



Nira Data



Alliance of Democracies

Democracy Perception Index 2025

The world's largest annual study on how
people perceive democracy



SPECIAL FEATURES

Security and Defense
Government Ratings
Perception of Countries and Leaders

Published by niradata.com

Welcome

The Democracy Perception Index (DPI) is the world’s largest annual study on how people perceive democracy, conducted by Nira Data in collaboration with the Alliance of Democracies. The 2025 edition offers an unprecedented comparison of global attitudes towards democracy across 100 countries. Results are based on nationally representative interviews with over 111,273 respondents from 100 countries conducted between April 9th and April 23rd, 2025.

The DPI was published ahead of the 2025 Copenhagen Democracy Summit to support the discussion on the global state of democracy.

Dr. Nico Jaspers
CEO at Nira Data

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- ▶ **111,273**
respondents
- ▶ **100**
countries
- ▶ **Spring 2025**
April 9th - April 23rd, 2025
- ▶ **91%**
of the global population represented

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Foreword

The Democracy Perception Index 2025 was published ahead of the 2025 Copenhagen Democracy Summit to support the discussion on the global state of democracy.



“ I’m not surprised that perceptions of the United States have fallen so sharply, although I find it reassuring that support for the rules-based international order remains strong around the world.

The mixed views on defence spending and people’s willingness to defend their country are quite concerning, especially in Europe. We face serious threats to our security, and our governments must make the case to their voters for investing in our defences today, to ensure peace and freedom prevail.

Every year, this poll confirms the same point: around the world people believe in democracy, but those fortunate to live in democracies are impatient for their governments to deliver.”

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Chair of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation,
former NATO Chief, and Danish Prime Minister



“ This year’s Democracy Perception Index highlights a world standing at a pivotal crossroads. While democracy continues to command strong and widespread support—with over two-thirds of people around the globe affirming its importance—citizens worry deeply about their government’s ability to improve living standards, manage the economy, and provide security.

At the same time, shifting perceptions of global powers reveal deeper currents of change. For the first time, more countries now hold a positive view of China than of the United States—a striking indicator of how public opinion is evolving across different regions and political systems.

As always, our mission with the Democracy Perception Index is to provide clear, data-driven insights that capture both the challenges and opportunities facing democracy today. We hope this report will enable policymakers, civil society, and engaged citizens worldwide to navigate these complexities and work together to renew and strengthen democratic institutions for the future.

Dr. Nico Jaspers, CEO at Nira Data

Executive Summary

A new poll of over 110,00 respondents from 100 countries shows that for the first time, more countries around the world have a positive view of China than of the United States.

The Democracy Perception Index, released by Nira Data and the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, is the eighth installment of the world's largest annual study on democracy covering 100 countries and representative of more than 91% of the world's population. It was prepared for the eighth-annual Copenhagen Democracy Summit on May 13-14.

State of Democracy

- ▶ Despite challenges, global commitment to democracy remains remarkably strong. Over two-thirds of people worldwide say it is very important to have democracy in their country, reaffirming the enduring appeal of democratic governance even amid complex global trends.
- ▶ Views on the purpose of democracy vary significantly. In 52% of the countries surveyed, people say the main goal of democracy is to improve living standards and well-being. Enabling people to freely choose their government, or protecting individual freedoms and rights, were only selected as the top purpose by 19% and 16% of countries, respectively. Lastly, in only 13% of countries did most people say the main purpose of democracy is to promote a fair and peaceful society.

Security and Defense

- ▶ Support for a stable and lawful international system remains a unifying theme across the globe. In 85% of surveyed countries, citizens agreed that nations should adhere to international laws and agreements, even if this limits their freedom of action. This strong endorsement of a rules-based order is shared by people in both democratic and non-democratic states, including major powers like the US, Russia, and China.
- ▶ When it comes to priorities for defense, people in 86 countries see strengthening alliances and international partnerships as the most important defense activity. Ukraine is one of the only two countries where most people say maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent is the most important priority. None of the surveyed countries saw mandatory military service as the highest priority. Poland and China are among the few countries who see increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities as more important than strengthening international alliances.
- ▶ Willingness to personally defend one's country in the event of an attack varied significantly by region. Respondents in the MENA region reported the highest willingness to fight (69% among those aged 18 to 55). In Europe, levels of willingness were mixed, with higher rates in countries like Norway, Greece, and Sweden, and lower rates in Moldova, France, Belgium, and Italy. Globally, willingness to engage in national defense was higher in authoritarian countries (59%) compared to democracies (45%).
- ▶ Views on defense spending also showed considerable variation across Europe. Strong majorities in countries including Ukraine, Poland, Norway, Georgia, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the UK supported increased defense spending, even if it led to higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas. By contrast, majorities in Italy, France, Greece, Austria, and Belgium opposed increases in defense spending. Public opinion in Germany was divided, with no clear majority for or against higher spending if it leads to higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas.

Executive Summary

Government Ratings

- ▶ While the belief in democracy endures, public confidence in the ability of governments—democratic or otherwise—to deliver effective results is very low. Across 18 policy areas, people globally gave their governments low marks, with an average score of just 2.77 out of 5. Citizens are particularly dissatisfied with government performance on the cost of living, poverty reduction, and affordable housing—issues that directly impact their daily lives. The widespread perception of underperformance highlights a growing gap between democratic ideals and the practical outcomes many citizens expect but feel are not being met.
- ▶ Among OECD countries, the country that is perceived by its citizens to be most well-run is Denmark, followed by Switzerland and Norway. At the bottom of the ranking is Hungary, Turkey and the UK.

Perception of Countries

- ▶ Singapore holds the most positive international image among its neighbors, key trading partners, and other relevant countries, followed by Switzerland and Qatar. At the other end of the spectrum, Israel, Belarus, and Iran have the most negative perception globally.
- ▶ The perception of the United States has declined noticeably over the past year. Its global net perception rating dropped from +22% in 2024 to -5% in 2025, which is lower than that of China (+14%) and is similar to Russia’s (-9%). The proportion of countries where the US held a net positive image decreased from 76% to 45% over the same period.

Perception of Political Leaders

- ▶ Donald Trump is the most globally recognized political leader, with 85% of respondents saying they know who he is. Vladimir Putin follows closely at 81%, while 63% are familiar with Xi Jinping and 35% with Narendra Modi.
- ▶ When it comes to perception, however, Trump has an almost universal negative perception rating: in 82% of countries around the world, Trump has a net negative rating, significantly worse than both Putin (61%) and Xi (44%).

Perception of Democracy

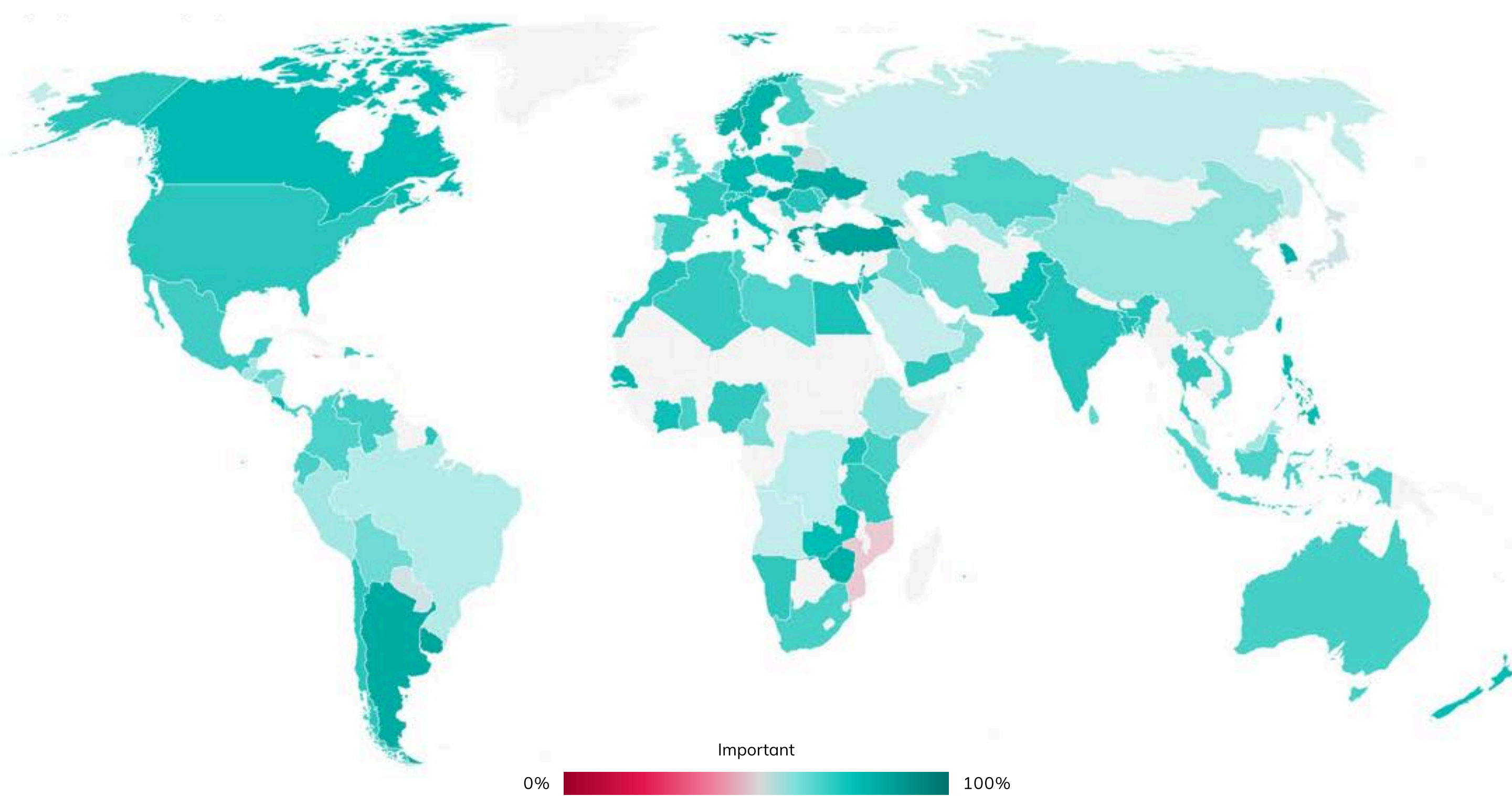
This chapter looks at people's perception of democracy. It starts with the question of how important democracy is to people, then asks what people understand by democracy and finally looks at how people perceive key elements of democracy - such as the impact of elections - in their own countries. Based on 8 of such elements, we construct the "Democracy Perception Index" (DPI), which ranks countries according to how democratic they are perceived to be by their citizens.

Importance of Democracy

Faith in Democracy remains high across the world. A majority of people surveyed in almost every country say that it is extremely or very important for their country to be a democracy. This ranges from the highest levels in Greece and Turkey to the lowest levels in Jamaica and Mozambique.

Democracy is important for people around the world

% say that it is 'extremely' or 'very' important to have democracy in their country



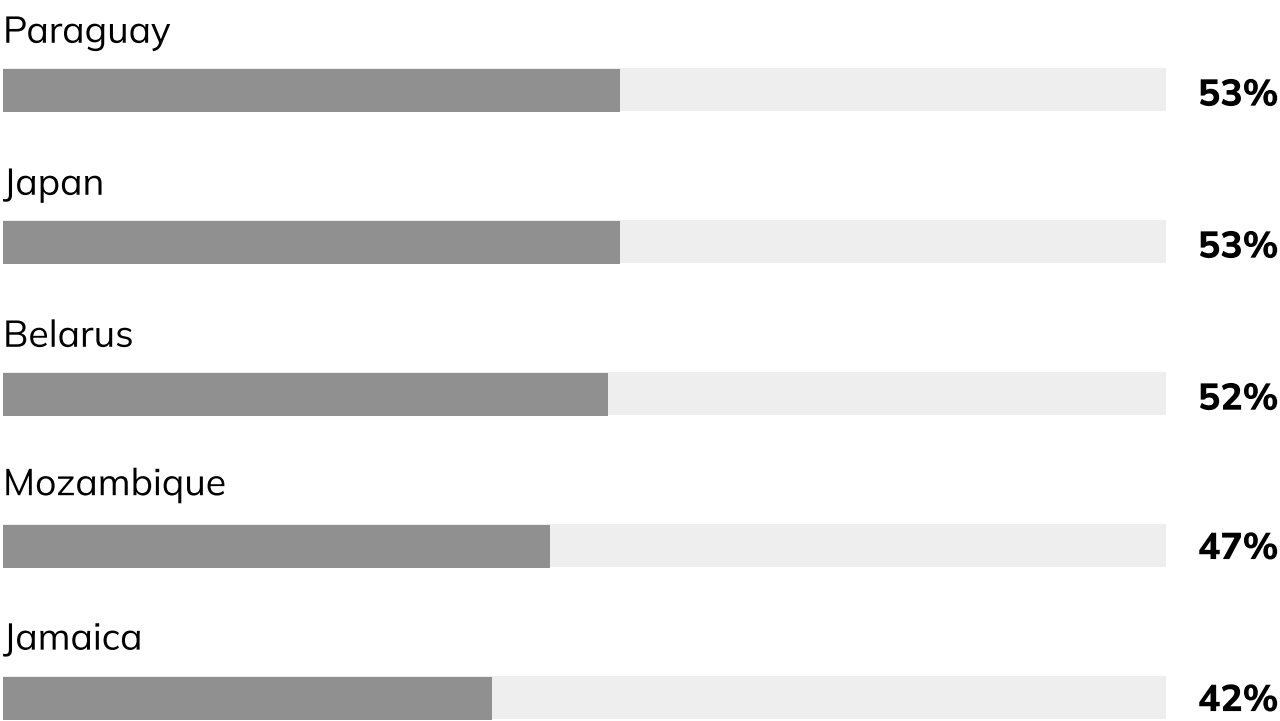
Importance of democracy

% of responses: "Extremely important" or "Very important"

Top 5



Bottom 5



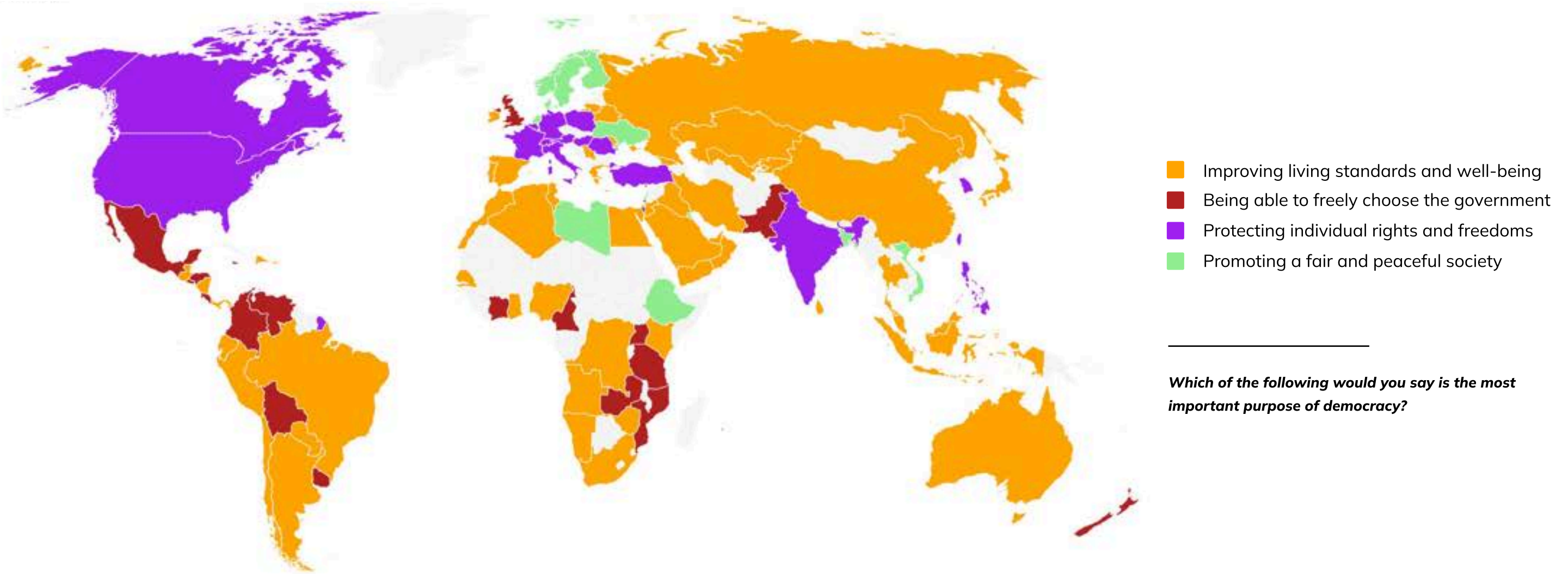
In your opinion, how important is it for your country to be a democracy?
Extremely important / Very important / Moderately important / Slightly important / Not important

Purpose of Democracy

Views on the purpose of democracy vary. In most countries, people say its main goal is to improve living standards and well-being. But in many OECD countries—including the United States and much of Europe—protecting individual rights and freedoms comes first.

Most people say the main purpose of democracy is to improve living standards

top response option by country



Main purpose of democracy by response

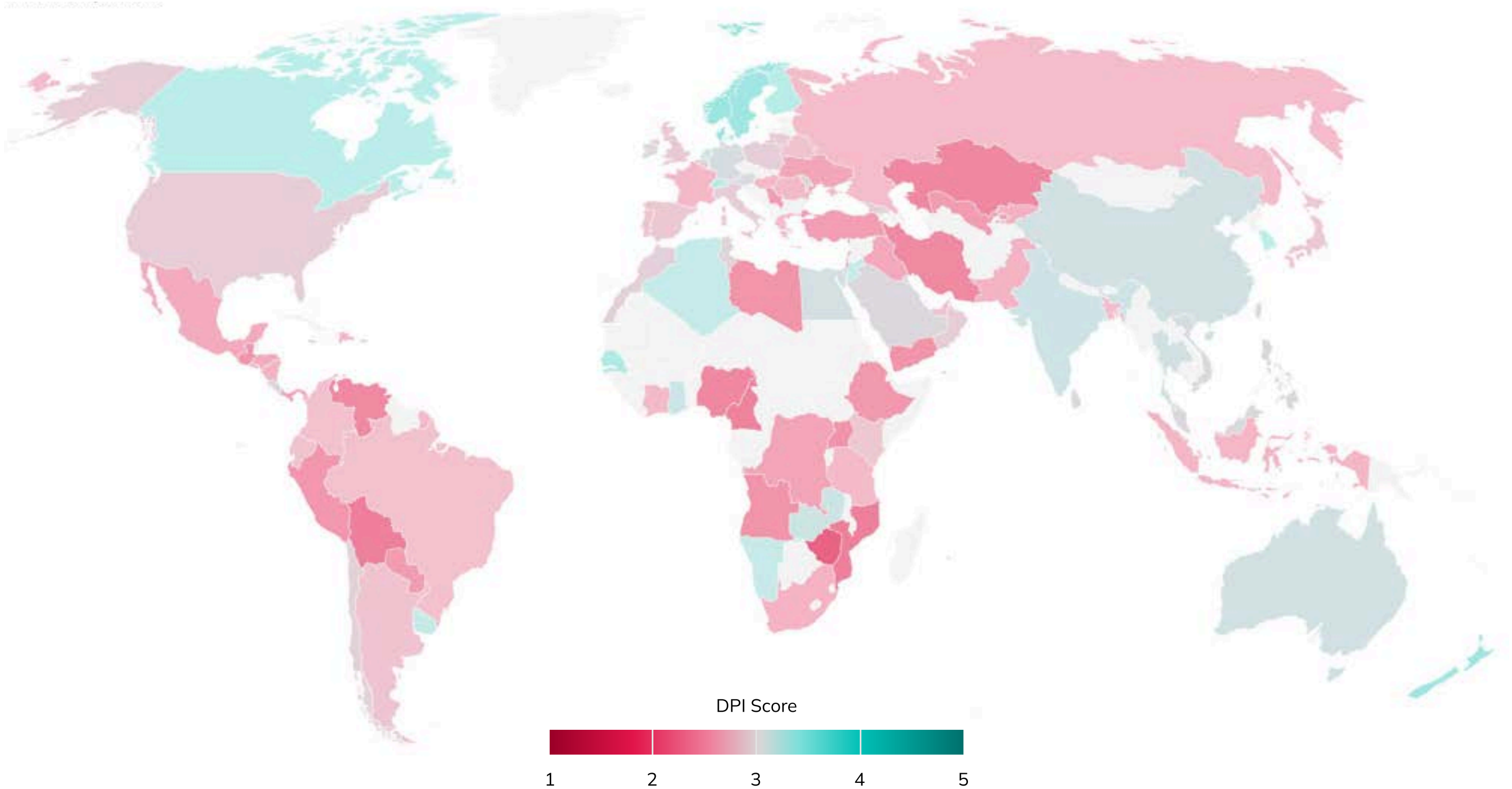
Improving living standards and well-being		Being able to freely choose the government	Protecting individual rights and freedoms	Promoting a fair and peaceful society
Algeria	Malaysia	Bolivia	Austria	Bangladesh
Angola	Moldova	Cameroon	Belgium	Denmark
Argentina	Morocco	Colombia	Canada	Ethiopia
Australia	Namibia	Costa Rica	France	Finland
Belarus	Nicaragua	El Salvador	Germany	Kuwait
Brazil	Nigeria	Honduras	Hungary	Lebanon
Chile	Oman	Israel	India	Libya
China	Panama	Ivory Coast	Italy	Netherlands
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Paraguay	Jamaica	Philippines	Norway
Dominican Republic (the)	Peru	Mexico	Poland	Palestine
Ecuador	Portugal	Mozambique	Romania	Sweden
Egypt	Puerto Rico (US)	New Zealand	South Korea	Ukraine
Georgia	Russia	Pakistan	Switzerland	Vietnam
Ghana	Saudi Arabia	Tanzania	Taiwan	
Greece	Senegal	Uganda	Turkey	
Guatemala	Serbia	United Kingdom	United States	
Indonesia	Singapore	Uruguay		
Iran	South Africa	Venezuela		
Iraq	Spain	Zambia		
Ireland	Sri Lanka			
Japan	Thailand			
Jordan	Tunisia			
Kazakhstan	United Arab Emirates			
Kenya	Uzbekistan			
Kyrgyzstan	Yemen			
Lithuania	Zimbabwe			

Perception of the State of Democracy

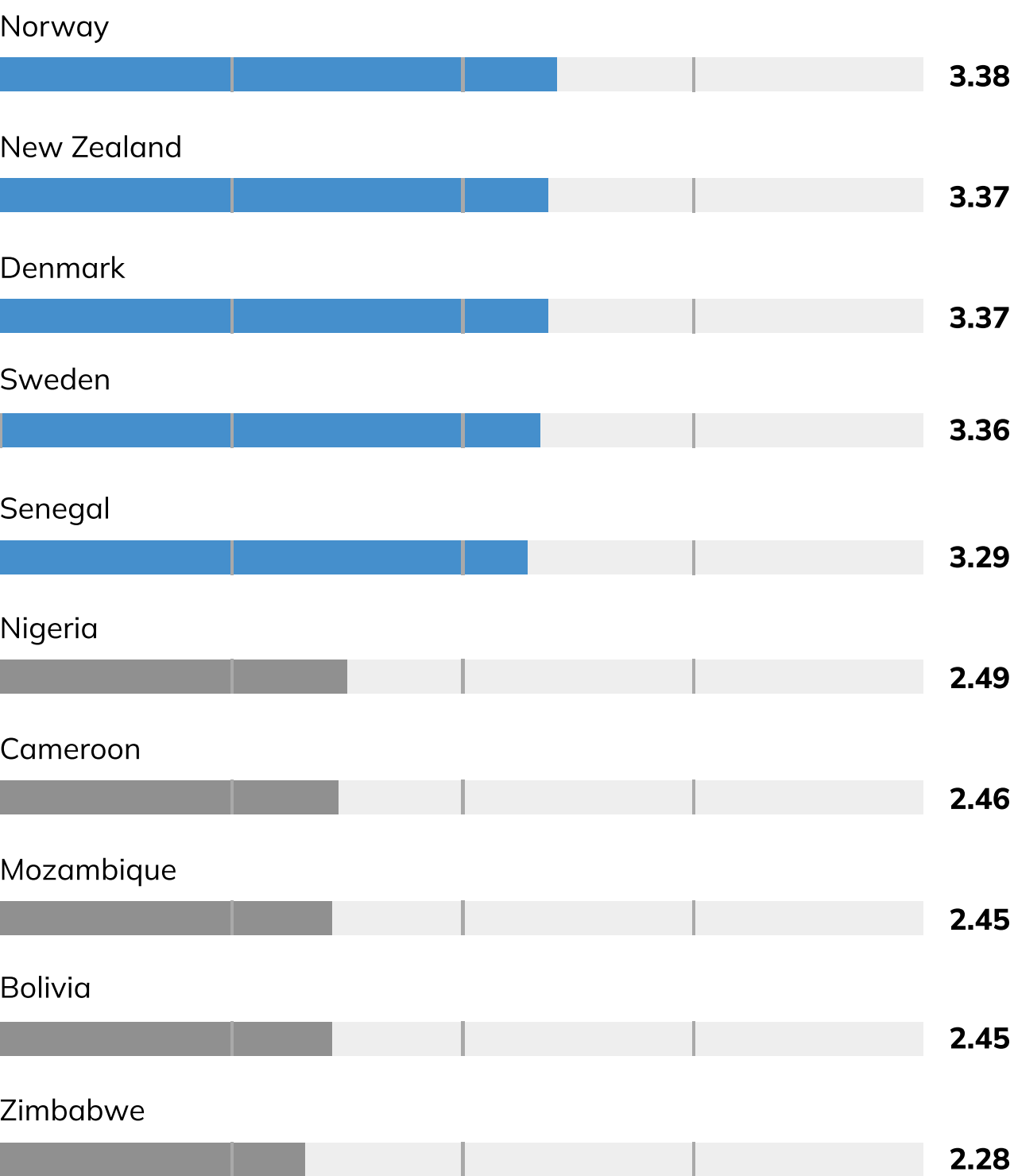
To understand how people perceive democracy in their country, respondents rated how well their government delivers on core democratic principles—such as freedom of speech, the rule of law, government transparency, and peaceful transitions of power. These ratings were combined into an overall Democracy Perception Index (DPI) score. This year’s top-scoring countries are Norway, New Zealand, and Denmark.

Democracy Perception Index

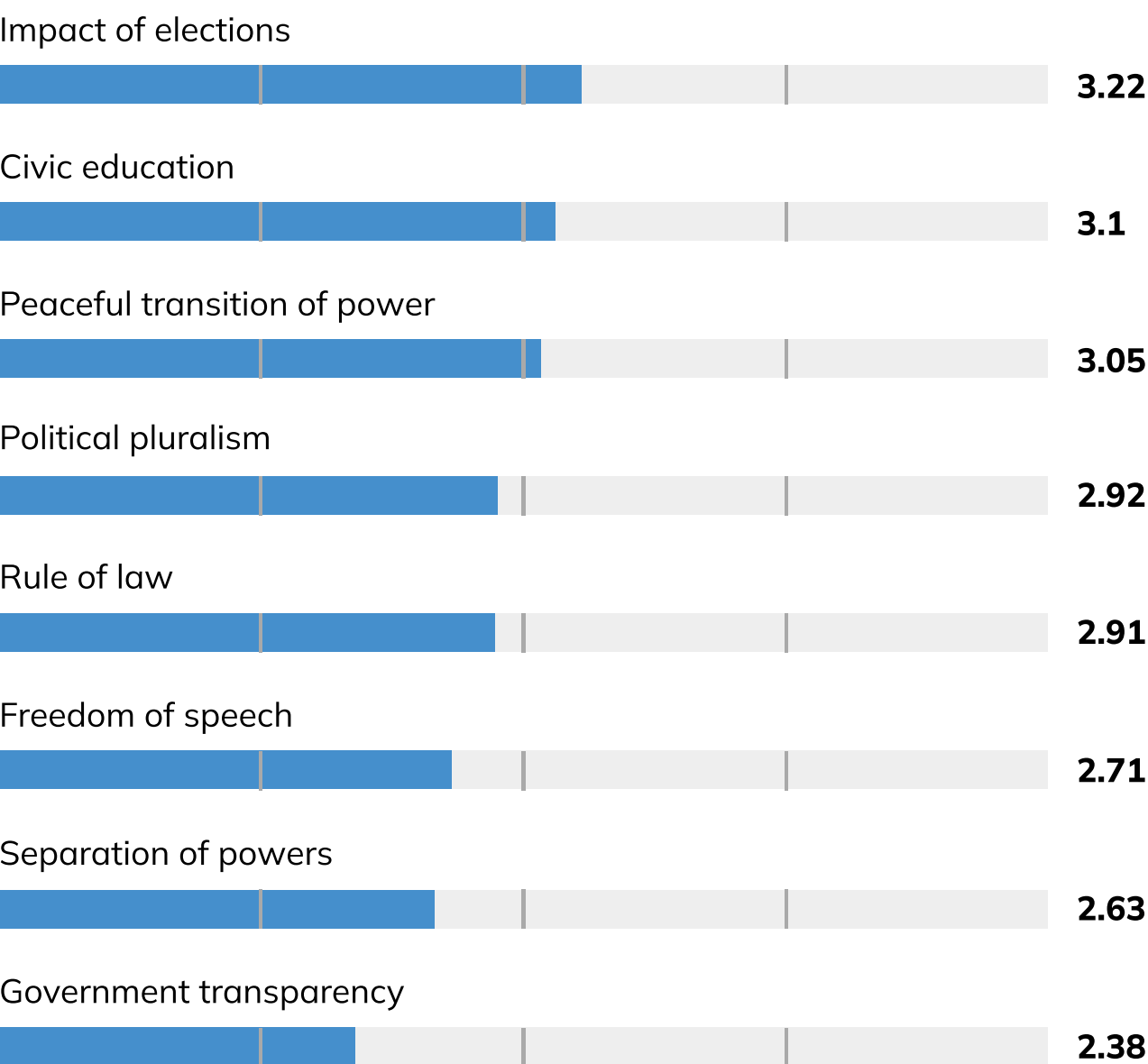
Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles



Highest and lowest public ratings



Global rating by democratic component

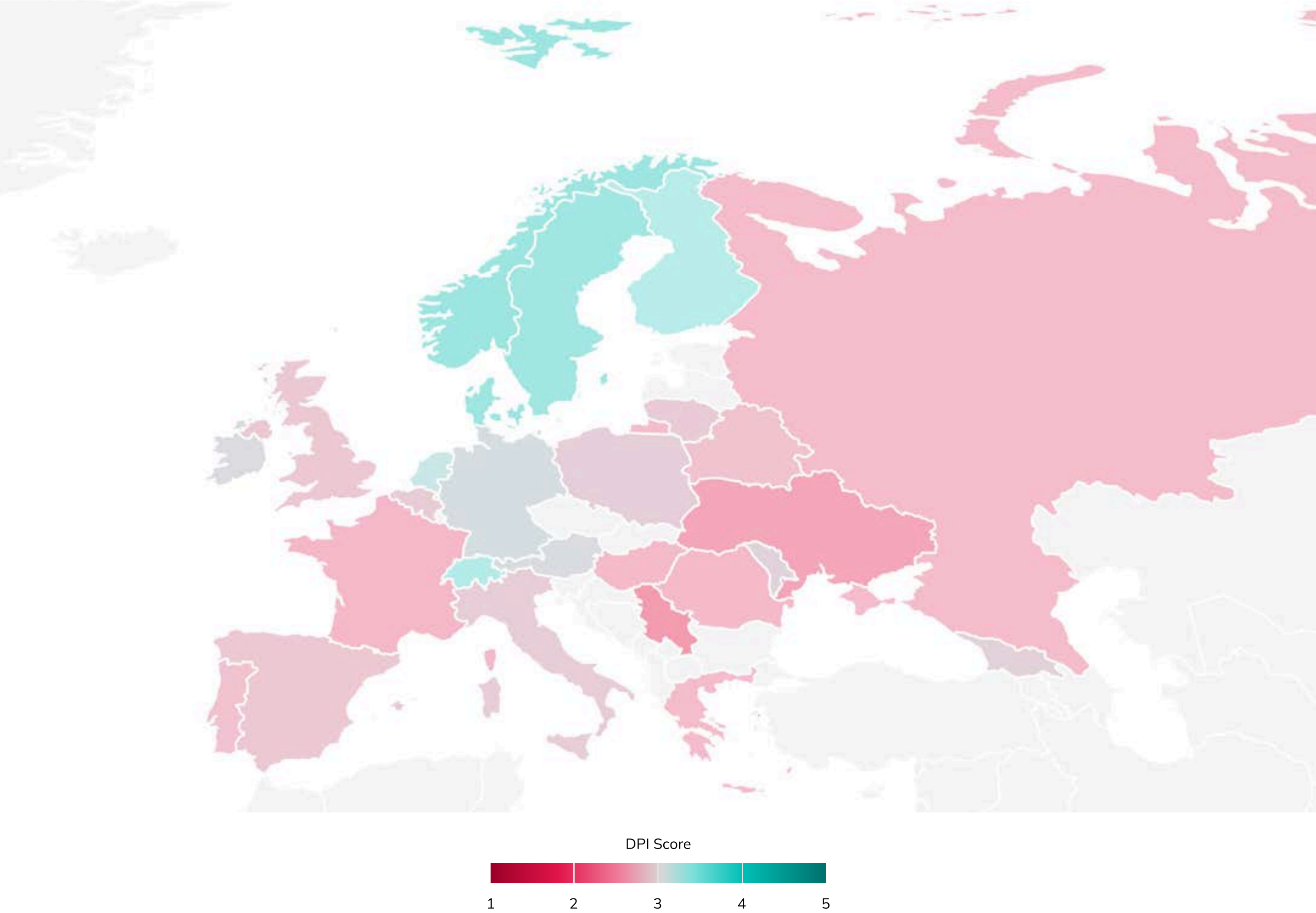


Perception of Democracy in Europe

Across Europe, public evaluations of democratic performance reveal low marks overall (2.96 out of 5). On average, citizens rate their governments as delivering only moderately well on core democratic principles like freedom of speech, rule of law, and transparent elections. A score of 3 out of 5 suggests significant dissatisfaction—and many countries fall well below that threshold. Only a few Northern European countries, such as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, stand out with more favorable ratings (above 3.3). In contrast, countries like Serbia, France, and Ukraine rank among the lowest, with scores below 2.5.

