



The Global State of Democracy IN FOCUS

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Inclusion and the Global State of Democracy Indices

Summary of findings

This *GSoD In Focus* showcases data on inclusion in relation to gender and social group equality derived from the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices, International IDEA's measurement of democratic trends and performance for 158 countries from 1975 until 2017.

While gender equality has seen remarkable progress across all regions since 1975, it has been unevenly distributed and some countries and regions are lagging sharply behind. Moreover, despite efforts to bring marginalized groups into the political process, there has been no significant improvement in any of the regions over the past four decades in ensuring social group equality in access to political power. More efforts are needed to ensure the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in the political process.

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Key facts and figures

- Gender Equality, as measured in the GSoD Indices, has seen remarkable progress over the past 42 years, and every region has experienced some improvement.
- Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and North America (in descending order) are the regions that have increased their Gender Equality scores by the most since 1975. The Middle East and Iran, and Asia and The Pacific, have shown the slowest rate of increase.
- At the country level, Spain, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Nepal and Rwanda are the countries that have seen the greatest improvements in their Gender Equality scores since 1975.
- Of the top 10 countries that have seen statistically significant improvements in Gender Equality in the past 10 years, 7 are in Africa (Algeria, Angola, Libya, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Tanzania), 2 are in Asia and the Pacific (Myanmar and Nepal) and 1 is in Latin America and the Caribbean (Ecuador).
- Three of the 15 countries in the world with the highest number of declines in the indicators of their democratic performance in the past four years (Pakistan, Brazil and the United States) have also seen declines in their Gender Equality score.
- Social Group Equality trends show stagnation or slight declines since 1975 in all regions except for Latin America and the Caribbean, which has shown slight gains, but stagnation since 1995.
- Half of the countries that have seen growing social group inequality in access to political power and enjoyment of civil liberties have been recently affected by conflict (Mali, Syria and Yemen).

1. Introduction

Inclusion is an important dimension of the quality of democracy. Enabling participation and access to resources and power for all social groups, regardless of racial, ethnic, religious, gender or class identity, is key to ensuring inclusive and sustainable democracies. The framework of the GSoD Indices provides two main measurements of inclusion: Gender Equality, which measures gender equality in access to political power; and Social Group Equality, which measures the political inclusion of marginalized groups (see Table 1 for the full list of indicators).

In addition, gender-disaggregated indicators are used to measure Access to Justice, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Domestic Movement, and Personal Integrity and Security. All these measurements are closely connected to two of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 on Gender Equality (Targets 5.1 and 5.5) and Goal 10 on Reducing Inequalities (Target 10.3) (United Nations 2016).

2. Trends in Gender Equality

The GSoD Indices subcomponent on Gender Equality measures women's access to political power. Five indicators have been aggregated into this measurement:

1. the proportion of women in the legislature;
2. the proportion of women appointed to cabinet level positions;
3. women's participation in civil society organizations;
4. political power distributed by gender; and
5. female versus male mean years of schooling.

This section analyses trends in Gender Equality from a long-term (42 years), medium-term (20 years) and short-term (10 years) perspective. When gains or declines are mentioned in the text, these refer to statistically significant changes.

Gender Equality has seen remarkable progress over the past 42 years and this improvement has occurred across every region. Latin America and the Caribbean is the region with the largest improvement, nearly doubling its score from 0.33 in 1975 to 0.65 in 2017, followed by Africa. However, women make up only 24 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide, which means that the world is far from reaching parity in political representation. At the current rate, it will take another 40 years to reach this goal (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015; International IDEA 2017: 103).

