



Democracy Indicators

In an attempt to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a particular democracy there needs to be a way look at the different components of democracy and evaluate how the government and society rate along a scale. Both *Freedom House* and the Swedish group *IDEA* have developed surveys to compare the various governments around the world, conducting research to assess the scores they give a country. Using these surveys as a guide, the *NDI Democracy Indicators* were developed as a tool to determine which areas of a democracy need improvement.

There are many ways to compare societies. We could develop economic indicators, security indicators, education indicators, etc. and each of these surveys would ask different questions to determine how a society is doing in a particular area. The *NDI Democracy Indicators* is designed to determine how a society is doing in developing as a democracy. It is just one of many tools that can be used to judge a society.

The objective of the democracy indicators is to have the participants judge their own democratic institutions to determine where they are strong and where they are weak. Participants are asked to be as objective as possible in scoring a particular question.

The participants are asked to consider each of the 60 questions and vote on how they think their country is doing. The voting is done on a scale of one to five with one being worse and five being the best. It is important to stress that the answers are not “yes” or “no” but on a scale. A final score is determined by adding the scores for each question and then dividing by 60, the total number of questions. We are then able to give an overall grade of between one and five. Less than two is “least democratic.” Scores between two and three are “less democratic.” Scores between three and four are “more democratic.” Scores above four are “most democratic.”

There is a step by step discussion of each of the 60 questions covering the following areas with the participants voting on each question:

1. Civil Rights
2. Economic and Social Rights
3. Civil and Political Participation
4. Political Parties
5. Free and Fair Elections
6. Rule of Law

- 7. Military and Police Control
- 8. Government Accountability
- 9. Corruption
- 10. Media
- 11. Government Responsiveness

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Step 1: Answer the questions on the following scale:

- Absolutely Not 1
- Mostly Not 2
- Sometimes 3
- Mostly Yes 4
- Absolutely Yes 5

Civil Rights	
1. Are people free of physical violation of their person or property?	
2. Do people have the freedom of movement, expression, and association?	
3. Do people have the freedom to practice their own religion, language or culture?	
Economic and Social Rights	
1. Are basic necessities of life provided for, including adequate food, shelter and clean water?	
2. Is the right to a decent and adequate education protected and provided for?	
3. Do the citizens have the right to own property or establish private businesses without undue government influence?	
4. Is there equal opportunity and absence of corruption and exploitation in economic matters such as access to higher education, employment, buying and selling of products, running businesses, etc.?	
5. Is the choice of residence, the choice of employment, ability to get an education and other personal aspects of an individual's life free of government control?	

Step 1: Answer the questions on the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Absolutely Not | 1 |
| Mostly Not | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Mostly Yes | 4 |
| Absolutely Yes | 5 |

Civic and Political Participation	
1. Is there a wide range of voluntary associations, citizen groups, social movements, etc. and are they independent of political parties and the government?	
2. Do women participate in political life and public office at all levels?	
3. Do all social groups have equal access to public office and are they fairly represented within it?	
4. Is there academic freedom and is the educational system free of extensive political influence or indoctrination?	
5. Is there open and free private discussion on all issues?	
6. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion on all issues?	
7. Are religious institutions, civic organizations, student organizations, unions, and other organizations free of government and political pressure?	
Political Parties	
1. Are political parties free to form, recruit members and campaign for office?	
2. Are opposition or non-governing parties free to organize within the legislature and contribute to government accountability?	
3. Are party and candidate finances transparent and free of corruption?	
4. Are people's political choices free of interference by government and military institutions?	
Free and Fair Elections	
1. Are electoral laws fair for all political parties and groups?	
2. Is registration and voting open to all citizens who meet fair requirements?	
3. Do the voters have a wide range of choices in the election of political parties and candidates?	

Step 1: Answer the questions on the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Absolutely Not | 1 |
| Mostly Not | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Mostly Yes | 4 |
| Absolutely Yes | 5 |

4. Are government officials in executive positions of power subject to regular competitive elections?	
5. Do all political parties and candidates have fair access to participate in elections?	
6. Are there equal campaigning opportunities for all political parties including equal and fair access to the media and means of communication with voters?	
7. Is there fair polling and honest tabulation of the ballots?	
8. Do the government and other political forces accept the results of the election?	
9. Is it possible or realistic for opposition parties to win power through the election process?	
10. Is it possible for there to be a peaceful transfer of power from the ruling party to the opposition?	
Rule of Law	
1. Is there an independent judiciary free from executive or outside pressures?	
2. Are all citizens, including those in positions of power, treated equally under the law?	
3. Is there protection from police terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture?	
4. Do citizens have confidence in the legal system to deliver fair and effective justice?	
Military and Police Control	
1. Is political life free of police and military involvement?	
2. Are the police and security services publicly accountable for their activities?	
3. Do the army, police and security services reflect the social composition of society at large?	
4. Is the country free of paramilitary units, private armies, warlords and criminal mafias?	

Step 1: Answer the questions on the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Absolutely Not | 1 |
| Mostly Not | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Mostly Yes | 4 |
| Absolutely Yes | 5 |

5. Does the civilian government have effective control over the police, security and armed forces?	
Government Accountability	
1. Are the executive agencies and their administrative staff open to scrutiny and control by the elected leaders?	
2. Does the legislature have the power to scrutinize executive officials and hold them accountable?	
3. Does the legislature have the power to initiate, scrutinize and amend legislation?	
4. Are public budgets and expenditures transparent and open to public scrutiny?	
5. Do the citizens have the right of access to government information?	
6. Do freely elected representatives determine the policies of the government?	
7. Is the government free of pervasive corruption?	
Corruption	
1. Is there adequate separation between public offices, both elected and unelected and the political party advantage, personal business, and family interests of the office holders?	
2. Are there effective arrangements for protecting office holders and the public from bribery and corruption?	
3. Are there rules and procedures effectively regulating the influence of special interests in the financing of elections, candidates and elected representatives?	
4. Are powerful corporations and business interests prevented from exerting undue influence over public policy and kept free from the involvement in corruption?	
5. Do the people have confidence that public officials and public services are free from corruption?	

Step 1: Answer the questions on the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Absolutely Not | 1 |
| Mostly Not | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Mostly Yes | 4 |
| Absolutely Yes | 5 |

Media	
1. Is the media independent from the government?	
2. Is the media representative of different opinions and accessible to different sections of society?	
3. Are the media and other independent organizations effective in investigating the government, political parties and powerful corporations?	
4. Are journalists free from restrictive laws, harassment and intimidation?	
Government Responsiveness	
1. Does the elected legislature reflect the social composition of the population?	
2. Are there open and systematic procedures to allow the public to consult on government policy and legislation?	
3. Are elected representatives accessible to their constituents?	
4. Are public services accessible and reliable for those who need them?	
5. Do the people have confidence in the ability of government to solve the main problems confronting society?	
6. Do the people have confidence in their own ability to influence the government?	
Total Points	

Step 2: Add the scores to get a total score.

Step 3: Divide the total score by 60 to get a “Democracy Score” according to the following scale:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 1 to 1.9 | <i>Least Democratic</i> |
| 2 to 2.9 | <i>Less Democratic</i> |
| 3 to 3.9 | <i>More Democratic</i> |
| 4 to 5 | <i>Most Democratic</i> |