from Finland) is

restricted to statutory regulations or there is no legal remedy for the protection of local autonomy (Norway).

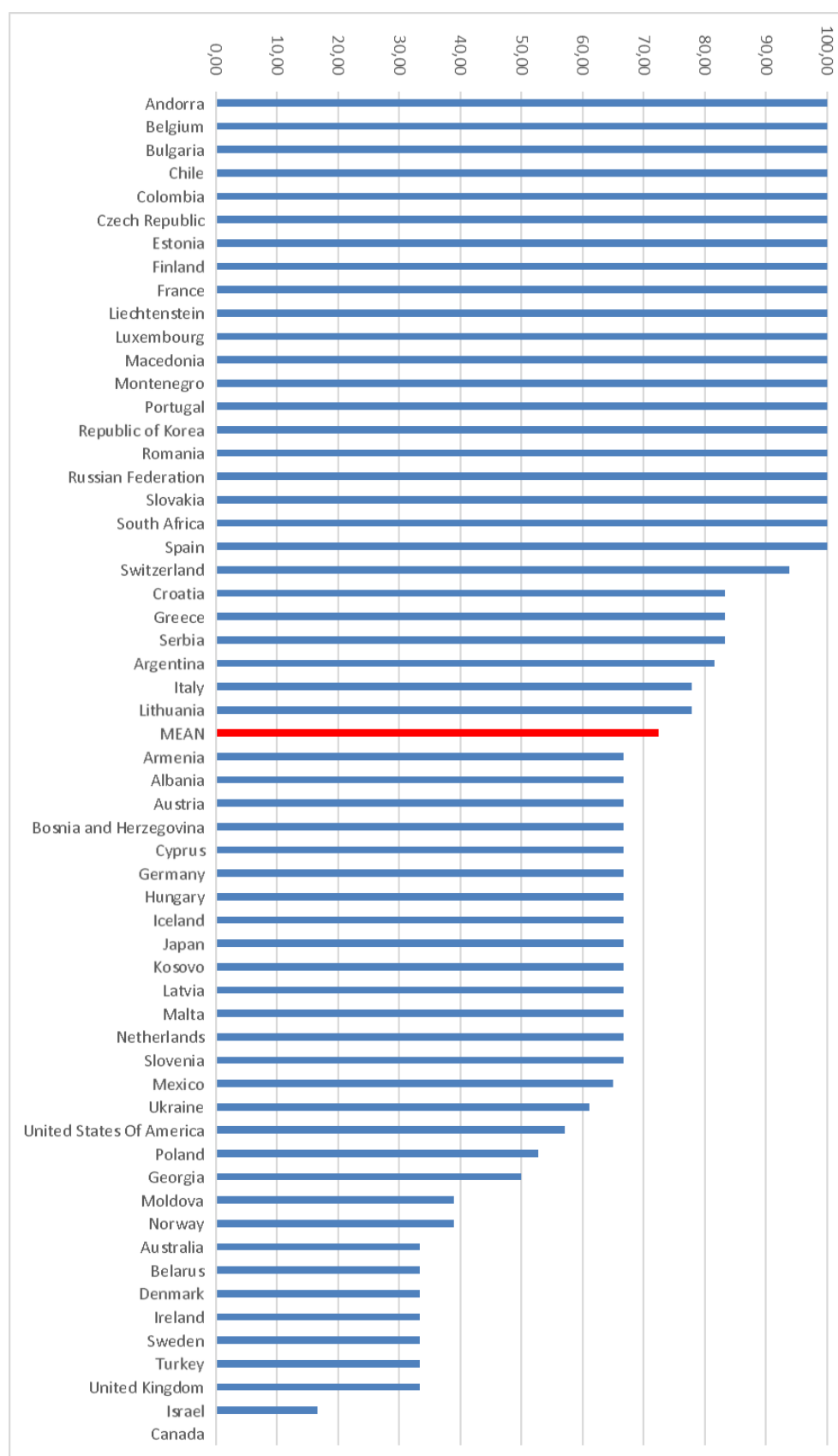
Table 5.19: Legal protection, descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
legalprotection_2015	57	0,00	3,00	2,15	0,840
legalprotection_2016	57	0,00	3,00	2,16	0,798
legalprotection_2017	57	0,00	3,00	2,14	0,811
legalprotection_2018	57	0,00	3,00	2,14	0,811
legalprotection_2019	57	0,00	3,00	2,22	0,812
legalprotection_2020	57	0,00	3,00	2,23	0,802
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Table 5.20: Legal protection, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Andorra	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Argentina	2,45	2,45	2,45	2,45	2,45	2,45	2,45
Armenia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	3,00	3,00	2,00
Australia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Austria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Bulgaria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Canada	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Chile	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Colombia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Croatia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Cyprus	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Czech Republic	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Denmark	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Estonia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Finland	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
France	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Georgia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Germany	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Greece	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Hungary	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Iceland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ireland	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Israel	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50
Italy	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	2,33
Japan	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Kosovo	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Latvia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Liechtenstein	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Lithuania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	2,33
Luxembourg	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Macedonia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Malta	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Mexico	1,85	1,93	1,93	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,95
Moldova	1,00	1,50	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,50	1,17
Montenegro	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Netherlands	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Norway	0,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,17
Poland	2,00	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,58
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Romania	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Russian Federation	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Serbia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Slovakia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Slovenia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Sweden	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Switzerland	2,81	2,81	2,81	2,81	2,81	2,81	2,81
Turkey	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Ukraine	2,50	2,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,83
United Kingdom	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
United States Of America	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71	1,71
Mean (N=57)	2,15	2,16	2,14	2,14	2,22	2,23	2,17

Figure 5.10: Legal protection, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Administrative supervision (AS)

The extent to which municipalities are subject to administrative supervision also affects the autonomy of local government. Article 8 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government expects supervision normally to be concerned with the legality of local decisions (their compliance with legal regulations). Supervision beyond the legality of decisions (expediency, merit) represents restrictions on local autonomy.

The coding instructions were calibrated to give high values to unobtrusive supervision:

Administrative supervision	<i>The extent to which administrative supervision of local government is (un)obtrusive</i>	0-3	0 administrative supervision reviews legality as well as merits/expediency of municipal decisions 1 administrative supervision covers details of accounts and spending priorities 2 administrative supervision only aims at ensuring compliance with law (legality of local decisions) 3 there is very limited administrative supervision (e.g. the higher authorities cannot suspend a decision)
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The average value for all countries is 1.83 which is close to a form of supervision limited to ensuring compliance with the law (see Table 5.21). There have hardly been any changes – at least on an aggregated level – on this variable over the time period covered (see Table 5.22).

Table 5.21: Administrative supervision, descriptive statistics

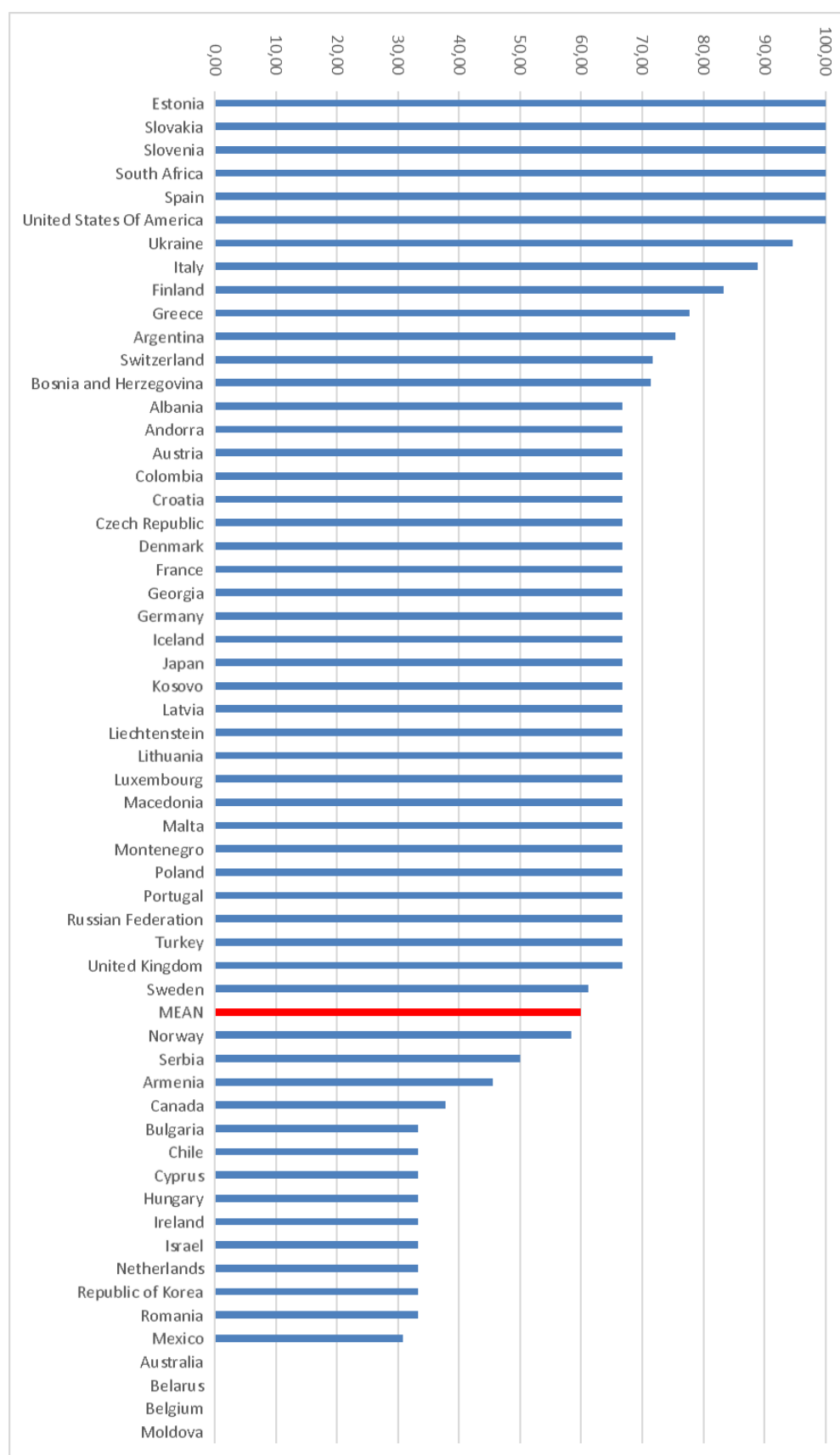
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
administrativesupervision_2015	57	0,00	3,00	1,82	0,769
administrativesupervision_2016	57	0,00	3,00	1,84	0,785
administrativesupervision_2017	57	0,00	3,00	1,84	0,785
administrativesupervision_2018	57	0,00	3,00	1,84	0,785
administrativesupervision_2019	57	0,00	3,00	1,85	0,800
administrativesupervision_2020	57	0,00	3,00	1,81	0,793
Valid N (listwise)	57				

The lightest formats of administrative supervision are found in Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa and the USA and the highest forms can be found in Australia, Belarus, Belgium and Moldova (see Figure 5.11).

Table 5.22: Administrative supervision, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Andorra	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Argentina	2,26	2,26	2,26	2,26	2,26	2,26	2,26
Armenia	1,36	1,36	1,36	1,36	1,37	1,37	1,36
Australia	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Austria	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Belarus	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Belgium	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,14	2,14	2,15	2,14	2,14	2,14	2,14
Bulgaria	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Canada	1,13	1,13	1,13	1,14	1,14	1,14	1,13
Chile	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Colombia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Croatia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Cyprus	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Czech Republic	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Denmark	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Estonia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Finland	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
France	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Georgia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Germany	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Greece	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	2,33
Hungary	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Iceland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ireland	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Israel	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Italy	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	1,00	2,67
Japan	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Kosovo	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Latvia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Liechtenstein	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Lithuania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Macedonia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Malta	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Mexico	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,93
Moldova	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Montenegro	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Netherlands	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Norway	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75
Poland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Portugal	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Republic of Korea	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Romania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Russian Federation	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Serbia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Slovakia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Slovenia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Sweden	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,50	1,50	1,83
Switzerland	2,15	2,15	2,15	2,15	2,15	2,15	2,15
Turkey	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Ukraine	2,03	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,84
United Kingdom	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United States Of America	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Mean (N=57)	1,82	1,84	1,84	1,84	1,85	1,81	1,83

Figure 5.11: Administrative supervision, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Central or regional access (CRA)

Central or regional access looks at the extent to which local authorities have regular opportunities to influence policy-making of higher levels of government. This element is also underlined by the European Charter of Local Self-Government: "Local authorities shall be consulted, insofar as possible, in due time and in an appropriate way in the planning and decision-making processes for all matters which concern them directly" (art. 4.6).

Channels of influence and access are coded as follows:

Central or regional access	<i>The extent to which local authorities have channels to influence higher level governments' policy-making</i>	0-3	(0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through formal consultation procedures and mechanisms (0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through formal representation structures (0-1) local authorities have access to higher-level decision-making through more informal channels (e.g. through trade unions that try to set the legislative agenda, party political networks, dual mandate holding, etc.)
	Additional coding instructions: Please clarify the channels and assess the extent of influence exercised upon the higher level.		

When looking at the variables across all countries, the mean value almost reaches 2, which means that on average, local authorities have about 2 out of the 3 abovementioned channels at their disposal (see Table 5.23).

