

Democracy Index 2019

A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



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Introduction

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide in 165 independent states and two territories. This covers almost the entire population of the world and the vast majority of the world’s states (microstates are excluded). The Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism; the functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties*. Based on its scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: “full democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid regime” or “authoritarian regime”. A full methodology and explanations can be found in the Appendix.

This is the 12th edition of the Democracy Index, which began in 2006, and it records how global democracy fared in 2019. The global results are discussed in this introduction, and the results by region are analysed in greater detail in the section entitled Democracy around the regions in 2019 (see page 23). According to The Economist Intelligence Unit’s measure of democracy, almost one-half (48.4%) of the world’s population live in a democracy of some sort, although only 5.7% reside in a “full democracy”, down from 8.9% in 2015 as a result of the US being demoted from a “full democracy” to a “flawed democracy” in 2016. More than one-third of the world’s population live under authoritarian rule, with a large share being in China.

Table 1
Democracy Index 2019, by regime type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	22	13.2	5.7
Flawed democracies	54	32.3	42.7
Hybrid regimes	37	22.2	16.0
Authoritarian regimes	54	32.3	35.6

Note. “World” population refers to the total population of the 167 countries covered by the Index. Since this excludes only micro states, this is nearly equal to the entire estimated world population.

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

According to the 2019 Democracy Index, 76 of the 167 countries covered by the model, or 45.5% of all countries, can be considered to be democracies. The number of “full democracies” increased to 22 in 2019, up from 20 in 2018, as Chile, France and Portugal joined the top-ranked countries (those scoring more than 8.00), while Malta was relegated to the “flawed democracy” category. The number of “flawed democracies” fell by one to 54 in 2019. Of the remaining 91 countries in our index, 54 are “authoritarian regimes”, up from 52 in 2018, and 37 are classified as “hybrid regimes”, down from 39 in 2018. (For a full explanation of the index methodology and categories, see page 52.)

“The global march of democracy stalled in the 2000s and retreated in the second decade of the 21st century. But the recent wave of protest in the developing world and the populist insurgency in the mature democracies show the potential for democratic renewal.”

Joan Hoey, Editor, The Democracy Index

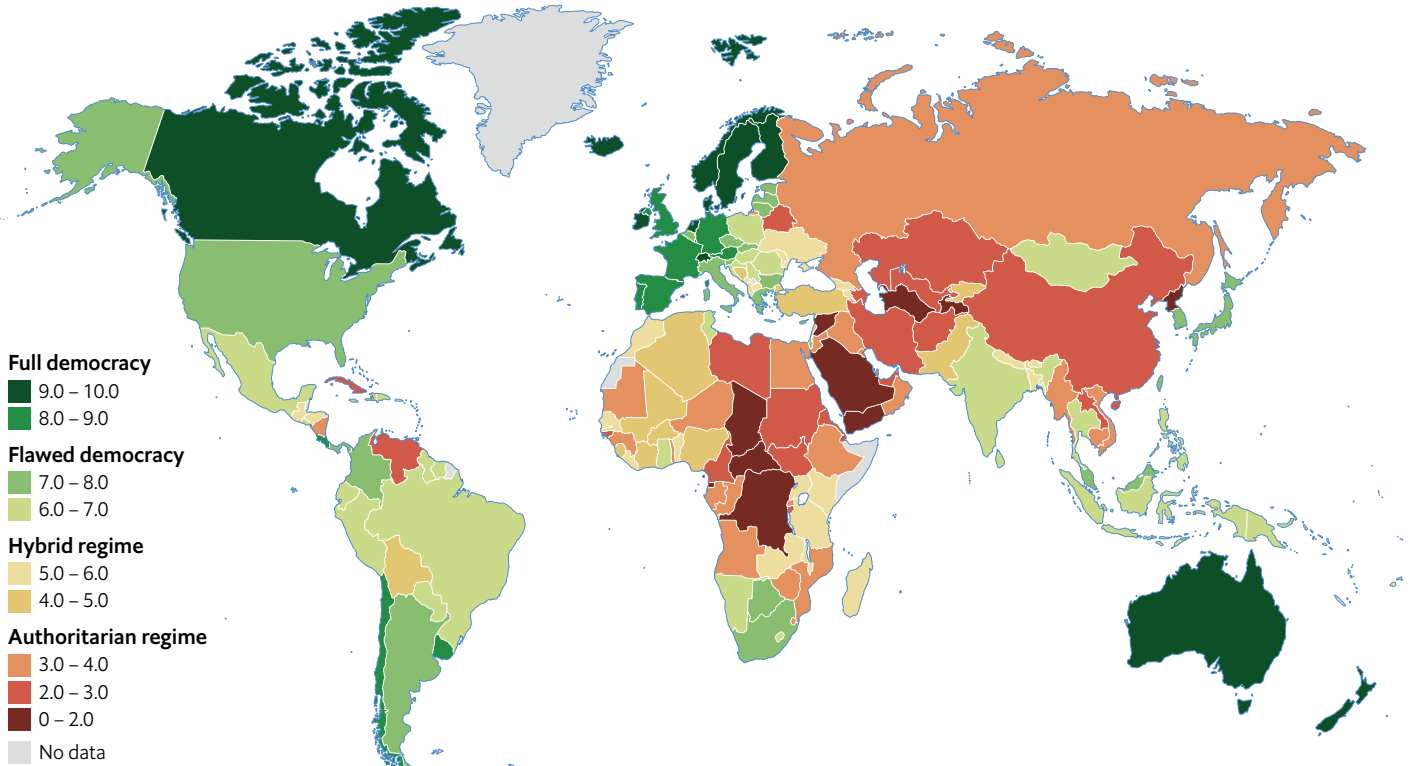
A year of democratic setbacks and global protest

In the 2019 Democracy Index the average global score for democracy fell from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44 (on a scale of 0-10). This is the worst average global score since the index was first produced in 2006. The 2019 result is even worse than that recorded in 2010, in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis, when the average global score fell to 5.46. From 2011 onwards the average global score recorded a gradual, modest annual improvement, but in 2015 and 2018 the score stagnated, and in 2016 and 2019 it declined.

The decline in the average global score in 2019 was driven by a sharp regression in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, a lesser one in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and by stagnation in the remaining four regions covered by the Democracy Index. Latin America was the worst-performing region in 2019, recording a fall of 0.11 points in its average regional score compared with 2018, to 6.13. Starting from an already low base, the regression in Sub-Saharan Africa was also striking: the average regional score fell by 0.10 points year on year, to 4.26. The democratic deterioration in the MENA region was more modest but followed a trend of steady regression that started in 2012, when the gains of the Arab Spring began to be reversed. In the 2019 Democracy Index three regions stood still in terms of their average scores, as gains in some countries and categories were erased by setbacks in others. Asia and Australasia and eastern and western Europe all failed to make headway in the Democracy Index in 2019. The exception to the regression rule in 2019 was North America (Canada and the US), whose average regional score moved up by 0.03 points because of a modest improvement in Canada's score.

In 2019 some 68 countries experienced a decline in their total score compared with 2018, but almost as many (65) recorded an improvement. The other 34 stagnated, with their scores remaining unchanged compared with 2018. There were some impressive improvements and some dramatic declines, as discussed in the Highlights section, with Thailand registering the biggest improvement in score and China the greatest decline. There were ten changes of regime category, six of them positive and four negative. Three countries (Chile, France and Portugal) moved from the "flawed democracy" category to be classified as "full democracies". Malta moved in the opposite direction, falling out of the "full democracy" category to become a "flawed democracy". At the other end of the democracy spectrum, Iraq and Palestine moved from being classified as "hybrid regimes" to "authoritarian regimes". Algeria moved from being classified as an "authoritarian regime" to the "hybrid regime" category. El Salvador and Thailand moved out of the "hybrid regime" category into the "flawed democracy" category, while Senegal moved in the opposite direction, from being a "flawed democracy" to a "hybrid regime".

Chart 1: Democracy Index 2019, global map by regime type



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

What lies behind the global democratic regression?

Surveys by the Pew Research Center on global attitudes towards democracy have in recent years revealed a disjuncture between still-high levels of public support for democracy across the globe and deep popular disappointment with the functioning of democracy and systems of political representation. Since the inception of the Democracy Index in 2006 we have highlighted the progressive deterioration in the practice of democracy in the most developed democracies in the West. According to Larry Diamond, a renowned democracy scholar, “we have been going through a democracy recession”, and he points to a trend towards authoritarianism in the developing world.

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index has also noted these trends towards authoritarian rule in the non-OECD regions. However, our focus has been much more on the growing democratic deficit in the developed world, which we have discussed at some length in recent editions of the Democracy Index (see for example, *Democracy Index 2016, Revenge of the deplorables*).

A regression and/or stagnation of democracy has been reflected in the declining average scores for the advanced democracies of the US and Europe over many years. In our view, the main manifestations of this democracy recession include:

- **an increasing emphasis on elite/expert governance rather than popular participatory democracy;**
- **a growing influence of unelected, unaccountable institutions and expert bodies;**
- **the removal of substantive issues of national importance from the political arena to be decided by politicians, experts or supranational bodies behind closed doors;**
- **a widening gap between political elites and parties on the one hand and national electorates on the other; and**
- **a decline in civil liberties, including media freedom and freedom of speech.**

These regressive trends in the mature democracies developed from the 1990s onwards, accelerated in the 2000s and reached their apogee in the decade that closed in 2019.

In the mature democracies the result was an unsustainable political status quo: the increasing vacuity of national politics and the retreat of political elites and parties from engagement with their electorates resulted in falling levels of popular trust in political institutions and parties, declining political engagement, and a growing resentment among electorates at the lack of political representation. Eventually the alienation of people from the 21st-century body politic gave rise to populist movements, which repudiated the mainstream political parties and demanded a new political contract between the people and their elected representatives.

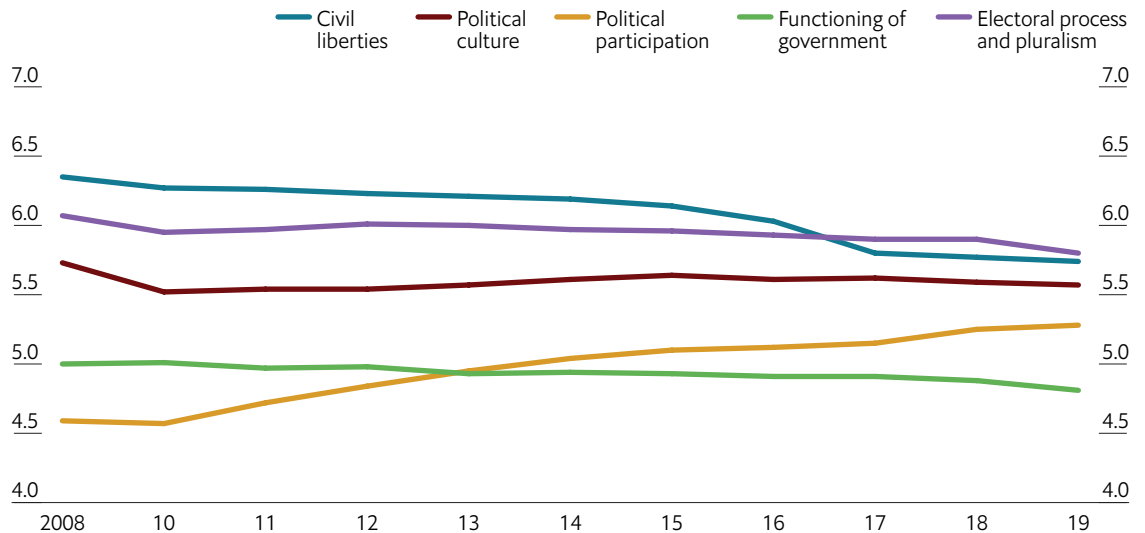
More developed emerging market democracies in Asia, eastern Europe and Latin America share some of the democratic deficits that characterise the mature democracies in the West. There too popular protest movements have emerged in recent years demanding change, as we discuss below in relation to 2019. The democratic deficits in the CIS region of eastern Europe, the MENA region and much of Sub-Saharan Africa are more fundamental, and protests in those regions often express popular aspirations for elementary democratic rights and basic freedoms.

Popular disappointment with the functioning of democracy across the developed and developing world can be explained by the worsening in the average global score across all but one of the five categories of the Democracy Index in recent years, a trend that continued in 2019. The five categories across which all countries are assessed are: *electoral process and pluralism; the functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties*.

The average global scores for all categories of the Democracy Index with the exception of *political participation* have fallen almost sequentially since 2012. Compared with 2008, the first year for which comparable data are available, the average category scores have fallen significantly. The biggest decline has been for *civil liberties*, the score for which fell from 6.35 in 2008 to 5.74 in 2019. This decline was recorded across all regions of the world, without exception, with the biggest being recorded in Latin America whose average score fell by 0.75 points between 2011 and 2019. Eastern Europe recorded the second biggest decline in its *civil liberties* score (of 0.66 points) during this period. The smallest decline (0.29 points) was in North America. In Western Europe, where infringements of free speech

Chart 2: Evolution of democracy by category, 2008-19

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

and religious freedom have increased, the average score declined sharply (by 0.42 points) over the same period. As highlighted in the *Democracy Index 2017: Free speech under attack*, free speech is increasingly being restricted by both state and non-state actors. In the past decade, in fact, no scores in the Democracy Index have deteriorated as much as those related to freedom of expression and media freedom.

The second-worst-performing category over the past decade has been *electoral process and pluralism*, the score for which deteriorated by 0.10 in 2019 compared with 2018, continuing years of steady decline. The average global score for this category has fallen from 6.07 in 2008 to 5.80 in 2019, with most of the regression being concentrated in developing regions such as Asia, eastern Europe, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Latin America’s average score in this category is higher than that of other emerging-market regions but lags significantly behind those for the developed world; it has also fallen sharply since 2011, from 8.20 to 7.48. The developed democracies of North America and western Europe continue to score highly in this category, but western Europe’s average score has declined steadily year by year. The average global score is dragged down by the very poor scores in this category in the MENA region (2.50) and Sub-Saharan Africa (3.99).

The *functioning of government* category is the lowest-scoring category in the Democracy Index, with an average global score of 4.81 in 2019, down from 5.00 in 2008. Asia (5.81), Latin America (5.40) and eastern Europe (4.54) have struggled to improve their performance in this category. Indeed they have regressed in recent years. The consistently low scores for transparency, accountability and corruption in the developing world explain much of the underperformance. In all of these areas there was little or no progress in 2019, and government failures in these areas help to explain the upsurge of political protest and social unrest in the developing regions in 2019. The MENA region (2.84) and Sub-Saharan Africa (3.27) perform very poorly in this area.

It is in the *functioning of government* category that the advanced democracies have also struggled in recent years and registered regressions in their scores. Western Europe averages only 7.95 in this category, while the score for the US was even lower, at 7.14 in 2019. Government dysfunction, insufficient transparency and a lack of accountability help to explain the relatively low scores for the mature democracies in this category. However, the questions which have dragged down the country and regional scores in this category are those that pertain to popular perceptions of control; public confidence in government; and public confidence in political parties. In the worst-scoring question in the *functioning of government* category (and in the entire index), concerning popular confidence in political parties, the score fell once again in 2019.

There has been a decline in the average global score for the *political culture* category between 2008 and 2019, from 5.73 to 5.57, a smaller regression compared with other categories. The trajectory of the score over this period has also been less linear and more lumpy. Disillusionment with traditional political parties which have failed to address weaknesses in the practice of democracy has undermined confidence in democracy itself, as revealed in surveys by Eurobarometer, Latinobarómetro, Afrobarometer, Gallup, Pew and others. In our Democracy Index the score for popular perceptions of democracy has fallen in recent years. There has also been a notable decline in the score relating to the degree of societal consensus and cohesion necessary to support democracy.

Democratic backsliding, popular protest

The one category which has recorded a steady and significant upward trajectory is *political participation*, for which the average global score has risen from 4.59 in 2008 to 5.28 in 2019. With the exception of North America, whose average score for political participation fell from 7.78 in 2011 to 7.50 in 2019, every region has recorded an improvement in this category over the same time period. Admittedly, the improvement has been from a low base, indicating one of the most damning weaknesses of democracy around the globe; the average global score for *political participation* is the second-lowest of all the categories, after that for *functioning of government*. The improvement in the average score for *political participation* over the past decade is in our view correlated with the parallel deterioration in the scores for *electoral process and pluralism*, *functioning of government* and *civil liberties*. The failures of “actually existing democracy” in the developing and developed world have inspired millions of people who aspire to have a better version of democracy, to become engaged, and to demand change.

As discussed in the section Democracy around the regions (see page 23), following a popular backlash against “actually existing democracy” in the developed democracies in recent years, public dissatisfaction with the political status quo boiled over in many places in the developing world in 2019. A rising tide of popular protest shook regimes run by despots and democrats alike in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the MENA region and in Sub-Saharan Africa. The willingness of populations to take to the streets to express their opposition to the established order, to protest against official measures, unjust laws and corruption and to demand change resulted in improved scores for *political participation* in many countries and across the regions.

Economic distress is almost a necessary precondition for serious instability, but in itself is not a sufficient one, and the protests of 2019 also had clear political mainsprings. Declines in incomes are not always followed by unrest. It is only when economic distress is accompanied by other structural features of vulnerability that there is a high risk of instability. The underlying vulnerability to unrest depends on a host of factors, including the degree of income inequality, the state of governance, levels of social provision, ethnic tensions, public trust in institutions, and a history of unrest. What appears to be decisive in firing unrest is the erosion of trust in governments, institutions, parties and politicians—what is generally termed “the crisis of democracy”. It is only by giving due consideration to this political dimension that we can understand the mainsprings of protest and see the common denominators of seemingly diverse protests.

In Latin America, mass protests erupted in 2019 in numerous countries, including Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti and Venezuela. The drivers of these protests varied from clashes over electoral fraud to demonstrations against corruption and austerity measures. All expressed distrust in the political class and dissension from governments’ policy decisions. In some cases, for example in Chile, a single issue, such as a government fare hike for Santiago’s metro system, became a lightning rod for other grievances. Dysfunctional political systems and the failure of governments to address voter concerns led to an improvement in *political participation* across the region, as growing numbers of citizens voiced their dissatisfaction with the status quo and demanded change.

Hong Kong was the epicentre of protest in Asia. What began as a protest against proposed amendments to Hong Kong’s extradition law soon morphed into a campaign for more democracy. After starting out by demanding that the local government drop the extradition legislation, protestors ended up calling for universal suffrage. The protests also gave expression to other concerns, for example about the increasing influence of central government on local matters, including those pertaining to freedom of expression.

More upheaval in the MENA region

Rising popular frustration with the political status quo in several countries led to growing public protests in the MENA region in 2019, including in Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Sudan, continuing a trend that started in 2018. These protests led to regime change in some countries or elections in the less authoritarian systems. In other countries populations joined demonstrations to express dissatisfaction with the slow pace of political and economic change.

