

Dr. Seraphine F. Maerz

Senior Lecturer in Political Science (Research Methods)
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[LinkedIn](#) · [Google Scholar](#) · [GitHub](#)

Co-founder of *QuantLab* · Co-developer of *quallmer*

EDUCATION

2017 | PhD Political Science (*summa cum laude*), Central European University, Budapest
Supervisor: Carsten Q. Schneider

2014 | MA Central Asian Studies, Humboldt University Berlin

2011 | MA European Studies (Political Science), European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder

2007 | BA International Communication & Translation, University of Hildesheim

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2025–present | Senior Lecturer in Political Science (Research Methods), University of Melbourne

2024–2025 | Lecturer in Political Science (Research Methods), University of Melbourne

2021–2024 | Research Fellow & Project Leader, Goethe University Frankfurt

2019–2021 | Assistant Professor, University of Gothenburg, V-Dem Institute

2018–2019 | Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Bard College Berlin

2017–2018 | Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Freiburg

Parental leave: 1st child: June–Oct. 2019, April–June 2021 | 2nd child: Nov. 2021–July 2022

RESEARCH GRANTS

2026–2028 | Australian Research Council DECRA

“Words of Warning: How Illiberal Public Discourse Signals Democratic Decline”

Chief Investigator (~\$470,000 AUD)

2022–2025 | EU Horizon Europe

“Neo-authoritarianism in Europe and the Liberal Democratic Response (AUTHLIB)”

Participating Researcher

2021–2024 | German Research Foundation (DFG)

“Smart Authoritarianism”

Principal Investigator (~\$500,000 AUD)

2020–2021 | Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“Pandemic Backsliding: Democracy during COVID-19”

Co-Principal Investigator

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

- Visiting Researcher, UC Berkeley, Department of Political Science (August–September 2017)
- Academic Achievement Award for First-Year Doctoral Students, CEU Budapest (2015)

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

[Google Scholar](#): ~4,400 citations | h-index: 21 | i10-index: 25

- Garbe, L. & Maerz, S.F. (Guest Editors). “The rise of authoritarian informationalism: escalating surveillance, manipulation, and control.” *Democratization*, 33(1), 1–18, 2026.
- Maerz, S.F. “How practices of digital authoritarianism harm democracy.” *Democratization*, 33(1), 163–190, 2026.
- Garbe, L., Maerz, S.F., & Freyburg, T. “Authoritarian collaboration and repression in the digital age.” *Democratization*, 33(1), 85–108, 2026.
- Schafer, D.G., Maerz, S.F., Schneider, C.Q., & Krasnokutskaya, A. “‘Strongmen’ Don’t Redistribute: Illiberal Leaders on the Right and Worsening Economic Inequality.” *Politics and Governance*, 13, 1–24, 2025.
- Edgell, A., Lachapelle, J., & Maerz, S.F. “Achieving Transparency, Traceability, and Readability with Human-Coded Data.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 58(2), 346–351, 2025.
- Maerz, S.F., Edgell, A.B., Wilson, M.C., Hellmeier, S., & Lindberg, S.I. “Episodes of Regime Transformation.” *Journal of Peace Research*, 61(6), 967–984, 2024.
- Wilson, M.C., Medzihorsky, J., Maerz, S.F., et al. “Episodes of liberalization in autocracies: A new approach to quantitatively studying democratization.” *Political Science Research and Methods*, 11(3), 501–520, 2023.
- Edgell, A.B., Boese, V.A., Maerz, S.F., Lindenfors, P., & Lindberg, S.I. “Establishing pathways to democracy using domination analysis.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 1203–1209, 2022.
- Edgell, A.B., Lachapelle, J., Lührmann, A., & Maerz, S.F. “Pandemic Backsliding: Violations of Democratic Standards During Covid-19.” *Social Science and Medicine*, 285, 1465–1471, 2021.
- Boese, V.A., Edgell, A.B., Hellmeier, S., Maerz, S.F., & Lindberg, S.I. “How democracies prevail: democratic resilience as a two-stage process.” *Democratization*, 28(5), 885–907, 2021.
- Hellmeier, S., Cole, R., Grahn, S., Kolvani, P., Lachapelle, J., Lührmann, A., Maerz, S.F., Pillai, S., & Lindberg, S.I. “State of the world 2020: Autocratization turns viral.” *Democratization*, 28(6), 1053–1074, 2021.
- Maerz, S.F., Lührmann, A., Hellmeier, S., Grahn, S., & Lindberg, S.I. “State of the World 2019: Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows.” *Democratization*, 27(6), 909–927, 2020.
- Maerz, S.F. “The Many Faces of Authoritarian Persistence: A Set-Theory Perspective on the Survival Strategies of Authoritarian Regimes.” *Government and Opposition*, 55(1), 64–87, 2020.
- Maerz, S.F. & Schneider, C.Q. “Comparing Public Communication in Democracies and Autocracies: Automated Text Analyses of Speeches by Heads of Government.” *Quality and Quantity*, 54, 517–545, 2019.
- Maerz, S.F. “Simulating Pluralism: The Language of Democracy in Hegemonic Authoritarianism.” *Political Research Exchange*, 1(1), 1–23, 2019.
- Maerz, S.F. “Ma’naviyat in Uzbekistan: An Ideological Extrication from Its Soviet Past?” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 23(2), 205–222, 2018.
- Schneider, C.Q. & Maerz, S.F. “Legitimation, Cooptation, and Repression and the Survival of Elec-

