



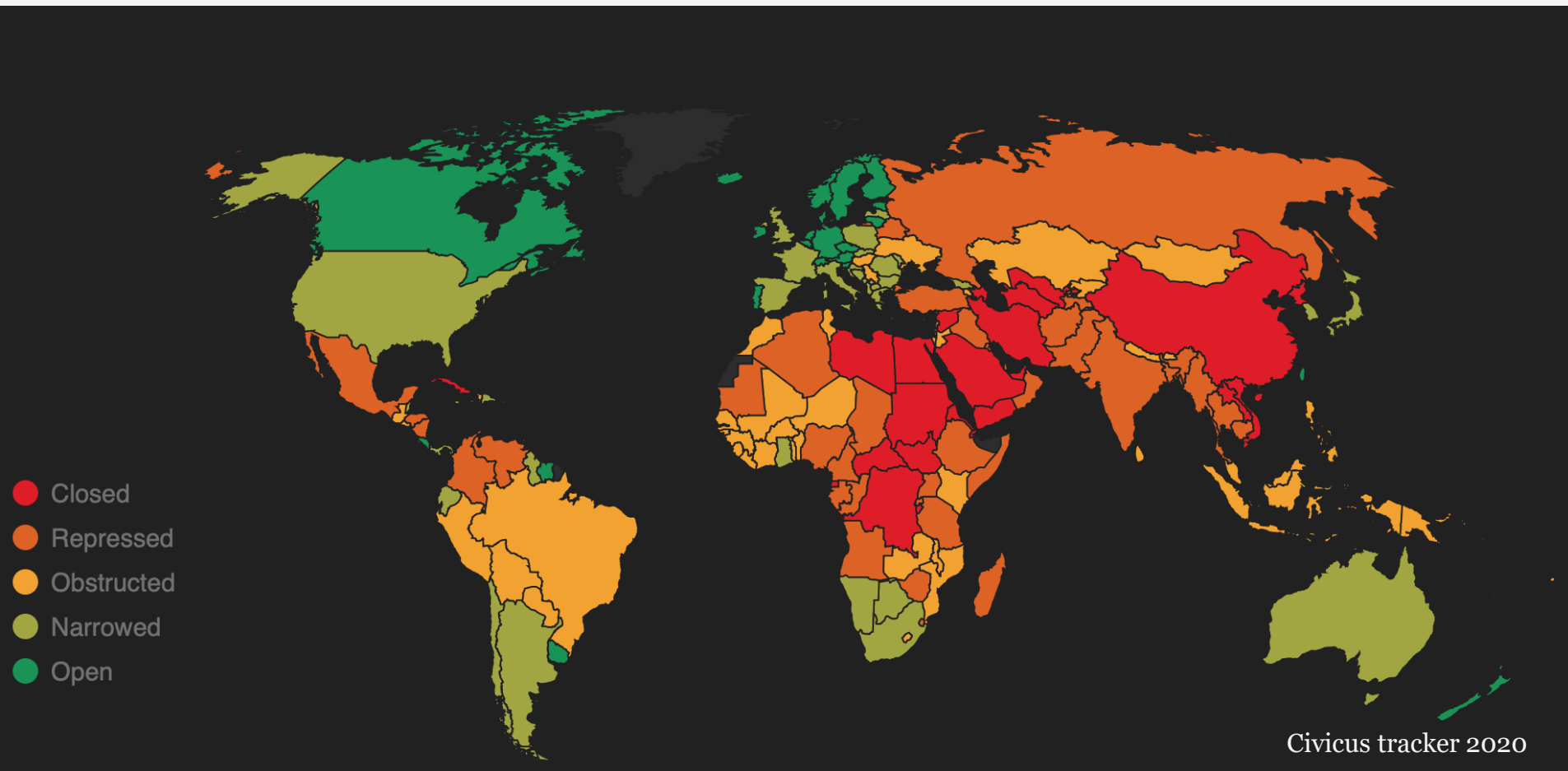
# Civil Society in Turbulent Times – Reflections from the West and the East

