

Methodology

This section explains the conceptual framework of the GSoD Indices and provides an explanation of the new regime classification that *The Global State of Democracy 2019* has introduced, as well as definitions of some of the key concepts used in the analysis.

The GSoD framework and the GSoD Indices

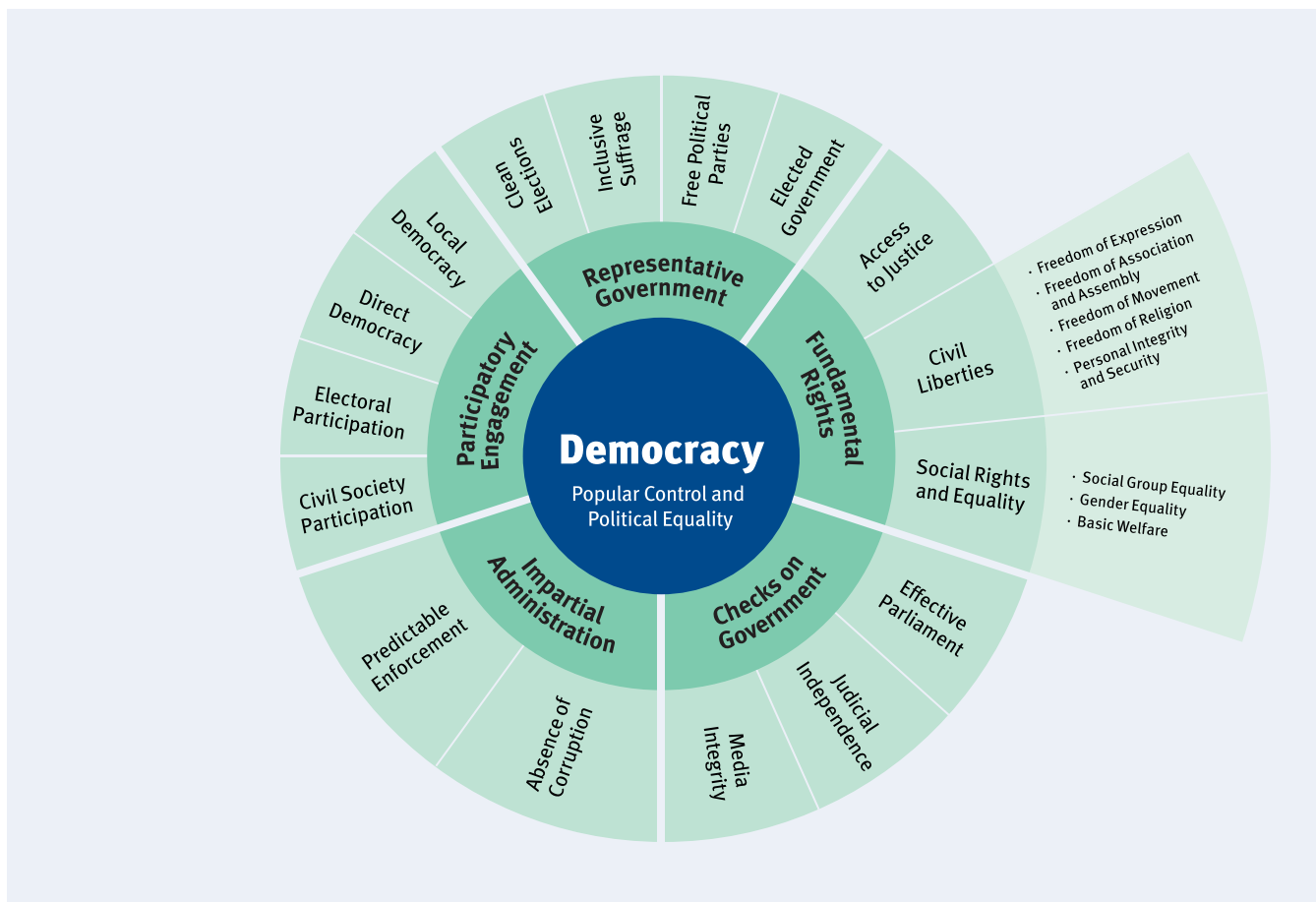
In November 2017 International IDEA launched the first edition of its new biennial report, *The Global State of Democracy*. The report provided evidence-based analysis and data on the global and regional state of democracy, with a focus on democracy’s resilience. It also contributed to the public debate on democracy, informed policy

interventions and examined problem-solving approaches to the challenges facing democracies worldwide.

