

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy 2008

The results of the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2008 confirm that, following a decades-long global trend in democratisation, the spread of democracy has come to a halt. Comparing the results for 2008 with those from the first edition of the index, which covered 2006, shows that the dominant pattern in the past two years has been stagnation. Although there is no recent trend of outright regression, there are few instances of significant improvement. However, the global financial crisis, resulting in a sharp and possibly protracted recession, could threaten democracy in some parts of the world.

This is the second edition of the Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index. It reflects the situation as of September 2008. The first edition, published in 2006 in the *Economist's World in 2007*, reflected the situation in September 2006. The Index provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories (this covers almost the entire population of the world and the vast majority of the world's independent states (27 micro states are excluded). The Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Countries are placed within one of four types of regimes: full democracies; flawed democracies; hybrid regimes; and authoritarian regimes.

Our Index embodies a wider concept than is the case with some other measures of democracy. Free and fair elections and civil liberties are necessary conditions for democracy, but they are unlikely to be sufficient for a full and consolidated democracy if unaccompanied by transparent and at least minimally efficient government, sufficient political participation and a supportive democratic political culture.

Democracy in stagnation

The global record in democratisation since the start of its so-called "third wave" in 1974, and acceleration in the post-Soviet 1990s, has been impressive. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's measure of democracy, half of the world's population now lives in a democracy of some sort. In recent years, there have however, been few further advances and several setbacks. The spread of democracy appears to have come to a halt.

Disappointments abound across many of the world's regions. There has been a very weak response in the Middle East to pressures for democratisation. The promise of "colour revolutions" in the CIS has remained unfulfilled and authoritarian trends in Russia have continued. Political crises and malaise in east central Europe have led to disappointment and questioning of the strength of the region's democratic transition. Media freedoms are being eroded across Latin America and populist forces with dubious democratic credentials have come to the fore. In the developed West, a precipitous decline in political participation, weaknesses in the functioning of government, and security-related curbs on civil liberties are having a corrosive effect on some long-established democracies.

The slowing of democratisation and rising disenchantment with the results of some political liberalisations appear to have a variety of causes. The pace of democratisation was bound to slow after "the easy cases"—eager-to-liberalise east central Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and African regimes susceptible to outside pressure for political change. "Hard cases" such as China and Middle East autocracies were always going to be a more difficult proposition. Autocrats have also learned how better to protect themselves; many of them preside over energy-rich states and have been strengthened by sustained high oil prices.

A key factor is the delegitimation of much of the democracy-promotion agenda, which has become associated with an internationally very unpopular US president and military intervention. A combination of double standards in foreign policy (autocrats can be good friends as well as foes) and growing infringements of civil liberties has reduced the effectiveness of Western governments' calls for democratisation.

Although almost half of the world's countries can be considered to be democracies, the number of "full democracies" is relatively low (only 30); 50 are rated as "flawed democracies". Of the remaining 87 states, 51 are authoritarian and 36 are considered to be "hybrid regimes". As could be expected, the developed OECD countries dominate among full democracies, although there are two Latin American, two central European and one African country, which suggest that the level of development is not a binding constraint. Only two Asian countries are represented: Japan and South Korea.

Table 1
Democracy index 2008 by regime type

| | Countries | % of countries | % of world population |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Full democracies | 30 | 18.0 | 14.4 |
| Flawed democracies | 50 | 29.9 | 35.5 |
| Hybrid regimes | 36 | 21.6 | 15.2 |
| Authoritarian regimes | 51 | 30.5 | 34.9 |

"World" population refers to total population of the 167 countries that are covered. Since this excludes only micro states this is nearly equal to the entire actual estimated world population in 2008.

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit; CIA World Factbook

Half of the world's population lives in a democracy of some sort, although only some 14% reside in full democracies. Despite the advances in democracy in recent decades, more than one third the world's population still lives under authoritarian rule.

Democracy and development

The relationship between the level of development (income per head) and democracy is not-clear cut. There is an apparent association; the simple correlation between our democracy index for 2008 and the logarithm of GDP per head (at PPP US\$) in 2007 is just under 0.6. This may look even surprisingly low—it implies that in a simple two-variable regression of the democracy index on income per head, just over one third of the inter-country variation in democracy is explained by income levels. If we also control for oil wealth (with

a so-called dummy variable that takes a value of 1 for major oil exporting countries and 0 otherwise), the explanatory power of the regression rises sharply to just over 60% of the inter-country variation in the democracy index. Although this still leaves almost 40% of the variation unexplained, it illustrates the often-observed strong negative impact on democratic development of a reliance on oil wealth.

However, the direction of causality between democracy and income is also debateable. The standard modernisation hypothesis that economic development leads to, and/or is a necessary pre-condition for democracy, is no longer universally accepted. Instead it has been argued that the primary direction of causation runs from democracy to income (Rigobon and Rodrik 2005; Acemoglu et al 2005).

One advantage of our index compared to others is that it provides for considerable differentiation of scores, including among developed countries. The "near-perfect democracy" is Sweden, the country with the highest score. The other Nordic countries also have high ranks. By contrast, the US and UK are near the bottom of the full democracy category. In the US there has been a perceptible erosion in civil liberties related to the fight against terrorism. Longstanding problems in the functioning of government have also become more prominent. In the UK there has also been some erosion of civil liberties, but there the main feature is a decline in political participation that has been of shocking proportions. According our index, the UK political participation score is the lowest in the developed West and is reflected across all dimensions—voting turnout, membership of political parties, willingness to engage in and attitudes to political activity.

