

Chapter 6

Global and Regional Trends in Economic Freedom

Ambassador Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim

The 2015 *Index of Economic Freedom* assesses economic policy developments in 186 economies in six regions around the world. The *Index* grades and ranks economies based on their performance in 10 key policy areas affecting overall economic freedom, which are grouped into categories that evaluate the rule of law, respect for the principle of limited government, regulatory efficiency, and the domestic and international openness of markets. The 2015 *Index*, the 21st annual edition, evaluates economic conditions and policy developments between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014.

GLOBAL PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC FREEDOM

The 2015 *Index* judges the world economy as a whole to be “moderately free.” Average economic freedom has increased for the third year in a row. Although the pace of advancement has slowed sharply in comparison to last year’s 0.7-point improvement, economic freedom has still advanced by 0.1 point to 60.4 in the 2015 *Index*.

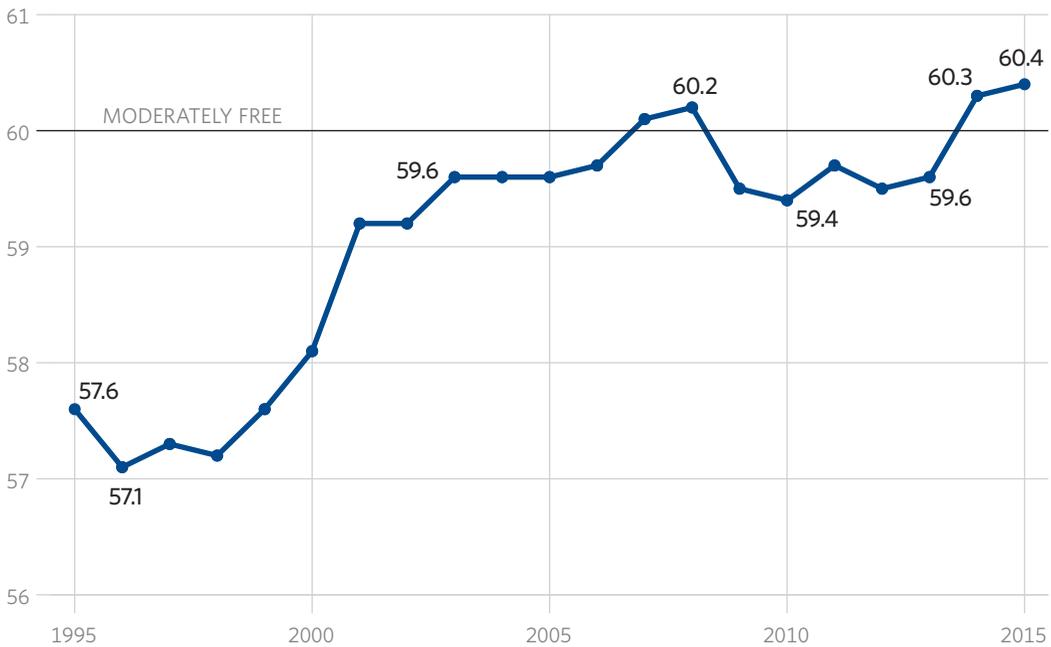
That represents a 2.8-point overall improvement from the inception of the *Index* in 1995. (See Chart 1.)

Of the 178 economies graded in the 2015 *Index*, only five have sustained very high freedom scores of 80 or more, putting them in the ranks of the economically “free.” The next 30 countries have been rated as “mostly free” economies recording scores between 70 and 80. With scores of 60 to 70, 55 countries have earned scores that place them in the “moderately free” category. Thus, a total of 90 economies, or about 50 percent of all nations and territories graded in the 2015 *Index*, provide institutional environments in which individuals and private enterprises benefit from at least a moderate degree of economic freedom in the pursuit of greater prosperity and success.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, nearly half of the remaining countries graded in the *Index*—88 economies—have registered economic freedom scores below 60. Of those, 62 economies are considered “mostly unfree” (scores of 50–60), and 26 are clearly “repressed” (below 50).

Global Economic Freedom

Average Score in the *Index of Economic Freedom*



Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, 2015 *Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Chart 1  heritage.org

Despite the global progress recorded over the 21-year history of the *Index*, the number of people living without economic freedom remains disturbingly high: 4.5 billion, or about 65 percent of the world's population. More than half of these people live in just two countries, China and India, where advancement toward greater economic freedom has been both limited and uneven. In the two most populous economies, structural reforms in a few key sectors have sometimes boosted growth, but the governments have failed to institutionalize open environments that promote broad-based and sustained improvements in the economic well-being of the population as a whole.

As shown in “The Ten Economic Freedoms: A Global Look” on the next page, on a worldwide basis, this year's increase in economic freedom has been driven by improvements in trade freedom, monetary freedom, and freedom from corruption, for which global ratings have advanced

by close to one point or more on average. Average scores for most other economic freedoms, including business freedom, property rights, labor freedom, investment freedom, and financial freedom, have registered small declines.

The loss of economic freedom was most pronounced in the area of respect for limited government. A score drop of 1.0 point in the category measuring control of government spending reflects the continuation of countercyclical or interventionist stimulus policies in some countries, though there is scant evidence that such policies are boosting growth or restoring employment.

GAINS AND LOSSES

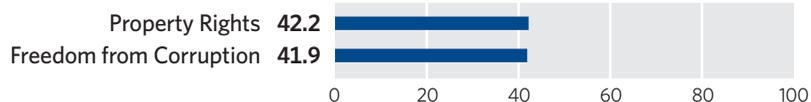
In the 2015 *Index*, 101 countries, the majority of which are less developed or emerging economies, showed advances in economic freedom over the past year. Remarkably, 37 countries, including Taiwan, Lithuania, Georgia, Colom-

The 10 Economic Freedoms: A Global Look

Score Changes

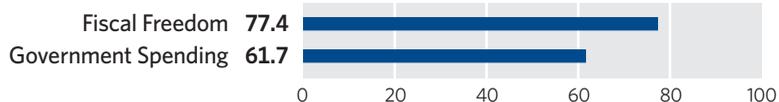
RULE OF LAW		GOVERNMENT SIZE		REGULATORY EFFICIENCY		OPEN MARKETS	
Property Rights	-0.9	Fiscal Freedom	+0.1	Business Freedom	-0.8	Trade Freedom	+0.6
Freedom from Corruption	+1.6	Government Spending	-1.0	Labor Freedom	-0.3	Investment Freedom	-0.7
				Monetary Freedom	+0.8	Financial Freedom	-0.4

RULE OF LAW



The world average score for property rights has declined since last year, with 28 countries' scores deteriorating. In many countries, the judiciary has become more vulnerable to political interference. Despite some improvement, the average score for freedom from corruption still lags behind scores for other components of economic freedom. Populations in some countries have engaged in demonstrations calling for greater transparency and accountability.

GOVERNMENT SIZE



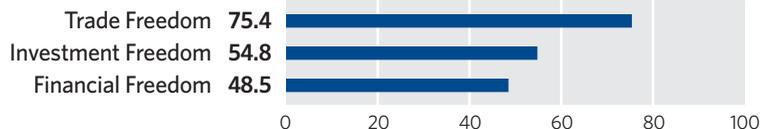
The average top individual income tax rate for all countries is about 28 percent, and the average top corporate tax rate is 24.1 percent. The average overall tax burden corresponds to around 23 percent of gross domestic product. The average level of government spending is equal to 34.7 percent of GDP. The average level of gross public debt for countries covered in the *Index* is equivalent to slightly over 50 percent of GDP.

REGULATORY EFFICIENCY



Many countries continue to implement regulatory reforms, although developed countries have generally lagged behind developing countries. Globally, starting a business takes seven procedures and 22 days, while licensing requirements consume over five months on average. For the world as a whole, burdensome labor codes stifle job growth. Monetary freedom registered a continued improvement as a result of generally low inflationary pressures.

OPEN MARKETS



The average trade freedom score continues to improve. The average investment freedom score remains essentially unchanged. Many countries' investment policies remain geared toward sectoral investment promotion rather than general market openness. Despite some progress, the global financial system remains under continuing strain and uncertainty. Overall, global financial freedom has recorded a slight decline since last year.

