Chapter **3**

Democracy

We live in an era of democracy; for the first time in history, most people in the world live under tolerably democratic rule. This upsurge in democracy reflects the transformation of the world's political landscape in the final quarter of the twentieth century. Over this short period, the number of democracies more than doubled. Democracy expanded beyond its core of Western Europe and former settler colonies to embrace Southern Europe (for example Spain), Eastern Europe (for example Hungary), Latin America (for example Brazil), more of Asia (for example Taiwan) and parts of Africa (for example South Africa).

This shift to democracy, while important in itself, will also have international ramifications. It is likely to contribute to peace and prosperity since democracies rarely go to war with each other and are more likely to form trade agreements than are non-democracies (Huth and Allee, 2003). The terrorists who attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, we should note, originated from authoritarian rather than democratic countries.

As democracy continues to spread, so it becomes more varied (Box 3.1). Understanding the forms taken by democracy in today's world is therefore a central task for comparative politics. In this chapter, we examine the established democracies of Europe and its settler colonies, with their emphasis on representative and limited government. We then discuss the newer democracies emerging from the ashes of communist and military rule. Finally, we assess those awkward semi-democratic regimes – Russia is an example – that

straddle the border between democratic and authoritarian rule. But to begin we must explore the origins of democracy itself. And that task must take us back to the fifth century BC to the world's most influential example of self-government: ancient Athens.

BOX 3.1
Forms of democracy

Form	Definition
Direct democracy	The citizens themselves assemble to debate and decide on collective issues
Representative democracy	Citizens elect politicians to reach collective decisions on their behalf, with the governing parties held to account at the next election.
Liberal democracy	The scope of democracy is limited by constitutional protection of individual rights, including freedom of assembly, property, religion and speech
New democracy	A democracy in which an authoritarian legacy continues to influence political action and debate. Democracy is not the only game in town
Established democracy	A consolidated democracy which provides an accepted framework for political competition. The outcome of free elections is accepted by the losers as well as the winners
Semi-democracy	An illiberal democracy in which elected presidents do not respect individual rights, or in which elected governments form a façade behind which traditional rulers continue to exercise effective power

Direct democracy

Democracy is a form of government offering a workable solution to the fundamental political problem of reaching collective decisions by peaceful means. But it is also an ideal and an aspiration. So we cannot understand democracy simply by looking at contemporary examples. Judged against the democratic ideal, even the most secure 'democracies' are found wanting. Indeed, the tension between high ideals and prosaic reality has itself become part of the democratic condition (Dahl, 2000).

So what, then, is the core principle of democracy? The essential idea is self-rule: the word itself comes from the Greek *demokratia,* meaning rule (*kratos*) by the people (*demos*). Thus democracy in its literal and richest sense refers not to the election of the rulers by the ruled but to the denial of any separation between the two. The model democracy is a form of self-government in which all adult citizens participate in shaping collective decisions in an environment of equality and open deliberation. In a direct democracy, state and society become one.

The birthplace of democracy is ancient Athens. Between 461 and 322 BC, Athens was the leading *polis* (city-community, often translated as city-state) in ancient Greece. *Poleis* were small independent political systems, typically containing an urban core and a rural hinterland. Athens, one of the larger examples, held only about 40,000 citizens. Especially in the earlier and more radical decades of the period, the Athenian *polis* operated on the democratic principle summarized by Aristotle as 'each to rule and be ruled in turn' (see Box 3.2). This principle applied across all the institutions of government within the city-community. All citizens could attend meetings of the assembly, serve on the governing council and sit on citizens' juries. Because ancient Athens continues to provide the archetypal example of direct democracy, we will look at its operation in more detail (Figure 3.1).

History has judged there to be no more potent symbol of direct democracy than the Ekklesia (People's Assembly) at Athens. Any citizen aged at least 20 could attend assembly sessions and there address his peers; meetings were of citizens, not their representatives. The assembly met around 40 times a year to settle issues put before it, including the recurring issues of war and peace which were central to the prospects and prosperity of the *polis.* In Aristotle's phrase, the assembly was 'supreme over all causes' (1962 edn, p. 237); it was the sovereign body, unconstrained by a formal constitution or even, in the early decades, by written laws.

But the assembly did not exhaust the avenues of participation in the Athenian democracy. Administrative functions were the responsibility of an executive council consisting of 500 citizens aged over 30, chosen by lot to serve for a one-year period. Through this device of rotation, the council exemplified the principle of direct democracy: government by, and not just for, the citizens. Hansen (1991, p. 249) suggests that about one in three citizens could expect to serve on the council at some stage in their life, an astonishing feat of self-government entirely without counterpart in modern democracies.

