

# Rick Morgan

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*Employment*      **Varieties of Democracy Institute at the University of Gothenberg, Sweden**  
– Independent Contractor      2019-present  
– Postdoc Research Fellow      2017-2019

## **Project lead – Democratic Space Barometer**

Funded by IRI and USAID, this project focuses on regime stability through the lens of democratization and autocratization – the processes in which a country becomes more or less democratic. To these ends, we break the categorical regime-type variable into six distinct dimensions of democratic governance. We then introduce indicators that capture significant shifts towards more autocratic governance (closing events) and shifts towards more democratic governance (opening events) in these six dimensions. Using a set of 12 random forest forecasting models, we estimate the probability that a country will experience at least one opening event or at least one closing event over a two-year window for each dimension. Access to the working drafts of the technical report, replication code, and interactive dashboard are available upon request.

## **Project lead – Predicting Adverse Regime Transitions (PART) project**

The PART project uses an ensemble of forecast models to estimate the risk that a country will become less democratic, broadly speaking, within a two year window. For more information, please see:

**Working Paper:** [www.v-dem.net/media/.../working\\_paper\\_2019\\_89.pdf](http://www.v-dem.net/media/.../working_paper_2019_89.pdf)

**Interactive Dashboard:** [www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/Forecast](http://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/Forecast)

**Replication Code:** [github.com/rickmorgan2/VForecast](https://github.com/rickmorgan2/VForecast)

*Education*      **Emory University**  
    **Ph.D. Political Science (Quantitative)**      2018  
    Committee: Dan Reiter, Eric Reinhardt, Adam Glynn, and Danielle Jung  
    **M.A. Political Science**      2014  
**University of Colorado at Boulder**  
    **B.A. Political Science, with honors**      2011

*Proficiencies*      **Data Analysis and Programming**  
    Statistical methodology  
    – Survey methodology & multilevel, measurement, generalized linear, and forecast modeling  
    Machine learning  
    – Principle component analysis & random forest, AdaBoost, and LASSO models  
    Programming  
    – R (Advanced): statistical analysis, Shiny (data visualization & interactive user interfaces), GIS, web-scraping, and package development  
    – SQL (Proficient)

*Experimental  
Design & Survey  
Experience*

In my dissertation, I argue that when ethnicity is salient to an insurgency, an increase in armed presence patrols (think cops patrolling neighborhoods in squad cars) can lead to a decrease in support for the government. However, when ethnicity is less salient, like in ideological conflicts, an increased presence of government forces can increase support. A government-funded rural road development plan and on-going ethnic and ideological insurgencies in India provided an opportunity to test this relationship.

More specifically, I used project implantation features of a rural road development plan to draw a random sample of villages with populations just above and below the threshold villages had to surpass to receive an all-weather road from the government. This allowed me to survey villages that did and did not receive a road but had a similar probability of being awarded one. The assumption here is that government forces are more likely to patrol where there's a paved road. My sampling strategy allowed me to test that directly in both an ethnic and an ideological conflict.

With the help of a small Indian survey firm (and NSF funding), we traveled to these areas to recruit and train local enumerators, who then helped us refine, test, and field our survey. The survey measured the frequency of patrols in villages and government support. The results support my hypotheses.

*Military  
Experience*

United States Army Reserves	
Psychological Operations Team Leader	2006-2011
Radio/COMSEC Repair Specialist	1998-2006

*Invited Talks  
(select)*

- NYU Center on International Cooperation – Data for Peace and Security: Practitioners Workshop on Best Practices (2019)
- USAID Center of Excellence: Democracy, Human Rights, & Governance (2019)
- Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research (2018)
- Princeton University, Empirical Studies of Conflict working group (2017, 2015)
- United States Institute of Peace/ESOC Conference (2017)

*References*

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