Table 5.23: Central or regional access, descriptive statistics:

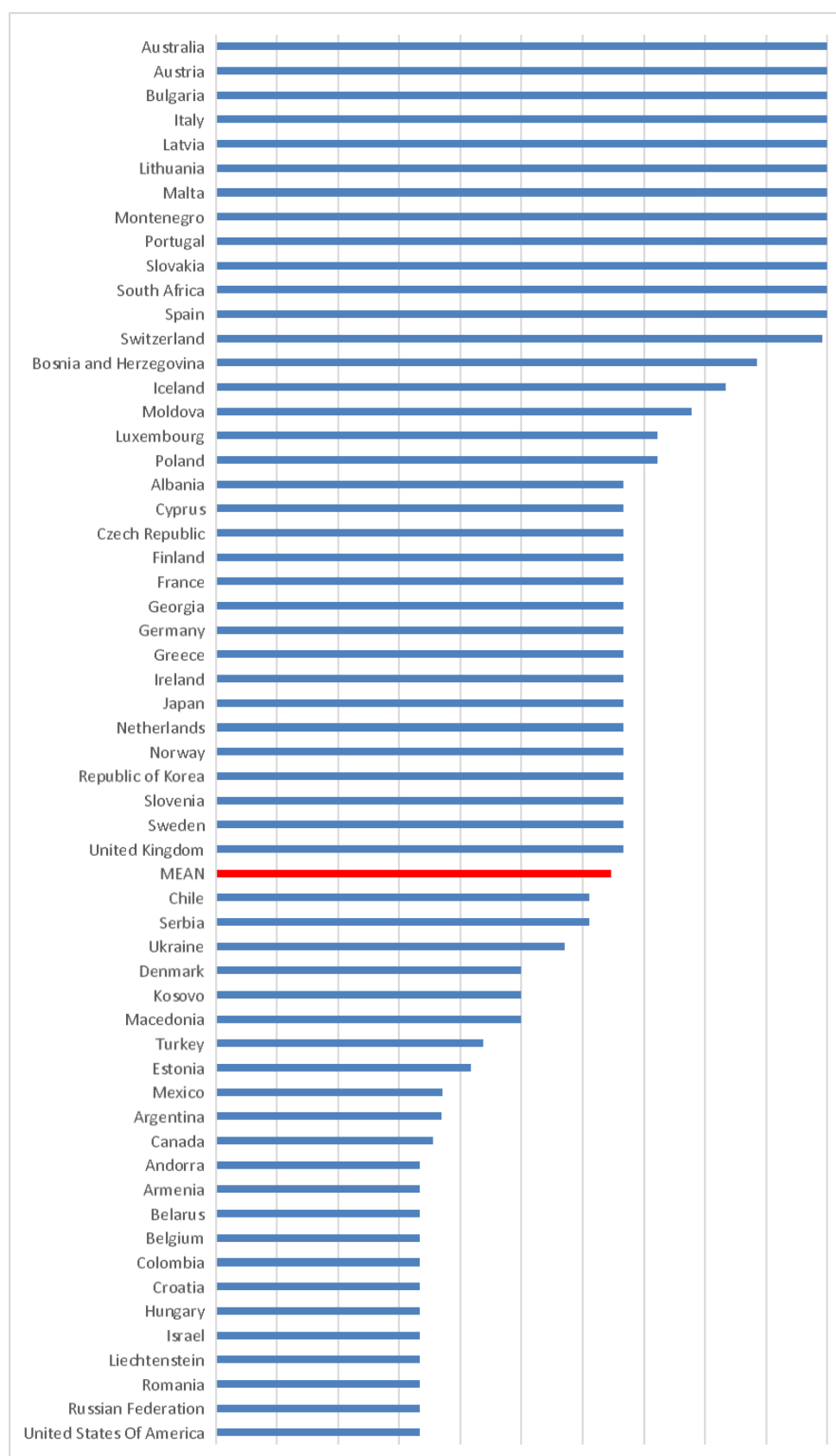
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
centralorregionalaccess_2015	57	1,00	3,00	1,93	0,754
centralorregionalaccess_2016	57	1,00	3,00	1,93	0,730
centralorregionalaccess_2017	57	1,00	3,00	1,93	0,730
centralorregionalaccess_2018	57	1,00	3,00	1,93	0,728
centralorregionalaccess_2019	57	1,00	3,00	1,96	0,744
centralorregionalaccess_2020	57	1,00	3,00	1,96	0,744
Valid N (listwise)	57				

The variable reveals that countries such as Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta etc. enjoy substantial influence through multiple channels, thus reaching the maximum possible score (see Table 5.24). The mean lies at almost two thirds of the maximum score meaning that most of the countries benefit from at least two ways of access to higher level governments' policy making, either through formal consultation/representation or informal channels. The lowest scores are found in federal states such as the Russian Federation and the United States (see Figure 5.12).

Table 5.24: Central or regional access, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Andorra	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Argentina	1,11	1,11	1,11	1,11	1,11	1,11	1,11
Armenia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Australia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Austria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Belgium	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,66	2,66	2,66	2,66	2,66	2,66	2,66
Bulgaria	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Canada	1,07	1,07	1,07	1,07	1,07	1,07	1,07
Chile	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,83
Colombia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Croatia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Cyprus	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Czech Republic	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Denmark	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Estonia	1,25	1,25	1,25	1,25	1,25	1,25	1,25
Finland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
France	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Georgia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Germany	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Greece	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Hungary	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Iceland	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Ireland	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Israel	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Italy	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Japan	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Kosovo	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Latvia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Liechtenstein	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Lithuania	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Luxembourg	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,50	2,50	2,17
Macedonia	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,50
Malta	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Mexico	1,07	1,07	1,07	1,15	1,15	1,15	1,11
Moldova	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	3,00	3,00	2,33
Montenegro	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Netherlands	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Norway	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Poland	3,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,17
Portugal	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Republic of Korea	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Romania	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Russian Federation	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Serbia	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,99	1,99	1,83
Slovakia	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Slovenia	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
South Africa	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Spain	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00
Sweden	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Switzerland	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98	2,98
Turkey	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31	1,31
Ukraine	1,65	1,66	1,69	1,74	1,77	1,77	1,71
United Kingdom	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
United States Of America	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Mean (N=57)	1,93	1,93	1,93	1,93	1,96	1,96	1,94

Figure 5.12: Central or regional access, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



Interactive rule (IR)

As mentioned above, interactive rule is a modification of the shared-rule concept of Hooghe et al. (2010). Interactive rule points to ways and means of mutual influence between local and central government, and highlights opportunities for local government as an active player vis-a-vis central government. Interactive rule sums up the three variables presented above (LP, AS and RCA). The range of values for this variable is between 0 and 9.

Interactive rule	0-9	The overall interactive rule enjoyed by local government in X country (the sum of all the three indicators above)
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The average score for Interactive rule is 5.94 with values ranging from 2 to the maximum of 9 (see Table 5.25).

Table 5.25: Interactive rule, descriptive statistics

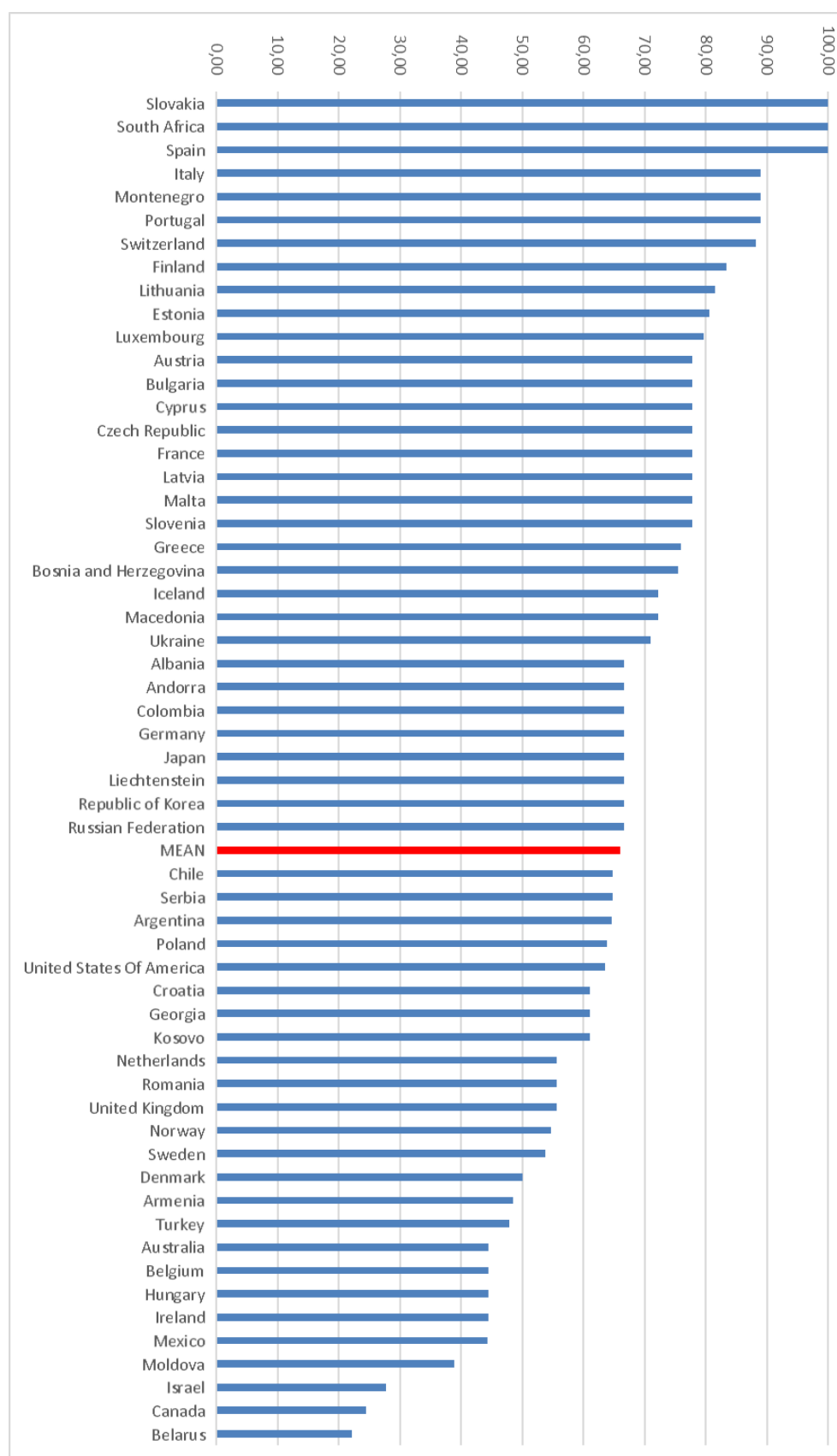
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
interactiverule_2015	57	2,00	9,00	5,8931	1,64396
interactiverule_2016	57	2,00	9,00	5,9293	1,60748
interactiverule_2017	57	2,00	9,00	5,9037	1,61414
interactiverule_2018	57	2,00	9,00	5,9072	1,61079
interactiverule_2019	57	2,00	9,00	6,0260	1,62319
interactiverule_2020	57	2,00	9,00	5,9997	1,56887
Valid N (listwise)	57				

The highest values on the Interactive rule variable are recorded for Slovakia, South Africa and Spain and lowest values in Mexico, Moldova, Israel, Canada and Belarus (see Table 5.26). Interesting to note are the Nordic countries which score comparatively lower than they do on self-rule (see Figure 5.13).

Table 5.26: Interactive rule, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)
Albania	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Andorra	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Argentina	5,81	5,81	5,81	5,81	5,81	5,81	5,81
Armenia	3,86	3,86	3,86	3,86	5,37	5,37	4,36
Australia	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Austria	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Belarus	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
Belgium	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,79	6,80	6,80	6,80	6,80	6,80	6,80
Bulgaria	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Canada	2,20	2,20	2,20	2,20	2,20	2,20	2,20
Chile	5,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	5,83
Colombia	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Croatia	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50
Cyprus	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Czech Republic	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Denmark	4,50	4,50	4,50	4,50	4,50	4,50	4,50
Estonia	7,25	7,25	7,25	7,25	7,25	7,25	7,25
Finland	7,50	7,50	7,50	7,50	7,50	7,50	7,50
France	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Georgia	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50
Germany	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Greece	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	7,50	7,50	6,83
Hungary	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Iceland	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50
Ireland	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Israel	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Italy	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	9,00	7,00	8,00
Japan	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Kosovo	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50
Latvia	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Liechtenstein	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Lithuania	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	8,00	8,00	7,33
Luxembourg	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,50	7,50	7,17
Macedonia	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50	6,50
Malta	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
Mexico	3,85	3,93	3,93	4,07	4,07	4,07	3,99
Moldova	3,00	3,50	3,00	3,00	4,00	4,50	3,50
Montenegro	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00
Netherlands	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00
Norway	3,75	4,75	4,75	4,75	5,75	5,75	4,92
Poland	7,00	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,75
Portugal	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00	8,00
Republic of Korea	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Romania	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00
Russian Federation	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00
Serbia	5,75	5,75	5,75	5,75	5,99	5,99	5,83
Slovakia	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00
Slovenia	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00	7,00
South Africa	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00
Spain	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00	9,00
Sweden	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,50	4,50	4,83
Switzerland	7,94	7,94	7,94	7,94	7,94	7,94	7,94
Turkey	4,31	4,31	4,31	4,31	4,31	4,31	4,31
Ukraine	6,18	7,16	6,19	6,24	6,27	6,27	6,38
United Kingdom	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00
United States Of America	5,71	5,71	5,71	5,71	5,71	5,71	5,71
Mean (N=57)	5,89	5,93	5,90	5,91	6,03	6,00	5,94

Figure 5.13: Interactive rule, country ranking, (mean 2015-2020, incl. mean N=57, standardised)



5.1.3 Local autonomy (LA)

Local Autonomy sums up all the variables presented so far. It is thus the aggregation of all 11 variables or, alternatively, the sum of self-rule (8 variables) and interactive rule (3 variables).

LA	0-37	The combined autonomy of local authorities (the sum of all variables)
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On a possible scale from 0 to 37 the average value measured for all countries over the 6 years from 2015 to 2020 amounts to 20.9. The lowest value measured is 12.11, the highest 32.35 (see table 5.27).

Table 5.27: Local autonomy, descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
localautonomy_2015	57	12,11	32,35	21,2889	4,57302
localautonomy_2016	57	12,11	32,35	21,3439	4,56223
localautonomy_2017	57	12,11	32,35	21,3707	4,57422
localautonomy_2018	57	12,12	32,35	21,4684	4,57438
localautonomy_2019	57	12,12	32,35	21,5744	4,56104
localautonomy_2020	57	12,12	32,35	21,4633	4,60847
Valid N (listwise)	57				

The average value slightly grew from 21.29 in 2015 to 21.57 in 2019, only to decrease to 21.46 in 2020. Across the six years, there is only a minor increase in LA of 0.17 across all 57 countries (see Table 5.28). On the individual country level, no substantial changes can be noted over the past six years, the biggest increase coming from Andorra (+2.76) and the biggest decrease from Poland (-2.35).

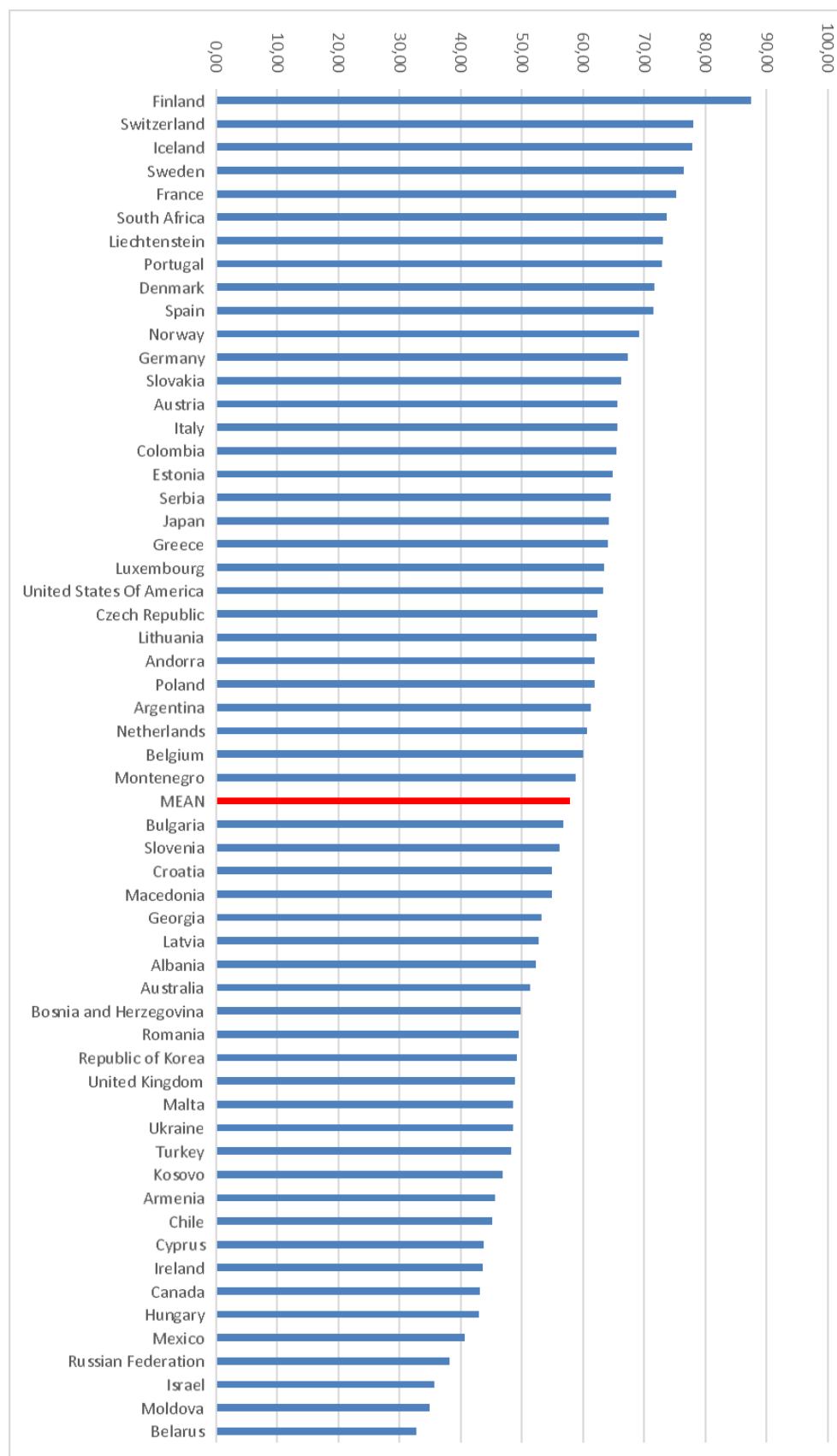
The overall ranking now puts Finland over Switzerland, with the remaining Nordic countries standing strong, and the arrival of South Africa as a newly added country to the top tier (see Figure 5.14).