A highly political legal system provided the final leg of Athens's complex democracy. Juries of several hundred people, again selected randomly from a panel of volunteers, considered lawsuits which citizens could – and frequently did – bring

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BOX 3.2
Aristotle's characterization of democracy

▸ All to rule over each and each in his turn over all.
▸ Appointment to all offices, except those requiring experience and skill, by lot.
▸ No property qualification for office-holding, or only a very low one.
▸ Tenure of office should be brief and no man should hold the same office twice (except military positions).
▸ Juries selected from all citizens should judge all major causes.
▸ The assembly should be supreme over all causes.
▸ Those attending the assembly and serving as jurors and magistrates should be paid for their services.
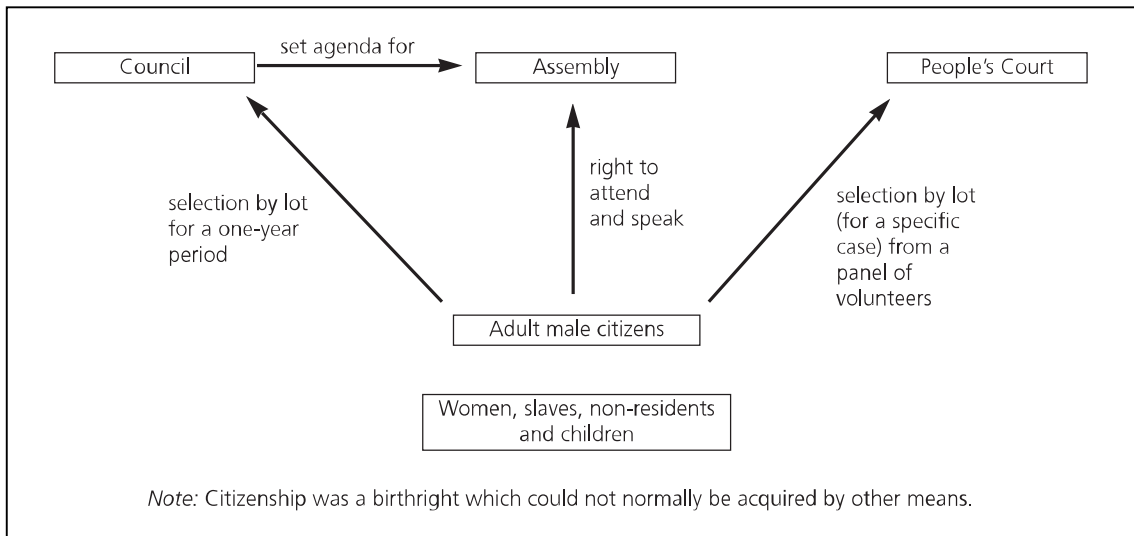
Source: Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book VI.

Figure 3.1 The direct democracy of ancient Athens

against those considered to have acted against the true interests of the *polis*. The courts functioned as an arena of accountability through which top figures (including generals) could be brought to book.

Thus the scope of the Athenian democracy was extraordinarily wide, providing an all-encompassing political framework within which citizens were expected to develop their true qualities. For the Athenians, politics was intrinsically an amateur activity, to be undertaken by all citizens to develop both themselves and the broader community.

Of course, we should not blind ourselves to serious flaws in Athens's little democracy:

▸ Citizenship was restricted to a small elite: it was a birthright of males whose parents were themselves citizens. Most adults – including women, slaves and foreign residents – were excluded. Women played no significant public role and critics allege that slavery was the platform which allowed citizens time to devote to public affairs (Finley, 1985).
▸ Participation was not in practice as extensive as the Athenians liked to claim. Most citizens were absent from most assembly meetings even after the introduction of a payment for attendance.
▸ Athenian democracy was hardly an exercise in

lean government. A modern management consultant would conclude that the system was a time-consuming, expensive and over-complex method of governing a small society. Its applicability to a modern world in which people are committed to paid work, and the affluence resulting therefrom, is questionable.
▸ The principle of self-government did not always lead to decisive and coherent policy. Indeed, the lack of a permanent bureaucracy eventually contributed to a period of ineffective government, leading to the fall of the Athenian republic after defeat in war.

Perhaps Athenian democracy was a dead-end in that it could only function on an intimate scale which precluded expansion and proved inherently vulnerable to predators. As Finer (1997, p. 368) observes, 'the *polis* was doomed politically if it expanded and doomed to conquest if it did not. It had to succumb and it did.' Yet for over 100 years, the Athenian democratic experiment survived and prospered. It provided a settled formula for rule and enabled Athens to build a leading position in the complex politics of the Greek world. Athens proves that direct democracy is, in some conditions, an achievable goal.

Certainly, Finer (1997, p. 371) was correct in acknowledging the Athenian contribution to

Western politics: 'the Greeks invented two of the most potent political features of our present age: they invented the very idea of citizen – as opposed to subject – and they invented democracy'.

Representative and liberal democracy

The contrasts between the classical democracy of ancient Athens and the modern democracies of today's world are clear. Most obviously, citizenship is no longer an elite status but has been extended to the vast majority of the adult population. But two other contrasts are equally important.

First, today's democracies are representative rather than direct. The democratic principle has transmuted from self-government to elected government. This transformation can be seen in the contrasting treatment of elections offered by ancients and moderns. The Greeks viewed elections as an instrument of aristocracy: a device for selecting qualified people for technical tasks which required an unfortunate departure from self-government. However, as the phrase 'representative democracy' shows, the modern world regards elections as an expression rather than a denial of democracy.

