INFOGRAPHICS

on freedom and prosperity
The scores in the Atlantic Council’s Freedom Index are an average of the scores in its three subindexes that measure economic, political, and legal freedoms.

The world average score of the Freedom Index increased only slightly between 2006 and 2021.

The North Africa regional average score, however, has declined since 2011.
The Freedom and Prosperity Center analyzed a group of 12 Eastern European countries between 1996 and 2021.

In 1996, the selected countries were comparable: Politically, they had all just escaped their Communist past. And economically they were all lower-middle income countries.

By 2021, these countries had diverged both politically and economically.

The countries in Group 1, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania, ranked in the Free category of the Atlantic Council’s Freedom Index (score 75 and above).

The countries in Group 2, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine, did not.

The countries in Group 1 grew 32% faster than those in Group 2 between 1996 and 2021.
Both North Korea and South Korea were poor and authoritarian from 1950 to 1980.

In 1980, South Korea’s GDP per capita was $1,718, while North Korea’s was $635, or 2.7 times smaller.

In 1980, South Korea became a democracy while North Korea remained a Communist country.

By 2020, the GDP per capita in South Korea had grown to be approximately 51 times larger than that of North Korea.

The graph illustrates the economic disparity between Communist East Germany and democratic West Germany in the years before their reunification.

In 1950, just after the end of World War II, the GDP per capita in East Germany was $2,796, while in West Germany it was $4,280, a difference of 1.5 times.

West Germany became a democracy after World War II, while East Germany became communist.

By 1990, West Germany’s GDP per capita was 3.6 times greater.

*GDP per capita (constant 1990 international $)
In 1961, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, and Hong Kong were all poor, with GNI per capita of $76, $163, and $437, respectively.

Taiwan became a democracy in 1975. Hong Kong had important elements of democracy under British rule and was an autonomous region until 2021. The PRC remained under the dictatorship of the Chinese Communist Party.

Hong Kong and Taiwan grew much faster than the PRC and both escaped the middle-income trap in the 1980s to become high income countries. The PRC never did so.

The World Bank set the middle-income threshold for 2021 at $13,205. The PRC is below that level.
China and Russia Prosperity Deficit

The graph compares China and Russia’s scores on the indicators of the Prosperity Index with those of the countries ranked as Free in the Freedom Index.

Source: The Atlantic Council Prosperity Index