The Global State of Democracy 2019: Addressing the Ills, Reviving the Promise is the second edition of this report. As an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide, International IDEA

FIGURE M.1

The GSoD Indices conceptual framework



defines democracy as a political system that is based on popular control and political equality. One of the Institute's core principles is that democracy is a universal value for citizens and a globally owned concept for which there is no universally applicable model.

Democracy is an ideal that seeks to guarantee equality and basic freedoms, empower ordinary people, resolve disagreements through peaceful dialogue, respect differences, and bring about political and social renewal without economic and social disruption. Therefore, International IDEA's broad concept of democracy encompasses more than just free elections—it has multiple dimensions, including civil and political rights, social and economic rights, democratic governance and the rule of law.

International IDEA's broad understanding of democracy overlaps with features emphasized by different traditions of democratic thought associated with the concepts of electoral democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy and participatory democracy. This concept of democracy reflects a core value enshrined in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948), that the 'will of the people' is the basis for the legitimacy and authority of sovereign states. It reflects a common and universal desire for peace, security and justice. Democracy reflects the fundamental ethical principles of human equality and the dignity of persons and is therefore inseparable from human rights.

In 2017 International IDEA constructed a new set of indices, the Global State of Democracy Indices (GSoD Indices), based on the core principles of democracy and on the Institute's State of Democracy assessment framework (a tool designed for in-country stakeholders to assess the quality of democracy). The Indices were developed by International IDEA staff with the support of external experts and the supervision of an expert advisory board consisting of five leading experts in the field of democracy measurement.

The GSoD Indices are a quantitative tool for measuring the performance of democracy globally and regionally in its different aspects over time, beginning in 1975. They serve as the main evidence base for the report, and provide a new, comprehensive measurement of democracy. They capture trends at the global, regional and national levels based on International IDEA's definition of democracy (International IDEA 2008). In this second edition of *The Global State of Democracy*, the GSoD Indices have been expanded to cover 158 countries over the period 1975–2018. In 2018, the Indices cover a total of 157 countries.

The conceptual framework underpinning the Indices (see Figure M.1) translates International IDEA's definition of democracy—which emphasizes popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers, and equality between citizens in the exercise of that control—into five main democracy attributes that contain 16 subattributes based on 97 indicators.

This framework aims to be universally applicable and compatible with different institutional arrangements. Using this broad understanding of democracy, the GSoD Indices do not provide an overarching democracy index with a score for each country that would allow democracies to be ranked. This approach differentiates the GSoD Indices from several other democracy measurement methodologies. It is used to enable a more multi-faceted analysis and understanding of democracy.

In addition, compared to some other democracy measurements, the GSoD Indices are distinguished by their relatively high degree of coverage in terms of years covered (since 1975, with annual updates) and number of countries included (158); the incorporation and use of different data sources; and the availability of uncertainty estimates for users, which allows them to assess whether differences in scores are statistically significant. For a more detailed comparison between the GSoD Indices and other measurements see International IDEA (2018a).

The five attributes of democracy in the GSoD Indices conceptual framework

The GSoD Indices conceptual framework is based on five attributes of democracy: Representative Government, Fundamental Rights, Checks on Government, Impartial Administration and Participatory Engagement.

Attribute 1: Representative Government

Representative Government covers the extent to which access to political power is free and equal as demonstrated by competitive, inclusive and regular elections. It includes four subattributes: Clean Elections, Inclusive Suffrage, Free Political Parties and Elected Government.