Second, modern democracy is based on a liberal philosophy in which the state's scope is restricted by the constitution. This limit is based on a distinction between public and private that would have been unacceptable in classical Athens where citizens who lived an entirely private life were dismissed as *idiotes*. Today's democracies are liberal democracies and it is the constitution as much as the legislature that is 'supreme over all causes'.

In this section, we examine how these modern concepts of representation and liberalism were grafted on to the original democratic idea so as to deliver a new hybrid. The requirement for this new form was clear. In contrast to the little democracy of Athens, any modern version of democracy must be compatible with the much larger states found in today's world.

In reinventing democracy for the modern era, the key breakthrough was to modify traditional ideas of representation. In itself, the idea of leaders representing their community in a wider assembly was nothing new. In Europe, for example, medieval monarchs had summoned leaders of the various estates of the realm – lords, commoners and representatives of the cities – to help them with their tasks of raising revenues and fighting wars. But unlike the Athenian assembly, the members of these royal advisory assemblies were summoned or self-appointed, not elected. They were not elected by those they represented, nor would they have deigned to have been so.

Indeed, representation was still viewed as a desirable brake on democracy. Thus James Madison, an architect of the American constitution, judged that representation served to 'refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country' (Madison, 1787, p. 45). At this stage, then, representation was still a device for limiting 'pure democracy'.

But in the nineteenth century, stimulated by the French Revolution of 1789 and by the diffusion of power brought about by mass literacy and industrialization, the notion of turning assemblies into representative bodies elected from a wide franchise rapidly gained ground. One of the first authors to graft representation on to democracy was the British-born pamphleteer and international revolutionary Tom Paine. In his *Rights of Man* (first published in 1791 or 1792), Paine wrote:

> The original simple democracy . . . is incapable of extension, not from its principle, but from the inconvenience of its form. Simple democracy was society governing itself without the aid of secondary means. By ingrafting representation upon democracy, we arrive at a system of government capable of embracing and confederating all the various interests and every extent of territory and population.
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> (Paine, 1984 edn, p. 180)

Scalability has certainly proved to be a key strength of representative democracy. The conventional wisdom in ancient Athens was that the upper limit for a republic was the number of people who could gather together to hear a speaker. However, modern representative government allows massive populations (such as 1.05 billion Indians and 290 million Americans) to exercise some popular control over their rulers. And there is no upper

limit. In theory, the entire world could become one giant representative system. Adapting Tom Paine's phrase, representative government has proved to be a highly convenient form.

As ever, intellectuals were on hand to secure the transition of representative democracy from an inherent contradiction to a workable system of rule. Prominent among them was Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1965), an Austrian-born economist who became an academic in the United States.

Schumpeter (1943, p. 269) conceived of democracy as nothing more than party competition: 'democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of refusing or accepting the men who are to rule them'. He wanted to limit the contribution of ordinary voters because of his jaded view of their political capacity: 'the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way that he would recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again.'

Reflecting this jaundiced view of the public, Schumpeter argued that elections should not be construed as a device through which voters elect representatives to carry out their will; rather, the role of elections is simply to produce a government. From this perspective, the elector becomes a political accessory, restricted to selecting from broad packages of policies and leaders prepared by rival parties. Representative democracy is merely a way of deciding who shall decide:

> The deciding of issues by the electorate [is made] secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding. To put it differently, we now take the view that the role of the people is to produce a government . . . And we define the democratic method as that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.
> (Schumpeter, 1943, p. 270)

These ideas represent a considerable thinning of the democratic ideal envisaged in classical Athens. But that is not all. The second distinctive feature of modern democracy, its liberal character, contributes a further qualification to strict rule by the people. Like representative democracy, liberal democracy is a compromise: it seeks to integrate the authority of democratic governments with limits on the scope of their action.

The central feature of liberal democracy is limited government. The goal is to secure individual freedom, including freedom from unwarranted demands by government itself. The object is defensive: to protect the population from its rulers and minorities from the danger of majority tyranny (Held, 1996). Liberal democracy is a settlement between individual liberty and collective organization which reflects the key issues involved in its emergence. These issues include the desire to entrench religious freedom, to protect against the recurrence of tyranny and to secure the rights of property against the mob. All these elements were central to the design of the American system of government, the most liberal (and perhaps the least democratic) of all the democracies.

In place of the all-encompassing scope of the Athenian *polis,* liberal democracies are governments of laws rather than men. Even elected rulers are subject to constitutions that almost always include a statement of individual rights. In theory, citizens can use domestic and international courts to uphold their rights when the government becomes overbearing. In this way, a liberal democracy is democracy disarmed.

Both the representative and liberal elements of modern democracy dilute the original principle of self-rule. We find in contemporary democracies a form of rule in which decision-making is the responsibility of governments rather than the governed and in which the public sphere is limited by protecting the rights of citizens in general and of property-owners in particular. The watering down is considerable but the outcome is a flexible and scalable political system which is coming to dominate the world.

Waves of democratization

How then were these principles of representative and liberal democracy implemented in the transition to democracy? When and how did modern established democracies emerge? As with the phases of decolonization discussed in the last

chapter, so too did democracies emerge in a series of distinct waves (Box 3.3). As defined by Huntington (1991, p. 15),

A wave of democratization is a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period . . . Three waves of democratization have occurred in the modern world.