toral Autocracies." *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 11(2), 213–235, 2017.

- Maerz, S.F. "The Electronic Face of Authoritarianism: E-Government as a Tool for Gaining Legitimacy in Competitive and Non-Competitive Regimes." *Government Information Quarterly*, 33(4), 727–735, 2016.

BOOK CHAPTERS, REVIEWS & TRANSLATIONS

- Stier, S. & Maerz, S.F. "Computational Methods." In *Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Springer), ed. Marianne Kneuer et al., forthcoming.
- Maerz, S.F. "The Internet and Autocratization." Chapter 15, pp. 175–187, in *Routledge Handbook of Autocratization*, ed. Aurel Croissant & Luca Tomini, 2024.
- Maerz, S.F., Schulte, F., & Trinn, C. "Autocratization and Political Conflict." Chapter 31, pp. 380–393, in *Routledge Handbook of Autocratization*, 2024.
- Boese-Schlosser, V.A., Edgell, A.B., Hellmeier, S., Maerz, S.F., Sato, Y., Wilson, M.C., & Lindberg, S.I. "Identifying Episodes of Autocratization." Chapter 5, pp. 65–76, in *Routledge Handbook of Autocratization*, 2024.
- Lindberg, S.I. et al. (incl. Maerz, S.F.). "Liberal Demokrati i Riskzonen – autokratisering blir viral." In *Demokratin Som Bildningsväg*, Carlssons Bokförlag, 2022.
- Maerz, S.F. & Puschmann, C. "Text as Data for Conflict Research: A Literature Survey." pp. 43–65, in *Computational Conflict Research*, Springer, 2020. Open Access.
- Maerz, S.F. Book review: Rollberg, P. & Laruelle, M. (eds.), *Mass Media in the Post-Soviet World. Europe-Asia Studies* 71(5), 863–865, 2019.
- Maerz, S.F., Kraayvanger, A.-L., Bahlo, S., & Aripova, B. "Beim Uloq (1915), Der Zweifel (1935)." Translations from Uzbek. In *Abdulla Qodiriy & seine Zeit. Festschrift für Barno Aripova* (ed. by Ingeborg Baldauf et al.), Edition Tethys, 2018.