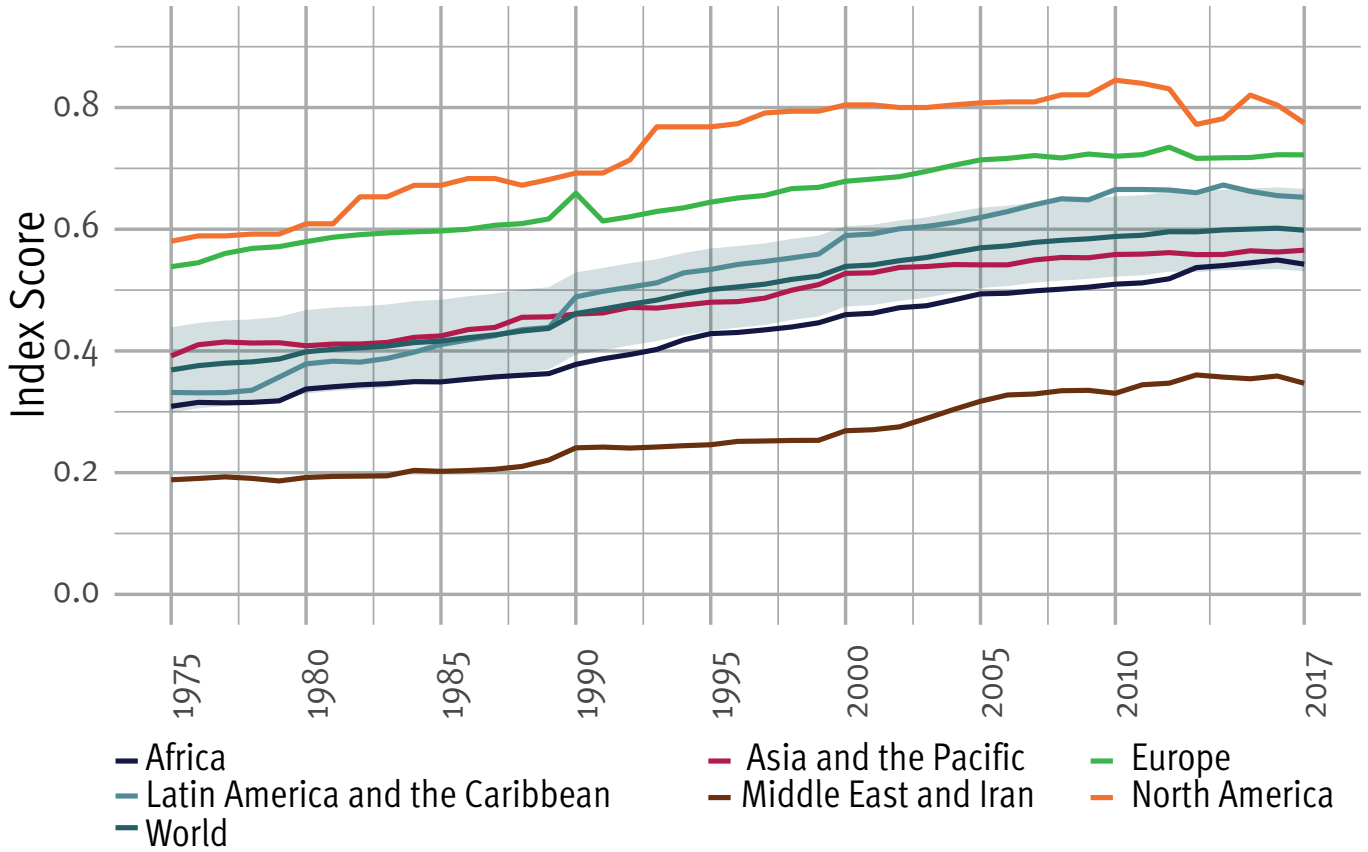
In addition, regional differences remain. The Middle East and Iran, the region which started with the lowest levels in 1975, has also shown the slowest rate of improvement. In 2017, the Middle East and Iran was more distant from the global average than it was in 1975 and remained the lowest performing region in the world on Gender Equality. While starting and ending at a higher level, the rate of improvement in the Asia and the Pacific region is similar to that of the Middle East and Iran and also below the global average rate of increase.

