The Closing Space Barometer

Key Findings and Programmatic Recommendations

Background

Democracy Risk is the formal and informal institutional environment that drives political outcomes. It is driven by political, governance, and party processes that shape the ability of political actors to influence outcomes, the processes that can be used to make decisions, and the constraints on action. Risk can be measured through a process-oriented approach, which assesses the vulnerabilities and opportunities that exist in the political process and the interplay of actors and institutions that both create and respond to risk.

Analytical Framework: Spaces, Key Actors, Tactics, and Recommendations

- **Key Actors**: The Barometer measures the risk of closing space within five countries to help answer the following questions:
  - Why are democratic spaces closing? What are the dynamics of democratic regression? Are there similar patterns of closing space in other contexts?
  - How do democratic spaces respond to the threat of closing space? What are the thresholds of closing space?
  - How can democratic spaces be maintained? What are the strategies for bringing democratic space back?

- **Tactics**: Tactics can vary widely from several months to years, including rhetorical, strategic, and tactical actions.

- **Recommendations**: Recommendations include legislative development and programmatic political party programs to professionalize those institutions in the control of government branches, the bureaucracy (agencies, commissions, and statutory/regulatory bodies), and internet or communication applications.

**General Recommendations**

- **Legislative Development and Programmatic Political Party Programs**: Should professionalize those institutions in the control of government branches, the bureaucracy (agencies, commissions, and statutory/regulatory bodies), and internet or communication applications.

- **Programmatic Political Party Programs**: Should incorporate a distinct analysis to identify unique challenges faced by groups with intersecting identities.

- **Individual Educational, Research, and Artistic Institutions**: To thwart closing space through patronage or ideological space through patronage of critical journalists.

- **Censorship, Harassment, Imprisonment, and Self-Censorship of Academics, Researchers, or Cultural Figures**: Should encourage transparency, including meritocratic recruitment and promotion, within political/electional or international actors shape domestic closing space.

- **Constitutional or Legal Changes**: That eliminate or weaken the power of other branches of government to hold democratic spaces.

- **New Laws Targeting the Rights of Identity Groups**: Should be implemented to address verbal harassment, scapegoating, killing, or arrest.

- **Faculty Hiring or Advancement and Artistic Patronage**: Linked to political affiliation.

- **Censorship, Harassment, Imprisonment, and Self-Censorship of Academics, Researchers, or Cultural Figures**: Should address harassment, imprisonment, and self-censorship of academics, researchers, or cultural figures.

- **Political/Electoral Threats and Violence Against Critical Journalists**: Should address threats and violence against critical journalists.

- **Political/Electoral Deadlocks and Interaction with Repressive Regimes in Other Countries**: Should address deadlock and interaction with repressive regimes.

- **Internet or Communication Applications**: Should implement measures that facilitate or interact with events in other spaces.

**The Closing Space Process**

In a space of democratic shrinking, the Barometer follows the process of closing space, from mobilization to mobilization, to understand the factors that lead to closing space.

**Event Space**

- **Identification of Event Space**: The Barometer identifies event space as a process where events in one space can influence events in another space.

- **Mobilization of Opposition Voters or Convince Incumbents**: To anticipate closing space, consider how events in one space might facilitate, or interact with, events in other spaces.

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