These results seem to highlight the interesting hypothesis that large countries, other things equal, tend to be less democratic. But this appears to be the case only among the developed countries. It does not hold across the whole sample—there is no significant relationship between the value of the democracy index and size of population for the entire 167-country sample.

Looking at the regional distribution of regime types, flawed democracies are concentrated in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and to a lesser extent in Asia. Despite progress in Latin American democratisation in recent decades, many countries in the region remain fragile democracies. Levels of political participation are generally very low and democratic cultures are weak. There has also been significant backsliding in recent years in some areas such as media freedoms.

Much of eastern Europe illustrates the difference between formal and substantive democracy. The new EU members from the region have pretty much equal levels of political freedoms and civil liberties as the old developed EU, but lag significantly in political participation and political culture—a reflection of widespread anomie and weaknesses of democratic development. Only two countries from the region—the Czech Republic and Slovenia (just)—are in the full democracy category. Hybrid and authoritarian regimes dominate heavily in the countries of the former Soviet Union, as the momentum towards "colour revolutions" has petered out.

Most of the world's authoritarian regimes are to be found in the Middle East and Africa, although there is also a fair number in Asia. The dearth of

democratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa is a well-known phenomenon, with much debate about the causes. In the statistical relationship between democracy and income discussed above, a dummy variable for the Middle East and North Africa is negative and highly significant statistically even when oil wealth is controlled for in our 167-country sample—that is, Middle East and North Africa has much lower levels of democratisation than could be inferred on the basis of income levels. Similar variables for Asia and for Eastern Europe are also negative, although at much lower levels of statistical significance. For other regions—Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and Latin America—average levels of democratic development correspond to what would be expected on the basis of average income levels.

Table 2
Democracy Index 2008

| | Rank | Overall score | Category scores | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | I Electoral process and pluralism | II Functioning of government | III Political participation | IV Political culture | V Civil liberties |
| Full democracies | | | | | | | |
| Sweden | 1 | 9.88 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 9.38 | 10.00 |
| Norway | 2 | 9.68 | 10.00 | 9.64 | 10.00 | 8.75 | 10.00 |
| Iceland | 3 | 9.65 | 10.00 | 9.64 | 8.89 | 10.00 | 9.71 |
| Netherlands | 4 | 9.53 | 9.58 | 8.93 | 9.44 | 10.00 | 9.71 |
| Denmark | 5 | 9.52 | 10.00 | 9.64 | 8.89 | 9.38 | 9.71 |
| Finland | 6 | 9.25 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 9.71 |
| New Zealand | 7 | 9.19 | 10.00 | 8.93 | 8.89 | 8.13 | 10.00 |
| Switzerland | 8 | 9.15 | 9.58 | 9.29 | 7.78 | 9.38 | 9.71 |
| Luxembourg | 9 | 9.10 | 10.00 | 9.29 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 9.71 |
| Australia | 10 | 9.09 | 10.00 | 8.93 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 10.00 |
| Canada | 11 | 9.07 | 9.17 | 9.64 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 10.00 |
| Ireland | 12 | 9.01 | 9.58 | 8.93 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 10.00 |
| Germany | 13 | 8.82 | 9.58 | 8.57 | 7.78 | 8.75 | 9.41 |
| Austria | 14 | 8.49 | 9.58 | 7.86 | 7.78 | 8.13 | 9.12 |
| Spain | 15 | 8.45 | 9.58 | 7.86 | 6.67 | 8.75 | 9.41 |
| Malta | 16 | 8.39 | 9.17 | 8.21 | 6.11 | 8.75 | 9.71 |
| Japan | 17 | 8.25 | 8.75 | 8.21 | 6.11 | 8.75 | 9.41 |
| United States | 18 | 8.22 | 8.75 | 7.86 | 7.22 | 8.75 | 8.53 |
| Czech Republic | 19 | 8.19 | 9.58 | 7.14 | 6.67 | 8.13 | 9.41 |
| Belgium | 20 | 8.16 | 9.58 | 8.21 | 6.11 | 7.50 | 9.41 |
| United Kingdom | 21 | 8.15 | 9.58 | 8.57 | 5.00 | 8.75 | 8.82 |
| Greece | 22 | 8.13 | 9.58 | 7.50 | 6.67 | 7.50 | 9.41 |
| Uruguay | 23 | 8.08 | 10.00 | 8.21 | 5.00 | 7.50 | 9.71 |
| France | 24 | 8.07 | 9.58 | 7.50 | 6.67 | 7.50 | 9.12 |
| Portugal | 25 | 8.05 | 9.58 | 8.21 | 5.56 | 7.50 | 9.41 |
| Mauritius | 26 | 8.04 | 9.17 | 8.21 | 5.00 | 8.13 | 9.71 |
| Costa Rica | 27 | 8.04 | 9.58 | 8.21 | 6.11 | 6.88 | 9.41 |
| South Korea | 28 | 8.01 | 9.58 | 7.50 | 7.22 | 7.50 | 8.24 |
| Italy | 29 | 7.98 | 9.58 | 6.43 | 6.67 | 8.13 | 9.12 |
| Slovenia | 30 | 7.96 | 9.58 | 7.86 | 6.67 | 6.88 | 8.82 |