The first modern democracies emerged in the 'first long wave of democratization' between 1828 and 1926. During this *first wave* nearly 30 countries established at least minimally democratic national institutions, including Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Scandinavian countries and the United States. Some of these fledgling democracies were later overthrown by fascist, communist or military dictatorships during Huntington's 'first reverse wave' from 1922 to 1942.

However, democracy did consolidate in the earliest nineteenth-century democratizations, including the United States and the United Kingdom. We will examine these two transitions of the first wave in more detail, not least because the USA remains the leading example of liberal democracy while Britain usefully illustrates representative democracy.

The emergence of democracy in the United States was rapid but it was a transition nonetheless. The founders had thought of political leadership in non-democratic terms, as the duty of a disinterested, leisured gentry. However, the idea that citizens could only be represented fairly by those of their own sort quickly gained ground, supported by the egalitarian spirit of a frontier society. The suffrage quickly extended to nearly all white males. But some groups had to wait until the twentieth century for the full franchise. Women were not offered the vote on the same terms as men until 1919 and the black franchise was not fully realised until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Dahl, 2001).

Today, the USA gives us the clearest picture of a *liberal* democracy in which limited government is entrenched by design. The Founding Fathers wanted, above all, to prevent dictatorship, including tyranny by the majority. To prevent any government – and especially elected ones – from acquiring too much power, the constitution set up an elaborate system of checks and balances between the institutions of government (Figure 3.2). Because power is so fragmented, the danger of any particular faction manipulating public authority for private ends is much reduced. Power checks power to the point where it is often difficult for the government to achieve even needed reforms. The constitution placed government under law before government by all the people. In this way, the liberal dimension of America's

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BOX 3.3
Huntington's three waves of democratization

Wave	Period	Examples
First	1828–1926	Britain, France, USA
Second	1943–62	India, Israel, Japan, West Germany
Third	1974–91	Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, parts of Africa

Note: The first wave was partly reversed between 1922 and 1942 (for example, in Austria, Germany and Italy) and the second wave similarly between 1958 and 1975 (for example, in much of Latin America and post-colonial Africa). A return to authoritarian rule after a democratic interlude is termed backsliding.

Source: Huntington (1991). For some criticisms of the wave approach, see Grugel (2002), pp. 32–7.
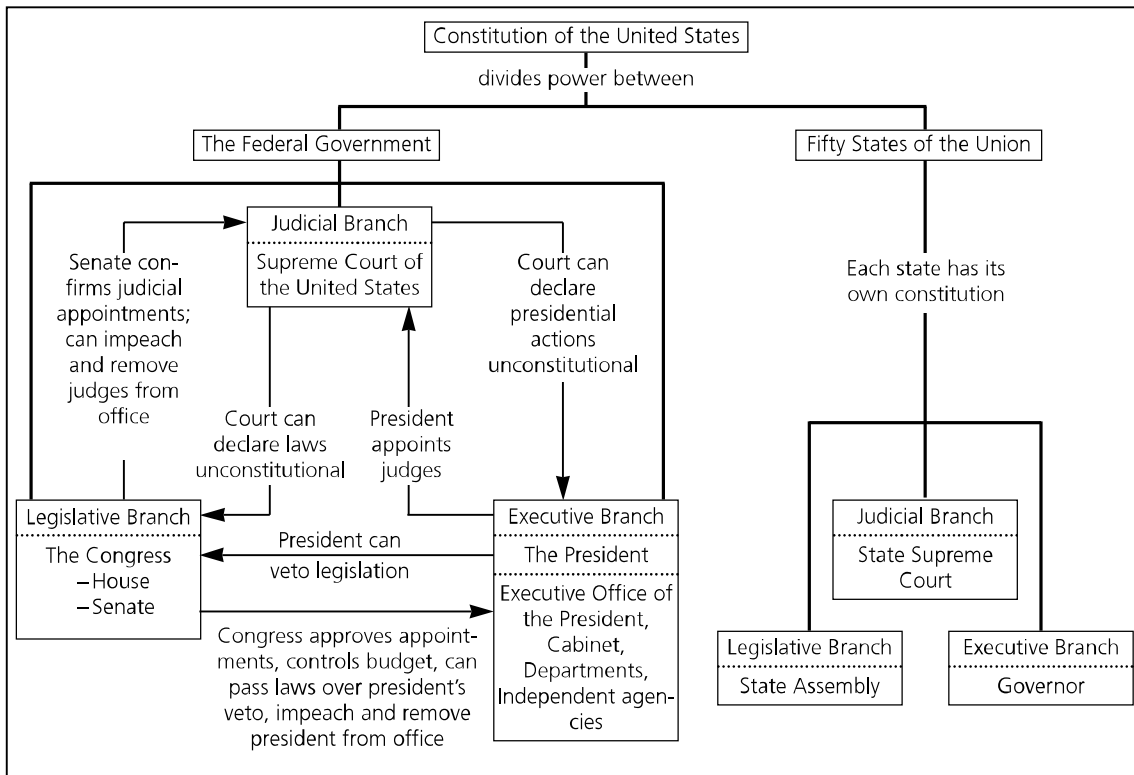
Figure 3.2 Liberal democracy: the separation of powers in the United States

democracy emerged victorious over its representative aspect. Only during periods of external threat, including post-9/11, do individual liberties come under threat (Lyon, 2003).