Sub-Saharan Africa experienced its fair share of protests in 2019, including in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa. Disillusioned and incensed citizens expressed their anger and frustration with national leaders over painfully slow progress on a range of economic, political and social issues. The protests differed from place to place, but the participants were inspired by common themes. In particular, protests were driven by frustration with a government that was seen as corrupt and self-serving, and unwilling or unable to tackle the political and socioeconomic inequalities facing its people.

The new populist movements in the developed world and the upsurge of popular protests in the developing world hold out the potential for a regeneration of democracy. At the heart of the populist insurgency has been a demand for more popular sovereignty and political representation. These are also concerns for protestors in the emerging-market regions, whose demands for government action to tackle corruption, economic and social inequalities and human rights abuses can be met only through greater democratisation.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 2
Democracy Index 2019

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Full democracy							
Norway	9.87	1	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71
Iceland	9.58	2	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71
Sweden	9.39	3	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	9.26	4	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00
Finland	9.25	5	10.00	8.93	8.89	8.75	9.71
Ireland	9.24	6	10.00	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00
Denmark	9.22	7=	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12
Canada	9.22	7=	9.58	9.64	7.78	9.38	9.71
Australia	9.09	9	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00
Switzerland	9.03	10	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12
Netherlands	9.01	11	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.75	9.12
Luxembourg	8.81	12	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Germany	8.68	13	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41
United Kingdom	8.52	14	9.58	7.50	8.89	7.50	9.12
Uruguay	8.38	15	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71
Austria	8.29	16=	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82
Spain	8.29	16=	9.58	7.14	7.78	8.13	8.82
Mauritius	8.22	18	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41
Costa Rica	8.13	19	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.41
France	8.12	20	9.58	7.86	7.78	6.88	8.53
Chile	8.08	21	9.58	8.57	5.00	8.13	9.12
Portugal	8.03	22	9.58	7.86	6.11	7.50	9.12
Flawed democracy							
South Korea	8.00	23	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24
Japan	7.99	24	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82
United States of America	7.96	25	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24
Malta	7.95	26	9.17	7.50	6.11	8.13	8.82
Estonia	7.90	27	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.53
Israel	7.86	28	9.17	7.86	8.89	7.50	5.88
Botswana	7.81	29	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12
Cabo Verde	7.78	30	9.17	7.36	6.67	6.88	8.82
Taiwan	7.73	31	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.12
Czech Republic	7.69	32	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53
Belgium	7.64	33	9.58	8.21	5.00	6.88	8.53
Cyprus	7.59	34	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	8.82
Italy	7.52	35	9.58	6.07	7.78	6.25	7.94
Slovenia	7.50	36=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24
Lithuania	7.50	36=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12

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Table 2
Democracy Index 2019

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Latvia	7.49	38	9.58	6.07	6.11	6.88	8.82
Greece	7.43	39	9.58	4.86	6.67	7.50	8.53
South Africa	7.24	40	7.42	7.50	8.33	5.00	7.94
Timor-Leste	7.19	41	9.58	6.29	5.56	6.88	7.65
Slovakia	7.17	42	9.58	7.14	5.56	5.63	7.94
Malaysia	7.16	43=	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.25	5.88
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	43=	9.58	7.14	6.11	5.63	7.35
Colombia	7.13	45	9.17	6.79	5.56	5.63	8.53
Panama	7.05	46	9.58	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.94
Bulgaria	7.03	47	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94
Argentina	7.02	48	9.17	5.36	6.11	6.25	8.24
Suriname	6.98	49	9.17	6.43	6.67	5.00	7.65
Jamaica	6.96	50	8.75	7.14	4.44	6.25	8.24
India	6.90	51	8.67	6.79	6.67	5.63	6.76
Brazil	6.86	52	9.58	5.36	6.11	5.00	8.24
Tunisia	6.72	53	9.17	5.71	7.22	5.63	5.88
Philippines	6.64	54	9.17	5.36	7.22	4.38	7.06
Ghana	6.63	55=	8.33	5.71	6.67	6.25	6.18
Hungary	6.63	55=	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06
Poland	6.62	57	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.35
Peru	6.60	58	9.17	5.00	5.56	5.63	7.65
Croatia	6.57	59	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06
Dominican Republic	6.54	60=	9.17	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.06
Lesotho	6.54	60=	9.17	4.50	6.67	5.63	6.76
Mongolia	6.50	62	9.17	5.71	5.56	5.00	7.06
Romania	6.49	63	9.17	5.71	5.56	4.38	7.65
Indonesia	6.48	64	7.92	7.14	6.11	5.63	5.59
Namibia	6.43	65	6.58	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94
Serbia	6.41	66	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35
Ecuador	6.33	67	8.75	5.36	6.11	4.38	7.06
Thailand	6.32	68	7.42	5.36	6.11	6.25	6.47
Sri Lanka	6.27	69	7.00	6.07	5.56	6.25	6.47
Paraguay	6.24	70	8.75	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.35
El Salvador	6.15	71=	9.17	4.64	6.11	3.75	7.06
Guyana	6.15	71=	6.92	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35
Mexico	6.09	73	7.83	6.07	7.22	3.13	6.18
Papua New Guinea	6.03	74	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.65
Hong Kong	6.02	75=	3.58	4.36	6.11	7.50	8.53
Singapore	6.02	75=	3.92	7.86	5.00	6.25	7.06

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Table 2
Democracy Index 2019

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
			Hybrid regime				
North Macedonia	5.97	77	7.00	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06
Ukraine	5.90	78	7.42	2.71	6.67	6.25	6.47
Albania	5.89	79	7.00	5.36	4.44	5.00	7.65
Bangladesh	5.88	80	7.83	6.07	6.11	4.38	5.00
Fiji	5.85	81	6.58	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.59
Senegal	5.81	82	6.08	6.07	4.44	6.25	6.18
Moldova	5.75	83	6.58	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06
Montenegro	5.65	84	5.67	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76
Madagascar	5.64	85	7.92	3.57	6.11	5.63	5.00
Armenia	5.54	86	7.50	5.36	6.11	3.13	5.59
Malawi	5.50	87	6.08	4.29	5.00	6.25	5.88
Liberia	5.45	88	7.42	3.07	5.56	5.63	5.59
Georgia	5.42	89=	7.83	3.21	6.11	4.38	5.59
Honduras	5.42	89=	7.83	4.29	4.44	4.38	6.18
Bhutan	5.30	91	8.75	6.79	2.78	4.38	3.82
Nepal	5.28	92	4.83	5.36	5.00	5.63	5.59
Guatemala	5.26	93	6.92	4.64	3.89	4.38	6.47
Kenya	5.18	94	3.50	5.71	6.67	5.63	4.41
Tanzania	5.16	95	5.75	5.00	5.00	5.63	4.41
Morocco	5.10	96	5.25	4.64	5.56	5.63	4.41
Benin	5.09	97=	4.67	5.71	4.44	5.63	5.00
Zambia	5.09	97=	4.75	2.93	4.44	6.88	6.47
Uganda	5.02	99	4.33	3.57	4.44	6.88	5.88
Mali	4.92	100	6.42	3.07	3.89	5.63	5.59
Kyrgyz Republic	4.89	101	6.08	2.93	6.67	3.75	5.00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.86	102=	6.17	2.93	5.56	3.75	5.88
Sierra Leone	4.86	102=	6.58	2.86	3.33	6.25	5.29
Bolivia	4.84	104	4.75	3.93	5.00	3.75	6.76
Haiti	4.57	105	4.75	2.07	3.89	6.25	5.88
Lebanon	4.36	106	3.92	1.50	6.67	5.00	4.71
Gambia	4.33	107	4.00	4.29	3.33	5.63	4.41
Pakistan	4.25	108	6.08	5.71	2.22	2.50	4.71
Nigeria	4.12	109	5.17	3.93	3.33	3.75	4.41
Turkey	4.09	110	3.08	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.35
Côte d'Ivoire	4.05	111	4.33	2.86	3.33	5.63	4.12
Burkina Faso	4.04	112	3.92	2.71	4.44	5.00	4.12
Algeria	4.01	113	3.08	2.86	5.00	5.00	4.12

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 2
Democracy Index 2019

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Authoritarian regime							
Jordan	3.93	114=	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53
Kuwait	3.93	114=	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53
Mauritania	3.92	116	3.50	3.57	5.00	3.13	4.41
Palestine	3.89	117	3.33	0.14	7.78	4.38	3.82
Iraq	3.74	118	5.25	0.00	6.67	5.00	1.76
Angola	3.72	119	2.25	2.86	5.56	5.00	2.94
Mozambique	3.65	120	2.58	2.14	5.00	5.00	3.53
Gabon	3.61	121	2.58	2.21	4.44	5.00	3.82
Myanmar	3.55	122=	3.08	3.93	2.78	5.63	2.35
Nicaragua	3.55	122=	1.25	2.86	3.89	5.63	4.12
Cambodia	3.53	124	0.83	4.64	3.33	5.63	3.24
Ethiopia	3.44	125	0.42	3.57	5.56	5.00	2.65
Togo	3.30	126	3.17	1.79	3.33	5.00	3.24
Niger	3.29	127	2.92	1.14	3.33	4.38	4.71
Qatar	3.19	128	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	3.82
Rwanda	3.16	129=	1.42	4.29	2.78	4.38	2.94
Zimbabwe	3.16	129=	0.00	2.50	4.44	5.63	3.24
Comoros	3.15	131	2.08	2.21	3.89	3.75	3.82
eSwatini	3.14	132=	0.92	2.86	2.78	5.63	3.53
Guinea	3.14	132=	3.50	0.43	4.44	4.38	2.94
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.11	134=	2.17	2.50	3.89	3.75	3.24
Russia	3.11	134=	2.17	1.79	5.00	2.50	4.12
Vietnam	3.08	136	0.00	3.21	3.89	5.63	2.65
Egypt	3.06	137=	2.67	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.35
Oman	3.06	137=	0.08	3.93	2.78	4.38	4.12
Kazakhstan	2.94	139	0.50	2.14	4.44	4.38	3.24
Venezuela	2.88	140	0.00	1.79	5.00	4.38	3.24
Afghanistan	2.85	141=	3.42	0.64	3.89	2.50	3.82
Cameroon	2.85	141=	1.67	2.50	3.33	4.38	2.35
Cuba	2.84	143	0.00	3.57	3.33	4.38	2.94
Djibouti	2.77	144	0.42	1.29	3.89	5.63	2.65
United Arab Emirates	2.76	145	0.00	3.93	2.22	5.00	2.65
Azerbaijan	2.75	146	0.50	3.21	2.78	3.75	3.53
Sudan	2.70	147	0.00	1.79	5.56	5.00	1.18
Guinea-Bissau	2.63	148	4.92	0.00	2.78	3.13	2.35
Bahrain	2.55	149	0.83	2.71	2.78	4.38	2.06
Belarus	2.48	150	0.92	2.00	2.78	4.38	2.35
Iran	2.38	151	0.00	2.86	4.44	3.13	1.47

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 2
Democracy Index 2019

	Overall Score	Rank	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Eritrea	2.37	152	0.00	2.14	1.67	6.88	1.18
China	2.26	153	0.00	4.29	3.33	2.50	1.18
Burundi	2.15	154	0.00	0.07	3.33	5.00	2.35
Laos	2.14	155	0.00	2.86	1.67	5.00	1.18
Libya	2.02	156	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	2.94
Uzbekistan	2.01	157	0.08	1.86	2.22	5.00	0.88
Yemen	1.95	158	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88
Saudi Arabia	1.93	159=	0.00	2.86	2.22	3.13	1.47
Tajikistan	1.93	159=	0.08	0.79	1.67	6.25	0.88
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	161	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47
Turkmenistan	1.72	162	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59
Chad	1.61	163	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.75	2.65
Syria	1.43	164	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00
Central African Republic	1.32	165	1.25	0.00	1.11	1.88	2.35
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.13	166	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.13	0.88
North Korea	1.08	167	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00

Democracy Index 2019 Highlights

2019: the worst global score since 2006

In 2019 the average global score fell from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44 (on a 0-10 scale), the worst result since the Democracy Index began in 2006. The decline in the global democracy score was driven by sharp regressions in the average regional scores in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and a smaller fall in the average regional score in MENA. Only one region, North America, registered an improvement in its average score in 2019, and this was due to a modest improvement in Canada's score. The average regional scores for Asia and eastern and western Europe stagnated in 2019. Four out of five categories of the Democracy Index, *electoral process and pluralism*, *the functioning of government*, *political culture* and *civil liberties*, also deteriorated in 2019. The exception was *political participation*, for which the average global score went up.

Around the world: a year of global protest

As reflected in the improved average global score in the *political participation* category in 2019, there was a major increase in political protest and social unrest in emerging-market regions of the world. This was the biggest upsurge of protest since 2014, in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis. As then, the 2019 protests varied in nature by country and context, but there were several common underlying drivers. The sheer number of protests spanning different time zones has caught the attention of commentators everywhere. In fact, protests have been building a head of steam for several years. The backdrop to the recent wave of protest is in part economic (austerity, cost-of-living increases, unemployment, income inequality).

But economic issues alone cannot explain the upsurge of unrest. Regressive democratic trends and political failures have been major factors. It is the growth of popular distrust in governments, institutions, parties and politicians that is driving many of today's protest movements. In the developed world, increasing political participation has been driven by similar concerns about the inadequacies of democratic politics. Dissatisfaction with the mainstream political parties has given rise to new populist parties and a demand for more direct democracy. In many places, scores for voter turnout have increased, membership of political parties and organisations has grown, and engagement with politics has improved. Despite disenchantment with democracy, and probably because of the degree of disaffection that now prevails, populations are turning out to vote and to protest. This heightened level of popular engagement prevented the Democracy Index from sliding even further than it did in 2019.

Top and bottom

There was little change at the very top and the very bottom of the index. Once again Norway came out on top, with a score of 9.87 (on a scale of 0-10), and North Korea was at the bottom of the global rankings, with a score of 1.08. Some of the more notable moves up and down the rankings were recorded by Thailand, which registered the biggest improvement in score and ranking, and by China, which registered the greatest decline. Following the first election since the military coup in 2014, Thailand's score improved by 1.69 points and it moved up 38 places in the rankings, from a "hybrid

regime” to a “flawed democracy”. China’s regression resulted in a decline in score of 1.06 points and a fall of 23 places down the rankings.

Winners and losers

Although there was no big movement at the top and bottom of the index, there were big movements in the rankings elsewhere. Three countries (Chile, France and Portugal) moved from the “flawed democracy” to the “full democracy” category. Malta moved in the opposite direction, falling out of the “full democracy” category to become a “flawed democracy”. At the other end of the democracy spectrum, Iraq and Palestine moved from being classified as “hybrid regimes” to “authoritarian regimes”. Algeria moved from being an “authoritarian regime” to a “hybrid regime”. El Salvador and Thailand moved out of the “hybrid regime” category into the “flawed democracy” category, while Senegal moved in the opposite direction from a “flawed democracy” to a “hybrid regime”. There were other notable improvements, including in Armenia, Bangladesh, El Salvador, eSwatini, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and Ukraine, and there were regressions in Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Cameroon, Comoros, Egypt, India, Guyana, Singapore, Mali and Zambia.

An overall setback in Latin America, despite some gains

Latin America is the most democratic emerging-market region in the world. However, its overall score fell substantially in 2019, from 6.24 in 2018 to 6.13, a fourth consecutive year of decline. In 2019 the regional decline was chiefly driven by the post-electoral crisis in Bolivia, and to a lesser extent by the democratic regression in Guatemala and Haiti. Overall scores fell in close to one-half of the countries in the region. That said, the only two regional ranking modifications in the 2019 Democracy Index were both upgrades (Chile and El Salvador). The growing use of authoritarian practices in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia accounts for much of the recent regional democratic deterioration.

Asia: a year of drama and tumult

Asian democracies had a tumultuous year in 2019. The biggest score change occurred in Thailand, whose score improved by 1.69 points compared with 2018, to 6.32, resulting in a rise of 38 places in the global rankings and a transition from a “hybrid regime” to a “flawed democracy”. The biggest democracy in the world, India, dropped ten places in the Democracy Index’s global ranking, to 51st place. India’s overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in 2019. The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country. The introduction of a “fake news” law in Singapore led to a deterioration in the score for civil liberties in the city-state. China’s score fell to 2.26, and the country is now ranked 153rd, close to the bottom of the global rankings, as discrimination against minorities, especially in the north-western region of Xinjiang, intensified and digital surveillance of the population continued apace. Hong Kong slipped a further three places in 2019, from 73rd to joint 75th with Singapore out of 167 countries, amid a deterioration in political stability following a sizeable cumulative decline in 2015-18. The wave of often violent protests that grew from mid-2019 is largely a manifestation of pre-existing deficiencies in Hong Kong’s democratic environment.

MENA: a turbulent year

Challenging geopolitical circumstances, economic stagnation and corruption have all fed through into rising popular frustration with the political status quo in several countries, including Algeria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Sudan. The trend of growing public protests in the region, first apparent in 2018, has widened and deepened, leading to regime change in some countries or elections in the less authoritarian systems. In other countries, however, protests continued as populations expressed dissatisfaction with the pace and direction of political change.

Sub-Saharan Africa's democracy drought

Sub-Saharan Africa, which is highly populated by authoritarian regimes (they account for half of the region's 44 countries that are scored in the Democracy Index), experienced a significant democratic regression in 2019. The region's overall average score in the Democracy Index fell to 4.26 in 2019, from 4.36 in 2018; 23 countries registered a decline in their scores, which offset marginal improvements in 11. This is the lowest average score for Sub-Saharan Africa since 2010, in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis, when every region of the world registered a democratic regression in the Democracy Index. This regional deterioration was primarily the consequence of declining scores for many countries in the category of *electoral process and pluralism*; the average regional category score fell to 3.99 (from 4.30 in 2018).

Eastern Europe's democratic malaise persists

In 2019 eastern Europe's average score in the Democracy Index remained unchanged from 2018, at 5.42. This remains markedly below the region's score of 5.76 in 2006, when the index was first published. Improvements in the scores for a few countries, notably Armenia and Ukraine, were offset by falling scores for others, notably Belarus and the Kyrgyz Republic. In total eight countries' scores rose in 2019, nine fell, and 11 stagnated. This mixed picture suggests that eastern Europe's democratic malaise persists amid a weak political culture, difficulties in safeguarding the rule of law, endemic corruption, a rejection by some countries of "liberal" democratic values and a preference for "strongmen" who bypass political institutions, all of which creates a weak foundation for democracy.