Table 2 continued
Democracy Index 2008

| | Rank | Overall score | Category scores | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | I Electoral process and pluralism | II Functioning of government | III Political participation | IV Political culture | V Civil liberties |
| Flawed democracies | | | | | | | |
| South Africa | 31 | 7.91 | 8.75 | 7.86 | 7.22 | 6.88 | 8.82 |
| Chile | 32 | 7.89 | 9.58 | 8.93 | 5.00 | 6.25 | 9.71 |
| Taiwan | 33 | 7.82 | 9.58 | 7.50 | 6.67 | 5.63 | 9.71 |
| Cape Verde | 34 | 7.81 | 9.17 | 7.86 | 6.67 | 6.25 | 9.12 |
| India | 35 | 7.80 | 9.58 | 8.21 | 5.56 | 6.25 | 9.41 |
| Cyprus | 36 | 7.70 | 9.17 | 6.07 | 6.67 | 7.50 | 9.12 |
| Estonia | 37 | 7.68 | 9.58 | 7.50 | 5.00 | 7.50 | 8.82 |
| Israel | 38 | 7.48 | 8.75 | 7.50 | 8.33 | 7.50 | 5.29 |
| Botswana | 39 | 7.47 | 9.17 | 7.50 | 5.00 | 6.25 | 9.41 |
| Hungary | 40 | 7.44 | 9.58 | 6.07 | 5.56 | 6.88 | 9.12 |
| Brazil | 41 | 7.38 | 9.58 | 7.86 | 4.44 | 5.63 | 9.41 |
| Lithuania | 42 | 7.36 | 9.58 | 5.71 | 6.11 | 6.25 | 9.12 |
| Panama | 43 | 7.35 | 9.58 | 7.14 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 8.82 |
| Slovakia | 44 | 7.33 | 9.58 | 7.14 | 6.11 | 5.00 | 8.82 |
| Poland | 45 | 7.30 | 9.58 | 6.07 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 9.12 |
| Latvia | 46 | 7.23 | 9.58 | 5.71 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 9.12 |
| Timor-Leste | 47 | 7.22 | 8.67 | 6.79 | 5.56 | 6.88 | 8.24 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 48 | 7.21 | 9.58 | 6.79 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 7.94 |
| Jamaica | 49 | 7.21 | 9.17 | 6.79 | 5.00 | 6.25 | 8.82 |
| Romania | 50 | 7.06 | 9.58 | 6.07 | 6.11 | 5.00 | 8.53 |
| Croatia | 51 | 7.04 | 9.17 | 6.07 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 8.24 |
| Bulgaria | 52 | 7.02 | 9.17 | 5.36 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 8.82 |
| Ukraine | 53 | 6.94 | 9.58 | 5.36 | 5.56 | 6.25 | 7.94 |
| Thailand | 54 | 6.81 | 7.75 | 6.79 | 5.56 | 6.88 | 7.06 |
| Mexico | 55 | 6.78 | 7.92 | 7.14 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 8.82 |
| Argentina | 56 | 6.63 | 8.75 | 5.00 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 8.24 |
| Sri Lanka | 57 | 6.61 | 7.42 | 4.64 | 5.56 | 7.50 | 7.94 |
| Mongolia | 58 | 6.60 | 9.17 | 6.07 | 3.89 | 5.63 | 8.24 |
| Suriname | 59 | 6.58 | 9.17 | 6.07 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 8.24 |
| Colombia | 60 | 6.54 | 9.17 | 5.36 | 5.00 | 4.38 | 8.82 |
| Papua New Guinea | 61 | 6.54 | 7.33 | 6.43 | 4.44 | 6.25 | 8.24 |
| Moldova | 62 | 6.50 | 9.17 | 4.29 | 6.11 | 5.00 | 7.94 |
| Serbia | 63 | 6.49 | 9.17 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.63 | 7.65 |
| Namibia | 64 | 6.48 | 5.25 | 5.36 | 6.67 | 6.88 | 8.24 |
| Montenegro | 65 | 6.43 | 9.17 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.63 | 7.35 |
| Paraguay | 66 | 6.40 | 8.33 | 6.07 | 5.00 | 4.38 | 8.24 |
| El Salvador | 67 | 6.40 | 9.17 | 5.71 | 3.89 | 5.00 | 8.24 |
| Malaysia | 68 | 6.36 | 6.50 | 6.07 | 5.56 | 7.50 | 6.18 |
| Indonesia | 69 | 6.34 | 6.92 | 6.79 | 5.00 | 6.25 | 6.76 |
| Peru | 70 | 6.31 | 8.75 | 4.29 | 5.56 | 5.00 | 7.94 |

