These two sections have demonstrated the difficulty in identifying a predominant or set route to democracy. The combination of long- and short-term causes and effects in the democratization of any given country requires sensitive analysis. Any adequate analysis generally requires consideration of both.

KEY POINTS

- The aspiration for democracy is part of a broader aspiration for freedom.
- There are two basic approaches to explanations for democratization, focusing on long-term socio-economic change, or on the short-term interplay of key political actors at moments of crisis.
- Democratization has long been correlated with economic development and with the rise of the middle class, especially in the West, although there are many exceptions.
- In developmental states, social groups beyond the middle class may be more active in pushing for democracy.
- There is no 'science' of transitions, but evidence suggests skilful statecraft can facilitate success.
- The most desirable element in a transition is a 'pact' between the key political actors over the ground rules for the new system that all respect.
- However, there is still no guarantee that the collapse of an authoritarian system will lead to democracy.

15

TYPES OF DEMOCRACY

One of the strengths of democracy has been its flexibility—its ability to adapt to a wide range of different circumstances. Athenian democracy was based on direct, regular involvement of the public in all key public decisions, if only involving male citizens. Subsequently, as states got bigger, direct decision-making came to be replaced by representation.

→ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of representation.

Today, it is difficult to settle on a set of core institutions common to all states that call themselves 'democracies'. In part this is because of the increasing number of states that claim to be democratic, but different from the liberal West (Zakaria, 1997), such as Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and, now, Russia. Even North Korea claims to be a democracy. In part, it is because the term is used in an enormous variety of ways (Paley, 2002) and, in part, it is because academic analysts disagree widely over which systems can meaningfully be classed as democracies—leading to wrangles over 'democracy with adjectives', as Collier and Levitsky (1997) put it (e.g. liberal democracy, representative democracy, multi-party democracy, populist democracy, etc.).

Keane (2009) has proposed another version of democracy with an adjective, i.e. 'monitory democracy'. By this, he means that the key common principle is not how decisions are made, nor ensuring choice between candidates for public office (although elections are crucial too), but rather holding officials and governments accountable for their actions—as he puts it, 'putting politicians, parties and

elected governments permanently on their toes'. This makes it for him 'the most complex form of democracy yet' (Keane, 2009: 689). He also commends it as the closest to a universal form in the modern era. Yet, insofar as consultative authoritarian regimes also organize elections and hold officials to account, this approach can blur the distinction between democracies and authoritarian regimes.

An earlier and very influential model of democracy in modern Western industrial societies is Dahl's 'polyarchy'. Extrapolating from his analysis of how local government operated in 1960s New Haven, Connecticut, this focuses on the activity of members of a range of elites who represent wider sections of the population. It aimed to update the traditional notion of representative democracy so that it better reflected the realities of political power in the large states of the late twentieth century. For details, **see Box 15.2**.

A more widely used term, however, is liberal democracy. There is no complete consensus on the key elements of liberal democracies, but Diamond has provided a useful list of the common features. (**See Box 15.3**.)

Whether one prefers the term polyarchy or liberal democracy—and there is evidently a lot of overlap—there is no doubt about the need for some kind of analytical distinction between at least two different types of democracy: a minimalist one that consists essentially of just elections, and another, more elaborate version, that displays many more dimensions of popular involvement in public decision-making. More recently, Møller and Skaaning (2013) have gone further and proposed a simple four-stage analytical typology of different types of democracy. This is reproduced in **Table 15.2**. For them, the key difference between polyarchy and liberal democracy is that the latter explicitly requires the rule of law.

KEY QUOTE BOX 15.2
Polyarchy

Polyarchy is a political order distinguished by the presence of seven institutions, all of which must exist for a government to be classified as a polyarchy:

1. Elected officials. Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2. Free and fair elections. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3. Inclusive suffrage. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4. Right to run for office. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for the suffrage.
5. Freedom of expression. Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the prevailing ideology.
6. Alternative information. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by laws.
7. Associational autonomy. To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

(Dahl, 1989: 221)

15

KEY QUOTE BOX 15.3
Liberal Democracy

The deeper level of liberal democracy requires the following:

- Freedom of belief, expression, organization, demonstration, and other civil liberties, including protection from political terror and unjustified imprisonment.
- A rule of law, under which all citizens are treated equally and due process is secure.
- Political independence and neutrality of the judiciary and of other institutions of 'horizontal accountability' that check the abuse of power, such as electoral administration, the audit, and the central bank.
- An open, pluralistic civil society, which affords citizens multiple, ongoing channels for expression and representation of their interests and values, in independent associations and movements and in the mass media as well.
- Freedom of cultural, religious, ethnic, and other minorities to speak their languages, practice their cultures, and express their identities.
- Civilian control over the military.

