

The background of the slide is a dense field of 3D-rendered numbers in various shades of blue and white. The numbers are scattered across the frame, creating a sense of depth and complexity. Some numbers are larger and more prominent, while others are smaller and recede into the background. The overall effect is a textured, data-driven aesthetic.

Measurement and Evaluation of Local Democracy

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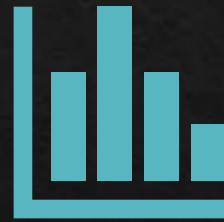
Today's Plan



Background

Introduce arguments

Why measure?



Measuring democracy

Existing measures

An “aspirational”
measure



Identifying indicators

What is (un)important?

Challenging
assumptions

Arguments

- ◆ 1) By traditional measures, our local democracies are healthy.
- ◆ 2) We should consider “aspirational” measures.
- ◆ 3) Measuring democracy is difficult and debatable.

Measuring democracy

- ◆ Why care about democracy?
- ◆ Why measure?
- ◆ Stages in “measuring” democracy
 - ◆ Conceptualization
 - ◆ Operationalization
 - ◆ Measurement

Existing indices

- ◆ What is an index?
- ◆ Existing indices
 - ◆ Vary slightly and reflect values of creators of index.
- ◆ What types of indicators are included?
- ◆ By these measures, our municipalities perform very well!

An aspirational index?

- ◆ What factors should we include when studying Canadian local democracy that aren't included in traditional (national) indices?
- ◆ What factors are important in this different context?
- ◆ What factors are not unique, but which we wish to consider?

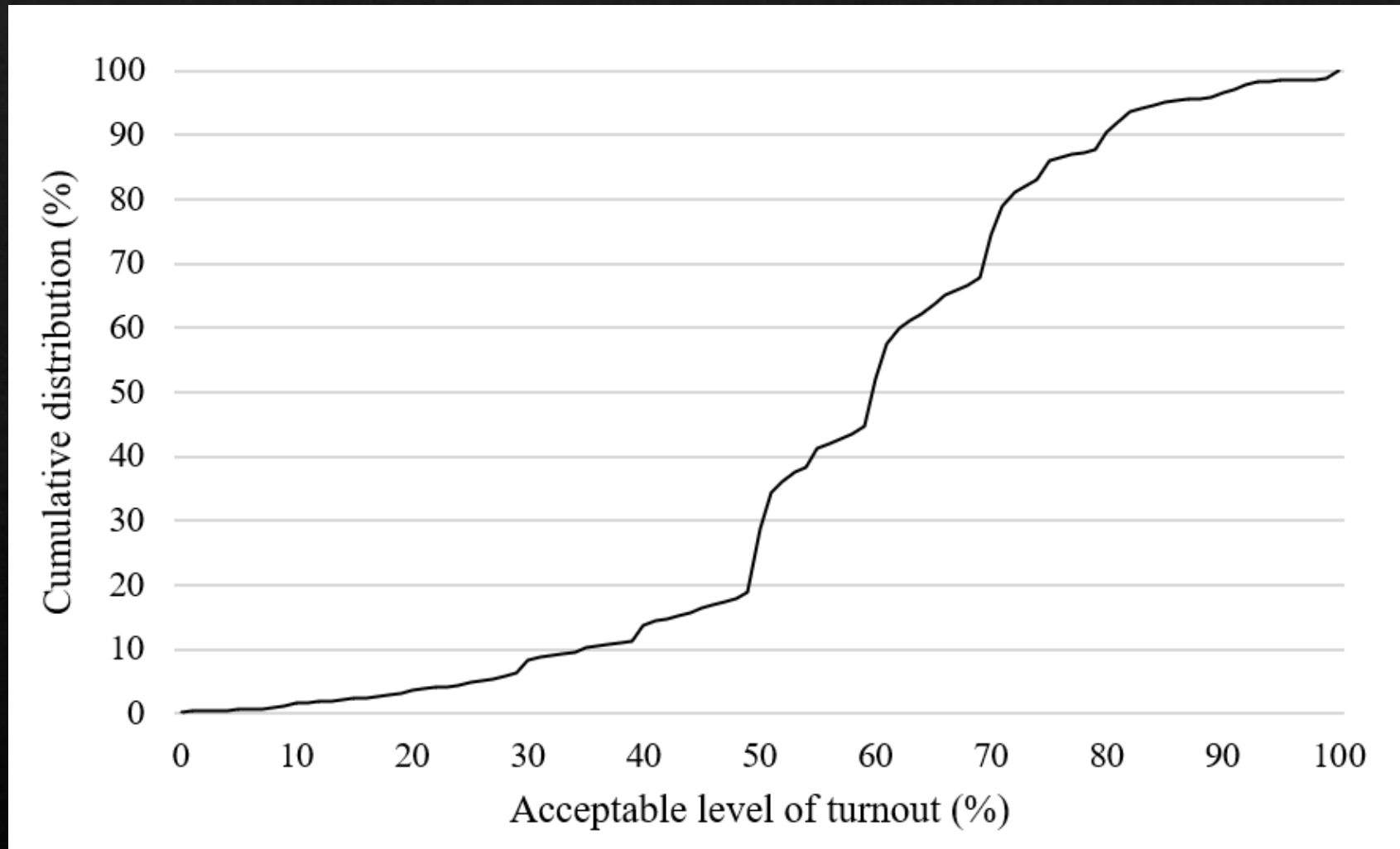
Potential indicators of local democracy

- ◆ Subjective, and depend upon the personal views of creators
- ◆ What are your priorities?
- ◆ Do others share them? Who does (not)?
- ◆ 3 examples to consider:
 - ◆ Acclamations/candidate numbers and satisfaction with democracy?
 - ◆ The proper level of turnout?
 - ◆ Gender and racial composition of council?