Table 2 continued
Democracy Index 2008

| | Rank | Overall score | Category scores | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | I Electoral process and pluralism | II Functioning of government | III Political participation | IV Political culture | V Civil liberties |
| Lesotho | 71 | 6.29 | 7.42 | 6.07 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 6.76 |
| Macedonia | 72 | 6.21 | 8.25 | 4.14 | 6.67 | 3.75 | 8.24 |
| Dominican Republic | 73 | 6.20 | 9.17 | 4.64 | 3.33 | 5.63 | 8.24 |
| Honduras | 74 | 6.18 | 8.33 | 6.07 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 7.06 |
| Bolivia | 75 | 6.15 | 8.33 | 5.71 | 5.00 | 3.75 | 7.94 |
| Guyana | 76 | 6.12 | 7.83 | 5.71 | 4.44 | 4.38 | 8.24 |
| Philippines | 77 | 6.12 | 8.33 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 3.13 | 9.12 |
| Nicaragua | 78 | 6.07 | 9.17 | 4.36 | 3.89 | 5.00 | 7.94 |
| Guatemala | 79 | 6.07 | 8.75 | 6.79 | 2.78 | 4.38 | 7.65 |
| Benin | 80 | 6.06 | 7.33 | 6.43 | 4.44 | 5.63 | 6.47 |
| Hybrid regimes | | | | | | | |
| Albania | 81 | 5.91 | 7.33 | 5.07 | 4.44 | 5.63 | 7.06 |
| Singapore | 82 | 5.89 | 4.33 | 7.50 | 2.78 | 7.50 | 7.35 |
| Mali | 83 | 5.87 | 8.25 | 5.71 | 3.89 | 5.63 | 5.88 |
| Hong Kong | 84 | 5.85 | 3.50 | 5.71 | 5.00 | 5.63 | 9.41 |
| Palestinian territories | 85 | 5.83 | 7.83 | 2.86 | 7.78 | 6.25 | 4.41 |
| Bosnia and Hercegovina | 86 | 5.70 | 7.83 | 3.29 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 7.94 |
| Turkey | 87 | 5.69 | 7.92 | 6.07 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Ecuador | 88 | 5.64 | 7.83 | 4.29 | 5.00 | 3.13 | 7.94 |
| Lebanon | 89 | 5.62 | 7.92 | 3.21 | 6.11 | 5.00 | 5.88 |
| Madagascar | 90 | 5.57 | 5.67 | 5.71 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 5.29 |
| Bangladesh | 91 | 5.52 | 7.00 | 5.07 | 4.44 | 3.75 | 7.35 |
| Mozambique | 92 | 5.49 | 6.17 | 5.36 | 5.56 | 6.25 | 4.12 |
| Senegal | 93 | 5.37 | 7.00 | 5.00 | 3.33 | 5.63 | 5.88 |
| Ghana | 94 | 5.35 | 7.42 | 4.64 | 4.44 | 4.38 | 5.88 |
| Venezuela | 95 | 5.34 | 6.58 | 4.29 | 5.56 | 4.38 | 5.88 |
| Tanzania | 96 | 5.28 | 6.50 | 3.93 | 5.06 | 5.63 | 5.29 |
| Zambia | 97 | 5.25 | 5.25 | 4.64 | 3.33 | 6.25 | 6.76 |
| Liberia | 98 | 5.25 | 7.83 | 0.79 | 6.11 | 5.63 | 5.88 |
| Malawi | 99 | 5.13 | 6.08 | 5.00 | 3.33 | 5.63 | 5.59 |
| Fiji | 100 | 5.11 | 6.08 | 3.21 | 3.33 | 5.00 | 7.94 |
| Uganda | 101 | 5.03 | 4.33 | 3.93 | 3.89 | 6.25 | 6.76 |
| Cambodia | 102 | 4.87 | 6.08 | 6.07 | 2.78 | 5.00 | 4.41 |
| Kenya | 103 | 4.79 | 3.50 | 4.29 | 5.56 | 5.63 | 5.00 |
| Georgia | 104 | 4.62 | 7.00 | 0.79 | 4.44 | 4.38 | 6.47 |
| Ethiopia | 105 | 4.52 | 3.00 | 3.93 | 5.00 | 6.25 | 4.41 |
| Burundi | 106 | 4.51 | 4.42 | 3.29 | 3.89 | 6.25 | 4.71 |
| Russia | 107 | 4.48 | 5.25 | 2.86 | 5.56 | 3.75 | 5.00 |
| Pakistan | 108 | 4.46 | 6.08 | 5.71 | 1.11 | 4.38 | 5.00 |
| Bhutan | 109 | 4.30 | 5.25 | 5.00 | 3.33 | 4.38 | 3.53 |