In Britain, by contrast, the outcome of the democratic transition was a less liberal but more representative form of government. By the eighteenth century, the power of the monarch had been checked by the authority of parliament. However, the rights of the individual citizen were never stated as clearly as in the USA. The widening of the suffrage also occurred more gradually in the United Kingdom, with each step easing the fears of the propertied classes about the dangers of further reform (Table 3.1). As the House of Commons acquired democratic legitimacy, so both the monarchy and the non-elected House of Lords retreated into the background. As in the United States, the implementation of democratic procedures in Britain continued well into the twentieth century

but the battle of principle was fought and won in the nineteenth.

Yet if the USA emphasizes liberal democracy, Britain gives priority to its representative element. Where American democracy diffuses power across institutions, British democracy emphasizes the sovereignty of parliament. Representation operates through parties that retain tight control over their own members of the House of Commons. A single governing party wields extensive powers until the voters offer their verdict at the next election. Except for the government's sense of self-restraint, the institutions that limit executive power in the United States – including a codified constitution, the separation of powers and federalism – are absent. Instead the electoral rules normally ensure a secure majority of seats to the winning party. In reality, the hallowed sovereignty of parliament is leased to the party in office.

Far more than the United States, Britain exemplifies Schumpeter's model of representative

democracy as an electoral competition between organised parties. 'We are the masters now', trumpeted a Labour MP after his party's triumph in the British election of 1945; similar thoughts must have occurred to many Labour MPs after their party's equally emphatic victory in 1997. From a comparative perspective, a governing party in Britain is still given an exceptionally free hand.

Despite these contrasts between Britain and the USA, both countries are of course examples of consolidated democracies emerging during the first nineteenth-century wave of democratization. Huntington's *second wave* of democratization began in the Second World War and continued until the 1960s. Like the first wave, some of the new democracies created at this time did not consolidate. For example, elected rulers in several Latin American states were quickly overthrown by military coups. But established democracies did emerge after 1945 from the ashes of defeated dictatorships, not just in West Germany but also in Austria, Japan and Italy. These postwar democracies were introduced by the victorious allies, led by the USA and usually acting with the support of domestic partners. Yet despite their partly imposed character, these second-wave democracies did establish firm roots, helped by an economic recovery itself nourished by American aid. During this postwar wave, democracy also consolidated in the new state of Israel and the former British Dominion of India.

Second-wave democracies differed in character from their predecessors. Their liberal traditions were somewhat weaker as representation through parties proved to be the stronger suit. Parties had gone unmentioned in the American constitution but by the time of the second wave they had emerged as the leading democratic instrument. Indeed, Germany's Basic Law (1949) codifies their role: 'the political parties shall take part in forming the democratic will of the people'. In several second-wave democracies, the importance of party was confirmed by the emergence of a single party which dominated national politics for a generation: Congress in India, the Christian Democrats in Italy, the LDP in Japan and Labour in Israel.

The *third wave* of democratization, finally,

Table 3.1 The British electorate as a percentage of the adult population, 1831–1931

Year	Electorate (per cent of population aged 20+)
1831	4.4
1832	First Reform Act
1832	7.1
1864	9.0
1867	Second Reform Act
1868	16.4
1883	18.0
1884	Third Reform Act
1886	28.5
1914	30.0
1918	Vote extended to women over 30
1921	74.0
1928	Equal Franchise Act
1931	97.0

Note: In 1969, the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18.

Source: Adapted from Dahl (1998), fig. 2.

began in 1974 and continued until 1991. Its main and highly diverse elements were:

▶ the end of right-wing dictatorships in Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal and Spain) in the 1970s
▶ the retreat of the generals in much of Latin America in the 1980s
▶ the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s.

This third wave has transformed the global political landscape: the predominance of democratic forms in today's world itself places added pressure on those non-democratic regimes that survive.

Within the third wave, it is only the Southern European group that provides consistently secure cases of democratic consolidation, aided by membership of the European Union and economic development. Elsewhere, in Eastern Europe and Latin America, many third-wave democracies have not yet fully consolidated, if indeed they are ever to do so at all. The category of new democracy – as also of semi-democracy – remains central to

understanding these uncertain regimes. We will explore this theme further by examining in more detail the political and economic challenges facing these new democracies.

New democracies

Just as the first wave of modern democracies represented a severe dilution of the Athenian vision of self-rule, so too many new democracies of the third wave are developing a further compromise with their own authoritarian histories. Certainly, the distinctions between most new democracies and the early modern democracies such as the United States and the United Kingdom remain important. In this section, we review the challenges facing these new additions to the democratic family.