One of the problems of the figures presented so far is that all the different aspects of local autonomy are given more or less equal importance. The only thing varying is whether a variable ranges from 0 to 3 or from 0 to 4. Having four financial variables and only one concerning organisational issues makes, for example, financial matters much more important, perhaps too important. This is the reason why we abstained from calling the autonomy measured an autonomy "index". In the next section (5.1.4) we will try to reduce complexity and to combine the different variables into a limited number of dimensions or into an overall index (the LAI).

Table 5.28: Local autonomy, single countries (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020, change between 2015 and 2020):

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)	Changes 2015-2020
Albania	19,32	19,32	19,32	19,32	19,32	19,32	19,32	0,00
Andorra	21,53	21,53	21,53	24,29	24,29	24,29	22,91	2,76
Argentina	21,97	21,98	22,98	22,99	22,99	22,99	22,65	1,02
Armenia	16,55	16,56	16,57	16,58	17,45	17,50	16,87	0,94
Australia	19,00	19,00	19,00	19,00	19,00	19,00	19,00	0,00
Austria	24,59	24,60	24,78	24,50	24,53	22,84	24,31	-1,75
Belarus	12,11	12,11	12,11	12,12	12,12	12,12	12,12	0,00
Belgium	22,22	22,22	22,22	22,22	22,22	22,22	22,22	0,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	18,21	18,21	18,55	18,54	18,54	18,58	18,44	0,36
Bulgaria	21,00	21,00	21,00	21,00	21,00	21,00	21,00	0,00
Canada	15,77	15,77	16,03	16,04	16,04	16,04	15,95	0,27
Chile	15,88	16,88	16,88	16,88	16,88	16,88	16,72	1,00
Colombia	24,24	24,24	24,24	24,24	24,24	24,24	24,24	0,00
Croatia	20,32	20,32	20,33	20,33	20,34	20,34	20,33	0,02
Cyprus	16,19	16,19	16,19	16,19	16,19	16,19	16,19	0,00
Czech Republic	23,07	23,07	23,07	23,07	23,07	23,07	23,07	0,00
Denmark	26,50	26,50	26,50	26,50	26,50	26,50	26,50	0,00
Estonia	23,97	23,97	23,97	23,97	23,97	23,97	23,97	0,00
Finland	32,35	32,35	32,35	32,35	32,35	32,35	32,35	0,00
France	27,84	27,84	27,84	27,84	27,84	27,84	27,84	0,00
Georgia	19,16	19,16	19,96	19,96	19,96	19,96	19,69	0,79
Germany	24,91	24,91	24,91	24,91	24,91	24,91	24,91	0,00
Greece	23,25	23,25	23,50	23,50	24,38	24,38	23,71	1,13
Hungary	15,97	15,97	15,91	15,91	15,91	15,91	15,93	-0,06
Iceland	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,62	28,81	-0,24
Ireland	16,15	16,15	16,15	16,15	16,15	16,15	16,15	0,00
Israel	13,22	13,22	13,22	13,22	13,22	13,22	13,22	0,00
Italy	24,29	24,29	24,29	24,29	25,24	23,24	24,27	-1,06
Japan	22,92	23,92	23,93	23,93	23,93	23,93	23,76	1,01
Kosovo	17,35	17,35	17,35	17,35	17,35	17,35	17,35	0,00
Latvia	19,56	19,56	19,56	19,44	19,44	19,44	19,50	-0,12
Liechtenstein	27,06	27,06	27,06	27,06	27,06	27,06	27,06	0,00
Lithuania	22,94	22,94	22,94	22,47	23,47	23,47	23,04	0,53
Luxembourg	23,32	23,32	23,32	23,32	23,82	23,82	23,49	0,50
Macedonia	20,33	20,33	20,33	20,33	20,33	20,33	20,33	0,00
Malta	17,97	17,97	17,97	17,97	17,97	17,97	17,97	0,00
Mexico	15,27	15,14	15,25	15,50	15,53	13,44	15,02	-1,83
Moldova	12,41	12,91	12,41	12,41	13,41	13,91	12,91	1,50
Montenegro	21,57	22,57	21,63	21,63	21,63	21,63	21,78	0,06
Netherlands	22,47	22,47	22,47	22,47	22,47	22,47	22,47	0,00
Norway	24,57	25,57	25,57	25,32	26,32	26,32	25,62	1,75
Poland	24,84	22,49	22,49	22,49	22,49	22,49	22,88	-2,35
Portugal	26,41	26,41	26,41	27,59	27,59	27,59	27,00	1,18
Republic of Korea	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	18,22	0,00
Romania	18,15	17,15	17,65	19,65	19,65	17,65	18,31	-0,50
Russian Federation	14,13	14,13	14,13	14,12	14,12	14,12	14,13	-0,01
Serbia	23,77	23,77	23,77	23,77	24,02	24,06	23,86	0,29
Slovakia	24,50	24,50	24,50	24,50	24,50	24,50	24,50	0,00
Slovenia	20,75	20,75	20,75	20,86	20,86	20,86	20,81	0,12
South Africa	27,24	27,24	27,24	27,24	27,24	27,24	27,24	0,00
Spain	25,44	26,46	26,70	26,70	26,71	26,71	26,45	1,27
Sweden	28,29	28,29	28,29	28,29	27,79	28,79	28,29	0,50
Switzerland	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,85	28,84	28,85	-0,01
Turkey	17,87	17,87	17,87	17,87	17,87	17,87	17,87	0,00
Ukraine	17,28	18,37	17,70	18,07	18,10	18,14	17,95	0,86
United Kingdom	18,10	18,09	18,09	18,09	18,09	18,09	18,09	0,00
United States Of America	23,40	23,40	23,40	23,40	23,40	23,40	23,40	0,00
Mean (N=57)	21,29	21,34	21,37	21,47	21,57	21,46	21,42	0,17

Figure 5.14: Local Autonomy mean (2015-2020)



5.1.4 Dimensions and index of local autonomy

We believe that each of the components of local autonomy is of interest in its own right depending on the questions one is interested in. For some purposes, however, it might be important to reduce complexity and to combine the different variables into a limited number of dimensions or into an overall index. By doing so, we also have the possibility to give different weights to the various aspects of local autonomy considering local autonomy as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Following the literature, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and both theoretical and empirical grounds¹⁴, we distinguish between the following seven dimensions of local autonomy:

- **Legal autonomy** (legal protection) describes the position given to the municipalities within the state (D_LA);
- **Organisational autonomy** (organisational autonomy) measures the extent to which local authorities are able to decide aspects of their political system and their own administration (D_OA);
- **Policy scope** (policy scope) describes the range of functions or tasks where municipalities are effectively involved in the delivery of services, be it through their own financial resources and/or through their own staff (D_PS);
- **Effective political discretion** (institutional depth + effective political discretion) describes the range of tasks over which local government effectively has a say and whether it enjoys a general competence clause (D_EPD);
- **Financial autonomy** (fiscal autonomy + financial self-reliance + borrowing autonomy) combines variables related to financial resources of local government giving them the possibility to influence their own budget (D_FA);
- **Non-interference** (financial transfer systems + administrative supervision) combines on the one hand the importance given to the municipalities within the state and, on the other hand, the extent to which municipalities are controlled by higher levels of the state (D_NI)¹⁵;
- **Access** (central or regional access) measures the extent to which municipalities are able to influence political decisions on higher levels (D_AC).

Not all of the variables we measured are of equal importance for the autonomy of local government. Since theory does not really help to assign different degrees of importance to the various dimensions proposed and the variables of which they are composed we invited the experts involved to judge their respective importance.

Based on the weights established by the coordinators, we can now construct the seven dimensions of local autonomy (see Table 5.29) and the Local Autonomy Index (see Table 5.30). The values for the dimensions and for the index are transformed to a scale reaching from 0 to 100 and the means for 2015-2020 per dimension are presented below. One can observe major differences between the countries for each dimension. Even when LAI scores may seem similar for certain countries, the way this score is reached varies a lot (see Table 5.31).

¹⁴ Ladner, A. and Keuffer, N. (2021). Creating an index of local autonomy—theoretical, conceptual, and empirical issues. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 31(2), 209-234.

¹⁵ A high value here means a low level of control and thus more autonomy.

Table 5.29: Construction of the seven dimensions of local autonomy

$D_LA_YEAR = 100/3 * \text{legalprotection_YEAR}$
$D_OA_YEAR = 100/4 * \text{organisationalautonomy_YEAR}$
$D_PS_YEAR = 100/4 * PS_Total_YEAR$
$D_EPD_YEAR = 100/16 * (\text{institutionaldepth_YEAR} + \mathbf{3} * EPD_Total_YEAR)$
$D_FA_YEAR = 100/25 * (\mathbf{3} * \text{fiscalautonomy_YEAR} + \mathbf{3} * \text{financialselfreliance_YEAR} + \text{borrowingautonomy_YEAR})$
$D_NI_YEAR = 100/7 * (\text{financialtransfersystem_YEAR} + \text{administrativesupervision_YEAR})$
$D_AC_YEAR = 100/3 * \text{centralorregionalaccess_YEAR}$
Weighting factors in bold

Local Autonomy Index (LAI)

Based on the judgements of the country group coordinators the Local Autonomy Index puts an emphasis on effective political discretion and financial autonomy which are considered to be very important dimensions of local autonomy. Policy scope and organisational autonomy are important dimensions of local autonomy, while the last three variables are considered to be somewhat important (see Table 5.30).

Table 5.30: Construction of the LAI (D_LAI)

$D_LAI_YEAR = (\mathbf{1} * D_LA_YEAR + \mathbf{2} * D_OA_YEAR + \mathbf{2} * D_PS_YEAR + \mathbf{3} * D_EPD_YEAR + \mathbf{3} * D_FA_YEAR + \mathbf{1} * D_NI_YEAR + \mathbf{1} * D_AC_YEAR) / 13$
Weighting factors in bold

Based on this index and calculated for the mean value for 2015-2020, Finland ranks highest by a stretch, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and Sweden (see Figure 5.15). The country where municipalities have the lowest degree of autonomy is Moldova.

Furthermore, when looking at the individual LAI scores per country, on the average level, there has not been much evolution in the past six years (see Table 5.32). The biggest increases are Portugal (+4.78) and Norway (+4.17), whereas the biggest decreases are to be found in Austria (-5.78) and Poland (-4.71).

Any construction of an index and any form of weighting implies decisions which might be questioned. Also the eleven variables presented in section 5.1 and the simple sum of all variables (LA) contain implicit weights. By including four variables measuring financial issues much more weight is given to financial aspects than to organisational autonomy which is only measured by one variable. The reduction of the eleven variables to seven dimensions and the different weights given to the variables and the dimensions are attempts to correct such distortions and to make the importance given to the different elements of local autonomy more transparent.

There are substantial correlations between the different variables of local autonomy.¹⁶ But small changes of the weights given to the different variables can considerably alter the ranking of the countries. In this respect, the rankings should be taken with caution and we suggest concentrating on the more general picture.

¹⁶ The correlation between LA and D_LAI for 2015-2020 amounts to .974 (sig. = .000, N = 57).

There is obviously a group of countries where municipalities enjoy a high degree of autonomy (index values above 70). The Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland belong to this group together with Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein.

There is also a group of countries in which local autonomy is very low (index values of 40 and less). The countries here are Cyprus, Malta, Israel, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Moldova.

Between these two groups, we suggest to distinguish three more groups of countries:

- Countries where municipalities have a medium-high degree of autonomy (index values between 60 and 70): Norway, Portugal, Colombia, United States, South Africa, Spain, Germany, Slovakia, Serbia, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Japan, Poland, Austria, Belgium and Greece.
- Countries with a medium degree of local autonomy (values between 50 and 60): Netherlands, Bulgaria, Argentina, Andorra, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Georgia, Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia, Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Croatia and Australia. This is also where the mean value for all 57 countries can be found (57.16).
- And countries with a medium-low degree of autonomy (values between 40 and 50): United Kingdom, Ukraine, Republic of Korea, Kosovo, Chile, Canada, Hungary, Armenia, Mexico, Turkey and Ireland.