Table 2 continued
Democracy Index 2008

| | Rank | Overall score | Category scores | | | | |
|------------------------------|------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | I Electoral process and pluralism | II Functioning of government | III Political participation | IV Political culture | V Civil liberties |
| Haiti | 110 | 4.19 | 5.58 | 3.64 | 2.78 | 2.50 | 6.47 |
| Gambia | 111 | 4.19 | 3.00 | 4.64 | 4.44 | 5.63 | 3.24 |
| Sierra Leone | 112 | 4.11 | 6.58 | 1.50 | 2.78 | 5.00 | 4.71 |
| Armenia | 113 | 4.09 | 4.33 | 3.21 | 3.89 | 3.13 | 5.88 |
| Kyrgyz Republic | 114 | 4.05 | 4.83 | 1.86 | 3.89 | 4.38 | 5.29 |
| Nepal | 115 | 4.05 | 1.33 | 4.29 | 2.78 | 6.25 | 5.59 |
| Iraq | 116 | 4.00 | 4.75 | 0.07 | 6.67 | 4.38 | 4.12 |
| Authoritarian regimes | | | | | | | |
| Jordan | 117 | 3.93 | 3.17 | 3.21 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 3.82 |
| Mauritania | 118 | 3.91 | 2.08 | 4.29 | 4.44 | 3.75 | 5.00 |
| Egypt | 119 | 3.89 | 2.67 | 3.21 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 4.12 |
| Morocco | 120 | 3.88 | 3.50 | 3.93 | 2.22 | 5.63 | 4.12 |
| Rwanda | 121 | 3.71 | 3.00 | 3.57 | 1.67 | 5.00 | 5.29 |
| Burkina Faso | 122 | 3.60 | 4.00 | 1.79 | 2.78 | 5.00 | 4.41 |
| Comoros | 123 | 3.58 | 3.00 | 2.21 | 4.44 | 5.00 | 3.24 |
| Nigeria | 124 | 3.53 | 2.92 | 3.21 | 3.33 | 4.38 | 3.82 |
| Cuba | 125 | 3.52 | 1.75 | 4.64 | 3.89 | 4.38 | 2.94 |
| Cameroon | 126 | 3.46 | 1.67 | 4.29 | 2.22 | 5.00 | 4.12 |
| Kazakhstan | 127 | 3.45 | 2.67 | 2.14 | 2.78 | 4.38 | 5.29 |
| Niger | 128 | 3.41 | 5.25 | 1.14 | 2.22 | 3.75 | 4.71 |
| Kuwait | 129 | 3.39 | 1.33 | 4.29 | 2.78 | 5.00 | 3.53 |
| Bahrain | 130 | 3.38 | 2.58 | 3.57 | 2.22 | 5.00 | 3.53 |
| Angola | 131 | 3.35 | 1.75 | 3.21 | 3.89 | 4.38 | 3.53 |
| Belarus | 132 | 3.34 | 2.58 | 2.86 | 3.33 | 4.38 | 3.53 |
| Algeria | 133 | 3.32 | 2.67 | 2.21 | 1.67 | 5.63 | 4.41 |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 134 | 3.27 | 1.25 | 2.86 | 2.78 | 5.63 | 3.82 |
| Azerbaijan | 135 | 3.19 | 3.08 | 0.79 | 3.33 | 3.75 | 5.00 |
| China | 136 | 3.04 | 0.00 | 5.00 | 2.78 | 6.25 | 1.18 |
| Swaziland | 137 | 3.04 | 1.33 | 2.86 | 2.22 | 4.38 | 4.41 |
| Afghanistan | 138 | 3.02 | 5.17 | 0.79 | 2.22 | 2.50 | 4.41 |
| Gabon | 139 | 3.00 | 1.25 | 2.21 | 3.33 | 4.38 | 3.82 |
| Oman | 140 | 2.98 | 0.00 | 3.57 | 2.22 | 5.00 | 4.12 |
| Tunisia | 141 | 2.96 | 0.00 | 2.86 | 2.78 | 5.63 | 3.53 |
| Yemen | 142 | 2.95 | 2.17 | 2.50 | 3.33 | 5.00 | 1.76 |
| Congo (Brazzaville) | 143 | 2.94 | 1.25 | 2.86 | 3.33 | 3.75 | 3.53 |
| Qatar | 144 | 2.92 | 0.00 | 3.57 | 2.22 | 4.38 | 4.41 |
| Iran | 145 | 2.83 | 0.92 | 2.86 | 3.33 | 5.00 | 2.06 |
| Sudan | 146 | 2.81 | 1.33 | 2.50 | 1.67 | 5.00 | 3.53 |
| United Arab Emirates | 147 | 2.60 | 0.00 | 3.93 | 1.11 | 5.00 | 2.94 |
| Zimbabwe | 148 | 2.53 | 0.00 | 0.79 | 3.89 | 5.63 | 2.35 |
| Vietnam | 149 | 2.53 | 0.83 | 4.29 | 1.67 | 4.38 | 1.47 |

Table 2 continued
Democracy Index 2008

| | Rank | Overall score | Category scores | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | I Electoral process and pluralism | II Functioning of government | III Political participation | IV Political culture | V Civil liberties |
| Tajikistan | 150 | 2.45 | 1.83 | 0.79 | 2.22 | 6.25 | 1.18 |
| Togo | 151 | 2.43 | 2.17 | 0.43 | 1.67 | 4.38 | 3.53 |
| Djibouti | 152 | 2.37 | 2.50 | 1.43 | 0.56 | 5.00 | 2.35 |
| Eritrea | 153 | 2.31 | 0.00 | 2.14 | 1.11 | 6.25 | 2.06 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 154 | 2.28 | 3.00 | 0.71 | 2.22 | 3.13 | 2.35 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 155 | 2.19 | 0.00 | 2.86 | 1.67 | 4.38 | 2.06 |
| Syria | 156 | 2.18 | 0.00 | 2.14 | 1.67 | 5.63 | 1.47 |
| Laos | 157 | 2.10 | 0.00 | 3.21 | 1.11 | 5.00 | 1.18 |
| Guinea | 158 | 2.09 | 0.00 | 0.43 | 3.33 | 3.75 | 2.94 |
| Libya | 159 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.14 | 1.11 | 5.00 | 1.76 |
| Guinea-Bissau | 160 | 1.99 | 2.08 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 1.88 | 3.24 |
| Saudi Arabia | 161 | 1.90 | 0.00 | 2.86 | 1.11 | 3.75 | 1.76 |
| Central African Republic | 162 | 1.86 | 1.75 | 1.07 | 1.67 | 1.88 | 2.94 |
| Myanmar | 163 | 1.77 | 0.00 | 1.79 | 0.56 | 5.63 | 0.88 |
| Uzbekistan | 164 | 1.74 | 0.08 | 0.79 | 2.22 | 5.00 | 0.59 |
| Turkmenistan | 165 | 1.72 | 0.00 | 0.79 | 2.22 | 5.00 | 0.59 |
| Chad | 166 | 1.52 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.38 | 3.24 |
| North Korea | 167 | 0.86 | 0.00 | 2.50 | 0.56 | 1.25 | 0.00 |

Changes between 2006 and 2008

The Economist Intelligence Unit's measure for 2008 reflects a picture of overall stagnation in democratisation since 2006—what Diamond (2008) has called a "democratic recession". Although there is, contrary to some alarmist reports, no recent trend of outright regression, there are very few instances of significant improvement. The average global score for 2008 is almost unchanged compared with 2006, and in most regions the average score for 2008 is similar to the average recorded for 2006.