Attribute 2: Fundamental Rights

Fundamental Rights captures the degree to which civil liberties are respected, and whether people have access to basic resources that enable their active participation in the political process. This aspect overlaps significantly with the international covenants on civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights. It includes three subattributes: Access to Justice, Civil Liberties, and Social Rights and Equality. It also includes the following

subcomponents: Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Association and Assembly, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Movement, Personal Integrity and Security, Basic Welfare, Social Group Equality and Gender Equality (see Figure M.1).

Attribute 3: Checks on Government

Checks on Government measures effective control of executive power. It includes three subattributes: Effective Parliament, Judicial Independence and Media Integrity.

Attribute 4: Impartial Administration

Impartial Administration concerns how fairly and predictably political decisions are implemented, and therefore reflects key aspects of the rule of law. It includes two subattributes: Absence of Corruption and Predictable Enforcement.

Attribute 5: Participatory Engagement

Participatory Engagement measures people's political participation and societal engagement at different levels. Because they capture different phenomena, the subattributes of this aspect—Civil Society Participation, Electoral Participation, Direct Democracy and Local Democracy—are not aggregated into a single index.

The GSoD Indices: regional and national coverage

The first iteration of the GSoD Indices covered the period 1975–2015. The data is updated annually and therefore this report includes data until 2018, but not for 2019. The GSoD Indices now cover 158 countries in the world. The decision was taken to exclude countries with a population of less than one million because of the uneven availability of data in those countries.

The GSoD Indices also cover six regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Iran (referred to in the report as the Middle East), and North America. The grouping of countries within these regions primarily follows a geographical logic, but also takes account of historical and cultural links, particularly in the regional subdivisions. Some further modifications needed to be made to enable meaningful analyses of relatively coherent regions with comparable social, political and historical backgrounds.

Table M.1 outlines the GSoD Indices' regional and subregional geographical divisions. For more information on the geographical definition of regions in the GSoD Indices see International IDEA (2017b).

TABLE M.1

The GSoD Indices: regional and subregional geographic divisions

Region/subregion	Country
Africa	
East Africa	Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda
Central Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo
Southern Africa	Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
West Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo
North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia
Latin America and the Caribbean	
The Caribbean	Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago
Central America and Mexico	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama

South America	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
North America	
North America	Canada, United States of America
Asia and the Pacific	
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
East Asia	China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Taiwan
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
South East Asia	Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam
Oceania	Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea
The Middle East and Iran	
The Middle East	Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Iran	Iran
Europe	
East-Central Europe	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia
Eastern Europe/Post-Soviet Europe	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine
North and West Europe	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
South Europe	Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey

The GSoD Indices: data sources

The GSoD Indices aggregate indicators from a number of data sets. In the 2018 update, the number of data sets has been reduced from 14 to 12. The number of indicators used is 97, of which V-Dem indicators constitute 70 per cent.

The data relies on a range of extant data sources that fall into four categories:

1. *Expert surveys.* Assessments by country experts of the situation on a particular issue in a particular country.
2. *Standards-based 'in-house coding.'* Coding carried out by researchers and/or their assistants based on an evaluative assessment of country-specific information found in reports, academic publications, reference works, news articles and so on.
3. *Observational data.* Data on directly observable features such as the proportion of parliamentarians who are women, infant mortality rates and the holding of legislative elections.
4. *Composite measures.* This data is based on a number of variables that come from different extant data sets rather than original data collection. For a full list of the indicators sourced from the various data sets see International IDEA (2018a).

