

Chapter 20: Culture and Community in the Global Age: 20-1b States of Democracy  
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## 20-1b States of Democracy

Rights-based discourses that challenged old assumptions about race, class, gender, and religion have flourished best in nations that have embraced democracy, access to education, political participation, and inclusivity in the professions. The global shift in granting the right to vote to women over the course of the twentieth century—seen in the United States (1920), Brazil (1932), Turkey (1934), Japan (1945), India (1947), and Morocco (1963)—illustrates this trend, as does the steady rise of female literacy and the increasing number of women in higher education in most parts of the world. These were the nations that permitted and fostered the emergence of protest movements highlighting the inequality of global integration and its environmental and economic consequences. However, the state of democracies around the world in the past half century has been mixed.

The nations of eastern Europe embraced democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union, though some newly democratic states became subject to great mood swings among the electorate. The shift to private ownership of businesses after decades of rigid state control brought riches to a select few, and the removal of trade barriers characteristic of Cold War rivalry opened up new markets and fostered investment from the West.

After 2008, however, rising unemployment and falling exports and stock prices threatened these experiments in free elections and free markets. In Russia, the popular but somewhat authoritarian leader Vladimir Putin followed his country's constitution by stepping down in 2008 after two terms as president. However, he engineered the election of his protégé Dimitri Medvedev as his successor and assumed the office of prime minister himself. This move led some political thinkers to fear a possible return to Soviet-era Russian domination, as did Russia's sudden seizure of the Crimea, a part of Ukraine, in 2014. The mutual admiration between Putin and Trump that became apparent in 2016 made American–Russian relations hard to predict.

Asian democracies proved somewhat more stable. Beginning with free parliamentary elections in 1999, the populous state of Indonesia moved from years of authoritarian and corrupt rule toward more open political institutions. The following years saw a violent independence movement of the Aceh (**ah-CHEH**) district of northern Sumatra, the secession in 2002 of East Timor after years of brutal Indonesian military occupation, terrorist bombings on the island of Bali in 2004, and a devastating earthquake and tsunami in the same year. But democratic elections were regularly held. The losing candidates left office peacefully, and the populace at large accepted the results.

Myanmar (formerly Burma), where stifling military governments had held sway since 1962,

experienced a rapid move toward democracy after free elections were held in 2010. The following year the military junta was dissolved, and the formerly banned opposition party led by female Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi (**owng-SAHN-soo-chi**) gained a significant role in parliament.

#### AP® Exam Tip

Understand the spread of democratic institutions following World War II.

In India a major political shift seemed to be at hand in 1998 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured an electoral victory after four decades of Congress Party rule. The success of the BJP came through blatant appeals to Hindu nationalism, the condoning of violence against India's Muslims, and opposition to the social and economic progress of the *Untouchables* (those traditionally confined to the dirtiest jobs). In 2004 the Congress Party returned to power and governmental stability proved strong even in the face of sensational terrorist attacks in Mumbai by Pakistani gunmen in 2008. When the BJP returned to power in 2014, the new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, committed himself to economic expansion rather than resuming his party's Hindu extremism.

Democracy in Pakistan proved uncertain. President and former military commander Pervez Musharraf's (**pair-VEZ moo-SHAH-ref**) abrupt firing of the country's chief justice, combined with his unpopular support of the Bush administration's war policies, sparked protests and calls for impeachment. He resigned the presidency in 2008. Asif Ali Zardari (**AH-sef AH-lee zar-DAH-ree**), who succeeded him, had inherited the leadership of the majority Pakistan People's Party after the assassination the year before of his charismatic wife Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of a popular earlier prime minister. Zardari faced difficulties forming a strong government because of the growing movement of the Pakistani Taliban to impose their own governance and a rigid Muslim behavioral code in outlying districts, as well as popular opposition to American antiterrorist attacks launched from Afghanistan.

In Turkey, an abortive military coup in 2016 bolstered the popularity of the president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (**REH-jep TIE-yip ER-do-wan**). Claiming that a Muslim religious movement that he had been close to for most of his political career had engineered the coup, Erdogan imprisoned some 40,000 suspected plotters; fired 100,000 movement members from police force, government, and educational positions; arrested parliament members representing a Kurdish party; and pushed through a constitutional change to increase his presidential powers. These authoritarian actions alarmed many of Turkey's allies but brought Erdogan closer to Putin in neighboring Russia.

Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced political instability, military coups, civil wars, and conflicts over resources since independence. It has also remained among the poorest regions in the world. Southern Africa, however, has seen democratic progress and a steady decline in armed conflicts since 1991. A key change came in South Africa in 1994, when long-time political prisoner Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress (ANC) won

the first national elections in which the African majority could participate equally. Also hopeful has been the return to democracy of Nigeria, Africa's most populous state, after decades of military rulers. In 1999, after a succession of military governments, Nigerians elected President Olusegun Obasanjo (**oh-LOO-she-gun oh-BAH-san-jo**) (a former coup leader), and a 2003 vote gave him a second term, despite serious voting irregularities. Similarly, in 2002 Kenyans voted out the Kenya African National Union Party that had held power for thirty-nine years. Also in 1999, Nelson Mandela left office and was succeeded by the deputy president and ANC leader Thabo Mbeki (**TAA-boh um-BEH-kee**). Mbeki stepped down in 2008 amidst turmoil in the leadership of the ANC. But the democratic system did not seem threatened, even when his successor Jacob Zuma was charged with corruption.

### Chronology

	Politics	Economics and Society
<b>2000</b>	2000 al-Qaeda attacks American destroyer USS <i>Cole</i> in Yemen	
<b>2001</b>	<p>2001 George W. Bush becomes president of the United States</p> <p>2001 Terrorists destroy the World Trade Center and damage the Pentagon on September 11</p> <p>2001 United States armed forces overthrow Taliban regime in Afghanistan</p>	<p>2001–2003 Terrorist attacks trigger global recession</p> <p>2001 Shanghai Cooperation Organization formed</p>
<b>2002</b>		2002 Euro currency adopted in twelve European countries
<b>2003</b>	2003 Unfounded fears of weapons of mass destruction lead United States and Britain to invade and occupy Iraq	
<b>2004</b>	<p>2004 Terrorists bomb Spanish trains</p> <p>2004–2009 Genocidal conflict ongoing in Darfur region of Sudan</p>	2004 Ten new members admitted to European Union

	Politics	Economics and Society
<b>2005</b>	<p>2005 Terrorists bomb London transit system</p> <p>2005 Mahmoud Ahmedinejad elected president of Iran</p>	
<b>2006</b>	<p>2006 Iraqis elect a government under a new constitution</p> <p>2006 Hamas movement defeats PLO in Palestinian election</p> <p>2006 Israel attacks Hezbollah in Lebanon in response to its seizure of Israeli soldiers</p>	
<b>2007</b>	2007 Assassination of Benazir Bhutto deepens political crisis in Pakistan	
<b>2008</b>	2008 Barack Obama elected president of the United States	2008 Collapse of mortgage debt bubble in United States triggers global recession
<b>2012</b>	2012 Barack Obama re-elected president of the United States	
<b>2013</b>	2013 Argentinian becomes Pope Francis I	
<b>2014</b>	2014 Russia seizes Crimea	
<b>2016</b>	2016 Donald Trump elected president of the United States	2016 British vote to leave EU
	2016 Abortive coup in Turkey	
<b>2020</b>	2020 Joseph Biden elected president of the United States	

Elsewhere some elected leaders, such as Robert Mugabe (**moo-GAH-bay**) in Zimbabwe, used violence and intimidation to hold on to power, and other states, such as Congo, were plagued with internal revolts and civil wars. Liberians emerged from fourteen years of civil war in 2003 and two years later chose Nobel Peace Prize winner Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (**SUHRleef**) to be Africa's first elected female head of state.

In Sudan, the general who had led a military coup in 1989, Omar al-Bashir, became the first sitting head of state to be charged with genocide and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court in 2009. A festering conflict in Darfur in western Sudan, which had cost hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced over 2 million people, was at the heart of the charges. However, a long rebellion in the south finally came to an end in 2011 with the creation of a new country with a democratic constitution, the Republic of South Sudan. Unfortunately, civil unrest resumed in the new state almost as soon as it came into being.

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