Economic Freedom: Regional Variations (Regional Average)

Regional Ranking	North America (73.9)	Middle East / North Africa (61.6)	South and Central America / Caribbean (59.7)	Asia-Pacific (58.8)	Europe (67)	Sub-Saharan Africa (54.9)
1	Canada	Bahrain	Chile	Hong Kong	Switzerland	Mauritius
2	United States	United Arab Emirates	Colombia	Singapore	Estonia	Botswana
3	Mexico	Qatar	Saint Lucia	New Zealand	Ireland	Cabo Verde
4		Israel	Bahamas, The	Australia	Denmark	Rwanda
5		Jordan	Uruguay	Taiwan	United Kingdom	Ghana
6		Oman	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Japan	Lithuania	South Africa
7		Kuwait	Barbados	South Korea	Germany	Madagascar
8		Saudi Arabia	Peru	Malaysia	Netherlands	Swaziland
9		Morocco	Jamaica	Macau	Finland	Uganda
10		Lebanon	Costa Rica	Brunei	Luxembourg	Namibia
11		Tunisia	Dominica	Kazakhstan	Georgia	Benin
12		Egypt	El Salvador	Thailand	Sweden	Zambia
13		Yemen	Trinidad and Tobago	Philippines, The	Czech Republic	Burkina Faso
14		Algeria	Panama	Samoa	Iceland	Côte d'Ivoire
15		Iran	Paraguay	Kyrgyz Republic	Norway	Gabon
16			Dominican Republic	Vanuatu	Austria	Senegal
17			Guatemala	Azerbaijan	Latvia	Tanzania
18			Nicaragua	Tonga	Belgium	Djibouti
19			Honduras	Mongolia	Poland	Gambia, The
20			Belize	Fiji	Cyprus	Seychelles
21			Brazil	Sri Lanka	Spain	Mali
22			Guyana	Indonesia	Slovak Republic	Nigeria
23			Suriname	Cambodia	Armenia	Kenya
24			Haiti	Bhutan	Macedonia	Mozambique
25			Ecuador	Pakistan	Hungary	Malawi
26			Bolivia	India	Bulgaria	Niger
27			Argentina	Bangladesh	Romania	Burundi
28			Venezuela	Maldives	Malta	Mauritania
29			Cuba	Papua New Guinea	Albania	São Tomé and Príncipe
30				China	Portugal	Togo
31				Tajikistan	Montenegro	Liberia
32				Vietnam	Turkey	Comoros
33				Laos	France	Guinea
34				Nepal	Italy	Guinea-Bissau
35				Micronesia	Croatia	Cameroon
36				Solomon Islands	Slovenia	Sierra Leone
37				Uzbekistan	Serbia	Ethiopia
38				Burma	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lesotho
39				Kiribati	Moldova	Angola
40				Timor-Leste	Greece	Chad
41				Turkmenistan	Russia	Central African Republic
42				North Korea	Belarus	Congo, Dem. Rep.
43					Ukraine	Congo, Republic of
44						Equatorial Guinea
45						Eritrea
46						Zimbabwe

Economic Freedom Scores

- 80-100 Free
- 70-79.9 Mostly Free
- 60-69.9 Moderately Free
- 50-59.9 Mostly Unfree
- 0-49.9 Repressed

One-Year Freedom Score Change

Region	Index Year		One-Year Change
	2014	2015	
Sub-Saharan Africa	54.6	54.9	+0.3
Asia-Pacific	58.5	58.8	+0.3
Middle East and North Africa	61.5	61.6	+0.1
South and Central America/Caribbean	59.7	59.7	No change
Europe	67.1	67.0	-0.1
North America	74.1	73.9	-0.2

Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, *2015 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Chart 2  heritage.org

bia, Israel, Cabo Verde, Montenegro, and Côte d’Ivoire, achieved their highest economic freedom scores ever in the 2015 *Index*.

While four countries (Singapore, Finland, Madagascar, and Suriname) recorded no score change, declines in economic freedom have occurred in 73 countries. Eleven countries, including Venezuela, Equatorial Guinea, Argentina, Bolivia, Algeria, Greece, and El Salvador, recorded their lowest economic freedom scores ever.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to six of the 10 most improved countries. São Tomé and Príncipe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo, Senegal, Burundi, and Zimbabwe all recorded score gains of two points or more. On the other hand, Europe has the most countries (Slovenia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Greece) recording serious declines, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (Equatorial Guinea, Botswana, and the Gambia) and Middle East/North Africa (Algeria and Yemen).

Score improvements in eight countries, all of which are developing or emerging economies, were significant enough to merit upgrades in their economic freedom status in the *Index*. Notably, Israel and Malaysia have joined the ranks of the “mostly free,” in Israel’s case for the first time ever and in Malaysia’s case regaining a level of economic freedom it had not experienced since 1996. Three developing countries (Morocco, Serbia, and Vanuatu) have advanced into the ranks of the “moderately free.” Three others (Haiti, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Togo) have escaped the status of economically “repressed.”

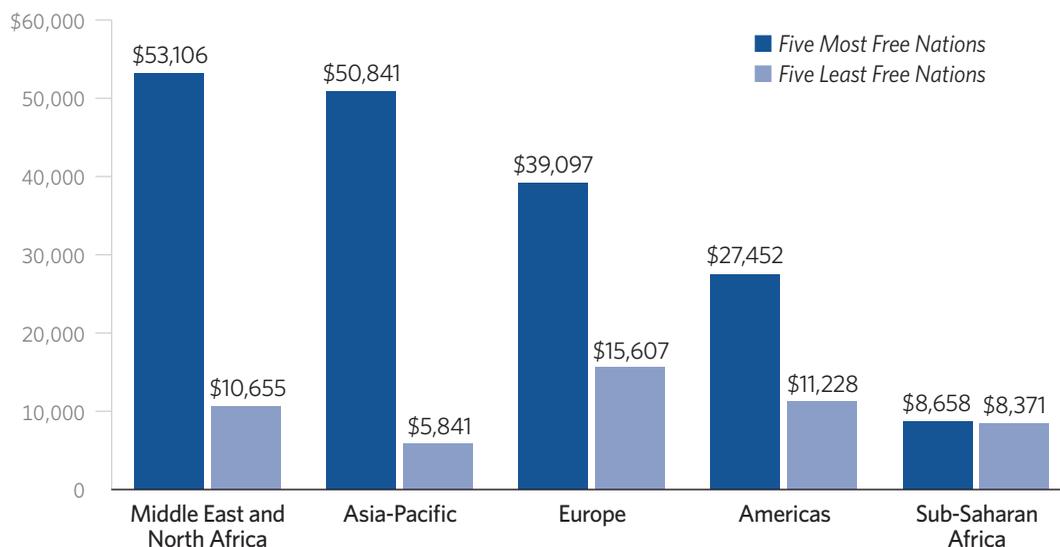
Fourteen countries, including Angola, Poland, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates, have achieved uninterrupted growth in economic freedom over the past five years. Seven of the 14, all developing countries, have recorded notable cumulative score gains of over five points: Zimbabwe, Burma, Comoros, Seychelles, Liberia, the Philippines, and Guinea-Bissau.

Competition for the top spot in the *Index* rankings has intensified. The 2015 *Index* has recorded a number of noticeable realignments and achievements within the top 20 global economic freedom rankings.

- Hong Kong has maintained its status as the world’s freest economy, a distinction that it has achieved for 21 consecutive years. However, the gap between that territory and Singapore, the second-freest economy, has almost vanished. Hong Kong’s economic freedom score declined by 0.5 point, with an erosion of the rule of law reflecting an increased level of perceived corruption.
- Along with Hong Kong and Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, and Switzerland are the only economies considered “free” with economic freedom scores above 80 on the 0-to-100 *Index* grading scale. New Zealand moved up two slots and reclaimed third place in the rankings as a result of committed efforts to cut government spending. Canada remains the world’s sixth-freest economy for the fifth year in a row.

Per-Capita Income by Region

GDP per Capita (Purchasing Power Parity)



Sources: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, *2015 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>; and International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Databases, <http://www.imf.org/external/ns/cs.aspx?id=28> (accessed November 19, 2014).

Chart 3 heritage.org

- Chile (seventh) and Mauritius (10th), two reform-minded developing economies, continue to rank among the world's 10 freest economies. Both have demonstrated persistent commitment to the rule of law, limited government, regulatory efficiency, and open markets.
- Moving up three slots, Estonia has become the world's eighth-freest economy. The small Baltic nation has rejoined the world's 10 freest economies for the first time since 2007, overtaking Denmark (11th), Ireland (ninth), and Mauritius.
- The United States continues to be only the 12th-freest economy, seemingly stuck in the ranks of the "mostly free," the second-tier economic freedom category into which the U.S. dropped in 2010.
- Taiwan and Lithuania, benefitting from uninterrupted score improvements since 2009, have recorded their highest economic freedom scores ever, advancing to 14th and 15th places, respectively, and surpassing Sweden, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Bahrain.

REGIONAL TRENDS IN ECONOMIC FREEDOM

In the 2015 *Index*, each of the six regions continues to be represented by at least one country that ranks among the top 20 freest economies. However, as shown in Chart 2, average levels of economic freedom advanced in only half of the regions.

Sub-Saharan Africa (led by São Tomé and Príncipe and Democratic Republic of Congo) and the Asia-Pacific region (led by Maldives and the Philippines) each showed an average score improvement of 0.3 point, and Middle East/North Africa countries (led by Israel and Morocco) gained 0.1 point on average. While average economic freedom for the South and Central America/Caribbean region stayed the same as last year, Europe and North America registered slight declines of 0.1 and 0.2 point, respectively.

Among the six regions, average levels of economic freedom vary widely. North America and Europe continue to record the highest average

Comparing Regional Average Scores with the Global Average

	Above or Equal to Global Average				Below Global Average		GLOBAL AVERAGE
	North America	Europe	Middle East/ North Africa	South and Central America/ Caribbean	Asia-Pacific	Sub-Saharan Africa	
Overall	73.9	67.0	61.6	59.7	58.8	54.9	60.4
Property Rights	73.3	59.9	39.4	39.0	38.0	30.1	42.2
Freedom from Corruption	62.7	57.0	38.4	41.1	37.6	32.5	41.9
Fiscal Freedom	74.6	71.7	88.8	78.4	80.2	75.6	77.4
Government Spending	59.4	40.5	62.3	69.3	66.7	72.2	61.7
Business Freedom	83.1	76.6	64.0	60.3	65.4	52.2	64.1
Labor Freedom	78.2	61.9	64.4	57.5	67.3	55.2	61.3
Monetary Freedom	77.3	78.8	73.4	74.9	73.2	73.7	75.0
Trade Freedom	87.0	86.7	74.1	74.8	72.8	67.2	75.4
Investment Freedom	73.3	74.1	44.4	55.3	44.1	48.4	54.8
Financial Freedom	70.0	63.2	45.3	46.6	43.1	40.2	48.5

Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, *2015 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Table 1  heritage.org

economic freedom scores among the regions: 73.9 and 67, respectively. Despite the ongoing economic and political turmoil in a number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa, the region as a whole still achieved an average economic freedom score slightly above 60 due to high ratings of economic freedom in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, reinforced by improved scores in Egypt, Israel, and Morocco.

co. Average economic freedom scores in the South and Central America/Caribbean region, the Asia-Pacific region, and Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be below 60.