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# Shrinking Spaces



# Turbulent Environments



# Civil Society in Turbulent Times: List of Content

## Changing Modes of co-operation between civil society and government



Stefan Toepler, Washington D.C

### Reflections from the West – United States

### Reflections from the East – Russia

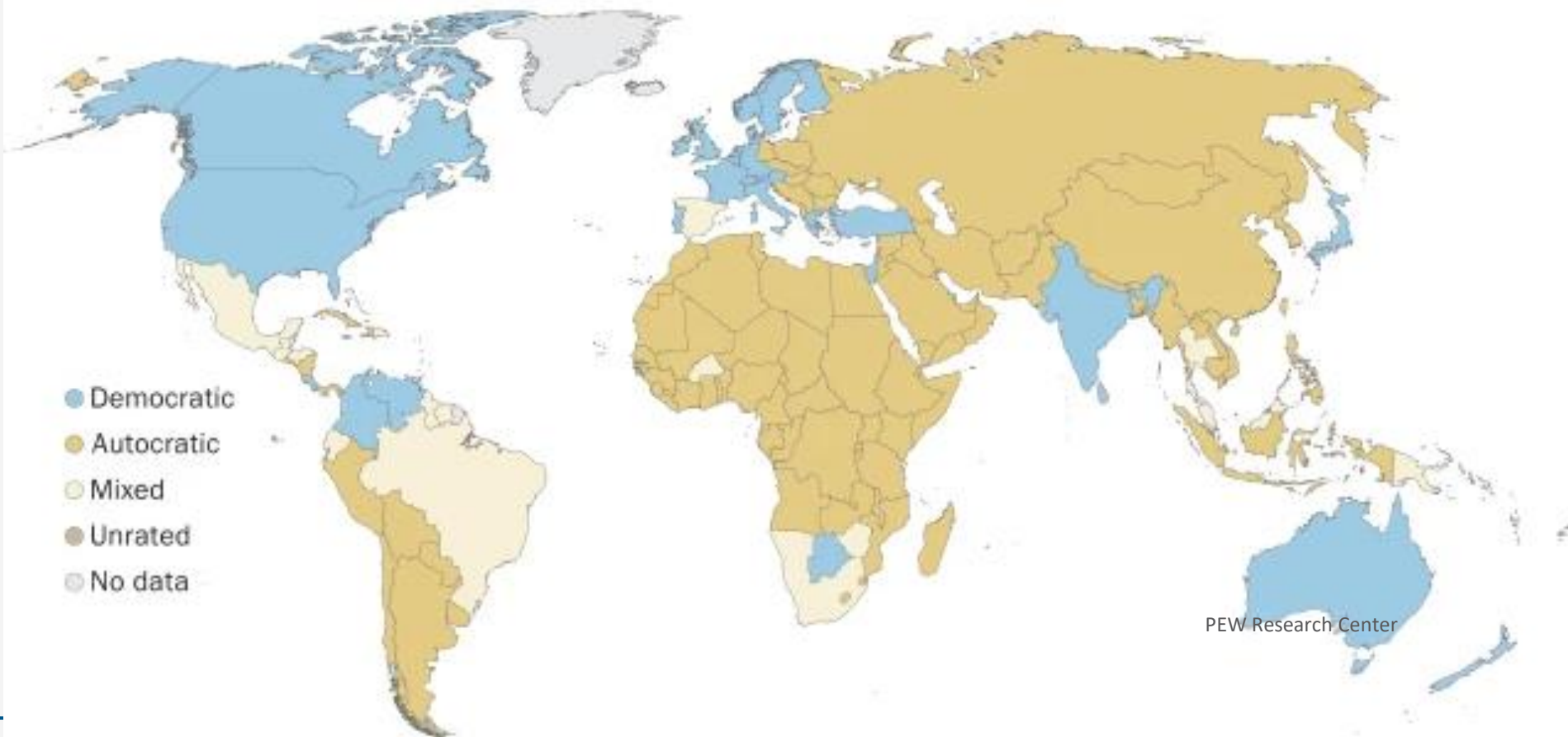
### Summary and Discussion



Christian Fröhlich, Moscow

# The World before the Third Wave of Democratization

**1977**

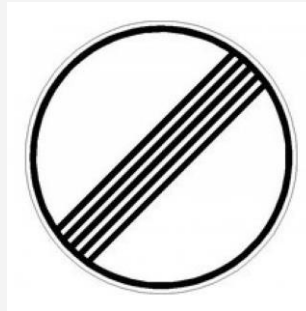




# Three Periods of Government-Civil Society Relations



1. Period of Opposition:  
1970 ~ 1989



2. Liberal Period of Experimentation:  
1989 ~ 2000



3. Current Period of Shrinking & Changing  
Spaces: 2000 ~ today

# Oppositional Period of Government-Civil Society Relations

- In the East, civil society operated under cover in authoritarian regimes
- They claimed liberty, participation and the withdrawn of the unjust and un-democratic regime.
- In the West, new social movements asked for a voice and a say in politics and policies.