At the country level Ecuador, Spain, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Nepal and Rwanda (in descending order) are the countries in the world that have seen the greatest improvements in Gender Equality since 1975. These advances have gone hand in hand with democratic improvements overall, except in the case of Rwanda, which scores in the bottom 25 per cent in the world on Representative Government.

Looking at the medium term, in the period 1997–2017 a total of 45 countries increased their Gender Equality scores, while 70 per cent of countries in the world showed stagnation, as they saw no change, either positive or negative. No countries had statistically significant declines during this period.

FIGURE 1

Gender Equality as measured by the Global State of Democracy Indices, 1975–2017



Note: Scoring runs from 0 to 1, with 0 representing the lowest achievement and 1 the highest.

Source: International IDEA, The Global State of Democracy Indices, 2018, <<http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices>>

In the short term, of the 10 countries that had statistically significant improvements in Gender Equality between 2007 and 2017, seven are in Africa (Algeria, Angola, Libya, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Tanzania), two are in Asia and the Pacific (Myanmar and Nepal) and one is in Latin America and the Caribbean (Ecuador).

Since 2015, three countries have experienced declines in their gender equality score: Pakistan, Brazil and the United States. These countries are also among the 15 countries in the world with the highest number of declines in the indicators of their democratic performance in the past four years.

3. Trends in Social Group Equality

Social Group Equality measures the political inclusion of a broad range of marginalized groups along socio-economic, ethnic, racial and religious cleavages and is composed of seven indicators. These indicators cover social class and social group equality in relation to enjoyment of civil liberties and access to political power.

Social Group Equality has not shown the same global improvement as Gender Equality. Instead, the trends for Social Group Equality show stagnation or slight declines in all regions except Latin America and the Caribbean, which has shown slight gains since 1975. This positive development in the region mostly occurred between 1975 and 1995, and has since then stagnated.

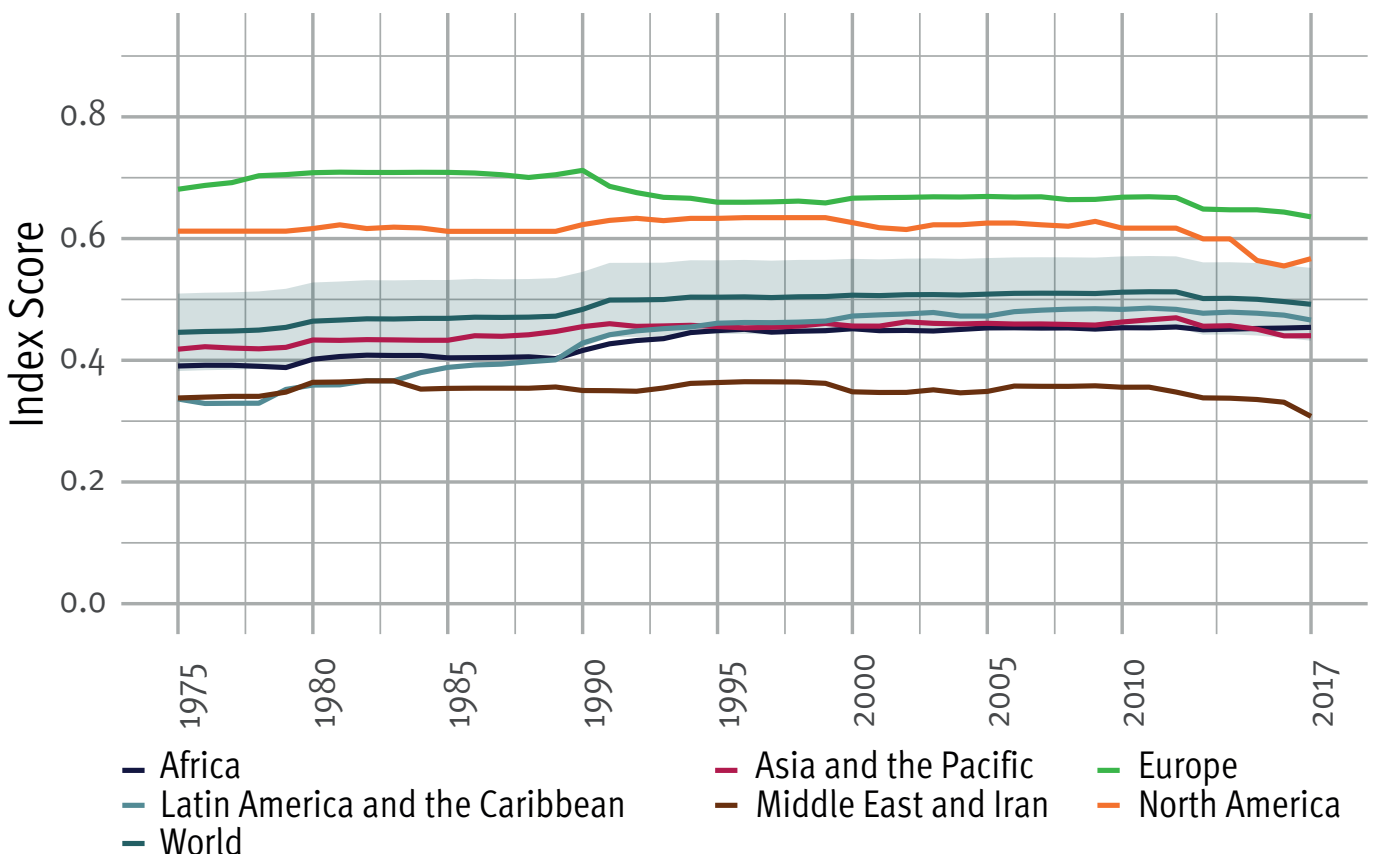
Looking at country-level developments, between 1997 and 2017 only 11 countries made advances and six declined, while 90 per cent of countries in the world saw no changes on this aspect of democracy. Of the countries that have made advances in Social Group Equality, six are in Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia and Tunisia), two are in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia and Peru), two are in Asia and the Pacific (Indonesia and Myanmar) and one is in Europe (Portugal).