Table 5.31: Seven dimensions of local autonomy, single countries, means 2015-2020

Country	Legal autonomy	Policy scope	Political discretion	Financial autonomy	Organisational autonomy	Non-interference	Access
Albania	66,67	55,88	73,53	19,05	62,50	50,00	66,67
Andorra	100,00	36,76	34,31	84,52	75,00	58,33	33,33
Argentina	81,55	46,14	51,12	53,88	80,81	87,67	36,91
Armenia	66,67	45,71	48,28	28,79	46,02	63,88	33,33
Australia	33,33	33,82	21,57	71,16	62,50	50,00	100,00
Austria	66,67	43,16	56,99	62,06	63,20	66,67	100,00
Belarus	33,33	73,53	49,13	29,73	25,00	0,00	33,33
Belgium	100,00	50,00	55,88	73,81	75,00	26,26	33,33
Bosnia and Herzegovina	66,67	45,97	41,54	27,63	77,15	63,81	88,56
Bulgaria	100,00	50,00	54,17	48,81	75,00	16,67	100,00
Canada	0,00	24,54	32,32	71,47	87,32	18,89	35,56
Chile	100,00	32,35	38,11	28,57	50,00	66,67	61,11
Colombia	100,00	66,18	73,53	70,24	75,00	33,33	33,33
Croatia	83,33	29,90	46,25	44,05	62,50	83,33	33,33
Cyprus	66,67	21,62	23,82	29,76	62,50	66,67	66,67
Czech Republic	100,00	36,76	50,37	39,29	81,25	66,67	66,67
Denmark	33,33	76,47	80,15	79,76	100,00	66,67	50,00
Estonia	100,00	57,35	61,64	34,52	93,75	83,33	41,67
Finland	100,00	76,47	86,76	89,29	87,50	91,67	66,67
France	100,00	79,23	76,09	73,81	62,50	83,33	66,67
Georgia	50,00	59,31	58,58	23,21	93,75	66,67	66,67
Germany	66,67	69,12	55,88	76,19	62,50	66,67	66,67
Greece	83,33	40,20	60,78	63,10	47,92	88,89	66,67
Hungary	66,67	46,08	54,78	29,76	62,50	16,67	33,33
Iceland	66,67	55,39	64,34	84,52	100,00	83,33	83,33
Ireland	33,33	23,53	38,24	69,05	37,50	16,67	66,67
Israel	16,67	44,12	21,57	58,33	56,25	16,67	33,33
Italy	77,78	45,10	52,57	69,05	50,00	77,78	100,00
Japan	66,67	60,22	55,11	62,24	75,00	50,00	66,67
Kosovo	66,67	50,00	42,03	29,76	62,50	50,00	50,00
Latvia	66,67	52,94	60,29	15,48	62,50	50,00	100,00
Liechtenstein	100,00	66,18	43,14	85,71	100,00	66,67	33,33
Lithuania	77,78	58,82	69,12	34,52	75,00	50,00	100,00
Luxembourg	100,00	35,29	51,47	59,52	62,50	66,67	72,22
Macedonia	100,00	40,88	53,06	44,05	56,25	66,67	50,00
Malta	66,67	10,29	26,10	33,33	37,50	83,33	100,00
Mexico	65,01	41,67	44,05	27,84	74,07	27,86	37,05
Moldova	38,89	30,88	47,06	15,48	50,00	0,00	77,78
Montenegro	100,00	30,39	43,38	66,67	68,75	33,33	100,00
Netherlands	66,67	64,71	60,29	45,24	75,00	50,00	66,67
Norway	38,89	58,82	71,32	63,10	96,88	79,17	66,67
Poland	52,78	59,64	50,02	59,52	87,50	57,33	72,22
Portugal	100,00	38,97	52,02	73,81	75,00	83,33	100,00
Republic of Korea	100,00	38,24	25,98	58,33	43,75	50,00	66,67
Romania	100,00	45,59	50,86	36,90	70,83	38,89	33,33
Russian Federation	100,00	40,44	6,03	26,58	73,45	33,33	33,33
Serbia	83,33	63,80	54,85	57,14	73,49	75,00	61,04
Slovakia	100,00	50,00	62,50	39,88	100,00	50,00	100,00
Slovenia	66,67	38,52	44,55	29,76	87,50	83,33	66,67
South Africa	100,00	30,88	35,42	89,29	75,00	83,33	100,00
Spain	100,00	34,83	48,23	73,81	72,92	83,33	100,00
Sweden	33,33	67,65	73,53	89,29	100,00	66,67	66,67
Switzerland	93,73	58,34	50,07	97,71	100,00	47,81	99,24
Turkey	33,33	37,51	27,15	44,05	62,50	83,33	43,71
Ukraine	61,11	55,98	45,87	23,42	68,75	58,17	57,09
United Kingdom	33,33	58,83	35,63	57,24	50,00	50,00	66,67
United States Of America	57,12	66,80	62,12	75,25	93,12	50,00	33,33
Mean (N=57)	72,42	48,28	50,06	53,48	70,96	56,93	64,63

Figure 5.15: Local Autonomy Index: Country Ranking, mean 2015-2020

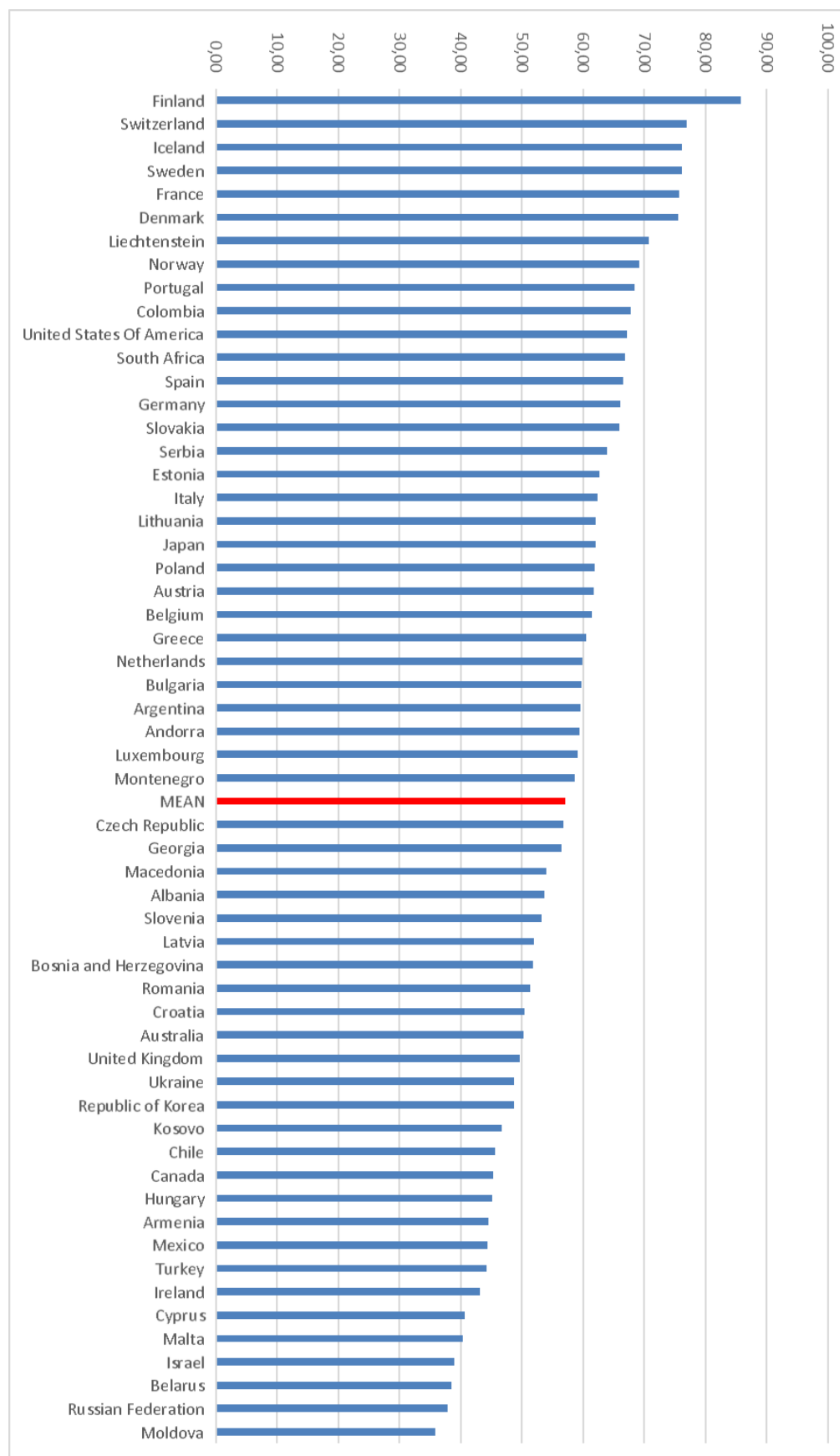


Table 5.32: LAI scores per country, years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, mean 2015-2020 and changes between 2015 and 2020, N=57)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Mean (2015-2020)	Changes (2015-2020)
Albania	53,68	53,68	53,68	53,68	53,68	53,68	53,68	0,00
Andorra	57,95	57,95	57,95	60,78	60,78	60,78	59,36	2,83
Argentina	57,37	57,40	60,70	60,74	60,74	60,75	59,62	3,37
Armenia	42,76	44,07	44,09	44,12	45,89	46,08	44,50	3,32
Australia	50,32	50,32	50,32	50,32	50,32	50,32	50,32	0,00
Austria	62,74	62,74	63,33	62,42	62,51	56,96	61,78	-5,78
Belarus	38,48	38,48	38,48	38,49	38,49	38,49	38,49	0,01
Belgium	61,44	61,44	61,44	61,44	61,44	61,44	61,44	0,00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	51,33	51,32	51,98	51,91	51,90	52,07	51,75	0,74
Bulgaria	59,66	59,66	59,66	59,66	59,66	59,66	59,66	0,00
Canada	45,01	45,01	45,51	45,52	45,52	45,52	45,35	0,52
Chile	43,44	46,01	46,01	46,01	46,01	46,01	45,58	2,56
Colombia	67,72	67,72	67,72	67,72	67,72	67,72	67,72	0,00
Croatia	50,40	50,41	50,43	50,45	50,47	50,47	50,44	0,07
Cyprus	40,69	40,69	40,69	40,69	40,69	40,69	40,69	0,00
Czech Republic	56,79	56,79	56,79	56,79	56,79	56,79	56,79	0,00
Denmark	75,59	75,59	75,59	75,59	75,59	75,59	75,59	0,00
Estonia	62,75	62,75	62,75	62,75	62,75	62,75	62,75	0,00
Finland	85,73	85,73	85,73	85,73	85,73	85,73	85,73	0,00
France	75,63	75,63	75,63	75,63	75,63	75,63	75,63	0,00
Georgia	54,95	54,95	57,32	57,32	57,32	57,32	56,53	2,37
Germany	66,11	66,11	66,11	66,11	66,11	66,11	66,11	0,00
Greece	59,60	59,60	60,56	60,56	61,39	61,39	60,52	1,79
Hungary	45,34	45,34	45,11	45,11	45,11	45,11	45,19	-0,23
Iceland	76,37	76,37	76,37	76,37	76,37	75,41	76,21	-0,96
Ireland	43,12	43,12	43,12	43,12	43,12	43,12	43,12	0,00
Israel	39,01	39,01	39,01	39,01	39,01	39,01	39,01	0,00
Italy	62,00	62,00	62,00	62,00	64,34	61,78	62,36	-0,23
Japan	61,06	62,16	62,17	62,17	62,18	62,19	61,99	1,13
Kosovo	46,70	46,70	46,70	46,70	46,70	46,70	46,70	0,00
Latvia	52,17	52,17	52,17	51,66	51,66	51,66	51,91	-0,51
Liechtenstein	70,69	70,69	70,69	70,69	70,69	70,69	70,69	0,00
Lithuania	62,13	62,13	62,13	60,21	62,77	62,77	62,03	0,64
Luxembourg	58,61	58,61	58,61	58,61	59,89	59,89	59,04	1,28
Macedonia	54,02	54,02	54,02	54,02	54,02	54,02	54,02	0,00
Malta	40,30	40,30	40,30	40,30	40,30	40,30	40,30	0,00
Mexico	45,13	44,67	44,76	45,45	45,66	40,65	44,39	-4,49
Moldova	34,57	35,85	34,57	34,57	37,13	38,41	35,85	3,85
Montenegro	58,41	61,71	57,86	57,86	57,86	57,86	58,60	-0,55
Netherlands	59,95	59,95	59,95	59,95	59,95	59,95	59,95	0,00
Norway	66,67	69,24	69,24	68,27	70,84	70,84	69,18	4,17
Poland	65,87	61,16	61,16	61,16	61,16	61,16	61,94	-4,71
Portugal	65,98	65,98	65,98	70,76	70,76	70,76	68,37	4,78
Republic of Korea	48,74	48,74	48,74	48,74	48,74	48,74	48,74	0,00
Romania	51,35	48,05	49,98	54,56	54,56	49,98	51,41	-1,37
Russian Federation	37,88	37,87	37,88	37,86	37,86	37,85	37,87	-0,03
Serbia	63,60	63,60	63,61	63,61	64,24	64,39	63,84	0,79
Slovakia	65,93	65,93	65,93	65,93	65,93	65,93	65,93	0,00
Slovenia	52,96	52,96	52,96	53,44	53,44	53,44	53,20	0,48
South Africa	66,86	66,86	66,86	66,86	66,86	66,86	66,86	0,00
Spain	64,27	66,22	67,15	67,16	67,19	67,21	66,53	2,94
Sweden	76,19	76,19	76,19	76,19	75,54	76,83	76,19	0,64
Switzerland	76,98	76,98	76,98	76,98	76,98	76,98	76,98	0,00
Turkey	44,15	44,15	44,15	44,15	44,15	44,15	44,15	0,00
Ukraine	47,97	49,48	47,96	49,04	48,95	49,09	48,75	1,12
United Kingdom	49,73	49,71	49,71	49,71	49,72	49,72	49,71	-0,01
United States Of America	67,11	67,11	67,11	67,11	67,10	67,10	67,11	-0,01
Mean (N=57)	56,88	57,00	57,08	57,26	57,51	57,24	57,16	0,36

5.2 Longitudinal development of the LAI (1990-2020)

In this section we present the development of the seven dimensions and the overall LAI across as a thirty-year time-series. The tables and figures shown are the result of combining the data from both the first release of the LAI (LAI 1.0) as well as the current project (LAI 2.0). The results are shown on a standardised scale of 0 to 100 and the time-series is presented as five 5-year-periods and one 6-year period (respectively 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020).

We will first present the evolution of every dimension over time (1990-2020), followed by the combined evolution of the seven dimensions and the LAI. For every dimension the means of the LAI 1.0 countries (N=39) followed by all LAI 1.0 and 2.0 countries (N=57) are shown, to highlight some more specific evolutive patterns.

5.2.1 Development per dimension

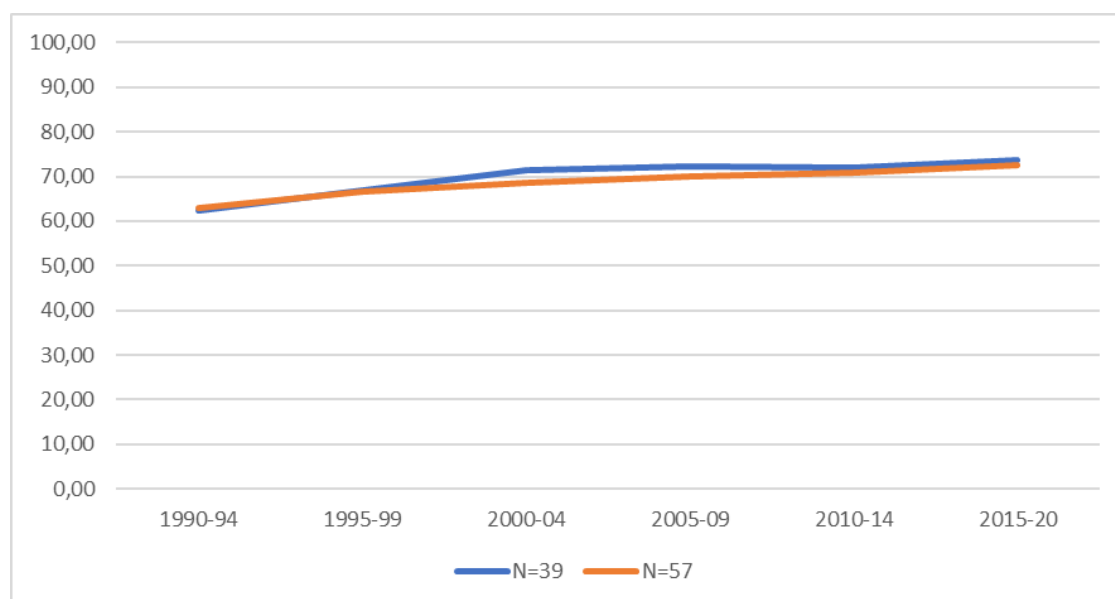
Legal autonomy

For legal autonomy, we can observe a 10% increase for both 39 and 57 country sets (+11.42 and +9.45 respectively), with only a slight decrease between the 2005-09 and 2010-14 time periods (see Table 5.33 and Figure 5.16).