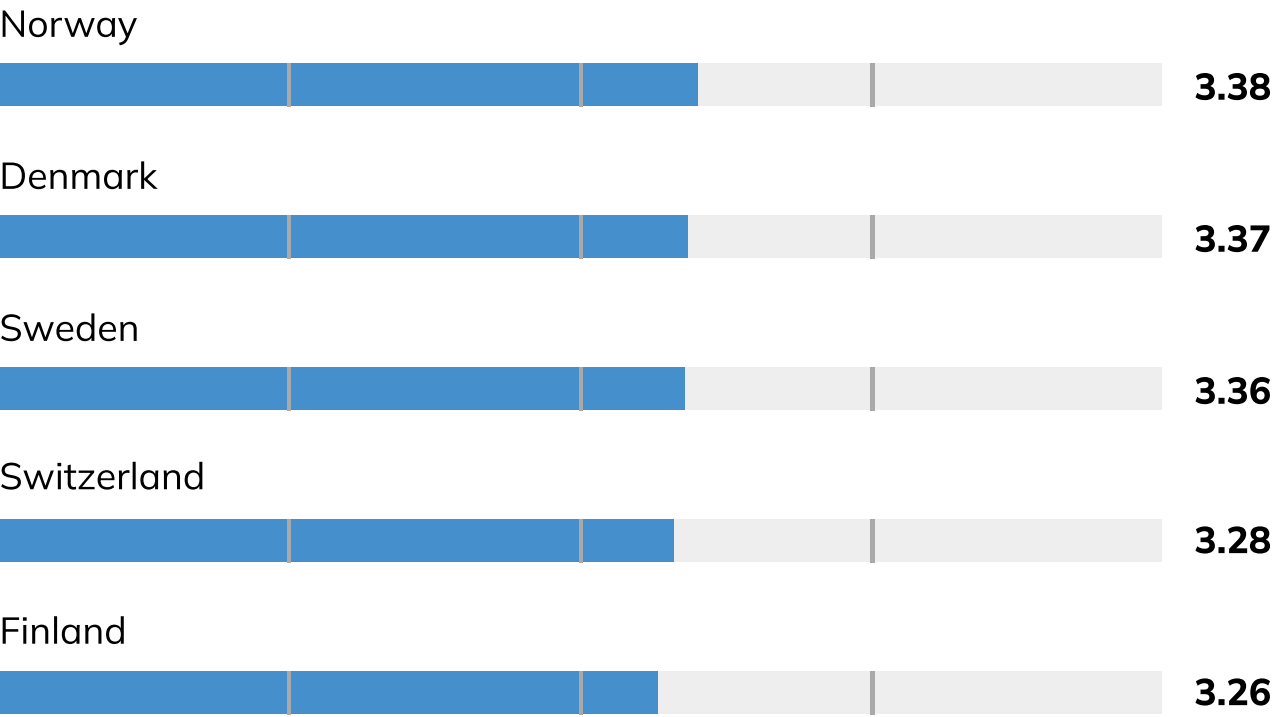
Democracy Perception Index — Europe

Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles

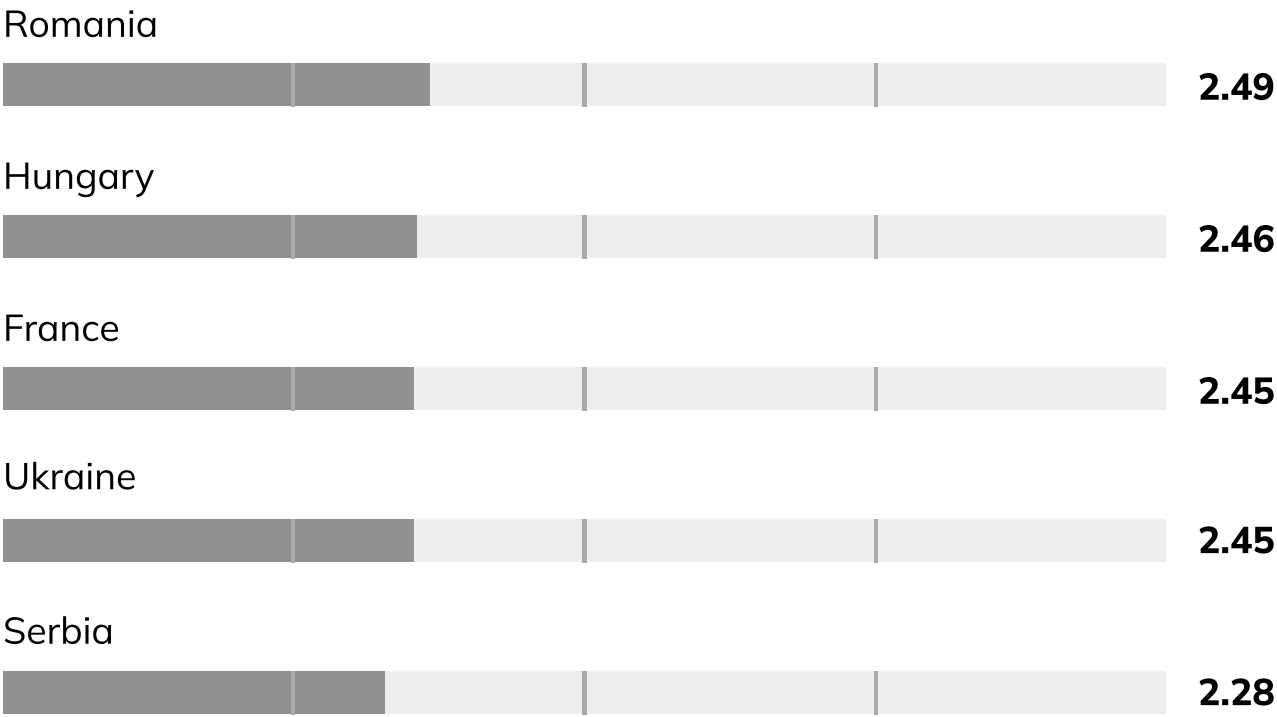


Highest and lowest public ratings

Top 5



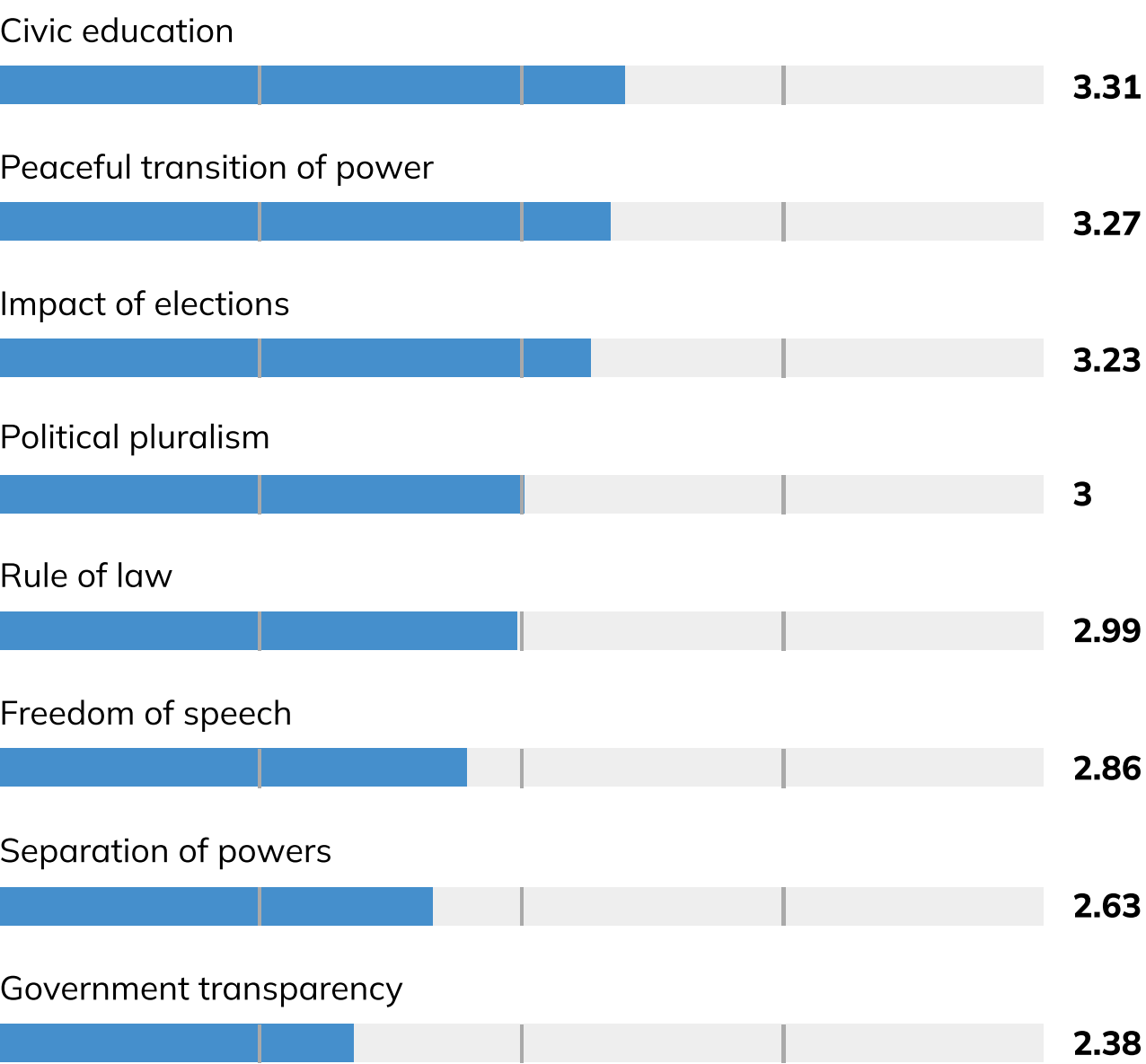
Bottom 5



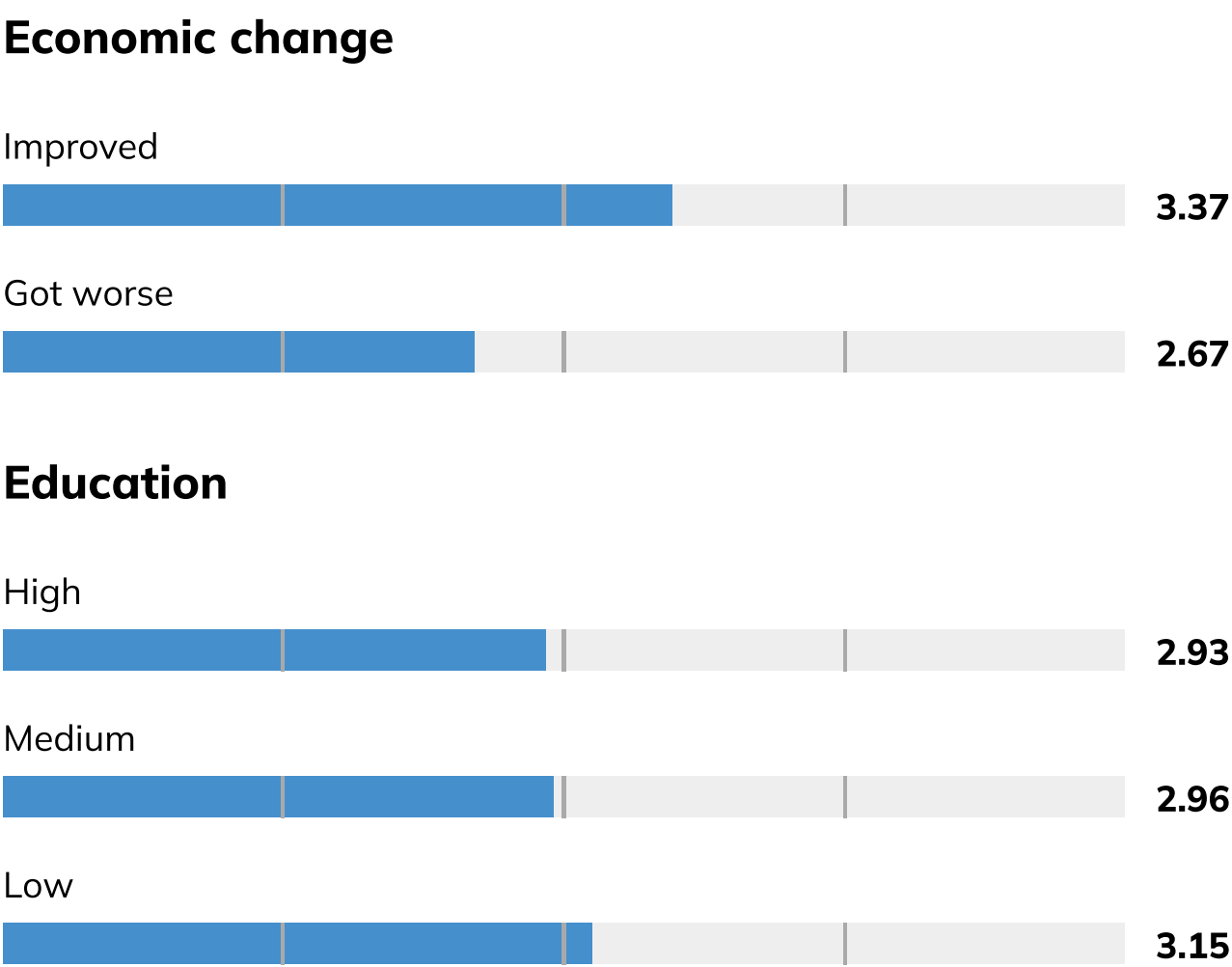
Perception of Democracy in Europe

Even in the areas where citizens rate government performance most positively—such as peaceful transfers of power and civic education—average scores only just exceed 3 out of 5. Evaluations are especially poor when it comes to transparency, freedom of speech, and checks and balances. Perceptions also differ by demographic group: people who say their economic situation has improved tend to be more positive, while younger and lower-income respondents are more critical. Those with less formal education express slightly more satisfaction than university graduates.

Average score by component



Average score by demographic group

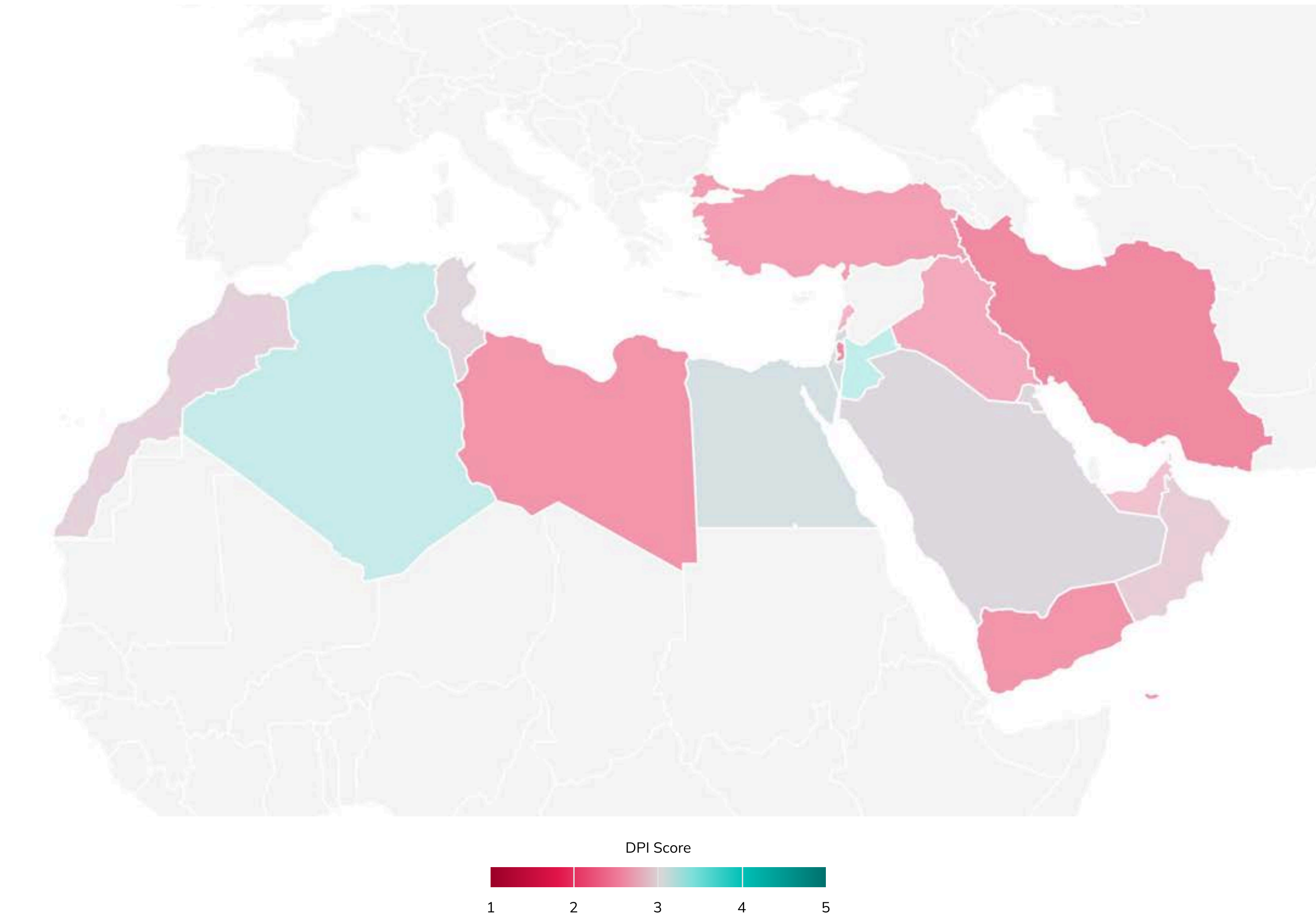


Perception of Democracy in MENA

Across the Middle East and North Africa, public evaluations of democratic performance are low—averaging just 2.84 out of 5. In most countries, citizens express limited satisfaction with how their governments deliver on core democratic principles. While ratings are somewhat higher in Jordan, Algeria, and Egypt, they remain modest. In places like Iran, Palestine, and Libya, average scores drop to 2.5 or below—signaling widespread public dissatisfaction.

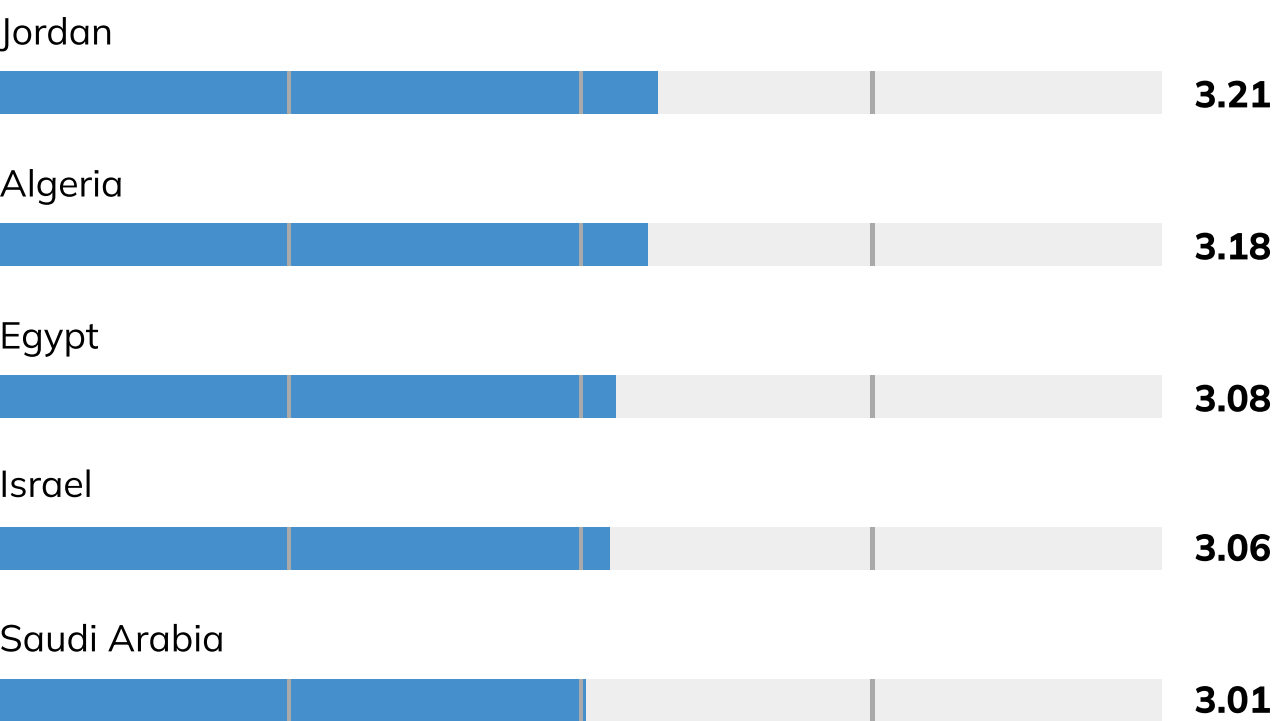
Democracy Perception Index — MENA

Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles

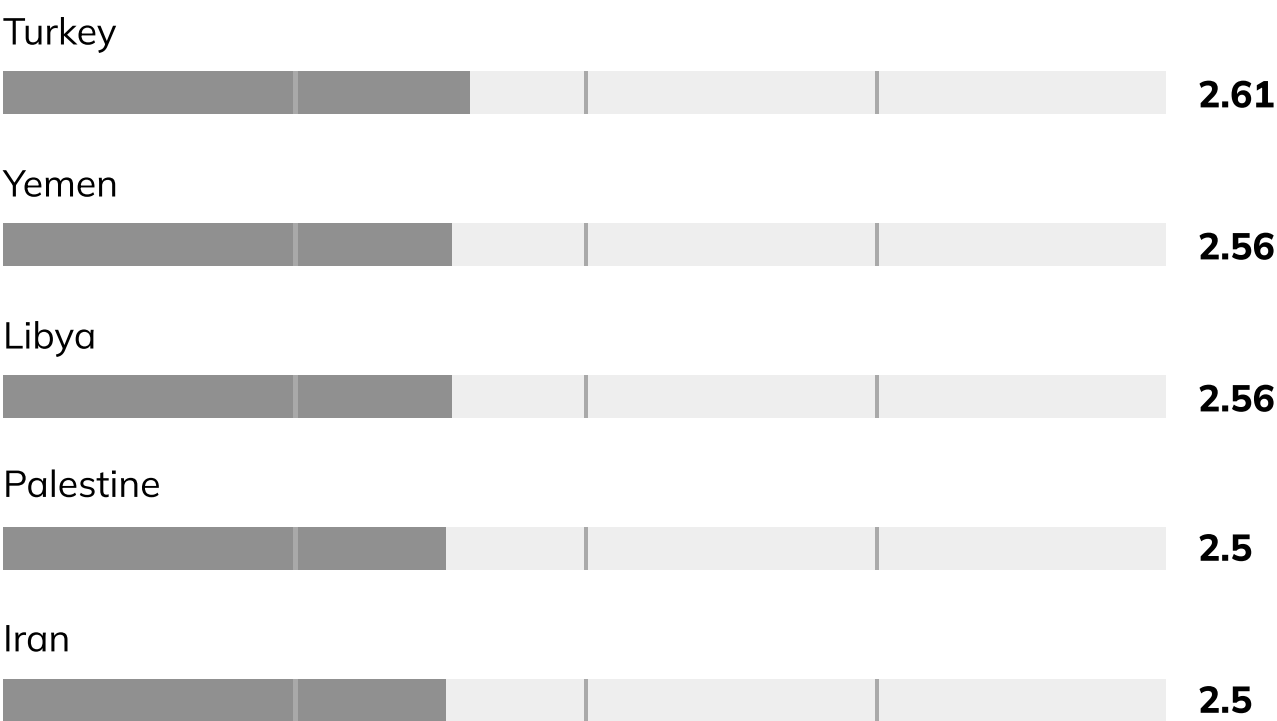


Highest and lowest public ratings

Top 5



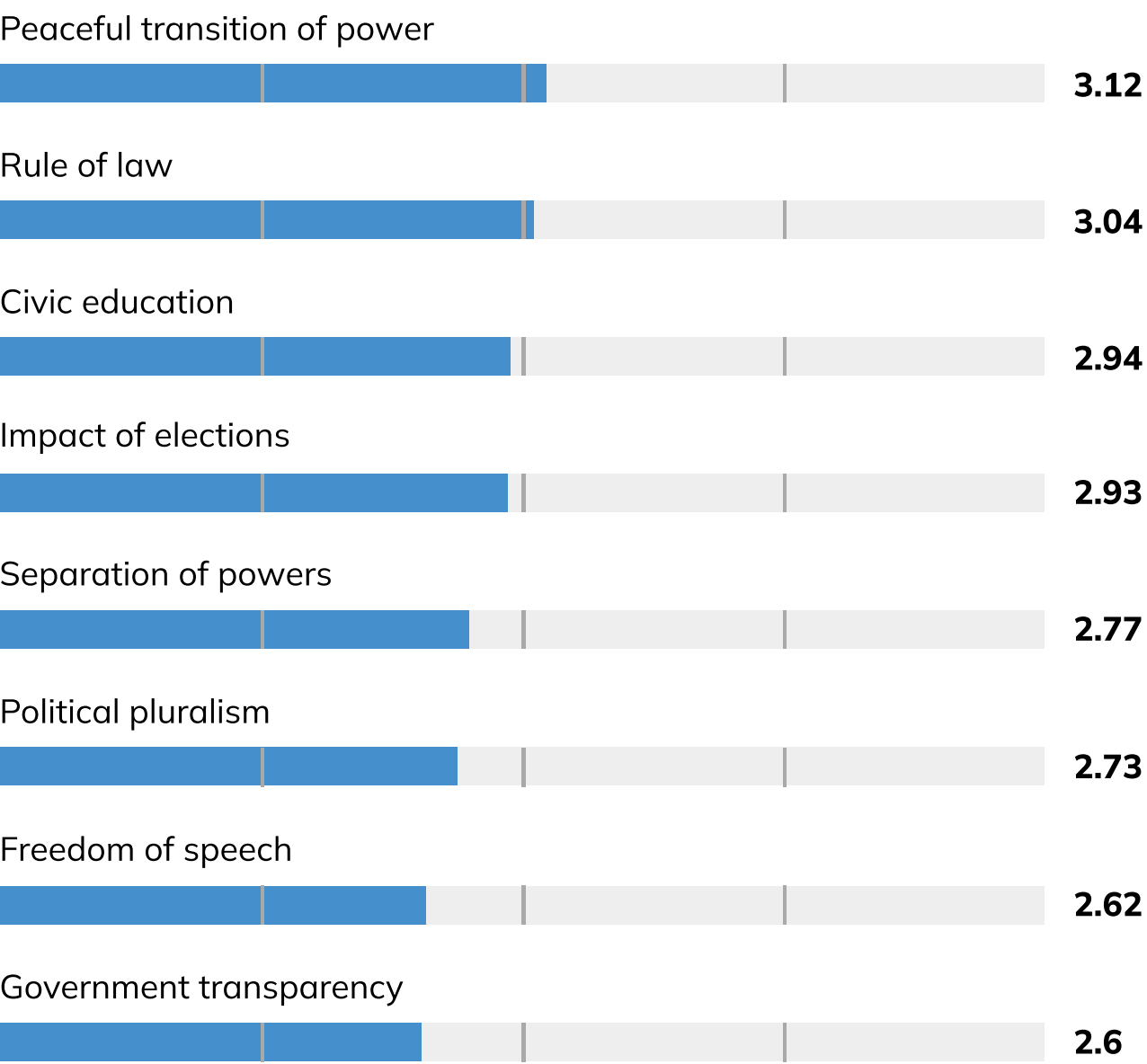
Bottom 5



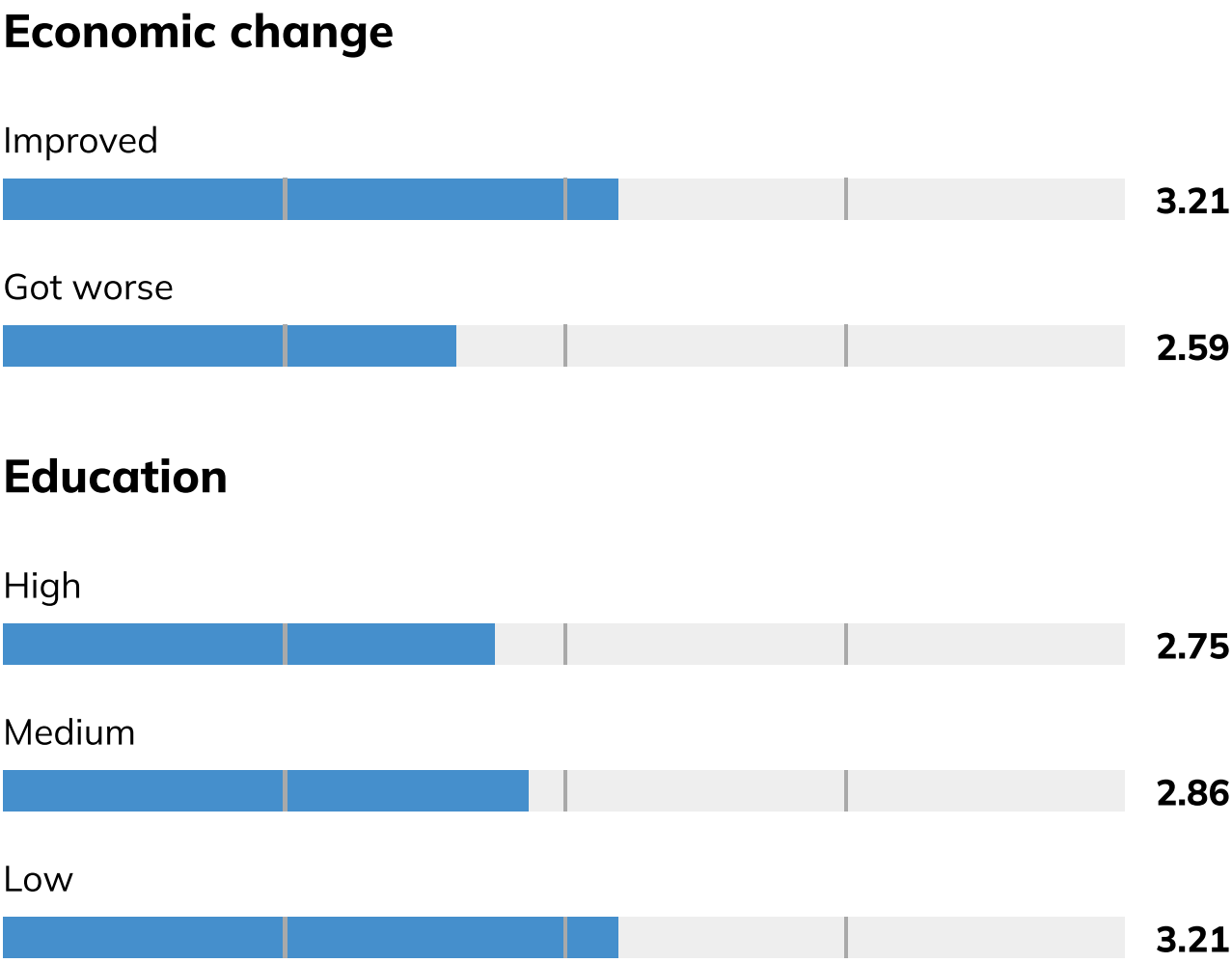
Perception of Democracy in MENA

Citizens across the region give their governments the highest marks for maintaining the rule of law and enabling peaceful transfers of power, though even these scores hover only slightly above average. Transparency and freedom of speech, by contrast, receive the weakest ratings. Perceptions also vary by background: people who say their economic situation has improved rate democratic performance more positively, and those with lower levels of formal education tend to express greater satisfaction than those with university degrees.

Average score by component



Average score by demographic group

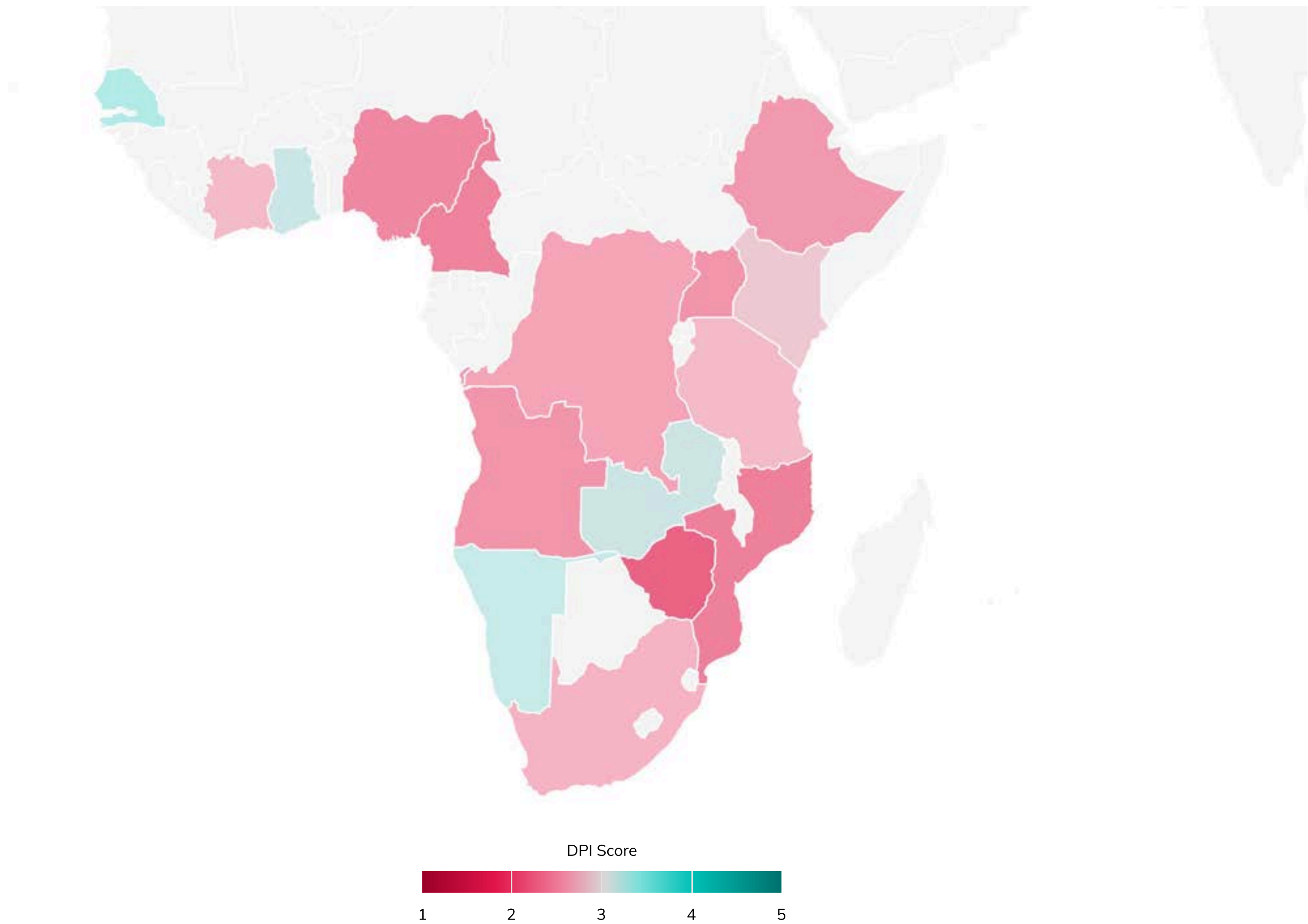


Perception of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

Public evaluations of democratic performance in Sub-Saharan Africa remain modest overall, with notable variation across countries. Senegal stands out with the highest average score in the region, followed by Namibia, Ghana, Zambia, and Kenya—each scoring just above 3 out of 5. At the other end of the spectrum, perceptions are far more critical in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Cameroon, where public ratings fall below 2.5, indicating deep dissatisfaction with how democracy is functioning.