To be sure, many new democracies do seem to have consolidated by one crucial test: a peaceful transfer of power through elections. For example, the South Korean presidential election of 1997 witnessed the first peaceful transfer of power to the centre-left in that country's history. Similarly, Herbst (2001) notes that by 1999 a dozen African states had experienced at least one change of government through the ballot box. Peaceful transfers have also become almost routine in Eastern Europe and parts of Latin America.

Yet even when elections have succeeded in the delicate task of replacing a governing elite, most new democracies remain distinctive; the question is not whether they will consolidate but what exactly they are consolidating into. The difficulties facing new democracies can be grouped into two clusters: the political problems associated with an illiberal inheritance and the economic problems caused by the combination of limited development and extreme inequality.

The political challenge

Consider first the political challenges facing new democracies of the third wave. Reflecting an authoritarian legacy, liberal ideas often remain weak. As Luckham and White (1996b, p. 7) point out, the development of democracy requires more than just competitive elections. It also requires the enforcement of legal restraint on state power, pro-

tection of civil rights, the establishment of relatively uncorrupt and effective bureaucracies, and the imposition of democratic control over potentially authoritarian forces such as the military and the security services.

> *Definition*
> A democracy has **consolidated** when it provides an accepted framework for political competition. As President Havel noted in Czechoslovakia after communism's collapse, democratic consolidation requires more than creating appropriate institutions: 'we have done away with totalitarianism but we have yet to win democracy'. The standard definition comes from Przeworski (1991, p. 26):
>
> > Democracy is consolidated when under given political and economic conditions a particular system of institutions becomes the only game in town and when no-one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions.

To the extent that democratic consolidation requires substituting a government of laws for one of men, the task is still incomplete in new democracies. The inheritance from the old regime continues to limit progress. After all, ruling communist parties and military councils had brooked no interference from the judiciary and paid no heed to constitutions, including statements of human rights. The agencies of repression – the military, the intelligence services and the police – were as strong as the mechanisms of representation were weak. However well-intentioned the new rulers may be, constructing a *liberal* democracy from an authoritarian history is a greater challenge than the blank canvas facing the framers of the United States constitution, designing a new state where none of any significance had previously existed.

Take, for example, the post-military democracies of Latin America. Here the generals still possess considerable prestige deriving from their historical role as providers of order to unstable societies. This status is sometimes reflected in a guaranteed budget, seats in the legislature and virtual exemption from civil law. Even in the civil arena, justice in much of Latin America remains underdeveloped. Lower courts are often inefficient and

corrupt and many cases do not arrive there because the police are themselves corrupt or because ordinary people regard the courtroom as the prerogative of the wealthy. In urban slums, the concept of individual rights does not apply, no matter what fine words appear in the constitution.

In post-communist states, too, any national traditions of rule by law were dulled by the totalitarian experience. Ruling communist parties were above the law and public officials continue to regard their position as an opportunity to obtain private advantage. The combination of an inadequate legal framework with systematic evasion and inadequate enforcement of those laws that do exist is a difficult base from which to consolidate liberal democracy.

In Africa, the problems differ. Far from achieving communist levels of penetration though society, the limited incision of the African state into its territory limits the impact of a transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. For African peasants, as for Latin American slum-dwellers, regime transitions in the capital city must seem remote indeed.

So in many new democracies, the tradition of power revolving around individuals – whether communist party bosses, the arrogant generals and landowners of Latin America or the 'big men' of African politics – tends to subvert attempts to consolidate the democratic framework.

The economic challenge

The economic difficulties confronting new democracies of the third wave are even more obvious than the political challenges. These problems consist of a combination of poverty and inequality, exacerbated by severe economic decline in the early years of the new democracy. Even in many of the larger and more developed new democracies, living standards remain well below Western levels. In the USA, gross domestic product (GDP) per head had reached $36,300 by 2002; in the new democracy of neighbouring Mexico, the equivalent figure was just $9,000 and 40 per cent of the population lived in poverty. European contrasts are equally stark: German GDP per head is almost double the figure for post-communist countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Relative poverty goes hand in hand with greater inequality. Many new democracies retain a large agricultural sector, where sharp contrasts continue between a rich, powerful elite and a poorly educated, and often powerless, population. Conflicts between landowners and dependent peasants are endemic in much of Latin America, for instance. As Vanhanen (1997) notes, such conditions favour neither the diffusion of power resources nor the development of mutual toleration and compromise which foster democratic consolidation.

Further, the ex-communist states in Eastern Europe suffered enormous economic dislocation in the transition from the old order. As planned economies began to be dismantled in tandem with democratization, unemployment soared. Throughout the post-communist world, the 1990s was a decade of deep economic decline in which the real suffering of the many was exacerbated by the ostentatious affluence of a few. Only in the opening years of the twenty-first century did economic growth return to most post-communist democracies, with Central and Eastern Europe as a whole now growing at a faster rate, albeit from a lower base, than in the Western part of the continent.

Lower levels of affluence in new democracies are important partly because a long research tradition claims that economic well-being is the key to democratic consolidation. In *Political Man* (1960, pp. 48–9), Lipset famously concluded that 'the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy'. Lipset demonstrated that stable democracies scored highest on such measures as income per person, literacy and the proportion of the population living in cities. Following Aristotle, Lipset believed that a large middle class opposed to extremism was conducive to democracy.