Western Europe welcomes back two "full democracies" and loses one

Western Europe's average score in the Democracy Index was stable in 2019 compared with 2018, at 8.35, after falling slightly in each of the three previous years. Countries in western Europe occupy seven of the top-ten places in the global democracy rankings, including the top three spots, and the region boasts the largest number of "full democracies" of anywhere in the world, with a total of 15. In 2019 two countries—France and Portugal—moved from the "flawed democracy" to the "full democracy" category, and one—Malta—moved in the other direction. There are now five countries in the region that are classed as "flawed democracies", down from six in 2018. Other countries to improve their scores in 2019 were Finland, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain, but Belgium, Italy and Turkey registered a fall in their scores. Turkey is the only "hybrid regime" in the region.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-19

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Canada	9.22	9.15	9.15	9.15	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.07	9.07
US	7.96	7.96	7.98	7.98	8.05	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.18	8.22	8.22
average	8.59	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Austria	8.29	8.29	8.42	8.41	8.54	8.54	8.48	8.62	8.49	8.49	8.49	8.69
Belgium	7.64	7.78	7.78	7.77	7.93	7.93	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.16	8.15
Cyprus	7.59	7.59	7.59	7.65	7.53	7.40	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.70	7.60
Denmark	9.22	9.22	9.22	9.20	9.11	9.11	9.38	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52
Finland	9.25	9.14	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.06	9.06	9.19	9.25	9.25
France	8.12	7.80	7.80	7.92	7.92	8.04	7.92	7.88	7.77	7.77	8.07	8.07
Germany	8.68	8.68	8.61	8.63	8.64	8.64	8.31	8.34	8.34	8.38	8.82	8.82
Greece	7.43	7.29	7.29	7.23	7.45	7.45	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.92	8.13	8.13
Iceland	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.50	9.58	9.58	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.71
Ireland	9.24	9.15	9.15	9.15	8.85	8.72	8.68	8.56	8.56	8.79	9.01	9.01
Italy	7.52	7.71	7.98	7.98	7.98	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.74	7.83	7.98	7.73
Luxembourg	8.81	8.81	8.81	8.81	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	9.10	9.10
Malta	7.95	8.21	8.15	8.39	8.39	8.39	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.39	8.39
Netherlands	9.01	8.89	8.89	8.80	8.92	8.92	8.84	8.99	8.99	8.99	9.53	9.66
Norway	9.87	9.87	9.87	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.80	9.80	9.68	9.55
Portugal	8.03	7.84	7.84	7.86	7.79	7.79	7.65	7.92	7.81	8.02	8.05	8.16
Spain	8.18	8.08	8.08	8.30	8.30	8.05	8.02	8.02	8.02	8.16	8.45	8.34
Sweden	9.39	9.39	9.39	9.39	9.45	9.73	9.73	9.73	9.50	9.50	9.88	9.88
Switzerland	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.15	9.02
Turkey	4.09	4.37	4.88	5.04	5.12	5.12	5.63	5.76	5.73	5.73	5.69	5.70
UK	8.52	8.53	8.53	8.36	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.21	8.16	8.16	8.15	8.08
average	8.35	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Albania	5.89	5.98	5.98	5.91	5.91	5.67	5.67	5.67	5.81	5.86	5.91	5.91
Armenia	5.54	4.79	4.11	3.88	4.00	4.13	4.02	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.15
Azerbaijan	2.75	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.71	2.83	3.06	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.19	3.31
Belarus	2.88	3.13	3.13	3.54	3.62	3.69	3.04	3.04	3.16	3.34	3.34	3.34
Bosnia and Hercegovina	4.86	4.98	4.87	4.87	4.83	4.78	5.02	5.11	5.24	5.32	5.70	5.78
Bulgaria	7.03	7.03	7.03	7.01	7.14	6.73	6.83	6.72	6.78	6.84	7.02	7.10
Croatia	6.57	6.57	6.63	6.75	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.73	6.81	7.04	7.04
Czech Republic	7.69	7.69	7.62	7.82	7.94	7.94	8.06	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.17
Estonia	7.90	7.97	7.79	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.61	7.61	7.61	7.68	7.68	7.74
Georgia	5.42	5.50	5.93	5.93	5.88	5.82	5.95	5.53	4.74	4.59	4.62	4.90
Hungary	6.63	6.63	6.64	6.72	6.84	6.90	6.96	6.96	7.04	7.21	7.44	7.53
Kazakhstan	2.94	2.94	3.06	3.06	3.06	3.17	3.06	2.95	3.24	3.30	3.45	3.62
Kyrgyz Republic	4.89	5.11	5.11	4.93	5.33	5.24	4.69	4.69	4.34	4.31	4.05	4.08
Latvia	7.49	7.38	7.25	7.31	7.37	7.48	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.23	7.37

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Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-19

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Lithuania	7.50	7.50	7.41	7.47	7.54	7.54	7.54	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.36	7.43
Moldova	5.75	5.85	5.94	6.01	6.35	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.33	6.50	6.50
Montenegro	5.65	5.74	5.69	5.72	6.01	5.94	5.94	6.05	6.15	6.27	6.43	6.57
North Macedonia	5.97	5.87	5.57	5.23	6.02	6.25	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.21	6.33
Poland	6.62	6.67	6.67	6.83	7.09	7.47	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.05	7.30	7.30
Romania	6.49	6.38	6.44	6.62	6.68	6.68	6.54	6.54	6.54	6.60	7.06	7.06
Russia	3.11	2.94	3.17	3.24	3.31	3.39	3.59	3.74	3.92	4.26	4.48	5.02
Serbia	6.41	6.41	6.41	6.57	6.71	6.71	6.67	6.33	6.33	6.33	6.49	6.62
Slovakia	7.17	7.10	7.16	7.29	7.29	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.33	7.40
Slovenia	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.51	7.57	7.57	7.88	7.88	7.76	7.69	7.96	7.96
Tajikistan	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.89	1.95	2.37	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.45	2.45
Turkmenistan	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.83	1.83	1.83	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.83
Ukraine	5.90	5.69	5.69	5.70	5.70	5.42	5.84	5.91	5.94	6.30	6.94	6.94
Uzbekistan	2.01	2.01	1.95	1.95	1.95	2.45	1.72	1.72	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.85
average	5.42	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Argentina	7.02	7.02	6.96	6.96	7.02	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.63	6.63
Bolivia	4.84	5.70	5.49	5.63	5.75	5.79	5.79	5.84	5.84	5.92	6.15	5.98
Brazil	6.86	6.97	6.86	6.90	6.96	7.38	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.38	7.38
Chile	8.08	7.97	7.84	7.78	7.84	7.80	7.80	7.54	7.54	7.67	7.89	7.89
Colombia	7.13	6.96	6.67	6.67	6.62	6.55	6.55	6.63	6.63	6.55	6.54	6.40
Costa Rica	8.13	8.07	7.88	7.88	7.96	8.03	8.03	8.10	8.10	8.04	8.04	8.04
Cuba	2.84	3.00	3.31	3.46	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52
Dominican Republic	6.54	6.54	6.66	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.74	6.49	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.13
Ecuador	6.33	6.27	6.02	5.81	5.87	5.87	5.87	5.78	5.72	5.77	5.64	5.64
El Salvador	6.15	5.96	6.43	6.64	6.64	6.53	6.53	6.47	6.47	6.47	6.40	6.22
Guatemala	5.26	5.60	5.86	5.92	5.92	5.81	5.81	5.88	5.88	6.05	6.07	6.07
Guyana	6.15	6.67	6.46	6.25	6.05	5.91	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.12	6.15
Haiti	4.57	4.91	4.03	4.02	3.94	3.82	3.94	3.96	4.00	4.00	4.19	4.19
Honduras	5.42	5.63	5.72	5.92	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.76	6.18	6.25
Jamaica	6.96	7.02	7.29	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.13	7.21	7.21	7.34
Mexico	6.09	6.19	6.41	6.47	6.55	6.68	6.91	6.90	6.93	6.93	6.78	6.67
Nicaragua	3.55	3.63	4.66	4.81	5.26	5.32	5.46	5.56	5.56	5.73	6.07	5.68
Panama	7.05	7.05	7.08	7.13	7.19	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.15	7.35	7.35
Paraguay	6.24	6.24	6.31	6.27	6.33	6.26	6.26	6.26	6.40	6.40	6.40	6.16
Peru	6.60	6.60	6.49	6.65	6.58	6.54	6.54	6.47	6.59	6.40	6.31	6.11
Suriname	6.98	6.98	6.76	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.65	6.65	6.65	6.58	6.52
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	7.16	7.04	7.10	7.10	6.99	6.99	6.99	7.16	7.16	7.21	7.18
Uruguay	8.38	8.38	8.12	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.10	8.08	7.96
Venezuela	2.88	3.16	3.87	4.68	5.00	5.07	5.07	5.15	5.08	5.18	5.34	5.42
average	6.13	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-19

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Afghanistan	2.85	2.97	2.55	2.55	2.77	2.77	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	3.02	3.06
Australia	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.01	9.01	9.01	9.13	9.22	9.22	9.22	9.09	9.09
Bangladesh	5.88	5.57	5.43	5.73	5.73	5.78	5.86	5.86	5.86	5.87	5.52	6.11
Bhutan	5.30	5.30	5.08	4.93	4.93	4.87	4.82	4.65	4.57	4.68	4.30	2.62
Cambodia	3.53	3.59	3.63	4.27	4.27	4.78	4.60	4.96	4.87	4.87	4.87	4.77
China	2.26	3.32	3.10	3.14	3.14	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.14	3.14	3.04	2.97
Fiji	5.85	5.85	5.85	5.64	5.69	5.61	3.61	3.67	3.67	3.62	5.11	5.66
Hong Kong	6.02	6.15	6.31	6.42	6.50	6.46	6.42	6.42	5.92	5.92	5.85	6.03
India	6.90	7.23	7.23	7.81	7.74	7.92	7.69	7.52	7.30	7.28	7.80	7.68
Indonesia	6.48	6.39	6.39	6.97	7.03	6.95	6.82	6.76	6.53	6.53	6.34	6.41
Japan	7.99	7.99	7.88	7.99	7.96	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.25	8.15
Laos	2.14	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.21	2.21	2.21	2.32	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
Malaysia	7.16	6.88	6.54	6.54	6.43	6.49	6.49	6.41	6.19	6.19	6.36	5.98
Mongolia	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.62	6.62	6.62	6.51	6.35	6.23	6.36	6.60	6.60
Myanmar	3.55	3.83	3.83	4.20	4.14	3.05	2.76	2.35	1.77	1.77	1.77	1.77
Nepal	5.28	5.18	5.18	4.86	4.77	4.77	4.77	4.16	4.24	4.24	4.05	3.42
New Zealand	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.19	9.01
North Korea	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	0.86	1.03
Pakistan	4.25	4.17	4.26	4.33	4.40	4.64	4.64	4.57	4.55	4.55	4.46	3.92
Papua New Guinea	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.36	6.32	6.32	6.54	6.54	6.54
Philippines	6.64	6.71	6.71	6.94	6.84	6.77	6.41	6.30	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.48
Singapore	6.02	6.38	6.32	6.38	6.14	6.03	5.92	5.88	5.89	5.89	5.89	5.89
South Korea	8.00	8.00	8.00	7.92	7.97	8.06	8.06	8.13	8.06	8.11	8.01	7.88
Sri Lanka	6.27	6.19	6.48	6.48	6.42	5.69	5.69	5.75	6.58	6.64	6.61	6.58
Taiwan	7.73	7.73	7.73	7.79	7.83	7.65	7.57	7.57	7.46	7.52	7.82	7.82
Thailand	6.32	4.63	4.63	4.92	5.09	5.39	6.25	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.81	5.67
Timor Leste	7.19	7.19	7.19	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.16	7.22	7.22	7.22	6.41
Vietnam	3.08	3.08	3.08	3.38	3.53	3.41	3.29	2.89	2.96	2.94	2.53	2.75
average	5.67	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Algeria	4.01	3.50	3.56	3.56	3.95	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.44	3.44	3.32	3.17
Bahrain	2.55	2.71	2.71	2.79	2.79	2.87	2.87	2.53	2.92	3.49	3.38	3.53
Egypt	3.06	3.36	3.36	3.31	3.18	3.16	3.27	4.56	3.95	3.07	3.89	3.90
Iran	2.38	2.45	2.45	2.34	2.16	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.94	2.83	2.93
Iraq	3.74	4.06	4.09	4.08	4.08	4.23	4.10	4.10	4.03	4.00	4.00	4.01
Israel	7.86	7.79	7.79	7.85	7.77	7.63	7.53	7.53	7.53	7.48	7.48	7.28
Jordan	3.93	3.93	3.87	3.96	3.86	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.89	3.74	3.93	3.92
Kuwait	3.93	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.78	3.78	3.78	3.74	3.88	3.39	3.09
Lebanon	4.36	4.63	4.72	4.86	4.86	5.12	5.05	5.05	5.32	5.82	5.62	5.82
Libya	2.02	2.19	2.32	2.25	2.25	3.80	4.82	5.15	3.55	1.94	2.00	1.84

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A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-19

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Morocco	5.10	4.99	4.87	4.77	4.66	4.00	4.07	4.07	3.83	3.79	3.88	3.90
Oman	3.06	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.15	3.26	3.26	3.26	2.86	2.98	2.77
Palestine	3.89	4.39	4.46	4.49	4.57	4.72	4.80	4.80	4.97	5.44	5.83	6.01
Qatar	3.19	3.19	3.19	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.09	2.92	2.78
Saudi Arabia	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.82	1.82	1.71	1.77	1.84	1.90	1.92
Sudan	2.70	2.15	2.15	2.37	2.37	2.54	2.54	2.38	2.38	2.42	2.81	2.90
Syria	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.74	1.86	1.63	1.99	2.31	2.18	2.36
Tunisia	6.72	6.41	6.32	6.40	6.72	6.31	5.76	5.67	5.53	2.79	2.96	3.06
UAE	2.76	2.76	2.69	2.75	2.75	2.64	2.52	2.58	2.58	2.52	2.60	2.42
Yemen	1.95	1.95	2.07	2.07	2.24	2.79	2.79	3.12	2.57	2.64	2.95	2.98
average	3.53	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
Angola	3.72	3.62	3.62	3.40	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.32	3.32	3.35	2.41
Benin	5.09	5.74	5.61	5.67	5.72	5.65	5.87	6.00	6.06	6.17	6.06	6.16
Botswana	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.87	7.87	7.87	7.98	7.85	7.63	7.63	7.47	7.60
Burkina Faso	4.04	4.75	4.75	4.70	4.70	4.09	4.15	3.52	3.59	3.59	3.60	3.72
Burundi	2.15	2.33	2.33	2.40	2.49	3.33	3.41	3.60	4.01	4.01	4.51	4.51
Cabo Verde	7.78	7.88	7.88	7.94	7.81	7.81	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.94	7.81	7.43
Cameroon	2.85	3.28	3.61	3.46	3.66	3.41	3.41	3.44	3.41	3.41	3.46	3.27
Central African Republic	1.32	1.52	1.52	1.61	1.57	1.49	1.49	1.99	1.82	1.82	1.86	1.61
Chad	1.61	1.61	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.62	1.62	1.52	1.52	1.65
Comoros	3.15	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.41	3.58	3.90
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.11	3.31	3.25	2.91	2.91	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.94	3.19
Côte d'Ivoire	4.05	4.15	3.93	3.81	3.31	3.53	3.25	3.25	3.08	3.02	3.27	3.38
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.13	1.49	1.61	1.93	2.11	1.75	1.83	1.92	2.15	2.15	2.28	2.76
Djibouti	2.77	2.87	2.76	2.83	2.90	2.99	2.96	2.74	2.68	2.20	2.37	2.37
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	1.92	1.81	1.70	1.77	1.66	1.77	1.83	1.77	1.84	2.19	2.09
Eritrea	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.44	2.40	2.40	2.34	2.31	2.31	2.31
eSwatini	3.14	3.03	3.03	3.03	3.09	3.09	3.20	3.20	3.26	2.90	3.04	2.93
Ethiopia	3.44	3.35	3.42	3.60	3.83	3.72	3.83	3.72	3.79	3.68	4.52	4.72
Gabon	3.61	3.61	3.61	3.74	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.56	3.48	3.29	3.00	2.72
Gambia	4.33	4.31	4.06	2.91	2.97	3.05	3.31	3.31	3.38	3.38	4.19	4.39
Ghana	6.63	6.63	6.69	6.75	6.86	6.33	6.33	6.02	6.02	6.02	5.35	5.35
Guinea	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.01	2.84	2.79	2.79	2.79	2.09	2.02
Guinea-Bissau	2.63	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.93	1.93	1.26	1.43	1.99	1.99	1.99	2.00
Kenya	5.18	5.11	5.11	5.33	5.33	5.13	5.13	4.71	4.71	4.71	4.79	5.08
Lesotho	6.54	6.64	6.64	6.59	6.59	6.66	6.66	6.66	6.33	6.02	6.29	6.48
Liberia	5.45	5.35	5.23	5.31	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	5.07	5.07	5.25	5.22
Madagascar	5.64	5.22	5.11	5.07	4.85	4.42	4.32	3.93	3.93	3.94	5.57	5.82
Malawi	5.50	5.49	5.49	5.55	5.55	5.66	6.00	6.08	5.84	5.84	5.13	4.97
Mali	4.92	5.41	5.64	5.70	5.70	5.79	5.90	5.12	6.36	6.01	5.87	5.99

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Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-19

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Mauritania	3.92	3.82	3.82	3.96	3.96	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	3.86	3.91	3.12
Mauritius	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.28	8.28	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.04	8.04	8.04	8.04
Mozambique	3.65	3.85	4.02	4.02	4.60	4.66	4.77	4.88	4.90	4.90	5.49	5.28
Namibia	6.43	6.25	6.31	6.31	6.31	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.23	6.48	6.54
Niger	3.29	3.76	3.76	3.96	3.85	4.02	4.08	4.16	4.16	3.38	3.41	3.54
Nigeria	4.12	4.44	4.44	4.50	4.62	3.76	3.77	3.77	3.83	3.47	3.53	3.52
Rwanda	3.16	3.35	3.19	3.07	3.07	3.25	3.38	3.36	3.25	3.25	3.71	3.82
Senegal	5.81	6.15	6.15	6.21	6.08	6.15	6.15	6.09	5.51	5.27	5.37	5.37
Sierra Leone	4.86	4.66	4.66	4.55	4.55	4.56	4.64	4.71	4.51	4.51	4.11	3.57
South Africa	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.41	7.56	7.82	7.90	7.79	7.79	7.79	7.91	7.91
Tanzania	5.16	5.41	5.47	5.76	5.58	5.77	5.77	5.88	5.64	5.64	5.28	5.18
Togo	3.30	3.10	3.05	3.32	3.41	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	2.43	1.75
Uganda	5.02	5.20	5.09	5.26	5.22	5.22	5.22	5.16	5.13	5.05	5.03	5.14
Zambia	5.09	5.61	5.68	5.99	6.28	6.39	6.26	6.26	6.19	5.68	5.25	5.25
Zimbabwe	3.16	3.16	3.16	3.05	3.05	2.78	2.67	2.67	2.68	2.64	2.53	2.62
average	4.26	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.44	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Democracy around the regions in 2019

The developed OECD countries of Europe and North America continue to dominate among the world's "full democracies", together with the two Australasian countries (but no Asian ones), three Latin American countries (Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile) and one African country (Mauritius). The almost complete predominance of OECD countries among those ranked as "full democracies" suggests that the level of economic development is a significant, if not a binding, constraint on democratic development. "Flawed democracies" are concentrated in Latin America, eastern Europe and Asia, although western Europe also has several. Like Asia, eastern Europe does not have a single "full democracy", and it is also the region that has deteriorated the most since the Democracy Index was established in 2006. It is followed by western Europe, indicating that the democratic malaise of the past decade has been felt most keenly in Europe.