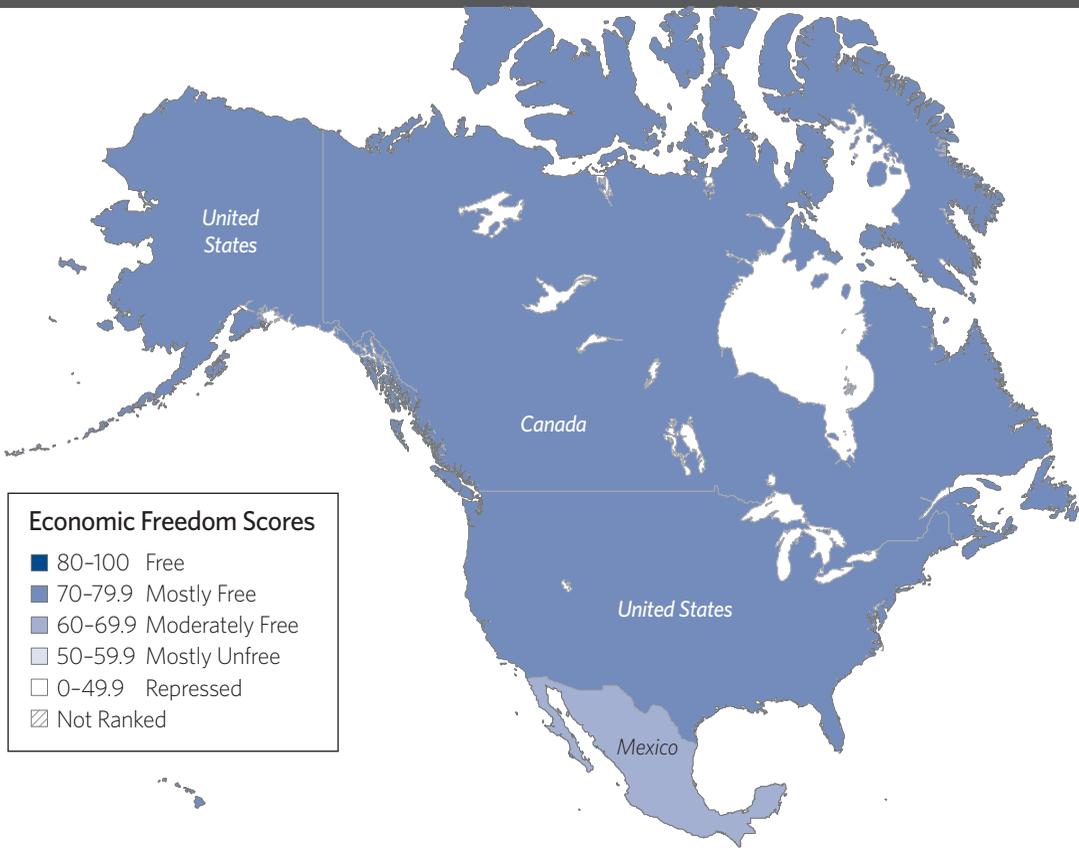
Despite varying degrees of economic freedom across the regions, the fundamental relationship between economic freedom and prosperity is readily apparent worldwide. Chart 3 shows that, no matter the region, per capita

Economic Freedom in North American Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
6	1	Canada	79.1	-1.1	90	81.0	79.9	48.3	89.0	76.1	77.9	88.4	80	80
12	2	United States	76.2	0.7	80	73.0	66.2	51.8	88.8	98.5	76.6	87.0	70	70
59	3	Mexico	66.4	-0.4	50	34.0	77.8	78.0	71.5	59.9	77.6	85.6	70	60

Table 2  heritage.org

North America



Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, *2015 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Map 1  heritage.org

income levels are consistently higher in countries that are economically freer.

The diversity of the world's peoples and cultures implies that there will be many paths to economic development and prosperity. The whole idea of economic freedom is to empower people with more opportunity to choose for themselves how to pursue and fulfill their dreams, subject only to the basic rule of law and honest competition from others. The patterns of economic freedom across the six *Index* regions are, not surprisingly, unique. They reflect the culture and history of each nation and the individuals that inhabit them, not to mention circumstances of geography or endowments of natural resources.

There is no single answer to the particular challenges of development that we face. One thing, however, is sure: Governments that respect and promote economic freedom provide the best environment for experimentation, innovation, and progress, and it is through these that humankind grows in prosperity and well-being.

NORTH AMERICA

The North America region has two “mostly free” economies (Canada and the U.S.) and one “moderately free” economy (Mexico). Canada has led the region in economic freedom since 2010.

Overall, average economic freedom in the region has registered a slight decline (0.2 point) since last year, with a small improvement in the

Economic Freedom in European Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
5	1	Switzerland	80.5	-1	90	85.0	70.3	65.1	78.1	75.3	86.3	90.0	85	80
8	2	Estonia	76.8	0.9	90	68.0	80.6	53.2	81.5	58.7	77.6	88.0	90	80
9	3	Ireland	76.6	0.4	85	72.0	73.6	45.6	82.1	76.2	83.9	88.0	90	70
11	4	Denmark	76.3	0.2	95	91.0	39.6	1.8	97.4	92.1	87.6	88.0	90	80
13	5	United Kingdom	75.8	0.9	90	76.0	62.9	30.3	91.1	75.6	74.4	88.0	90	80
15	6	Lithuania	74.7	1.7	60	57.0	92.9	61.3	84.9	62.0	81.2	88.0	80	80
16	7	Germany	73.8	0.4	90	78.0	60.8	40.1	88.2	51.2	81.5	88.0	90	70
17	8	The Netherlands	73.7	-0.5	90	83.0	51.8	23.8	84.3	66.3	79.8	88.0	90	80
19	9	Finland	73.4	0.0	90	89.0	66.4	3.6	92.6	54.8	79.9	88.0	90	80
21	10	Luxembourg	73.2	-1.0	90	80.0	62.3	42.2	71.3	42.1	80.7	88.0	95	80
22	11	Georgia	73.0	0.4	40	49.0	87.2	73.8	88.6	79.9	82.7	88.6	80	60
23	12	Sweden	72.7	-0.4	90	89.0	43.0	19.2	87.9	54.0	85.5	88.0	90	80
24	13	Czech Republic	72.5	0.3	75	48.0	81.5	40.6	68.2	82.9	81.2	88.0	80	80
26	14	Iceland	72.0	-0.4	90	78.0	72.0	32.6	90.5	62.2	77.0	88.0	70	60
27	15	Norway	71.8	0.9	90	86.0	52.1	43.8	92.1	48.2	81.7	89.4	75	60
30	16	Austria	71.2	-1.2	90	69.0	50.1	19.8	78.0	76.7	80.3	88.0	90	70
37	17	Latvia	69.7	1.0	50	53.0	84.4	59.2	82.1	61.5	83.8	88.0	85	50
40	18	Belgium	68.8	-1	80	75.0	43.6	10.2	90.7	63.7	81.7	88.0	85	70
42	19	Poland	68.6	1.6	60	60.0	82.1	47.1	67.3	60.4	81.3	88.0	70	70
45	20	Cyprus	67.9	0.3	70	63.0	79.5	36.7	79.5	59.6	82.7	88.0	70	50
49	21	Spain	67.6	0.4	70	59.0	53.1	39.8	77.5	52.6	81.3	88.0	85	70
50	22	Slovak Republic	67.2	0.8	50	47.0	80.8	55.1	69.6	56.5	75.5	88.0	80	70

(continued on next page)

United States outweighed by declines in Canada and Mexico. The downward spiral in U.S. economic freedom over the previous seven years has come to a halt. In the 2015 *Index*, the U.S. recorded modest score gains in six of the 10 economic freedoms; however, its score for business freedom has plunged below 90, the lowest level since 2006.

The North American Free Trade Agreement remains the linchpin of massive trade and investment flows in the North America region. This increasing integration is reflected in converging scores for trade freedom and investment free-

dom in the region. In 1995, when the first edition of the *Index* measured these freedoms, the score differences between the United States and Mexico were over 10 points. Over the past two decades, the trade and investment freedom margins have narrowed to less than three points.