Table 5.33: Legal autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	62,28	62,9697
1995-99	66,85	66,6391
2000-04	71,55	68,5845
2005-09	72,23	70,1065
2010-14	72,06	70,9447
2015-20	73,70	72,4205

Figure 5.16: Legal autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



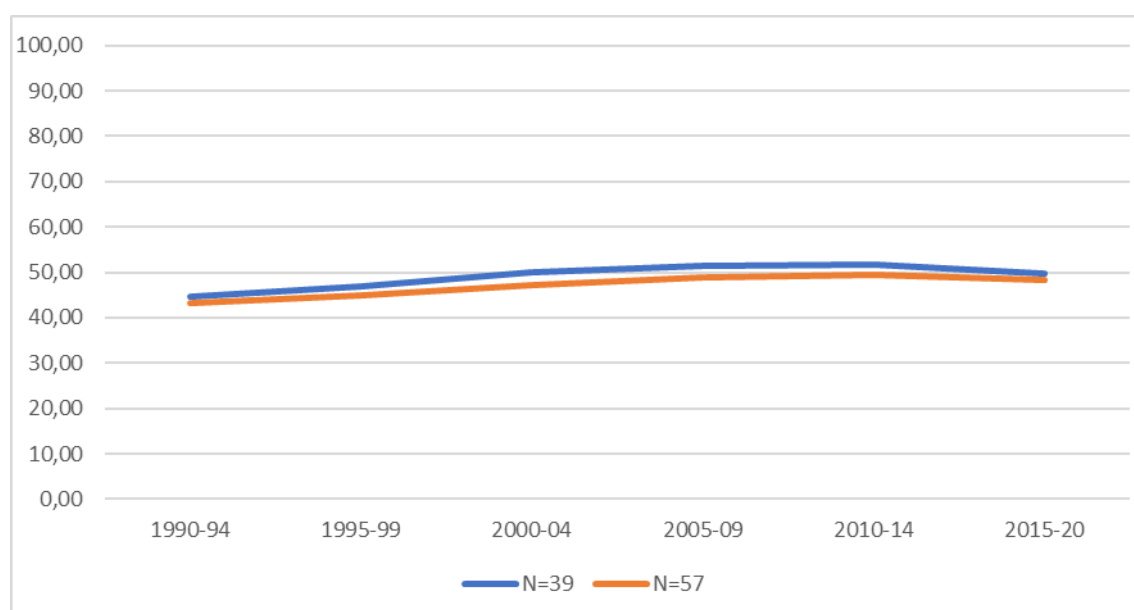
Policy scope

For policy scope, we observe a lesser increase of about 5% for both 39 and 57 countries (+5.31 and +5.15 respectively). A minor decrease can be observed between the two final time periods (see Table 5.34 and Figure 5.17). Over the entire time-series, the 39 European countries show a higher score for this dimension than the total 57 countries, roughly and 2 to 3-point difference.

Table 5.34: Policy scope, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	44,53	43,1312
1995-99	46,97	44,8807
2000-04	49,92	47,0585
2005-09	51,32	48,7775
2010-14	51,69	49,4713
2015-20	49,85	48,2772

Figure 5.17: Policy scope, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



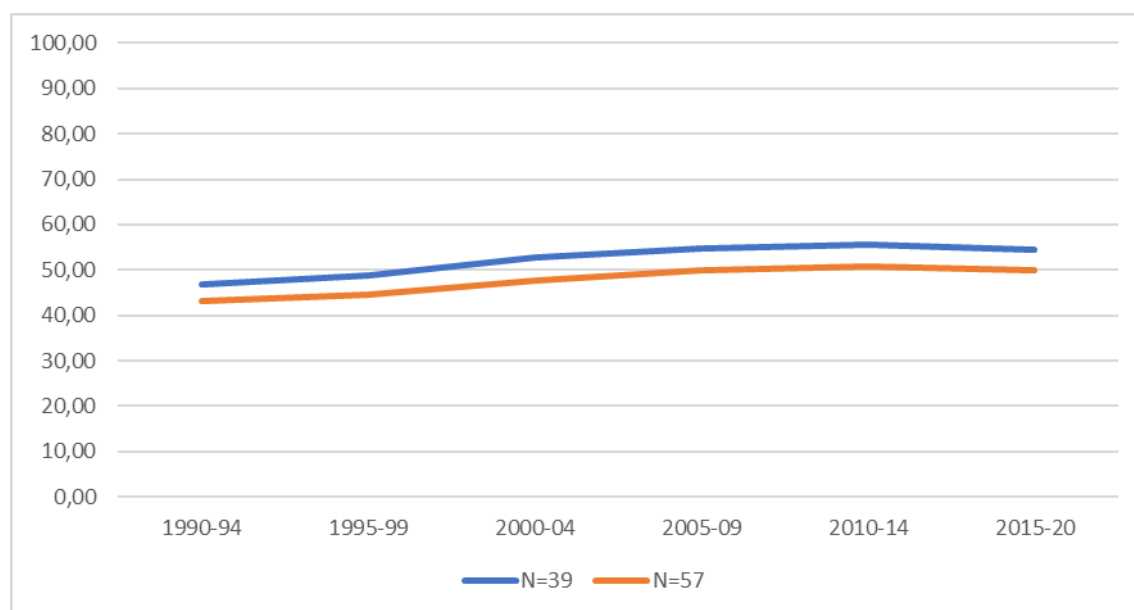
Political discretion

Regarding the dimension of political discretion, similar tendencies can be observed when comparing it to policy scope, explained by the high correlation of both underlying variables, illustrated in a previous section. However, we can see a higher increase over time than for policy scope, +7.73 and +7.02 respectively for N=39 and N=57 (see Table 5.35). Here again, a minor dip can be observed in the final two time periods (see Figure 5.18).

Table 5.35: Political discretion, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	46,83	43,0427
1995-99	48,84	44,5708
2000-04	52,84	47,7212
2005-09	54,69	49,8942
2010-14	55,61	50,9091
2015-20	54,56	50,0625

Figure 5.18: Political discretion, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



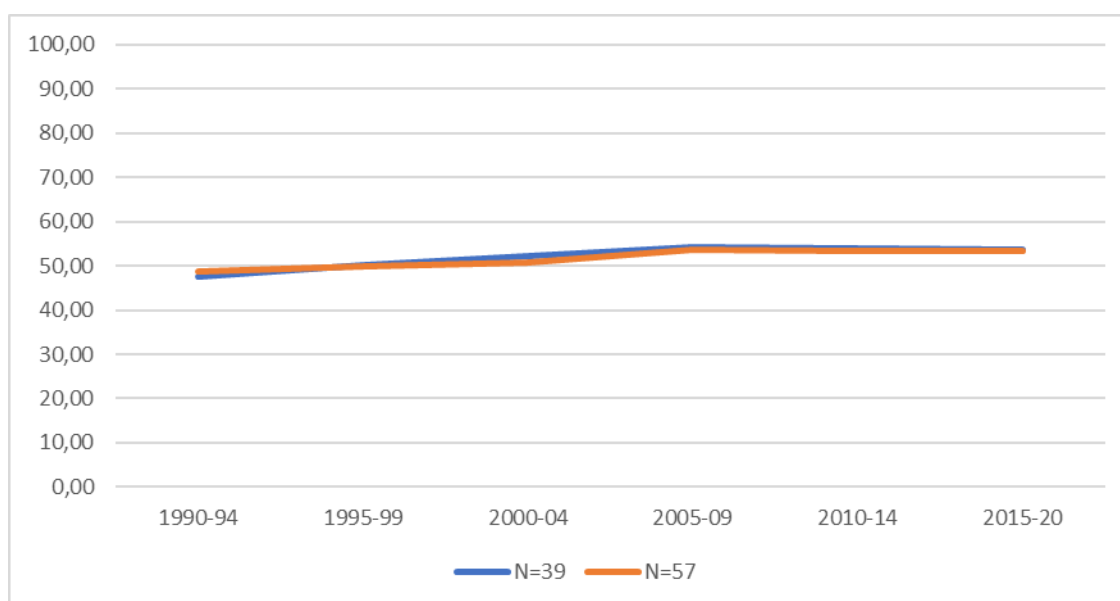
Financial autonomy

One of the smallest increases over time for both 39 and 57 countries can be found in the financial autonomy dimension, respectively +5.86 and +4.86 points on the standardised scale (see Table 5.36). A small decrease can be observed after the 2005-09 period, most likely related to the financial crisis. This trend continues over time during the final six observed years for the 39 European countries, however, this is not the case for the total mean of the 57 countries, as we can observe a minor increase during said period (see Figure 5.19).

Table 5.36: Financial autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	47,68	48,6186
1995-99	50,23	49,8001
2000-04	52,22	50,7772
2005-09	54,25	53,5265
2010-14	54,09	53,3623
2015-20	53,54	53,4796

Figure 5.19: Financial autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



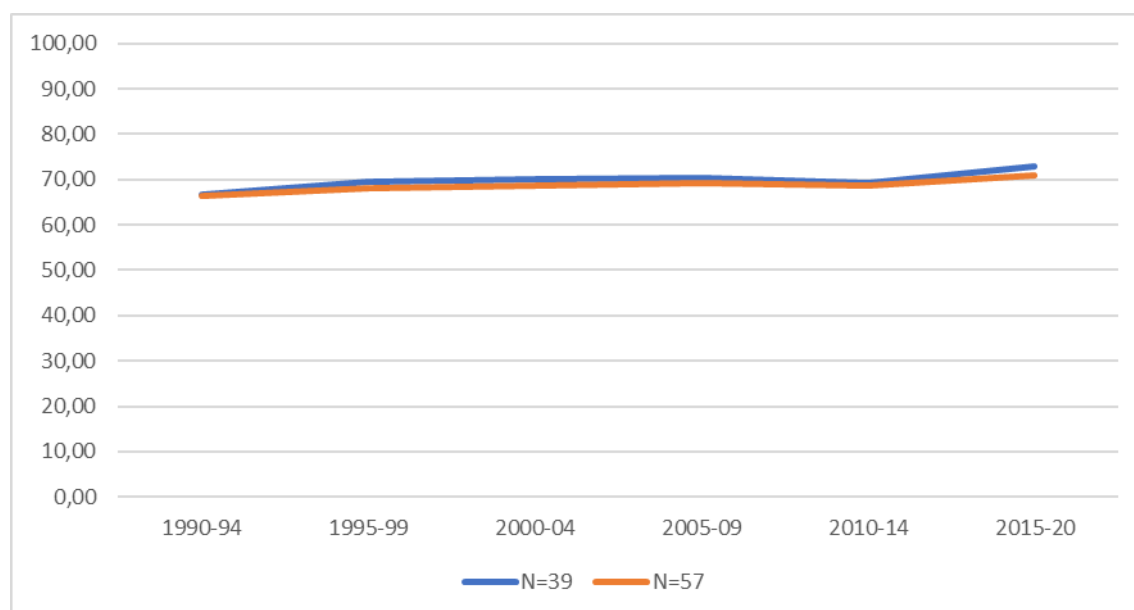
Organisational autonomy

Organisational autonomy shows a more fluctuating trend in both cases. Overall, we can observe an increasing trend from 1990 to 2020 of +6.20 and +4.56 (respectively N=39 and N=57). This trend, however, slows down towards the 2005-2009 period, only to decrease between the 2005-09 and 2010-14 periods (see Table 5.37). Finally, the decrease is overturned and a 2-to-3-point increase is seen in the final period (see Figure 5.20).

Table 5.37: Organisational autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	66,72	66,3971
1995-99	69,41	67,9655
2000-04	70,12	68,6868
2005-09	70,31	69,3725
2010-14	69,35	68,6401
2015-20	72,92	70,9592

Figure 5.20: Organisational autonomy, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



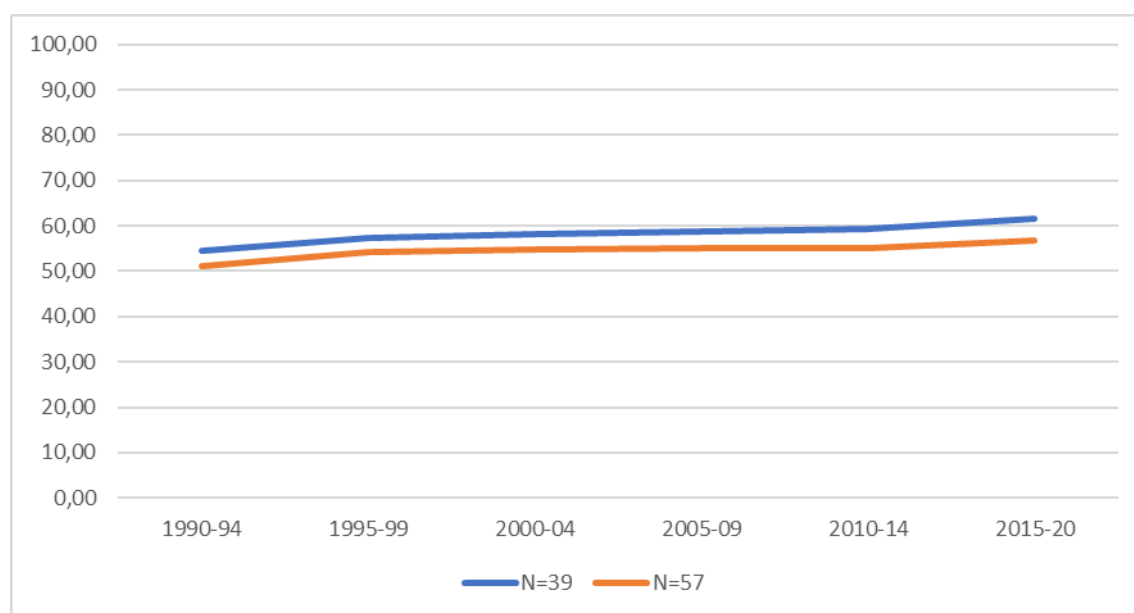
Non interference

The sixth dimension shows a continuous increase over time when N=39, however, an almost negligible decrease occurs between 2005-09 and 2010-14 when N=57, only to pick up the pace during the final period of 2015-20 (see Table 5.38). Overall, the increase is +7.33 for N=39 and 5.83 for N=57. As was the case for the political discretion dimension, a clear-cut difference is visible between the two graph lines, illustrating a higher score during all periods for the smaller group of countries (see Figure 5.21).