Table 4
Democracy across the regions

	No. of countries	Democracy index average	Full democracies	Flawed democracies	Hybrid regimes	Authoritarian regimes
North America						
2019	2	8.59	1	1	0	0
2018	2	8.56	1	1	0	0
Western Europe						
2019	21	8.35	15	5	1	0
2018	21	8.35	14	6	1	0
Eastern Europe						
2019	28	5.42	0	12	9	7
2018	28	5.42	0	12	9	7
Latin America & the Caribbean						
2019	24	6.13	3	14	4	3
2018	24	6.24	2	14	5	3
Asia & Australasia						
2019	28	5.67	2	14	5	7
2018	28	5.67	2	13	6	7
Middle East & North Africa						
2019	20	3.53	0	2	3	15
2018	20	3.54	0	2	4	14
Sub-Saharan Africa						
2019	44	4.26	1	6	15	22
2018	44	4.36	1	7	14	22
Total						
2019	167	5.44	22	54	37	54
2018	167	5.48	20	55	39	53

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

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But Europe is not alone in experiencing a long-term decline in democracy: there has also been a decline in Latin America since the index was first introduced, which became more severe in 2015 and was pronounced in 2019. In fact, only Asia has registered a significant improvement since 2006, albeit from a low base, as fledgling democracies have consolidated (although there have been notable setbacks too). Sub-Saharan Africa had been making modest progress overall since 2006, but in 2019 the region as a whole experienced a significant deterioration in its average score. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has had a turbulent time, and its average score in 2019 was the same as it was when the index was first published in 2006. For a few years it appeared that the Arab Spring, which began in late 2010, might herald a period of political transformation analogous to that in eastern Europe in the 1990s. However, only Tunisia has consolidated any democratic gains, graduating into a “flawed democracy” in 2014 with an increase in its score from 3.06 in 2006 to 6.72 in 2019.

In 2019 the average global score fell from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44 (on a 0-10 scale), driven by sharp regressions in the average regional scores in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and a much smaller fall in the average regional score in MENA. Only one region, North America, registered an improvement in its average score in 2019, and this was due to a very modest improvement in Canada’s score. The average regional scores for Asia as well as eastern and western Europe stagnated in 2019. These headline averages do not tell the whole story, of course, and there were notable successes and setbacks in every region. The following section looks in more detail at general trends and specific cases, region by region.

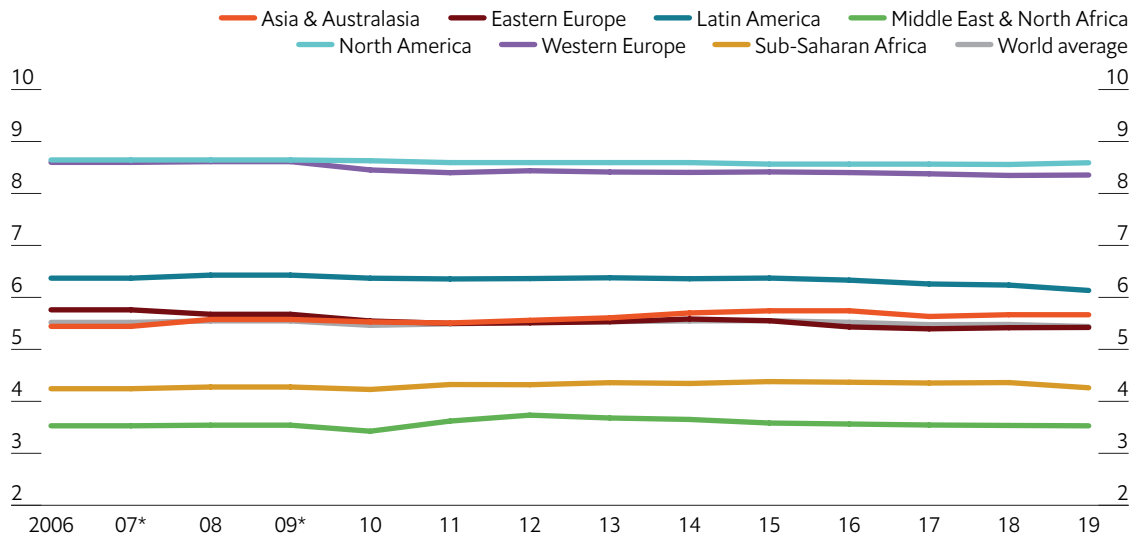
Table 5
Democracy Index 2006-19 by region

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Asia & Australasia	5.67	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Eastern Europe	5.42	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Latin America	6.13	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37
Middle East & North Africa	3.53	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
North America	8.59	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Western Europe	8.35	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.26	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.44	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Chart 3 Democracy Index change over time 2006-19

(Based on 167 countries and 60 indicators; 10=most democratic)



*No data.

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Asia and Australasia

Since we began producing the Democracy Index in 2006, the Asia and Australasia region has made more progress in improving its standing in our global rankings than any other region. However, it continues to lag behind North America (8.59), western Europe (8.35) and Latin America (6.13). The region made rapid progress in the decade up to 2016 and its average score peaked at 5.74 that year. However, the average regional score declined significantly in 2017 and has remained stagnant at 5.67 in 2018-19.

Asia is the region with the biggest divergence in scores: it includes top-scoring New Zealand (9.26), which retained its 4th position in the global ranking (out of 167 countries), while persistent laggard North Korea (1.08) is at the bottom of the global ranking in 167th place. Australia and New Zealand are the region’s only two “full democracies”. However, South Korea and Japan are very close to attaining “full democracy” status, but for now they remain “flawed democracies”. The region has 12 other “flawed democracies” after Thailand returned to the fold following the general election in 2019. The region has five “hybrid regimes” and seven “authoritarian regimes”.

For Asian democracies 2019 was a tumultuous year. The biggest score change occurred in Thailand with a 1.69-point improvement from 2018, to 6.32, resulting in a rise of 38 places in the global rankings and the country’s transition from a “hybrid regime” to a “flawed democracy”. The improvement came about because Thailand finally held an election in March 2019, the first since the military coup d’état in May 2014. Voters had a wide array of parties and candidates from which to choose, and this helped to restore some public confidence in the electoral process and the political system. There were reports of minor infringements and limited coercion, but not enough to sully the process entirely. The election led to improvements in the scores across all five categories of the Democracy Index, but the sharpest increase was recorded for electoral process and pluralism.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 6
Asia and Australasia 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
New Zealand	9.26	4	1	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00	Full democracy
Australia	9.09	9	2	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
South Korea	8.00	23	3	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy
Japan	7.99	24	4	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82	Flawed democracy
Taiwan	7.73	31	5	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.12	Flawed democracy
Timor-Leste	7.19	41	6	9.58	6.29	5.56	6.88	7.65	Flawed democracy
Malaysia	7.16	43=	7	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.25	5.88	Flawed democracy
India	6.90	51	8	8.67	6.79	6.67	5.63	6.76	Flawed democracy
Philippines	6.64	54	9	9.17	5.36	7.22	4.38	7.06	Flawed democracy
Mongolia	6.50	62	10	9.17	5.71	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Indonesia	6.48	64	11	7.92	7.14	6.11	5.63	5.59	Flawed democracy
Thailand	6.32	68	12	7.42	5.36	6.11	6.25	6.47	Flawed democracy
Sri Lanka	6.27	69	13	7.00	6.07	5.56	6.25	6.47	Flawed democracy
Papua New Guinea	6.03	74	14	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.65	Flawed democracy
Hong Kong	6.02	75=	15=	3.58	4.36	6.11	7.50	8.53	Flawed democracy
Singapore	6.02	75=	15=	3.92	7.86	5.00	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Bangladesh	5.88	80	17	7.83	6.07	6.11	4.38	5.00	Hybrid regime
Fiji	5.85	81	18	6.58	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Bhutan	5.30	91	19	8.75	6.79	2.78	4.38	3.82	Hybrid regime
Nepal	5.28	92	20	4.83	5.36	5.00	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Pakistan	4.25	108	21	6.08	5.71	2.22	2.50	4.71	Hybrid regime
Myanmar	3.55	122=	22	3.08	3.93	2.78	5.63	2.35	Authoritarian
Cambodia	3.53	124	23	0.83	4.64	3.33	5.63	3.24	Authoritarian
Vietnam	3.08	136	24	0.00	3.21	3.89	5.63	2.65	Authoritarian
Afghanistan	2.85	141=	25	3.42	0.64	3.89	2.50	3.82	Authoritarian
China	2.26	153	26	0.00	4.29	3.33	2.50	1.18	Authoritarian
Laos	2.14	155	27	0.00	2.86	1.67	5.00	1.18	Authoritarian
North Korea	1.08	167	28	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00	Authoritarian

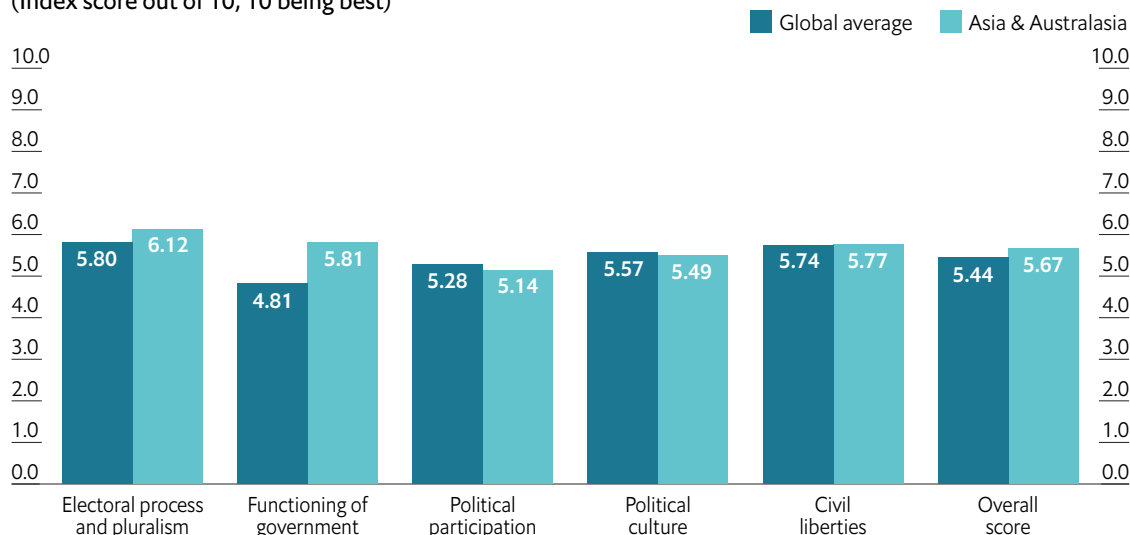
Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Nevertheless, the election results favoured predominantly the military-aligned Phalang Pracharat party. Paea Thai, the party of two former prime ministers, Yingluck Shinawatra and Thaksin Shinawatra, secured the largest number of seats but was unable to form a coalition government. As a result Prayuth Chan-ocha, the former coup leader, was appointed as prime minister in June 2019, after securing support from smaller parties and the junta-appointed Senate (the upper house of parliament).

Elections took place in the biggest democracy in the world, India, over April-May 2019. However, the country dropped ten places in the Democracy Index's global ranking, to 51st. India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in 2019. The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country. The Indian government stripped the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state of its special status by repealing two key constitutional provisions granting it powers of autonomy. Article 370 gave the state assembly of J&K powers to decide which articles of the Indian constitution would be applicable in the state—except for matters related to defence, communication and foreign affairs. Furthermore, Article 35A prevented Indian residents from other states from purchasing land or property in J&K. Following the removal of these provisions of the constitution and the passage of a new Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019, J&K no longer enjoys statehood and is now

divided into two union territories: one that retains the name Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Ahead of the move, the government deployed a large number of troops in J&K, imposed various other security measures and placed local leaders under house arrest, including those with pro-India credentials. The government also restricted internet access in the state.

Chart 4 Asia & Australasia, Democracy Index 2019 by category
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Meanwhile, a separate citizenship registration exercise in Assam, a state in north-eastern India, has excluded 1.9m from the final list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The vast majority of people excluded from the NRC are Muslims. The ruling nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) says that most of the people excluded from the list are immigrants from Bangladesh, whose government denies this. Critics claim that the exercise targets the Muslim population and will lead to demographic changes along religious lines. There are almost 200m Muslims in India: the figure was 195,810,000 in 2015, representing 14.9% of the total population of India and 10.5% of the total Muslim population of the world, according to a report by the Pew Research Center (see References and bibliography, page 65). At current growth rates India will be home to the world's biggest Muslim population by 2060, with a Muslim population of more than 333m or 19.4% of the total population. The new citizenship law has enraged the large Muslim population, stoked communal tensions and generated large protests in major cities.

Elections were also held in Indonesia in April 2019, returning Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi) as president for a second term. However, in a disturbing development some senior politicians have advocated the abolition of direct elections. This would see Indonesia reverting to the pre-2004 system, under which the president was selected by the national parliament. Such a regressive step would weaken the country's electoral system, replacing the current competitive, high-turnout elections with an opaque procedure. A proposal to end direct elections was not put to parliament in 2019. Jokowi opposes such a move, but as his influence wanes in future, others may push it to the fore.

The introduction of a “fake news” law in Singapore led to a deterioration in the score for *civil liberties* in the city-state. The government claims that the law was enacted simply to prevent the dissemination of false news, but it threatens freedom of expression in Singapore, as it can be used to curtail political debate and silence critics of the government. The country has a low threshold of tolerance when it comes to criticism of the government, and libel laws are routinely used to muzzle opposition voices. The law could be deployed by the government during campaigning ahead of the general election that is expected to be held after the Chinese New Year holiday in early 2020. Nevertheless, support for the ruling People’s Action Party (PAP) remains strong, despite the introduction of such repressive legislation. By contrast, Malaysia, which scrapped its “fake news” law in August 2018 (having introduced it in March of that year) made further democratic gains in 2019. Its score improved and the country rose nine places in the global ranking as campaigning opportunities for all parties, including the opposition, improved, especially in the realm of social media.

China’s score fell to 2.26 in the 2019 index, and the country is now ranked 153rd, close to the bottom of the global rankings. Over the past year discrimination against minorities, especially in the north-western region of Xinjiang, has intensified. The widespread incarceration and detainment of Muslim minorities, coupled with other infringements of civil liberties, underpins the decline in China’s overall score. Digital surveillance of the population continued apace in 2019, representing a further constraint on individual freedoms. Given the country’s authoritarian rule, meaningful political participation and political culture remain extremely weak. Furthermore, the majority of the population is unconvinced that democracy would benefit the economy, and support for democratic ideals is absent.

A year of protest in Hong Kong

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index has Hong Kong slipping a further two places in 2019, from 73rd to joint 75th out of 167 countries, amid a deterioration in political stability. The territory's score fell by 0.13 points in the 2019 index, following a sizeable cumulative decline in 2015-18. Indeed, the wave of often violent protests that has been growing since mid-2019 is largely a manifestation of pre-existing deficiencies in Hong Kong's democratic environment, rather than a drastic change in conditions last year.

The protest movement was sparked by proposed amendments to Hong Kong's extradition law, which would potentially have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial (the territory does not have an extradition treaty with the mainland). This inspired a series of demonstrations, which focused at first on forcing the local government to drop the legislation but which quickly came to embrace a range of demands, including the granting of universal suffrage. The protests also tapped into concerns about the increasing influence of the central government on local matters, including those pertaining to freedom of expression.

The authorities' uncompromising response to the rising political and social unrest served to stoke tensions further. An aggressive response by the police during early, mainly peaceful protests, combined with poor public relations efforts on the part of the local leadership, led to a marked decline in confidence in government—the main factor behind the decline in the territory's score

in our 2019 index. The only indicator in the index that improved in 2019 was that for political engagement, as evidenced by the unprecedented voter turnout in local district elections in November 2019. However, this was a result of increased dissatisfaction among the population with the government and the political system, which was reflected in deteriorating scores for other indicators.

The risk that continued serious social unrest could result in the local and central governments taking more drastic action to rein in protesters, such as calling in the mainland security forces or cancelling the "one country, two systems" framework, is significant. Even excluding these possibilities, we expect a steady erosion of democratic processes and freedoms in Hong Kong over the next few years. The use of non-accountable administrative controls to stem political discussion—as in the case of the *Financial Times* journalist, Victor Mallet, who had his residency revoked in 2018—and the reform of educational institutions and their syllabuses to discourage critical political debate are likely to be extended. Erosion of judicial independence outside of business legal matters is also likely, and the authorities will continue to take a tough line on barring opposition candidates in legislative elections.