EUROPE

The Europe region includes 43 countries graded by the *Index*, the most of any region. Switzerland continues to be the only “free” economy in the region, with a score of 80.5. Nine of the world’s 20

Economic Freedom in European Countries *(continued)*

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
52	23	Armenia	67.1	-1.8	20	36.0	84.4	82.8	82.7	64.3	70.6	85.4	75	70
53	24	Macedonia	67.1	-1.5	35	44.0	91.4	65.6	79.2	70.7	79.0	86.2	60	60
54	25	Hungary	66.8	-0.2	55	54.0	78.7	25.9	74.5	67.7	79.2	88.0	75	70
55	26	Bulgaria	66.8	1.1	30	41.0	91.0	64.5	68.5	76.6	83.2	88.0	65	60
57	27	Romania	66.6	1.1	40	43.0	86.9	62.3	69.8	68.6	77.3	88.0	80	50
58	28	Malta	66.5	0.1	75	56.0	63.1	44.4	61.0	55.6	81.8	88.0	80	60
63	29	Albania	65.7	-1.2	30	31.0	87.2	76.1	70.6	52.9	80.8	87.8	70	70
64	30	Portugal	65.3	1.8	70	62.0	61.1	28.8	87.5	42.9	82.8	88.0	70	60
66	31	Montenegro	64.7	1.1	40	44.0	92.6	36.7	77.1	77.5	79.7	84.8	65	50
70	32	Turkey	63.2	-1.7	45	50.0	76.1	57.6	61.0	50.2	72.4	84.6	75	60
73	33	France	62.5	-1.0	80	71.0	47.5	2.5	80.2	43.5	77.5	83.0	70	70
80	34	Italy	61.7	0.8	55	43.0	54.2	23.2	71.9	55.4	81.2	88.0	85	60
81	35	Croatia	61.5	1.1	40	48.0	74.9	46.5	55.8	42.8	80.0	87.2	80	60
88	36	Slovenia	60.3	-2.4	60	57.0	58.1	0.0	81.2	57.1	81.3	88.0	70	50
90	37	Serbia	60.0	0.6	45	42.0	82.4	27.1	57.8	70.4	72.2	78.2	75	50
97	38	Bosnia and Herzegovina	59.0	0.6	20	42.0	82.9	27.3	53.5	63.4	84.0	87.2	70	60
111	39	Moldova	57.5	0.2	40	35.0	85.1	51.8	66.8	40.6	76.1	79.8	50	50
130	40	Greece	54.0	-1.7	40	40.0	64.2	0.0	73.3	51.6	77.8	83.0	60	50
143	41	Russia	52.1	0.2	20	28.0	86.1	57.8	76.3	58.9	63.9	75.0	25	30
153	42	Belarus	49.8	-0.3	20	29.0	86.4	54.7	72.0	80.1	44.5	81.0	20	10
162	43	Ukraine	46.9	-2.4	20	25.0	78.7	28.0	59.3	48.2	78.6	85.8	15	30
N/A	N/A	Kosovo	N/A	N/A	30	33.0	N/A	73.9	66.8	72.1	74.9	N/A	65	N/A
N/A	N/A	Liechtenstein	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90.0	85	80

Table 3  heritage.org

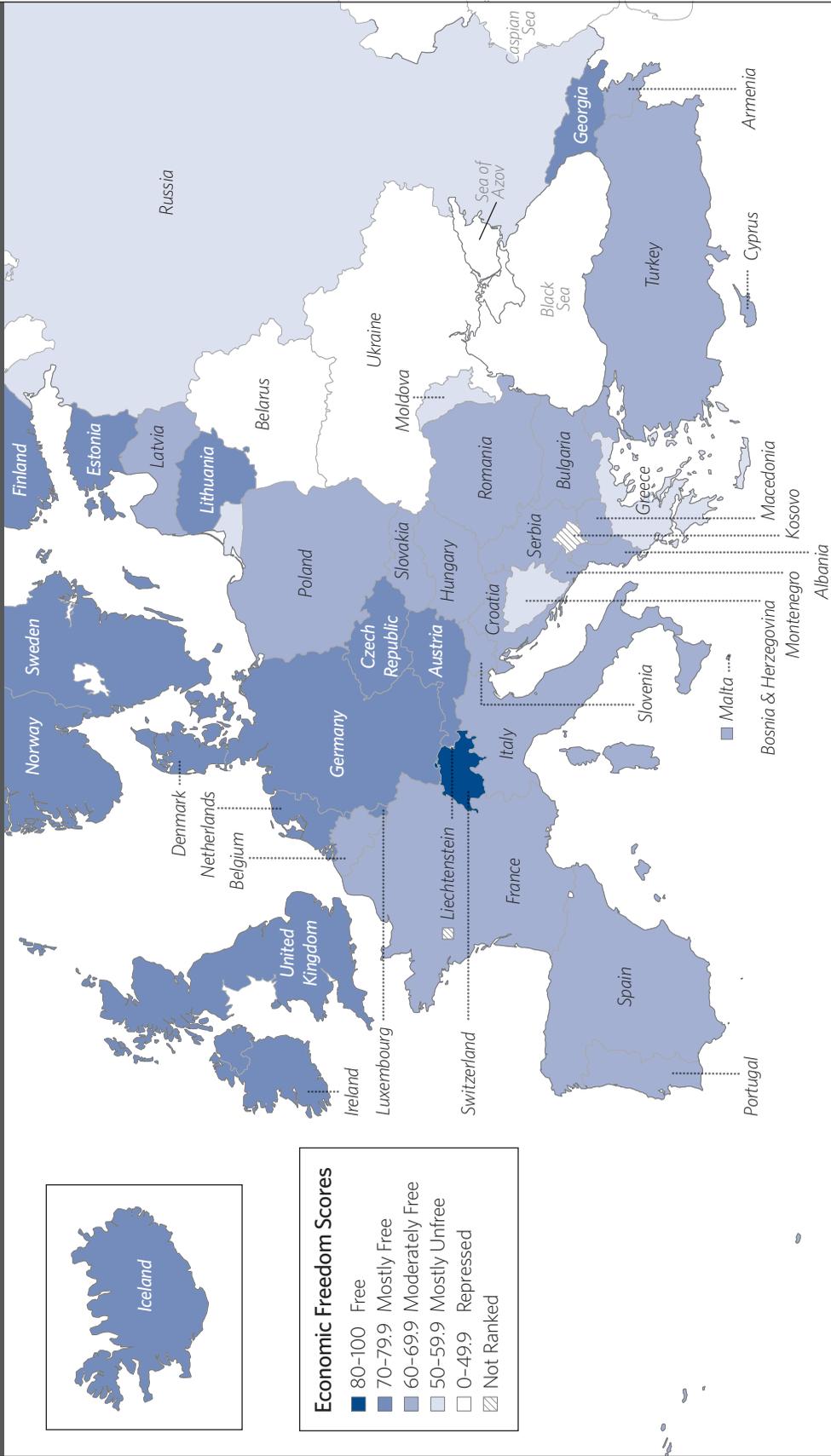
freest countries are in Europe, and the vast majority of the region's countries are considered at least "moderately free." Europe has three "mostly unfree" economies (Moldova, Greece, and Russia) and two "repressed" economies (Ukraine and Belarus).

Taken as a whole, the Europe region still struggles with a variety of policy barriers to dynamic economic expansion, such as overly protective and costly labor regulations, higher tax burdens, various market distortionary subsidies, and continuing

problems in public finance management resulting from years of expansion of the public sector.

The result has been stagnant economic growth, which has exacerbated the burden of fiscal deficits and mounting debt. In many countries of the region, decisive policy action is needed to cut spending. Where such actions have been taken, progress is apparent. Three Baltic economies (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia) are on the move toward greater economic freedom. Overcoming severe recessions

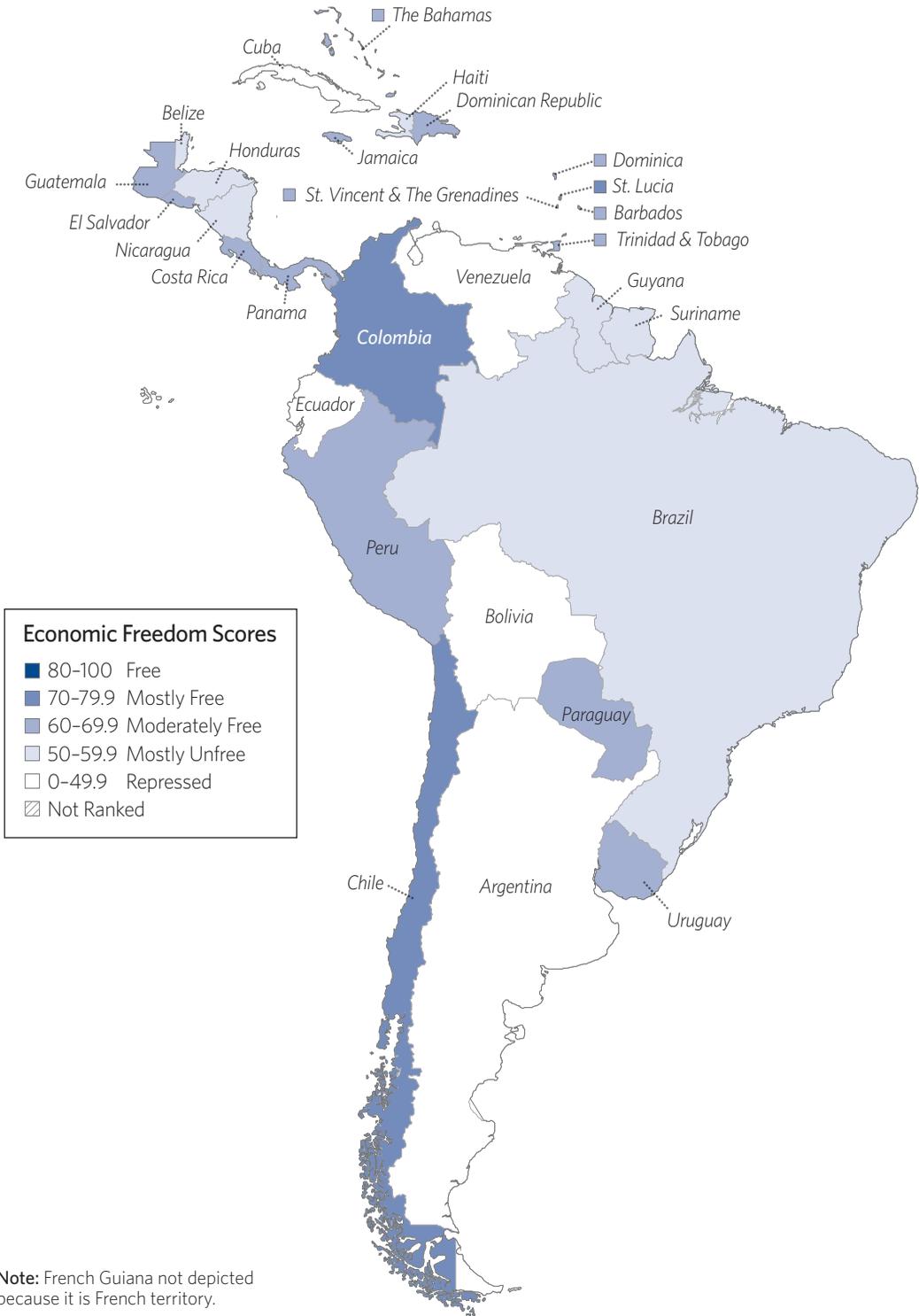
Europe



Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, 2015 Index of Economic Freedom (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Map 2 heritage.org