Table 5.38: Non interference, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	54,41	51,0967
1995-99	57,48	54,1012
2000-04	58,30	54,8476
2005-09	58,80	55,1318
2010-14	59,39	55,0728
2015-20	61,73	56,9253

Figure 5.21: Non interference, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



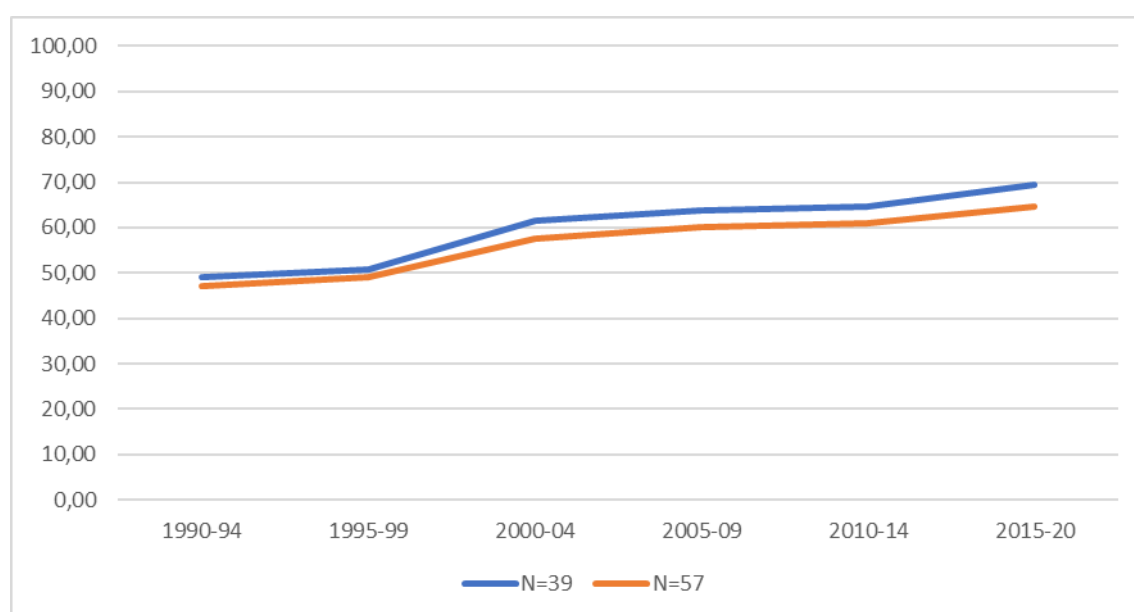
Access

The final dimension is by far the one that has increased the most over time in both cases, +20.41 when N=39 and +17.67 when N=57 (see Table 5.39). This 20% increase has been stable over all time periods, the biggest jumps occurring during 1995-99 and the final six years (2015-20, see Figure 5.22).

Table 5.39: Access, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	N=39	N=57
1990-94	49,03	46,9630
1995-99	50,89	49,1790
2000-04	61,67	57,4632
2005-09	63,88	60,0368
2010-14	64,77	60,8991
2015-20	69,44	64,6343

Figure 5.22: Access, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



5.2.2 Development of all the dimensions

As we have seen in the previous section, each dimension has seen an increase over time. The overall scores are always higher when N=39, but the rising trends share a resemblance when N=57, which makes sense because the 39 countries constitute about two thirds of the N=57 country set. In this section, we present the overall evolution of all dimensions over time.

As seen in Table 5.40, all dimensions seem to have followed a general increase. The fluctuations and slight decreases during certain periods for some of the dimensions have been highlighted in the previous section. Legal autonomy and organisational autonomy visibly score the highest. It is important to note the time-series starts off with 54 countries for the 1990-94 period, only to finally reach the full amount of 57 countries starting at the 2000s. This is because a certain number of covered countries did not exist during the early 90s.

Table 5.40: Seven dimensions of the LAI, means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, N=57, standardised

	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-20
Legal autonomy	62,97	66,64	68,58	70,11	70,94	72,42
Policy scope	43,13	44,88	47,06	48,78	49,47	48,28
Political discretion	43,04	44,57	47,72	49,89	50,91	50,06
Financial autonomy	48,62	49,80	50,78	53,53	53,36	53,48
Organisational autonomy	66,40	67,97	68,69	69,37	68,64	70,96
Non interference	51,10	54,10	54,85	55,13	55,07	56,93
Access	46,96	49,18	57,46	60,04	60,90	64,63
N=	54	56	57	57	57	57

When put into a set of spider diagrams, the numbers show a clear progression of autonomy across all dimensions gradually over time (see Figure 5.23). When visualising only the first and last time period (respectively 1990-94 and 2015-2020), this progress is even more clearly highlighted (see Figure 5.24). the most obvious increase is to be observed on the access dimension.

Figure 5.23: Spider diagram, seven dimensions of the LAI, means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, N=57, standardised

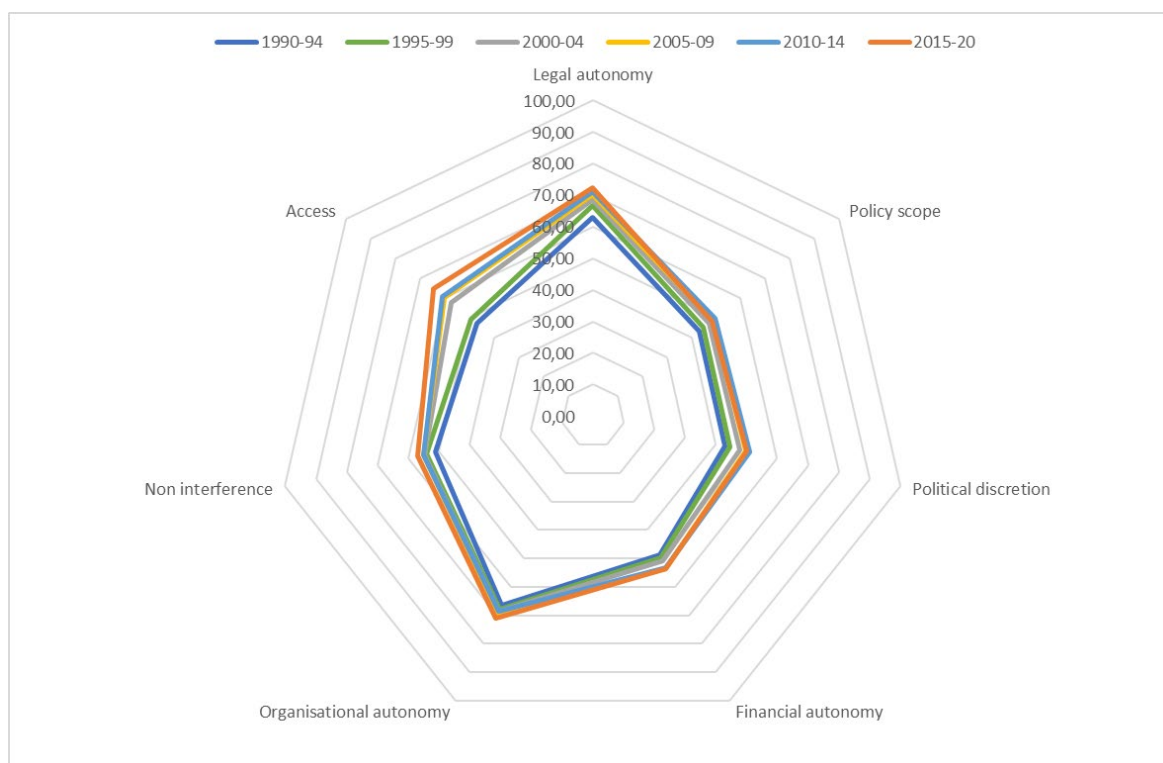
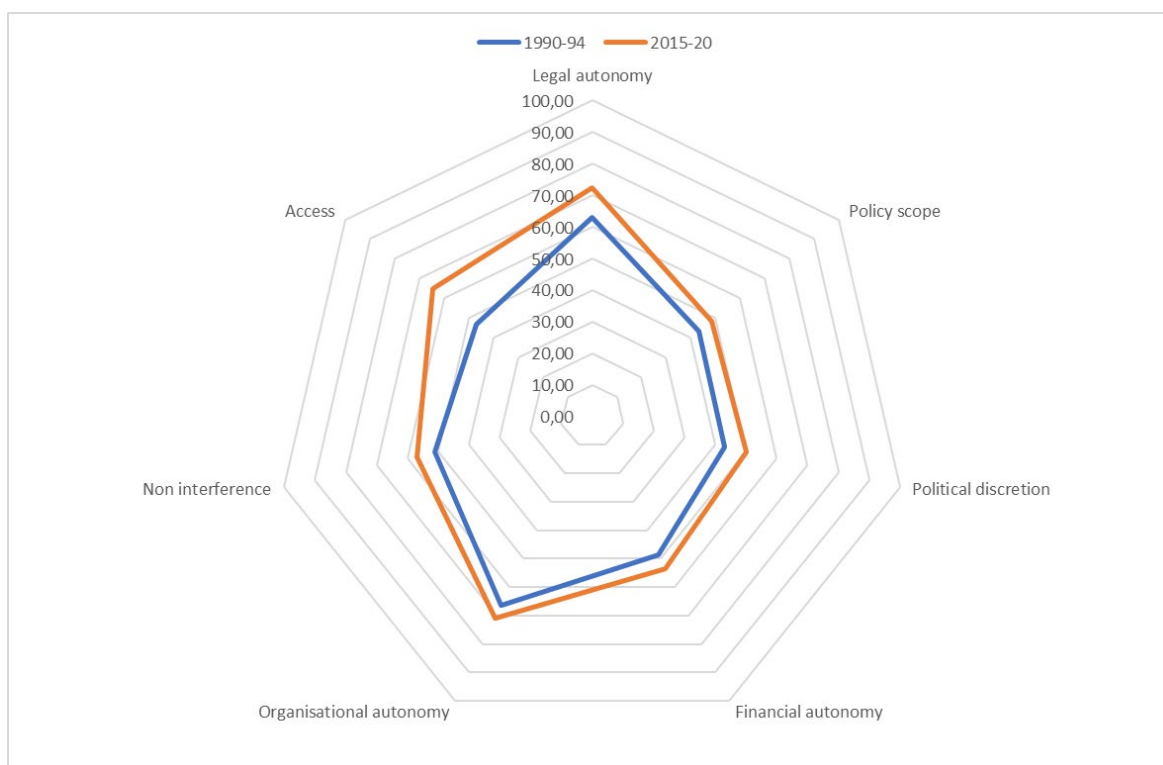


Figure 5.24: Spider diagram, seven dimensions of the LAI, means 1990-94, 2015-20, N=57, standardised



5.2.3 Development of the LAI

Finally, we would like to demonstrate the development of the LAI alongside the aforementioned seven dimensions. Figure 5.25 again shows the evolution of all seven dimensions, this time as a line graph. It also shows the progression of the LAI over time for all 57 countries combined, situated around the 50-57 mark near the middle of the standardised scale. The graph also indicates the previously mentioned observations, i.e. legal autonomy and organisational autonomy situated around the upper 60s, closely followed by the highest progressing access dimension (see Table 5.41).

Figure 5.25: LAI and the seven dimensions, line graph, means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, N=57, standardised

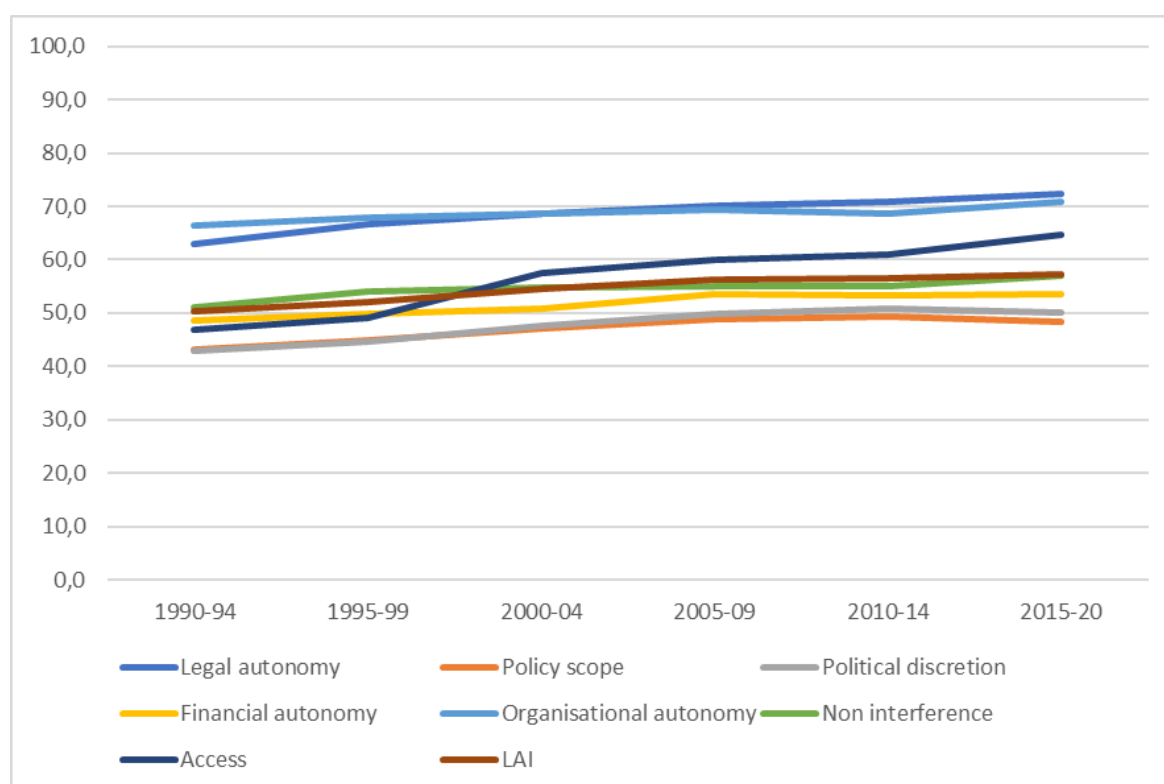


Table 5.41: LAI and the seven dimensions, means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, N=57, standardised

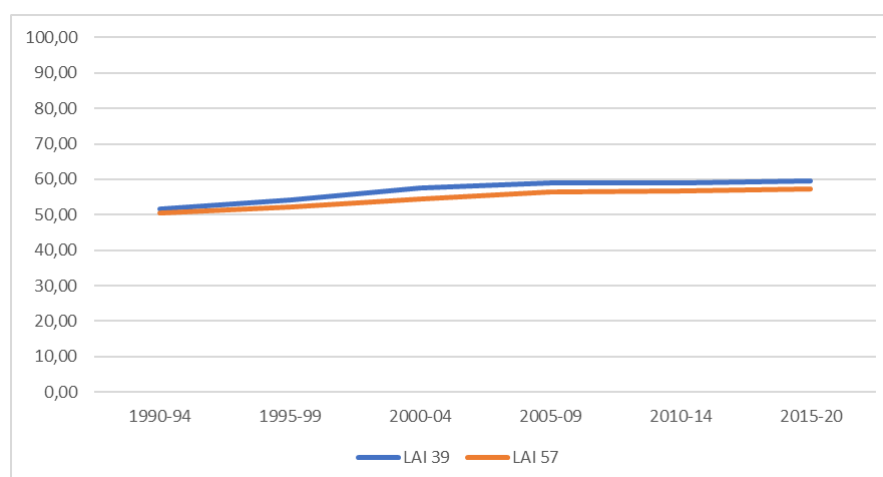
	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-20
Legal autonomy	62,97	66,64	68,58	70,11	70,94	72,42
Policy scope	43,13	44,88	47,06	48,78	49,47	48,28
Political discretion	43,04	44,57	47,72	49,89	50,91	50,06
Financial autonomy	48,62	49,80	50,78	53,53	53,36	53,48
Organisational autonomy	66,40	67,97	68,69	69,37	68,64	70,96
Non interference	51,10	54,10	54,85	55,13	55,07	56,93
Access	46,96	49,18	57,46	60,04	60,90	64,63
LAI	50,39	52,20	54,45	56,30	56,61	57,16
N=	54	56	57	57	57	57

When looking at the development of the LAI individually, we can observe a higher increase in the first decade, gradually slowing down and stabilizing towards 2020. Over thirty years, the LAI has increased around 7-8%, that is +7.92 for 39 countries and +6.77 for the total of 57 countries (see Table 5.42). This slightly stronger increase for N=39 and its higher score at the starting period of 1990-94 is visualized by a more clear-cut difference towards the end (see Figure 5.26).