Under these assumptions there is a risk that the territory could move in future from being rated a "flawed democracy" according to the Democracy Index methodology to being classified as a "hybrid regime". However, a wide margin will remain between Hong Kong's position in the index and that of China.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 7
Eastern Europe 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Estonia	7.90	27	1	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Czech Republic	7.69	32	2	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Slovenia	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Lithuania	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12	Flawed democracy
Latvia	7.49	38	5	9.58	6.07	6.11	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Slovakia	7.17	42	6	9.58	7.14	5.56	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Bulgaria	7.03	47	7	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94	Flawed democracy
Hungary	6.63	55=	8	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Poland	6.62	57	9	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.35	Flawed democracy
Croatia	6.57	59	10	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Romania	6.49	63	11	9.17	5.71	5.56	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Serbia	6.41	66	12	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
North Macedonia	5.97	77	13	7.00	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Ukraine	5.90	78	14	7.42	2.71	6.67	6.25	6.47	Hybrid regime
Albania	5.89	79	15	7.00	5.36	4.44	5.00	7.65	Hybrid regime
Moldova	5.75	83	16	6.58	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06	Hybrid regime
Montenegro	5.65	84	17	5.67	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76	Hybrid regime
Armenia	5.54	86	18	7.50	5.36	6.11	3.13	5.59	Hybrid regime
Georgia	5.42	89=	19	7.83	3.21	6.11	4.38	5.59	Hybrid regime
Kyrgyz Republic	4.89	101	20	6.08	2.93	6.67	3.75	5.00	Hybrid regime
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.86	102=	21	6.17	2.93	5.56	3.75	5.88	Hybrid regime
Russia	3.11	134=	22	2.17	1.79	5.00	2.50	4.12	Authoritarian
Kazakhstan	2.94	139	23	0.50	2.14	4.44	4.38	3.24	Authoritarian
Azerbaijan	2.75	146	24	0.50	3.21	2.78	3.75	3.53	Authoritarian
Belarus	2.48	150	25	0.92	2.00	2.78	4.38	2.35	Authoritarian
Uzbekistan	2.01	157	26	0.08	1.86	2.22	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Tajikistan	1.93	159=	27	0.08	0.79	1.67	6.25	0.88	Authoritarian
Turkmenistan	1.72	162	28	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

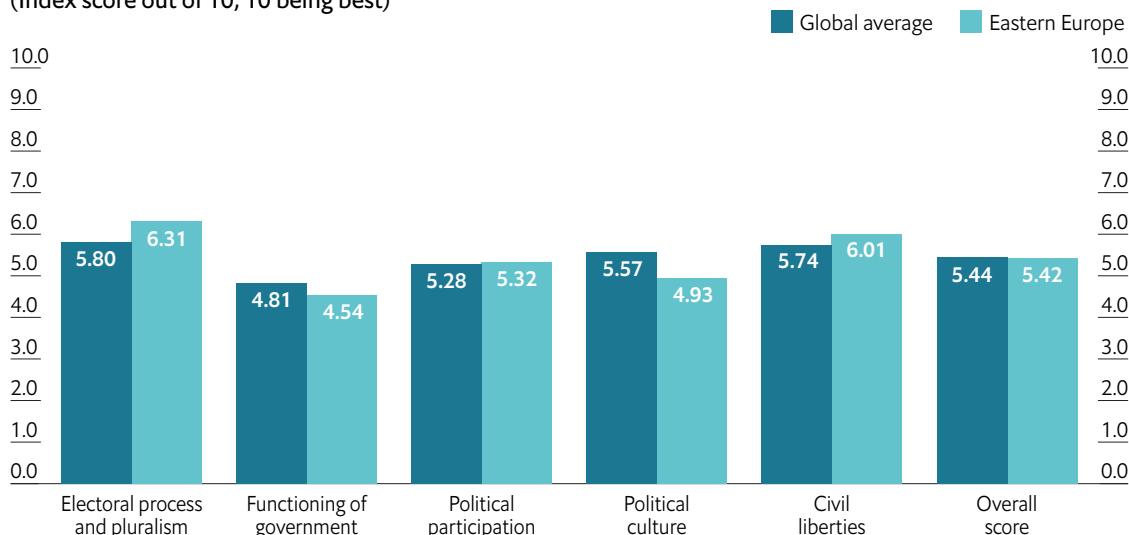
Eastern Europe

In 2019 eastern Europe's average score in the Democracy Index remained unchanged at 5.42 compared with 2018. This remains markedly below the region's score of 5.76 in 2006, when the index was begun. Improvements in the scores for a few countries, notably Armenia and Ukraine, were offset by falling scores for others, notably Belarus and the Kyrgyz Republic. In total eight countries' scores rose in 2019, nine fell, and 11 stagnated.

This mixed picture suggests that eastern Europe's democratic malaise persists amid a weak political culture, difficulties in safeguarding the rule of law, endemic corruption, a rejection by some countries of "liberal" democratic values, and a preference for "strongmen" who bypass political institutions, all of which creates a weak foundation for democracy.

Chart 5 Eastern Europe, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

No country moved category in 2019, meaning that there are still no “full democracies” in eastern Europe. There are, however, 12 countries that are classed as “flawed democracies”, including all of the 11 EU member states plus Serbia; and nine that are classed as “hybrid regimes” (the remaining western Balkan states plus Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic). The rest are “authoritarian regimes”.

“Flawed democracies”: Poland slips behind Hungary

For the “flawed democracies” in the region, the changes in 2019 were minor. The scores for the Baltic states moved closer together, as Estonia—the leader—saw confidence in political parties decline, while Latvia—the laggard—saw the share of women in parliament increase. Estonia remained the highest-ranking country in eastern Europe, with a score of 7.90 and a global ranking of 27th.

The states of Central Europe are close behind the Baltics in the Democracy Index, but the gap between the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia on the one hand, and Hungary and Poland on the other, is now substantial. Moreover, in 2019 Poland fell below Hungary for the first time, as Poland’s ruling conservative-nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party continued its efforts to turn the country into an “illiberal democracy”, including by constraining the independence of the judiciary and consolidating media ownership in Polish hands.

In contrast, Romania, which scores closer to the bottom of the “flawed democracy” category, registered an improvement in its score in 2019. Growing public frustration with the Social Democrats (PSD) over the past two years, in particular with judicial reforms that were seen as facilitating corruption, led to a rise in political participation. This manifested itself in major street protests, an anti-corruption movement, and strong voter turnout in the European Parliament election in May and the presidential election in November. The latter resulted in the re-election of a pro-European president, Klaus Iohannis, on a pledge to fight corruption, alongside the lowest support for a PSD candidate in 30 years.

“Hybrid regimes”: Ukraine and Armenia improve

Two countries in the “hybrid regime” category made substantial steps towards democracy in 2019: Ukraine and Armenia. In both countries elections were held that were judged to be free and fair.

In Ukraine, the elections in question were the presidential and parliamentary polls held in April and May, respectively, which were won by Volodymyr Zelensky and his party, Servant of the People. Observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) judged that the polls had been “competitive and held with respect for fundamental freedoms”, albeit not without some instances of malpractice. Servant of the People won an absolute majority of seats in parliament, and there was an orderly transfer of power. Mr Zelensky benefited from public frustration about the continued influence of oligarchs under the presidency of Petro Poroshenko and has pledged to use this moment of political renewal to crack down on corruption.

In Armenia, the OSCE judged that the snap election in December 2018 “respected fundamental freedoms and enjoyed broad public trust”. This came after the “Velvet Revolution”, a series of anti-government protests that succeeded in preventing Serzh Sargsyan, the president since 2008, from staying in power by switching to the post of prime minister. Instead Nikol Pashinian, the opposition leader, took office as prime minister and began an anti-corruption campaign; he then won an absolute majority in the December election. Armenia’s score in the Democracy Index rose from 4.11 in 2017 to 4.79 in 2018, as government accountability and transparency improved and public confidence in the political system grew; it rose further, to 5.54 in 2019, as these improvements were consolidated and peaceful political activity became possible without government interference.

In contrast, the Kyrgyz Republic slipped further down the “hybrid regime” category after the arrest of the former president, Almazbek Atambayev, charged with murder and plotting a government coup. Social cohesion has frayed as divisions deepen between the north of the country, where Mr Atambayev still has support, and supporters of the current president, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, in the south.

“Authoritarian regimes”: minimal change

There were only minor changes in score among eastern Europe’s seven authoritarian regimes in 2019. Russia’s score remains the highest out of the seven, with 3.11, and Turkmenistan’s the lowest, with just 1.72. Belarus, Azerbaijan and four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) remain dictatorships, most of whose leaders have stayed in place for decades. We expect little to no improvement in the scores for these countries over the coming years, as there appears no credible possibility of the political opposition gaining power in any of them. However, the edifice of authoritarian rule, which in most cases depends on state repression of all dissent and opposition, is brittle, and this represents a threat to the survival of the regimes. For example, Turkmenistan may have an apparently quiescent and atomised population and little previous history of social unrest, but the dire state of the economy, severe goods shortages, restrictions on hard currency and the imposition of punitive discipline on the population may eventually have unexpected consequences.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Table 8
Latin America and the Caribbean 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Uruguay	8.38	15	1	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71	Full democracy
Costa Rica	8.13	19	2	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.41	Full democracy
Chile	8.08	21	3	9.58	8.57	5.00	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	43=	4	9.58	7.14	6.11	5.63	7.35	Flawed democracy
Colombia	7.13	45	5	9.17	6.79	5.56	5.63	8.53	Flawed democracy
Panama	7.05	46	6	9.58	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.94	Flawed democracy
Argentina	7.02	48	7	9.17	5.36	6.11	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Suriname	6.98	49	8	9.17	6.43	6.67	5.00	7.65	Flawed democracy
Jamaica	6.96	50	9	8.75	7.14	4.44	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Brazil	6.86	52	10	9.58	5.36	6.11	5.00	8.24	Flawed democracy
Peru	6.60	58	11	9.17	5.00	5.56	5.63	7.65	Flawed democracy
Dominican Republic	6.54	60=	12	9.17	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Ecuador	6.33	67	13	8.75	5.36	6.11	4.38	7.06	Flawed democracy
Paraguay	6.24	70	14	8.75	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.35	Flawed democracy
El Salvador	6.15	71=	15=	9.17	4.64	6.11	3.75	7.06	Flawed democracy
Guyana	6.15	71=	15=	6.92	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
Mexico	6.09	73	16	7.83	6.07	7.22	3.13	6.18	Flawed democracy
Honduras	5.42	89=	17	7.83	4.29	4.44	4.38	6.18	Hybrid regime
Guatemala	5.26	93	18	6.92	4.64	3.89	4.38	6.47	Hybrid regime
Bolivia	4.84	104	19	4.75	3.93	5.00	3.75	6.76	Hybrid regime
Haiti	4.57	105	20	4.75	2.07	3.89	6.25	5.88	Hybrid regime
Nicaragua	3.55	122=	21	1.25	2.86	3.89	5.63	4.12	Authoritarian
Venezuela	2.88	140	22	0.00	1.79	5.00	4.38	3.24	Authoritarian
Cuba	2.84	143	23	0.00	3.57	3.33	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

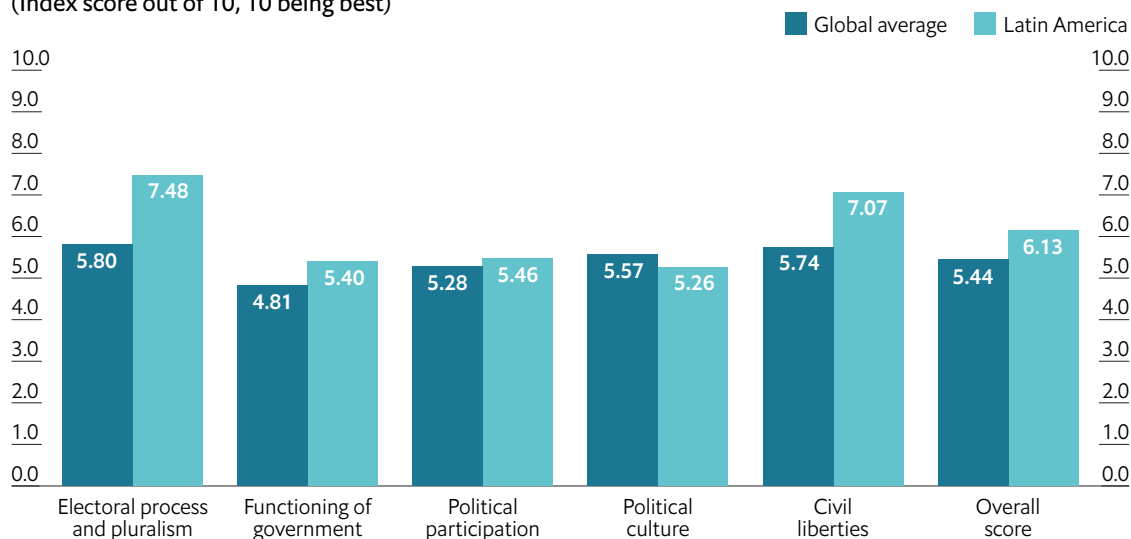
Latin America remains the most democratic emerging-market region in the world, scoring below only western Europe and North America. However, the region's overall score fell substantially in 2019, from 6.24 in 2018 to 6.13, a fourth consecutive year of decline. In 2019 the regional decline was chiefly driven by the post-electoral crisis in Bolivia, and to a lesser extent by democratic regression in Guatemala and Haiti. Overall scores fell in close to half of the countries in the region. That said, the only two regional ranking modifications in the 2019 Democracy Index were both upgrades (Chile and El Salvador). The growing use of authoritarian practices in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia accounts for much of the recent regional democratic deterioration.

Latin America's democratic backsliding in recent years has resulted from a decline in *electoral process and pluralism* and *civil liberties*, the two categories in which the region stands significantly ahead of global averages. Advances in *political participation* and *political culture* have managed to

offset only partially the worsening of the overall score. Furthermore, Latin America's performance in terms of the *functioning of government* remains lacklustre, as the region has struggled to tackle high levels of corruption and violence and has failed to rein in drug-trafficking and organised crime. Ineffective governance has increased popular dissatisfaction, undermining confidence in political institutions and perceptions of democracy. Dysfunctional political systems and the failure of governments to address voter concerns have led to an improvement in *political participation* across the region, as growing numbers of citizens voice their dissatisfaction with the status quo and demand change.

Chart 6 Latin America & the Caribbean, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Pan-regional social unrest in 2019

A salient political trend in the region in 2019 was the emergence of mass demonstrations in numerous countries. The drivers of these protests varied from opposition to austerity measures and corruption to clashes over electoral results. However, all were expressions of distrust in the political class and dissension from governments' policy decisions (see "Where next and what next for Latin America?", 2019, a White Paper by The Economist Intelligence Unit). A reduction in fuel subsidies and a metro fare hike triggered large-scale demonstrations in Ecuador and Chile, respectively. In Ecuador the fuel subsidy reduction—part of an IMF-backed economic reform agenda—sparked intense unrest, which forced the president, Lenín Moreno, to reinstate the subsidies.

In Chile, the escalation of unrest in 2019 was dramatic. The country has not been immune to protests in the past, but it has a long tradition of stability, and the scale of the unrest in late 2019 came as a shock. The fare increases on the metro system of the capital, Santiago, ignited a number of middle-class frustrations which had been simmering for some time. Chileans protested over inequality, uneven access to public services and the government's perceived unresponsiveness to such matters. The demonstrations drew large numbers of people on to the streets—at their height close to 1m in

Santiago alone. In response, the Chilean government led by the president, Sebastián Piñera, promised higher social expenditure, reversed some unpopular fiscal policy decisions and even began the process of drafting a new constitution. Owing to the willingness of the people to take to the streets, Chile improved its score in the *political participation* category and moved from a “flawed democracy” to a “full democracy”. The other “full democracies” in Latin America are Costa Rica and Uruguay.

In Venezuela the head of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, proclaimed himself as the legitimate president in January 2019, after presidential elections held in 2018 were judged to have been neither free nor fair. In support of Mr Guaidó, Venezuelans took to the streets in several pro-democracy rallies to protest against the regime of Nicolás Maduro. Free-falling real wages and worsening living conditions, struggling public services and often severe fuel, electricity and water shortages are among the major grievances of Venezuelans. Mr Maduro responded to public protests and pressure on his regime by sanctioning state-sponsored repression carried out by the security forces and cracking down on opposition lawmakers, as well as by purging the regime’s ranks. Venezuela’s overall score in the Democracy Index deteriorated further in 2019, and it remains one of only three “authoritarian regimes” in the region, together with Cuba and Nicaragua.

In Colombia many civil society groups, such as students, indigenous groups, coffee growers and teachers, came together in heavily attended national anti-government strikes in late 2019. The protests’ key driver was anger over the inaction of the government of Iván Duque on a range of issues, including the half-hearted implementation of the 2016 peace agreement that ended five decades of civil war; a lack of progress on the anti-corruption agenda; and an unpopular tax bill.

Bolivia’s electoral crisis

Bolivia experienced the most severe democratic deterioration in Latin America in 2019. The worsening of its score, from 5.70 in 2018 to 4.84 in 2019, was a result of the crisis that followed the general election in October 2019. According to the Organisation of American States, there were severe irregularities in the electoral process as well as vote manipulation by the president, Evo Morales of the left-wing Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Mr Morales, who was seeking a fourth term in office (even though the constitution permits only two), perpetrated an electoral fraud to avoid his likely defeat in a second round of the presidential contest by the main opposition candidate, Carlos Mesa.

Mr Morales’s fraudulent victory triggered large-scale national demonstrations with the

participation of several civil society groups. He gradually lost the trust of the police, which began to mutiny in the main Bolivian cities. Social unrest continued to grow increasingly violent owing mainly to clashes between police forces and pro-government supporters. This chaos culminated in the withdrawal of confidence in Mr Morales by the army, which “invited” him to resign. Cornered, Mr Morales resigned and fled to Mexico, where he was given asylum (he is now in Argentina). However, his departure left the country in a political crisis.

After a wave of resignations, the interim presidency fell to Jeanine Añez, an opposition senator. In line with her mandate the right-wing Ms Añez reformed the electoral tribunal and called for new elections on March 3rd 2020. However, there are fears that an investigation of former government officials could turn into a purge of MAS members.

Meanwhile, in Haiti, citizens repeatedly demonstrated, calling for the resignation of their president, Jovenel Moïse, and in Puerto Rico mass protests against the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Roselló, led to his resignation in July 2019.

Guatemala and Honduras down

Democracy in Central America continues to face severe challenges, particularly in Guatemala and Honduras—two “hybrid regimes” whose scores deteriorated further in 2019. In the pre-election period in Guatemala several presidential candidates were banned from standing on dubious grounds. Meanwhile, the government’s offensive against the UN-backed anti-corruption body, the Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG) continued, and it was finally dismissed by the administration of Jimmy Morales, who was under investigation by the CICIG. Guatemala’s score in the *electoral process and pluralism* and *functioning of government* categories fell in 2019, reflecting problems with the fairness of the electoral process, the separation of state powers and the accountability of elected government officials.

In Honduras the brother of the president, Juan Orlando Hernández, was convicted by a New York court of drug-trafficking charges. Although the president was not directly accused, his brother’s conviction casts a shadow over Mr Hernández and his government. The scandal symbolised the extensive deficiencies of the political system in Honduras, which is characterised by a lack of checks and balances on government authority and the increasing lack of transparency of governmental affairs. Honduras’s scores for *electoral process and pluralism* and *functioning of government* fell in 2019.

El Salvador was a welcome exception to the rule in Central America in 2019. It moved up the Democracy Index rankings from a “hybrid regime” to a “flawed democracy”. The improvement in the country’s score from 5.96 in 2018 to 6.15 in 2019 took it over the threshold of 6.00 required for inclusion in the “flawed democracy” grouping. El Salvador’s rise was driven by greater public interest and participation in political affairs and an improvement in its overall *political participation* score. Over the course of the year more than 500,000 people reportedly joined Nuevas Ideas, the party of the president, Nayib Bukele, which is impressive in a country of less than 7m inhabitants.

Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is the lowest-ranked of all the regions covered in The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index, with six out of the 167 countries covered in our rankings featuring in the bottom 20. The average regional score of 3.53 is a marginal deterioration from 2018 and is in line with the longer-term trend of the past five years of a slow decline from an already low base.

Challenging geopolitical circumstances, economic stagnation and corruption have all fed through into rising popular frustration with the political status quo in several countries. The trend of growing public protests in the region, first apparent in 2018, has widened and deepened, leading to regime change in some countries or elections in the less authoritarian systems. In other countries, however, protests continued as populations expressed dissatisfaction with the pace and direction of political change.