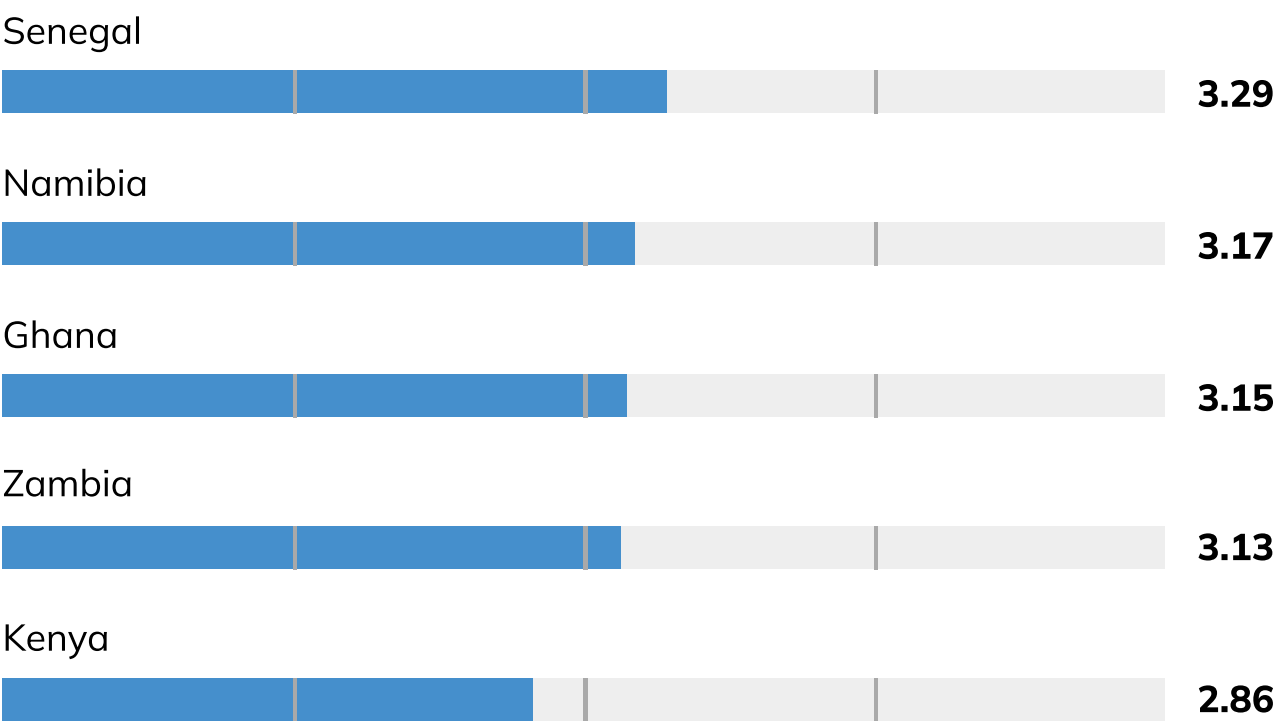
Democracy Perception Index — Sub-Saharan Africa

Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles

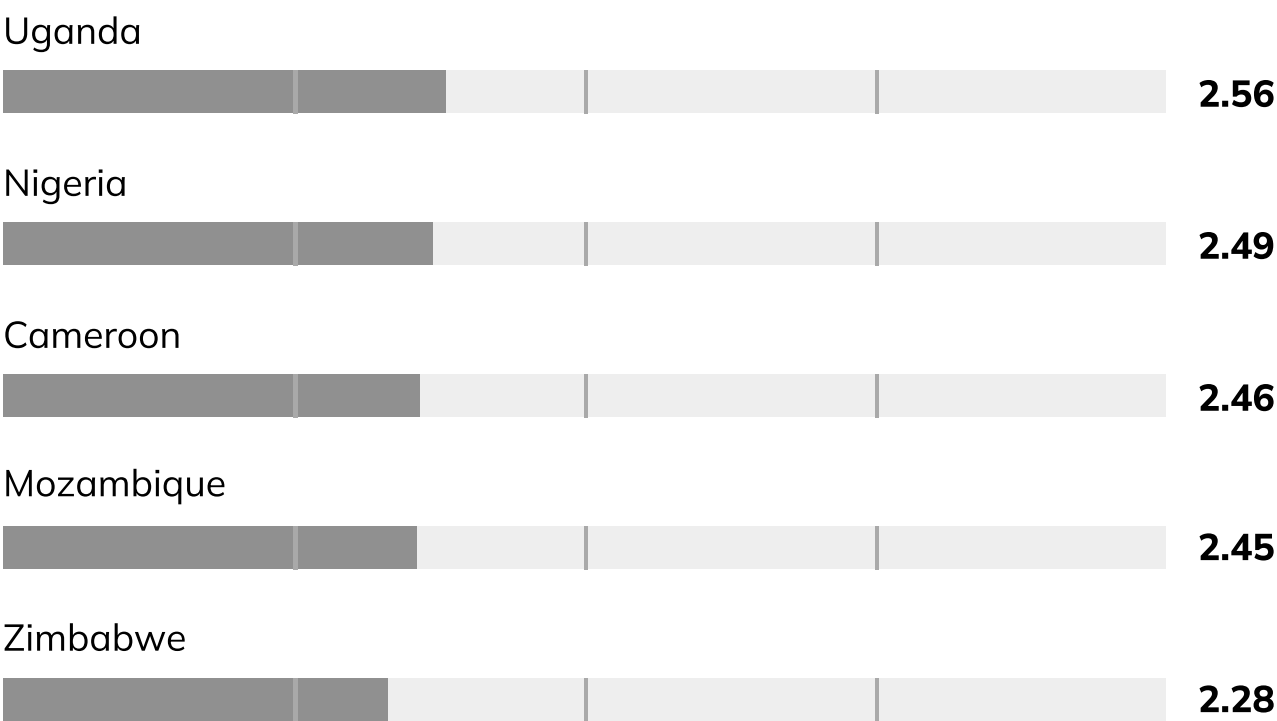


Highest and lowest public ratings

Top 5



Bottom 5

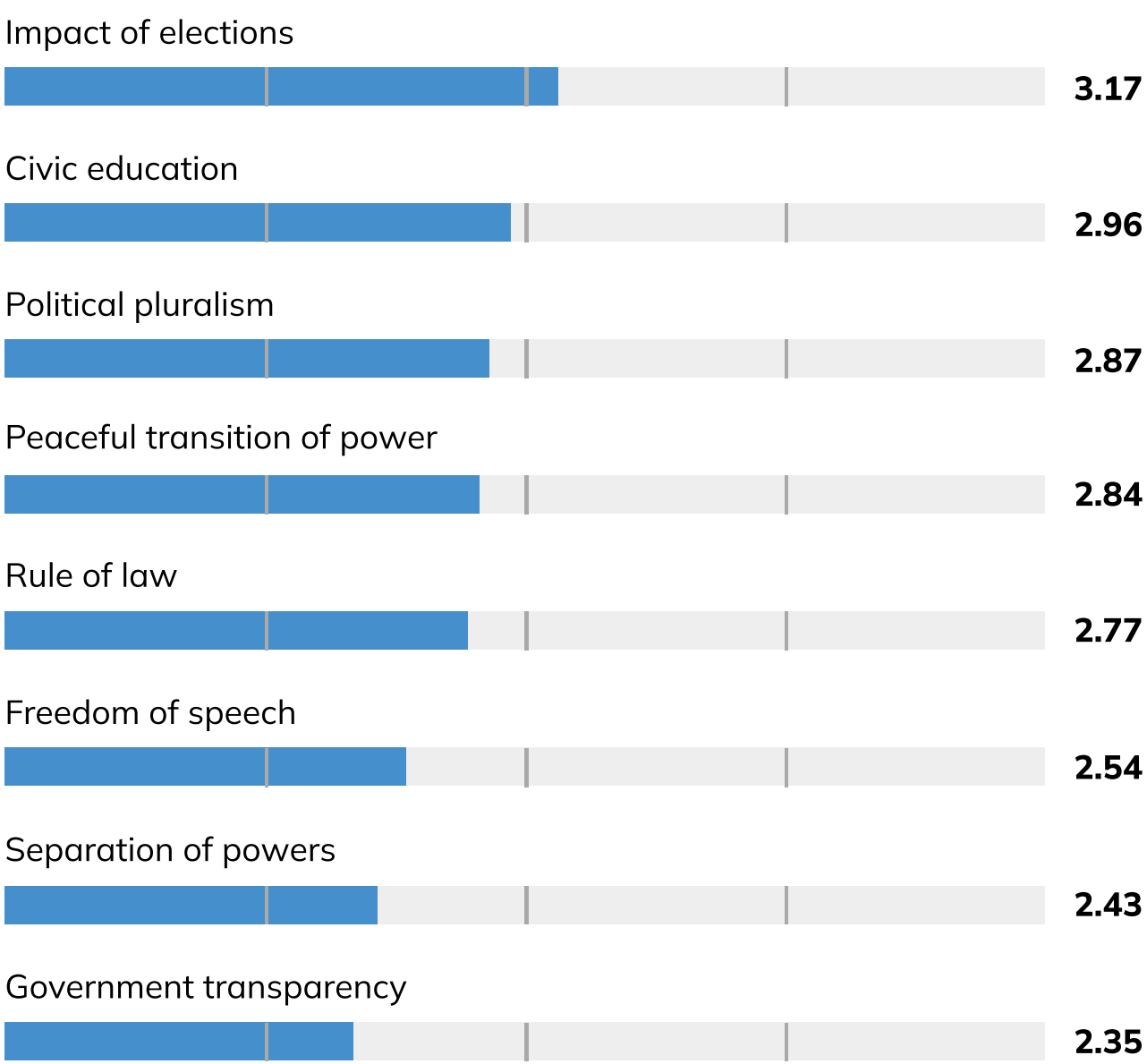


Perception of Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

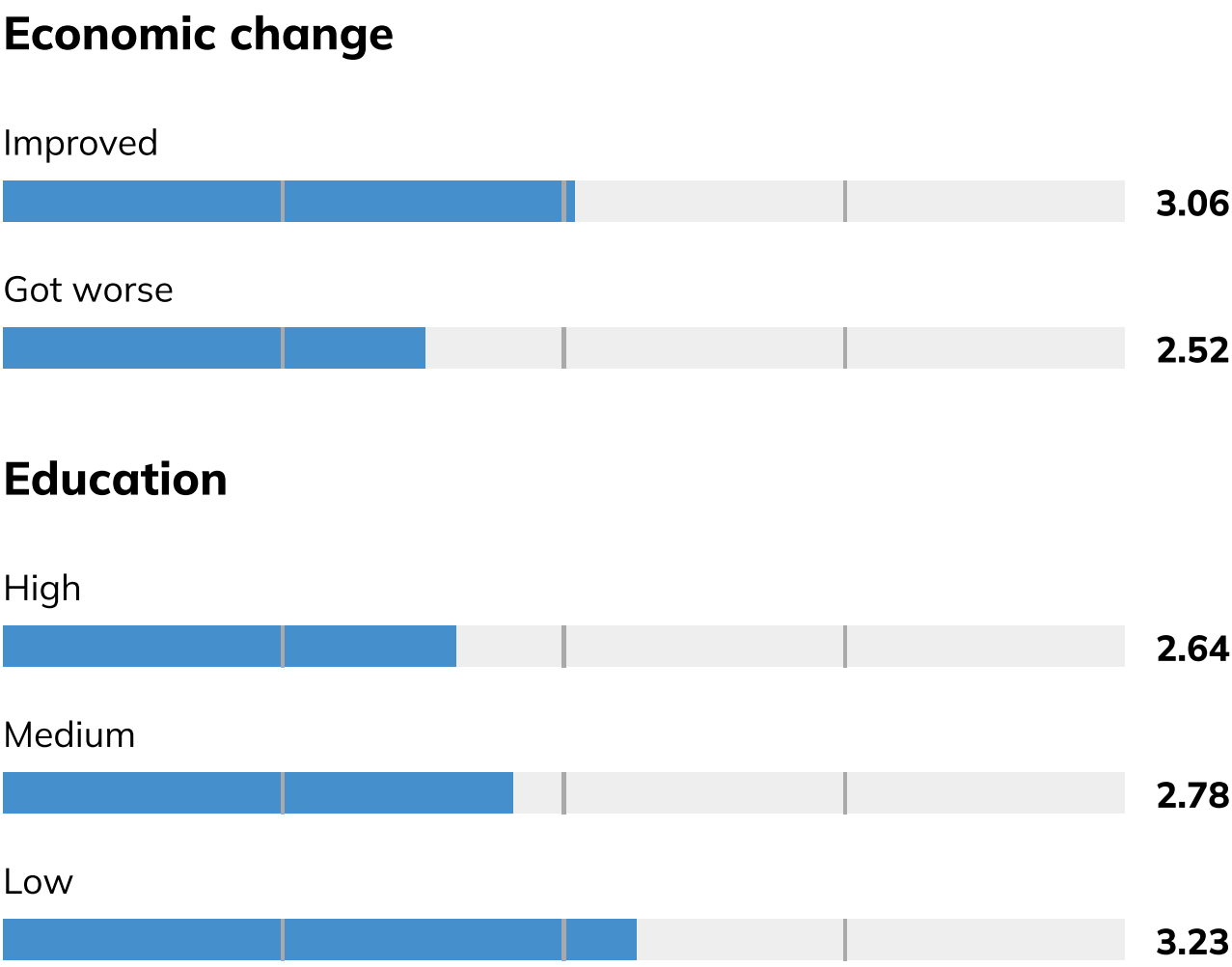
Among the eight components of democracy, respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa give their governments the highest marks on the impact of elections, followed by civic education and political pluralism. Government transparency receives the lowest average score, with separation of powers and freedom of speech also rated poorly.

Similarly to other regions, respondents who report improved economic conditions express and those with less formal education report the highest overall ratings of democracy in their country.

Average score by component



Average score by demographic group



Perception of Democracy in the Americas

Across the Americas, public evaluations of how well governments deliver on democratic principles are mixed—and generally modest. Canada and Uruguay receive the highest average ratings from their citizens, followed by Costa Rica, Chile, and Jamaica, with scores around or just above 3 out of 5. In contrast, citizens in Bolivia, Venezuela, and Guatemala give their governments some of the lowest ratings in the region, averaging below 2.6.

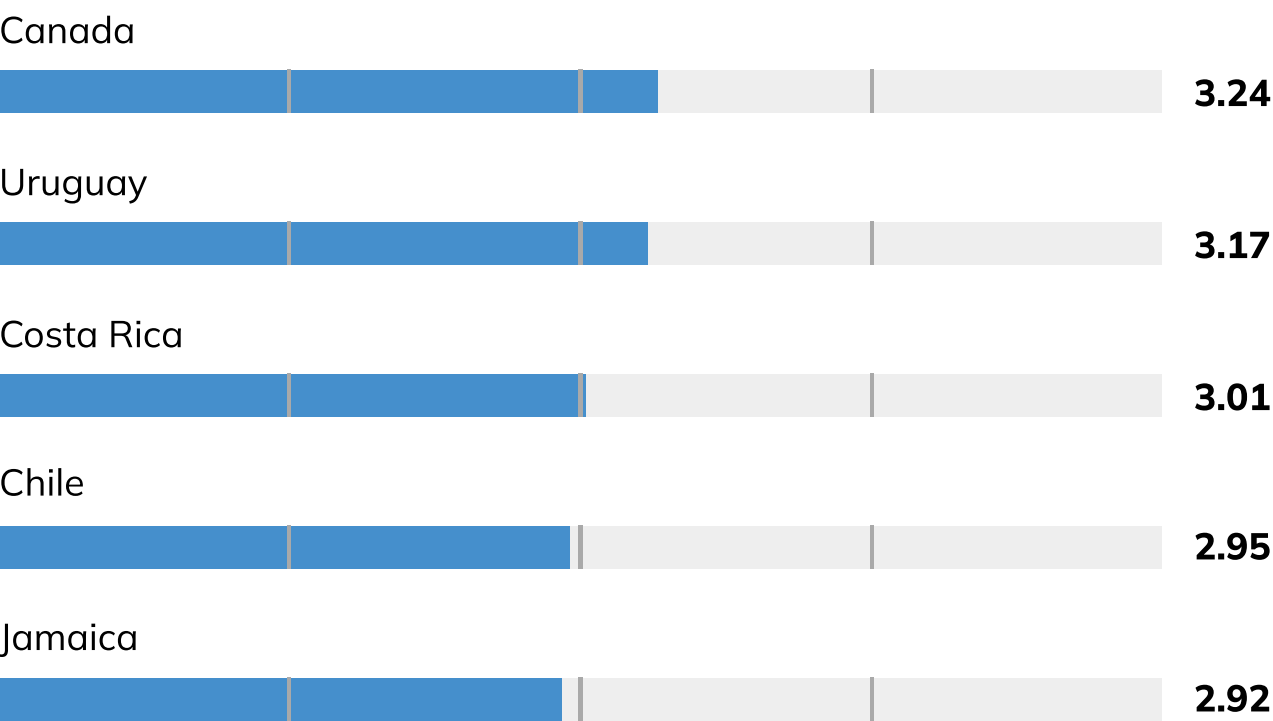
Democracy Perception Index — Americas

Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles

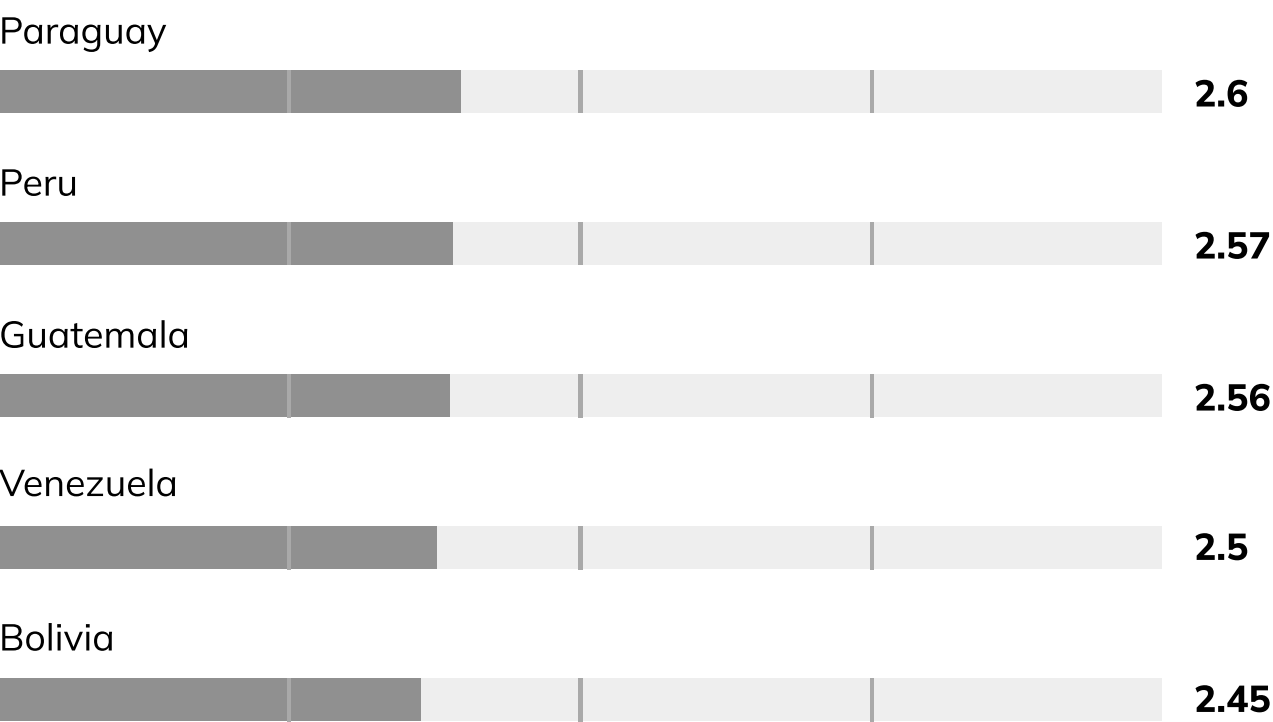


Highest and lowest public ratings

Top 5



Bottom 5

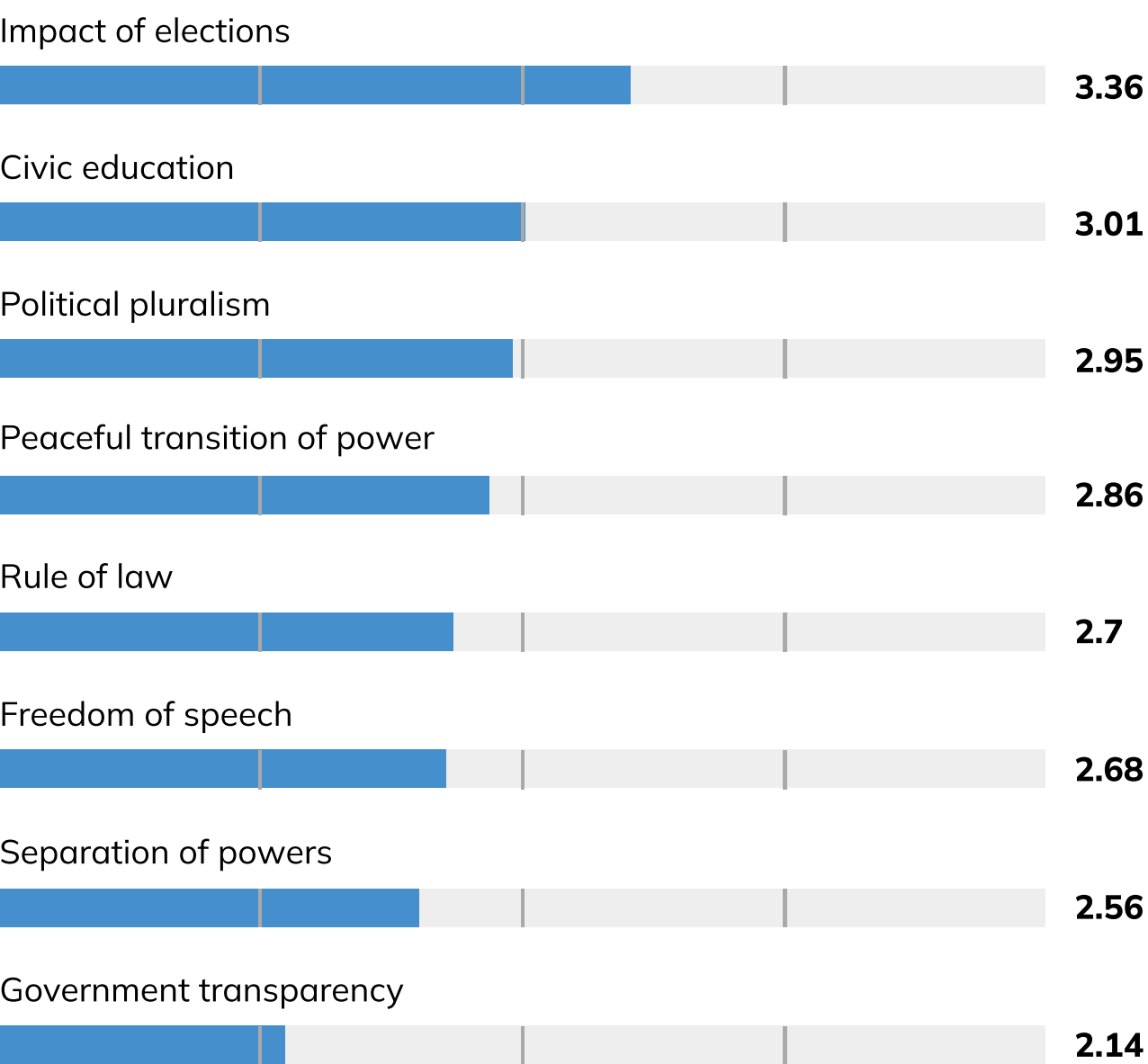


Perception of Democracy in the Americas

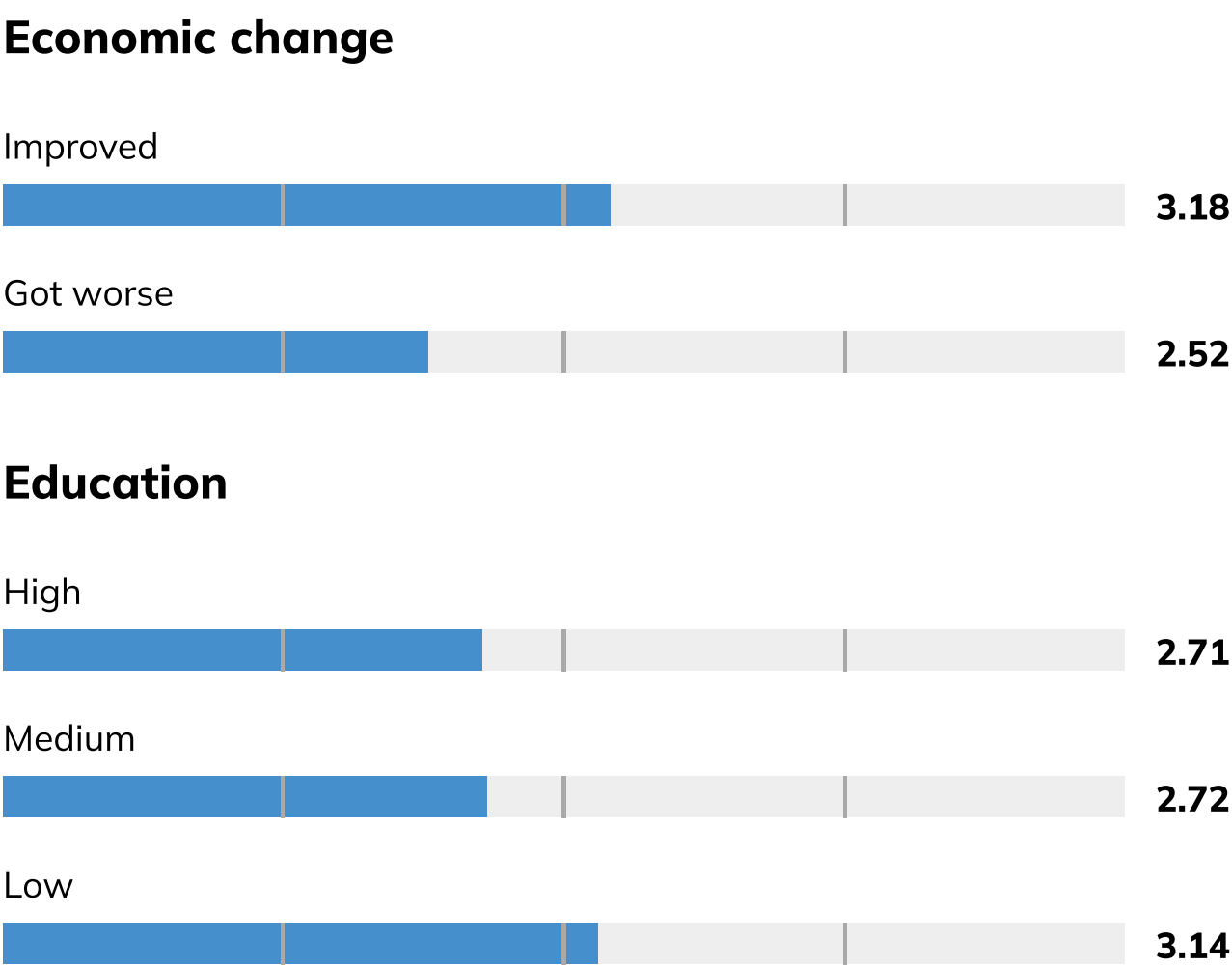
When asked to assess specific democratic components, people in the Americas give their governments the highest marks for the impact of elections, followed by civic education and political pluralism. Government transparency receives the weakest evaluations, alongside separation of powers and freedom of speech.

As in other regions, those who report improved economic conditions tend to rate democratic performance more favorably, while people with less formal education express slightly more satisfaction overall.

Average score by component



Average score by demographic group

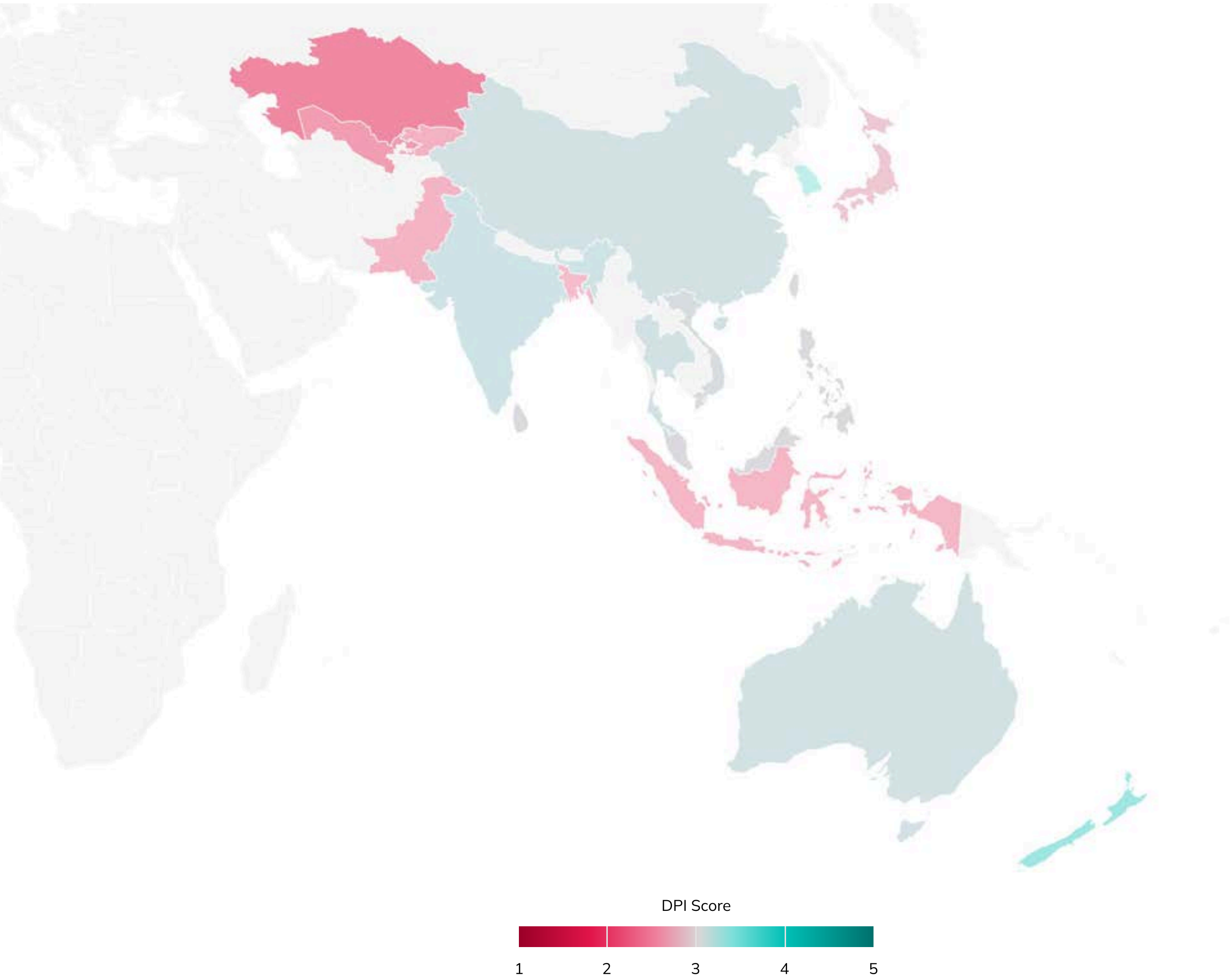


Perception of Democracy in Asia-Pacific

Across the Asia-Pacific region, citizens give their governments moderate marks for democratic performance—averaging 2.95 out of 5. Public perceptions are most favorable in New Zealand, South Korea, India, China, and Australia, where average ratings exceed 3.1. At the lower end, citizens in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan give their governments the most critical evaluations, with scores falling below 2.7.