(Diamond, 2002: 213)

The merit of this typology is that it provides a clear and relatively simple framework for assessing the extent of a particular system's democracy. It also embodies an implicit sequencing of stages for deepening democracy. But the next question then is how to 'measure' a country's democracy. How might individual dimensions of democracy be assessed? Can this data be synthesized into an overall assessment? And if this can be done, should it be?

KEY POINTS

- Numerous different models of democracy have been proposed.
- Often, these use Western experiences as a reference point.
- It makes analytical sense to differentiate between different levels of democracy.
- The two most widely used models of developed democracy are polyarchy and liberal democracy.

Table 15.2 Typology of democratic regimes

	Competitive Elections	Inclusive Elections with High Integrity	Civil Liberties	Rule of Law
Minimalist democracy	+			
Electoral democracy	+	+		
Polyarchy	+	+	+	
Liberal democracy	+	+	+	+

Source: Møller and Skaaning (2013).

MEASURING DEMOCRACY

There are two common strategies to measure democracy. The first is to assess a particular system along a set of dimensions that constitute what it means to be democratic and then synthesize them into a single score. The best-known example of this is the Freedom House Index, based in the USA. This ranking assesses the extent of freedom (rather than primarily democracy) in a country along two fundamental dimensions: political rights and civil liberties. These are then synthesized into an overall assessment.

It is the most comprehensive survey of its kind, now covering 195 countries and fourteen territories. It is repeated every year, and as a result perhaps its greatest strength is the way it charts changes over time. Its data are often used in quantitative academic research to search for correlations with other dimensions of social and economic development.

It is not, however, the only such index. Other similar, albeit less comprehensive, indexes include the Bertelsmann Foundation's Transformation Index, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, and the Polity IV database of political regimes.

Since the focus of each of these indexes is slightly different, and since each depends on judgements by analysts, they may come to different assessments of individual countries. Freedom House, for instance, classifies France as fully free, and Pakistan as partly free, while Polity IV classifies both as democracies, but not 'complete democracies', unlike, for example, the USA, the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

There is a further problem: all these institutions are based in the West. They can create the impression of being superior teachers, marking the 'grades' of non-Western states like pupils. Freedom House is not a politically neutral institution—it deliberately aims to promote democracy—and chiefly American-style democracy—around the world. This, in itself, can antagonize citizens, not to mention governments, of developing countries, who resent the perceived condescension.

Koelble and LiPuma (2008) have forcefully urged the 'democratization of democracy', arguing that the democratizing trajectory of postcolonial states is bound to be different from that of developed countries (though, of course, the USA was itself originally a colony). They rejected the possibility of an ahistorical, value-neutral, scientific measurement of democracy, since the starting point for ex-colonies—inequality and entrenched discrimination between ethnic or other communities—still hangs over them, in a way that former metropolitan states have never had to confront.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an institution which promotes democracy internationally, has responded to this line of criticism. It produced a handbook of a myriad possible proposals for democratization (Beetham et al., 2002). However, the expectation was that citizens wanting to promote democracy in their country would carry out a 'democratic audit' of their system, identify the most obvious obstacles to democracy, and then set out the most urgent and important recommendations appropriate for reform for them. IDEA has been criticized for not providing a methodologically consistent, sequenced programme for democratization (though it has compiled a great deal of useful comparative data on aspects of democracy around the world). Rather, its main objective was to inspire democracy activists in the field to action. Even if this led to conflicting priorities between countries, it would not matter, since IDEA accepts different trajectories to democracy.

THE PERSISTENCE OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

While the 1990s saw widespread democratization, the period since then has seen a revival of authoritarianism; for example, in Egypt and Venezuela. The number of democracies worldwide continued to creep slowly upwards, but many authoritarian regimes that had seemed 'ripe' for democratization stabilized. Kurlantzik (2013) has written of democracy globally 'in retreat'. Wike and Fetterolf (2018) have written of liberal democracy's 'crisis of confidence'. A third of states in the world remain authoritarian. Others have regressed. Many of their leaders have recovered their self-confidence.