These trends are reflected in the performance of the different components of the Democracy Index in 2019. The *functioning of government* category declined steeply for the second successive year as a result of corruption and economic mismanagement and remains below the levels seen earlier

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019

A YEAR OF DEMOCRATIC SETBACKS AND POPULAR PROTEST

Table 9
Middle East and North Africa 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Israel	7.86	28	1	9.17	7.86	8.89	7.50	5.88	Flawed democracy
Tunisia	6.72	53	2	9.17	5.71	7.22	5.63	5.88	Flawed democracy
Morocco	5.10	96	3	5.25	4.64	5.56	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Lebanon	4.36	106	4	3.92	1.50	6.67	5.00	4.71	Hybrid regime
Algeria	4.01	113	5	3.08	2.86	5.00	5.00	4.12	Hybrid regime
Jordan	3.93	114=	6=	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Kuwait	3.93	114=	6=	3.58	4.29	3.89	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Palestine	3.89	117	8	3.33	0.14	7.78	4.38	3.82	Authoritarian
Iraq	3.74	118	9	5.25	0.00	6.67	5.00	1.76	Authoritarian
Qatar	3.19	128	10	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	3.82	Authoritarian
Egypt	3.06	137=	11=	2.67	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.35	Authoritarian
Oman	3.06	137=	11=	0.08	3.93	2.78	4.38	4.12	Authoritarian
United Arab Emirates	2.76	145	13	0.00	3.93	2.22	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Sudan	2.70	147	14	0.00	1.79	5.56	5.00	1.18	Authoritarian
Bahrain	2.55	149	15	0.83	2.71	2.78	4.38	2.06	Authoritarian
Iran	2.38	151	16	0.00	2.86	4.44	3.13	1.47	Authoritarian
Libya	2.02	156	17	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian
Yemen	1.95	158	18	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Saudi Arabia	1.93	159=	19	0.00	2.86	2.22	3.13	1.47	Authoritarian
Syria	1.43	164	20	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

in the decade. By contrast, the average regional score for *political participation* rose in 2019 to 4.53, after two years of decline. The stronger score in this category highlights the increased willingness of populations who are frustrated by government failures and feel disenfranchised within the formal political system to take other forms of political action—the average regional score of 2.50 (on a score of 0-10) for *electoral process and pluralism* speaks for itself. However, this has led to increased polarisation within political systems, and in some cases violence and a harsh response by authoritarian governments, hence the continuing declines in 2019 in the average regional scores for *political culture* and *civil liberties*.

The overall stagnation in the regional score in the 2019 Democracy Index masks some significant regional variation—from Israel, which is the strongest democracy in the region and ranks 28th globally, to Syria, which is close to the very bottom of the global ranking in 164th place. Within the MENA region no country is included in the “full democracy” category, and only Israel and Tunisia are designated “flawed democracies”. The remainder occupy the bottom half of the rankings, and while a handful of countries are categorised as “hybrid regimes”, the majority are classified as “authoritarian”.

All of the Gulf Arab states are ranked as “authoritarian”, with Kuwait, which has some parliamentary oversight, (a rank shared with another MENA state, Jordan). Algeria was the only country to move up

a category in 2019, after the longstanding president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, was removed from office in April 2019 following sustained protests (known as the Hirak Movement). This has allowed Algeria to move up 13 places in the global rankings, from 126th to 113th, and to transition from an “authoritarian” to a “hybrid regime”. However, the country’s average score of 4.01 is only just above the boundary between the two categories, and the gains are fragile.

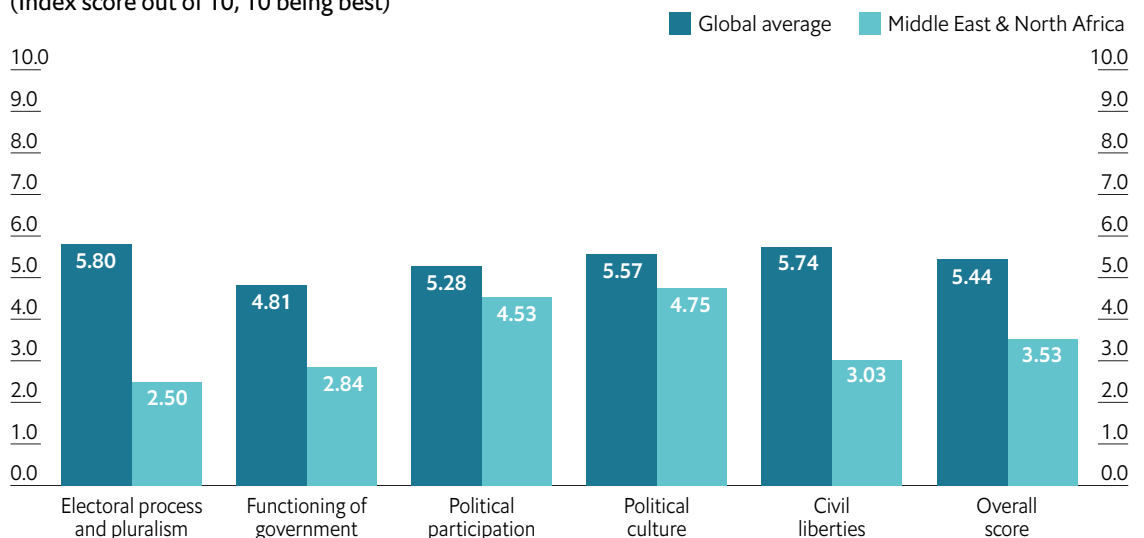
Algeria’s powerful military has used constitutional mechanisms to entrench its dominance. A former prime minister, Abdelmajid Tebboune, secured a clear victory with 58% of the vote in the December 2019 presidential election. However, the candidates were all broadly in line with the military’s stance, and many opposition supporters boycotted the election. The election was intended by the military-backed interim authorities to draw a line under the political crisis. However, despite an offer from Mr Tebboune to enter into a dialogue with the protest movement, the authorities appear unlikely to achieve such closure in the near future. Furthermore, the country faces pressing economic challenges, and there is little indication that Mr Tebboune has a clear strategy to address these. Failure to do so could potentially reignite popular discontent, and Algeria’s recent gains could easily be reversed.

Social tensions erupted in Sudan

Sudan underwent a major political upheaval in 2019 amid protests that dislodged the longstanding ruler, Omar al-Bashir, and its overall score improved from 2.15 in 2018 to 2.70 in 2019. The country moved up eight places in the global ranking, from 155th to 147th, but the violence that accompanied the political change held back the improvement. All the gains in the Democracy Index for Sudan came from the *political participation* category, where the score shot up. As in Algeria, the military sought to dominate the process. However, the severity of the violence created pressure for negotiations between the military council that had taken over and opposition groups, leading to the signing in July of a deal by the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the civilian opposition to form an 11-member civilian-dominated Sovereign Council, with a rotating presidency, to govern the country during a 39-month transition period.

Chart 7 Middle East & North Africa, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

The civilian-led government under the prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, together with the Sovereign Council, is mandated to lead the country into national elections. The current authorities face the daunting task of restoring peace, undoing several decades of macroeconomic mismanagement under the previous regime and restoring public confidence in the government, but the military's influence in the political sphere remains strong—Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the head of the TMC, is the president of the Sovereign Council for the first 21 months. As a result, many Sudanese are wary of a power grab by the military, which would take the country back to where it was under the Bashir regime. Social tensions will remain high as the public continues to be wary of any attempt by the military to seize power during the transition period.

Moving in the opposite direction to Algeria, Iraq has been demoted in the 2019 Democracy Index from a “hybrid regime” to an “authoritarian regime” as a result of the violent unrest that erupted in October in protest against corruption and unemployment. The president, Barham Salih, called for early elections, which we expect to take place in early 2020, following the resignation of the prime minister in early December after two months of intense protests. Iraq's geopolitical position is extremely precarious as a result of growing tensions between the US and Iran. The latter's growing influence in Iraq became a major focal point of the protests. Initially, protesters demanded improvements in governance, public services and employment opportunities, frustrated at the utter ineptitude of recent governments (Iraq scores 0 in the *functioning of government* category), but they subsequently demanded regime change. Hundreds of Iraqis have been killed in the violence and Iraq's score in the Democracy Index fell from 4.06 in 2018 to 3.74 in 2019. *Electoral processes* remain in place (the score in this category strengthened in 2019) but *civil liberties* have worsened—reflecting the political violence since October 2019—with the political system continuing to fail to produce effective or stable governments capable of addressing Iraq's problems.

Palestine was also demoted from a “hybrid regime” to an “authoritarian regime” in our 2019 index. Attempts at reconciliation between Fatah, which controls the West Bank, and Hamas, the Islamist group that rules in Gaza, have repeatedly broken down, hampering efforts to hold long-delayed parliamentary and presidential elections.

Despite the overall weakness of democracy in the MENA region, the picture is not uniformly gloomy. The overall rank masks considerable advances in some countries on the path to democratisation—despite ongoing political instability—although the gains could easily be reversed. The most notable positive change is in Tunisia, which remains the only “Arab Spring” state to have transitioned from dictatorship to meaningful democratic freedoms. Tunisia's score and ranking advanced again in 2019 as the country held a second round of free elections, in which new political groups and actors entered the fray. Tunisia jumped ten places in the ranking to 53rd globally, having made significant gains in the *electoral process and pluralism* category. New parties dominate the parliament following the 2019 parliamentary election, and a political outsider has been elected president. However, the challenges of embedding democracy in difficult economic conditions are reflected in some slippage in Tunisia's scores for *political participation* and *political culture* in 2019 compared with a year earlier.

Even in countries whose overall score has slipped, as in Lebanon, local populations are once again taking direct action. Lebanon's already poor score for *functioning of government* slipped further in 2019, as did its score for *political culture*. The Lebanese public has become increasingly frustrated by a

succession of governments presiding over a system in which confessional and other powerful interests determine the allocation of resources and long-term policy planning and financial management. This state of affairs has harmed Lebanon's economy and polity and brought the country closer to a full-blown financial crisis.

Widespread and prolonged protests led to the resignation of the government and renewed pledges of reform. The prime minister Saad Hariri resigned and Hassan Diab was made prime minister-designate at the end of December. However, he was still in the process of forming a government. Protests continue amid public fears that more substantive political change will not occur and that the country's deep sectarian divide and structural economic problems will not be addressed. Nevertheless, the peaceful and broadly non-sectarian nature of the protests offers some hope that in the longer term Lebanon can move beyond the highly flawed political accommodation created after the end of the civil war in the 1990s.

Overall, the region is in a precarious state. Public dissatisfaction with the status quo became even more widespread in 2019. Public protests calling for a fundamental overhaul of political systems, and in some cases regime change, proliferated. In Algeria and Sudan longstanding authoritarian leaders have already been displaced. However, in most cases renewed calls for political change are unlikely to result in the substantive political and economic overhaul that these countries require.

North America

Table 10
North America 2019

	Overall score	Global rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Canada	9.22	7=	1	9.58	9.64	7.78	9.38	9.71	Full democracy
United States of America	7.96	25	2	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

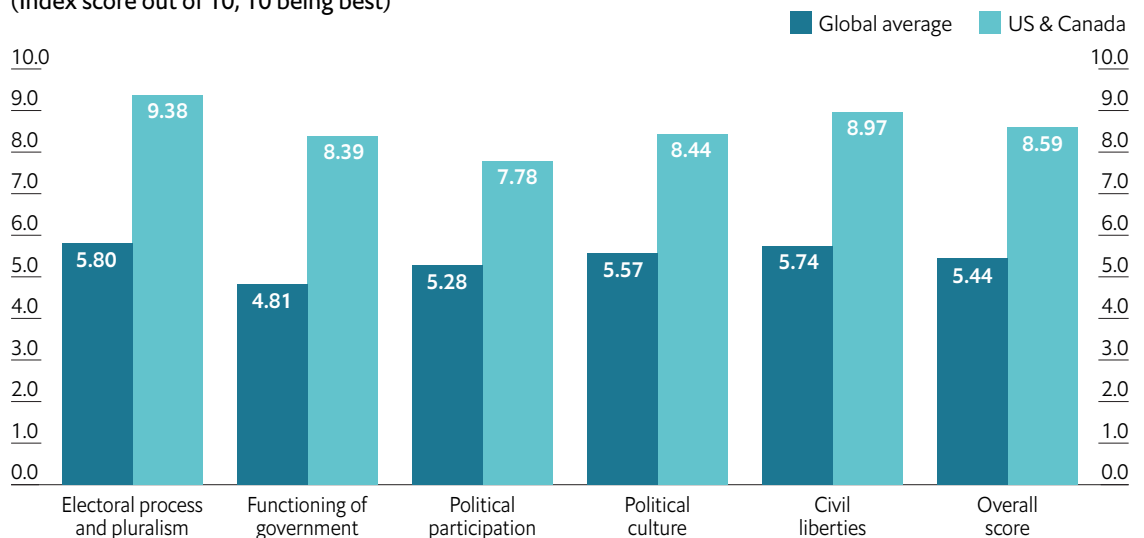
North America retains the highest average score of any region in the 2019 Democracy Index. With a score of 8.59, North America continues to outrank western Europe, which has an average score of 8.35. Below the headline figure, however, the results are mixed. Canada's score has improved slightly, from 9.15 in 2018 to 9.22 in 2019, and in the global ranking it is joint seventh (with Denmark). It significantly outperforms its southern neighbour, the US, which fell below the threshold for a "full democracy" in 2016 owing to a further decline in public trust in US institutions, a development that preceded the election of Donald Trump that year and indeed helps to explain his success in winning the presidency. Since then the US's score has held steady at 7.96, and it ranks 25th globally.

Political partisanship is undermining the functioning of US democracy

Popular support for democracy remains strong in the US, whose citizens have always exhibited a fierce attachment to independence and national sovereignty. However, popular dissatisfaction with how democracy is working in practice, both in terms of government dysfunction and a lack of political representation by the two main parties, has grown in recent years. Political polarisation and

Chart 8 North America, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

partisanship have deepened, undermining the function of state institutions.

The US has fallen steadily in the global rankings over the last decade, from 17th place in the 2010 Democracy Index to 25th in 2019. This mainly reflects a deterioration in the *functioning of government* category, which has been the US’s worst-scoring category since 2016, at 7.14. Public frustration with institutions has been building for years; according to Gallup polls, the number of Americans who approve of the way that Congress (the legislature) is handling its job fell to 21% in 2019, compared with 40% in 2000.

The highly partisan nature of Washington politics has contributed to this trend. Republicans and Democrats are increasingly seen as being focused on blocking each other’s agenda, to the detriment of policymaking. This trend has worsened under the current administration. Rising partisan tensions have left Congress in a stalemate: the passage of the revised US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was the only piece of major legislation to get through the divided legislature in 2019.

Mr Trump has not been the dealmaker he had boasted he would be, at least not on the domestic front. His response to the consistent hostility of the opposition to his presidency from day one has been to go on the offensive and up the ante. He has been deliberately provocative in an effort to rally his political and voter base, particularly on issues such as immigration and security. Having emerged unscathed from the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller, which found no evidence that the president’s 2016 campaign had co-ordinated with Russia to influence the 2016 election and was unable to produce conclusive evidence that Mr Trump committed a crime regarding obstruction of justice, Mr Trump dismissed as a “hoax” and a “fraud” the impeachment case launched later in the year by the Democrats over his dealings with Ukraine. The Republican Party has closed ranks around him, and the fierce polarisation that has characterised Mr Trump’s presidency seems more entrenched than ever.

On policy matters, Mr Trump’s unconventional, freewheeling approach has also strained working relations between the executive and legislative branches of the US government. Most of the major policy actions in 2019—including the escalation of the trade war with China, the abrupt redeployment

of US troops from northern Syria and the killing of a senior Iranian general—were executed without consulting Congress. Moreover, Mr Trump has repeatedly called into question the independence and competence of the US judicial system, particularly when his policy directives have been opposed by the courts, most notably on immigration. Although we expect the US system of checks and balances to remain intact, these actions risk undermining public confidence in institutions further. The score for *political culture* was downgraded in the 2018 index as a result of these trends, and an upgrade is unlikely in 2020.

The US scores relatively well for *electoral process and pluralism*, and its score for *political participation* remains higher than it was in the past, reflecting greater representation of women in the 116th Congress (2019-21).

Support for democracy remains firm in Canada, despite political fragmentation

Canada has scored consistently well in the Democracy Index, thanks to its history of stable, democratic government. Canada has always ranked among the top ten countries; it slipped one place to seventh place in the 2019 ranking, but this was due to improvements in other countries. Of the index's five categories, Canada scores particularly highly for the *electoral process and pluralism* (9.58) and the *functioning of government* (9.64) categories, as well as for *civil liberties* (9.71). The Canadian state actively promotes religious tolerance, which is important given Canada's large French-speaking and native minorities. Although some tensions remain, government and businesses regularly seek permission from First Nations communities for land and natural resource development projects. All Canadians enjoy equality under the law.

Canada maintains a democratic advantage vis-à-vis the US in a number of areas. Federal and provincial governments compete over the allocation of resources, most recently over the nationalisation of a crude-oil pipeline project in western Canada. Nonetheless, federal-provincial tensions have eased in recent years as the separatist threat from French-speaking Quebec has receded. A new conservative party, Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), was swept to power in the 2018 provincial elections on promises to remain within Canada, which has all but eliminated secessionist concerns.

Canada receives a higher score than the US on several indicators, including political power and the influence of interest groups. Canada's score for *political culture* improved in the 2019 rankings, as voter turnout remained reasonably high in the 2019 federal elections, at 66%, despite rising public frustration with political parties. The reputation of the prime minister and leader of the Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau, was tarnished by a political influence scandal in 2019, while the leader of the opposition Conservatives, Andrew Scheer, resigned in late 2019 after failing to connect with voters. Despite this, Canadians' attachment to the democratic process remains firm.