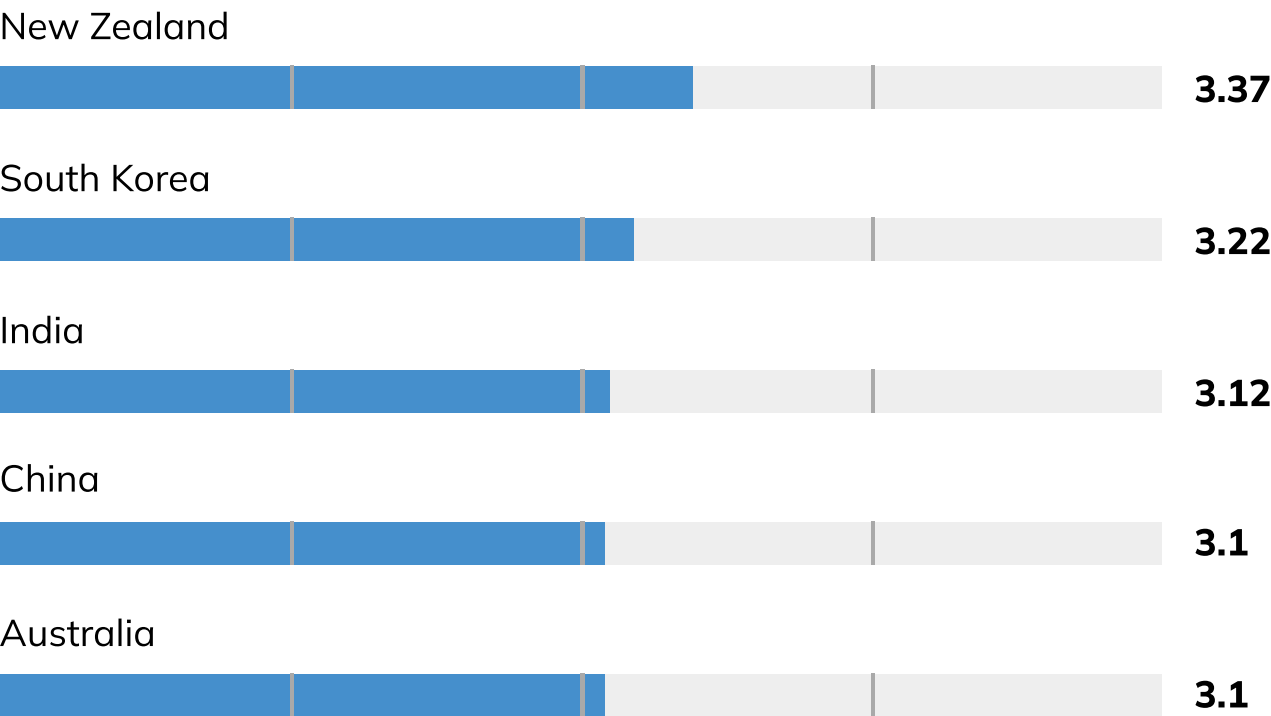
Democracy Perception Index — Asia-Pacific

Average public perception of government performance across eight core democratic principles

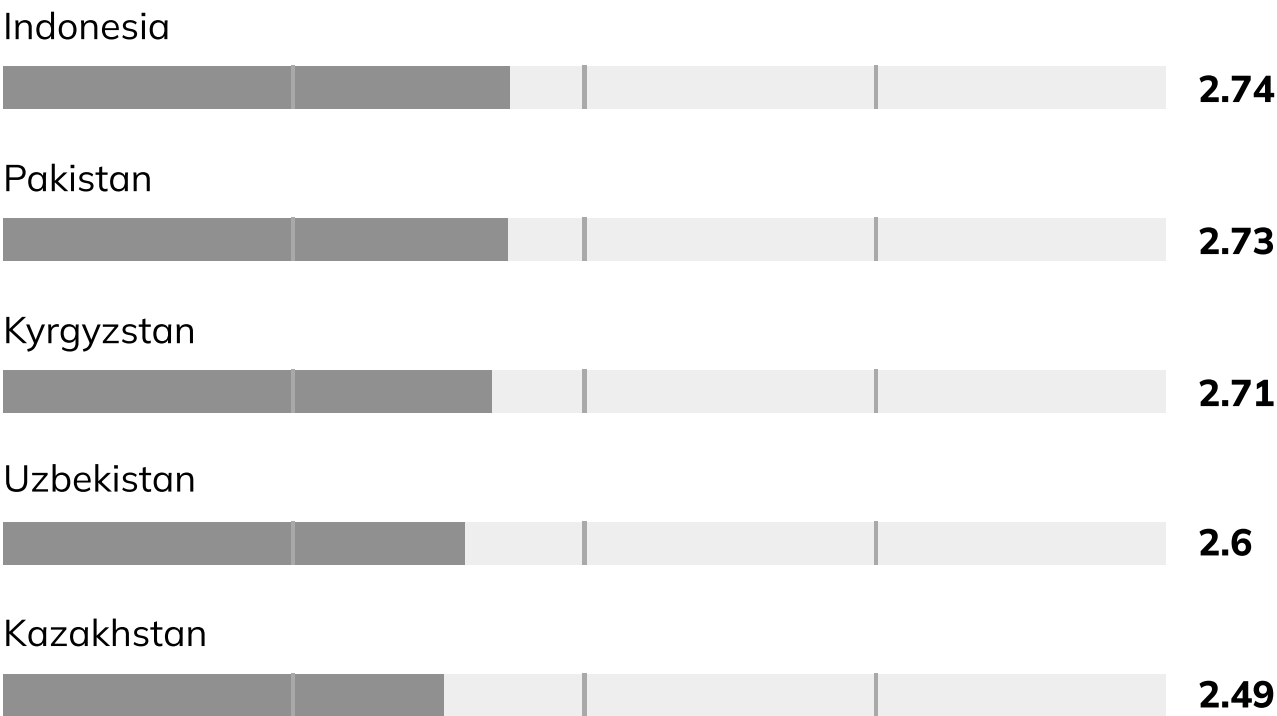


Highest and lowest public ratings

Top 5



Bottom 5

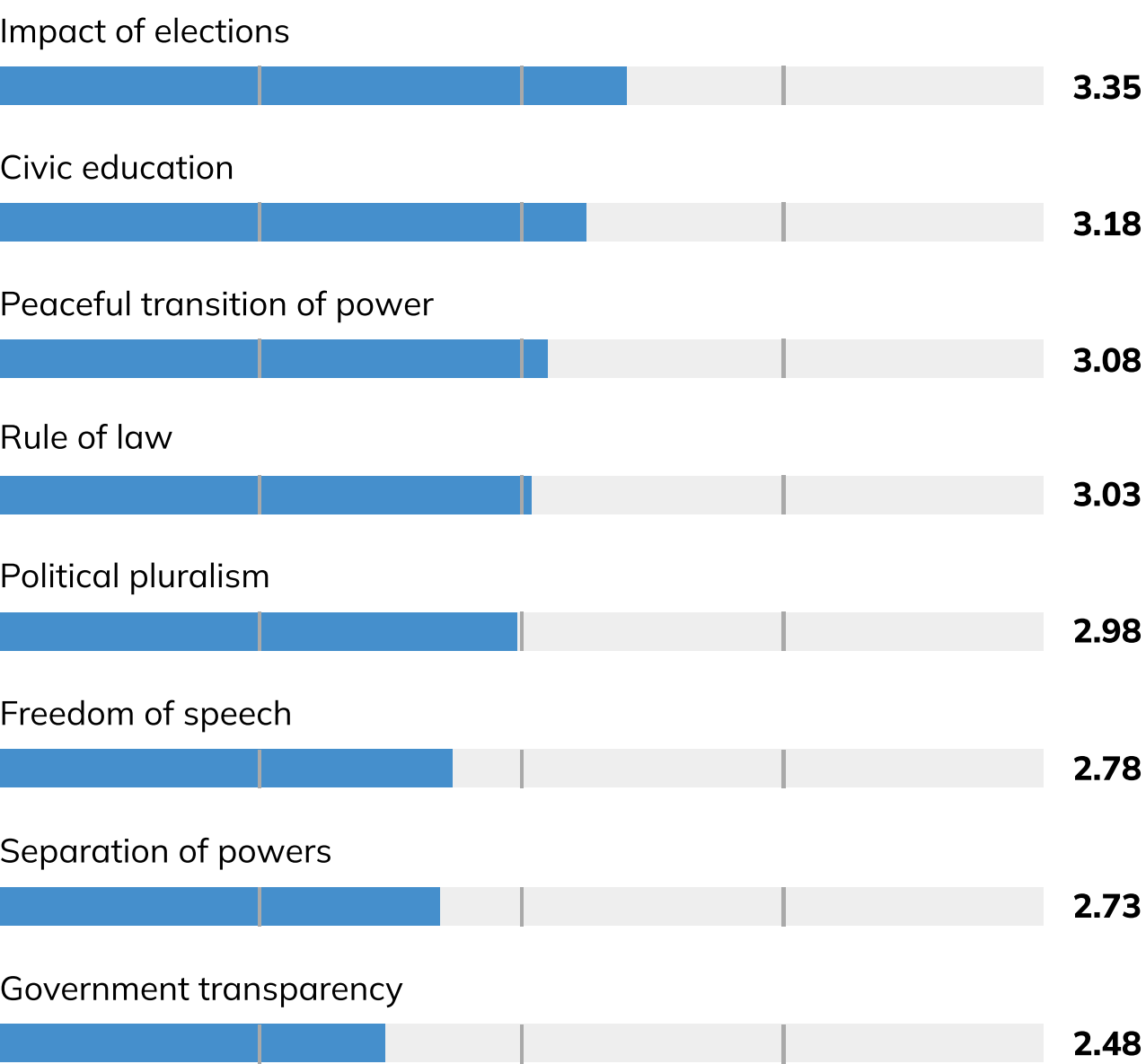


Perception of Democracy in Asia-Pacific

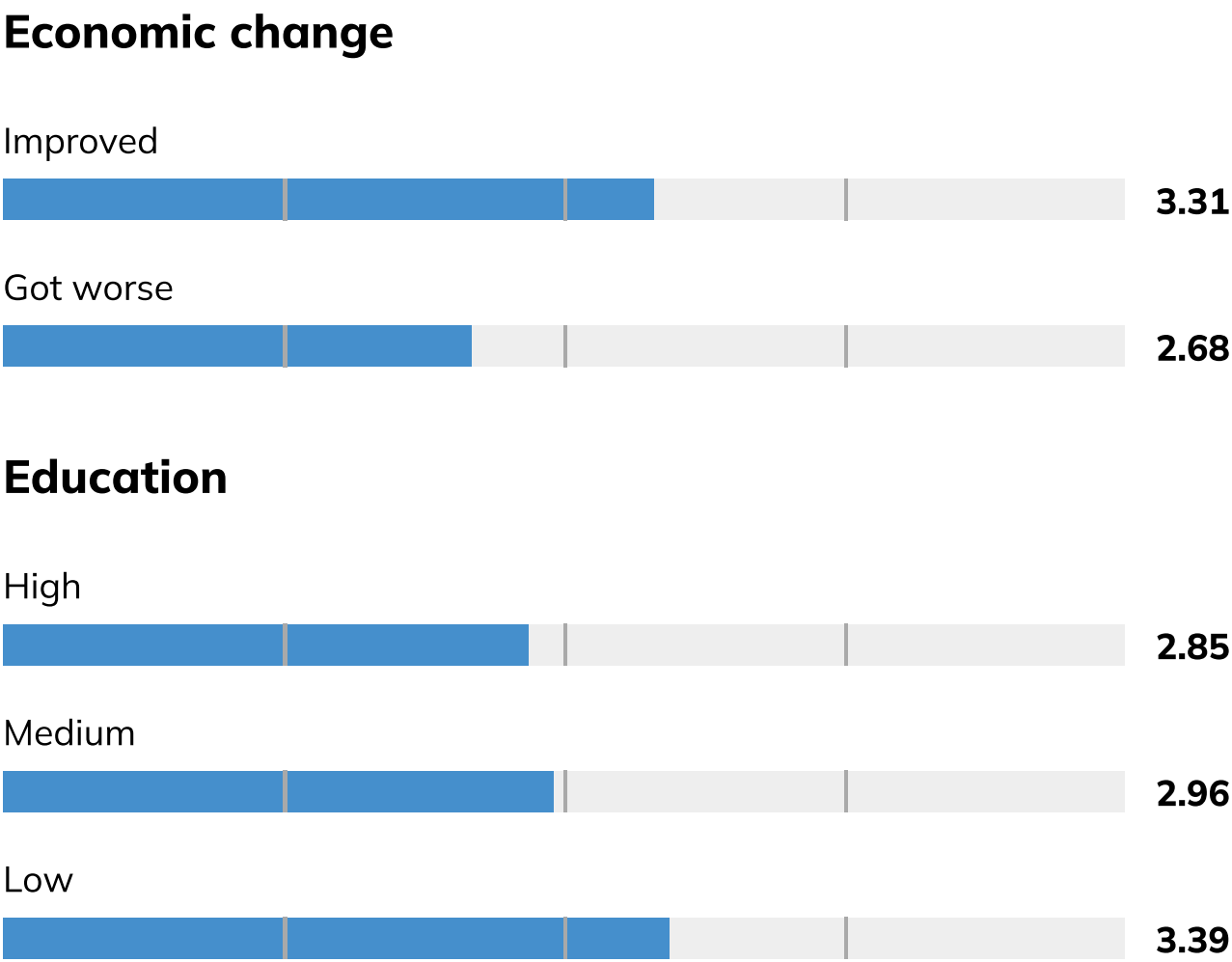
When asked to assess specific democratic components, people in the Asia-Pacific region rate the impact of elections, civic education, and peaceful transfers of power as the strongest areas of performance. By contrast, government transparency is viewed most critically, followed by separation of powers and freedom of speech.

As in other regions, people who say their economic situation has improved tend to rate democracy more positively—and those with lower levels of formal education report the highest average scores.

Average score by component



Average score by demographic group

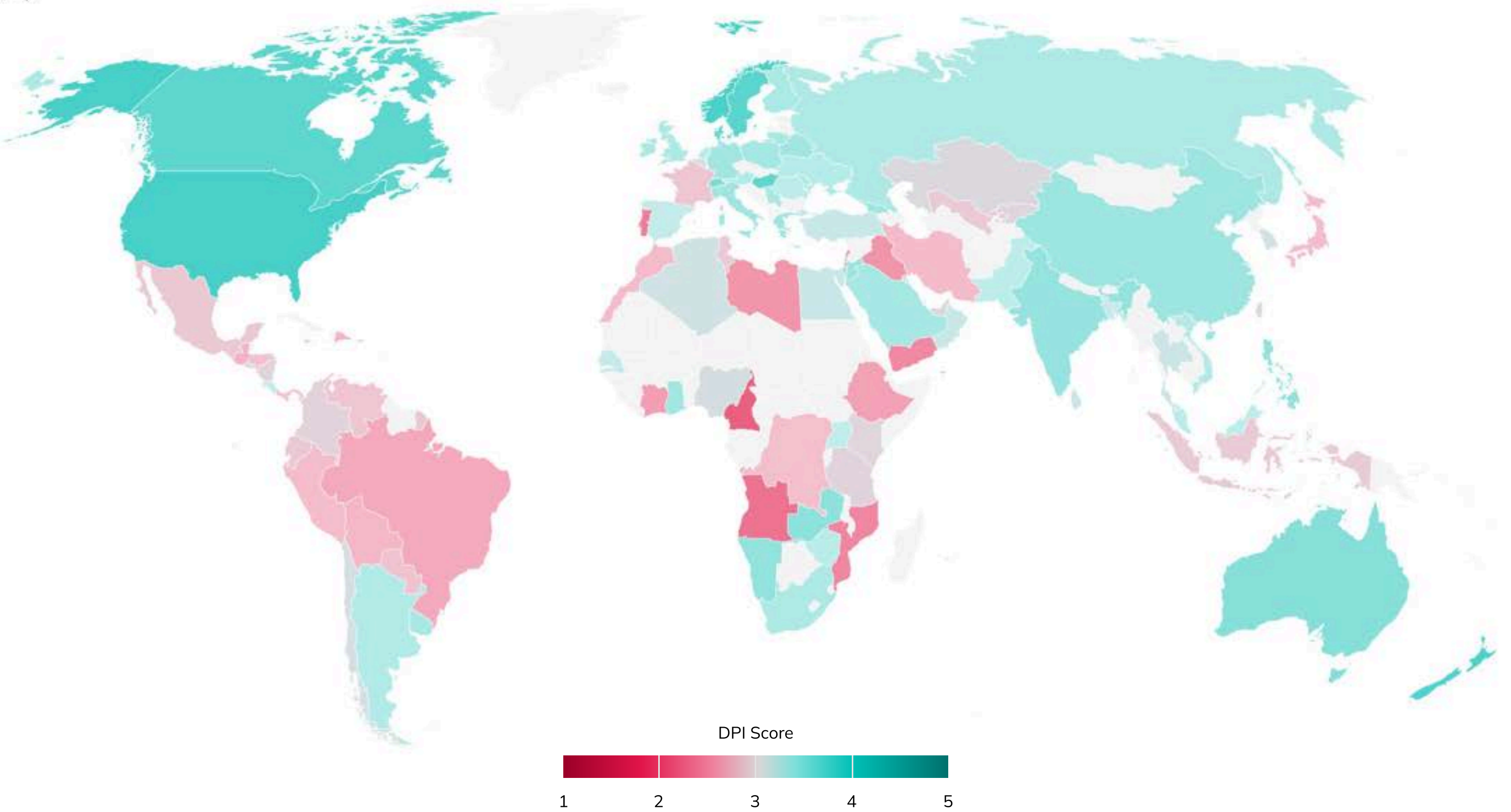


Global Perception of Civic Education

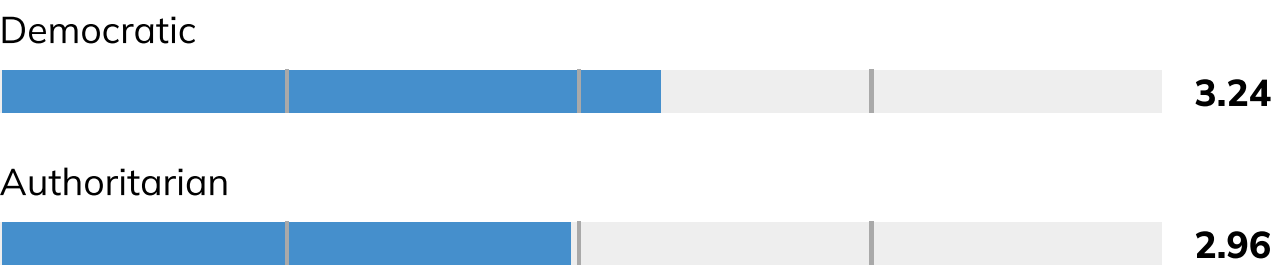
When asked how well they understand how their country’s political system functions, people in many democratic and OECD countries give relatively high ratings. The United States ranks first, followed closely by Norway, New Zealand, and Sweden. Scores are generally strong across Europe, Asia-Pacific, and North America, while much lower in countries like Mozambique, Cameroon, and Bolivia.

DPI component score: Civic education

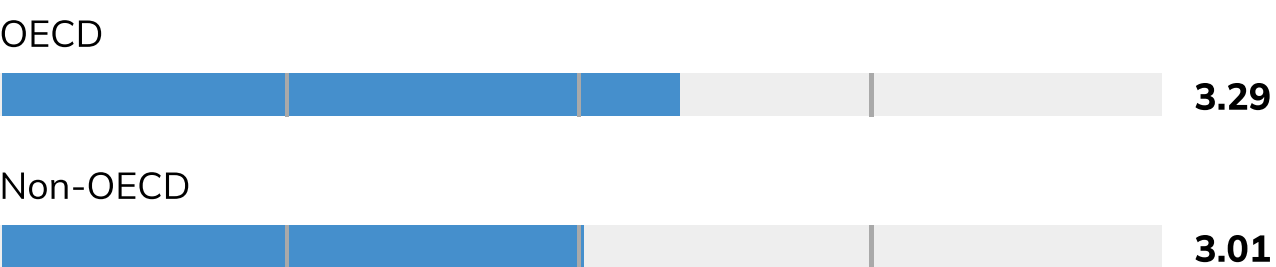
Average public perception of government performance



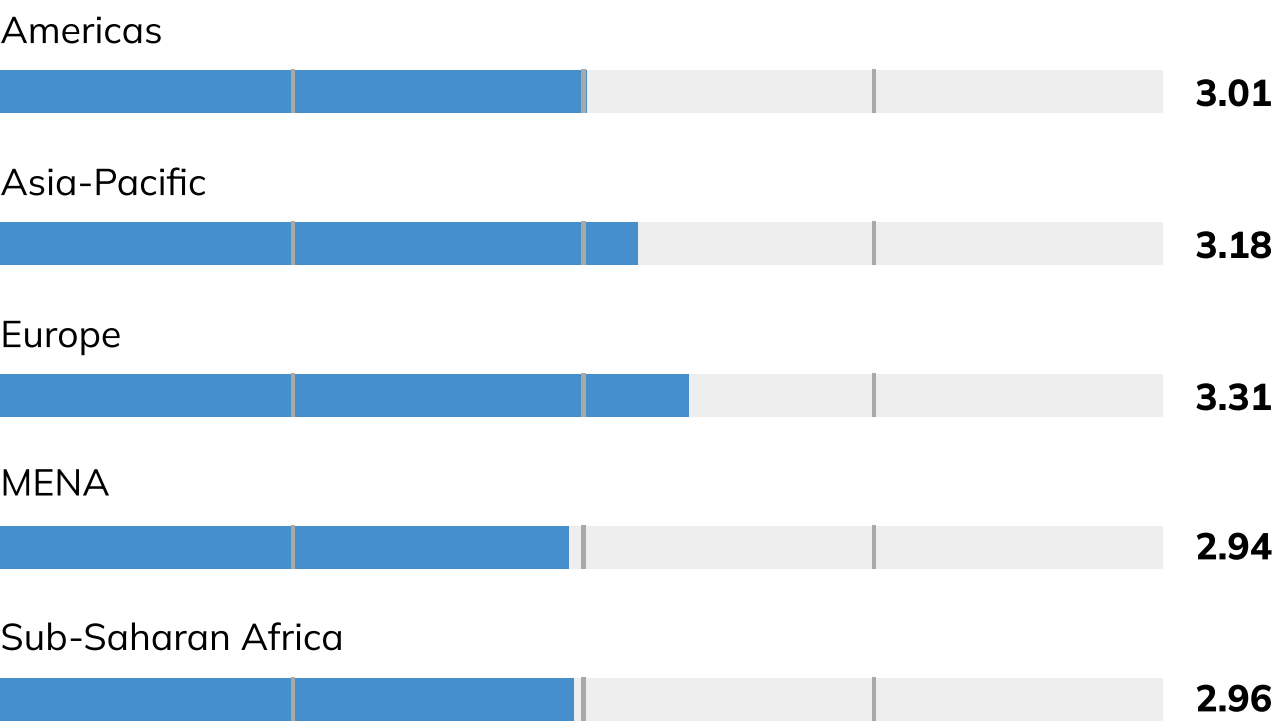
By regime type



OECD



By region



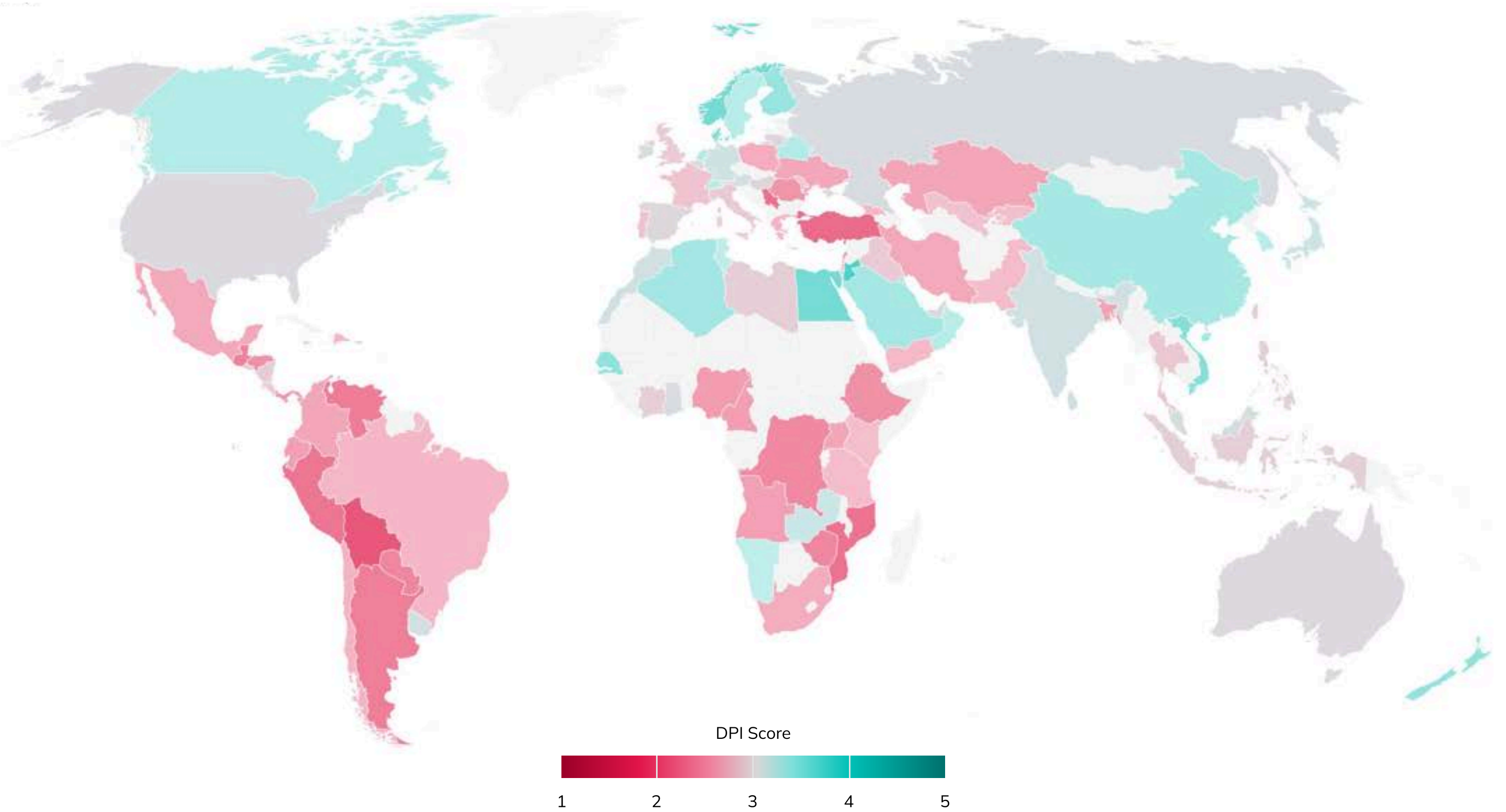
How well would you say that you understand your country’s political system and how it functions?
Very well / Fairly well / Somewhat well / Not very well / Not well at all

Global Perception of Rule of Law

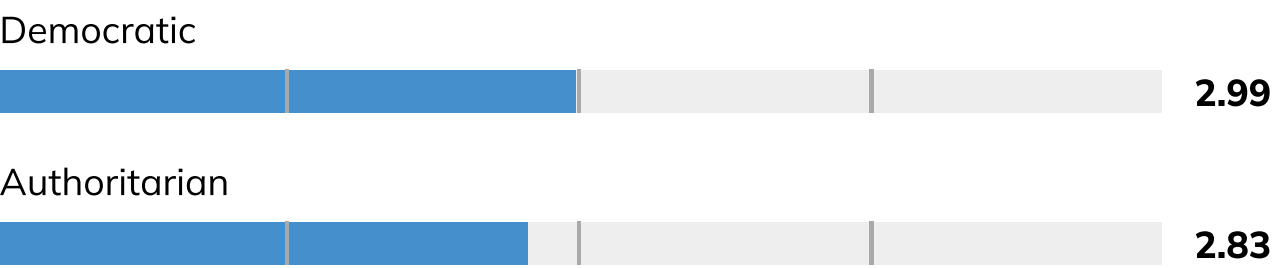
When it comes to people’s assessment of the rule of law in their countries, the results are mixed. Respondents most likely to say their courts would stop the government from violating the law are found in democracies such as Norway, Denmark, and New Zealand—but also in some authoritarian states, including Jordan, Egypt, and Vietnam. At the other end of the scale, confidence in judicial checks is markedly lower in countries like Bolivia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

DPI component score: Rule of law

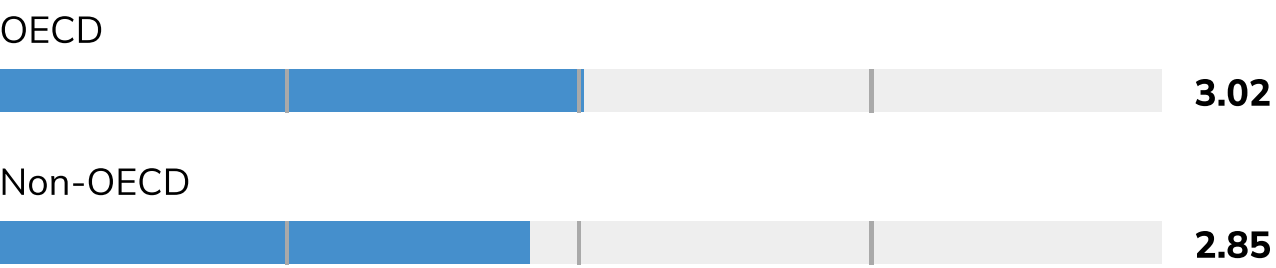
Country-level average (1-5)



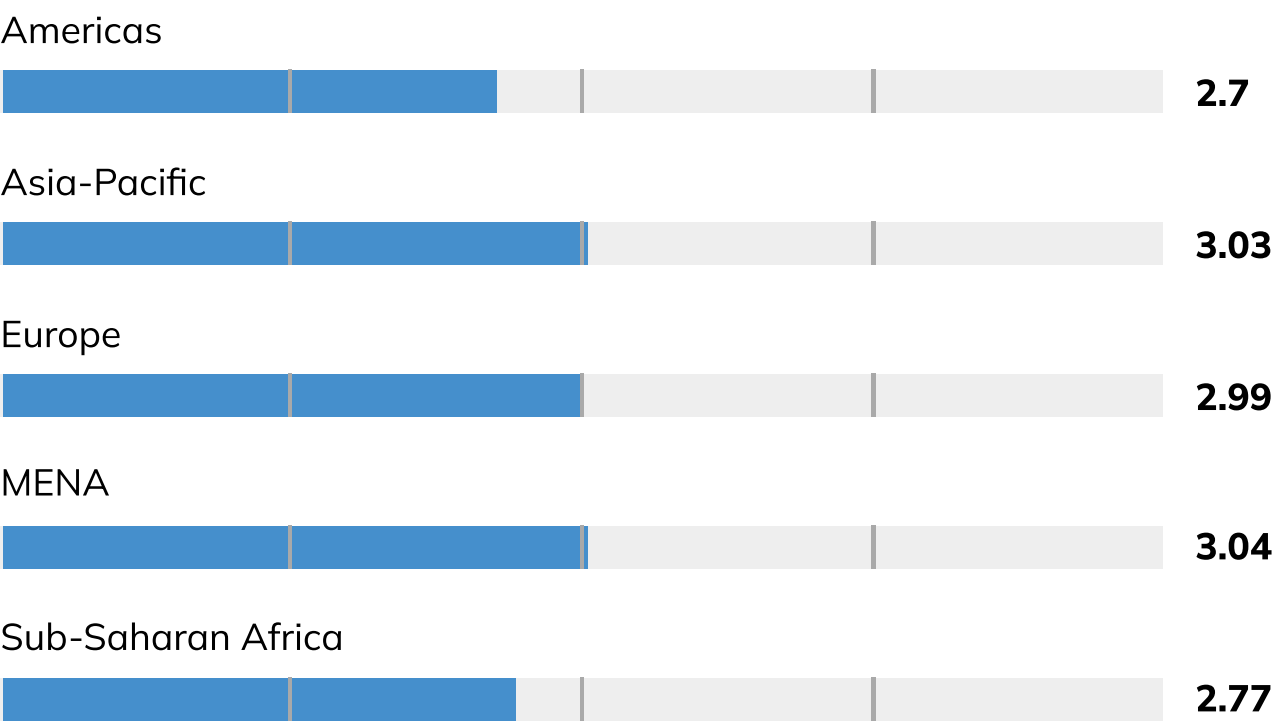
By regime type



OECD



By region



How often do you think that courts in your country make fair and impartial decisions?
Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always

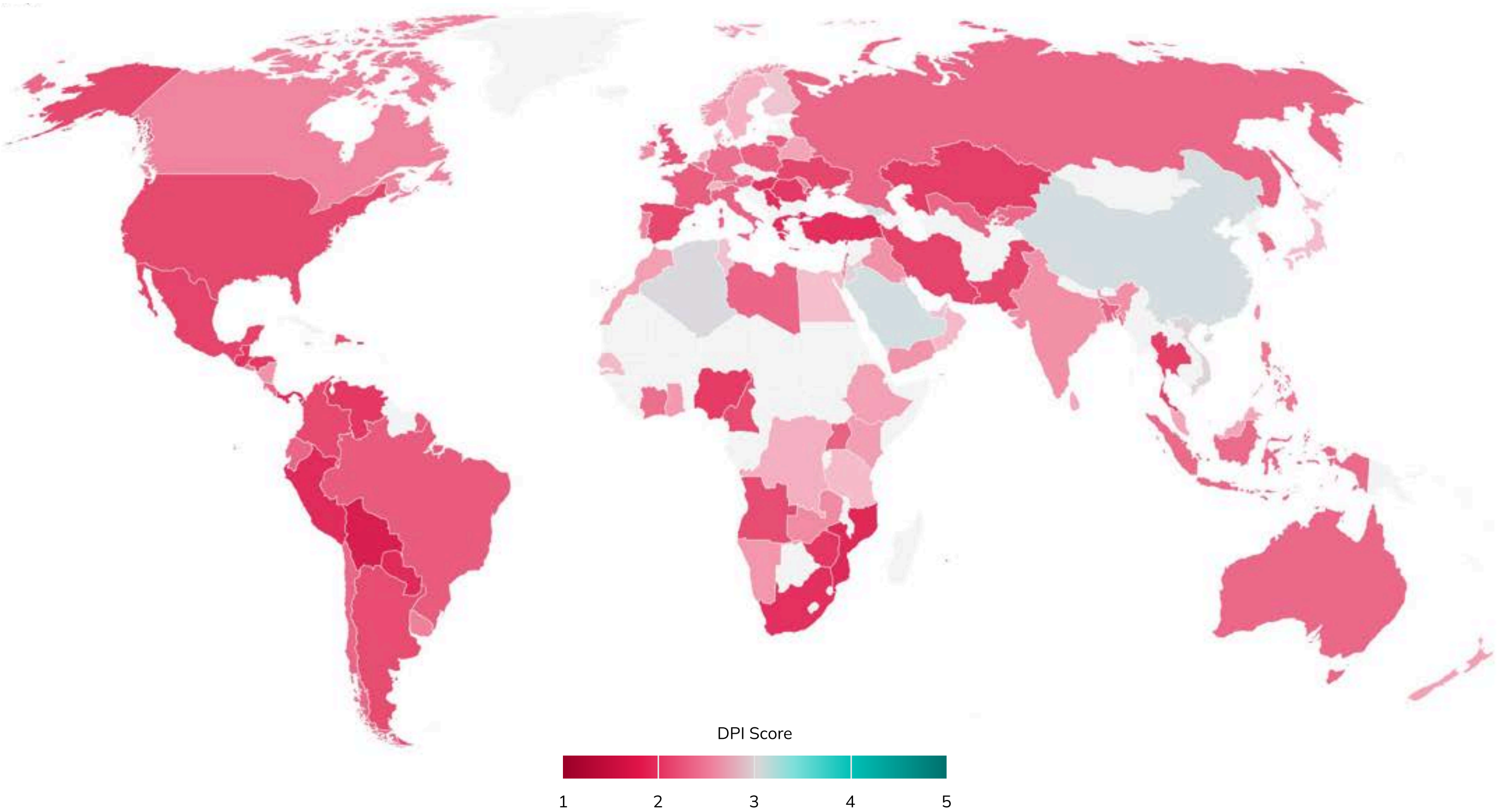
Global Perception of Government Transparency

The perception that governments are withholding important information from the public is widespread. Ratings of government transparency are lower than all other democratic components, with barely any variation between democratic, authoritarian, OECD, and non-OECD (2.38) countries.

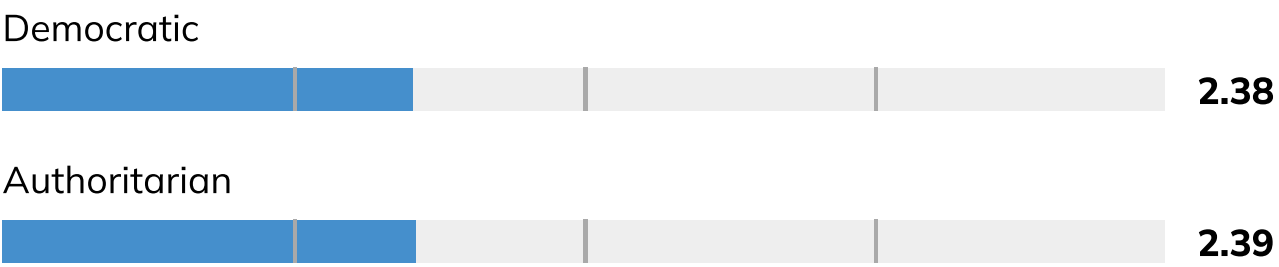
Regionally, the Americas report the most negative perceptions, with an average score of just 2.14. Sub-Saharan Africa (2.35), Europe (2.38), and Asia-Pacific (2.48) follow close behind.