There were more countries (68) that had deterioration in their democracy scores between 2006 and 2008 than those that experienced an improvement (56), with the scores unchanged for the remaining 43 countries. The average score for the 167 countries improved slightly from 2006 to 2008, from 5.52 to 5.55. In almost all the world's regions the average regional score remained unchanged or improved only slightly between 2006 and 2008. The sole exception was eastern Europe, which had a perceptible decline in its average score, although in no country was the change large enough to precipitate a change in the regime type categorisation. However, 19 out of the 28 countries in eastern Europe recorded a decline in their democracy scores between 2006 and 2008; in only one country in this region (the Czech Republic) was there a slight improvement; and in eight the score remained unchanged.

In only 12 countries out of the 167 that are covered was there a change in regime type between 2006 and 2008—in eight there was a positive upgrading and in four a regression. All four countries that had negative change in regime type involved a movement from flawed democracies to hybrid regimes (Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Mali and the Palestinian Territories). Among the improving countries two moved from the flawed to the full democracy category (Italy and South Korea); two from a hybrid regime to a flawed democracy (Nicaragua and Thailand); and four from authoritarian to hybrid regimes (Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone).

Eight of the 12 countries undergoing a change in regime type were from Asia (three in a negative and five in a positive direction). This illustrates the fact that many of the most significant changes in democratisation between 2006 and 2008 occurred in Asia, as well as the fact that the trend in Asia was mixed, with both positive and negative changes almost equally represented.

The strengthening of extreme political parties and anti-immigrant forces underpinned the deterioration in the scores of several West European countries, including Austria and the Netherlands. As noted, most countries in eastern Europe experienced a decline in their scores. A common explanation for the emergence of political difficulties in east central Europe is that the EU accession process had previously held together these countries' fractious party political systems, as mainstream parties united behind the reforms that were needed to gain EU membership. But once accession was achieved, and politics reverted to "natural" antagonistic patterns, the underlying fragility of east-central European political systems was exposed.

There are a number of possible reasons for this fragility. Most important is that although democratic forms are in place in the region, the substance of democracy—including a political culture based on trust and healthy levels of political participation—is absent. This is manifested in low levels of political participation beyond voting (and even turnout at elections is low in some countries), and very low levels of public confidence in state institutions. A key underlying factor is that transition has resulted in a large stratum of discontented voters, who feel that they have lost out during the transition, and who as a result often favour parties that would challenge the status quo.

Ukraine which suffered only a small deterioration in its score between 2006 and 2008, remains, along with Moldova, the only democracy in the CIS (albeit in the flawed category). The most significant declines in score between 2006 and 2008 were recorded in Georgia and Russia (the third biggest decline worldwide was in Russia). The so-called "rose revolution" in Georgia, when peaceful street protests against falsified parliamentary elections in November 2003 eventually forced out the incumbent president, Eduard Shevardnadze, created optimism that the country would move towards a democracy. Subsequent events have not justified these hopes. Constitutional amendments were pushed through in 2004, concentrating power in the hands of the new president, Mikheil Saakashvili, and weakening the legislature. In 2006, the government manipulated the electoral system for local elections, ensuring that the ruling party would dominate local legislatures. A crackdown on the opposition and a nine-day state of emergency imposed in November 2007

illustrated the lack of progress. The conduct of elections in 2008 left much to be desired. Finally, Mr Saakashvili's attempt to reintegrate by force Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia in August 2008 led to conflict with Russia and disaster for Georgia.

Table 3
Democracy across the regions

| | Number of countries | Democracy index average | Full democracies | Flawed democracies | Hybrid regimes | Authoritarian regimes |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| North America | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 2 | 8.64 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 2 | 8.64 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Europe | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 21 | 8.60 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2008 | 21 | 8.61 | 19 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Eastern Europe | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 28 | 5.76 | 2 | 14 | 6 | 6 |
| 2008 | 28 | 5.68 | 2 | 14 | 6 | 6 |
| Latin America & the Caribbean | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 24 | 6.37 | 2 | 17 | 4 | 1 |
| 2008 | 24 | 6.43 | 2 | 18 | 3 | 1 |
| Asia & Australasia | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 28 | 5.44 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 9 |
| 2008 | 28 | 5.58 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| Middle East & North Africa | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 20 | 3.53 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| 2008 | 20 | 3.54 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 16 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 44 | 4.24 | 1 | 7 | 13 | 23 |
| 2008 | 44 | 4.28 | 1 | 6 | 15 | 22 |
| Total | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 167 | 5.52 | 28 | 54 | 30 | 55 |
| 2008 | 167 | 5.55 | 30 | 50 | 36 | 51 |

In Russia, the one positive development (the fact that the Constitution was respected and that Vladimir Putin stepped down from the presidency in May 2008) was offset by a number of negative developments. Although the formal trappings of democracy remain in place, today's Russia has been called a "managed" (or "stage managed") democracy. The Duma is now little more than a rubber-stamp parliament; regional governors are appointed directly; the main media are state-controlled; civil society organisations have come under intense pressure; and the state has increased its hold over the economy. Most Russians appear unperturbed by the trend towards authoritarianism. During the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, many Russians came to associate the term "democracy" with chaos, and "capitalism" was synonymous with rigged privatisations, the rise of the "oligarchs" and widespread poverty.

There was little change in the overall situation in sub-Saharan Africa. Twenty countries had a decline in the scores between 2006 and 2008 (many of them from already very low levels); 16 had an improvement and for eight the scores

remained unchanged between 2006 and 2008. Two underwent a regime change: a small deterioration was sufficient to push Mali out of the flawed democracy category into a hybrid regime, and Sierra Leone showed major improvements, lifting the country out of the authoritarian category.