There is scope for improvement in *political participation*, as disengagement from politics is evident, although this is a problem shared by many developed nations. Disengagement finds expression in relatively poor voter turnout, low membership of political parties and a general lack of political engagement by international standards. Canada scores poorly here, at 7.78, which is on a par with the US, Australia and Switzerland but behind many of its other peers in western Europe. Canada's score for *civil liberties* declined slightly in the 2019 index, reflecting its Holocaust denial, hate speech and libel laws, which impair the country's strong tradition of support for freedom of speech. However, Canada's score remains near-perfect, and above that of the US, in the *civil liberties* category.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Table 11
Sub-Saharan Africa 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Mauritius	8.22	17	1	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41	Full democracy
Botswana	7.81	29	2	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12	Flawed democracy
Cabo Verde	7.78	30	3	9.17	7.36	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
South Africa	7.24	40	4	7.42	7.50	8.33	5.00	7.94	Flawed democracy
Ghana	6.63	55=	5	8.33	5.71	6.67	6.25	6.18	Flawed democracy
Lesotho	6.54	60=	6	9.17	4.50	6.67	5.63	6.76	Flawed democracy
Namibia	6.43	65	7	6.58	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Senegal	5.81	82	8	6.08	6.07	4.44	6.25	6.18	Hybrid regime
Madagascar	5.64	85	9	7.92	3.57	6.11	5.63	5.00	Hybrid regime
Malawi	5.50	87	10	6.08	4.29	5.00	6.25	5.88	Hybrid regime
Liberia	5.45	88	11	7.42	3.07	5.56	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Kenya	5.18	94	12	3.50	5.71	6.67	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Tanzania	5.16	95	13	5.75	5.00	5.00	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Benin	5.09	97=	14=	4.67	5.71	4.44	5.63	5.00	Hybrid regime
Zambia	5.09	97=	14=	4.75	2.93	4.44	6.88	6.47	Hybrid regime
Uganda	5.02	99	16	4.33	3.57	4.44	6.88	5.88	Hybrid regime
Mali	4.92	100	17	6.42	3.07	3.89	5.63	5.59	Hybrid regime
Sierra Leone	4.86	102=	18	6.58	2.86	3.33	6.25	5.29	Hybrid regime
Gambia	4.33	107	19	4.00	4.29	3.33	5.63	4.41	Hybrid regime
Nigeria	4.12	109	20	5.17	3.93	3.33	3.75	4.41	Hybrid regime
Côte d'Ivoire	4.05	111	21	4.33	2.86	3.33	5.63	4.12	Hybrid regime
Burkina Faso	4.04	112	22	3.92	2.71	4.44	5.00	4.12	Hybrid regime
Mauritania	3.92	116	23	3.50	3.57	5.00	3.13	4.41	Authoritarian
Angola	3.72	119	24	2.25	2.86	5.56	5.00	2.94	Authoritarian
Mozambique	3.65	120	25	2.58	2.14	5.00	5.00	3.53	Authoritarian
Gabon	3.61	121	26	2.58	2.21	4.44	5.00	3.82	Authoritarian
Ethiopia	3.44	125	27	0.42	3.57	5.56	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Togo	3.30	126	28	3.17	1.79	3.33	5.00	3.24	Authoritarian
Niger	3.29	127	29	2.92	1.14	3.33	4.38	4.71	Authoritarian
Rwanda	3.16	129=	30=	1.42	4.29	2.78	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian
Zimbabwe	3.16	129=	30=	0.00	2.50	4.44	5.63	3.24	Authoritarian
Comoros	3.15	131	32	2.08	2.21	3.89	3.75	3.82	Authoritarian
eSwatini	3.14	132=	33	0.92	2.86	2.78	5.63	3.53	Authoritarian
Guinea	3.14	132=	34	3.50	0.43	4.44	4.38	2.94	Authoritarian
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.11	134=	35	2.17	2.50	3.89	3.75	3.24	Authoritarian
Cameroon	2.85	141=	36	1.67	2.50	3.33	4.38	2.35	Authoritarian
Djibouti	2.77	144	37	0.42	1.29	3.89	5.63	2.65	Authoritarian
Guinea-Bissau	2.63	148	38	4.92	0.00	2.78	3.13	2.35	Authoritarian
Eritrea	2.37	152	39	0.00	2.14	1.67	6.88	1.18	Authoritarian
Burundi	2.15	154	40	0.00	0.07	3.33	5.00	2.35	Authoritarian
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	161	41	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47	Authoritarian
Chad	1.61	163	42	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.75	2.65	Authoritarian
Central African Republic	1.32	165	43	1.25	0.00	1.11	1.88	2.35	Authoritarian
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.13	166	44	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.13	0.88	Authoritarian

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is populated by a large number of “authoritarian regimes” (encompassing half of the region’s 44 countries scored in the Democracy Index). Worse still, the region experienced a significant democratic regression in 2019. The overall average regional average score in the Democracy Index fell to 4.26 in 2019, from 4.36 in 2018; 23 countries registered a decline in their scores, which offset marginal improvements in 11. This is the lowest average score for the continent since 2010, in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis, when every region of the world registered a democratic regression in the Democracy Index.

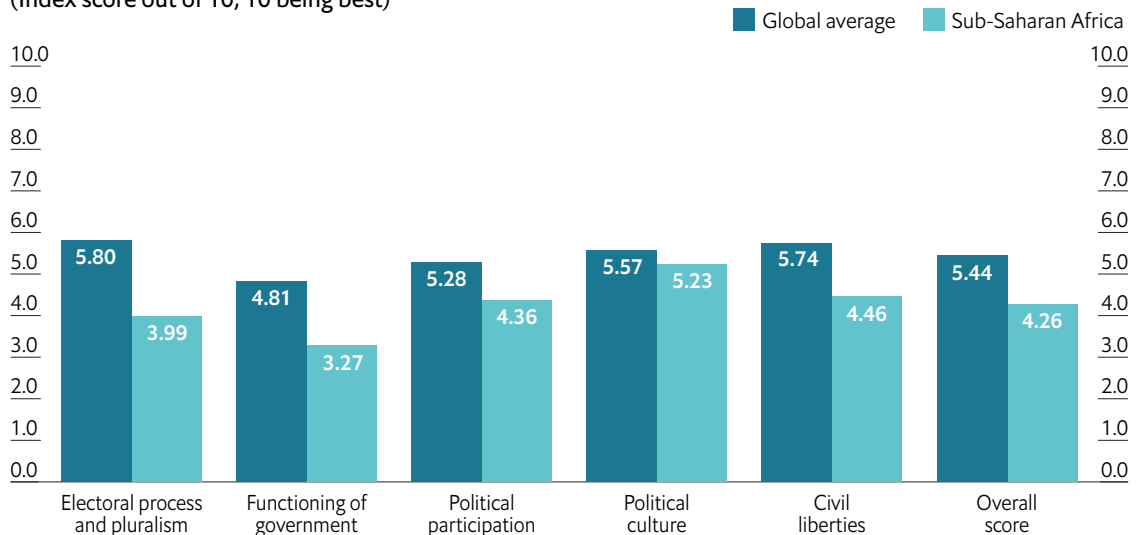
Tightening electoral reins

Regional deterioration was primarily the consequence of declining scores for many countries in the category of *electoral process and pluralism*; the average regional category score fell to 3.99 (from 4.30 in 2018). Reasons for this decline vary, but there is a pattern of institutions either being manipulated or not up to the task. Niger and Comoros suffered the most significant declines in this category; both countries administrations’ implemented rules that excluded key opposition figures from standing in presidential elections. In Niger the election is scheduled for 2021, but the ruling government has already amended the country’s electoral law, disqualifying the main opposition leader from standing. In Comoros, a snap presidential election (which was announced by presidential decree) was held in March 2019 in a restricted and non-inclusive manner.

Similarly, increased restrictions on the electoral process in Senegal, Benin, Rwanda and Zambia reflected democratic backsliding and a retreat from political pluralism. Although it was deemed to be broadly free and fair, the February general election in Nigeria was held during an extremely testing period, as the poor security situation (owing to violent attacks by Boko Haram or other militants) hampered the voting process and was a key reason for a low voter turnout, at just 34.8%. The failure of successive presidents to deal with the threat from extremist insurgents or to tackle endemic corruption has led large swathes of the population to lose hope that anything might change for the better.

Chart 9 Sub-Saharan Africa 2019, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Among the countries that recorded improvements in their electoral processes were Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar, which held free and fair elections in 2019. The election score for Guinea Bissau was upgraded because the first round of the presidential election was judged to have been credible, with a run-off election held in late-December producing an opposition candidate who was declared the winner. Some autocratic countries edged up in the category, including Angola, Ethiopia and Mauritania, but not by enough to improve the region's score. This reflects the piecemeal and often reversible nature of political reform.

New presidents in Ethiopia and Angola may espouse more competitive elections, but the rigidity of patronage systems that have been entrenched for decades will be difficult to reverse with any speed. In many instances longstanding political parties continue to hold power; more than 15 African presidents have governed for more than a decade, some of them since their countries achieved independence. Some of these countries have sought to project an image of democracy without putting in place sufficient institutions or election-monitoring mechanisms to back it up. As such, even if held on time, elections do not automatically lead to representative governments, and this factor weighs on the regional average. Instead, numerous presidents and parties have learned how to circumvent the arrival of genuine multiparty elections by restricting civil liberties and shutting down the media, in effect suppressing opposition through indirect means.

Reliance on foreign powers

The average regional score for *functioning of government* slipped to 3.27 in 2019, from 3.39 in 2018, with the category registering the continent's second-biggest decline (by magnitude) in the Democracy Index for Sub-Saharan Africa. Difficulties in governance have long been underpinned by overly centralised policymaking, acquiescent legislatures, a general lack of accountability mechanisms and entrenched corruption—all of which have led to negative public perceptions of governments, political parties and civil servants.

Amplifying these long-standing regional shortcomings, in a number of West African states an intensification of terrorist activity led to a further deterioration in country scores. Burkina Faso and Mali are becoming increasingly dependent on their former metropole, France, to counter the threat to basic security posed by jihadist networks affiliated with al-Qaeda and Islamic State, which are operating across the Sahel. For the first time Burkina Faso's government is now deemed not to have full dominion over the country's entire territory, with increasingly sophisticated and deadly terror groups having *de facto* control over remote, lightly governed border regions in the north and east of the country. The crisis has uprooted almost 500,000 people (and counting), transforming around one-third of the country into a conflict zone. A regional task force established to expel the jihadi threat has proven under-resourced and ineffective, meaning that dependency on France has been growing, and the Sahel is now deemed to be meeting the definition of a low-level protectorate, with the balance of power lying with France's vastly superior capabilities.

A different cause of increased foreign influence was also observed in Zambia, where excessive borrowing from China has the hallmarks of a debt trap, and the resulting diplomatic trade-offs are adversely influencing government policy.

Shortcomings aplenty

The average regional scores for *political participation*, *political culture* and *civil liberties*—the three other categories measured by the Democracy Index—also declined as improvements in some countries were offset by deterioration elsewhere. The regional score for *political culture*, which assesses the population’s perceptions of democracy, remains the highest-scored category, but it still declined marginally to 5.23 in 2019 (from 5.24 in 2018). This decline was solely attributable to changing perceptions of leadership in Burkina Faso, where a rising desire for a return to strongman rule has been fuelled by seemingly intractable problems facing citizens. There appears to be growing nostalgia for the era of the previous dictator of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, who kept jihadist groups out of the country during his time in power. Slow economic progress under the current democratic government is also likely to have encouraged these perceptions.

Reflecting slightly lower *political participation* on a regional level, the average category score also fell marginally to 4.36 in 2019 (from 4.37 in 2018). This was driven by declines in voter turnout in recently held elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (47.6%; December 2018), Benin (22.99%; April 2019) and Namibia (60.8%; November 2019). These declines offset improvements as a result of higher female representation in the Malawian parliament, the increased participation of the population in lawful demonstrations in eSwatini, and an improved adult literacy rate in Zambia.

The aggregate for *civil liberties* also fell slightly in 2019, reflecting the tendency of regional governments to clamp down on democratic freedoms with the aim of retaining power. The only countries that benefited from a strengthening of civil liberties were Madagascar (with its increased judicial independence) and The Gambia, which has been transitioning towards democracy since 2017, after its first democratic transfer of power had been successfully completed. In The Gambia, improvements in 2019 were underpinned by greater internet access and improved public perceptions about respect for human rights (with the launch of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission as well as a new draft constitution). However, elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa governments have shown little restraint in terms of tolerance of opposing views and have instead cracked down on civil liberties to stifle dissent.

Western Europe

Western Europe’s average score in the Democracy Index was stable in 2019 compared with 2018, at 8.35, after falling slightly in each of the three previous years. This stability was the result of improvements in the scores for *political culture* and *political participation*, offset by a deterioration in the score for the *functioning of government*. There were also marginal declines in the other two scores—for *electoral process and pluralism* and *civil liberties*—but these remained the highest-scoring categories for the region, as they have been since the index was first compiled in 2006.

Countries in western Europe occupy seven of the top ten places in the global democracy ranking, including the top three spots, and the region boasts the largest number of “full democracies” of anywhere in the world, with a total of 15. In 2019 two countries—France and Portugal—moved from the “flawed democracy” to the “full democracy” category, and one—Malta—moved in the other direction. There are now five countries in the region that are classed as “flawed democracies”, down from six in 2018. Other countries whose scores improved were Finland, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and

Table 12
Western Europe 2019

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Norway	9.87	1	1	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
Iceland	9.58	2	2	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
Sweden	9.39	3	3	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41	Full democracy
Finland	9.25	5	4	10.00	8.93	8.89	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
Ireland	9.24	6	5	10.00	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00	Full democracy
Denmark	9.22	7=	6	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
Switzerland	9.03	10	7	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
Netherlands	9.01	11	8	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.75	9.12	Full democracy
Luxembourg	8.81	12	9	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
Germany	8.68	13	10	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41	Full democracy
United Kingdom	8.52	14	11	9.58	7.50	8.89	7.50	9.12	Full democracy
Austria	8.29	16	12	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82	Full democracy
Spain	8.18	18	13	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.13	8.82	Full democracy
France	8.12	20	14	9.58	7.86	7.78	6.88	8.53	Full democracy
Portugal	8.03	22	15	9.58	7.86	6.11	7.50	9.12	Full democracy
Malta	7.95	26	16	9.17	7.50	6.11	8.13	8.82	Flawed democracy
Belgium	7.64	33	17	9.58	8.21	5.00	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Cyprus	7.59	34	18	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Italy	7.52	35	19	9.58	6.07	7.78	6.25	7.94	Flawed democracy
Greece	7.43	39	20	9.58	4.86	6.67	7.50	8.53	Flawed democracy
Turkey	4.09	110	21	3.08	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.35	Hybrid regime

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

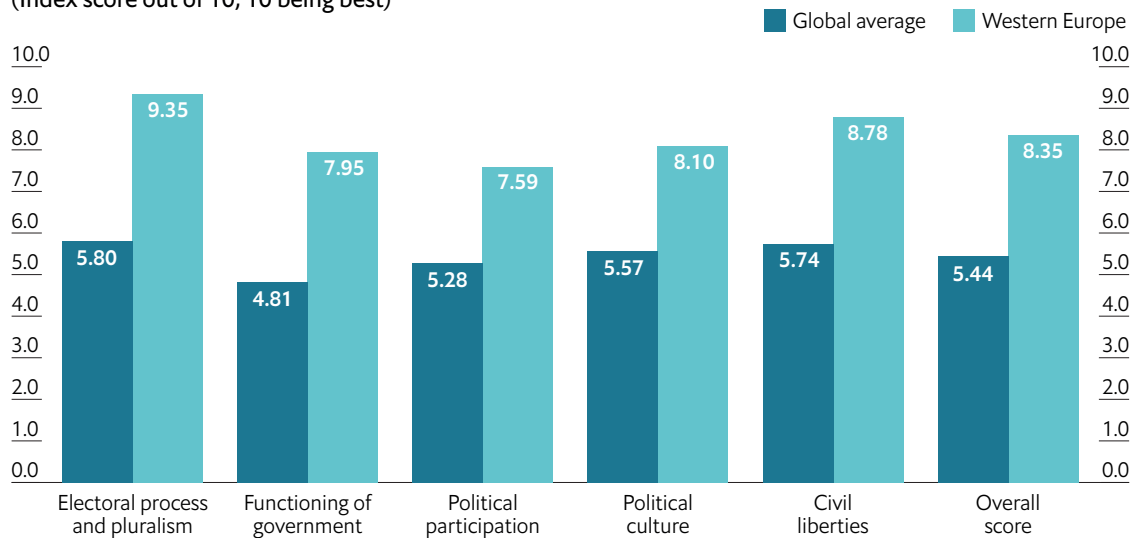
Spain, Belgium, Italy and Turkey registered a fall in their scores. Turkey is the only “hybrid regime” in the region.

Popular disaffection with the traditional mainstream parties remained strong in western Europe in 2019, with voters looking to a broad array of anti-establishment parties for an alternative. This continued the trend of fragmentation of the political scene, which has been visible for some years now, and the decline of former two-party systems. This has created difficulties for government formation, leading in some cases to uncomfortable coalitions or to governments which, once formed, struggled to remain stable and effective. Key examples in 2019 have been Austria, Belgium, Italy and Spain.

A general election in April in Spain resulted in a win for the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), but without enough seats for a majority. Given a highly fragmented parliament, the party failed to put together a coalition, and a repeat election was held in November—the fourth in four years. Austria saw its controversial coalition of the centre-right and the far-right fall apart in May, after less than 18 months in office, resulting in an early election in September, which brought to power an unusual Conservative-Green coalition. Belgium held a federal election in May, at which the split in voting patterns between Flanders (right-wing) and Wallonia (left-wing) became even more pronounced and extremist parties became more successful. At end-2019 parties were still working on coalition negotiations. And in

Chart 10 Western Europe, Democracy Index 2019 by category

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Italy a government crisis in August brought an end to the fractious coalition between the anti-establishment Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) and the right-wing Lega that had been formed in 2018. To avert a snap election that would have benefited the Lega, the centre-left Partito Democratico (PD) and the M5S—previously fierce political opponents—set aside their differences and agreed to go into government together.

As difficult as this proliferation of new parties and agendas has been to manage, in terms of building and maintaining coalitions it has led to greater choice for voters, and in many cases greater political engagement on the part of the public. The two countries in western Europe that rose from the “flawed democracy” to “full democracy” category in 2019—France and Portugal—both saw improvements in political culture related to this.

In France the key development was the “national debate” held in January-March. This was in response to the “gilets jaunes” protests that began in late 2018, with demonstrations across the country—particularly in rural areas—fuelled by anger at stagnant wages, cuts to public services and a sense that the government was out of touch with ordinary people. The national debate, which was run by mayors from town halls nationwide as well as online, was an effort to give people a platform to express their grievances within the democratic process. Social unrest eased and there were 2m responses, which were fed into “Act II” of the government’s reform agenda. A similar process of town hall meetings will take place in 2020 to maintain political engagement.

In Portugal the improvement in score marked the culmination of a gradual rise in confidence in political parties and the government as the period of austerity following the global financial crisis receded—the country was on the cusp of the “full democracy” category already.

In Spain, the sentencing by the Supreme Court in October 2019 of nine Catalan separatist leaders to prison terms of between nine and 13 years for their role in the region’s failed independence campaign in 2017 provoked widespread condemnation and mass demonstrations in Catalonia. The court acquitted all nine accused of the charge of violent rebellion but convicted them of charges of sedition, misuse of

public funds and disobedience. Although the sentencing complied with the letter of the law, the long prison terms for elected politicians on charges such as sedition were not in the spirit of democracy. With their excessively legalistic response to dealing with the Catalan question the Spanish authorities have shown a lack of confidence in addressing the issue through political dialogue and open debate, weakening their democratic credentials in the process. These deficiencies were already captured in a decline in Spain's score in 2017-18. The very modest improvement in its score in the 2019 Democracy Index reflects an improvement in relation to one question concerning local elections, which were held in May 2019 and were deemed to have been free and fair.

In the United Kingdom, continued attempts by parliament to frustrate Brexit led to government dysfunction and increasing political polarisation in 2019. However, a snap general election at the end of the year returned a Conservative majority government in a public endorsement of the prime minister Boris Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement. Continued high levels of popular engagement offset negative developments in 2019 and the UK's score remained virtually unchanged year on year.