Civil Rights Movement USA



Solidarność in Poland



Anti-Nuclear Power Protest in Germany

# The Liberal Period of Government-Civil Society Relations

Lester Salamon:

The associational revolution of civil society organizations

Acknowledgment of CSOs in governance arrangements

Strong engagement of international donors



Francis Fukuyman:

„The universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government”

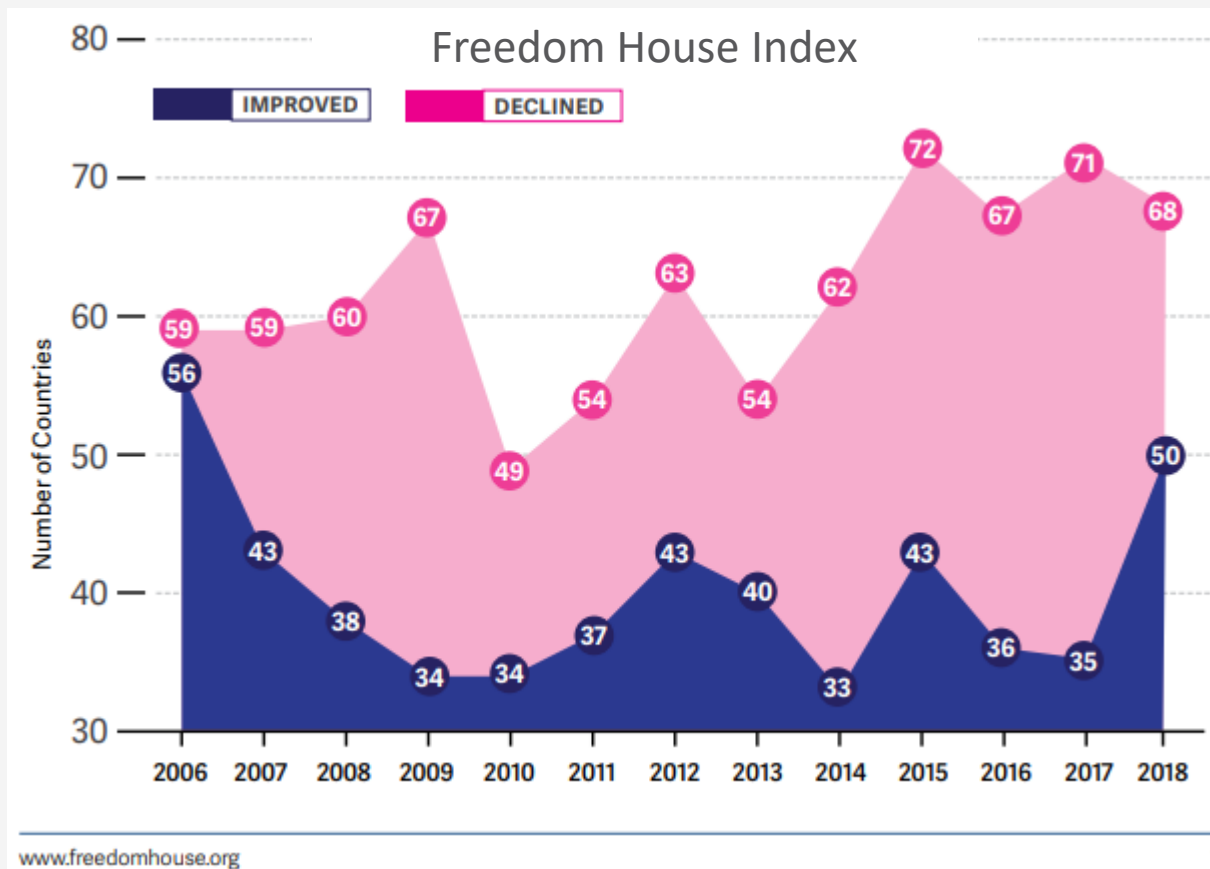


Georg Soros



## End of the „Transition Paradigm“: 2000

- Revival of authoritarianism, regimes withstand political change.
- Transition processes stagnate, creating hybrid regimes or they even tend to reverse.



# Current Period of Shrinking & Changing Spaces for Civil Society

Tool Box for the Control of Civil Society Organizations:

Control or Ban on Foreign Funding

Hurdles for Registration

Withdrawal of the Tax-exempt Status

Media Campaigns

Control of Day-to-Day-Operations

Delegitimization

Criminalization and Prosecution

## Changing Spaces for Civil Society



*"Our goals are absolutely clear. This is a high standard of living in the country, a safe, free and comfortable life. It is a mature democracy and a developed civil society."* (Putin, Address to the Federal Assembly, 26.05.2004)



**EU-China  
NGO Twinning Exchange**  
中欧民间组织互换项目

## Reflections from the West – United States

Wall Street Journal

## Reflections from the East – Russia

After WW2 flourishing associational life – but predominantly state-controlled

**BUT there WAS civil society in the Soviet Union!**

- Protection of human rights based on Helsinki Accords (1976)
- Environmental activism by students
- Self-help initiatives by marginalized social groups
- Dissident movement