South and Central America/Caribbean



Economic Freedom in South and Central America / Caribbean Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
7	1	Chile	78.5	-0.2	90	71.0	76.5	83.3	69.3	67.0	85.6	82.0	90	70
28	2	Colombia	71.7	1.0	50	36.0	80.3	76.0	81.5	81.7	80.1	81.2	80	70
35	3	Saint Lucia	70.2	-0.5	70	71.0	77.7	65.8	75.6	79.8	85.5	72.0	65	40
41	4	The Bahamas	68.7	-1.1	70	71.0	97.8	83.2	68.9	75.3	78.8	52.2	30	60
43	5	Uruguay	68.6	-0.7	70	73.0	77.1	65.1	72.6	64.3	71.6	81.8	80	30
44	6	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	68.0	1.0	70	62.0	73.3	75.3	70.8	78.2	82.3	68.4	60	40
46	7	Barbados	67.9	-0.4	80	75.0	73.8	42.1	71.6	69.2	78.2	63.8	65	60
47	8	Peru	67.7	0.3	40	38.0	78.6	88.5	67.7	63.4	83.9	87.0	70	60
48	9	Jamaica	67.7	1.0	40	38.0	81.5	73.2	85.9	76.5	71.4	75.0	85	50
51	10	Costa Rica	67.2	0.3	50	53.0	80.0	89.9	64.5	54.6	75.8	83.8	70	50
61	11	Dominica	66.1	0.9	60	58.0	73.6	61.5	71.6	68.7	89.5	72.8	75	30
62	12	El Salvador	65.7	-0.5	35	38.0	79.4	85.5	53.3	53.3	82.5	85.2	75	70
67	13	Trinidad and Tobago	64.1	1.4	50	38.0	79.0	69.3	65.3	76.6	74.3	78.6	60	50
68	14	Panama	64.1	0.7	30	35.0	84.5	78.8	71.5	41.5	76.4	78.4	75	70

(continued on next page)

following the global financial turmoil, these young free-market democracies have sustained their openness to global markets and competition, pursued regulatory reform, and shrunk the size of their governments. Each has moved up in the *Index* rankings every year since 2012, outperforming many older members of the European Union such as Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA/ CARIBBEAN

In the South and Central America/Caribbean region, 29 countries are distributed throughout the rankings in a more bell-shaped way than is found among the countries of any other region. All but eight countries have received an economic freedom score between 50 and 70 in the 2015 *Index*, and 14 countries fall in the middle

economic freedom category of “moderately free.” There is no “free” economy, but three “mostly free” economies (Chile, Colombia, and Saint Lucia) lead the region. Recording its highest score ever in the 2015 *Index*, Colombia has solidified its ranking as the second freest in the region. Although Haiti has moved out of the ranks of the “repressed,” five countries (Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador) persist with poor policy choices that trap their citizens in the lowest category of economic freedom.

Although countries in the region demonstrate a high degree of economic and political diversity, the stark reality in common across the region is that economies are underperforming and stagnating due to the lack or even loss of economic freedom. The foundations of well-functioning free-market democracy remain fragile in the South and Cen-

Economic Freedom in South and Central America / Caribbean Countries *(continued)*

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
83	15	Paraguay	61.1	-0.9	30	24.0	96.0	81.9	58.4	26.3	78.3	81.4	75	60
86	16	Dominican Republic	61.0	-0.3	30	29.0	84.1	87.1	53.5	57.5	76.0	77.8	75	40
87	17	Guatemala	60.4	-0.8	20	29.0	79.6	94.1	54.7	50.6	76.8	84.6	65	50
108	18	Nicaragua	57.6	-0.8	10	28.0	78.4	76.6	58.0	56.7	67.8	85.4	65	50
116	19	Honduras	57.4	0.3	30	26.0	84.9	78.7	53.2	28.0	75.4	77.6	60	60
117	20	Belize	56.8	0.1	30	6.7	82.4	78.3	59.1	61.8	79.3	70.4	50	50
118	21	Brazil	56.6	-0.3	50	42.0	68.4	50.9	53.6	52.1	69.4	69.6	50	60
123	22	Guyana	55.5	-0.2	25	27.0	68.7	70.8	63.8	74.5	78.4	72.0	45	30
129	23	Suriname	54.2	0.0	35	36.0	69.3	73.8	42.2	81.9	77.2	66.2	30	30
151	24	Haiti	51.3	2.4	10	19.0	80.3	76.2	43.1	63.7	73.5	77.6	40	30
156	25	Ecuador	49.2	1.2	15	35.0	79.1	51.0	51.4	51.3	68.2	71.4	30	40
163	26	Bolivia	46.8	-1.6	10	34.0	86.8	60.9	53.7	25.5	69.7	77.6	10	40
169	27	Argentina	44.1	-0.5	15	34.0	66.8	41.2	52.8	43.3	59.6	68.8	30	30
176	28	Venezuela	34.3	-2.0	5	20.0	75.0	52.0	41.6	24.2	42.8	62.8	0	20
177	29	Cuba	29.6	0.9	10	46.0	61.8	0.0	20.0	20.0	64.8	63.8	0	10

Table 4  heritage.org

tral America/Caribbean region. With widespread corruption and the weak protection of property rights aggravating systemic shortcomings such as regulatory inefficiency and monetary instability caused by various market distortions, the region as a whole has become increasingly vulnerable to competing deceptive models of governance based on cronyism and populism.

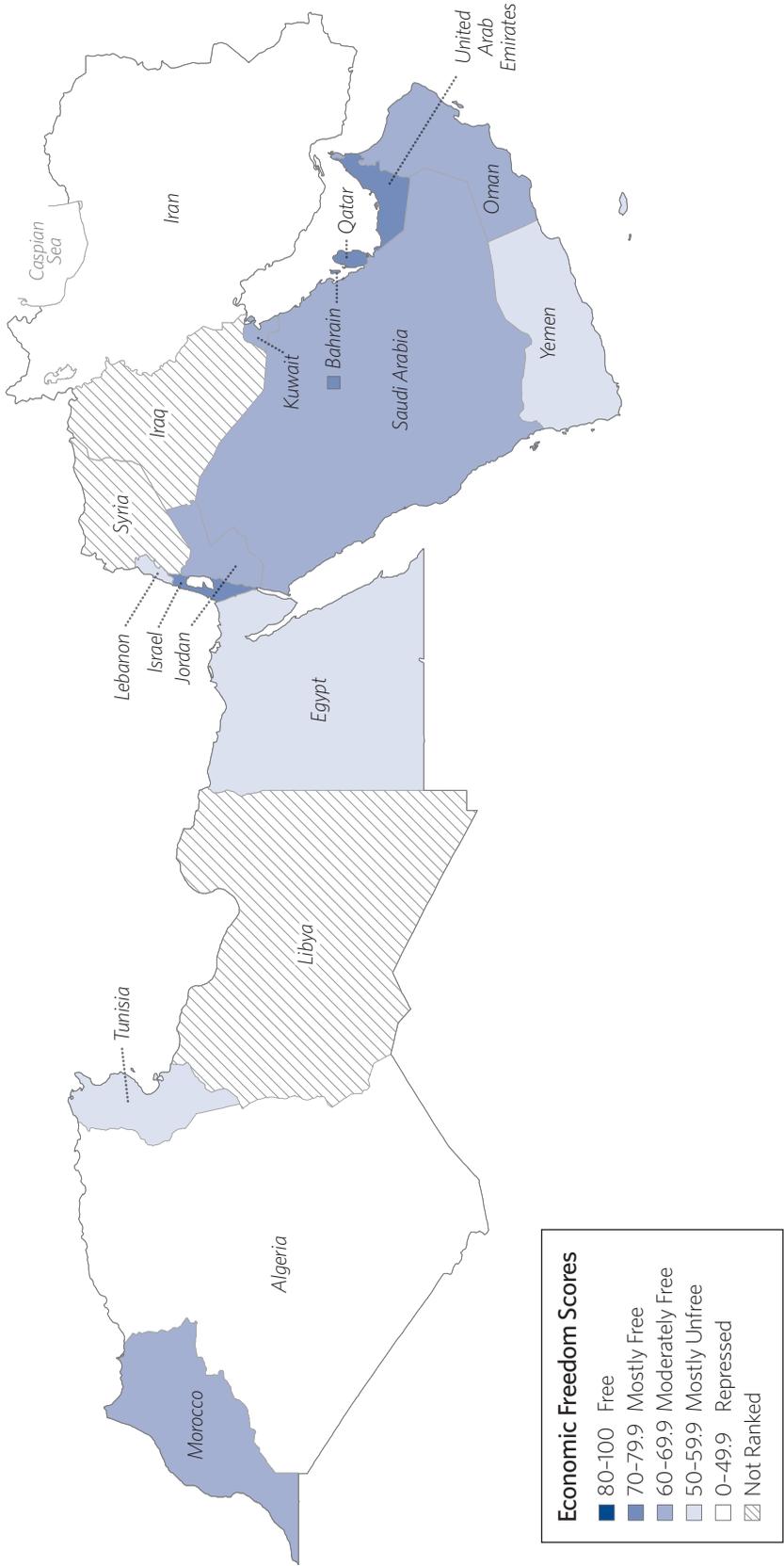
Over the past year, economic freedom in the South and Central America/Caribbean region has improved in 13 countries while declining in 15. Suriname scored the same as the previous year. The erosion of economic freedom in populous countries such as Brazil and Argentina is particularly troubling, exacerbating poverty and increasing the challenge of fostering broad-based sustainable growth in the future.

MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA

The Middle East/North Africa region continues to be a critical global hot spot for economic, political, and security vulnerabilities. The majority of the Middle East/North Africa region's 15 economies graded by the *Index* continue to be only "moderately free" or "mostly unfree," with Algeria and Iran considered "repressed." Algeria, Yemen, and Bahrain recorded three of the 10 largest score declines in the 2015 *Index*, while Egypt and Israel were among the best in improving economic freedom this year.

Since early 2011, many countries in the region have been undergoing socioeconomic upheaval, with outcomes far from certain. The lives of many ordinary people in the region have yet to

Middle East/North Africa



Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, 2015 *Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Map 4 heritage.org

Economic Freedom in Middle East/North African Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
18	1	Bahrain	73.4	-1.7	60	48.0	99.9	73.1	72.5	83.1	74.2	78.6	65	80
25	2	United Arab Emirates	72.4	1.0	55	69.0	99.5	85.8	74.7	83.8	83.8	82.4	40	50
32	3	Qatar	70.8	-0.4	70	68.0	99.7	71.9	70.5	71.2	79.7	81.8	45	50
33	4	Israel	70.5	2.1	75	61.0	61.9	47.8	72.4	67.1	81.6	88.6	80	70
38	5	Jordan	69.3	0.1	60	45.0	93.7	70.7	59.1	74.4	80.6	79.6	70	60
56	6	Oman	66.7	-0.7	55	47.0	98.5	44.2	68.4	76.1	76.2	76.8	65	60
74	7	Kuwait	62.5	0.2	45	43.0	97.7	61.1	58.6	64.2	74.0	76.2	55	50
77	8	Saudi Arabia	62.1	-0.1	40	46.0	99.7	61.9	65.8	72.7	68.4	76.4	40	50
89	9	Morocco	60.1	1.8	40	37.0	70.9	61.0	68.8	33.4	81.9	78.2	70	60
94	10	Lebanon	59.3	-0.1	20	28.0	91.3	70.6	54.7	60.7	72.0	75.8	60	60
107	11	Tunisia	57.7	0.4	40	41.0	74.3	70.8	81.2	69.1	74.8	61.2	35	30
124	12	Egypt	55.2	2.3	20	32.0	85.8	68.0	65.4	53.6	67.4	70.0	50	40
133	13	Yemen	53.7	-1.8	30	18.0	91.5	59.9	54.0	57.1	68.5	77.6	50	30
157	14	Algeria	48.9	-1.9	30	36.0	80.0	38.7	66.6	50.5	71.2	60.8	25	30
171	15	Iran	41.8	1.5	10	25.0	81.2	93.0	57.0	51.3	48.7	41.4	0	10
N/A	N/A	Iraq	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.0	N/A	43.8	57.7	74.4	73.6	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	Libya	N/A	N/A	10	15.0	95.0	37.5	46.8	66.7	71.4	80.0	5	N/A
N/A	N/A	Syria	N/A	N/A	10	17.0	N/A	N/A	57.3	49.1	N/A	N/A	0	20

Table 5  heritage.org

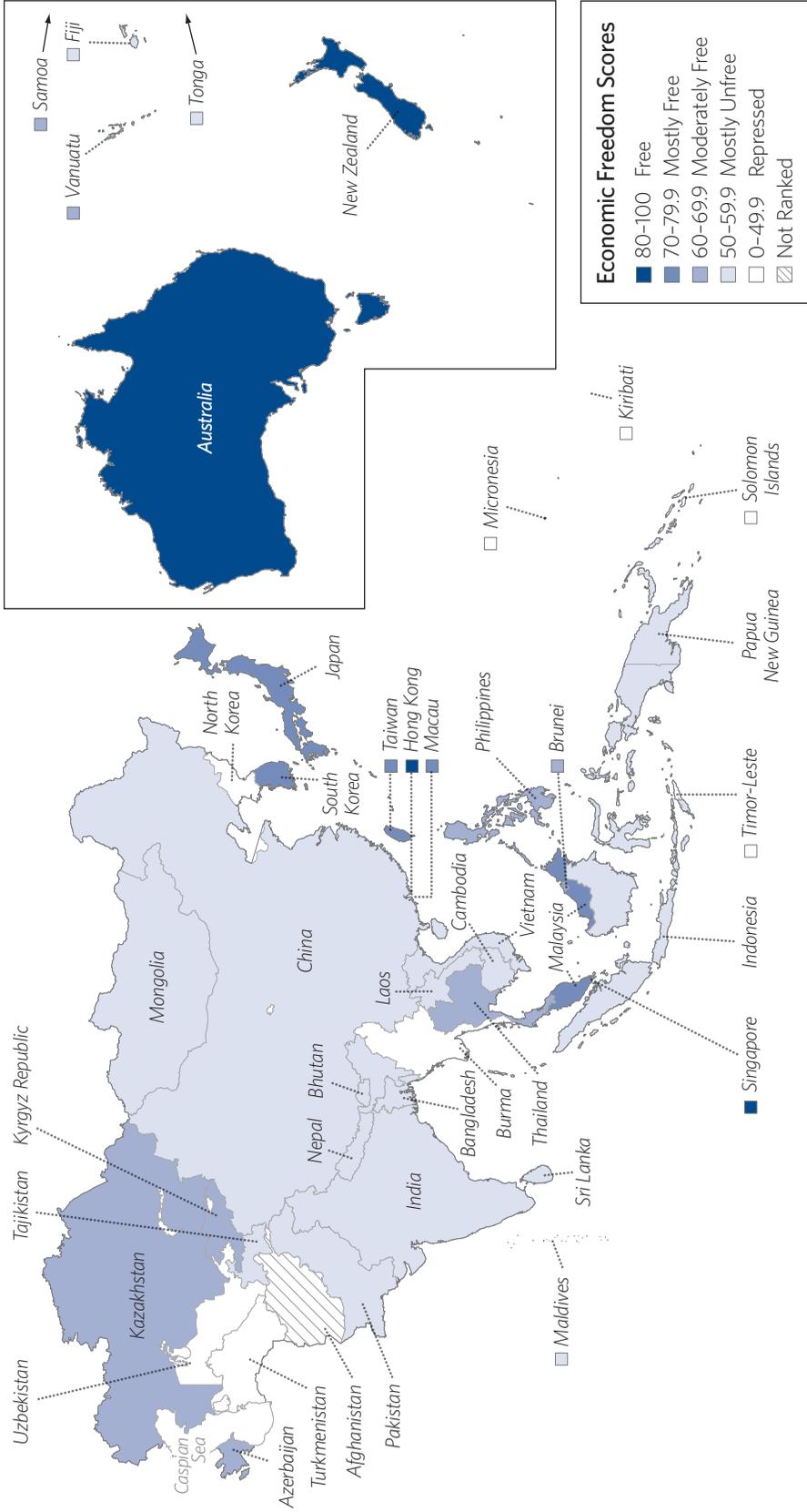
change for the better. Of the Arab Spring economies, Tunisia and Egypt have shown the most encouraging results over the past year. However, Yemen and Bahrain continue to be on downward paths in terms of economic freedom, and grading of economic freedom for Iraq, Libya, and Syria remains suspended because of ongoing violence and unrest.

Structural and institutional problems abound throughout the region, and private-sector growth continues to lag far behind levels needed to provide adequate jobs for growing populations. Taken as a whole, the Middle East/North Africa region's lack of job opportunities continues to be a serious problem, particularly for younger members of the labor force

whose average unemployment rate is close to 25 percent.

Undoubtedly, mounting economic problems will not be solved simply by holding elections or allowing greater expressions of dissent. Existing policies and practices continue to restrict economic freedom. Over the past year, business freedom, the lack of which contributed to igniting Arab Spring protests, has declined in 11 of the 18 countries in the region. Equally troublesome is that costly subsidies on energy and food, which place a considerable burden on budgets and stand in the way of sound sustainable economic development, are still on the rise as many governments in the region continue to rely on lavish subsidies to quell social and political unrest.