POLICY REPORTS & BRIEFS

- Maerz, S.F., Chernykh, S., & Sanhueza Petrarca, C. "Addressing AI-Powered Threats to Democracy." [Policy Report for Robert Schumann Center \(EUI\)](#) and European Commission, 2026. *Commissioned work*.
- Garbe, L., Maerz, S.F., & Freyburg, T. "Wie Autokratien im Digitalen kooperieren." *De Facto*, 2026.
- Maerz, S.F., Edgell, A.B., & Lachapelle, J. "Pandemic Backsliding – Demokratien im Ausnahmezustand während COVID-19." *De Facto*, 2022.
- Edgell, A.B., Wilson, M.C., & Maerz, S.F. "Episodes of Regime Transformation." *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter*, Spring 2021.
- Maerz, S.F. & Mechkova, V. Policy Report for USAID on e-government, 2021. *Commissioned work*.
- Kolvani, P. et al. (incl. Maerz, S.F.). "Pandemic Backsliding: Democracy and Disinformation Seven Months into the Covid-19 Pandemic." [Policy Brief 25](#), V-Dem Institute, 2020.
- Edgell, A.B. et al. (incl. Maerz, S.F.). "An Update on Pandemic Backsliding." [Policy Brief 24](#), V-Dem Institute, 2020.
- Lührmann, A., Edgell, A.B., & Maerz, S.F. "Pandemic Backsliding: Does Covid-19 Put Democracy at Risk?" [Policy Brief 23](#), V-Dem Institute, 2020.

V-DEM DEMOCRACY REPORTS

- Alizada, N. et al. (incl. Maerz, S.F.). *Autocratization Turns Viral*, [Democracy Report 2021](#). V-Dem Institute.
- Lührmann, A. et al. (incl. Maerz, S.F.). *Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows*, [Democracy Report 2020](#). V-Dem Institute.

DATASETS & R PACKAGES

Datasets

- [ERT](#) – Episodes of Regime Transformation dataset, V-Dem Institute (co-developer)
- [PanDem](#) – Pandemic Backsliding dataset, V-Dem Institute (co-developer)
- [V-Dem \(v.11\)](#) – Varieties of Democracy dataset, v.11, V-Dem Institute (contributor)
- [TOSCO 2.0](#) – Telecommunications Ownership and Control dataset (co-developer)

R Packages

- Maerz, S.F. & Benoit, K. [quallmer](#) – R package for Qualitative Analysis with LLMs, 2026. quallmer.github.io/quallmer
- Maerz, S.F., Edgell, A.B., Hellmeier, S., & Ilchenko, N. [vdemdata](#) – R package for V-Dem data, 2026. github.com/vdem institute/vdemdata
- Maerz, S.F. et al. [ERT](#) – R package for ERT dataset, 2026. github.com/vdem institute/ERT
- Maerz, S.F. & Benoit, K. [quanteda.llm](#) – LLM support for quanteda, 2025.
- Maerz, S.F. [audacola](#) – R package for Automated Data Collection and Analysis, 2020. <https://github.com/SeraphineM/audacola>

TEACHING

Seminars and Lectures

- **University of Melbourne:** Quantitative Methods (PhD), Authoritarian Politics (BA, co-coordinator), Decoding Democracy (BA), Communicating Social Science Research (BA Honours), Researching Politics and Policy (PhD), Applied Political Science Project (BA, co-coordinator, R coding seminar)
- **Goethe University Frankfurt:** Measuring Democracy (MA)
- **University of Gothenburg:** Varieties of Democracy (MA, co-coordinator)
- **Bard College Berlin:** Introduction to Statistics (BA), Measuring Democracy and Autocracy (BA)
- **University of Freiburg:** Democratization & Authoritarianism (BA/MA), Qualitative Methods (MA)
- **CEU Budapest:** Research Design, Set Methods and QCA (Guest lecture), Comparative Politics (TA), Central Asia (TA)

Online Methods Workshops

- [ekomex 2026](#), University of Konstanz: “Introduction to AI-driven Text Analysis” & “Fine-Tuning Large Language Models”
- [AI-Powered Qualitative Analysis in R 2.0](#) (with K. Benoit), Instats platform, 2026
- [Tuning LLMs for Text Analysis](#), Instats platform, 2026
- [Using AI for Text Analysis: An Introduction](#), Instats platform, 2025
- [Using AI for Text Analysis: Advanced Applications](#), Instats platform, 2025
- [Quarto in RStudio: Writing Reproducible & Dynamic Research Papers](#), Instats platform, 2024

SUPERVISION

- PhD: 3 current (University of Melbourne; 2 as principal supervisor, 1 as co-supervisor)
- PhD external examiner: 2 completed (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Sapienza Università di Roma)
- MA: 4 completed (University of Gothenburg)
- Honours: 2 completed (University of Melbourne)