The regional spread for the decliners is similarly diverse: two countries in the Middle East (Syria and Yemen), two in Asia and the Pacific (Mongolia and Tajikistan), one in Africa (Mali) and one in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina). Half of the countries that have seen declining Social Group Equality in access to political power and enjoyment of civil liberties have recently been affected by conflict (Mali, Syria and Yemen).

While it is positive that more countries have improved than declined over the past 20 years, the number of countries that have improved overall is remarkably low. In the same period, Gender Equality saw four times as many countries improve, while no countries declined. Despite a seemingly heightened awareness of the importance of social inclusion across the world, this awareness has not translated into measurable improvements in Social Group Equality. Access to political power and the enjoyment of civil liberties for vulnerable social groups across the world is largely as unequal as it was in 1975.

FIGURE 2

Social Group Equality as measured by the Global State of Democracy Indices, 1975–2017



Note: Scoring runs from 0 to 1, with 0 representing the lowest achievement and 1 the highest.

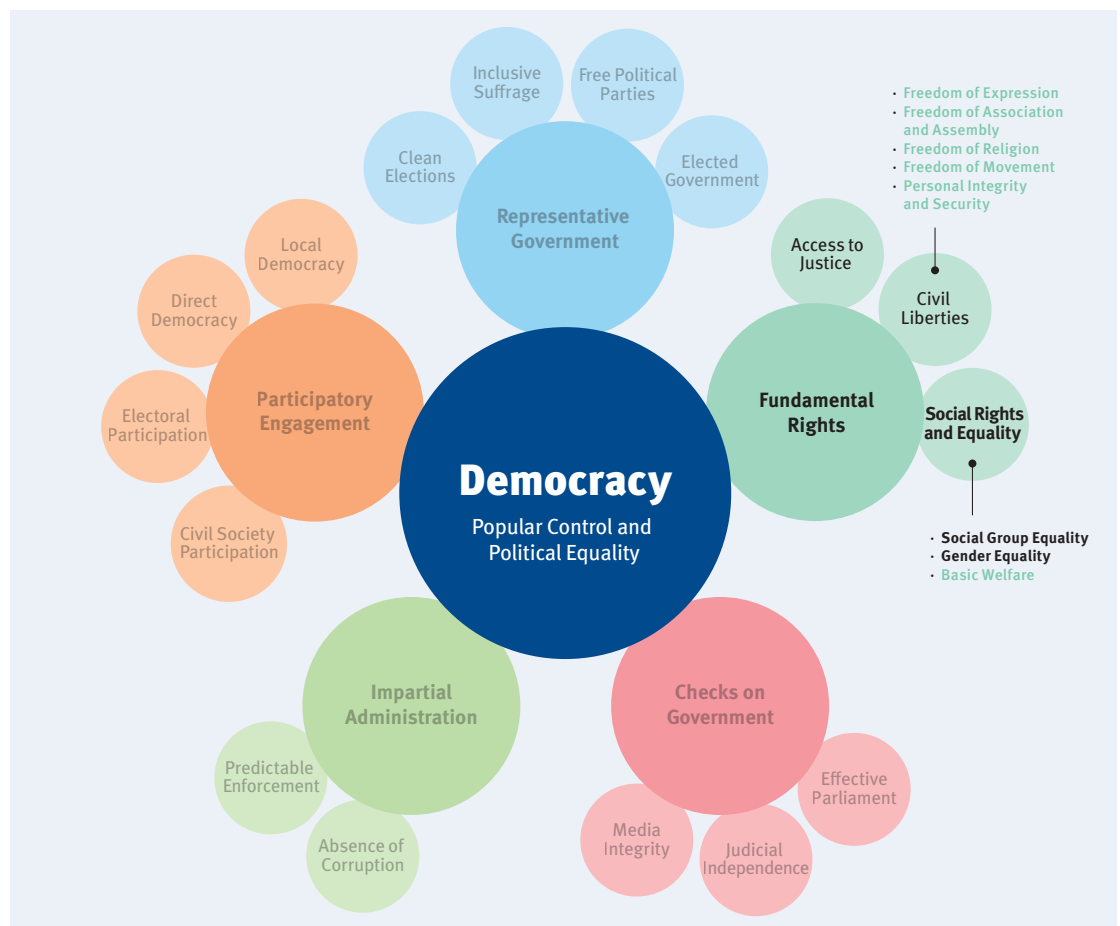
Source: International IDEA, The Global State of Democracy Indices, 2018, <<http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices>>

4. The GSoD Indices and indicators of inclusion

The GSoD Indices are one of the few measurements of democracy that have elements of inclusion prominently integrated into their democratic framework. Inclusion is integrated into the GSoD Indices framework via the Fundamental Rights attribute, which measures individual liberties and access to resources in a country. This attribute emphasizes social rights that support fair political representation and democratic accountability (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

The Global State of Democracy: Conceptual Framework



While other measurements of democracy include indicators that may reference inclusion, apart from the GSoD Indices and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project, few provide measurements that exclusively measure elements of inclusion.

The GSoD Indices take many of the V-Dem indicators as well as indicators from other sources (ICRG, GHDx) to create two subcomponents that measure inclusion: Gender Equality and Social Group Equality. These relate to the two main dimensions of inclusion: gender and social group belonging, whether by social group—as distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, religion or caste—or by disadvantaged group, social class or socio-economic position.

These indicators focus on enjoyment of civil liberties, access to power, access to education, political representation and participation in civil society. These subcomponents are closely connected to two of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 5 on Gender Equality (Targets 5.1 and 5.5) and Goal 10 on Reducing Inequalities (Target 10.3). Table 1 lists all the indicators for inclusion found under the Fundamental Rights attribute.