Asia and the Pacific



Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, 2015 Index of Economic Freedom (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

Map 5 heritage.org

Economic Freedom in Asia-Pacific Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
1	1	Hong Kong	89.6	-0.5	90	75.0	93.2	89.7	100.0	95.9	81.8	90.0	90	90
2	2	Singapore	89.4	0.0	90	86.0	91.2	93.8	96.9	96.9	83.7	90.0	85	80
3	3	New Zealand	82.1	0.9	95	91.0	70.4	43.0	95.5	91.4	87.6	86.8	80	80
4	4	Australia	81.4	-0.6	90	81.0	63.7	61.8	94.1	81.6	85.3	86.4	80	90
14	5	Taiwan	75.1	1.2	70	61.0	80.4	87.1	92.4	55.2	83.3	86.4	75	60
20	6	Japan	73.3	0.9	80	74.0	68.7	47.1	84.1	90.2	86.7	82.6	70	50
29	7	South Korea	71.5	0.3	75	55.0	72.5	67.9	89.7	51.1	81.6	72.6	70	80
31	8	Malaysia	70.8	1.2	55	50.0	84.4	74.0	93.5	75.7	80.8	80.0	55	60
34	9	Macau	70.3	-1.0	60	49.7	71.8	91.8	60.0	50.0	74.9	90.0	85	70
39	10	Brunei	68.9	-0.1	35	60.0	87.0	63.6	68.3	96.9	76.6	81.8	70	50
69	11	Kazakhstan	63.3	-0.4	25	26.0	93.2	85.0	73.7	87.0	74.6	79.0	40	50
75	12	Thailand	62.4	-0.9	40	35.0	81.5	81.4	72.5	63.5	69.9	75.4	45	60
76	13	The Philippines	62.2	2.1	30	36.0	79.1	89.3	55.3	58.2	78.8	75.4	60	60
78	14	Samoa	61.9	0.8	60	38.0	80.2	46.5	73.6	78.4	81.2	75.8	55	30
82	15	Kyrgyz Republic	61.3	0.2	20	24.0	93.6	53.2	73.7	85.0	73.8	80.2	60	50
84	16	Vanuatu	61.1	1.6	40	33.5	97.2	83.8	51.5	46.4	82.9	75.4	60	40
85	17	Azerbaijan	61.0	-0.3	20	28.0	88.1	59.7	74.5	79.1	79.8	76.0	55	50
95	18	Tonga	59.3	1.1	20	28.6	87.2	79.0	74.1	92.1	73.5	78.4	40	20
96	19	Mongolia	59.2	0.3	30	38.0	83.9	35.6	68.2	82.7	69.2	74.8	50	60
98	20	Fiji	59.0	0.3	25	22.3	81.3	74.6	63.2	75.2	78.3	70.2	50	50
101	21	Sri Lanka	58.6	-1.4	35	37.0	85.0	88.4	72.5	58.7	68.2	71.6	30	40
105	22	Indonesia	58.1	-0.4	30	32.0	83.3	88.3	49.3	48.7	74.9	74.8	40	60

(continued on next page)

ASIA-PACIFIC

For two years in a row, the Asia-Pacific region has outperformed the other five regions in terms of advancing economic freedom. Since 2013, the region as a whole has recorded a cumulative score gain of close to 1.5 points. The Asia-Pacific area continues to have by far the largest number of the world's "free" economies. Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, and Australia lead the *Index*. Nonetheless, the region is marked by sharp disparities in levels of economic freedom, with six of the world's 20 freest economies but also seven of the 20 least free countries. Over 60 percent of

the 41 countries in the Asia-Pacific region score between 40 and 60 on the economic freedom scale, remaining either "mostly unfree" or "repressed."

Despite the stark divergences, the region on the whole continues to demonstrate an impressive degree of economic resilience and dynamism. Asia is home to the world's largest economies and a number of fast-growing emerging economies. As indicated by the region's high level of trade freedom, Asia-Pacific economies have been capitalizing on the freer flow of goods and services both around the world and within the region. Facilitating vibrant commercial engagement beyond borders and ampli-

Economic Freedom in Asia-Pacific Countries *(continued)*

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
110	23	Cambodia	57.5	0.1	25	20.0	90.5	87.5	29.2	62.2	78.7	72.2	60	50
115	24	Bhutan	57.4	0.7	60	63.0	82.6	60.1	61.9	81.1	66.0	49.4	20	30
121	25	Pakistan	55.6	0.4	30	28.0	77.7	86.1	65.6	42.1	71.2	65.6	50	40
128	26	India	54.6	-1.1	55	36.0	79.4	78.3	43.3	48.7	65.3	64.6	35	40
131	27	Bangladesh	53.9	-0.2	20	27.0	72.7	92.0	62.2	63.7	67.7	59.0	45	30
134	28	Maldives	53.4	2.4	25	21.9	95.5	50.6	85.8	73.4	74.1	47.8	30	30
137	29	Papua New Guinea	53.1	-0.8	20	25.0	66.9	68.7	53.5	74.5	72.7	85.0	35	30
139	30	China	52.7	0.2	20	40.0	69.7	81.5	52.1	63.0	74.2	71.8	25	30
140	31	Tajikistan	52.7	0.7	20	22.0	92.1	81.9	65.4	46.4	69.6	74.6	25	30
148	32	Vietnam	51.7	0.9	15	31.0	79.1	77.1	61.5	62.9	66.8	78.6	15	30
150	33	Laos	51.4	0.2	15	26.0	86.2	86.8	59.5	57.1	74.5	58.6	30	20
152	34	Nepal	51.3	1.2	30	31.0	85.6	88.9	65.7	44.3	70.5	61.8	5	30
154	35	Micronesia	49.6	-0.2	30	30.0	93.2	0.0	51.0	79.1	76.9	81.0	25	30
159	36	Solomon Islands	47.0	0.8	30	25.0	61.1	25.7	67.7	68.6	74.3	73.0	15	30
160	37	Uzbekistan	47.0	0.5	15	17.0	90.2	67.3	73.1	64.2	63.5	69.8	0	10
161	38	Burma	46.9	0.4	10	21.0	86.9	77.9	28.7	79.3	66.1	74.2	15	10
164	39	Kiribati	46.4	0.1	30	29.2	73.0	0.0	56.8	83.9	80.6	55.4	25	30
167	40	Timor-Leste	45.5	2.3	20	30.0	64.7	0.0	59.8	72.0	68.7	79.6	40	20
172	41	Turkmenistan	41.4	-0.8	5	17.0	94.0	93.5	30.0	20.0	64.2	80.0	0	10
178	42	North Korea	1.3	0.3	5	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
N/A	N/A	Afghanistan	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.0	91.7	81.2	61.4	67.5	72.6	N/A	55	N/A

Table 6  heritage.org

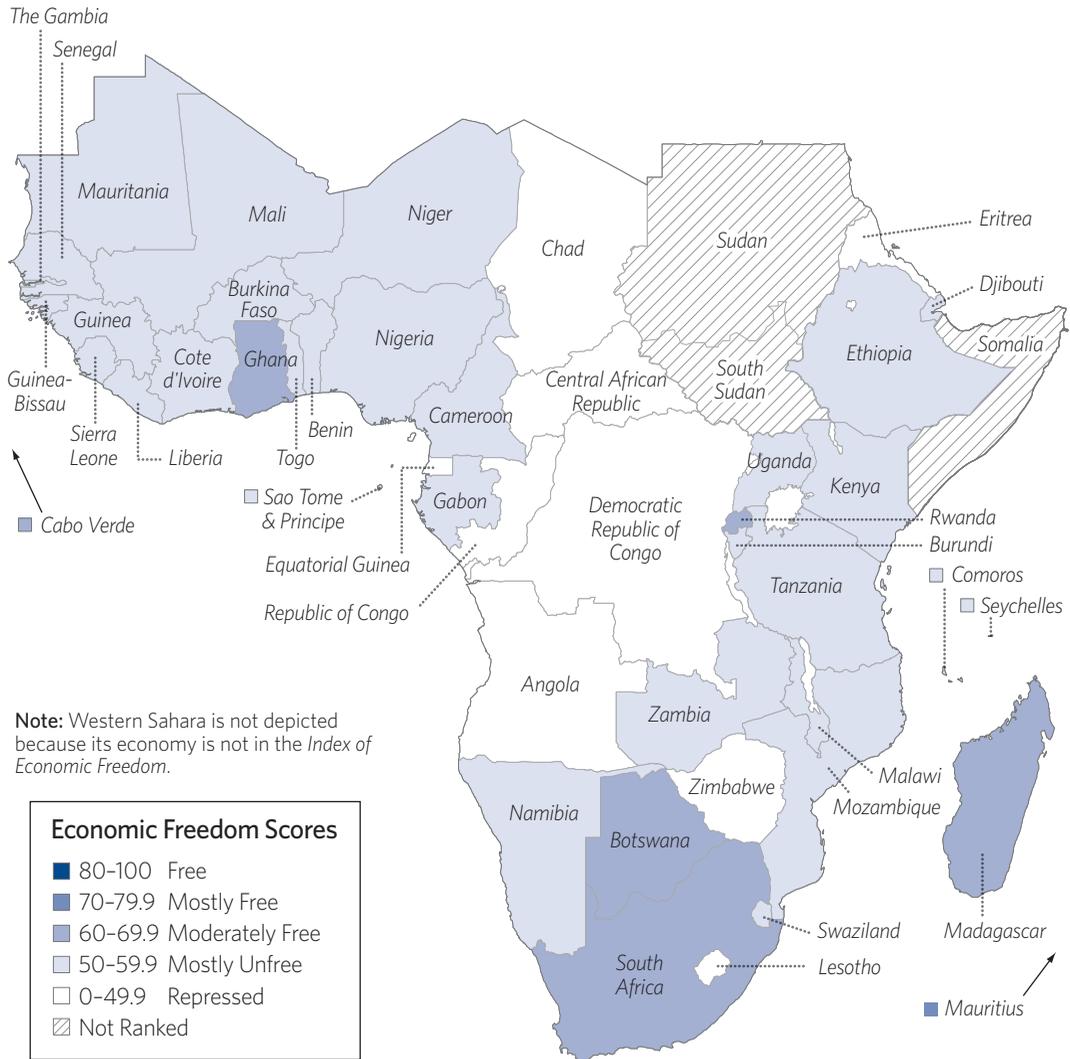
ving economic development, trade agreements have proliferated in the Asia–Pacific region over the past decade. There are now some 40 completed intraregional trade agreements and over 100 agreements with countries outside the region.