Table 5.42: LAI, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised

Period	LAI 39	LAI 57	Period	LAI 39	LAI 57
1990-94	51,67	50,39	2005-09	58,85	56,30
1995-99	54,25	52,20	2010-14	59,03	56,61
2000-04	57,44	54,45	2015-20	59,59	57,16

Figure 5.26: LAI, values for 39 and 57 countries, per time period (1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14 and 2015-2020), standardised



5.3 Determinants and implications of local autonomy

5.3.1 Determinants of local autonomy

Population, number and size of local governments

When looking at population size, the number and size of local governments, we see positive coefficients but no significative correlations with the LAI or any of its dimensions (see Table 5.43).

Table 5.43: Correlations, LAI and its seven dimensions with population size, number of local governments and size

		POP_2020	LG_2015_2020	sizeIlg2020
LAI_Index_D7w_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,018	0,145	-0,087
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,894	0,283	0,518
	N	57	57	57
D7w_legalautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,065	0,003	-0,067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,629	0,980	0,623
	N	57	57	57
D7w_politicaldiscrction_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,099	0,104	-0,234
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,462	0,441	0,079
	N	57	57	57
D7w_policyscope_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,166	0,247	-0,125
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,217	0,064	0,353
	N	57	57	57
D7w_financialautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,127	0,136	0,146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,346	0,312	0,278
	N	57	57	57
D7w_organisationalautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,079	0,124	-0,234
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,557	0,359	0,080
	N	57	57	57
D7w_noninterference_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,066	-0,003	-0,043
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,626	0,982	0,749
	N	57	57	57
D7w_access_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,235	-0,177	0,129
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,079	0,188	0,340
	N	57	57	57

Country groupings according to membership affiliations (EU, CoE, OECD), federalist countries and politico-administrative traditions/systems

The countries participating in the LAI 2.0 project belong to different international organisations and alliances. Not all of them promote local autonomy to the same extent, but it is interesting to know whether in some of these alliances local autonomy is stronger than in others.

Our data reveal some minor differences only (see Table 5.44). In the OECD countries (N=35) local autonomy is on average slightly higher than in the countries of the CoE (N=44) or the EU (N=27). This is particularly due to more autonomy on the financial dimensions. The countries of the CoE enjoy more autonomy compared to the EU as far as their legal autonomy is concerned and when it comes to intergovernmental relations (non-interference and access).

Table 5.44: LAI and dimension scores by affiliations (EU, CoE, OECD member States), means 2015-20, standardised

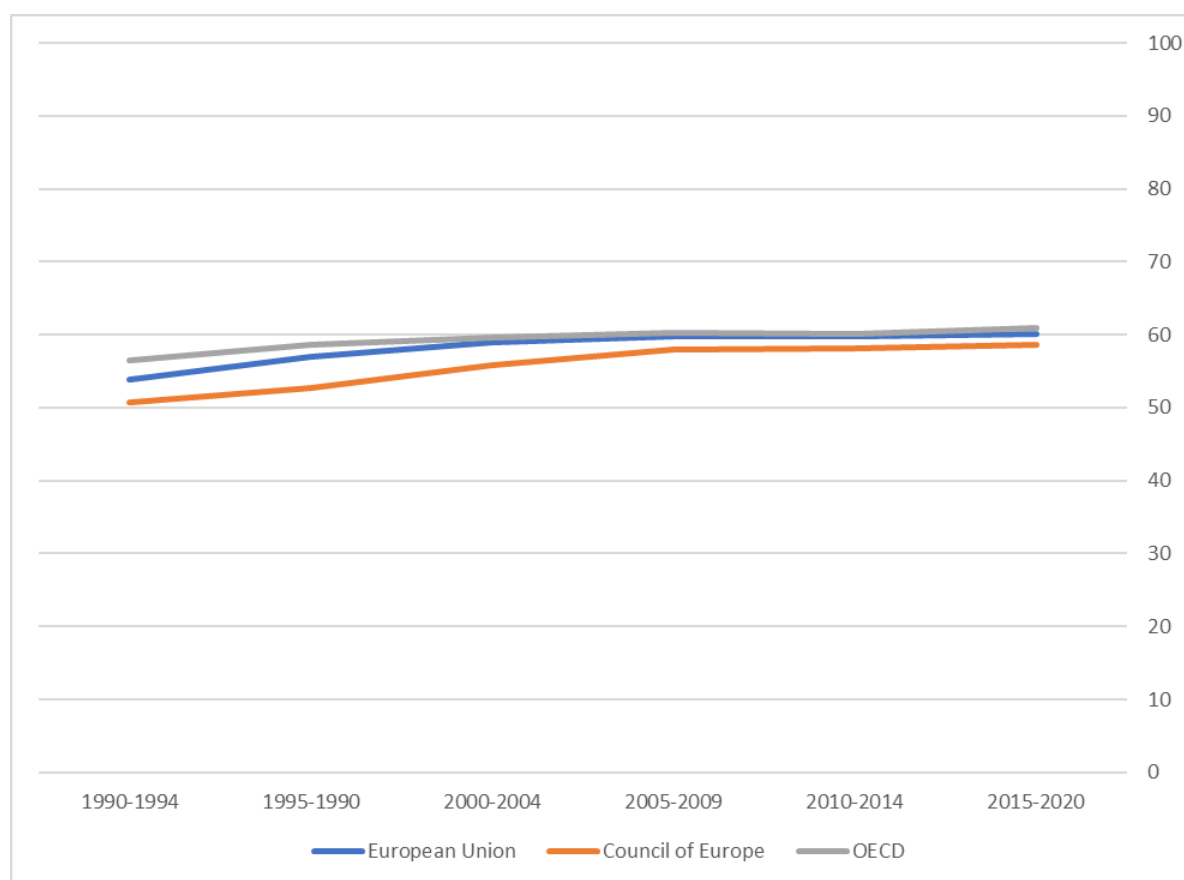
	EU	CoE	OECD
LAI_Index_D7w_15_20s	60,2	58,6	60,8
D7w_legalautonomy_2015s	78,1	75,2	70,9
D7w_politicaldiscretion_2015s	55,7	52,3	54,4
D7w_policyscope_2015s	48,2	48,7	50,8
D7w_financialautonomy_2015s	54,6	52,8	59,8
D7w_organisationalautonomy_2015s	71,5	72,4	74,0
D7w_noninterference_2015s	62,3	60,5	59,5
D7w_access_2015s	71,7	68,1	68,5
N=	27	44	35

When looking more specifically at the evolution of the LAI over 30 years among these three groups, the EU and CoE members states show a constant progression over time whereas the OECD group shows a slight dip between 2005-09 and 2010-14. That being said, the OECD countries benefit from an overall higher score than the other two country groups, and maintain the highest average scores even though their progression is less important (+4.41 compared to +6.27 for the EU and +7.81 for the CoE, see Table 5.45). Visually speaking, we can see that the CoE group is catching up with the EU average, which could be an indication of successful adhesions by CoE member States to the European Charter (see Figure 5.27).

Table 5.45: LAI evolution by affiliation (EU, CoE, OECD), means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, standardised

LAI_Index	EU	CoE	OECD
1990-1994	53,90	50,74	56,43
1995-1999	56,89	52,63	58,66
2000-2004	58,98	55,88	59,65
2005-2009	59,70	57,95	60,32
2010-2014	59,84	58,08	60,17
2015-2020	60,17	58,55	60,84
Changes	6,27	7,81	4,41

Figure 5.27: LAI evolution by affiliation (EU, CoE, OECD), means 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04, 2005-09, 2010-14, 2015-20, standardised



Another way of looking at the results would be to separate the countries into groups according to politico-administrative systems/traditions¹⁷ and to see how federal states fare on the seven dimensions and LAI by creating a separate category for the latter as well.

The table also reveals the lack of autonomy in the Eastern countries and the particularly high degree of autonomy in the Nordic countries which score the highest on the overall LAI score by a stretch. However, when looking more deeply into the dimensional differences, the latter end up in the lower tier for legal autonomy alongside the Anglo-Saxon countries (see Table 5.46). On the policy scope, political discretion and organisational autonomy dimension, they again score the highest. The continental European federal states (Switzerland, Germany and Austria) score highest for financial autonomy and access, whereas the continental European Napoleonic countries take the lead in non-interference and are runners-up for legal autonomy. Federalist countries generally fare well on legal and organisational autonomy, which might be related to their particular legal-organisational configurations, which could also explain why they score high on the Regional Authority Index (RAI, see section 5.3.3).

¹⁷ Kuhlmann, S., and Wollmann, H. (2019). *Introduction to comparative public administration: Administrative systems and reforms in Europe*. Cheltenham and Camberley (UK): Edward Elgar Publishing.

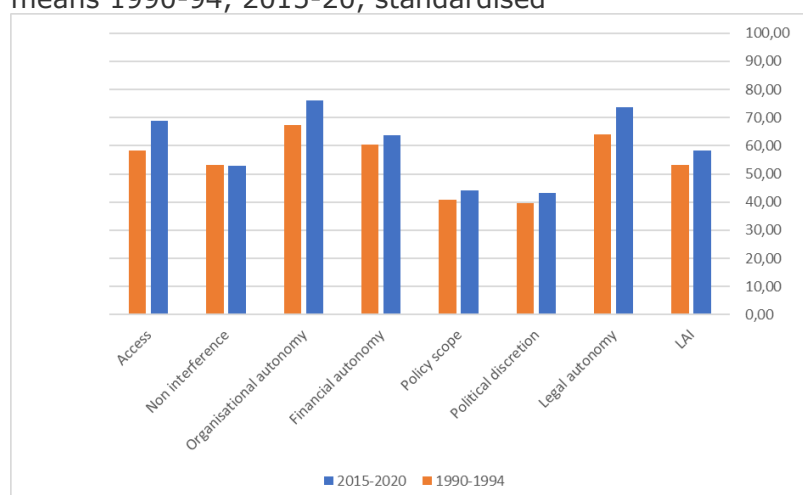
Table 5.46: LAI and dimensions across country groups (Federalist Countries, Continental European Napoleonic, Continental European Federal, Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, Central Eastern European, South Eastern European, others), 2015 means, standardised

	Federalist	Continental European Napoleonic	Continental European Federal	Nordic	Anglo-Saxon	Central Eastern European	South Eastern European	Others
LAI	58,2	65,8	68,3	73,8	45,0	57,5	55,5	52,5
Legal autonomy	73,6	93,5	75,7	56,5	50,0	79,9	100,0	70,0
Policy scope	44,0	48,1	56,9	66,6	34,6	48,1	47,8	45,2
Political discretion	43,2	57,6	54,3	72,7	30,9	54,4	52,5	44,8
Financial autonomy	63,8	71,2	78,7	75,2	45,3	42,1	42,9	46,7
Organisational autonomy	76,1	63,9	75,2	93,2	43,8	82,8	72,9	68,0
Non interference	52,8	73,8	60,4	72,9	66,7	47,7	27,8	53,0
Access	68,9	77,8	88,6	66,7	83,3	68,1	66,7	58,2
N=	14	6	3	6	2	4	2	34

Regarding federalist countries, the following graph shows the evolution of the various dimensions and the LAI between 1990-94 and 2015-2020 (see Figure 5.27). The LAI did increase over time, but not equally across all dimensions: financial autonomy, policy scope and political discretion have only seen a slight increase while non-interference shows barely any increase over 30 years.

Federalist countries do not seem to have more autonomous municipalities. Compared to non-federalist countries they have a little bit more financial and organisational autonomy but less legal autonomy. This at a first sight an astonishing result which is most probably due to two different groups of federalist countries. One in which the spirit of federalism is present in any form of decentralisation and one where the intermediate tier (sub-national level) is autonomous, and the lower tier (local/municipal level) does indeed have a low degree of autonomy.

Figure 5.27: Evolution of the LAI and its dimensions for federalist countries (N=14), means 1990-94, 2015-20, standardised



5.3.2 Implications of local autonomy

In this section, we present the correlations of the LAI data with the variables of the supplementary data we asked the experts to provide (see chapter 4.2). There are in fact signs that local autonomy works in the right direction: satisfaction with services and democracy as well as trust are higher and the same is the case for the importance of local government and to some extent also the implication during COVID (see Table 5.47). However, this all depends on what country set you look at (the 39 countries of the first release i.e. LAI 1.0 or the total amount of covered countries, i.e. N=57). If we look at the different dimensions, it seems that political discretion, financial and organisational autonomy are particularly important (see Table 5.48).

Table 5.47: Correlations LAI (mean 2015-20, standardised) and supplementary data from country profiles (2020)

		LAI_Index_D7w _2015_2020s	LAI_Index_D7 w_2015_2020s
ImplicationCovid	Pearson Correlation	0,133	0,357*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,329	0,028
	N	56	38
SatisfactionServices	Pearson Correlation	0,388**	0,410*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,003	0,011
	N	56	38
ImportanceLocGov	Pearson Correlation	0,435**	0,417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001	0,009
	N	55	38
SatisfactionLocDemocracy	Pearson Correlation	0,444**	0,314
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001	0,055
	N	56	38
TurnoutLocEle	Pearson Correlation	0,228	0,180
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,090	0,280
	N	56	38
TurnoutcomparedNational Elections	Pearson Correlation	0,141	0,091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,306	0,594
	N	55	37
TrustLocalPoliticians	Pearson Correlation	,289*	0,266
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,031	0,107
	N	56	38
TrustcomparedtoNationalP oliticians	Pearson Correlation	0,000	-0,051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,997	0,766
	N	54	37

Note: ** = significant at 0.01 level, * = significant at 0.05 level.