More recent research confirms the correlation between affluence and stable democracy, even though there are exceptions such as poor but democratic India. Marks and Diamond (1992, p. 110) seem to be fully justified in describing the connection between affluence and democracy as 'one of the most powerful and stable relationships in the study of comparative national development'.

Crucially, the economic and political weaknesses of new democracies are linked. The absence of a

Profile **MEXICO**

Population: 105m.
Gross domestic product per head: $9,000. Mexico is the world's ninth largest economy.
Form of government: a federal and presidential republic.
Legislature: the 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected for a single three-year period and the 128 members of the Senate for a six-year tenure.
Executive: the president, directly elected for a non-renewable six-year term, heads both the state and the government, choosing the members of the Cabinet.
Judiciary: headed by the Supreme Court of Justice, the judicial system mixes American constitutional principles with the civil law tradition. In practice, both judicial independence and police enforcement of law have been weak.
Electoral system: 300 members of the Chamber represent single-member districts, the other 200 are elected by the list system of proportional representation. The Senate also operates a mixed electoral system.
Party system: dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) until the 1990s. Other major parties are the conservative National Action Party (PAN), which formed part of Fox's Alliance for Change in the 2000 elections, and the left-wing Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD).

'Yes, it can be done,' shouted the crowds in Mexico City as they celebrated the downfall of the PRI after the presidential election of 2000. After 70 years in power, the PRI not only lost a presidential election for the first time but also no longer controlled either house of the national legislature. The world's oldest ruling party had suffered an historic reverse, defeated by a centre-right coalition led by Vicente Fox. This peaceful transfer of power decisively confirmed Mexico's status as a new democracy. For students of comparative politics, Mexico offers a remarkably successful example of democratization.

The PRI had been founded in 1929 in the decade following the radical Mexican revolution. Gradually, however, socialist principles were diluted as the PRI established a classic semi-democracy based on patronage networks. The PRI distributed favours while repressing opposition and manipulating election results. In the 1950s and 1960s, the PRI seemed to have discovered the perfect recipe for a stable dictatorship. However, three problems recurred:

▶ continuing poverty for those excluded from the PRI network, reflected in periodic revolts
▶ increasing opposition from the expanding urban middle class created by economic growth
▶ occasional economic crises when the PRI placed its political objectives before sound economic policy.

With the political effectiveness of the PRI machine decaying, Carlos Salinas (President, 1988–94) initiated economic reforms, including privatizing major firms and opening the economy to international competition, not least through NAFTA. In contrast to the Soviet Union, where Gorbachev had initiated political reform before restructuring the economy, liberalization in Mexico preceded political change. As the PRI lost direct control of economic resources, so its powers of patronage declined and voters became free to support opposition parties, especially in the cities. Independent trade unions began to form outside the enveloping embrace of the PRI.

But the PRI also introduced political changes that served to enliven a moribund opposition. By the 1990s, the PRI no longer felt able to manipulate election results. In 1997, it lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies after relatively fair elections. The decisive election in 2000 was overseen by an independent election commission. So the PRI's fall was partly self-induced: its leaders recognized that the tools needed to guarantee their party's continued grip on power were hindering the country's further development.

Mexico's gradual moves to democracy seem to have avoided what Baer (1993, p. 64) described as 'the dilemma of all reforms from above, particularly in ageing regimes: how to avoid unleashing a revolution from below'. But it remains to be seen how far, and at what speed, democracy will consolidate in Mexico. The PRI remains a significant force, controlling half the country's 32 states. Mexico's continuing problems – peasant revolts and urban squalor, drugs and crime, corrupt judges and incompetent police – mean that it remains premature to place the country in the same political category as the USA and Canada, its NAFTA partners.

Further reading: Camp (2002), Cornelius and Weldon (2004), Craske (2001), Levy and Bruhn (2001).

liberal political framework itself inhibits economic advance. Weak legal systems restrict economic development because corporations lack confidence that commercial disputes can be resolved fairly and promptly through the courts. Close personal connections develop between politicians in need of money and well-placed business executives who value political influence. These semi-corrupt networks preclude the development of a clear framework for market regulation. Dominant firms with political protection can see off competitive threats, preventing the development of a level playing field in which the most efficient companies can prosper. Scared off by corrupt and slow-moving bureaucrats, foreign investors are inclined to go elsewhere, especially as population and market size are relatively small in new democracies. As a result, both economic and democratic development wither, held back by the incomplete penetration of liberal ideas and institutions.

The challenge of timing

We should mention one final factor affecting the consolidation of third-wave democracies: the timing of their transition. To be born into a world which is already democratic is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it increases the pressures on new democracies to consolidate too quickly. Populations value not just democracy but the affluence they sense goes with it; and they demand both now. On the other hand, an international environment supportive of democracy – and even more so since 9/11 – is beneficial to democratic consolidation. To understand new democracies, it is helpful to explore the challenge of timing in more detail.