Apart from failed transitions, e.g. in Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, not to mention Russia, two other factors have contributed to this authoritarian revival. The first is the greater level of sophistication of some authoritarian regimes. Shambaugh (2008) has documented the enormous efforts that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) put into studying the reasons for the collapse of the other communist regimes and learning lessons to aid their survival.

The second factor is the growing internationalization of the confrontation between democratic and authoritarian regimes. This has been marked by the readiness of some authoritarian regimes to intervene in the internal affairs of others, paralleling the efforts of Western governments to spread democracy. Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Venezuela, and Russia have all done this (Vanderhill, 2013).

Over the past ten to fifteen years, political scientists have begun to pay more attention to authoritarian regimes. This can encompass a wide variety of regimes: monarchies, personal dictatorships, military regimes, theocratic regimes, racially or ethnically polarized regimes, and one-party dominant regimes. What defines them is what they are *not*, rather than what they are—they are *not* democracies (however that may be defined). Devising a single definition for this very heterogeneous group has thus far proved impossible.

Nevertheless, they do have things in common. After reviewing the literature on authoritarianism, Frantz and Ezrow (2011: 85) point out that regularities appear in different policy outcomes from democracies. Autocracies tend to spend less on social programmes, wages, and environmental policies than democracies. They also tend to attract less foreign direct investment (FDI), perhaps because they also tend to be weaker on enforcing property rights. Perhaps not surprisingly, they also offer the greatest opportunities for corruption. Most strikingly, according to Przeworski et al. (2000: 230), dictatorships tend to have higher death rates (but also higher birth rates) than democracies, whatever the level of development. A graphic example of this was in North Korea in the late 1990s, when anywhere between 240,000 and 3.5 million people died of starvation out of a total population of 22 million. Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999: 7–8) points to the contrast: 'no substantial famine has ever occurred in any democratic and independent country with a relatively free press'. Furthermore, according to Geddes et al. (2014), it is possible to distinguish different trends in periods of longevity and different patterns of collapse according to whether the regime was monarchical, personalistic, dominated by a military junta, or controlled by a ruling party.

The research on authoritarian regimes has tended to focus on two distinct but overlapping themes of legitimation: (i) how do authoritarian regimes structure their institutions of rule; and (ii) why do ordinary people not challenge authoritarian regimes more?

Authoritarian Institutions

Sometimes, authoritarian regimes hold elections to demonstrate their legitimacy, but then one of the puzzles is why people bother to vote when there is no likelihood of it changing the way the country is run. Magaloni (2006) examined the record of the PRI in Mexico which held power from 1929 to 2000, which made it one of the longest-lived ruling parties in the world—almost as long as the Soviet Communist Party. It achieved this without resorting to terror. Instead, it held regular national elections and people regularly voted for it because it offered patronage (jobs working for the government or state corporations, such as the national oil corporation PEMEX), 'pork' (i.e. state largesse for localities that voted for the PRI), and (limited) influence over specific government policies to their supporters (Schedler, 2006: 12–13). So, voters could vote to secure benefits, even if they could not change their rulers.

As for how authoritarian systems structure their rule, Gandhi and Przeworski (2007) have argued that those that hold regular elections last longer than those that do not. And, in general, Gandhi (2008) has shown that dictators have an incentive to create institutions to share in policy-making, both as a way of co-opting support, whether from 'insiders' in the regime or from key elite groups outside it, and also as a Machiavellian way of exposing real or potential opposition. But the recent experience of Turkey illustrates the risks. It can backfire. In March 2019 the AKP narrowly lost the mayoral election for Istanbul, the largest city and hitherto a stronghold. The AKP had been very confident—President Erdogan is himself a former mayor there. It contested the result because of 'procedural irregularities' and forced a rerun. But then in June 2019, the challenger, Ekrem Imamoglu, won a much more decisive victory from an electorate that was scornful of the AKP's machinations. This gave new heart to the opposition.

Authoritarian regimes sometimes adopt institutions more often associated with democracies to stay in power. In Russia, the Kremlin has created a moderate opposition party, A Just Russia (as well as the ruling party United Russia), and a 'social chamber' (in addition to the national parliament) for non-governmental organizations, ostensibly as part of a policy of 'guided democracy' to encourage moderate and constructive new ideas for policy-making and to pre-empt radical opposition. Meanwhile, China has begun experimenting at the local level with its own forms of deliberative democracy (explained in Chapter 4) which were originally devised to strengthen established democracies, as we can see in **Box 15.7**.