In the 2015 *Index*, the Asia–Pacific region has recorded some notable changes in economic freedom. The scores of 27 countries have improved, and those of 14 have worsened. Of those that have improved, seven countries, including Taiwan, Vietnam, and Laos, have achieved their highest economic freedom score ever in the 2015 *Index*. Four countries (Taiwan, South Korea, the Philip-

pires, and Burma) have achieved five consecutive years of advancing economic freedom.

On the other hand, Hong Kong’s economic freedom score has tumbled to the territory’s second lowest rating since 2007. Although Hong Kong continues strongly to maintain the features of an economically free society, the city’s waning institutional uniqueness has placed it at a critical crossroads. The current failure to deliver promised meaningful electoral reform has galvanized greater pro-democracy sentiments in Hong Kong and undermined trust and confidence in the government.

Sub-Saharan Africa



Map 6 heritage.org

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Unlike other regions that have a more diverse and a wider range of economic freedom scores, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to show variations only within the lower bands of economic freedom. There is no “free” economy in the region, and Mauritius continues to lead the region as a “moderately free” economy. A majority of 46 nations are ranked either “most-

ly unfree” or “repressed.” In fact, nine of the world’s 26 “repressed” economies are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Nevertheless, together with the Asia-Pacific region, Sub-Saharan African has experienced the most widespread increases in economic freedom over the past year. In the 2015 *Index*, economic freedom has advanced in 59 percent of the economies of the Sub-Saharan Africa

Economic Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa Countries

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
10	1	Mauritius	76.4	-0.1	65	52.0	91.9	87.4	78.0	68.2	77.6	88.4	85	70
36	2	Botswana	69.8	-2.2	70	64.0	79.5	61.9	66.8	70.0	73.9	72.2	70	70
60	3	Cabo Verde	66.4	0.3	75	58.0	78.3	67.9	61.8	42.1	81.0	69.6	70	60
65	4	Rwanda	64.8	0.1	30	53.0	80.2	79.2	59.5	84.5	76.0	80.8	65	40
71	5	Ghana	63.0	-1.2	50	46.0	84.6	70.8	62.5	56.9	69.2	64.8	65	60
72	6	South Africa	62.6	0.1	50	42.0	69.5	68.2	73.0	61.6	74.9	76.6	50	60
79	7	Madagascar	61.7	0.0	45	28.0	90.9	94.7	62.3	45.1	79.2	71.8	50	50
91	8	Swaziland	59.9	-1.3	40	39.0	76.4	68.6	60.5	69.3	73.9	76.0	55	40
92	9	Uganda	59.7	-0.2	25	26.0	73.3	89.0	43.3	87.5	76.3	76.6	60	40
93	10	Namibia	59.6	0.2	30	48.0	66.7	56.0	64.3	90.9	74.3	71.2	55	40
99	11	Benin	58.8	1.7	30	36.0	68.3	86.7	55.2	53.2	79.9	58.4	70	50
100	12	Zambia	58.7	-1.7	30	38.0	71.9	78.0	68.2	46.0	73.2	76.8	55	50
102	13	Burkina Faso	58.6	-0.3	25	38.0	82.4	79.8	49.6	57.8	80.0	68.2	65	40
103	14	Côte d'Ivoire	58.5	0.8	35	27.0	77.7	82.4	65.4	46.0	75.0	71.4	55	50
104	15	Gabon	58.3	0.5	40	34.0	77.5	74.6	57.9	64.3	78.4	61.0	55	40
106	16	Senegal	57.8	2.4	40	41.0	71.3	74.6	54.6	39.5	83.0	74.0	60	40
109	17	Tanzania	57.5	-0.3	30	33.0	79.9	79.3	45.0	61.4	69.7	67.0	60	50
112	18	Djibouti	57.5	1.6	25	36.0	81.2	57.1	55.4	66.6	78.9	54.8	70	50
113	19	The Gambia	57.5	-2.0	25	28.0	75.4	73.4	55.7	66.7	70.8	65.0	65	50
114	20	Seychelles	57.5	1.3	50	54.0	79.8	59.4	67.7	63.9	76.0	44.0	50	30
119	21	Mali	56.4	0.9	25	28.0	69.6	89.2	47.2	50.7	81.1	73.2	60	40
120	22	Nigeria	55.6	1.3	30	25.0	85.2	76.1	48.3	77.7	70.4	63.8	40	40
122	23	Kenya	55.6	-1.5	30	27.0	78.0	72.1	47.9	63.8	72.8	64.0	50	50
125	24	Mozambique	54.8	-0.2	30	30.0	75.2	66.5	60.9	37.9	82.0	75.4	40	50
126	25	Malawi	54.8	-0.6	40	37.0	78.5	49.0	49.1	63.1	53.8	72.2	55	50

(continued on next page)

region. Most impressively, six of the top 10 largest score improvements in the 2015 *Index* have occurred in countries in this region. São Tomé and Príncipe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo, Senegal, Burundi, and Zimbabwe have all recorded score gains of two points or more. Liberia and Sierra Leone, two post-conflict countries currently confronting challenges of containing Ebola, have continued to move up

from the ranks of the economically “repressed.” Also encouraging is that six countries in the region, including Angola, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, and Seychelles, have registered sustained growth in economic freedom throughout the past five years.

Many countries in the region have substantial growth momentum. The positive economic results achieved through advancing economic freedom

Economic Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa Countries *(continued)*

World Rank	Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Change from 2014	Property Rights	Freedom from Corruption	Fiscal Freedom	Government Spending	Business Freedom	Labor Freedom	Monetary Freedom	Trade Freedom	Investment Freedom	Financial Freedom
127	26	Niger	54.6	-0.5	30	34.0	76.6	83.6	39.2	40.9	81.3	65.6	55	40
132	27	Burundi	53.7	2.3	20	21.0	73.5	61.3	61.4	68.1	69.8	72.2	60	30
135	28	Mauritania	53.3	0.1	25	30.0	80.2	59.8	50.5	52.1	76.6	69.0	50	40
136	29	São Tomé and Príncipe	53.3	4.5	25	42.0	87.8	41.4	65.1	45.8	70.7	75.2	50	30
138	30	Togo	53.0	3.1	30	29.0	69.7	78.1	51.9	43.4	80.4	67.8	50	30
141	31	Liberia	52.7	0.3	25	38.0	83.0	69.9	60.1	43.9	72.7	74.4	40	20
142	32	Comoros	52.1	0.7	30	28.0	64.5	78.8	47.3	52.0	77.9	73.0	40	30
144	33	Guinea	52.1	-1.4	15	24.0	68.1	79.5	51.6	74.4	66.7	61.2	40	40
145	34	Guinea-Bissau	52.0	0.7	20	19.0	89.1	88.0	39.6	61.7	77.5	65.4	30	30
146	35	Cameroon	51.9	-0.7	25	25.0	71.7	87.8	41.6	47.8	75.6	59.6	35	50
147	36	Sierra Leone	51.7	1.2	10	30.0	80.8	87.5	53.4	41.6	68.5	70.2	55	20
149	37	Ethiopia	51.5	1.5	30	33.0	77.4	91.4	55.9	56.4	66.1	64.4	20	20
155	38	Lesotho	49.6	0.1	35	49.0	68.5	0.0	54.7	63.9	75.2	64.6	45	40
158	39	Angola	47.9	0.2	15	23.0	84.5	50.1	47.4	43.2	65.4	70.2	40	40
165	40	Chad	45.9	1.4	20	19.0	46.2	83.6	27.1	47.7	75.6	55.2	45	40
166	41	Central African Republic	45.9	-0.8	15	25.0	65.0	92.0	27.2	37.5	69.6	52.4	45	30
168	42	Congo, Dem. Rep.	45.0	4.4	10	22.0	72.9	85.7	42.8	38.4	75.1	63.0	20	20
170	43	Congo, Republic of	42.7	-1.0	10	22.0	67.4	60.7	36.8	36.0	71.6	62.4	30	30
173	44	Equatorial Guinea	40.4	-4.0	10	19.0	75.4	31.4	37.5	33.5	78.3	53.8	35	30
174	45	Eritrea	38.9	0.4	10	20.0	57.0	71.8	18.2	65.5	57.8	69.2	0	20
175	46	Zimbabwe	37.6	2.1	10	21.0	66.6	74.2	37.1	23.7	75.4	58.4	0	10
N/A	N/A	Somalia	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	Sudan	N/A	N/A	N/A	11.0	86.4	94.5	49.0	43.8	52.8	55.6	15	N/A

Table 7  heritage.org

have created valuable impetus for additional institutional reforms that are needed to ensure long-term economic development. However, the region as a whole continues to underperform in following through on policy changes that will help the emergence of a more dynamic private sector.

Despite sustained high growth over the past decade, structural transformation remains patchy in many African countries. Limited diversification has resulted in less broad-based growth,

with exports often concentrated in sectors with little scope for sustained productivity increases. More critically, uneven economic playing fields, exacerbated by the weak rule of law, continue to leave those who lack connections with only limited prospects for a brighter future. It remains to be seen whether the region's political leaders have the political will to undertake the fundamental economic reforms that are needed to translate narratives of "Africa Rising" into reality.