# Reflections from the East – Russia

## PERESTROIKA & the 1990s

- Retreat of the state → associational revolution
- Compensation of lack of basic provision and welfare
- Politicization of public life



# Reflections from the East – Russia

## Nationalist turn in state – civil society relations since 2000s

- State discourse: “distinct civilization’ and conservative modernization
- Nationalization of civil society
- **Dividing civil society!**

Wall Street Journal

### ➤ Broadening of state support

- “Socially-orientated” CSOs & “social service providers”
- State funding programs
- Advisory function

### ➤ Limitation/Repression against

- Human-rights protecting CSOs
- Internationally funded CSOs
- Protest & social movements
- Critique of status-quo

# Reflections from the East – Russia

## Repertoire of shrinking space for civil society in Russia - “civilized oppression” (Daucé 2014)

- Legal restraints:
  - since 2006 barriers for CSO registration & accounting
  - 2012 Law on Foreign Agents
  - 2015 Law on Undesirable Organizations
  - Amendments on forms of public action & media communication
- Discursive de-legitimization (e.g. of international cooperation)
- Propaganda of conservative values / state patriotism
- Cooptation of undemocratic parts of civil society
- Mobilization of administrative resources
- Development state-affiliated movements
- Limiting freedom of speech (e.g., on the Internet)
- Harassment and prosecution of activists (and sadly even attacks)

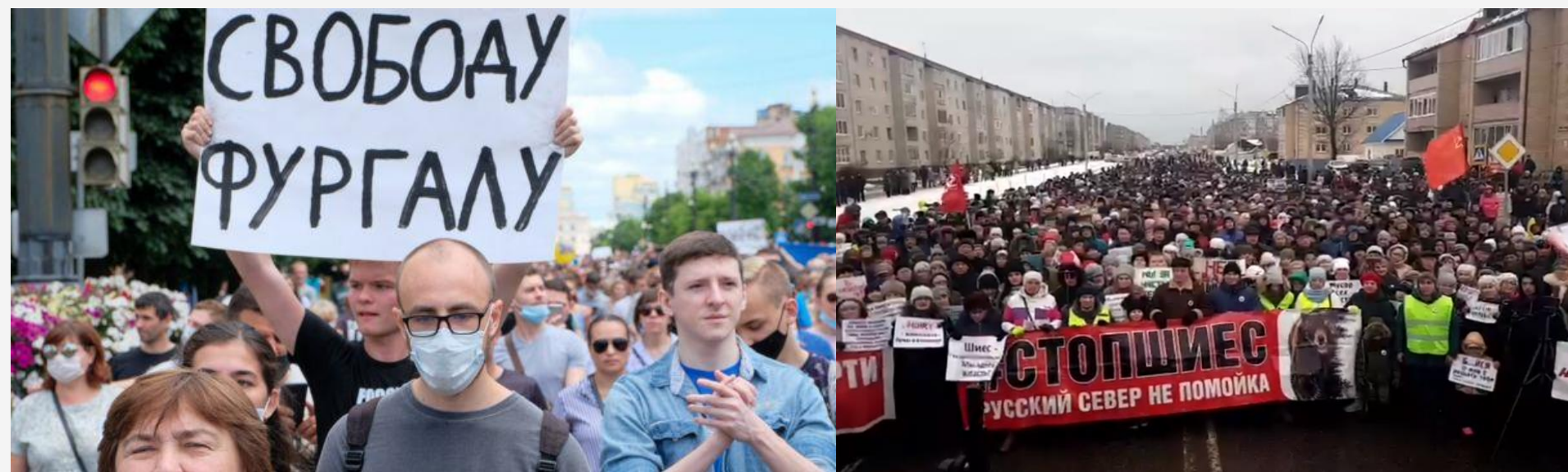
# Reflections from the East – Russia

## OUTLOOK

Despite CSO-divide, legal restraints, occupation of the public:

- Flourishing informal, localized grass-roots activism  
&
- Local political and social protest

Wall Street Journal



# Summary:

There are at least three trends characterizing the relationship between civil society and governments:

1. Janus-headedness:

Governments tend to work closely with service providing CSOs. In contrast, civil society organizations addressing political and /or adversial issues are confronted with increased government control or even prohibition.

2. Reluctance towards Advocacy

Civil society organizations tend more and more to abstain from advocacy. This is partly a result of government regulations or control and partly an outcome of new public management and of the marketization of the sector.

3. Opposition towards government

Civil society increasingly takes to the streets protesting since there is no way to influence policy and politics otherwise.



## References

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