Table 5.48: Correlations seven dimensions of the LAI (mean 2015-20, standardised) and supplementary data from country profiles (2020)

		D7w_legalau tonomy_2015 _2020s	D7w_policys cope_2015_ 2020s	D7w_political discretion_20 15_2020s	D7w_financia lautonomy_2 015_2020s	D7w_organis ationalautono my_2015_20 20s	D7w_noninte reference_201 5_2020s	D7w_access _2015_2020 s
ImplicationCovid	Pearson Correlation	0,100	0,176	0,053	0,033	0,220	0,075	-0,093
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,463	0,195	0,697	0,809	0,104	0,581	0,495
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
SatisfactionServi ces	Pearson Correlation	-0,110	0,228	0,256	,374**	,351**	0,083	0,111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,419	0,092	0,057	0,004	0,008	0,543	0,414
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
ImportanceLocG ov	Pearson Correlation	0,098	0,033	,276*	,466**	0,215	0,144	,271*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,477	0,812	0,041	0,000	0,115	0,294	0,045
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
SatisfactionLoc Democracy	Pearson Correlation	0,000	0,184	,329*	,358**	,325*	,274*	0,149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,999	0,174	0,013	0,007	0,015	0,041	0,272
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
TurnoutLocEle	Pearson Correlation	0,070	-0,091	0,002	,434**	0,043	0,176	0,020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,606	0,506	0,989	0,001	0,753	0,195	0,882
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
Turnoutcompare dNationalElectio	Pearson Correlation	,315*	0,057	0,116	0,045	0,051	-0,009	0,048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,019	0,679	0,398	0,746	0,714	0,950	0,726
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
TrustLocalPolitic ians	Pearson Correlation	-0,012	0,171	,299*	0,162	0,236	0,152	0,066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,930	0,209	0,025	0,232	0,080	0,264	0,631
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
Trustcomparedt oNationalPoliti	Pearson Correlation	-0,061	-0,013	0,043	0,032	-0,104	0,000	0,057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,661	0,925	0,757	0,817	0,456	0,998	0,682
	N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54

Note: ** = significant at 0.01 level, * = significant at 0.05 level.

5.3.3 A short comparison with other indices of decentralisation

Correlations with the Regional Authority Index (RAI)

In these projects we followed the methodology of the Regional Authority Index project by Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010). However, when we tend to compare both indexes, there are no correlations between LAI and RAI variables to be mentioned, at least in our larger sample (see Table 5.49). If we only look at the countries which took part in the LAI 1.0 project, there are slight correlations with the RAI self-rule index. There is perhaps something like an overarching culture of decentralisation but there are also countries which decentralise either on the local or on the regional level.

Table 5.49: Correlations with the RAI (2018), 2020 means, standardised

		RAI_selfrule (2018)	RAI_sharedrule (2018)	RAI (2018)
selfrule_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,237	0,057	0,186
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,101	0,699	0,200
	N	49	49	49
interactiverule_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,149	-0,077	-0,133
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,306	0,599	0,362
	N	49	49	49
localautonomy_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,156	0,023	0,117
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,284	0,874	0,422
	N	49	49	49
selfrule_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,350*	0,214	0,325
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,037	0,211	0,053
	N	36	36	36
interactiverule_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,083	0,064	-0,033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,630	0,713	0,847
	N	36	36	36
localautonomy_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,293	0,217	0,287
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,083	0,203	0,090
	N	36	36	36

Note: ** = significant at 0.01 level, * = significant at 0.05 level.

Correlations with OECD fiscal decentralisation data

In this final subsection we compare the different dimensions of local autonomy and the Local Autonomy Index (LAI) to other indices of decentralisation such as those found in the OECD fiscal decentralisation database.¹⁸ Without going too much into details, there are some interesting aspects to highlight based on the results of our analysis (see Table 5.50).

The LAI somewhat correlates with the part of local governments' own tax in percent of general government tax income, but does not correlate quite as much with the percentage of non-central government spending, at least not at a significant level. Financial autonomy correlates with both of the fiscal decentralisation indicators we used, as was expected. Interesting enough, we find similarly important correlations for organisational autonomy. Also worthy to note are the negative correlations of legal autonomy with the OECD indicators. The reason for this is most probably to be found in the well-established Nordic systems where local autonomy is high and no special legal status is needed to protect the municipalities.

¹⁸ OECD fiscal decentralisation database (consulted in 2021), available under: <http://www.oecd.org/tax/federalism/oecdiscaldecentralisationdatabase.htm>

Table 5.50: Correlations with OECD fiscal decentralisation indicators, means 2015-20, standardised

		Percentage of non-central total government spending (2019)	Subcentral tax revenue as % of total tax revenue
LAI_Index_D7w_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,312	0,361*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,087	0,033
	N	31	35
D7w_legalautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,293	-0,328
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,109	0,055
	N	31	35
D7w_policyscope_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,259	0,289
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,159	0,092
	N	31	35
D7w_politicaldiscretion_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,112	0,138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,548	0,428
	N	31	35
D7w_financialautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,455*	0,575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,010	0,000
	N	31	35
D7w_organizationalautonomy_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	0,547**	0,453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001	0,006
	N	31	35
D7w_noninterference_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,101	-0,070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,588	0,690
	N	31	35
D7w_access_2015_2020s	Pearson Correlation	-0,145	-0,100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,437	0,568
	N	31	35

Note: ** = significant at 0.01 level, * = significant at 0.05 level.

Taken all together, the relative and varying degrees of closeness of our measures of autonomy to the other indices of decentralisation can be taken both as a sign that our data measures the relevant aspects of autonomy and that it adds new elements to the measurement of local autonomy.

6. Summary and conclusion

This report presents the methodology, the data gathered and some first results of the project “Self-rule index for local authorities in the EU, Council of Europe and OECD countries, 1990-2020” (Tender 2019CE16BAT176). The aim of the present mandate, which is named “LAI 2.0”, was to:

- update and refine the existing data, from 1990 up to 2020;
- increase the number of countries covered, by including the European Union (EU) Member States as well as those of the Council of Europe (CoE), and of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- include additional variables to measure possible effects of local autonomy and to assess multilevel governance.

The 57 countries covered are all 27 EU member states together with 44 CoE member states (missing are Azerbaijan, Monaco and San Marino) as well as 36 OECD member states (New Zealand is missing, as is Costa Rica who joined the OECD in May 2021 when the project was already ongoing). Additionally, Argentina, Belarus as well as Kosovo and South Africa have been included. The years covered are 1990 to 2020.

The overall challenge of the project was to produce reliable and comparable data in a relatively limited period of time. In some countries, for example, it was not self-evident which state level to take into account, and in some countries not all local units enjoy the same degree of autonomy. Added to that, some of the countries have also faced or are still facing internal conflicts.

To accomplish the task, we brought together a team of researchers familiar with the situation in the respective countries. The experts were requested to code their countries on the basis of a coding scheme which was developed by the project leaders and the country group coordinators. The code book draws upon theoretical considerations, empirical studies as well as basic ideas of the European Charter of Local-Self-Government. The consistency of the coding was checked in three steps: for each country whether the variables fit into the overall pattern of the country, within groups of countries whether the countries fit into the overall pattern of the country groups and for all countries for outliers on each variable and for the total value. Furthermore, several meetings have been organised in order to improve and to clarify the coding procedure and discuss preliminary results. The final results were reviewed by two external experts.

This report presents the data and first findings of the project. First, it presents the results for the eleven variables as well as simple additive measures of self-rule (SR), interactive rule (IR) and local autonomy (LA) for the years 2015-2020. These variables can be used for further research in their own right. Second, we reduce complexity measured by the eleven variables to seven dimensions of local autonomy and look at the overall developments of said dimensions and the LAI for all 57 countries across 30 years (1990-2020). Finally, we look at the determinants and implications of the LAI by observing correlations between the LAI and size and number of local governments, their affiliations to the EU, CoE and OECD, as well as grouping them according to their politico-administrative systems. We also examine the relationship between Local Autonomy Index and the Regional Authority Index and confront our index and the different dimensions with other indices of decentralisation.

As was the case for the first release of the Local Autonomy Index (LAI 1.0), we see this report and the concomitant datasets as a platform for further research, not as a final product. For example, some of the coding of some of the countries might lead to discussions and modifications. New countries may be added, and further updates may

follow. Furthermore, the selection of dimensions of local autonomy and the construction of an overall index of local autonomy may be refined in the light of new research. The index should be referred to as "Local Autonomy Index, Release 2.0".

Part of the reporting includes the following: Appendix A shows the evolution of the number of local government over time. Appendix B includes a series of country profiles which explain the coding of the respective countries and changes over time. Appendix C contains the coding sheets with all the data gathered for all 57 individual countries.

When we look at the individual LAI scores per country, on the average level, there has not been much evolution in the past six years (2015-2020). The biggest increases are Portugal and Norway, whereas the biggest decreases are to be found in Austria and Poland. The overall ranking now puts Finland over Switzerland, with the remaining Nordic countries standing strong, and the arrival of South Africa as a newly added country to the top tier.

The Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland belong to the highest scoring group together with Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein. There is also a group of countries in which local autonomy is very low (index values of 40 and less). The countries here are Cyprus, Malta, Israel, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Moldova.

Regarding the development over 30 years of all 57 covered countries, there has been a general and progressive increase across all dimensions. When looking at the development of the LAI itself, we can observe a higher increase in the first decade, gradually slowing down and stabilizing towards 2020. Over thirty years, the LAI has increased around 7-8%, that is +7.92 for 39 countries and +6.77 for the total of 57 countries.

When considering population, size and number of local governments, we find no correlations between this data and the LAI. We do observe a difference in scores for the various dimensions and the LAI depending on the affiliation of countries to the EU, CoE and OECD. The former two groups show a stronger increase over time but the OECD member states as a group remain the highest scorers. Federalist countries do not seem to have more autonomous municipalities. Compared to non-federalist countries they have a little bit more financial and organisational autonomy but less legal autonomy.

On the implication side, based on the supplementary data we collected, we see that local autonomy could have a positive impact on citizen's satisfaction with services and democracy as well as their political trust. We also observe a correlation between local autonomy and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

In order to assess multilevel governance we tend to compare the Local autonomy and the Regional authority indexes and there are no correlations between LAI and RAI variables to be mentioned. If we only look at the countries which took part in the LAI 1.0 project, there are slight correlations with the RAI self-rule index. The LAI somewhat correlates with the part of local governments' own tax in percent of general government tax income but does not correlate quite as much with the percentage of non-central government spending, at least not at a significant level. Financial autonomy correlates with both of the fiscal decentralisation indicators we used, as was expected.

Although this LAI 2.0 projects led to these interesting results, some limits emphasised by the external control should be mentioned. The first limit is related to the units of analysis, i.e. the exact scope of local governments. In this project, we look at one level of local government to assess local autonomy, in general the lowest and most important one where local self-government is most effective. In some countries,

however, some “intermediate” local governments (between municipal and regional levels) also provide some services at the local level. In the same vein, inter-municipal cooperation bodies and special purpose local entities, which can have an important role in local service delivery, are also excluded from the analysis.

The second limit is also methodological and concerns the units of aggregation. Although this remains challenging, especially in federal countries where there are as many local government systems as there are federated states, the LAI embraces the variety of local government landscape across countries, as well as within countries. Concretely, different scores are given to the subunits (i.e. the units of aggregation) in federal countries where the degree of autonomy varies from one subunit to another. In this report, however, we have only presented results at the national, aggregated, level in order to reduce complexity. The third limit point to the same direction, namely that the diversity of local autonomy is very difficult to synthesise in one index. There is no ultimate way of weighing the variables in an overall index and local government experts would have given more emphasised to different dimensions according to their comprehension of the concept of local autonomy.

The final limit is concerned with the coding process. As in the initial project, the rating is based on experts’ understanding and judgement on the basis of the codebook, which may entitle reliability and validity risks according to the literature.¹⁹ In order to avoid as much as possible subjective perception (especially on policy scope and effective political discretion different tasks), several meetings with the experts were organised to improve and to clarify the wording of coding instructions and procedures. However, introducing a “second opinion” coding by asking someone else than the original coders from each country and using quantitative indicators would further safeguard the reliability of the index.

Despite these remarks, which are interesting avenues to take into account to further improve the results in future releases, the external experts reached the conclusions that the methodology is solid, the comprehensive set of variables, indicators and dimensions are relevant to measure the local autonomy, and the results plausible. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of local autonomy proved to travel well beyond the European continent. Additionally, the detailed country reports (in Appendix) are an additional and strong value added to the codification process.

We hope that the local autonomy index, which now includes a large number of new countries on five continents and a development over thirty years, will be a springboard to academics and policy-makers for a more comprehensive and empirically based understanding of local autonomy and its development over time.

¹⁹ Ladner, A., Keuffer, N., and Baldersheim, H. (2016). Measuring local autonomy in 39 countries (1990–2014). *Regional & Federal Studies*, 26(3), 328.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Number of local governments and changes over time

Country name	1990	2000	2010	2020	Changes (2020-1990)
Albania	374	374	373	61	-313
Austria	2317	2358	2356	2094	-223
Belgium	589	589	589	581	-8
Bulgaria	274	262	264	265	-9
Croatia	172	546	556	556	384
Cyprus	380	380	379	78	-302
Czech Republic	4100	6251	6250	6258	2158
Denmark	275	275	98	98	-177
Estonia	255	247	226	79	-176
Finland	460	452	342	310	-150
France	36693	36683	36685	35090	-1603
Georgia	1004	1004	69	64	-940
Germany	15978	13735	11882	10789	-5189
Greece	5923	1033	1034	332	-5591
Hungary	3089	3158	3175	3178	89
Iceland	213	124	77	69	-144
Ireland	113	114	114	31	-82
Italy	8094	8097	8094	7904	-190
Latvia	573	558	118	119	-454
Liechtenstein	11	11	11	11	0
Lithuania	58	60	60	60	2
Luxembourg	118	118	116	102	-16
Macedonia	34	123	80	81	47
Malta	67	68	68	68	1
Moldova	959	649	898	898	-61
Netherlands	672	537	431	355	-317
Norway	448	435	430	356	-92
Poland	2383	2491	2479	2477	94
Portugal	305	308	308	308	3
Romania	2948	2951	3181	3181	233
Serbia	145	145	145	145	0
Slovakia	2826	2883	2891	2890	64
Slovenia	62	203	221	212	150
Spain	8108	8111	8115	8131	23
Sweden	284	289	290	290	6
Switzerland	3021	2899	2596	2202	-819
Turkey	2061	3244	2966	1947	-114
Ukraine	10572	11595	11622	9525	-1047
United Kingdom	540	468	434	404	-136

Andorra		7	7	7	0
Argentina	2179	2187	2261	2173	-6
Armenia		930	915	482	447
Australia	823	621	538	518	-305
Belarus	1672	1672	1495	2637	965
Bosnia and Herzegovina		71	71	72	1
Canada	4446	3820	3585	3476	-970
Chile	334	341	345	345	11
Colombia		1088	1101	1101	62
Israel	239	264	253	255	16
Japan	3223	3217	1727	1717	-1506
Kosovo		30	33	38	8
Mexico	2403	2452	2466	2479	76
Montenegro	20	21	21	24	4
Republic of Korea	260	232	228	226	-34
Russian Federation		112	20339	17723	17611
South Africa		842	283	257	-585
United States Of America	84955	87525	90056	90075	5120
Total	217052	219260	235747	225204	6016
Mean	4341	3847	4136	3951	106

Note: for the countries where there is no data in 1990, the first available data has been taken into account to calculate the changes over time.

Appendix B: Country profiles

Appendix C: Datasets

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

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All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at:

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For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