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

- Research Integrity Advisor, Faculty of Arts, SSPS, University of Melbourne (2026)
- Member, Academic Programs Committee & Academic Board, University of Melbourne (2025–2026)
- Coordinator, Political Science PhD Program, University of Melbourne (2025)
- Co-founder, QuantLab – Network for quantitative / computational social science at UniMelb
- Series Editor, Routledge “Democratization and Autocratization Studies”
- Guest Editor, *Democratization* Special Issue on Digital Authoritarianism (2026)
- Research Associate, V-Dem Institute (ongoing)
- Deputy Director & Steering Committee Member, V-Dem Institute (2020–2021)
- Coordinator, ERASMUS exchange programs, University of Freiburg (2018)
- Member, organizing committee, 8th Graduate Network Conference, CEU Budapest (2016)
- Reviewer: *AJPS*, *CPS*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *BJPS*, *JPR*, *Political Behavior*, *Democratization*, *Political Studies*, *PRQ*, *EPSR*, *IJPOR*, *Government Information Quarterly*, *Governance*, among others

CONSULTANCY & ADVISORY

- Amnesty International (2025) – Authoritarian practices and generative AI
- New York Times (2022) – Illiberal discourse and text-as-data methods
- Bloomberg (2020) – Expert commentary on illiberal public communication
- Helsingin Sanomat (2020) – Expert commentary on V-Dem Project

INVITED TALKS

- ANU, School of Politics and International Relations (June 2026): LLM-assisted methods workshop; SPIR seminar series
- Griffith University, Brisbane (April 2026): PhD workshop on LLMs for text analysis; PolSci research seminar
- DEMLAB, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Oct. 2025, online)
- ANU, School of Politics and International Relations (June 2025): Quantitative text analysis methods workshop; SPIR seminar series
- Australasian Public Policy Meeting, University of Melbourne (Jan. 2025): LLMs and Text as Data
- WZB Berlin (Dec. 2024): Detecting democratic decline with political speeches (online)
- International IDEA & Center for New Ideas (Nov. 2024): Measuring Regime Transformations
- University of Mainz (March 2023): **Keynote** – “Democracy in Crisis” (online)
- University of Bremen, YISARES Autumn School (Oct. 2022): Digital Authoritarianism (online)
- CEU Democracy Institute, CIVICA Workshop (Sept. 2022): Autocratization in Digital Public Spaces
- GIGA Hamburg (May 2022), Aarau Democracy Days (March 2022): Pandemic Backsliding (online)
- University of Alabama (April 2021): Public Discourse and Autocratization (online)
- CAIS Bochum (Sept. 2018): Illiberal Public Discourse

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- 2026: ECPR Joint Sessions, Innsbruck (April), APSA Virtual Workshop on LLMs in Political Science (April), WZB Berlin, Transformations of Democracy, Kick-off Workshop (May, invited)
- 2025: APSA Virtual Workshop on Computational Methods (April)
- 2024: EUI Florence, Decrypting Digital Authoritarianism (Oct. 2024, invited), Melbourne Political Economy Group, Monash University (Sept. 2024), ACERG Workshop, APSA, University of Melbourne (June 2024)
- 2023: ECPR General Conference, Prague (Sept.) – **Section organizer** “Digital Authoritarianism” with multiple panels (with L. Garbe), Università degli Studi di Milano (June 2023): Identifying early autocratization (invited), WZB Berlin, TTC Workshop (Nov. 2023, invited), CEDAR, University of Birmingham (Jan. 2023, invited)
- 2022: GPSA Comparative Politics Section, Frankfurt/Oder (Sept.)
- 2021: GPSA Congress (Sept.), ISA Annual Convention (April)
- 2020: ECPR General Conference (Aug.)
- 2019: ECPR Joint Sessions, Mons (April)
- 2018: GPSA Frankfurt (Sept.), ECPR Hamburg (Aug.)
- 2017: CEU Doctoral Conference (April), GPSA Tübingen (March), APSA San Francisco (Aug.)
- 2016: ECPR Joint Sessions, Pisa (April), ECPR General Conference, Prague (Sept.)
- 2015: University of Exeter, Nawruz Postgraduate Workshop (March, invited)
- 2014: RGASPI Moscow (Aug., invited), ECPR Graduate Student Conference, Innsbruck (July)

Last updated: March 2026