Views on the appropriate level of turnout

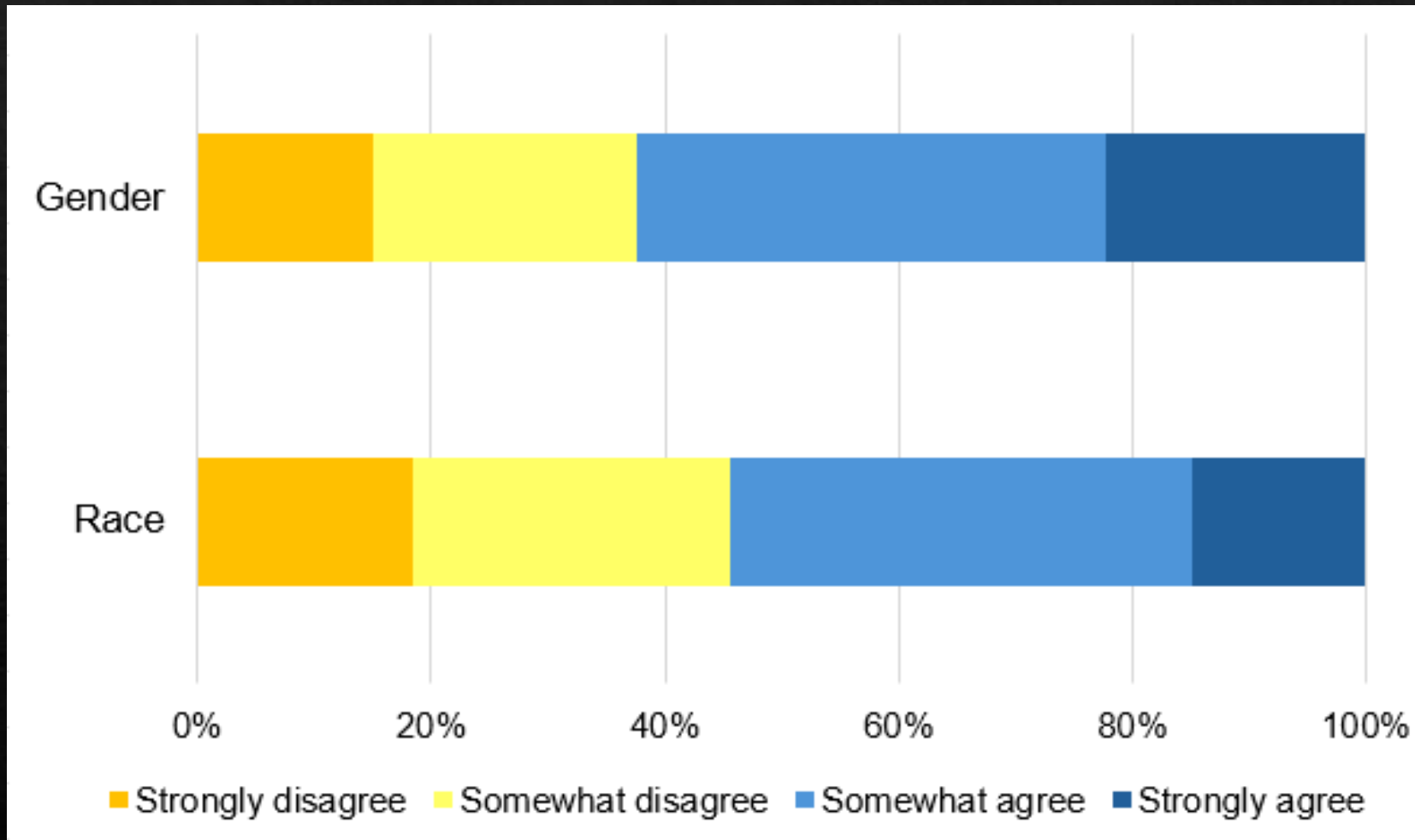
- ◆ ON survey from 2022 (N=4,045): “In 2018, the average level of turnout in local election in Ontario was 38.3%. In your option, do you think this level of turnout is:”
 - ◆ Too low: 75.5%
 - ◆ Fine/too high: 13.2%
 - ◆ Don't know: 11.4%

What level of turnout is acceptable?



Data from the Multilevel Democracy Project (2022). N = 3,453.

Should composition of council reflect the population?



Data from the Canadian Municipal Election Study (2017/2018). N = 3,954

Arguments

- ◆ 1) By traditional measures, our local democracies are healthy.
- ◆ 2) We should consider “aspirational” measures.
- ◆ 3) Measuring democracy is difficult and debatable.
- ◆ 4) A customizable index would accommodate individual preferences and be more persuasive.