There were few changes between 2006 and 2008 in Latin America (one positive change in regime type) and the Middle East and North Africa (one negative change in regime type), where almost all countries remain authoritarian.

Shifts in regime type

Downgrades

Bangladesh—from flawed democracy to hybrid

Bangladesh has been governed by a caretaker government, under emergency rule, since January 2007. The normal practice in Bangladesh is for the outgoing government to transfer power to an unelected caretaker government, which is charged with preparing for parliamentary elections. This transfer of power occurred in October 2006, but owing to disagreements over the preparations and a deteriorating security situation, emergency rule was promulgated on January 11th 2007. Street protests are banned, (although restrictions on protests might be lifted in the coming months).

Hong Kong—from flawed democracy to hybrid

Several developments underpin the deterioration in Hong Kong. One was the decision of the Chinese government to rule against the introduction of full democracy until 2017 (at the earliest). There have also been increasing reports of self-censorship in the local press owing to fears that newspapers that print negative stories about China and the Hong Kong government will lose advertising opportunities from Chinese and HK companies.

Mali—from flawed democracy to hybrid

There has been a deterioration in civil liberties as the government has restricted media freedoms, while insecurity has increased as a result of insurgency in the north of the country.

Palestinian Territories—from flawed democracy to hybrid

The Islamist Hamas movement that won the parliamentary election in early 2006, and Fatah, who hold on to the presidency have failed to bridge their differences. Instead, factional infighting has worsened in recent years, culminating in the takeover of power in the Gaza Strip by Hamas while the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah has tried to maintain his grip on the West Bank. Political violence has worsened.

Upgrades

Bhutan—from authoritarian to hybrid

The secluded nation has made major progress in its transition from absolute monarchy to democracy. Elections have been held for both houses of parliament, in December 2007 (for the upper house of parliament) and March 2008 (for the lower house of parliament).

Italy—from flawed to full democracy

Silvio Berlusconi controlled the state broadcaster at the 2006 election, but this is no longer the case. Mr Berlusconi won the most recent election, but this was in a fair

vote. There has been some improvement in checks and balances and in ensuring that all parties have equal access to the media during an election campaign.

Nepal—from authoritarian to hybrid

Between late 2006 and now, Nepal has seen the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement that ended a decade-long Maoist insurgency; the inclusion of the Maoist former rebels in a coalition government; and the holding of a parliamentary election.

Nicaragua—from hybrid to flawed democracy

Recent elections have been clean; legislative politics have become more constructive with the opposition, previously divided, increasingly finding a united voice and becoming effective at limiting the government's excesses; and the Supreme Court has enacted a constitutional reform that limits the power of the executive.

Pakistan—from authoritarian to hybrid

In November 2007 the then-president, Pervez Musharraf, relinquished his position as army chief, thus removing the last official vestige of army rule. The state of emergency that was imposed in late 2007 was short-lived. In February 2008 the country successfully held a parliamentary election whose results were accepted, and a coalition government was formed.

Sierra Leone—from authoritarian to hybrid

The country held reasonably free and fair general elections in 2007, with few incidents of violence. There was an orderly transfer of power to the opposition. These were the first elections held after the withdrawal of UN troops.

South Korea—from flawed to full democracy

Improvements in civil liberties and a further reduction in any residual risk of a return to military rule underpin the move to the full democracy category.

Thailand—from hybrid to flawed democracy

After staging a coup in September 2006 to oust the democratically elected prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, the military kept its pledge to hand power back to a civilian government via a fresh election. The December 2007 election went ahead smoothly, and a new government was installed soon after with a workable majority in the House of Representatives (the lower house). The military has since returned to the barracks. However, ongoing political instability means that there is a considerable risk that the military could again intervene and oust a democratically-elected government.

Democracy under stress

There have been major reversals before—a democratisation wave after the Second World War ended with more than 20 countries subsequently sliding back to authoritarianism. We are not yet witnessing that sort of rollback, but the threat of backsliding now outweighs the possibility of further gains.

Democracy as a value retains strong popular appeal worldwide. Surveys show that most people in most places still want democracy. While creating democracy by external intervention is being discredited, trends such as globalisation, increasing wealth and education, and expanding middle classes would normally favour the organic development of democracy. These underlying forces suggested that any retreat from democracy would not be permanent.

However, this is where the present global financial crisis and likely sharp and possibly protracted recession in much of the world enters the picture. The crisis has the potential to undermine the credibility of free-market capitalism,

especially in lower income markets. *The Economist* newspaper recently concluded that "economic liberty is under attack and capitalism, the system which embodies it, is at bay." (*Economist*, October 18-24). The UK, the birthplace of modern privatisation and deregulation, has nationalised much of its banking industry. The US and other governments in many developed countries appear poised to follow. It is unlikely that the statist trend will be limited to only the financial sector ("socialism in one sector"). The pro-regulation climate will likely affect other sectors also. While the scale of the change is still unclear, a larger economic role for the state in general and a smaller and more constrained private sector can be expected, at least for the next few years. Some argue that Anglo-Saxon capitalism has failed, and have called for rolling back the deregulatory tide that stemmed from the Thatcher-Reagan era.