DPI component score: Government transparency

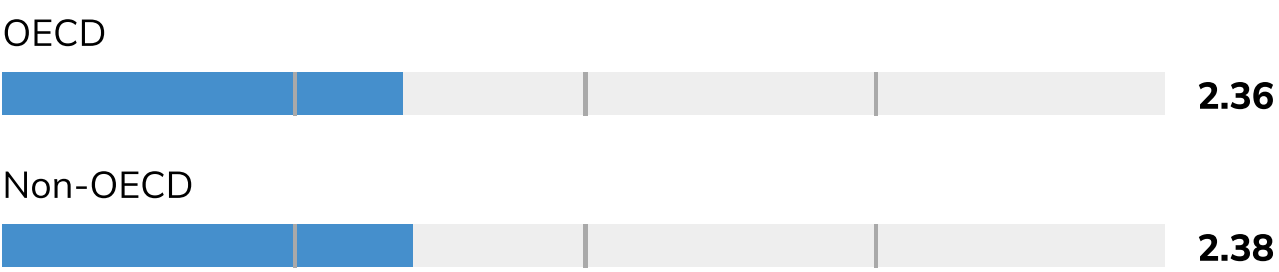
Country-level average (1-5)



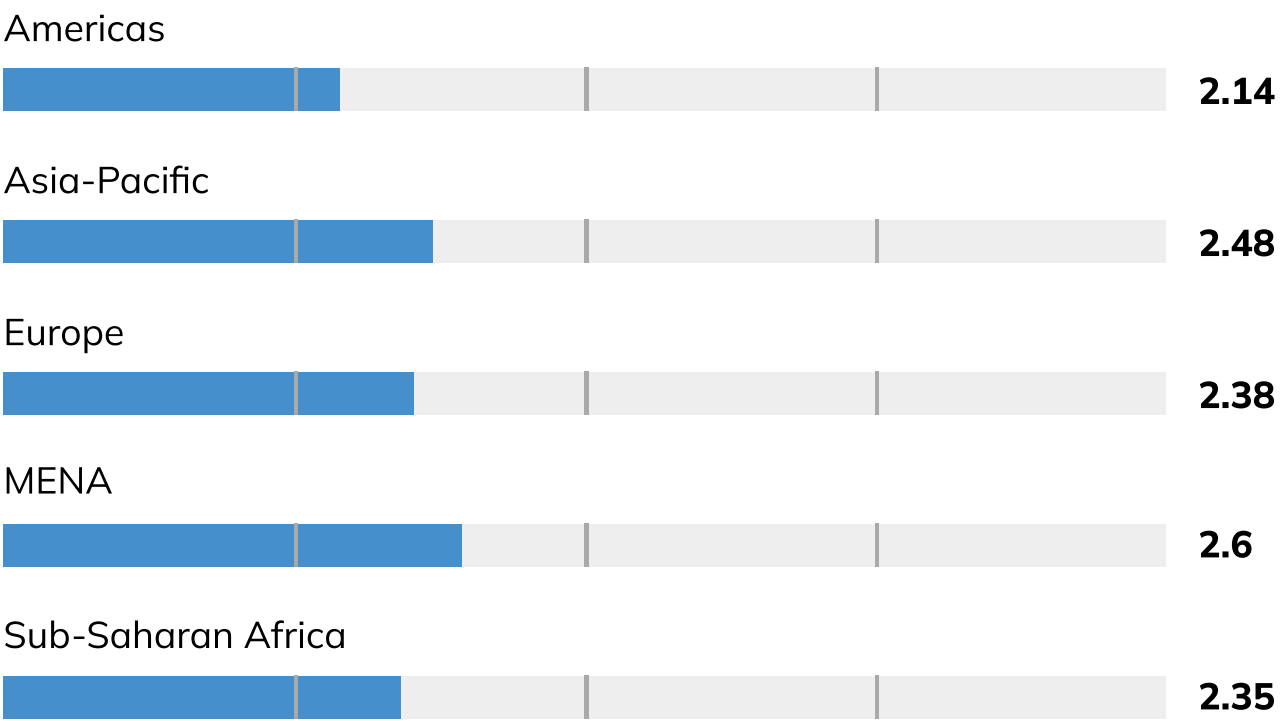
By regime type



OECD



By region



How often do you think the government withholds important information from the public?
Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Always

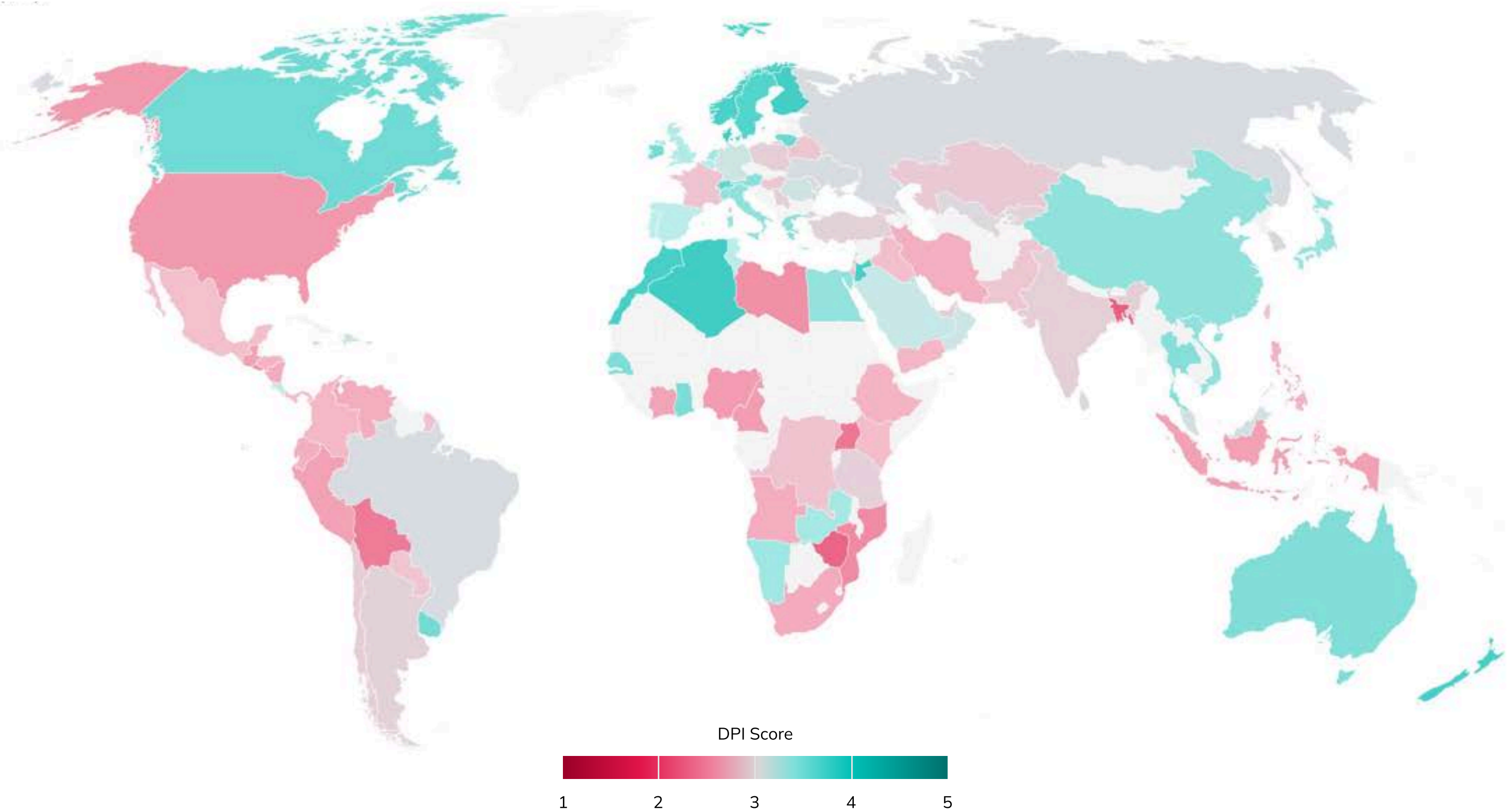
Global Perception of Transition of Power

Citizens are mixed about whether or not they think power can change hands peacefully in their country. Confidence in peaceful transition of power are highest in Europe and the Asia–Pacific, like Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, and Japan. Notably, many MENA countries such as Algeria, Jordan, and Morocco also scored surprisingly high, with respondents indicating lower concern about violence following a change in leadership.

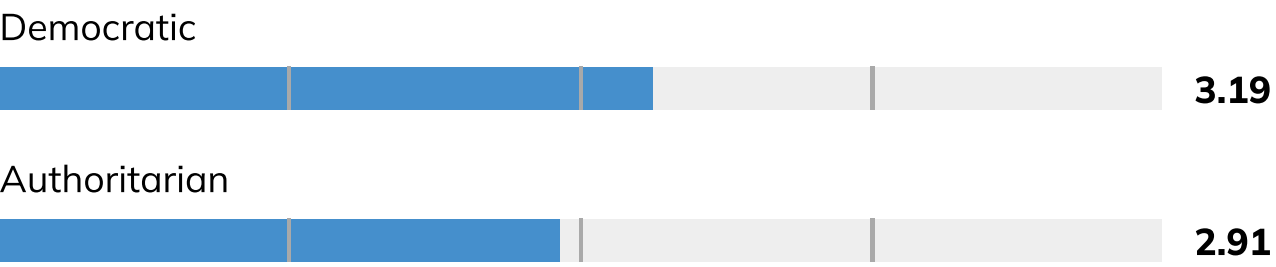
By contrast, concern is more widespread in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where confidence in peaceful transitions tends to be lower. Among established democracies, the United States stands out for its relatively low score — one of the lowest among OECD countries.

DPI component score: Peaceful transition of power

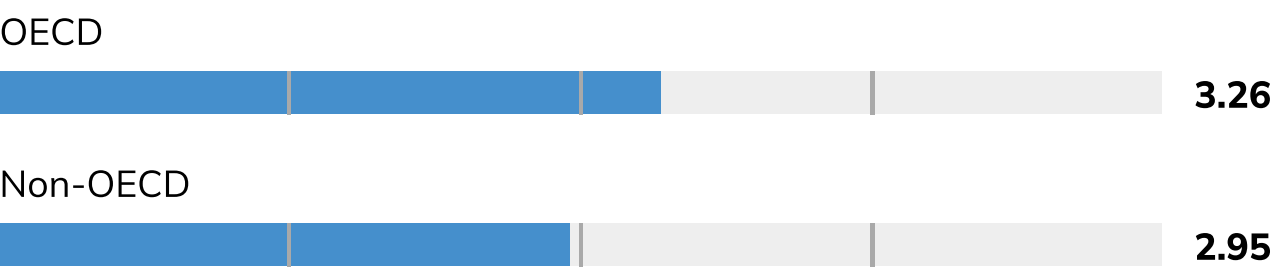
Country-level average (1-5)



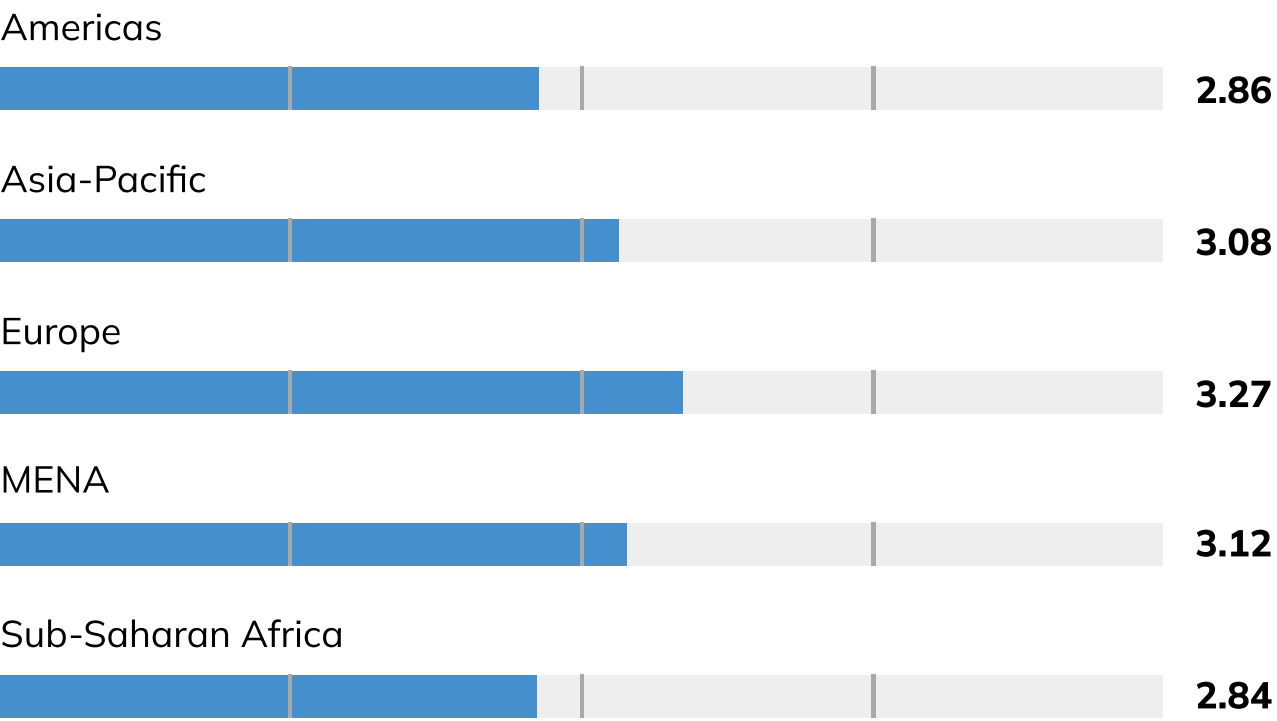
By regime type



OECD



By region



How likely do you think it is that a future change of government in your country will cause violence?
Very unlikely / Somewhat unlikely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat likely / Very likely

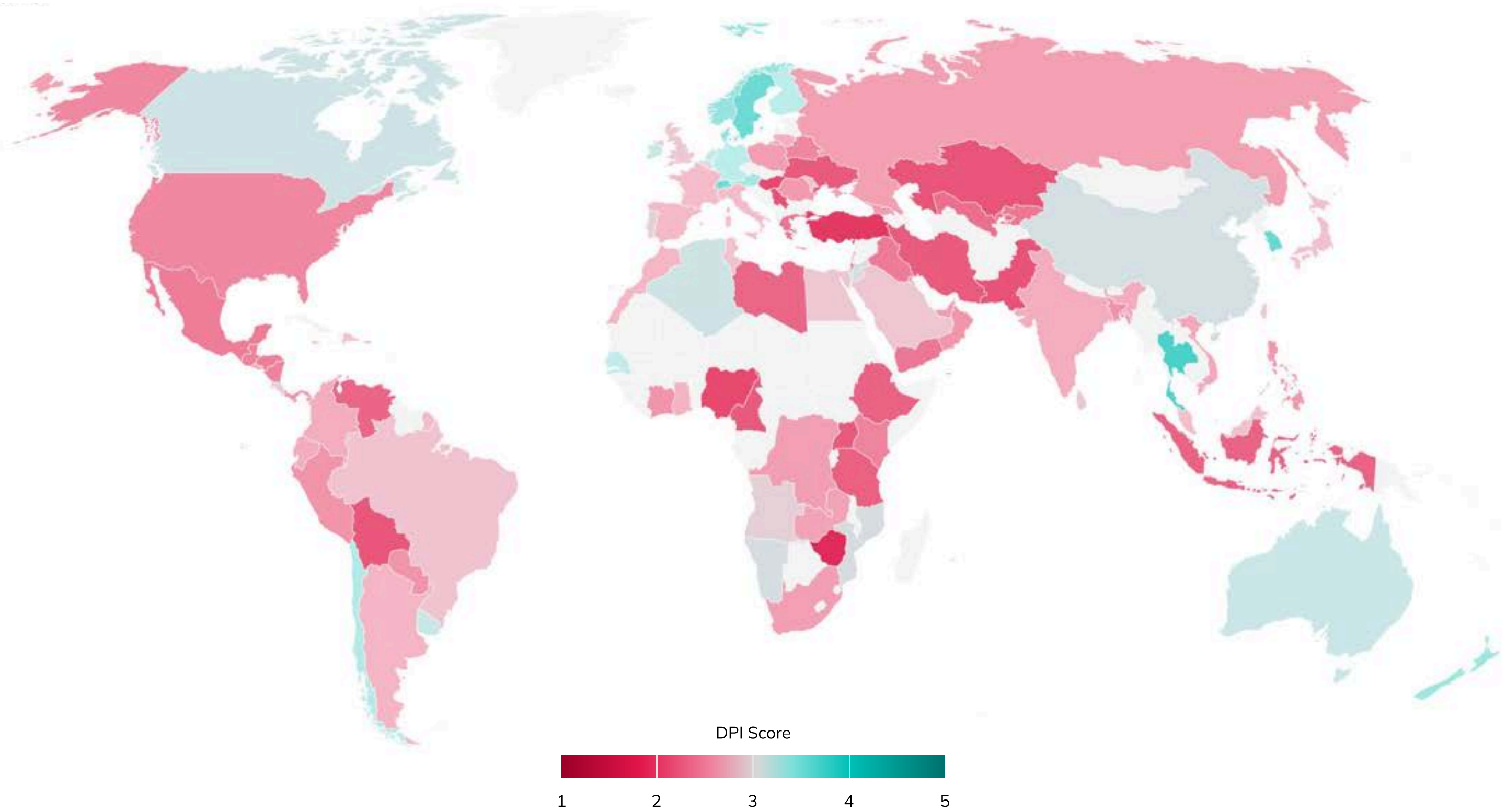
Global Perception of Freedom of Speech

In most countries, citizens do not believe their government is respecting the right to free speech. When asked whether “critics of the government—such as journalists and civil society groups—can speak freely without facing consequences,” public ratings were often negative, even in established democracies. Sweden, Switzerland, South Korea, and Thailand stand out with the highest public ratings.

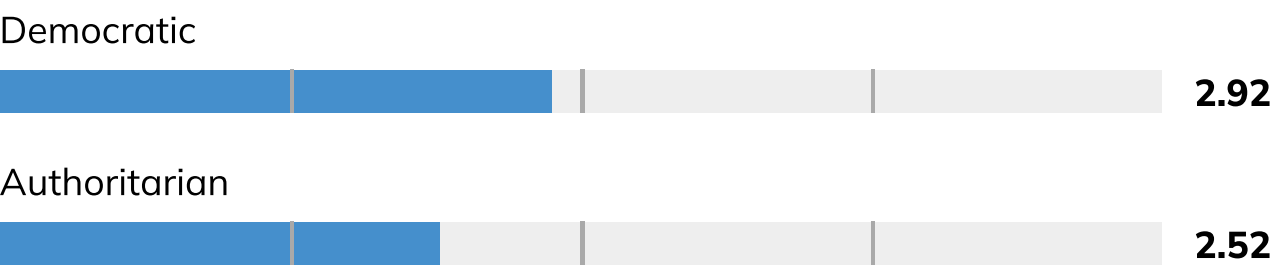
By contrast, perceptions are far more negative in authoritarian countries—especially in Turkey, Zimbabwe, and Pakistan. The United States ranks lower than most other advanced democracies.

DPI component score: Freedom of speech

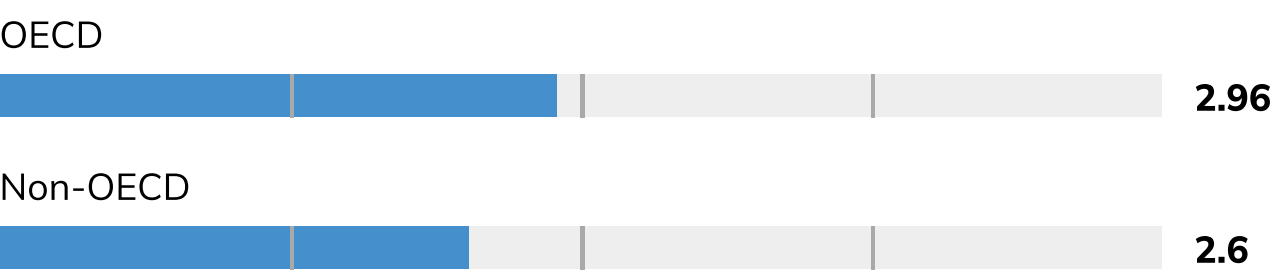
Country-level average (1-5)



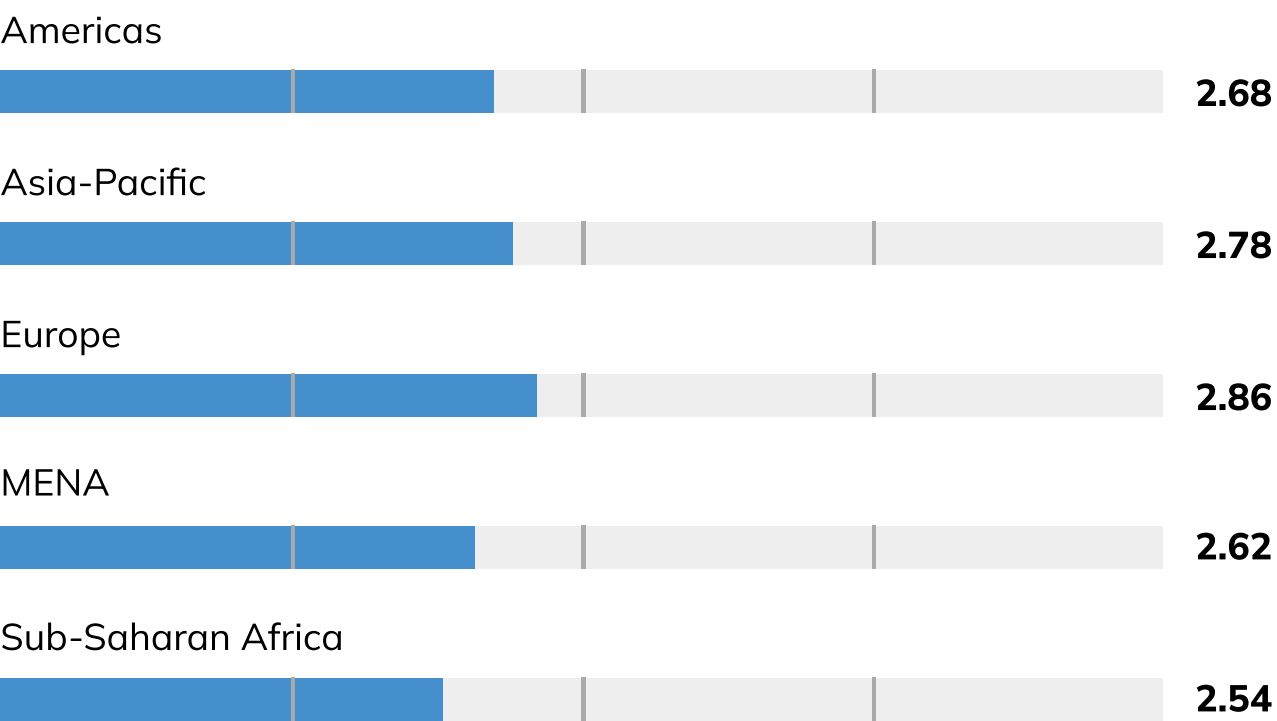
By regime type



OECD



By region



How likely do you think it is that journalists or civil society organizations in your country face negative consequences when criticizing the government?
Very unlikely / Somewhat unlikely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat likely / Very likely

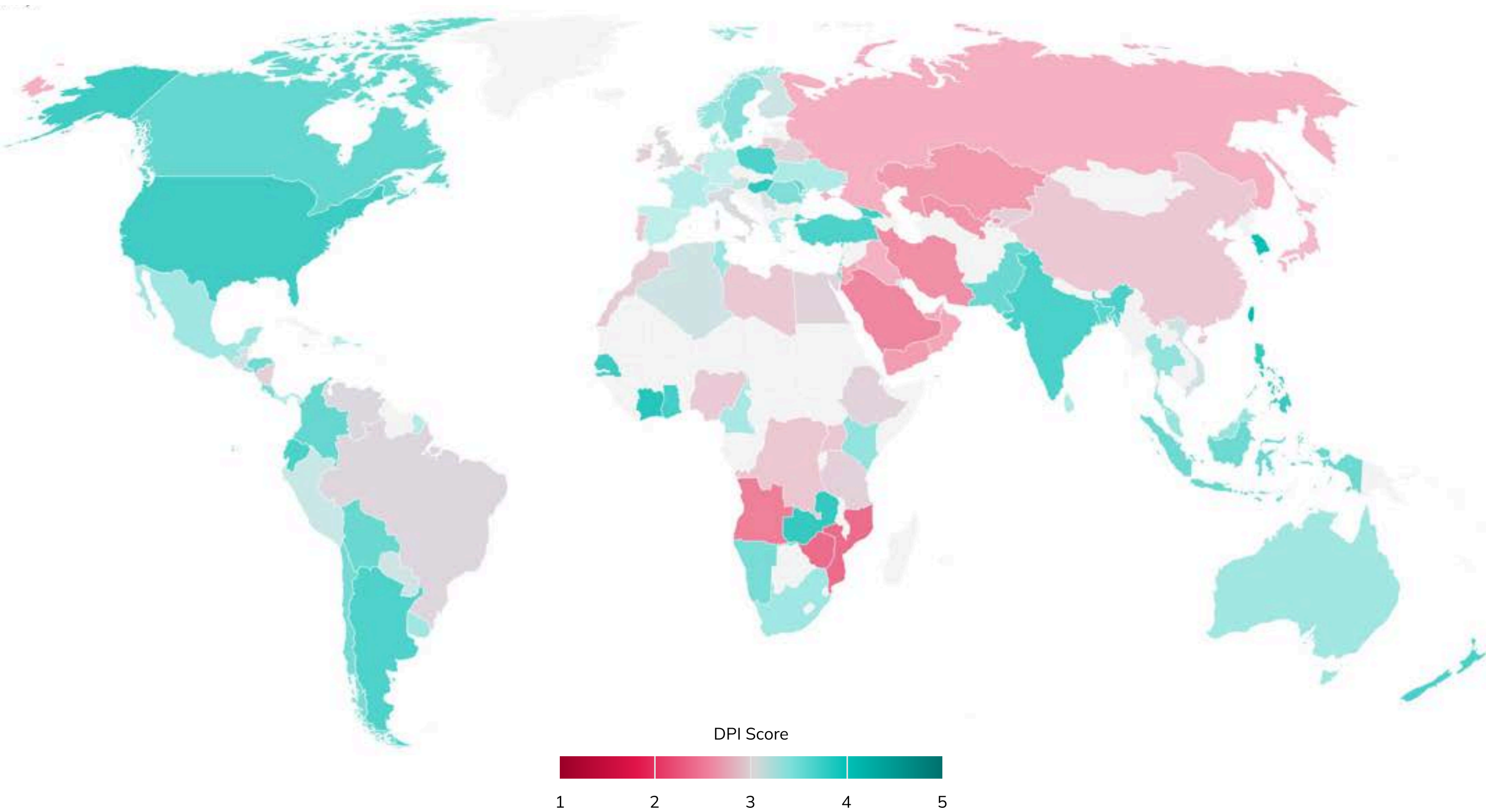
Global Perception of Impact of Elections

People express broadly positive views about the role elections play in shaping political outcomes—second only to civic education among the eight components. Citizens in democratic and OECD countries report higher scores, though ratings are relatively positive across regime types.

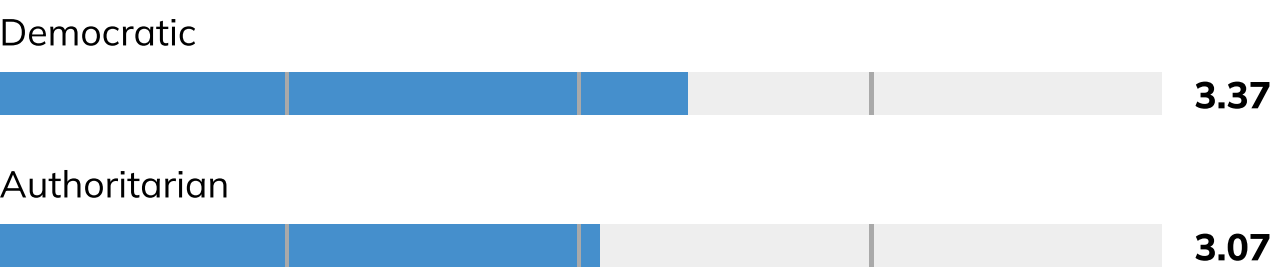
Respondents in Taiwan, South Korea, and Zambia report the highest scores. At the other end, people in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Angola are far more skeptical.

DPI component score: Impact of elections

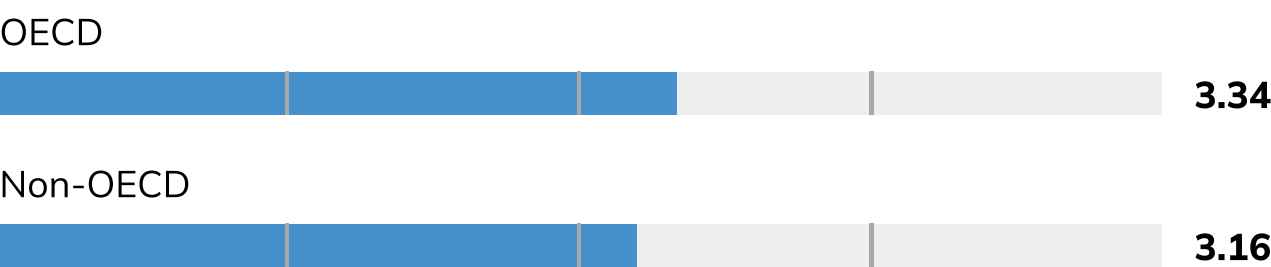
Country-level average (1-5)



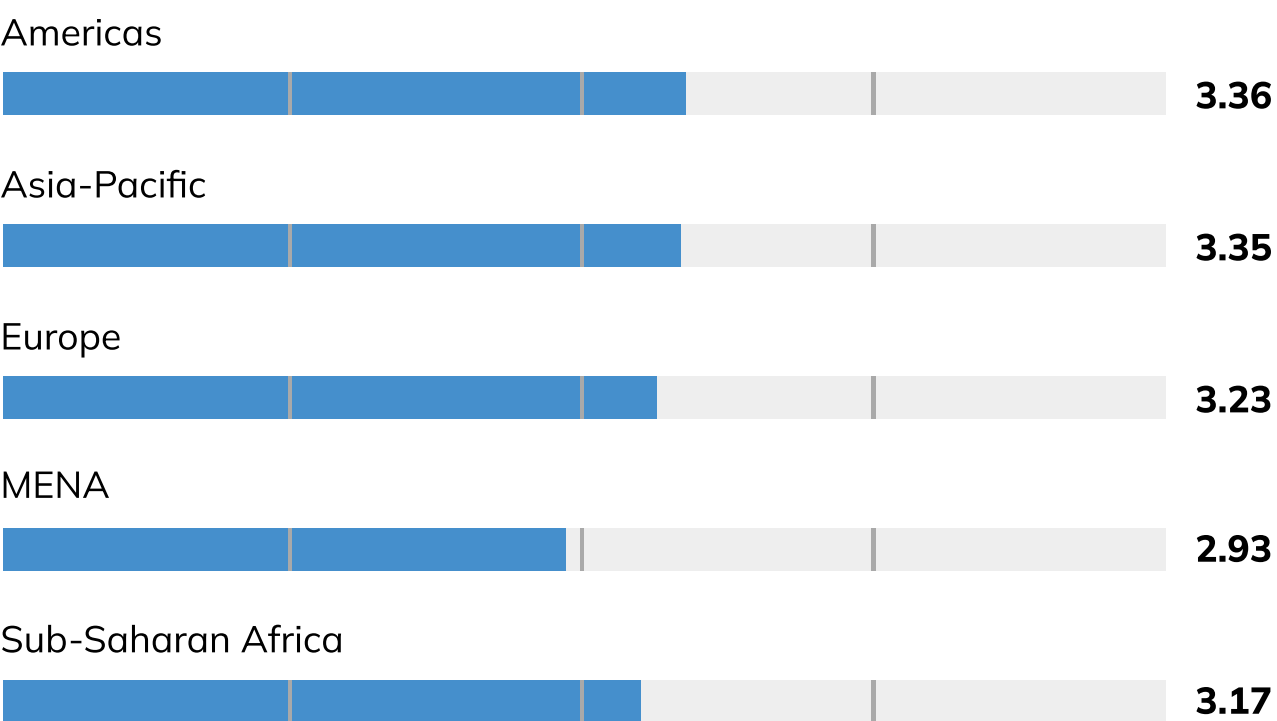
By regime type



OECD



By region



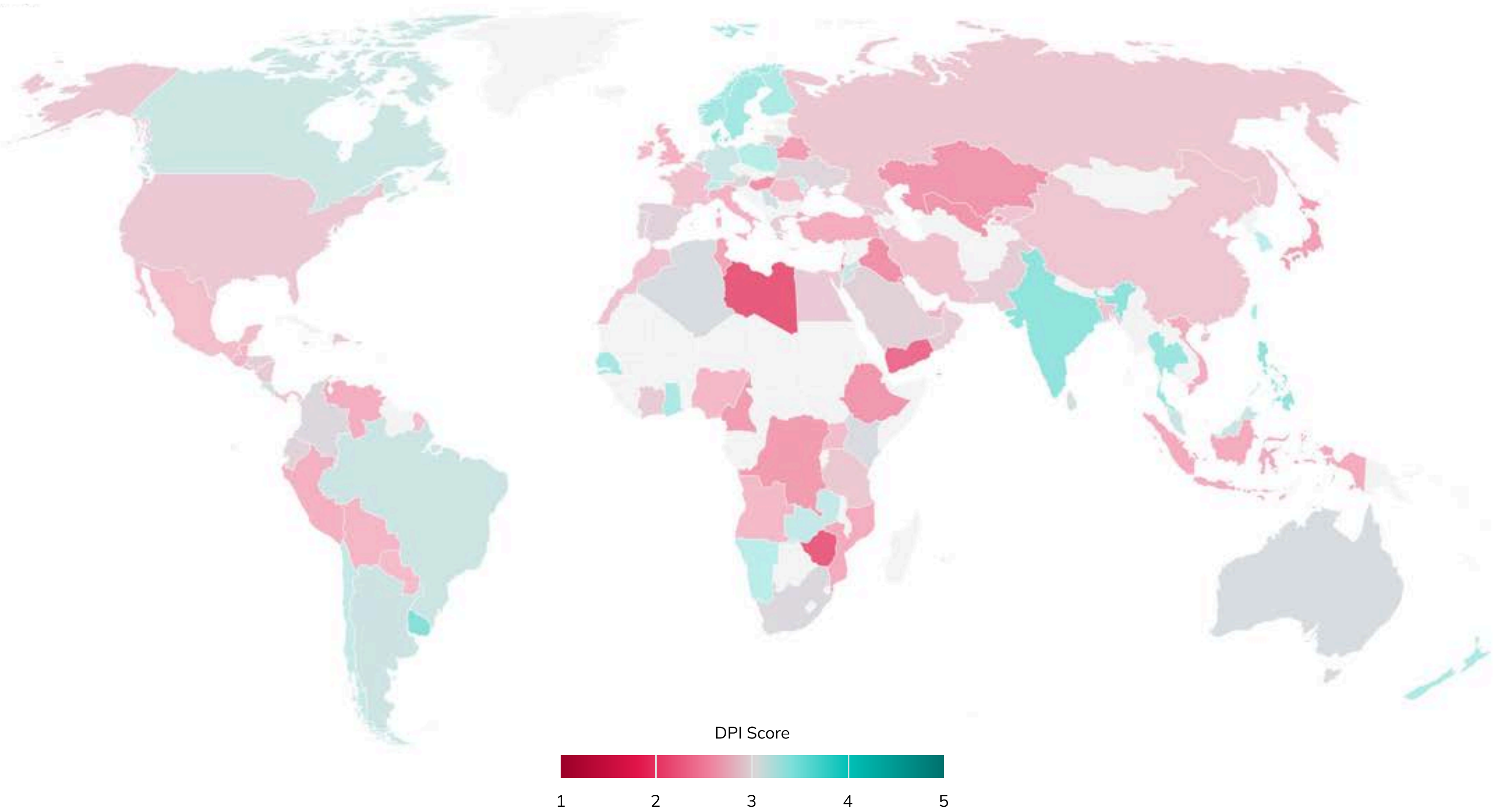
How much impact do you think elections can have on your country's political direction?
Very big impact / Big impact / Moderate impact / Small impact / No impact

Global Perception of Political Pluralism

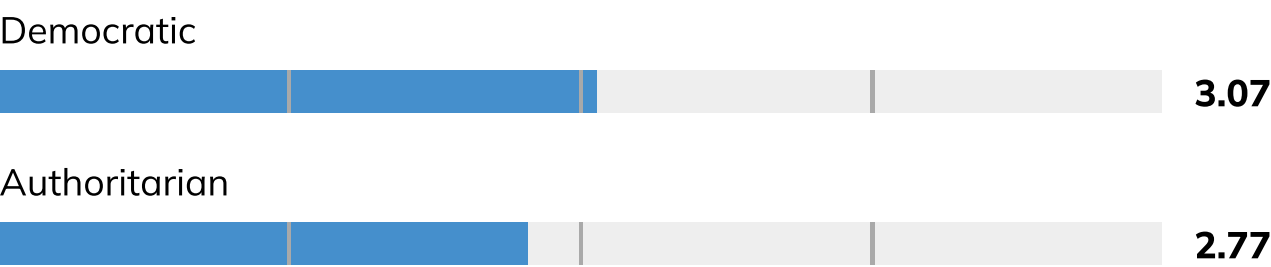
Perceptions of political representation are uneven across countries. Respondents in Uruguay, India, and the Nordic states report the highest levels of belief that different political views are reflected in their systems. By contrast, large majorities in Libya, Zimbabwe, and Palestine see limited political diversity.