TABLE M.2

Data sets used in the compilation of the GSoD Indices

Data set	Data provider	Reference
Bjørnskov-Rode Regime Data (BRRD)	Bjørnskov and Rode	< http://www.christianbjoernskov.com/bjoernskovrodedata/ >
Civil Liberties Dataset (CLD)	Møller and Skaaning	< http://ps.au.dk/forskning/forskningsprojekter/dedere/datasets/ >
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistics	FAO	< http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home >
Global Health Data Exchange (GHDx)	Global Health Data Exchange	< http://ghdx.healthdata.org/ >
International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)	Political Risk Services	< http://epub.prsgroup.com/products/icrg >
Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (LIED)	Skaaning, Gerring and Bartusevicius	< http://ps.au.dk/forskning/forskningsprojekter/dedere/datasets/ >
Media Freedom Data (MFD)	Whitten-Woodring and Van Belle	< http://faculty.uml.edu/Jenifer_whittenwoodring/MediaFreedomData_000.aspx >
Political Terror Scale (PTS)	Gibney, Cornett, Wood, Haschke, Arnon and Pisanò	< http://www.politicalterrorscale.org/ >
Polity IV	Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr	< http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html >
United Nations (UN) Demographic and Social Statistics	UN Statistics Division	< https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/index.cshml >
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statistics	UNESCO	< http://data.uis.unesco.org/ >
Varieties of Democracy data set	V-Dem	< https://www.v-dem.net/ >

The GSoD Indices: additional methodological information

For a full explanation of the GSoD methodology see International IDEA (2018a).

Scores and scales

The GSoD Indices consist of attribute and subattribute scores per country per year (country–year). The scoring runs from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the lowest achievement in the sample and 1 is the highest.

For almost all the attributes and subattributes, the annual scores for each country are accompanied by uncertainty estimates (confidence intervals) that assess whether

differences between countries and within countries over time are statistically significant. The only exceptions are the subattributes based on a single observational indicator (e.g. Political Participation) or formative aggregations procedures (e.g. Inclusive Suffrage, Direct Democracy and Local Democracy).

Methodology

Both the GSoD Indices and the analysis contained in this report respond to the lack of analytical material on democracy building and the quality of democracy at the global and regional levels; most studies focus on the national level. The GSoD initiative strives to bridge the gap between academic research, policy development and

democracy-assistance initiatives. The data and the report are intended to inform policymakers and decision-makers, civil society organizations and democracy activists, policy influencers and think tanks, and democracy support providers and practitioners.

As an Institute-wide project, the publication employs a mixed methodology. It incorporates input from staff members across International IDEA’s headquarters and regional offices, including external contributors. It was peer reviewed by a group of external academic experts and practitioners. Building on International IDEA’s regional presence and expertise in the field of democracy, it also draws on the Institute’s in-depth regional knowledge of democratic trends.

Regime classification

The Global State of Democracy 2019 introduces a political regime classification based on the GSoD Indices. The classification aims to facilitate understanding of the Indices, enhance the analysis, and ensure greater policy relevance of the data. The GSoD Indices define three broad regime types: (a) democracies (of varying performance), (b) hybrid regimes and (c) non-democracies.

This regime classification was adopted by International IDEA in 2019 and is based on a consultative process with scholars from the GSoD Indices Expert Advisory Board, which advised on the creation of the Indices and continues to provide methodological support to the Indices.¹⁶

The regime classification adopted by International IDEA is not intended to be seen as a central part of the analysis of the report, rather as a generic reference point to enhance analytical simplicity for a policymaking audience and complemented by attribute-level performance analysis and nuanced qualitative analysis. The classification is focused on the electoral component of democracy and is not used to rank countries but to cluster democratic and non-democratic performance into broad categories in order to facilitate analysis.

Regime classifications are useful for making sense of, and assigning meanings to, the abstract numerical GSoD Indices scores. They can be used for overall global and regional trends analysis, as reference points to analyse country cases or to detect intertemporal and/or cross-national patterns in the data set. However, when describing a country, International IDEA aims to complement the regime typology with attribute- and subattribute-level analysis whenever possible to retain the nuances captured by the GSoD Indices data set.

Labelling performance of attributes

The first step in the regime classification is to determine performance levels for each attribute. These levels can also be applied to subattributes, as needed. Based on numeric threshold values, three levels are distinguished: high, mid-range and low levels (see Table M.3).

Defining and identifying types of political regimes

The classification distinguishes between three broad regime types: democracies, hybrid regimes and non-democracies.