In the face of economic turmoil and such criticism of free market ideology, can democracy remain immune or will it also come under threat in markets where democratic institutions are weak? When economic liberalism is curtailed, social and political liberalism also tend to be affected. It would be wrong to underestimate the anger that the developments on Wall Street have engendered on so-called Main Street, not only in the US but also elsewhere. There is talk of a broken financial system discrediting Western values in general. A broader backlash may develop against free markets and neo-liberal ideology in some countries as economic conditions deteriorate. While it is highly unlikely that developed countries would experience a significant rollback of democracy, there is little cause for complacency, especially about the impact on emerging markets with fragile democratic institutions. A lot will depend on the depth and duration of the economic recession, as well as the extent to which attitudes towards the market and role of government actually shift. There are several ways in which democracy might be adversely affected:

- Economic recession could boost extremist political forces in western Europe, and is also likely to feed anti-immigrant sentiment. These trends will interact with existing concerns about terrorism and could result in a further erosion of civil liberties.
 - Many non-consolidated democracies are very fragile and if subjected to intense socio-economic stress, backsliding in democracy is possible. This would especially be the case in much of Latin America (which has a history of democracy reversals), Eastern Europe, and Africa where progress in democratisation in recent decades—already under stress in many cases—could suffer significant setbacks.
 - The shallowness of democratic cultures—as revealed by disturbingly low scores for many countries in the Economist Intelligence Unit's indexes for political participation and political culture—also underscores the fragility of many democracies and the potential for reversals.
 - Serious recessions typically threaten democracy via increased social unrest. It is therefore worrying that 48 countries are assessed by the Economist Intelligence Unit as being at high risk of social unrest. In the category of flawed democracies there are 15 such countries out of 55; among hybrid regimes, 16 out of 36; and 17, or one third, of the 51 authoritarian states. It is true that historically
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economic crises and difficulties have been associated with democratic breakthroughs, such as the sudden collapse of seemingly stable autocratic regimes, as much as with the opposite outcome of increasing authoritarianism. However, under present circumstances, and given the combination of other factors that are at work, it seems much more likely that the negative impact on democratisation would predominate.

- Democracy promotion by the Western world was already discredited by the experience in the Middle East over recent years. The economic crisis is likely to further undermine the credibility of efforts by developed nations to promote their values abroad.
- The financial and economic crisis may increase the attractiveness of the Chinese model of authoritarian capitalism for many emerging markets.

Table 4 Countries with a high or very high risk of social unrest, 2008

Flawed democracies

Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Macedonia, Moldova, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Ukraine

Hybrid regimes

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Venezuela

Authoritarian regimes

Afghanistan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Iran, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zimbabwe

- Political and economic freedom are often closely associated. Our democracy index is negatively correlated with levels of government regulation in various fields, including the degree of financial sector regulation. While the causality is unclear, a rise in economic nationalism may be associated with less democracy.

None of these points suggest a significant backsliding in democratisation is inevitable. Nonetheless, they do suggest that nations with a weak democratic tradition may be vulnerable to setbacks over the next few years.

Defining and measuring democracy

There is no consensus on how to measure democracy—definitions of democracy are contested and there is an ongoing 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 on what constitutes a democracy.

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 thus 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 whether reference to these basic features is sufficient for a satisfactory concept of democracy. As

discussed below, there is a question of 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. They produce a number of measures, of which the narrowest is 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 criteria for an electoral democracy include:

- 1) A competitive, multiparty 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

Freedom House also measure the slightly broader concept of political freedom. This is somewhat (though not much) more demanding than the criteria for electoral democracy, covering the electoral process and political pluralism and, to a lesser extent the functioning of government and a few aspects of participation. At the end of 2007, 121 out of 193 states were classified as "electoral democracies; of these, on a more stringent criterion, 90 states were classified as "free".

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. Their 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 that reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not "thick" enough. They do not encompass sufficiently or at all some features that determine how substantive democracy is or its quality. Freedom is an essential component of democracy, but not sufficient. In existing measures, the elements

of political participation and functioning of government are taken into account only in a marginal and formal way.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's 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 inter-related and form a coherent conceptual whole. The condition of having 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 the freedom of speech, expression and 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 or are not implemented then the concept of democracy is not very meaningful or it becomes an empty shell.

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, are 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 (although 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 well

being. Thus 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 in 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 of democracy 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 regimes:

1. Full democracies—scores of 8-10
2. Flawed democracies—score of 6 to 7.9
3. Hybrid regimes—scores of 4 to 5.9
4. Authoritarian regimes—scores below 4

Threshold points for regime types depend on overall scores that are rounded to one decimal point.

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. Thus 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 a system, 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. Or 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, rather than a 2 for that indicator). The

problems of a 1-5 or 1-7 system are magnified when attempting to extend the index to many regions and countries.

Some features of the Economist Intelligence Unit 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, Latin American Barometer, 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—ie developed, consolidated democracies have, with very few exceptions, higher turnout (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 affect significantly 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: Yes formally, 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 fulfilled

0.5: Two of the three criteria are fulfilled

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 free to form political and civic organisations, free of state interference and surveillance?

1: Yes

0.5: Officially free, but subject to some 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 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. Special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups do not 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 assuring 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 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 they 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

% 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 and/or presidential elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age).

1 if consistently above 70%

0.5 if between 50% and 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% to 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% to 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% to 40%

0 if less than 30%

33. Adult literacy

1 if over 90%

0.5 if 70% to 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% to 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% to 50%

0 if more than 50%

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

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 army rule

1 if less than 10%

0.5 if 10% to 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% to 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% to 70%

0 if less than 50%

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 runs badly in democracies

1 if more than 80%

0.5 if 60% to 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% to 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: Minority view points are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws restrict heavily 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 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 successfully 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 members of groups 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 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 human rights protection; 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% to 70%

0 if less than 50%

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

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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