DPI component score: Political pluralism

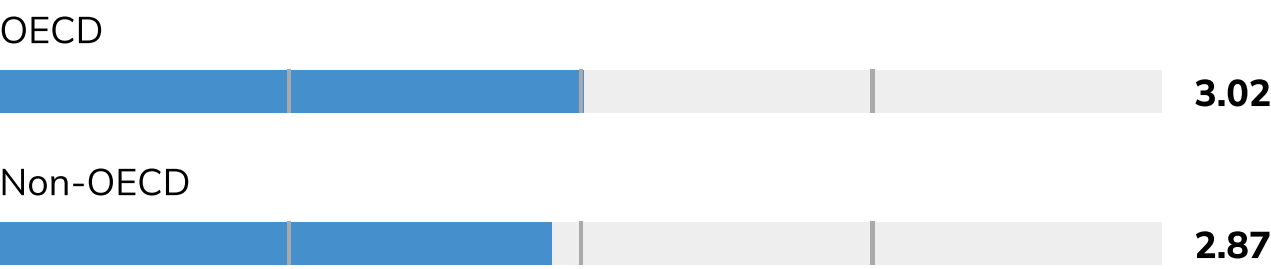
Country-level average (1-5)



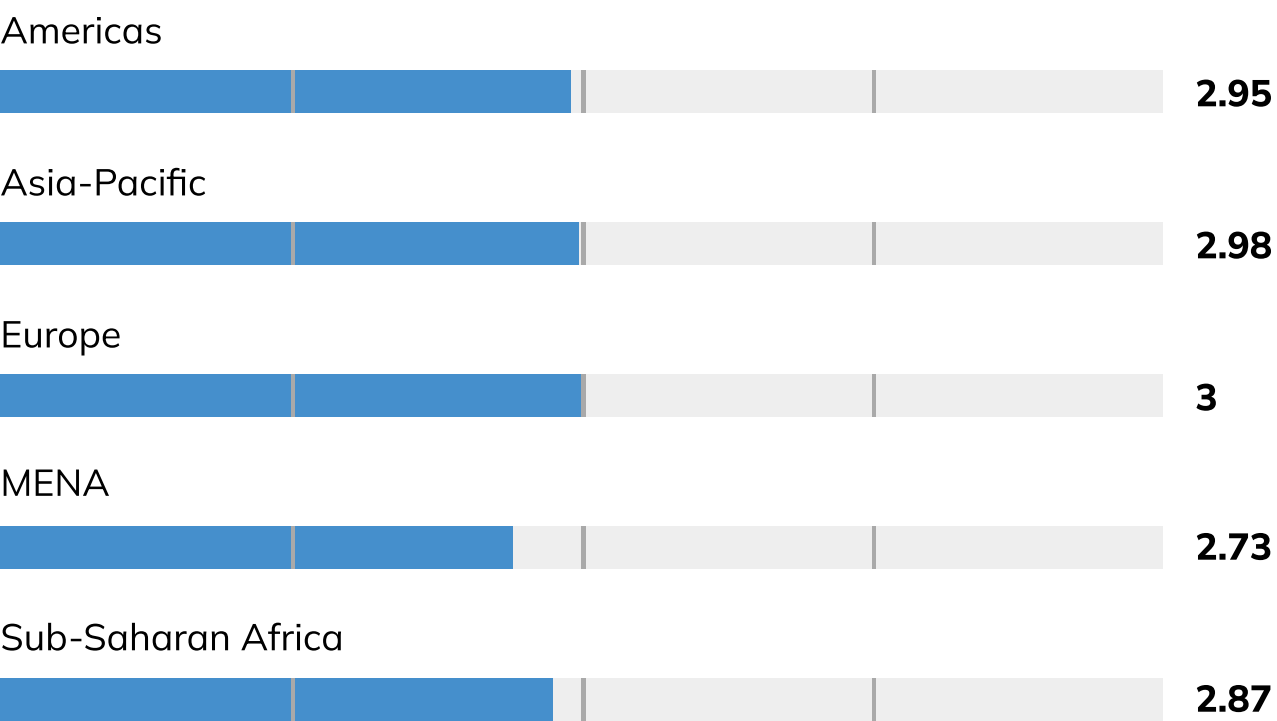
By regime type



OECD



By region



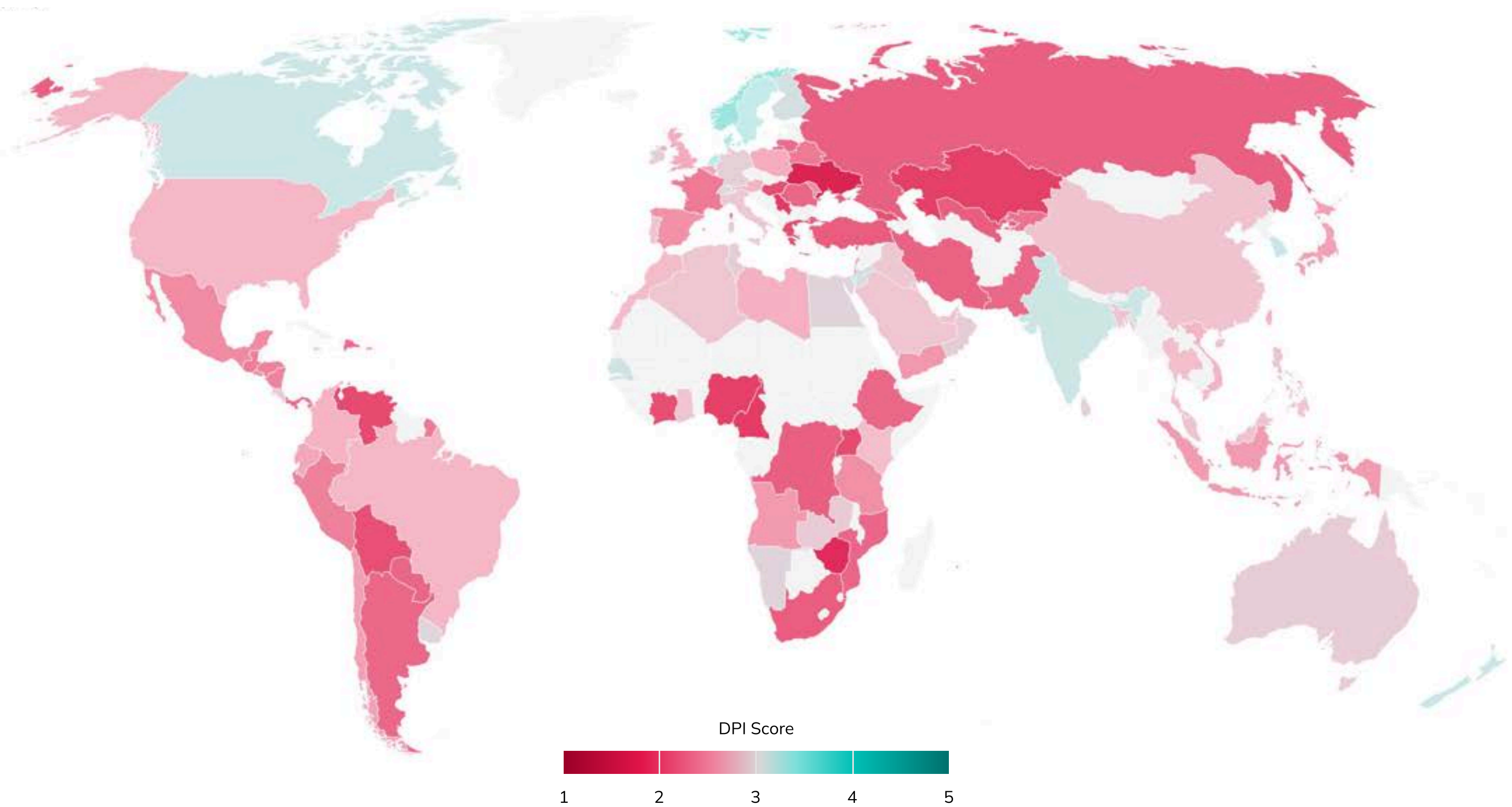
To what extent do you think different political beliefs are represented in your country's political system?
To a very large extent / To a large extent / To some extent / To a small extent / Not at all

Global Perception of Separation of Powers

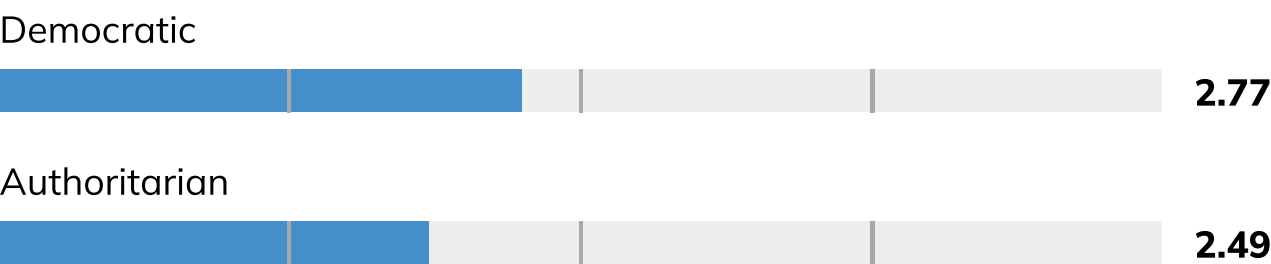
Across all countries surveyed, people report relatively low confidence that courts will hold governments accountable. Average scores are below 3 in every region and regime type. Democratic and OECD countries rate higher than authoritarian and non-OECD countries, but the gap is modest. Northern European citizens give the highest overall ratings of their government, while Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas score lowest. Among individual countries, perceptions are strongest in Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands—while countries like Ukraine, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria receive the weakest evaluations.

DPI component score: Separation of powers

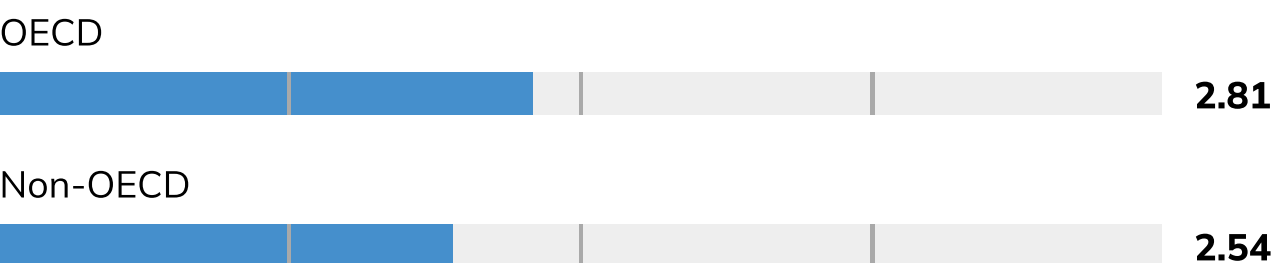
Country-level average (1-5)



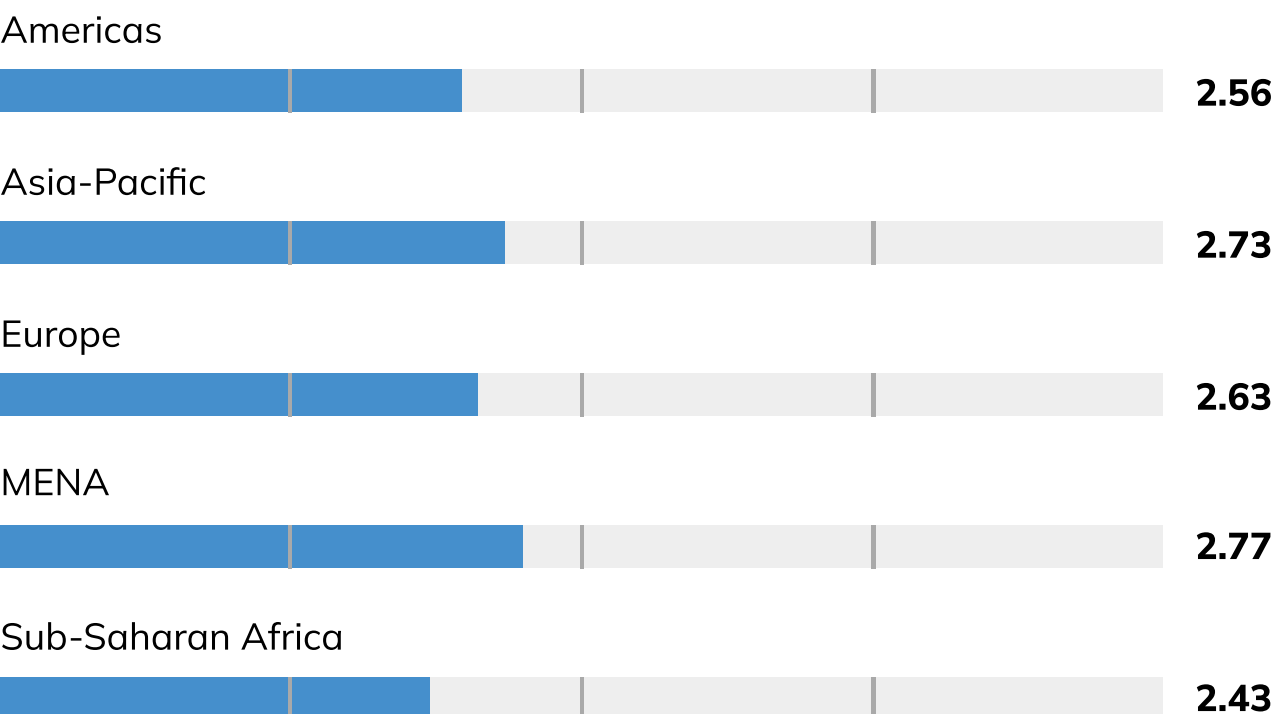
By regime type



OECD



By region



How likely do you think it is that courts in your country will stop the government if it violates the law?
Very likely / Somewhat likely / Neutral/Uncertain / Somewhat unlikely / Very unlikely

Security and Defense

This chapter explores how people around the world view security, defense, and the principles that guide international relations today. As global tensions evolve, public opinion reveals both a strong commitment to international law and significant concerns about potential military conflicts. The findings highlight how citizens prioritize diplomacy and alliances over more confrontational defense strategies, while also shedding light on regional differences in willingness to personally defend one's country. The chapter also examines the divides in public opinion on defense spending, particularly in Europe, reflecting the broader complexities facing policymakers.

This chapter draws on data from a larger report on security and defense

Please visit niradata.com/product/security to access the main report and dataset

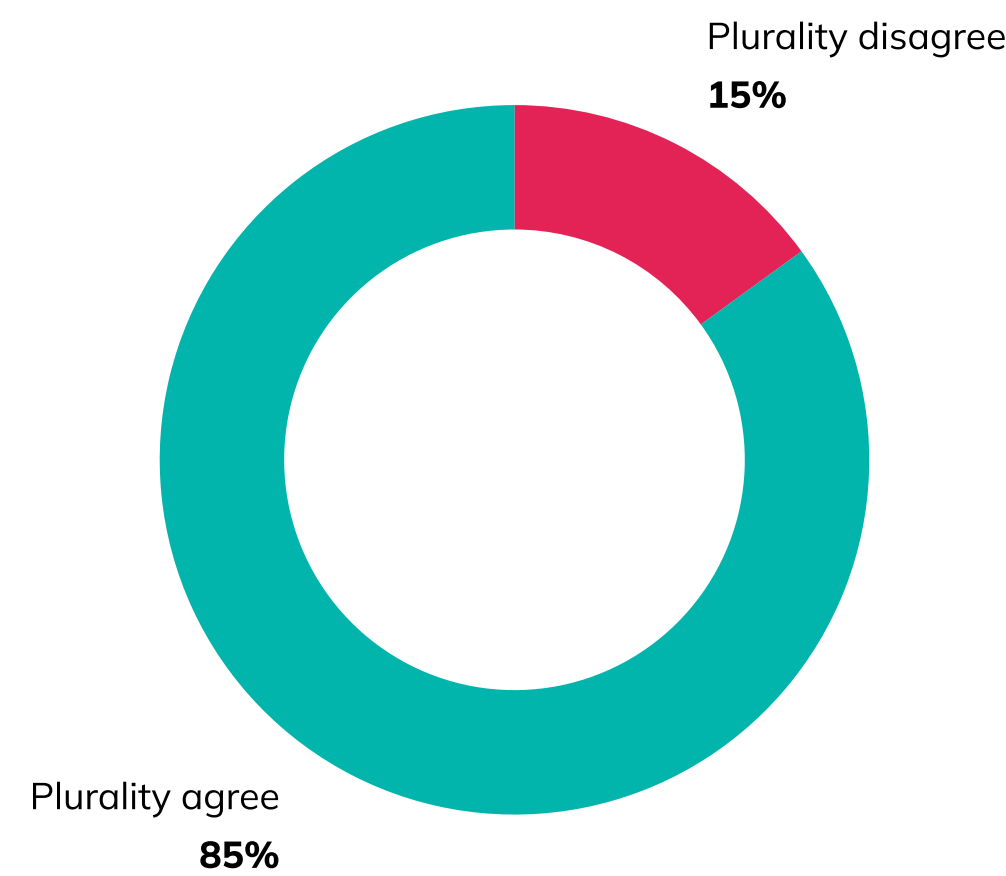
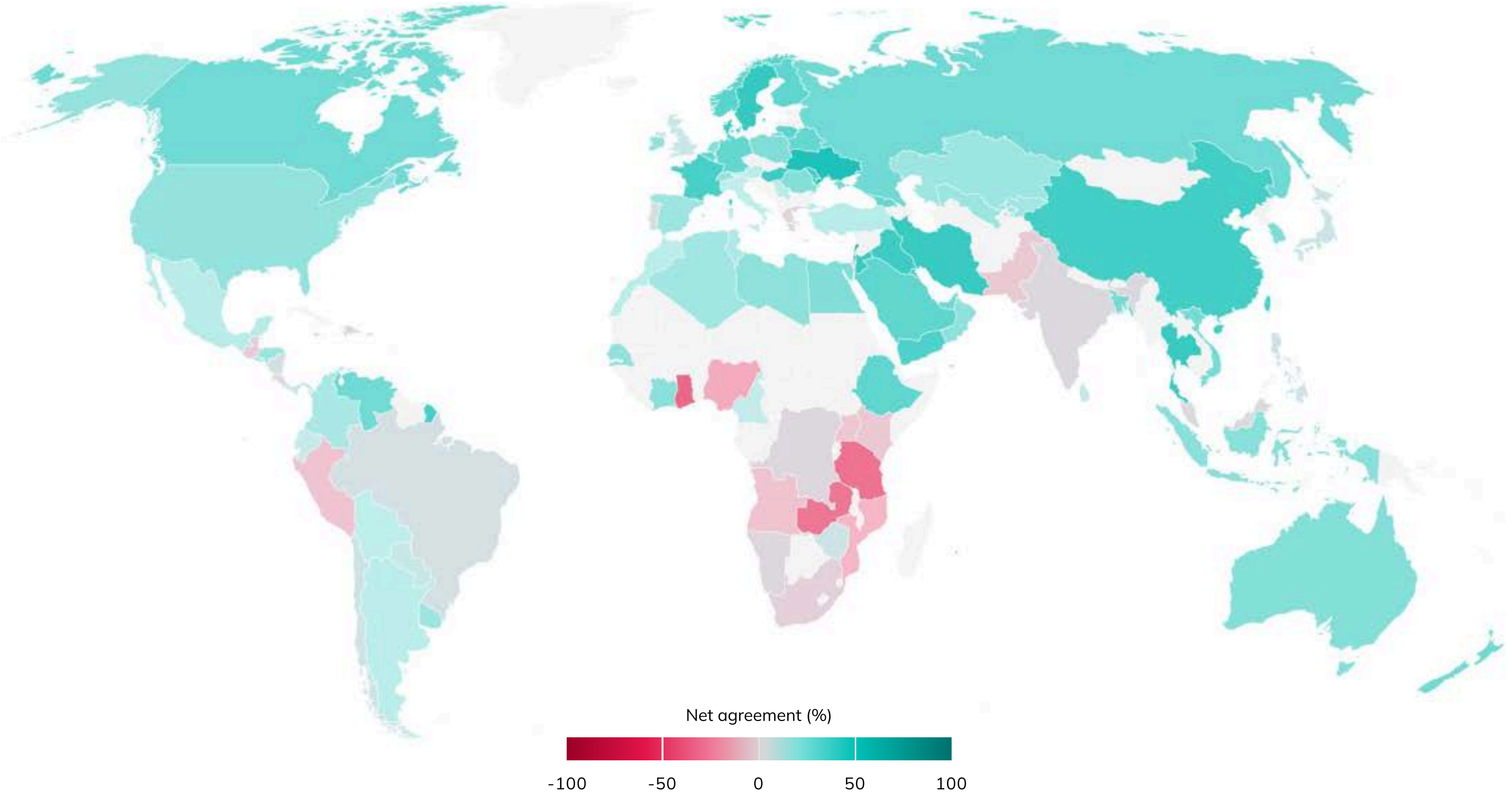
Attitudes Towards a Rules-Based World Order

Most people across the world support a rules-based international order. Asked whether countries should follow international laws even when it limits their freedom of action, an average of 49% of people agree across all 100 countries surveyed, while only 32% disagree, resulting in a net agreement of +17%.

Support is especially strong in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, with high net agreement in places like Ukraine, Palestine, and Thailand. A few countries—mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—showed lower levels of agreement, including Ghana, Zambia, and Pakistan.

Most people agree that countries should follow international laws

Net agreement: % agree - % disagree



In 85 out of the 100 countries surveyed, more people agree than disagree with the following statement:

“Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action.”

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
“Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action.”

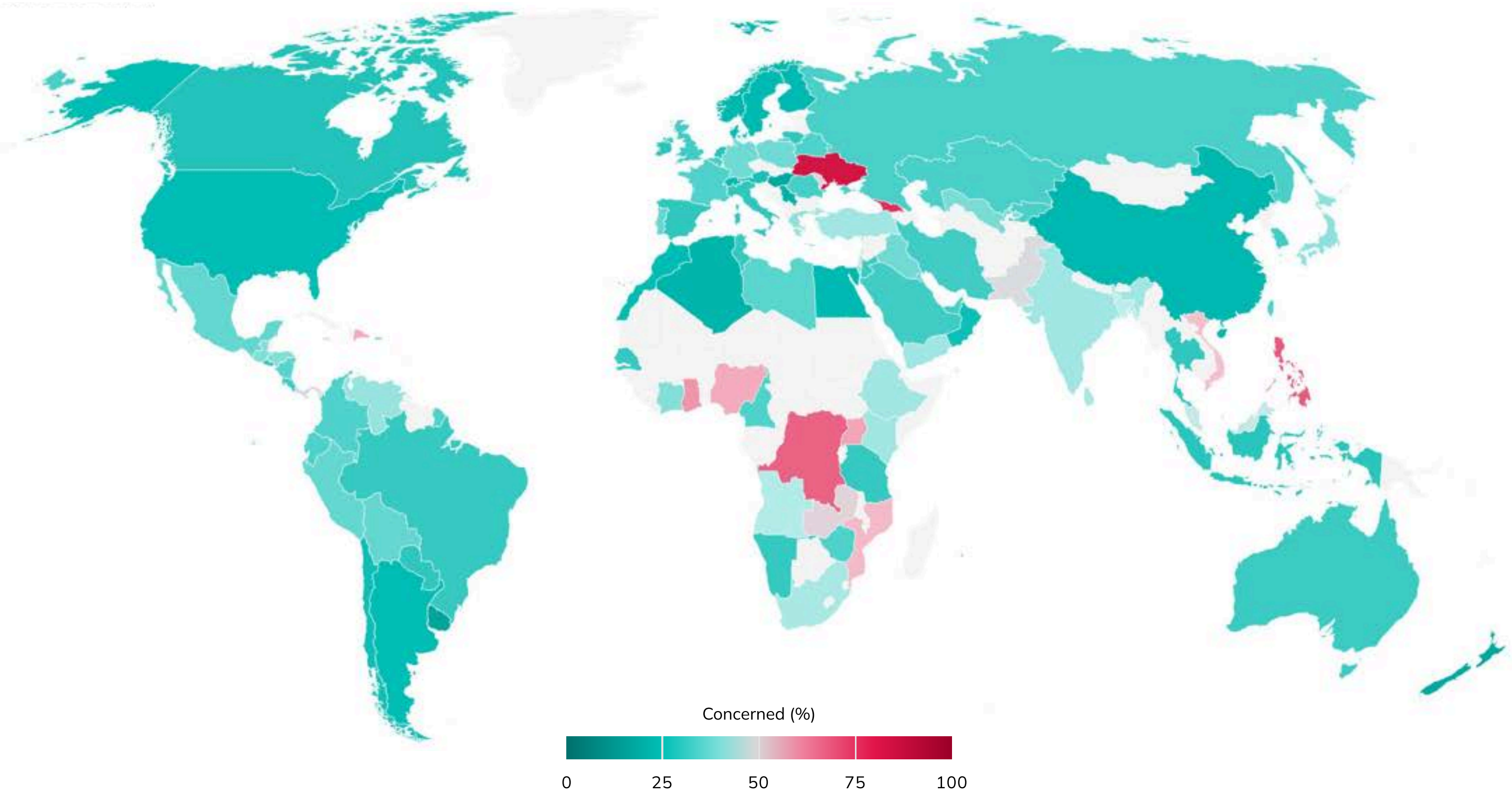
Fear of Foreign Attack

Most people around the world are not very concerned about the possibility of being attacked by another country. The highest levels of concern are concentrated in places with active or recent conflict — including Ukraine, Georgia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo — as well as parts of the Middle East, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

By contrast, concern is notably low in the United States and China, and in northern European countries like Sweden, Finland, and Norway.

Fear of foreign attack is highest in Ukraine, Georgia, and the Philippines

% Very or Extremely concerned



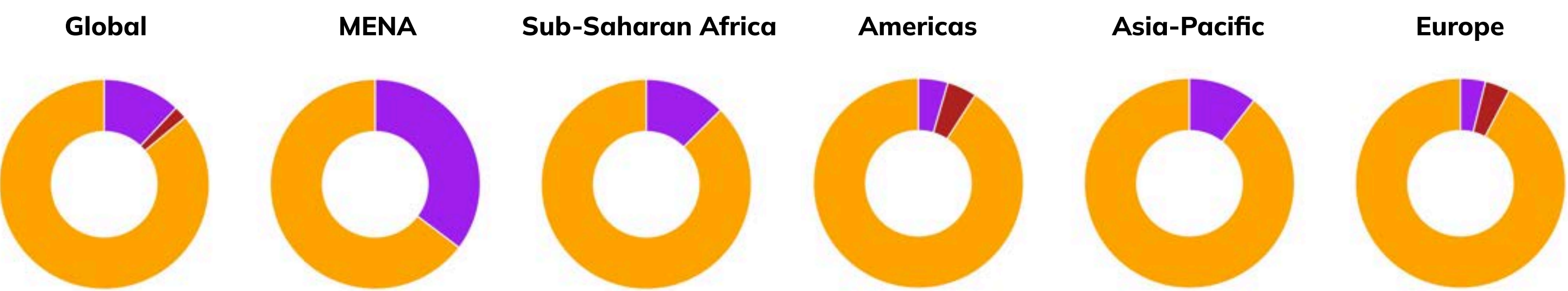
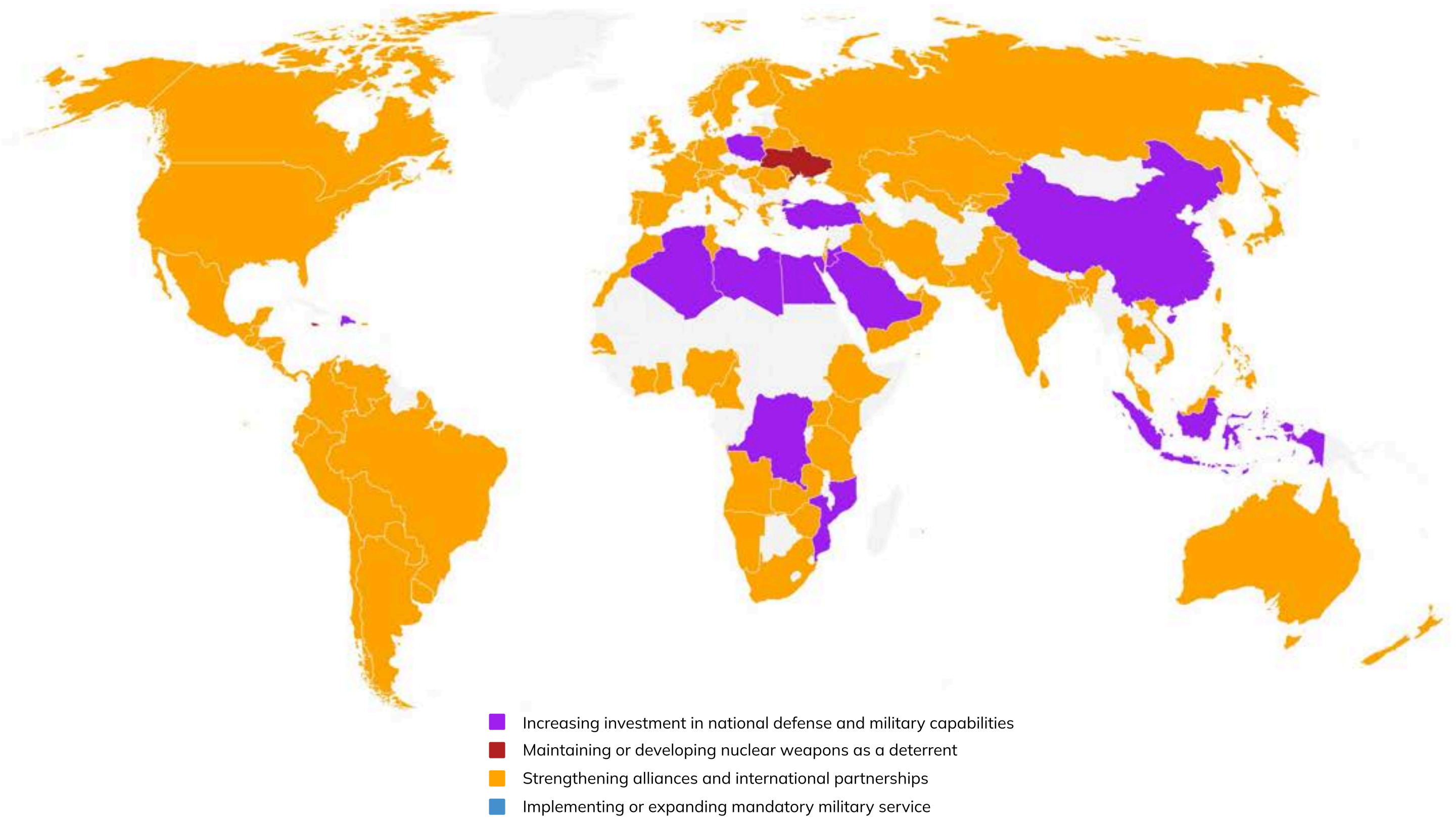
How concerned are you about the possibility of your country being attacked by another country in the near future?
Not at all concerned / Slightly concerned / Moderately concerned / Very concerned / Extremely concerned

Priorities for Defense

In nearly every country surveyed, people say the best way to protect against foreign threats is by strengthening international partnerships — not through increased defense spending, nuclear deterrence and especially not through mandatory military service. “Strengthening alliances” is the top priority in 87 out of 100 countries, often by wide margins. Even in countries with high threat perceptions, publics favor cooperation over confrontation. The few exceptions include Ukraine, where people prioritize nuclear deterrence, and countries like China, Poland, and Turkey, where boosting national military capacity ranks first.

Most countries prioritize alliances over military buildup

Most selected response per country



The MENA region stands out as the most focused on military buildup, with more countries prioritizing increased investment in defense than in any other region — particularly in North Africa. Still, most countries in every region including MENA favor strengthening international partnerships.

In no country did most people select “Implementing or expanding mandatory military service” as their top choice.

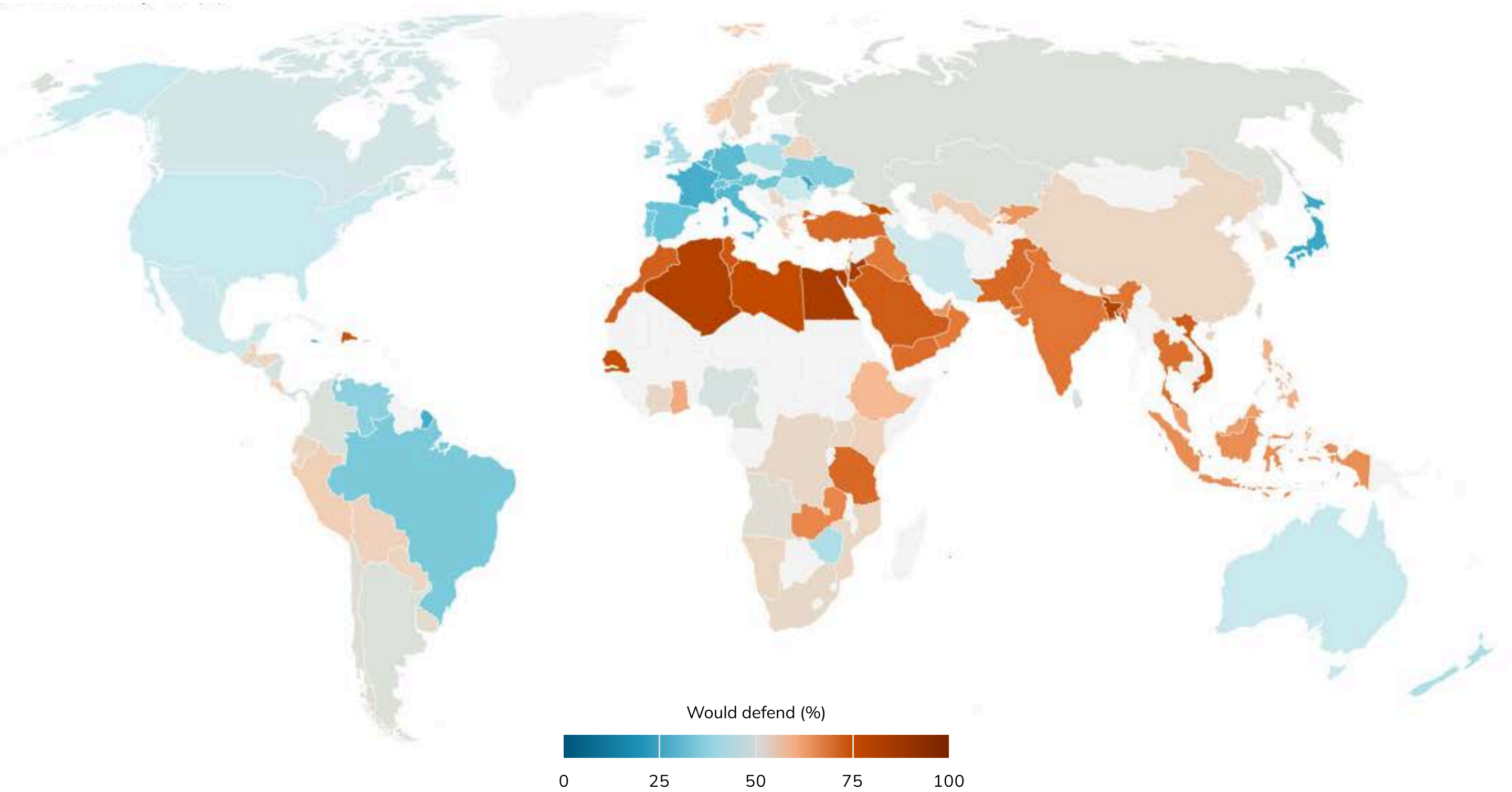
If you had to choose, which of the following options should have the highest priority for your country to protect itself against potential threats from other countries?
Strengthening alliances and international partnerships / Maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent /
Implementing or expanding mandatory military service / Increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities

Willingness to Fight for Their Country

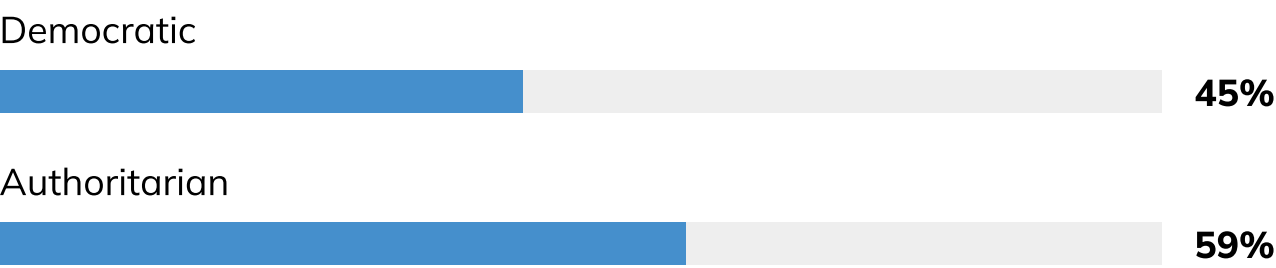
Across the Middle East and North Africa, an average of 69% of people aged 18–55 say they would personally fight if their country were attacked — the highest regional average in the world. In Europe, the figure drops to 41%, with higher shares in countries like Norway, Greece, and Sweden, but some of the lowest globally in France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, where fewer than one in three say they would be willing to fight to defend their country.