TABLE M.3

Attribute-level labels

IF value >0.7	>=0.4 & value <0.7	IF value <0.4
High Representative Government	Mid-range Representative Government	Low Representative Government
High Fundamental Rights	Mid-range Fundamental Rights	Low Fundamental Rights
High Checks on Government	Mid-range Checks on Government	Low Checks on Government
High Impartial Administration	Mid-range Impartial Administration	Low Impartial Administration
High Participatory Engagement	Mid-range Participatory Engagement	Low Participatory Engagement

¹⁶ They include Professors Gerardo Munck (principal peer reviewer of the 2019 edition of *The Global State of Democracy*), Svend-Erik Skaaning (Principal GSoD Indices Methodologist) and Claudiu Tufiş (GSoD Indices Data Manager).

Democracies

Drawing on International IDEA's notion of democracy, which emphasizes 'popular control over decision-making and political equality among those exercising that control' (International IDEA 2008: 20), the GSoD Indices classify political regimes as 'democratic' if they have governments emerging from sufficiently inclusive, clean and competitive elections.

This concept is rooted in scholarly theories and popular perceptions of democracy that view electoral contestation and participation rights as core elements of a democracy (see International IDEA 2018: 13). However, the concept specifies only the minimum requirements for a political regime to qualify as a democracy. Countries classified as democratic by these standards may differ widely in the quality of their democracy and in the performance of their different democratic attributes.

The Representative Government attribute of the GSoD Indices substantiates this basic concept of democracy and relates it to empirical evidence. This attribute measures the integrity of elections, the inclusiveness of voting rights, the extent to which political parties are free to campaign for political office and the extent to which national representative government offices are filled through elections. To be classified as a democracy, a political regime must score at least 0.35 on Representative Government.

Since Representative Government is an aggregate measure summarizing four subattributes and 18 underlying indicators by means of a statistical estimation, it is sometimes difficult to identify which of its component indicators are responsible for classifying a country as non-democratic. Therefore, International IDEA uses the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (LIED), which is one of the indicators used to calculate the Representative Government score, as a measure to help distinguish democracies from other types of political regimes.

The LIED has seven clearly defined levels that measure whether countries select their legislature and executive through competitive elections (Skaaning et al. 2015). To qualify as a democracy, a political regime must score at least 4 on the LIED—that is, it must have minimally competitive multiparty elections for its legislature and executive.

In alignment with International IDEA's commitment to the multi-dimensionality of democracy, the GSoD Indices do not further distinguish between democracies by comparing and ranking them on a single aspect. Instead, the levels of the five attributes of democracy and the more disaggregated indices and indicators in the data set are used to describe different types of democratic performance. In 2018, there

are 23 different democratic performance patterns among the 97 countries classified as democracies in the GSoD Indices, ranging from countries that score high on all five attributes, to countries that score high on only one attribute.

Hybrid regimes

In addition to democracies, International IDEA's GSoD framework creates separate categories for hybrid regimes and non-democratic regimes, to reflect the diversity of the current global democracy landscape. The common denominator of these two types of regimes is that they do not hold competitive elections (as measured by the LIED). However, hybrid regimes may combine democratic and non-democratic characteristics, while non-democracies will have fewer democratic features and more non-democratic features. Therefore, patterns of attribute performance will vary between hybrid and non-democratic regimes, as outlined below.

International IDEA considers a hybrid regime category necessary in order to avoid equating political regimes that exist on the boundary between autocracy and democracy with consolidated autocracies, and to mark the gradations of 'democratic-ness' characterizing many of these boundary countries with unsettled political–authority relations, and to show that many of these countries exhibit both democratic and authoritarian features in different combinations.

Hybrid regimes are defined in International IDEA's 2018–2022 Strategy as 'having the combination of elements of authoritarianism with democracy (...). These often adopt the formal characteristics of democracy (while allowing little real competition for power) with weak respect for basic political and civil rights' (International IDEA 2018b: 11).