In turn, such tendencies complicate the previous categorical distinction between democracies and authoritarian regimes, leading to more hybrid regimes.

→ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of deliberative democracy.

Popular Acceptance of Authoritarianism

It is obvious that terror can subdue peoples, especially if it seems as though any individual, high or low, can be targeted. Frantz and Ezrow (2011: 72) recount the story of Saddam Hussein inviting ministers to contribute ideas on ending the Iran–Iraq War (1980–8) when it was going badly. The minister of health suggested that Saddam should step down temporarily from power to ease negotiations with Iran. For this, he was arrested and executed. 'Insecurity, unpredictability, and fear of the unknown . . . all . . . permeated Iraq' (Sassoon, 2012: 128).

However, most authoritarian regimes do not rely exclusively on terror to maintain their rule because it always risks provoking opposition out of despair and even a counter coup. Even dictators

CASE STUDY BOX 15.7
China as a Hybrid Authoritarian System

China is a striking example of a hybrid authoritarian system. The Chinese Communist Party CCP has ruled since 1949 and does not allow serious political competition. It brutally suppressed opponents, particularly during the Great Leap Forward (1958–60) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–9). Since the death of Mao in 1976, it has gradually moved from personal domination by a single leader towards more institutionalized leadership with no official constitutionally allowed to hold the same leading position for more than ten years. There is significant market freedom and the regime allows private enterprise. Limited competitive elections take place between approved candidates in many villages and townships, and a number of seats in the National People's Congress are reserved for elected representatives from eight 'democratic' parties, though they cannot challenge the leading role of the CCP. However, the regime still controls all key positions in the state apparatus and armed forces, and its members are above the law—they cannot be prosecuted by the legal system unless this has been approved by higher party officials.

According to the World Bank, China is now an upper-middle income country with a per capita income of around US$9,770 in 2018, which puts it well within the range where a transition to democracy might take place. Chinese citizens are economically more free than at any point since 1949. There is now a substantial middle class—according to McKinsey, it amounted to around 475 million people in 2012 ('Mapping China's middle class', 2010). Moreover, the explosion of the Internet and social media users—in June 2014 there were 802 million reported Internet users in China (Forbes, 2018)—gives citizens much greater opportunities to express views publicly than at any time since 1949, even though the state organizes widespread surveillance of online activity and bans Western search engines and social media sites.

However, widespread demonstrations in favour of democracy were brutally suppressed across the country in June 1989 and the current leader, President Xi Jinping, has reversed the relatively relaxed policies of his predecessor by increasing restrictions on freedom of speech—reportedly Western democracy is now a taboo subject in Chinese universities ('Western values forbidden', 2015). The 2019 Press Freedom Index of the organization Reporters Without Borders ranked China 177 out of 180 countries ('World Press Freedom Index', 2019). Instead, the CCP has mounted an increasingly draconian campaign against official corruption, using language of popular accountability akin to that associated with Keane's 'monitory democracy'. It harps on the need for social stability and is very wary of an untutored civil society.

At the same time, officials respond to proposals and criticisms from civil society groups to develop better policies, and they use the social media to stimulate citizen responses to individual policy initiatives. In this way, it practises a consultative authoritarianism that encourages and exploits popular support for social stability and sustained improvements in the standard of living (Teets, 2014). This combination of rapid economic growth and stable elite leadership elicits positive responses elsewhere in East Asia (Welsh and Chang, 2015), and in the West too. (Berggruen and Gardels, 2013)

need legitimation, including Saddam Hussein. According to Sassoon on Iraq (2012: 193): 'Fear played a major role in sustaining the Ba'ath regime for more than three decades, but the party's control of the population was not based only on fear. An elaborate system of rewards and punishments provided a robust framework for the Ba'ath Party's domination.'

Divide and rule—privileging some groups over others—is a technique that has supported dictatorships and empires since at least Roman times. This may involve the use of brutality—for example, the military government in Myanmar continued to exploit civil war with minorities in various parts of the country to legitimize its rule with the majority Burmese (Callahan, 2003), as has happened in Syria.

KEY POINTS

- The term 'authoritarian regime' can be applied to a very disparate group of states.
- Authoritarian rule can rest on terror, threats, and coercion.
- Authoritarian rulers are also concerned to legitimize their rule.
- The more skilful authoritarian rulers devise institutions to give at least the appearance of involving people outside the core leadership in policy-making, if not of sharing power.
- This can lead to hybrid regimes that have at least some features of democracy.