Majorities in the Middle East and North Africa say they would fight to defend their country

% of population aged 18-55 who say “Yes” (%)

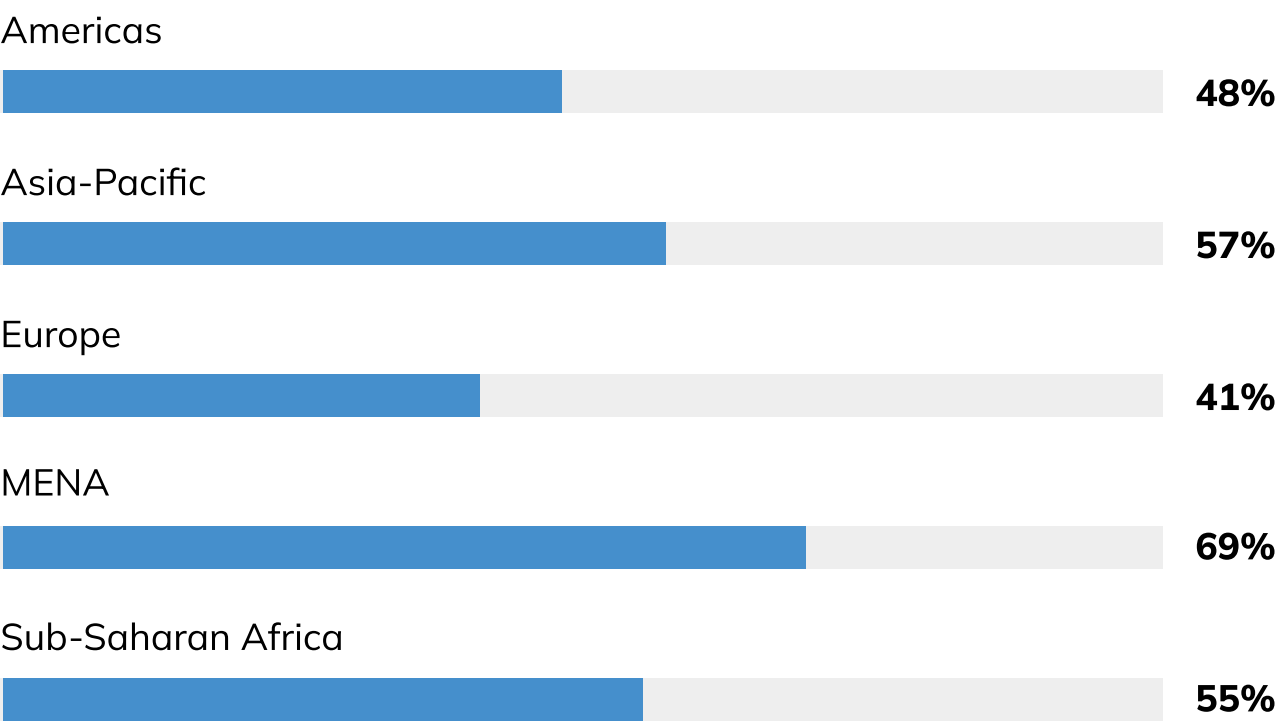


By regime type



Across the world, the share of people aged 18-55 who say they are willing to fight to defend their country is much higher in authoritarian countries (59%) than in democracies (45%)

By region



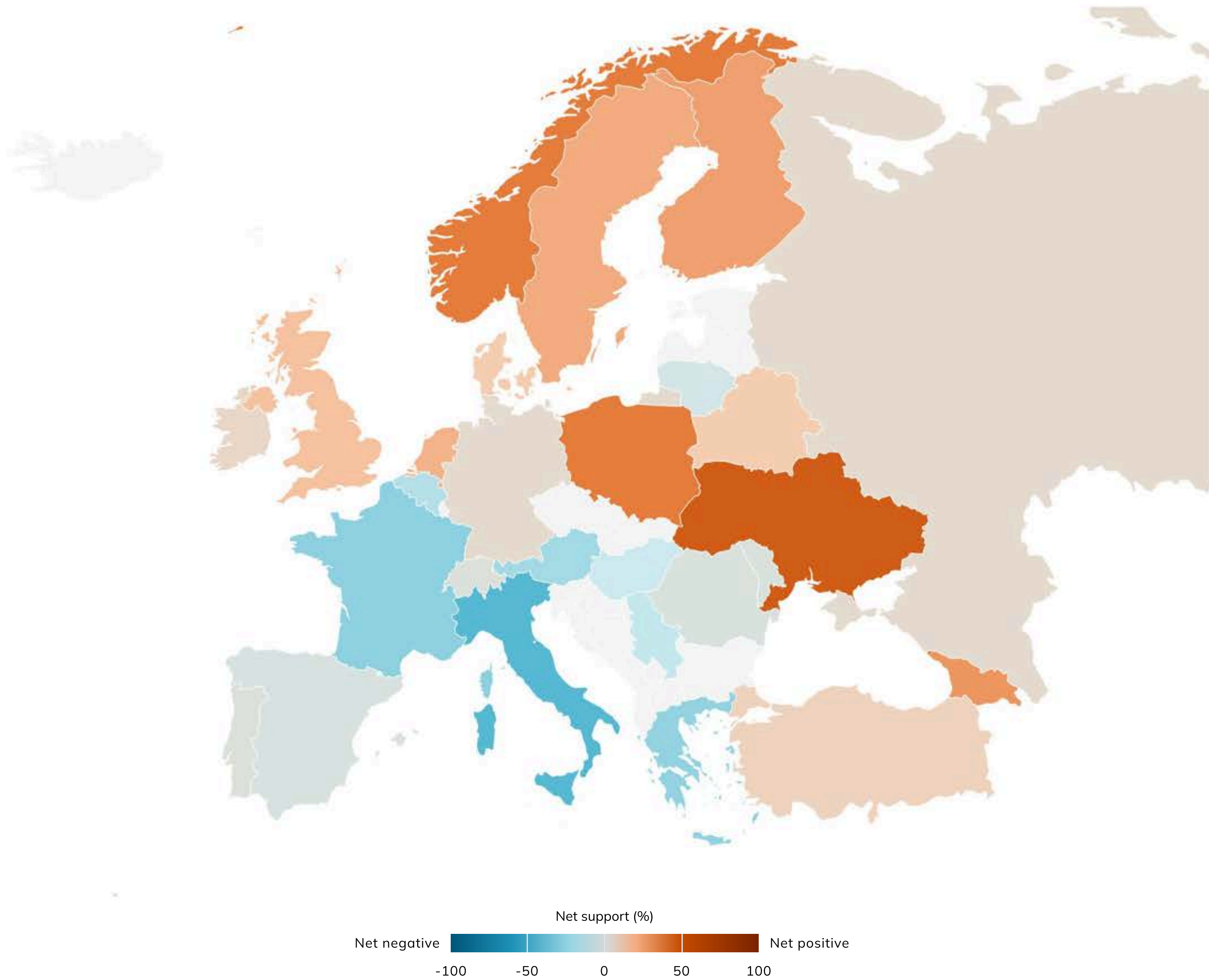
If your country is attacked by a foreign power, would you be personally willing to fight to defend it?
Yes / Not sure / No

Support for Higher Defense Spending

Public support for increasing defense spending varies dramatically across Europe. In countries close to the frontlines — such as Ukraine, Poland, and Norway — most people are in favor of higher military budgets. But in Western and Southern Europe, opposition is much stronger. In Italy, France, and Belgium, the majority oppose increased defense spending, resulting in some of the lowest net support scores on the continent. Germany remains split, with public opinion evenly divided.

Europe is divided about increased defense spending

Net support: % Yes - % No



Would you support an increase in your country's defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?
Yes / Not sure / No

Government Ratings

This chapter looks at how people rate their governments' work in different policy areas, ranging from the cost of living, to education and health systems, security and defense, macroeconomic management, public infrastructure, the environment and many more. It provides an overview of how democracies and authoritarian governments compare across those different policy areas. Since they are very context specific, perception ratings are difficult to compare across countries at different levels of income, security environments etc., so cross country comparisons are limited to countries with similar macroeconomic and societal conditions, for example across OECD countries.

This chapter draws on data from a larger report on government ratings

Please visit niradata.com/product/government-ratings to access the main report and dataset

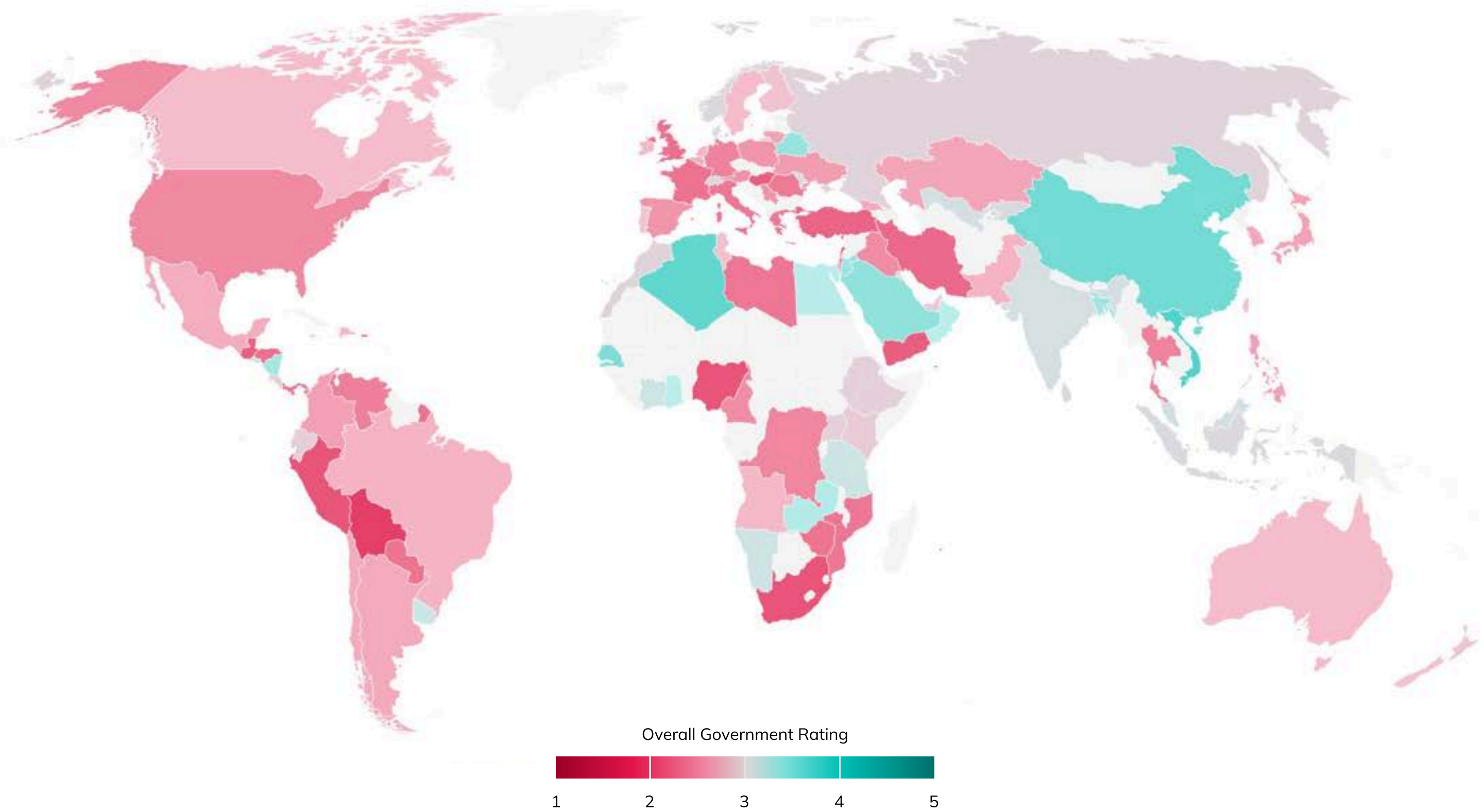
Government Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate how well they think their government is performing across 18 different policy areas—from the cost of living and education to security, infrastructure, and the environment. Each area was scored on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive), with 3 representing a neutral assessment. A country’s overall rating reflects the average across all 18 areas.

Globally, citizens give their governments poor marks. The average score is just 2.77—slightly below neutral—with wide variation between countries: from a high of 3.67 in Vietnam to a low of 1.99 in Bolivia.

Average ratings of government performance across all 18 policy areas

Average across 18 components



How would you rate your government's work on ...
[Respondents were asked to assess 18 specific areas of democratic performance. The average of these responses forms each country's overall score]

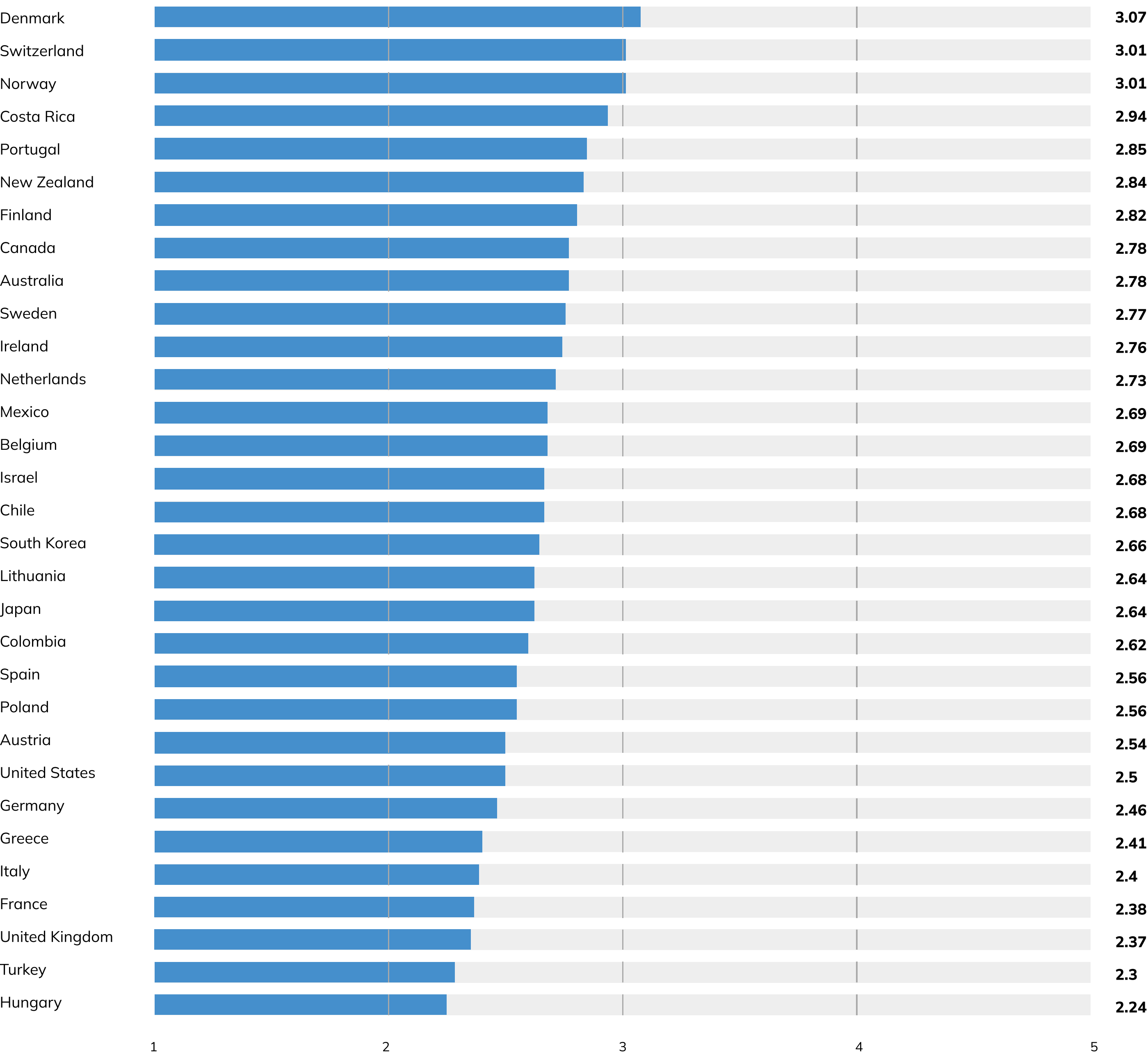
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Government Ratings, OECD Countries

Public ratings of government performance vary widely across OECD countries. Based on average scores across 18 policy areas—rated from very negative (1) to very positive (5)—respondents in most countries give their governments middling marks, between 2.5 and 3. A few countries, including Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland, stand out with more favorable assessments. But in many others—such as the United States, Germany, France, and the UK—citizens rate their governments poorly, underscoring broad dissatisfaction with policy delivery even in long-established democracies.

Average ratings of government performance across all 18 policy areas

Average across 18 components, OECD countries



How would you rate your government's work on ...
[Respondents were asked to assess 18 specific areas of democratic performance. The average of these responses forms each country's overall score]

Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Government Ratings, by Regime Type

Public ratings of government performance vary only modestly between democratic and authoritarian countries. In most areas, average scores are similar—but authoritarian governments receive notably higher marks from their citizens on public safety, national security, and counter-terrorism. Democratic countries perform slightly better or equally well on education, economic growth, and environmental protection.

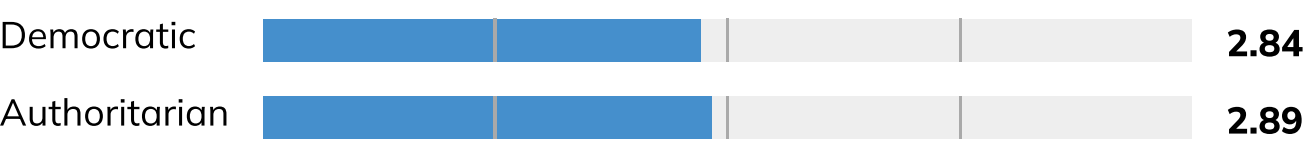
Terrorism



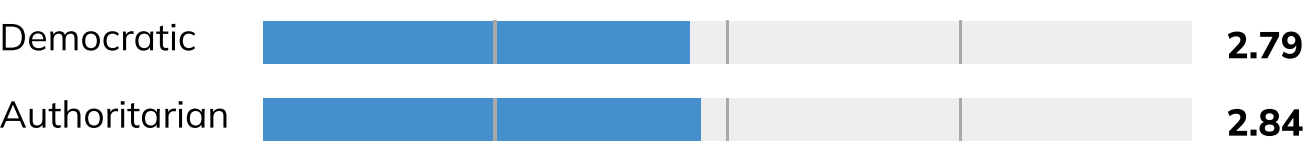
War security



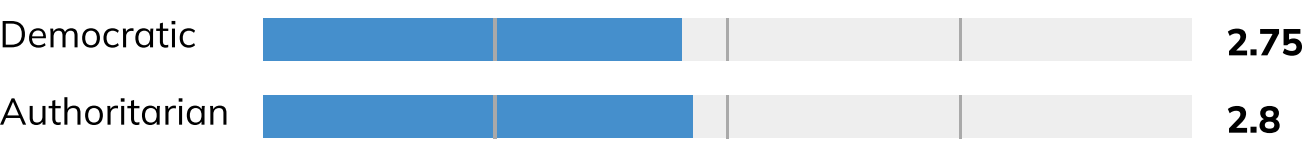
Discrimination



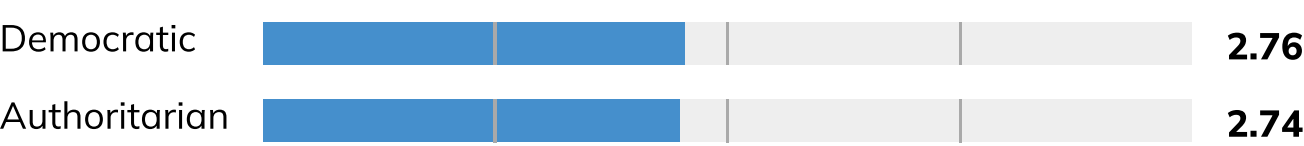
Public infrastructure



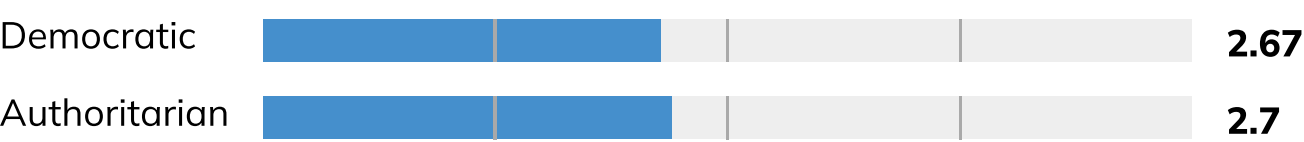
Environment



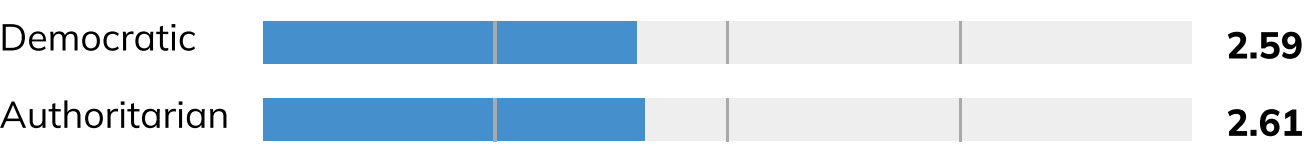
Economic growth



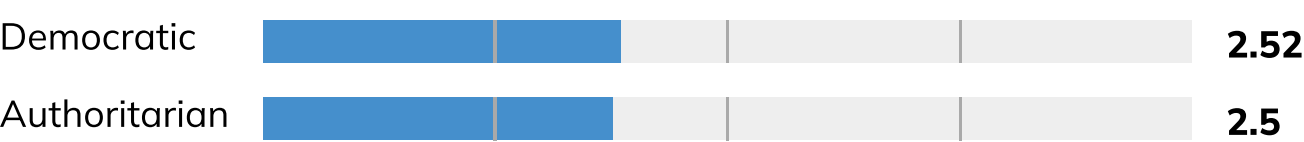
Public administration



National debt and spending responsibly



Living standards



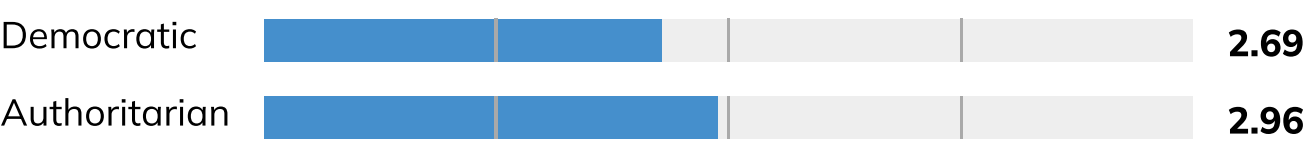
Gender equality



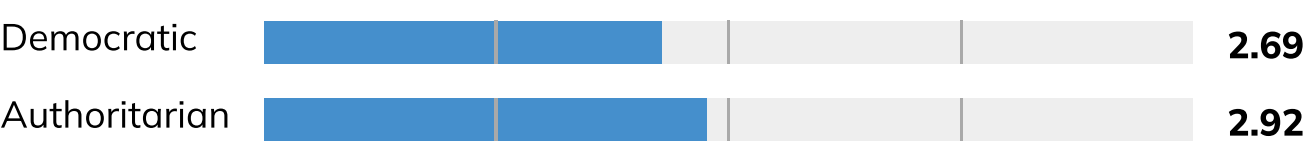
New technologies



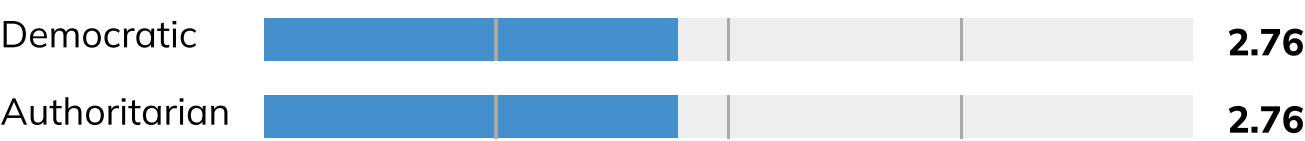
Public safety



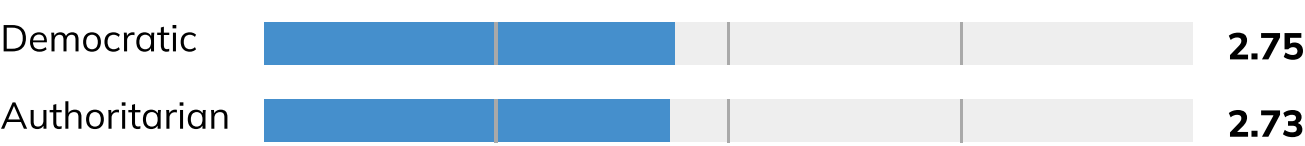
Refugees



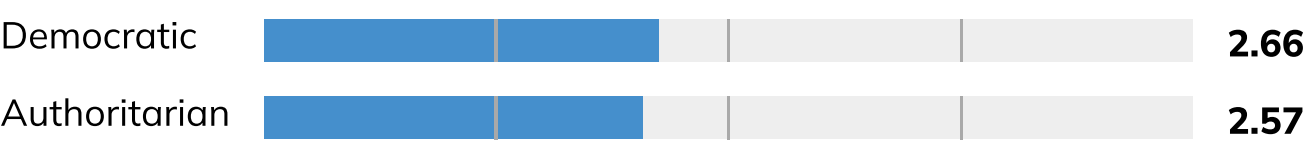
Public education



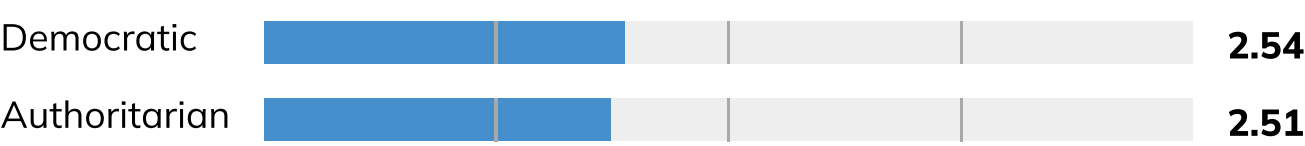
Affordable healthcare



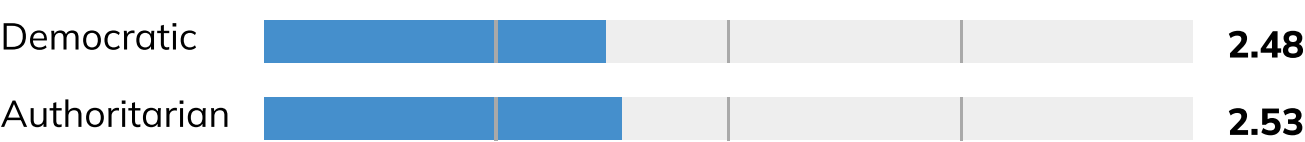
Job creation and reducing unemployment



Costs of living



Affordable housing



How would you rate your government's work on ...
[Respondents were asked to assess 18 specific areas of democratic performance. The average of these responses forms each country's overall score]

Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of Countries

This chapter examines how countries are perceived by their neighbors, key trading partners, and other nations that hold strategic or cultural relevance to them. These perceptions provide valuable insights into how a country's image is shaped not just globally, but within the specific international circles that most directly affect its interests and influence. The data highlights a broad spectrum of public opinion, with countries like Singapore, Switzerland, and Qatar enjoying consistently positive reputations, while others face more critical views. We also explore notable shifts in perception over the past year, including a significant decline in the United States' global standing relative to China and Russia.

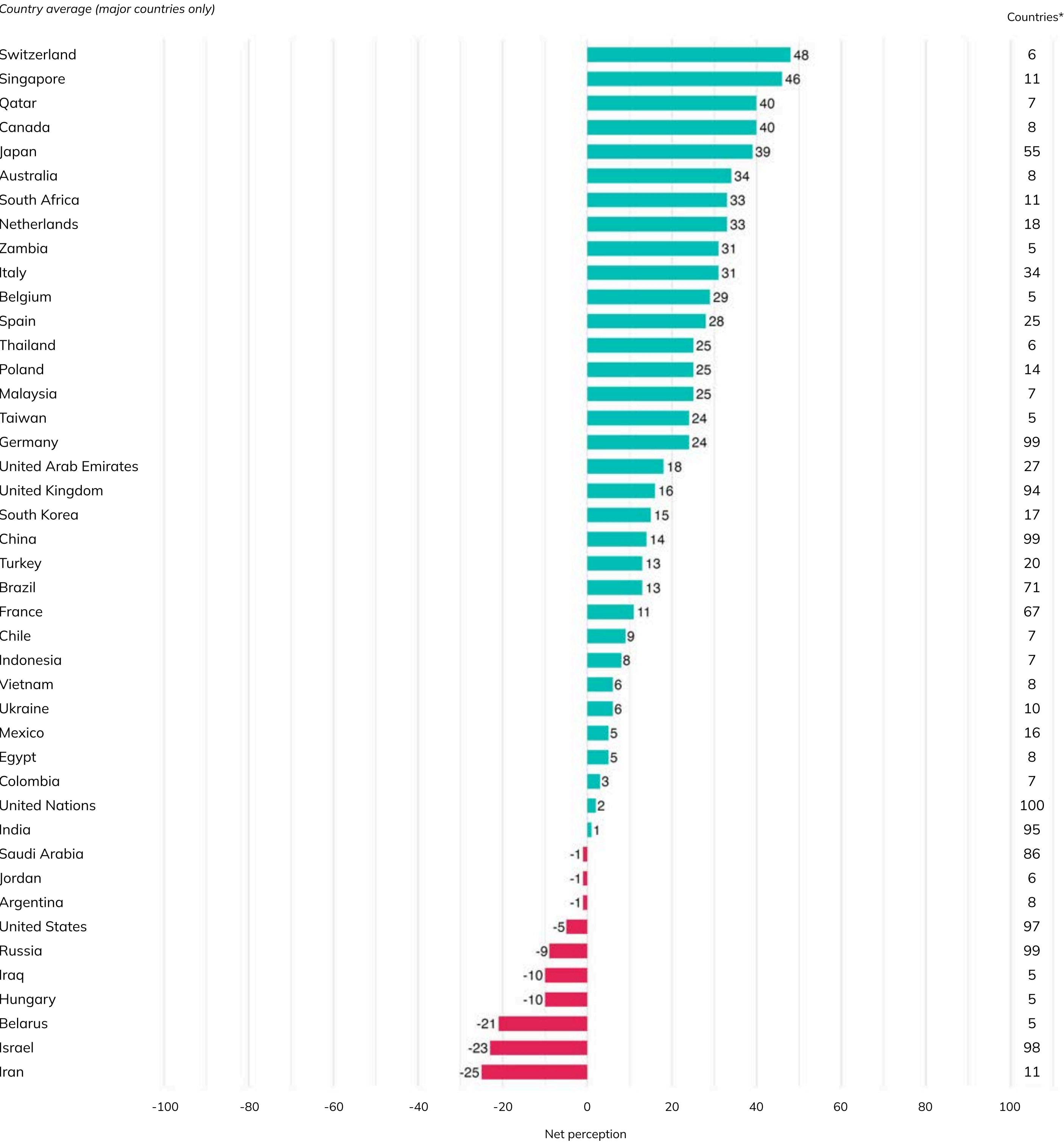
This chapter draws on data from a larger report on perception of countries

Please visit niradata.com/product/country-perception to access the main report and dataset

Ranking of Most Popular Countries

People’s perceptions of countries vary widely across the world, revealing sharp divides in global opinion. Countries like Switzerland, Singapore, and Qatar are viewed most positively by those who rated them (neighbors or major trading partners). Among the select countries rated by respondents from across all countries, Israel stands out as having the most negative global perception, followed closely by Russia and the United States. China, by contrast, receives a slightly positive net score.

Global perception scores



*While most countries were evaluated by respondents from a handful of countries (neighbors or major trading partners), others like the United States and China were evaluated by almost all countries around the world.

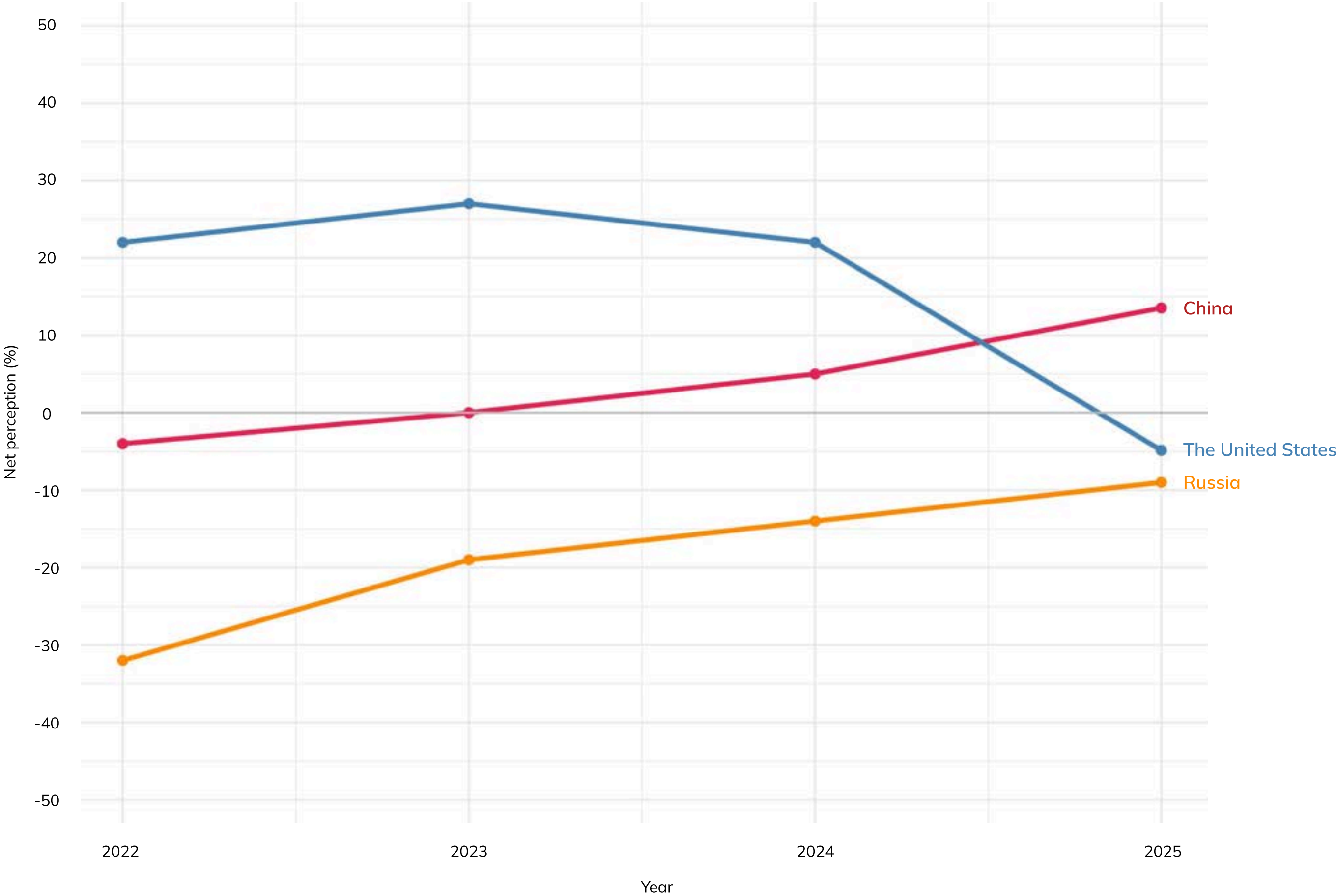
What is your overall perception of ... ?
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of Global Powers

Global perceptions of the world’s major powers are shifting. In 2022 and 2023, the average perception of the United States was more positive than negative, and significantly more positive than either Russia or China. But by 2025, global opinion has flipped: China is now the only major power among the three with a net positive image, while the U.S. and Russia are both viewed more negatively than positively. The U.S. in particular has seen a sharp decline in its global standing over the past year, while perceptions of China and Russia have steadily improved.