Therefore, for International IDEA, hybrid regimes may have some nominally democratic institutions and some democratic processes and practices but are characterized by pervasive informal practices eroding the functioning of formal institutions, which may also include weakened checks and balances (Bogaards 2009; Morlino 2009; Mufti 2018).

Hybrid regimes are defined operationally by International IDEA as political regimes that score at least 3.5 on the GSoD Representative Government attribute and less than 4 on the LIED (i.e. they do not hold competitive elections).

While criteria based on numerical thresholds have been defined in order to classify hybrid regimes in the GSoD framework, International IDEA also recognizes the inherent challenge of classifying such regimes, as by their nature they can extend conceptually into both the democracy and non-democracy category.

Non-democratic regimes

Non-democratic regimes include autocracies, authoritarian regimes, one-party systems, military regimes, authoritarian monarchies and failed states or war-torn, conflict-ravaged countries without a centralized monopoly on the use of force. Of these terms, ‘authoritarian’ regime is used as a generic descriptor for those that meet the basic criteria of statehood, in terms of an established central monopoly on the use of force.

Authoritarian regimes, similar to hybrid regimes, do not hold competitive elections. Even if they do hold some form of elections, incumbent political elites in authoritarian regimes disadvantage their opponents, and restrict the competitiveness of these elections ‘so profoundly and systematically as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule rather than instruments of democracy’ (Schedler 2013: 3; see also Levitsky and Way 2010: 5).

Moreover, in such regimes, civil liberties tend to be systematically curtailed, there tends to be no clear separation of power, the judiciary tends to be controlled by the executive,

oppositional political parties tend to be barred from operating freely, and the media tends to be systematically restricted, as are critical voices within civil society. Therefore, in non-democratic regimes as opposed to hybrid regimes, the ‘democratic’ features are significantly less numerous and the authoritarian features more prominent.

When observing the attribute-level classification of non-democratic regimes, these regimes tend to score low on most attributes. In rare instances, they may score mid-range on one attribute—generally an attribute that is not considered a core element of democratic systems by mainstream definitions of democracy. Examples of attributes on which non-democratic regimes could score in the mid-range include Impartial Administration (and if so, generally on Absence of Corruption) or Fundamental Rights (generally due to higher levels of Basic Welfare). There are eight different attribute-level performance patterns for non-democracies in 2018.

Political regimes that score below 3.5 on Representative Government and below 4 on the LIED are classified as non-democracies (see Table M.4).

TABLE M.4

GSoD regime classification

	Democracy	Hybrid regime	Non-democracy
Necessary and sufficient condition	RG ≥ 0.35	RG ≥ 0.35	RG < 0.35
	& LIED ≥ 4	& LIED < 4	& LIED < 4

Notes: RG: Representative Government; LIED: Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy.

TABLE M.5

Definitions and terminology

Term	Definition
Crisis of representation	The crisis of representation can be defined as a lack of faith in, or loyalty to, representative democracy, or a disengagement from its institutions and processes.
Deepening autocratization	The term ‘deepening autocratization’ is used to describe at least three statistically significant subattribute declines within hybrid regimes or non-democracies over a five-year period.
Democracy	International IDEA defines democracy as popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers, and equality between citizens in the exercise of that control.

TABLE M.5

Definitions and terminology (cont.)