CONCLUSION: SMARTER DEMOCRACY, DEEPER DEMOCRACY, OR TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC–AUTHORITARIAN HYBRIDITY?

As authoritarianism has revived, satisfaction with democracy in the West has declined. As the Norwegian sociologist Ringen put it: 'At the moment in history when the standing of democracy in the world is stronger than ever, its standing in the eyes of citizens is weak and probably weakening' (Ringen, 2007: 41). He wrote this before the global financial and the Eurozone crises which have further shaken confidence in Western governments. Della Porta (2013) has raised the question of whether democracy (at least traditional liberal representative democracy) can be saved at all.

Critical questions and challenges multiply. Are democracies too prone to concentrate on short-term issues? Can they devise policies to tackle big long-term challenges, such as climate change (Burnell, 2012)? What about preserving intergenerational equality between older and younger generations over paying for social services? Berggruen and Gardels (2013: 9), for instance, have suggested that more intelligent public governance for the twenty-first century would synthesize, as they put it, Western 'consumer democracy' and Chinese 'meritocratic Confucianism' into 'knowledgeable democracy' with 'accountable meritocracy'.

Runciman (2013) agrees with some of these criticisms in his survey of crises that have challenged Western democracies since the early twentieth century. Democracies do find it difficult to take the long view. The time horizon of (most) elected legislators is no longer than the date for their re-election. Yet, while democracies may find it difficult to devise long-term plans, and

even more difficult to stick to them, he also concludes that democracies are better at coping with complex social and economic changes and adapting to them because they are more pragmatic. Incremental change is what democracies do best. But because they have surmounted difficulties in the past, people in democracies also suffer from what he terms the 'confidence trap', i.e. a refusal to address serious problems until almost too late, believing that they will muddle through again somehow, as they (almost) always have. Casual democratic optimism brings costs, even within established democracies.

As Ringen (2007) suggests, in the end democracy will survive and thrive if its citizens believe that they enjoy a strong sense of freedom and control. In other words, democracy needs to sustain the sense of emancipation that was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In general, people do not choose to live under authoritarianism if given a real choice, though they may put up with it for the sake of other compensations. As the World Values Surveys show, there is near-universal majority support for the principle of democracy, but the ways in which that principle is implemented vary considerably, and that variety is only likely to increase. It certainly is no longer the case that the traditional Western model of liberal, representative, parliamentary democracy inspires deference at home or abroad. New forms of democracy and/or new political actors are needed to revive it. Already more than a decade ago the Council of Europe (2004) came up with a list of reforms to restore confidence of citizens in their democracies in Europe (though few have been implemented). Democratic reformers will try to learn lessons from the experiences of other countries, and not just in the West. Local experiments in participatory budgeting in Brazil and India have inspired imitation in Western Europe (Rocke, 2014). Conversely, authoritarian regimes will also sometimes borrow lessons to try to increase their legitimacy without, they hope, losing control. Populism can be either democratic or authoritarian. Whether or not that leads to hybrid regimes, these trends will complicate attempts to differentiate between democratic and authoritarian regimes. So rigorous thinking and consistent use of concepts will be more vital than ever for meaningful analysis and debate.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How useful is the term 'monitory democracy' in characterizing modern democracies?
2. Is there any point in trying to measure democracy and, if so, who should do it?
3. What are the limits within which states can be deemed to be 'differently democratic' while still remaining democracies?
4. Do the citizens of a liberal democracy have to practise liberal toleration towards each other?
5. Will China and Russia become democracies? If so, why and how?
6. Will India ever be a liberal democracy? What about Turkey?
7. Why was there no 'pact' between all the main political actors in Iraq after 2003, and how far does that explain the recurring political chaos there?
8. Is there any future in trying to synthesize 'knowledgeable democracy' and 'accountable meritocracy'?
9. If they were implemented, how effective would the Council of Europe recommendations be in reviving confidence in democracy?

10. Can rivals only defeat populists by beating them at their own game, i.e. developing a populist persona of their own? Why?
11. How persuasive are Mudde and Kaltwasser's (2017) suggestions on ways to combat populism and populists?
12. How does the intensified populism of Prime Minister Modi affect your assessment of Indian democracy?
13. Has Donald Trump installed authoritarian populism in the White House?
14. Are there any lessons from the way earlier populist regimes ended for the future of current populist regimes and movements?

FURTHER READING

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An excellent survey.