Net perception of global powers (2022-2025)

net perception: % say they have a positive perception - % say they have a negative perception



What is your overall perception of ... ?

The United States
China
Russia

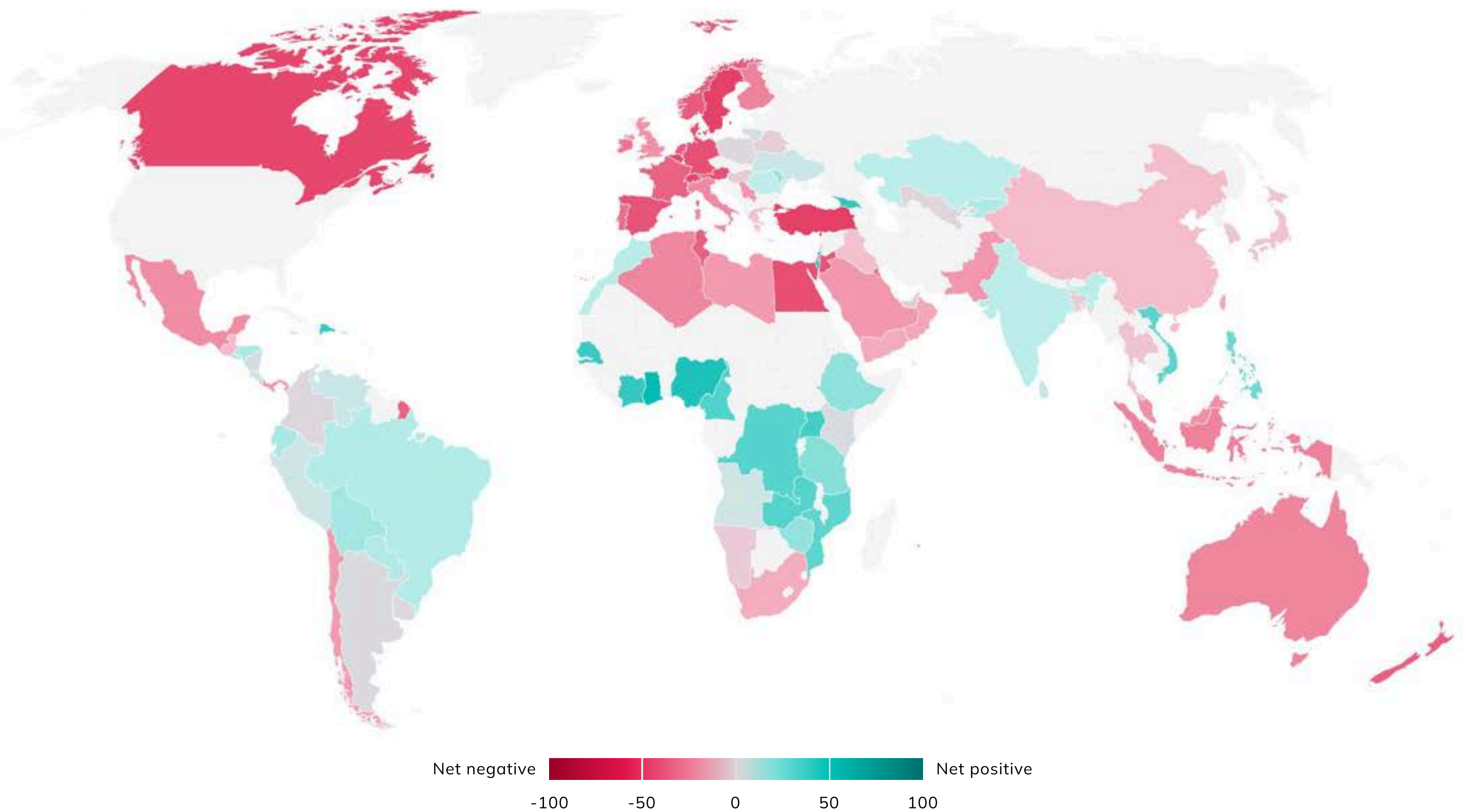
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Deep Dive: Perception of the US

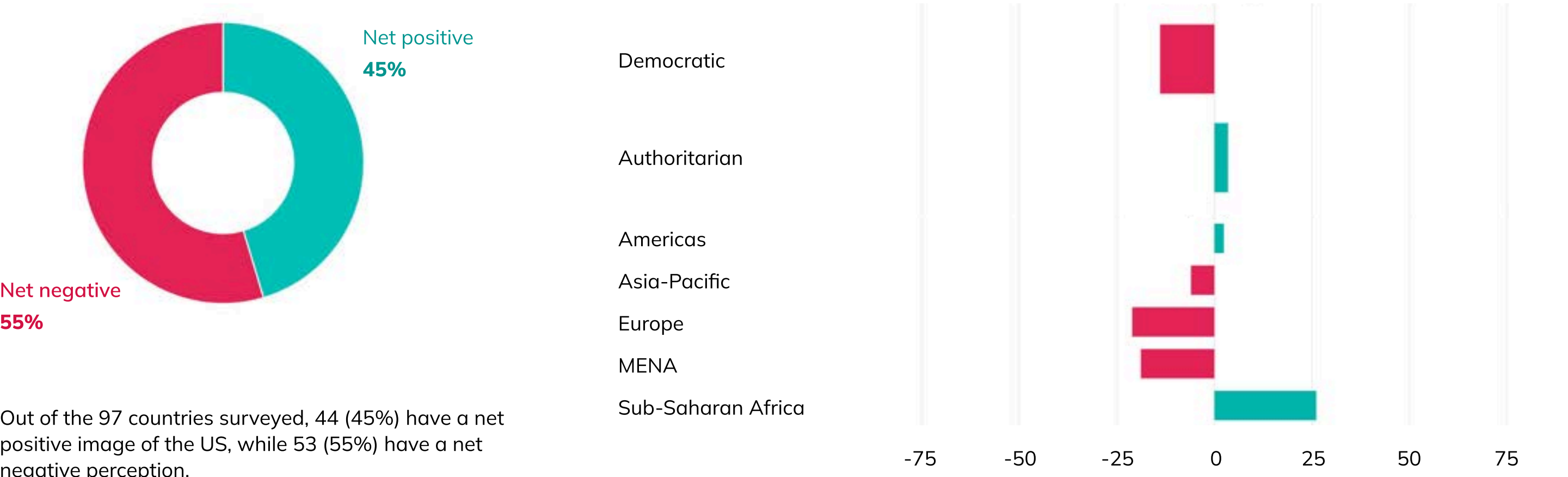
The United States is viewed more negatively than positively in most countries around the world. Perceptions are especially negative in the MENA region—particularly in Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan—as well as among the U.S.’s immediate neighbors, Canada and Mexico. Western Europe is similarly critical, with Spain and Belgium among the most negative. By contrast, the U.S. receives some of its most positive ratings from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and parts of Eastern Europe, including Romania and Poland.

Perception of the US

net perception: % say they have a positive perception - % say they have a negative perception



Most countries have a negative perception of the United States



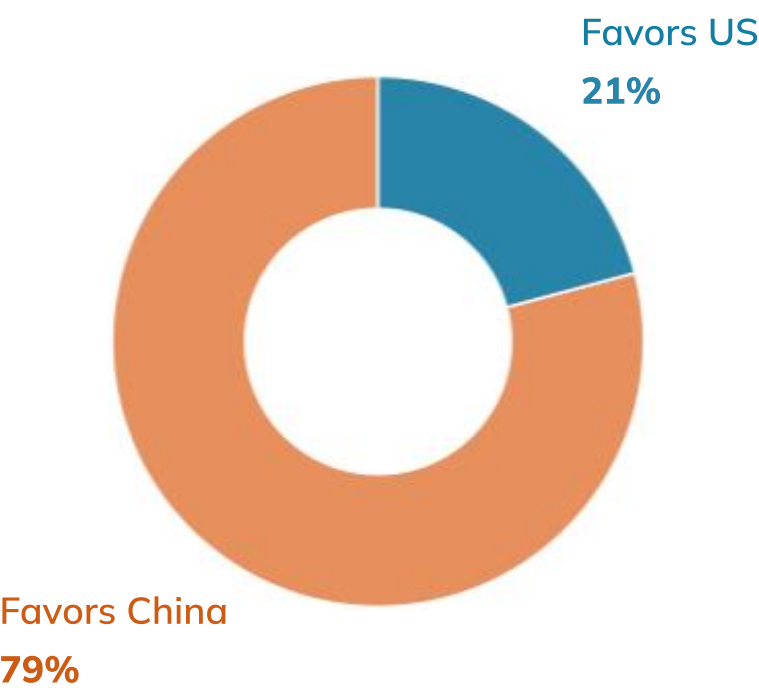
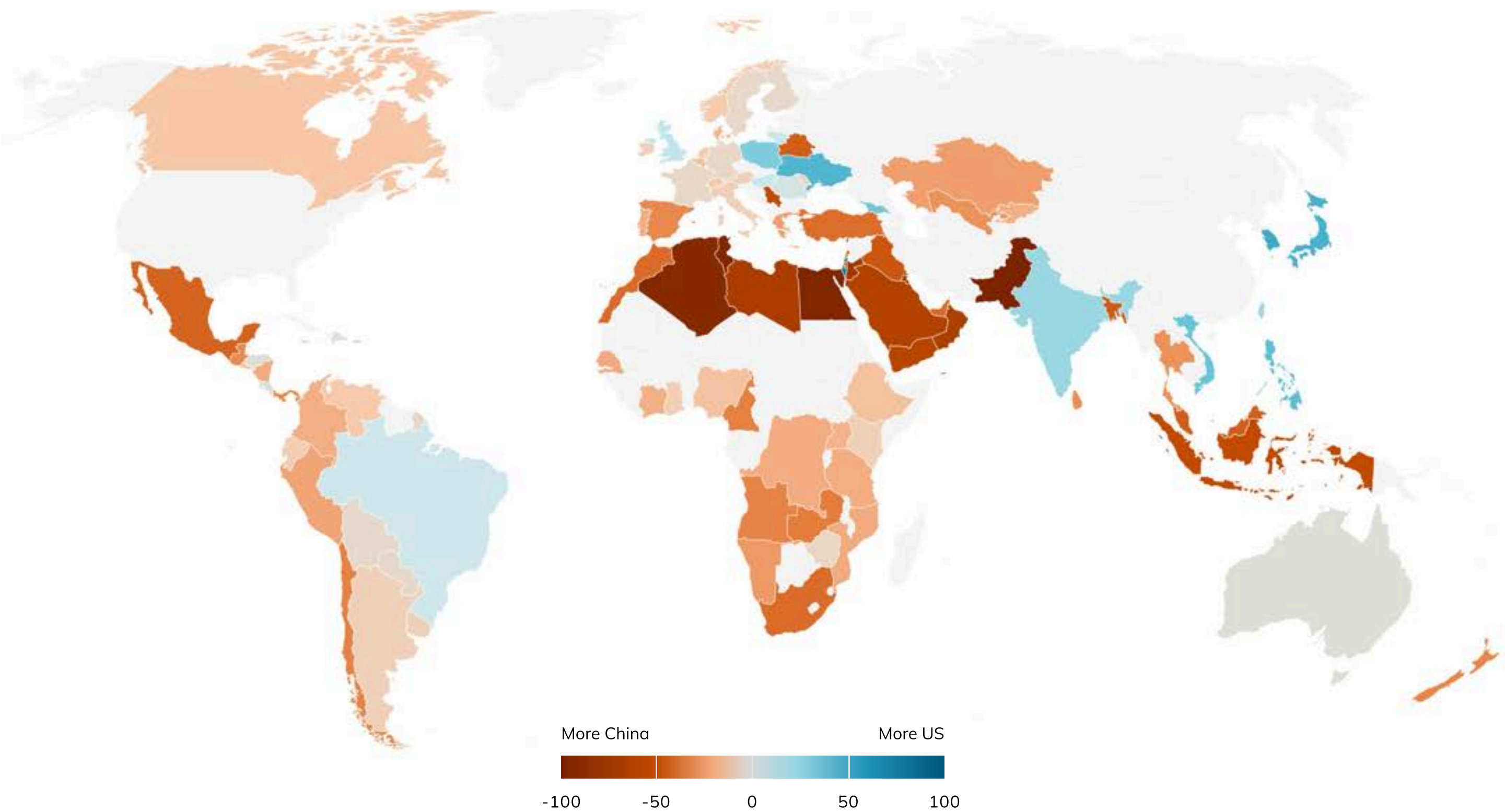
What is your overall perception of The United States?
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of the US vs. China

Most countries have a more favorable view of China than of the United States. While U.S. allies such as Israel, South Korea, Japan, Poland, and Ukraine strongly prefer the U.S., these are relative exceptions. In Europe, net perceptions of China are often higher than those of the U.S., particularly in Western Europe. The same is true across much of Asia and Latin America. The gap is especially wide in the Middle East and North Africa, where countries like Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia view China far more positively than the U.S.

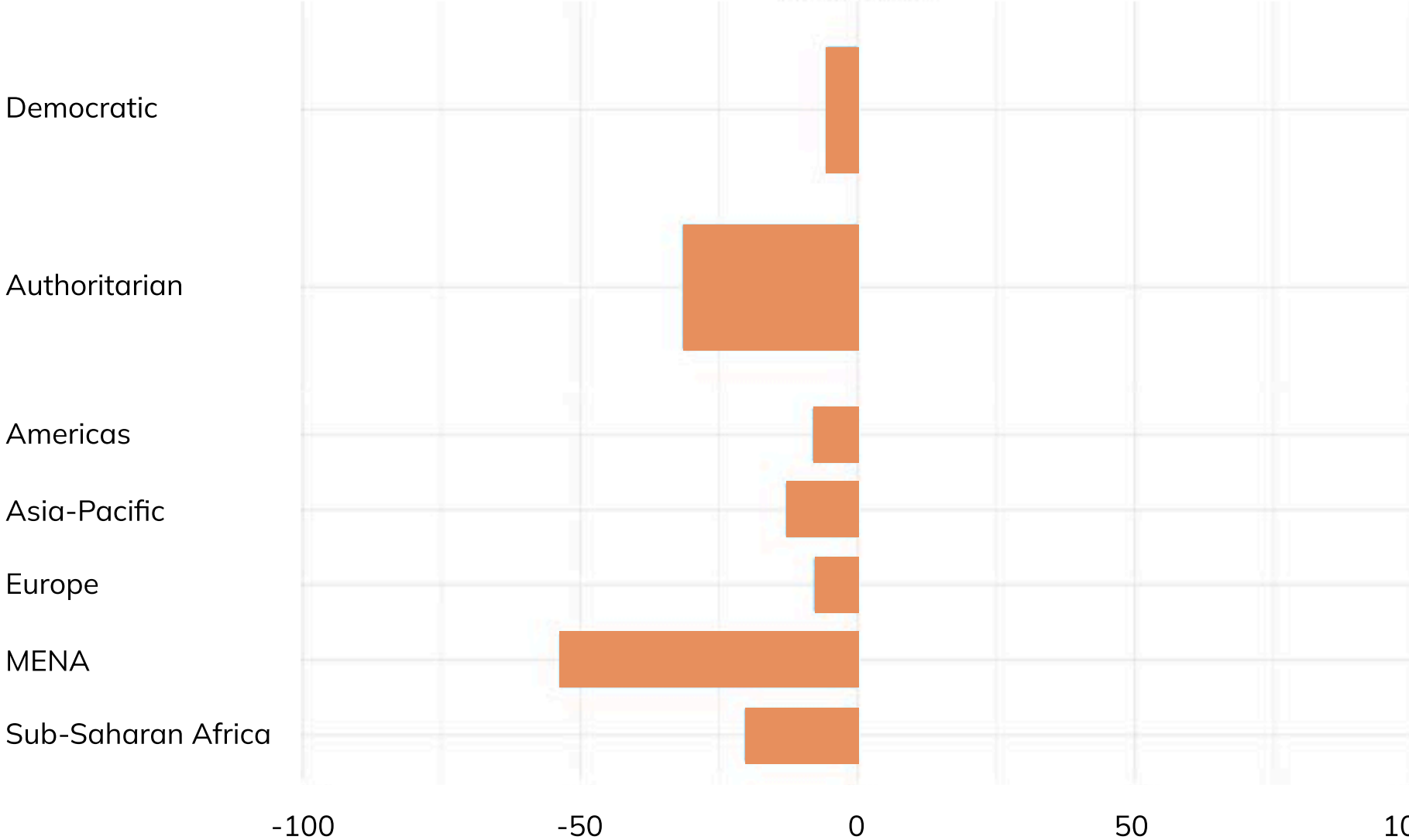
Difference in perception: United States vs. China

Difference: (net perception of US - net perception of China)



Over three quarters of countries around the world have a more positive view of China than the US:

Out of the 96 countries surveyed, 76 have a more positive view of China, while 20 have a more positive view of the US.



What is your overall perception of China / The United States?
Very positive / Somewhat positive / Neither positive nor negative / Somewhat negative / Very negative

Perception of Political, Business, Spiritual and Cultural Leaders

Perceptions of democracy are shaped by people—primarily by political leaders, but also indirectly by cultural, religious, and business figures. This chapter examines a selection of 12 individuals who are globally recognized for their political influence, thought leadership, economic impact, or their massive social media followings that reach hundreds of millions worldwide. These individuals play a unique role in shaping global public opinion. The chapter focuses on two key criteria to assess their global impact: (a) the extent of their public recognition, and (b) whether they are viewed positively or negatively.

This chapter draws on data from a larger report on perception of political, business, spiritual and cultural leaders

Please visit niradata.com/product/people-perception to access the main report and dataset

Global Awareness

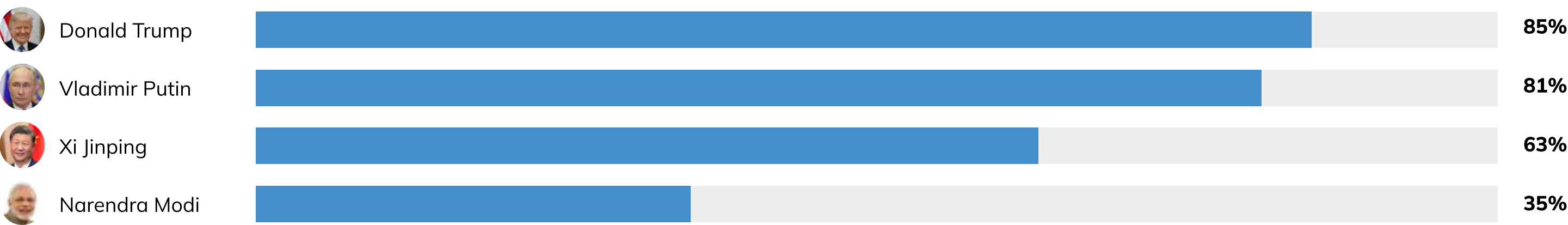
Among the 12 global figures surveyed, political leaders are the most widely recognized—Donald Trump tops the list as the most well-known person in the world (85% awareness), followed closely by Vladimir Putin. Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi are less familiar to global audiences beyond their home countries.

Business figures like Elon Musk and Bill Gates also enjoy broad name recognition. Awareness of cultural and spiritual figures is more mixed: Pope Francis and Angelina Jolie are widely known, while others—such as Taylor Swift and the Dalai Lama—are less so.

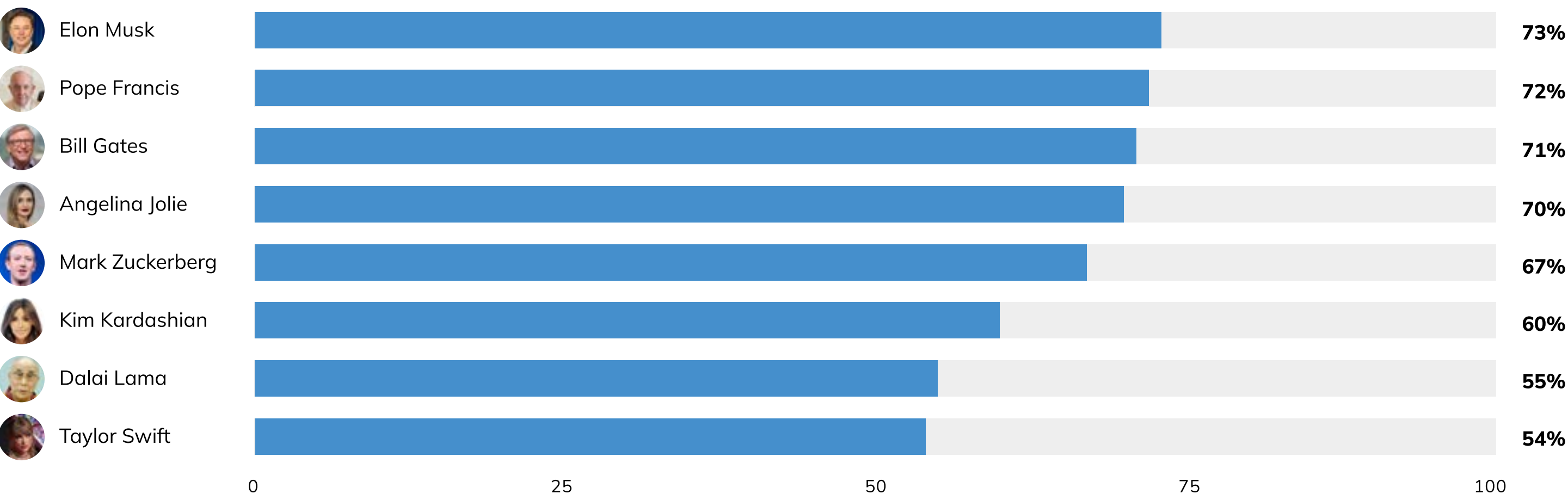
Global awareness by person

Awareness (%)

Political Leaders



Business, Cultural and Spiritual Leaders



What is your overall perception of ... ?

Donald Trump / Vladimir Putin / Xi Jinping / Narendra Modi / Elon Musk / Pope Francis / Bill Gates / Angelina Jolie / Mark Zuckerberg / Kim Kardashian / Dalai Lama / Taylor Swift

Positive / Negative / I don't know this person

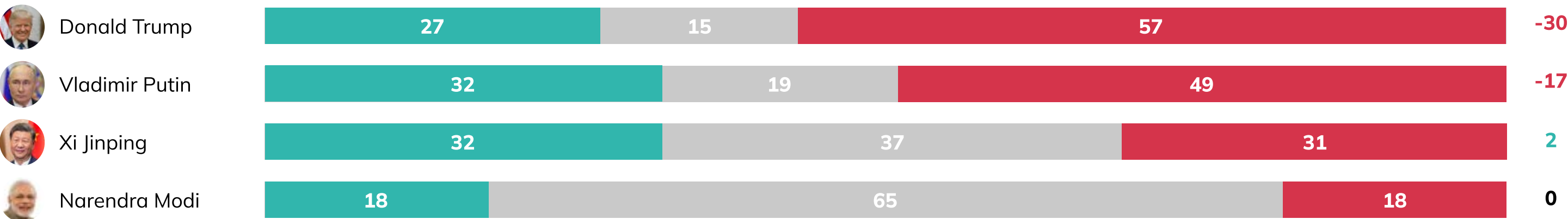
Global Perception

Donald Trump stands out with the most universally negative image: in 82% of countries, more people view him negatively (57% on average) than positively (27%). Vladimir Putin follows closely, with net negative perceptions in 61% of countries, and Xi Jinping in 44%. In contrast, Pope Francis and Angelina Jolie are the most admired, enjoying consistently positive ratings across the globe. While Elon Musk has an overall net negative perception, Bill Gates seems to be very highly regarded with a net positive score that surpasses both Pope Francis and Taylor Swift

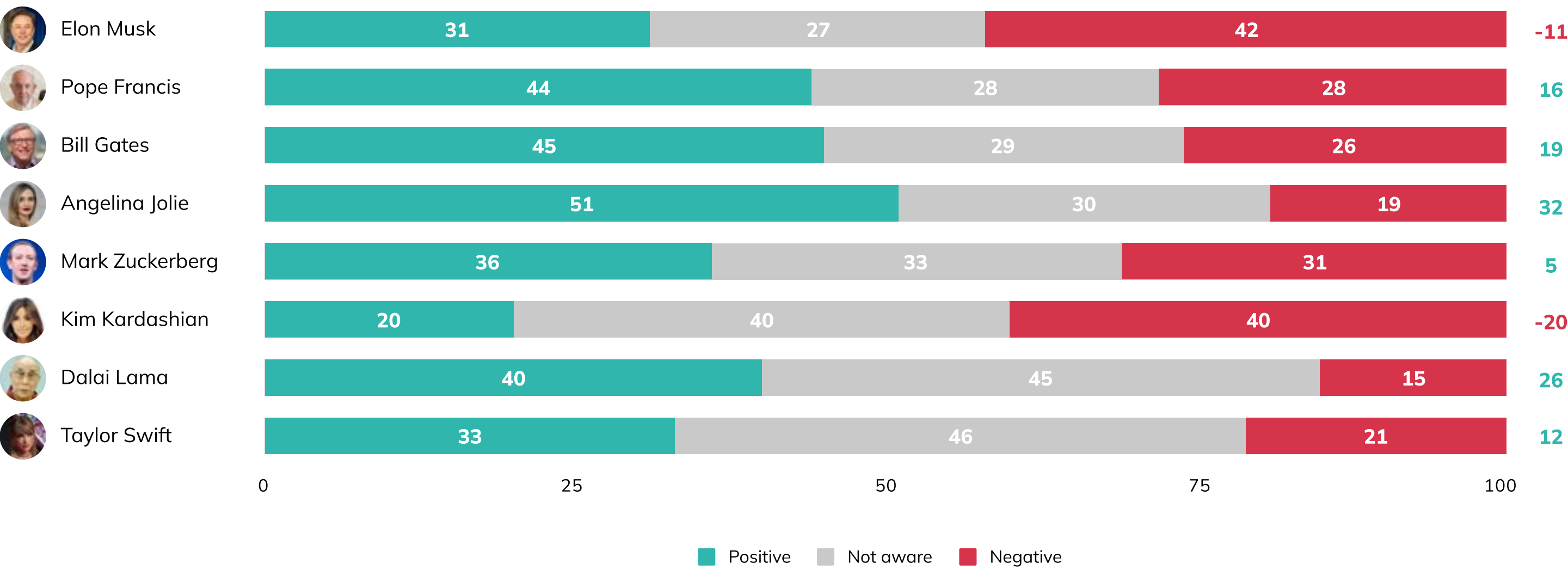
Global perception by person

Share (%)

Political Leaders



Business, Cultural and Spiritual Leaders



What is your overall perception of ... ?

Donald Trump / Vladimir Putin / Xi Jinping / Narendra Modi / Elon Musk / Pope Francis / Bill Gates / Angelina Jolie / Mark Zuckerberg / Kim Kardashian / Dalai Lama / Taylor Swift

Positive / Negative / I don't know this person

Global Perception of Political Leaders

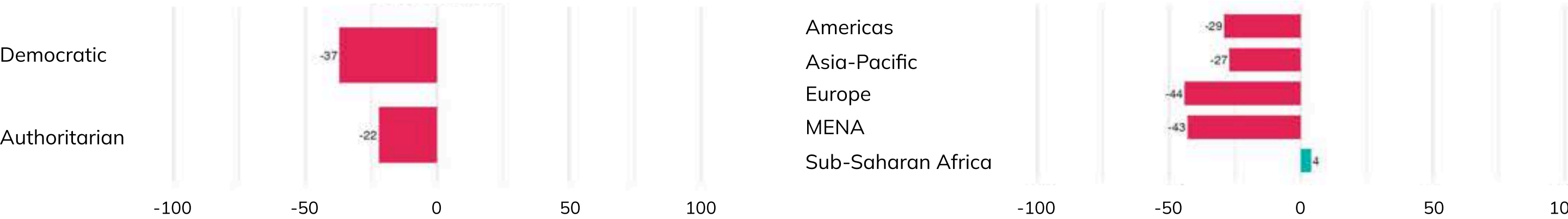
Donald Trump is viewed negatively across nearly every region of the world—especially in democratic countries. In Europe and other democratic states, perceptions of Trump are nearly as negative as those of Vladimir Putin. Only in Sub-Saharan Africa does Trump receive a slightly positive rating.

Putin, meanwhile, is perceived just as negatively as Trump in democratic countries, but opinion is more neutral in Asia and the MENA region, and tilts slightly positive in authoritarian countries and across Sub-Saharan Africa.

By contrast, Xi Jinping receives far less negative ratings overall. Global perceptions are more evenly split, with slightly positive views in authoritarian countries—especially in MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa. In democratic countries, including Europe, Xi’s image is negative, but less so than that of Trump or Putin.



Donald Trump



Vladimir Putin



Xi Jinping



What is your overall perception of ... ?

Donald Trump / Vladimir Putin / Xi Jinping

Positive / Negative / I don't know this person

Methodology

Overview

This report presents an overview of a study conducted by Nira Data and the Alliance of Democracies in the spring of 2025, between April 9th and April 23rd. The sample of n=111,273 online-connected respondents was drawn across 100 countries, with an average sample size of around 1,100 respondents per country. Nationally representative results were calculated based on the official distribution of age and gender for each country's population, sourced from the most recent and available data from Barro Lee & UNStat, and census.gov. The average margin of error across all countries sampled is (+/-) 4.6 percentage points.

How the DPI Categorizes Democracies

In order to compare public opinion results between more democratic countries and less democratic countries, the DPI uses the 2024 categories from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to create two groups:

"Democratic" - labeled as "Full Democracies" and "Flawed Democracies" by the EIU.

"Authoritarian" - countries labeled as "Hybrid Regimes" or "Authoritarian" by the EIU.

Free Speech

In some countries surveyed, the government plays an active role in shaping public opinion and/or has policies in place that restrict freedom of speech around certain topics. This can have a strong influence on the survey results.

Data Collection

Nira Data's surveys are conducted online through internet-connected devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Nira Data follows an open recruitment approach that leverages the reach of over 40,000 third-party apps and mobile websites. To ensure coverage across different demographic groups and geographical regions, Nira Data targets a highly diverse set of apps and websites – from news to shopping, to sports and games. As a result, Nira Data generates up to 21 million answers every month from respondents living in as many as 100 different countries.

Data Privacy and Anonymity

Once a user opts in to complete a survey, Nira Data informs the respondent about the nature of the questionnaire and explains that all answers – including the generic demographics that are part of the targeting and quality assurance process – are recorded anonymously. To ensure respondent privacy and high-quality response data, Nira Data does not collect any personally identifiable information (PII) on users. In contrast to surveys conducted face-to-face or by telephone, the anonymity offered by Nira Data's methodology may help reduce response bias, interviewer bias, and respondent self-censorship.

For more information, please contact:

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Nira Data

Our vision is to give researchers, policymakers, democracy advocates — and anyone who cares about the world — direct access to the voices of billions.

Nira Data was founded in 2025 to create an institutional home for the Democracy Perception Index (DPI) and to expand its reach. Our broader mission is to build a platform that makes global public opinion more accessible—empowering researchers, policymakers, journalists, and democracy advocates with reliable, high-quality data on how people around the world see their societies and the world



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The Alliance of Democracies Foundation

Alliance of Democracies' vision is to become the world's leading “megaphone” for the cause of democracy.

The Alliance of Democracies Foundation

The Alliance of Democracies Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2017 by Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The Foundation is dedicated to the advancement of democracy and free markets across the globe and runs three core programs: the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, the Expeditionary Economics Program, and the Campaign for Democracy.

The Copenhagen Democracy Summit

The Copenhagen Democracy Summit is an annual conference bringing together political and business leaders, including current and former heads of government, from the world's democracies. The goal of the Summit is to be the top international forum for analysis of the security and economic challenges facing the democratic world as well as a forum for analysis of the interplay between technology and democratic norms.



Alliance of Democracies



Copenhagen Democracy Summit

Contact Us

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www.allianceofdemocracies.org



Questionnaire

Q1
In your opinion, how important is it for your country to be a democracy?

- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important

Q2
Which of the following would you say is the most important purpose of democracy?

- Enabling people to freely choose their government
- Protecting individual rights and freedoms
- Improving the living standards and well-being of everyone
- Promoting a fair and peaceful society

Q3
How much impact do you think elections can have on your country’s political direction?

- Very big impact
- Big impact
- Moderate impact
- Small impact
- No impact

Q4
How likely do you think it is that courts in your country will stop the government if it violates the law?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral / Uncertain
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Q5
How often do you think that courts in your country make fair and impartial decisions?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q6
How likely do you think it is that journalists or civil society organizations in your country face negative consequences when criticizing the government?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neutral / Uncertain
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

Q7
To what extent do you think different political beliefs are represented in your country's political system?

- To a very large extent
- To a large extent
- To some extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

Q8
How well would you say that you understand your country’s political system and how it functions?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Somewhat well
- Not very well
- Not well at all

Q9
How often do you think the government withholds important information from the public?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q10
How likely do you think it is that a future change of government in your country will cause violence?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neutral / Uncertain
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

Q11
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Countries should follow international laws and agreements, even if it limits their freedom of action.”

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q12
How concerned are you about the possibility of your country being attacked by another country in the near future?

- Not at all concerned
- Slightly concerned
- Moderately concerned
- Very concerned
- Extremely concerned

Q13
If you had to choose, which of the following options should have the highest priority for your country to protect itself against potential threats from other countries?

- Strengthening alliances and international partnerships
- Maintaining or developing nuclear weapons as a deterrent
- Implementing or expanding mandatory military service
- Increasing investment in national defense and military capabilities

Q14
If your country is attacked by a foreign power, would you be personally willing to fight to defend it?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q15
Would you support an increase in your country’s defense spending even if that means higher taxes or reduced spending in other areas?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

What is your overall perception of ... ?

Q16
The United States

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q17
China

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q18
Russia

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q19
Israel

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q20
Germany

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q21
France

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q22
The United Kingdom

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q23
India

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q24
The United Nations

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

What is your overall perception of ... ?

Q25
Angelina Jolie

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q26
Bill Gates

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q27
Dalai Lama

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q28
Donald Trump

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q29
Elon Musk

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q30
Kim Kardashian

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q31
Mark Zuckerberg

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q32
Narendra Modi

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q33
Pope Francis

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q34
Taylor Swift

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q35
Vladimir Putin

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

Q36
Xi Jinping

- Positive
- Negative
- I don't know this person

How would you rate your government's work on...
for each policy area, respondents are given the following answer options:

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Q37
... ensuring low inflation and stable costs of living?

Q38
... promoting job creation and reducing unemployment?

Q39
... managing national debt and public spending?

Q40
... providing and maintaining public infrastructure (roads, electricity, water supply)?

Q41
... providing a high quality public education system?

Q42
... increasing public safety and preventing crime?

Q43
... reducing poverty and improving living standards?

Q44
... promoting economic growth?

Q45
... reducing discrimination and protecting minority rights?

Q46
... protecting the environment and managing climate change risks?

Q47
... ensuring an efficient public administration?

Q48
... promoting innovation and the adoption of new technologies?

Q49
... ensuring access to affordable housing?

Q50
... ensuring access to affordable healthcare?

Q51
... ensuring gender equality and promoting women's rights?

Q52
... providing security against war and external aggression?

Q53
... managing refugees and international migration?

Q54
... fighting terrorism and extremism?