The one country to move down into the "flawed democracy" category was Malta. A political crisis unfolded in 2019, as links were discovered between serving government officials and the assassination of an investigative journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia, two years earlier. The prime minister, under pressure from protesters and the EU, will step down in January 2020, but the affair has revealed significant weaknesses in the rule of law and inadequate checks and balances on the government's power. The European Parliament has criticised the country's "golden passport" scheme as facilitating money-laundering and criminality within the bloc's borders.

Appendix

Defining and measuring democracy

There is no consensus on how to measure democracy. Definitions of democracy are contested, and there is a lively debate on the subject. The issue is not only of academic interest. For example, although democracy promotion is high on the list of US foreign-policy priorities, there is no consensus within the US government as to what constitutes a democracy. As one observer put it: “The world’s only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined—and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit,” (Horowitz, 2006, p. 114).

Although the terms “freedom” and “democracy” are often used interchangeably, the two are not synonymous. Democracy can be seen as a set of practices and principles that institutionalise, and thereby, ultimately, protect freedom. Even if a consensus on precise definitions has proved elusive, most observers today would agree that, at a minimum, the fundamental features of a democracy include government based on majority rule and the consent of the governed; the existence of free and fair elections; the protection of minority rights; and respect for basic human rights. Democracy presupposes equality before the law, due process and political pluralism. A question arises as to whether reference to these basic features is sufficient for a satisfactory concept of democracy. As discussed below, there is a question as to how far the definition may need to be widened.

Some insist that democracy is, necessarily, a dichotomous concept: a state is either democratic or not. But most measures now appear to adhere to a continuous concept, with the possibility of varying degrees of democracy. At present, the best-known measure is produced by the US-based Freedom House organisation. The average of its indexes, on a 1 to 7 scale, of *political freedom* (based on 10 indicators) and of *civil liberties* (based on 15 indicators) is often taken to be a measure of democracy.

The Freedom House measure is available for all countries, and stretches back to the early 1970s. It has been used heavily in empirical investigations of the relationship between democracy and various economic and social variables. The so-called Polity Project provides, for a smaller number of countries, measures of democracy and regime types, based on rather minimalist definitions, stretching back to the 19th century. These have also been used in empirical work.

Freedom House also measures a narrower concept, that of “electoral democracy”. Democracies in this minimal sense share at least one common, essential characteristic. Positions of political power are filled through regular, free and fair elections between competing parties, and it is possible for an incumbent government to be turned out of office through elections. Freedom House’s criteria for an electoral democracy include:

- 1) A competitive, multi-party political system.
- 2) Universal adult suffrage.
- 3) Regularly contested elections conducted on the basis of secret ballots, reasonable ballot security and the absence of massive voter fraud.
- 4) Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.

The Freedom House definition of political freedom is more demanding (although not much) than its criteria for electoral democracy—that is, it classifies more countries as electoral democracies than as “free” (some “partly free” countries are also categorised as “electoral democracies”). At the end of 2015, 125 out of 193 states were classified as “electoral democracies”; of these, on a more stringent criterion, 89 states were classified as “free”. The Freedom House political-freedom measure covers the electoral process and political pluralism and, to a lesser extent, the functioning of government and a few aspects of participation.

A key difference in measures is between “thin”, or minimalist, and “thick”, or wider, concepts of democracy (Coppedge, 2005). The thin concepts correspond closely to an immensely influential academic definition of democracy, that of Dahl’s concept of *polyarchy* (Dahl, 1970). Polyarchy has eight components, or institutional requirements: almost all adult citizens have the right to vote; almost all adult citizens are eligible for public office; political leaders have the right to compete for votes; elections are free and fair; all citizens are free to form and join political parties and other organisations; all citizens are free to express themselves on all political issues; diverse sources of information about politics exist and are protected by law; and government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

The Freedom House electoral democracy measure is a thin concept. Its measure of democracy based on political rights and civil liberties is “thicker” than the measure of “electoral democracy”. Other definitions of democracy have broadened to include aspects of society and political culture in democratic societies.

The Economist Intelligence Unit measure

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index is based on the view that measures of democracy which reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not thick enough. They do not encompass sufficiently, or, in some cases, at all, the features that determine how substantive democracy is. Freedom is an essential component of democracy, but not, in itself, sufficient. In existing measures, the elements of political participation and functioning of government are taken into account only in a marginal and formal way.

Our Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism*; *civil liberties*; the *functioning of government*; *political participation*; and *political culture*. The five categories are interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole. The condition of holding free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is clearly the *sine qua non* of all definitions.

All modern definitions, except the most minimalist, also consider civil liberties to be a vital component of what is often called “liberal democracy”. The principle of the protection of basic human rights is widely accepted. It is embodied in constitutions throughout the world, as well as in the UN Charter and international agreements such as the Helsinki Final Act (the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe). Basic human rights include freedom of speech, expression and of the press; freedom of religion; freedom of assembly and association; and the right to due judicial process. All democracies are systems in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. But rule by the majority is not necessarily democratic. In a democracy, majority rule must be combined with

guarantees of individual human rights and the rights of minorities. Most measures also include aspects of the minimum quality of functioning of government. If democratically-based decisions cannot be or are not implemented, then the concept of democracy is not very meaningful.

Democracy is more than the sum of its institutions. A democratic political culture is also crucial for the legitimacy, smooth functioning and, ultimately, the sustainability of democracy. A culture of passivity and apathy—an obedient and docile citizenry—is not consistent with democracy. The electoral process periodically divides the population into winners and losers. A successful democratic political culture implies that the losing parties and their supporters accept the judgment of the voters and allow for the peaceful transfer of power.

Participation is also a necessary component, as apathy and abstention are enemies of democracy. Even measures that focus predominantly on the processes of representative, liberal democracy include (albeit inadequately or insufficiently) some aspects of participation. In a democracy, government is only one element in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political organisations and associations. Citizens cannot be required to take part in the political process, and they are free to express their dissatisfaction by not participating. However, a healthy democracy requires the active, freely chosen participation of citizens in public life. Democracies flourish when citizens are willing to participate in public debate, elect representatives and join political parties. Without this broad, sustaining participation, democracy begins to wither and become the preserve of small, select groups.

At the same time, even our thicker, more inclusive and wider measure of democracy does not include other aspects—which some authors argue are also crucial components of democracy—such as levels of economic and social wellbeing. Therefore, our Index respects the dominant tradition that holds that a variety of social and economic outcomes can be consistent with political democracy, which is a separate concept.

Methodology

The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy, on a 0 to 10 scale, is based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: *electoral process and pluralism*; *civil liberties*; the *functioning of government*; *political participation*; and *political culture*. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indexes.

The category indexes are based on the sum of the indicator scores in the category, converted to a 0 to 10 scale. Adjustments to the category scores are made if countries do not score a 1 in the following critical areas for democracy:

1. Whether national elections are free and fair.
2. The security of voters.
3. The influence of foreign powers on government.
4. The capability of the civil service to implement policies.

If the scores for the first three questions are 0 (or 0.5), one point (0.5 point) is deducted from the index in the relevant category (either the *electoral process and pluralism* or the *functioning of government*). If the score for 4 is 0, one point is deducted from the *functioning of government* category index.

The index values are used to place countries within one of four types of regime:

1. Full democracies: scores greater than 8
2. Flawed democracies: scores greater than 6, and less than or equal to 8
3. Hybrid regimes: scores greater than 4, and less than or equal to 6
4. Authoritarian regimes: scores less than or equal to 4

Full democracies: Countries in which not only basic political freedoms and civil liberties are respected, but which also tend to be underpinned by a political culture conducive to the flourishing of democracy. The functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse. There is an effective system of checks and balances. The judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced. There are only limited problems in the functioning of democracies.

Flawed democracies: These countries also have free and fair elections and, even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation.

Hybrid regimes: Elections have substantial irregularities that often prevent them from being both free and fair. Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies—in political culture, functioning of government and political participation. Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically, there is harassment of and pressure on journalists, and the judiciary is not independent.

Authoritarian regimes: In these states, state political pluralism is absent or heavily circumscribed. Many countries in this category are outright dictatorships. Some formal institutions of democracy may exist, but these have little substance. Elections, if they do occur, are not free and fair. There is disregard for abuses and infringements of civil liberties. Media are typically state-owned or controlled by groups connected to the ruling regime. There is repression of criticism of the government and pervasive censorship. There is no independent judiciary.

The scoring system

We use a combination of a dichotomous and a three-point scoring system for the 60 indicators. A dichotomous 1-0 scoring system (1 for a yes and 0 for a no answer) is not without problems, but it has several distinct advantages over more refined scoring scales (such as the often-used 1-5 or 1-7). For many indicators, the possibility of a 0.5 score is introduced, to capture “grey areas”, where a simple yes (1) or no (0) is problematic, with guidelines as to when that should be used. Consequently, for many indicators there is a three-point scoring system, which represents a compromise between simple dichotomous scoring and the use of finer scales.

The problems of 1-5 or 1-7 scoring scales are numerous. For most indicators under such systems, it is extremely difficult to define meaningful and comparable criteria or guidelines for each score. This can lead to arbitrary, spurious and non-comparable scorings. For example, a score of 2 for one country may be scored a 3 in another, and so on. Alternatively, one expert might score an indicator for a particular country in a different way to another expert. This contravenes a basic principle of measurement,

that of so-called *reliability*—the degree to which a measurement procedure produces the same measurements every time, regardless of who is performing it. Two- and three-point systems do not guarantee reliability, but make it more likely.

Second, comparability between indicator scores and aggregation into a multi-dimensional index appears more valid with a two- or three-point scale for each indicator (the dimensions being aggregated are similar across indicators). By contrast, with a 1-5 system, the scores are more likely to mean different things across the indicators (for example, a 2 for one indicator may be more comparable to a 3 or 4 for another indicator). The problems of a 1-5 or 1-7 system are magnified when attempting to extend the index to many regions and countries.

Features of The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index

Public opinion surveys

A crucial, differentiating aspect of our measure is that, in addition to experts' assessments, we use, where available, public-opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey. Indicators based on the surveys predominate heavily in the *political participation* and *political culture* categories, and a few are used in the *civil liberties* and *functioning of government* categories.

In addition to the World Values Survey, other sources that can be leveraged include the Eurobarometer surveys, Gallup polls, Asian Barometer, Latin American Barometer, Afrobarometer and national surveys. In the case of countries for which survey results are missing, survey results for similar countries and expert assessment are used to fill in gaps.

Participation and voter turnout

After increasing for many decades, there has been a trend of decreasing voter turnout in most established democracies since the 1960s. Low turnout may be due to disenchantment, but it can also be a sign of contentment. Many, however, see low turnout as undesirable, and there is much debate over the factors that affect turnout and how to increase it.

A high turnout is generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the current system. Contrary to widespread belief, there is, in fact, a close correlation between turnout and overall measures of democracy—that is, developed, consolidated democracies have, with very few exceptions, higher turnouts (generally above 70%) than less established democracies.

The legislative and executive branches

The appropriate balance between these is much disputed in political theory. In our model, the clear predominance of the legislature is rated positively, as there is a very strong correlation between legislative dominance and measures of overall democracy.

The model

I Electoral process and pluralism

1. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government free?
Consider whether elections are competitive in that electors are free to vote and are offered a range of choices.
1: Essentially unrestricted conditions for the presentation of candidates (for example, no bans on major parties).
0.5: There are some restrictions on the electoral process.
0: A single-party system or major impediments exist (for example, bans on a major party or candidate).
2. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government fair?
1: No major irregularities in the voting process.
0.5: Significant irregularities occur (intimidation, fraud), but do not significantly affect the overall outcome.
0: Major irregularities occur and affect the outcome.
Score 0 if score for question 1 is 0.
3. Are municipal elections both free and fair?
1: Are free and fair.
0.5: Are free, but not fair.
0: Are neither free nor fair.
4. Is there universal suffrage for all adults?
Bar generally accepted exclusions (for example, non-nationals; criminals; members of armed forces in some countries).
1: Yes.
0: No.
5. Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state or non-state bodies?
1: Yes.
0: No.
6. Do laws provide for broadly equal campaigning opportunities?
1: Yes.
0.5: Formally, yes, but, in practice, opportunities are limited for some candidates.
0: No.
7. Is the process of financing political parties transparent and generally accepted?
1: Yes.
0.5: Not fully transparent.
0: No.

8. Following elections, are the constitutional mechanisms for the orderly transfer of power from one government to another clear, established and accepted?
 - 1: All three criteria are satisfied.
 - 0.5: Two of the three criteria are satisfied.
 - 0: Only one or none of the criteria is satisfied.
9. Are citizens free to form political parties that are independent of the government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: There are some restrictions.
 - 0: No.
10. Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: There is a dominant two-party system, in which other political forces never have any effective chance of taking part in national government.
 - 0: No.
11. Is potential access to public office open to all citizens?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Formally unrestricted, but, in practice, restricted for some groups, or for citizens from some parts of the country.
 - 0: No.
12. Are citizens allowed to form political and civic organisations, free of state interference and surveillance?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Officially free, but subject to some unofficial restrictions or interference.
 - 0: No.

II Functioning of government

13. Do freely elected representatives determine government policy?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.
 - 0: No.
14. Is the legislature the supreme political body, with a clear supremacy over other branches of government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0: No.
15. Is there an effective system of checks and balances on the exercise of government authority?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Yes, but there are some serious flaws.
 - 0: No.

16. Government is free of undue influence by the military or the security services.
1: Yes.
0.5: Influence is low, but the defence minister is not a civilian. If the current risk of a military coup is extremely low, but the country has a recent history of military rule or coups.
0: No.
17. Foreign powers and organisations do not determine important government functions or policies.
1: Yes.
0.5: Some features of a protectorate.
0: No (significant presence of foreign troops; important decisions taken by foreign power; country is a protectorate).
18. Do special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups exercise significant political power, parallel to democratic institutions?
1: Yes.
0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.
0: No.
19. Are sufficient mechanisms and institutions in place for ensuring government accountability to the electorate in between elections?
1: Yes.
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
0: No.
20. Does the government's authority extend over the full territory of the country?
1: Yes.
0: No.
21. Is the functioning of government open and transparent, with sufficient public access to information?
1: Yes.
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
0: No.
22. How pervasive is corruption?
1: Corruption is not a major problem.
0.5: Corruption is a significant issue.
0: Pervasive corruption exists.
23. Is the civil service willing to and capable of implementing government policy?
1: Yes.
0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
0: No.
24. Popular perceptions of the extent to which citizens have free choice and control over their lives.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
- If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think that they have a great deal of choice/control.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

25. Public confidence in government.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey, Gallup polls, Eurobarometer, Latinobarometer

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in government.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

26. Public confidence in political parties.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

III Political participation

27. Voter participation/turn-out for national elections.

(Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.)

1 if above 70%.

0.5 if 50%-70%.

0 if below 50%.

If voting is obligatory, score 0. Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.

28. Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.

0: No.

29. Women in parliament.

% of members of parliament who are women.

1 if more than 20% of seats.

0.5 if 10-20%.

0 if less than 10%.

30. Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations.
Score 1 if over 7% of population for either.
Score 0.5 if 4-7%.
Score 0 if under 4%.
If participation is forced, score 0.
31. Citizens' engagement with politics.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics.
1 if over 60%.
0.5 if 40-60%.
0 if less than 40%.
32. The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations.
1 if over 40%.
0.5 if 30-40%.
0 if less than 30%.
33. Adult literacy.
1 if over 90%.
0.5 if 70-90%.
0 if less than 70%.
34. Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day.
1 if over 50%.
0.5 if 30-50%.
0 if less than 30%.

35. The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some attempts.

0: No.

Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora.

If participation is forced, score 0.

IV Democratic political culture

36. Is there a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some serious doubts and risks.

0: No.

37. Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be good or fairly good to have a strong leader who does not bother with parliament and elections.

1 if less than 30%.

0.5 if 30-50%.

0 if more than 50%.

38. Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military rule.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have military rule.

1 if less than 10%.

0.5 if 10-30%.

0 if more than 30%.

39. Perceptions of rule by experts or technocratic government; proportion of the population that would prefer rule by experts or technocrats.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have experts, not government, make decisions for the country.

1 if less than 50%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if more than 70%.

40. Perception of democracy and public order; proportion of the population that believes that democracies are not good at maintaining public order.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that democracies are not good at maintaining order.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

Alternatively, % of people who think that punishing criminals is an essential characteristic of democracy.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

41. Perception of democracy and the economic system; proportion of the population that believes that democracy benefits economic performance.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that the economic system is badly run in democracies.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

42. Degree of popular support for democracy.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who agree or strongly agree that democracy is better than any other form of government.

1 if more than 90%.

0.5 if 75-90%.

0 if less than 75%.

43. There is a strong tradition of the separation of Church and State.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some residual influence of Church on State.

0: No.

V Civil liberties

44. Is there a free electronic media?

1: Yes.

0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. One or two private owners dominate the media.

0: No.

45. Is there a free print media?

1: Yes.

0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. There is high degree of concentration of private ownership of national newspapers.

0: No.

46. Is there freedom of expression and protest (bar only generally accepted restrictions, such as banning advocacy of violence)?

1: Yes.

0.5: Holders of minority viewpoints are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws heavily restrict scope for free expression.

0: No.

47. Is media coverage robust? Is there open and free discussion of public issues, with a reasonable diversity of opinions?

1: Yes.

0.5: There is formal freedom, but a high degree of conformity of opinion, including through self-censorship or discouragement of minority or marginal views.

0: No.

48. Are there political restrictions on access to the Internet?

1: No.

0.5: Some moderate restrictions.

0: Yes.

49. Are citizens free to form professional organisations and trade unions?

1: Yes.

0.5: Officially free, but subject to some restrictions.

0: No.

50. Do institutions provide citizens with the opportunity to petition government to redress grievances?

1: Yes.

0.5: Some opportunities.

0: No.

51. The use of torture by the state.
1: Torture is not used.
0: Torture is used.
52. The degree to which the judiciary is independent of government influence.
Consider the views of international legal and judicial watchdogs. Have the courts ever issued an important judgement against the government, or a senior government official?
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
53. The degree of religious tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
Are all religions permitted to operate freely, or are some restricted? Is the right to worship permitted both publicly and privately? Do some religious groups feel intimidated by others, even if the law requires equality and protection?
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
54. The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law.
Consider whether favoured groups or individuals are spared prosecution under the law.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
55. Do citizens enjoy basic security?
1: Yes.
0.5: Crime is so pervasive as to endanger security for large segments.
0: No.
56. Extent to which private property rights are protected and private business is free from undue government influence
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
57. Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms.
Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
58. Popular perceptions on protection of human rights; proportion of the population that think that basic human rights are well-protected.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey:

% of people who think that human rights are respected in their country.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

59. There is no significant discrimination on the basis of people's race, colour or religious beliefs.

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some significant exceptions.

0: No.

60. Extent to which the government invokes new risks and threats as an excuse for curbing civil liberties.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

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