TABLE 1

**Indicators related to inclusion in the GSoD Indices framework,
Fundamental Rights attribute**

Subattribute	Subcomponent	Inclusion indicators (source)
2.1. Access to Justice		2.1.1 Access to justice for men (V-Dem) 2.1.2 Access to justice for women (V-Dem)
	2.2.A Freedom of Expression	2.2.4 Freedom of discussion for women (V-Dem) 2.2.5 Freedom of discussion for men (V-Dem)
	2.2.B Freedom of Association and Assembly	
	2.2.C Freedom of Religion	2.2.11. Freedom of religion (V-Dem) 2.2.12 Religious organization repression (V-Dem) 2.2.13 Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (V-Dem)
2.2. Civil Liberties	2.2.D Freedom of Movement	2.2.15 Freedom of domestic movement for women (V-Dem) 2.2.16 Freedom of domestic movement for men (V-Dem)
	2.2.E Personal Integrity and Security	2.2.18 Freedom from forced labour for women (V-Dem) 2.2.19 Freedom from forced labour for men (V-Dem) 2.2.22 Political terror scale (Gibney, Corett, Wood, Haschke, Arnon, Pisanò)
	2.3.A Social Group Equality	2.3.1 Social class equality in respect for civil liberties (V-Dem) 2.3.2 Social group equality in respect for civil liberties (V-Dem) 2.3.3 Power distributed by socio-economic position (V-Dem) 2.3.4 Power distributed by social group (V-Dem) 2.3.5 Representation of disadvantaged social groups (V-Dem) 2.3.6 Religious tensions (ICRG) 2.3.7 Ethnic tensions (ICRG)
2.3. Social Rights and Equality	2.3.B Basic Welfare	2.3.13 Educational equality (V-Dem) 2.3.14 Health equality (V-Dem)
	2.3.C Gender Equality	2.3.15 Power distributed by gender (V-Dem) 2.3.16 CSO women's participation (V-Dem) 2.3.17 Female vs. male mean years of schooling (GHDx) 2.3.18 Lower chamber female legislators (V-Dem) 2.3.19 Election of women in the cabinet (V-Dem)

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About the GSoD Indices

The Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices measure global-, regional- and country-level democratic trends over time, from 1975 to 2017. The conceptual framework for the Indices is based on International IDEA's broad definition of democracy, which emphasizes popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers, and equality between citizens in the exercise of that control (Beetham et al. 2008).

In the GSoD conceptual framework, this definition is translated into five main attributes of democracy: Representative Government, Fundamental Rights, Checks on Government, Impartial Administration and Participatory Engagement. These are then subdivided into 16 subattributes and 8 subcomponents, to give 29 aspects of democracy based on 97 indicators.

The GSoD Indices take data from 12 different data sets, of which 70 per cent is from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem). More information about the overall framework can be found in *GSoD In Focus No.1* (International IDEA, 2018).

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About this series

In 2018 International IDEA launched the new *GSoD In Focus* series. These short updates apply the GSoD Indices data to current issues, providing evidence-based analysis and insights into the contemporary democracy debate.

Where to find the data

The GSoD Indices are available on the International IDEA website. Users can generate their own data visualizations and extract data at the country, regional and global levels across the attributes and subattributes for specific years or for selected time periods starting from 1975. The Indices are updated annually.

<<http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices>>



About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with the mandate to promote and advance democracy worldwide. International IDEA contributes to the public debate on democracy and assists in strengthening processes, reforms, institutions and actors that build, advance and safeguard democracy, with a focus on electoral processes; constitution-building processes; and political participation and representation.

The Global State of Democracy Initiative is headed by the Democracy Assessment and Political Analysis (DAPA) Unit. For queries regarding the GSoD Initiative or the GSoD Indices, please contact the DAPA team and GSoD Helpdesk at GSoD.Indices@idea.int.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
Strömsborg
SE-103 34 Stockholm, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 8 698 37 00
info@idea.int
www.idea.int

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