Term	Definition
Democratic backsliding	<p>The report uses the term ‘(modern) democratic backsliding’ to describe the gradual and usually intentional weakening of checks on government and civil liberties by democratically elected governments. Democratic backsliding occurs in those countries that have suffered a net decline of at least 0.1 points on the average score of Checks on Government and Civil Liberties over a period of five years. Four different severities of democratic backsliding are identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moderate: countries with declines of less than -0.15 on their averaged Checks on Government/Civil Liberties indicator during their episode of backsliding. 2. Severe: countries with declines above -0.15. 3. Partial democratic breakdown: countries with backsliding so severe that it results in a shift to a hybrid regime. 4. Full democratic breakdown: countries with backsliding so severe that it results in a shift to non-democracy. <p>Democratic backsliding is always used to describe countries that were democratic at the onset of the backsliding episode. Democratic backsliding is a form of democratic erosion.</p>
Democratic breakdown	The term ‘democratic breakdown’ is used in the report to describe the movement of a country from democracy to a hybrid regime (partial breakdown) or to a non-democracy (full breakdown).
Democratic erosion/deterioration	When country-level declines in one or more subattribute of democracy are observed, but do not fit the conceptual and quantitative description of democratic backsliding, these are referred to as forms of democratic erosion or democratic deterioration. These two terms are used interchangeably in the report.
Democratic fragility	The term ‘democratic fragility’ is used to describe democracies that have experienced at least one episode of partial or full democratic breakdown since their first transition to democracy. Very fragile democracies are democracies that have experienced several episodes of partial or full democratic breakdown.
Democratic performance	When democratic performance is referred to in the report, it generally focuses on the scores (between 0 and 1) for the 28 aspects of the GSoD framework. Performance is analysed in absolute terms, based on a three-tier scale: low (<0.4), mid-range ($0.4-0.7$) and high (>0.7). In those few cases when relative performance is used, the world average is used as a benchmark and is always specified.
Democratic weakness	The term ‘democratic weakness’ or weak democracy is used in connection with countries that score low on one or more of their democratic attributes (unless they score high on four out of five attributes).
Older and third-wave democracies	This report defines older democracies as those countries that were democracies before 1975. It defines as third-wave democracies those countries that transitioned to democracy after 1975. These are subdivided into early third-wave democracies (those countries that transitioned to democracy between 1975 and 2000) and new third-wave democracies (those that transitioned after 2000).
Populism	Populism is used in the report as an umbrella term to define populist parties or leaders on the left or right of the political spectrum that promote nationalist and ethnonationalist ideologies, and that may have a more anti-establishment bent. It therefore aligns with a view of populism as a ‘thin’ ideology that is combined with other ideologies (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017).
Resilience	International IDEA defines resilience as the ability of social systems to cope with, innovate, survive and recover from complex challenges and crises presenting stress or pressure that can lead to systemic failure. Democracy’s resilience is seen as the ability of a political system to recover, adapt and/or flexibly address such complex challenges, crises and breakdowns (International IDEA 2017a). In this report, it specifically refers to the ability of regimes that have regressed into hybridity or non-democracy to return to democracy.

TABLE M.5

Definitions and terminology (cont.)

Term	Definition
Significant advances and declines	All declines and advances referred to in the report are statistically significant, unless otherwise specified. These advances and declines are always assessed based on the 16 subattributes in the GSoD framework, as using the 28 aspects of the framework (which also include subcomponents) would lead to double counting and measurement errors. Statistically significant declines and advances are generally measured in five-year intervals, unless otherwise specified.
Top and bottom 25 per cent	In the report, the top and bottom 25 per cent of performers refers to the 39 countries that score in the top and bottom 25 per cent of countries in the GSoD Indices sample of 157 countries in 2018. The GSoD Indices do not rank countries within these groupings, although score performance varies between countries within these percentile categories.

Policy considerations

At the end of each regional chapter, a table with a list of policy considerations is provided to address the challenges and harness the opportunities identified in the analysis. These policy considerations build on the democracy assessment provided by the GSoD indices. The table is organized into the attributes and subattributes of the GSoD framework and provide first a snapshot of some basic GSoD data for the attribute pertaining to the region, followed by:

- Priority countries for reform: the democracies in the region that perform low on the

attribute—unless a political opening is foreseeable in the near future or recent political reforms have been observed, the priority countries for reform do generally not include the hybrid regimes or non-democracies;

- Priority areas for reform: these draw on good-practice recommendations provided in other International IDEA knowledge products or on experience from technical assistance provided by International IDEA in the region;
- Good-practice countries for regional learning: these generally refer to the countries in the region with a high performance on the attribute.

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