The first wave democracies were not so much adopting a new political order as inventing it. As we saw in discussing the United Kingdom, innovation was a leisurely, even evolutionary, process of adapting old ideas to large states. By contrast, third-wave democracies were delivered into a world where democratic ideas were already becoming predominant. As a result, they are expected to mimic established examples without the economic resources and gradual maturation which helped the countries of the first wave. Both domestic and international audiences expect the process of developing democracy to be collapsed into a decade or two. The result is rushed rather than leisurely democratization. In the first wave, democracy could be an outcome but in the third wave it has to be an intention. As Hollifield and Jillson (2000, p. 11) suggest,

> The latest transitions to democracy have occurred with dizzying speed, giving the societies involved little time to prepare for the leap to representative government. Whereas democracies in Western Europe, the United States and the former British dominions had a gestation period of one or two centuries, in the third wave democratization has come virtually overnight. This has led to a great deal of improvisation and many setbacks.

At the same time, democracies of the third wave have one clear advantage over their predecessors: a favourable global and regional context. Leading actors such as the United States and the European Union, and sympathetic institutions such as the World Bank, began to promote democracy once the Cold War ended. This support began even before September 11 gave the USA a further reason to promote democracy in the authoritarian Middle East.

Often, a favourable regional context also eased transition. Greece, Portugal and Spain – and more recently post-communist Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic – undoubtedly benefited from their position close to the heartland of European democracy. In a similar way, Mexico's transition from semi-democracy surely owes something to its trading links with the USA, consolidated through NAFTA. Indeed Diamond (1997, p. 39) suggests that 'the greatest regional force for democratic consolidation in the Americas may well be the move towards regional free trade'.

Semi-democracy

The final concept to explore in this chapter is that of semi-democracy. This term lacks the theoretical purity of either democratic or authoritarian rule; its task is more descriptive. Semi-democracy denotes forms of government which, in practice,

blend both democratic and authoritarian elements. In a semi-democracy, democratic legitimacy is not wholly lacking; rather, it is acquired and exploited in dubious ways and often remains contested. As in Asian states such as Singapore and Malaysia, the dominant leaders use ethnic diversity, fear of political instability or the demand for economic development as reasons for departing from the liberal aspects of established democracies.

In a world dominated by democratic ideology, semi-democracy is a more likely outcome than a return to authoritarianism for those new democracies that do not consolidate. This hybrid is not new but it is becoming more prevalent. Carothers (2002, p. 18) observes that 'what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious middle ground between democracy and dictatorship is actually the most common political condition in countries of the developing and postcommunist worlds'.

Definition

A **semi-democracy** blends democratic and authoritarian elements in stable combination. Although rulers are elected, they govern with little respect for individual rights and often harass opposition or even non-official groups. By contrast, a **new democracy** is one that has not yet had time to consolidate; that is, democracy has not become the 'only game in town'. In practice, new democracies and semi-democracies show similar characteristics but a new democracy is transitional while a semi-democracy is not. Assuming a new democracy does not slide back into authoritarian rule, it will develop into either an established democracy or a semi-democracy.

The crucial point is that we should not think of democracy and authoritarianism as sole and incompatible ways of organizing government. Rather, each principle can provide pockets of power that can coexist, sometimes indefinitely, within the one political system; once set, semi-democracy is a strong amalgam. Crouch (1996, p. vii), for instance, shows how Malaysia's 'repressive–responsive' regime combines democratic and authoritarian features in a manner that 'provides the foundation for a remarkably stable political order'.

Similarly, Borón (1998, p. 43) refers to the 'faulty democracies' of Latin America in which rulers, once elected, govern in an authoritarian style, showing little concern for mass poverty or legal niceties. In these conditions, suggests Borón, democracy 'endures but does not consolidate'.

The notion of semi-democracy also captures the political reality of many states in sub-Saharan Africa. As Herbst (2001, p. 359) writes, 'it is wrong to conclude that African states are travelling between democracy and authoritarianism simply because a majority of them belong to neither category. Rather, the current condition of African states could well prevail for decades'.

In understanding the operating methods of semi-democracies, it is useful to distinguish two variants. In the *first* type, an elected party or leader sets the framework for political competition, governing in an illiberal fashion. O'Donnell (1994, p. 59) describes this format: 'whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office.'

Russia's super-presidential system is an example. The president not only takes the lead in seeking to impose solutions to national problems but more significantly is expected to do so. Boris Yeltsin (President 1991–2000) ruled in a highly personal way which inhibited the development of government institutions. Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, is an equally tough political operator. In many African countries, too, 'presidents have an inordinate amount of power invested in them and little in the way of institutional provisions to check that power' (May, 2000, p. 176).

One way in which these democratic despots acquire at least some legitimacy is through semi-competitive elections. They use control over money, jobs, contracts, pensions, public housing, the media, the police, the electoral system and the courts to deliver success, usually without any need to manipulate the election count. Egypt and Tunisia are examples of countries where elections have long been semi-competitive.

Note, however, that such methods are often combined with effective governance and a favourable disposition towards a dominant ruler or party. For example, Singapore's People's Action Party may manipulate elections in its favour but it

'ASIAN DEMOCRACY'

Many Asian leaders reject aspects of the Western democratic tradition. They claim to be building a distinctive form of 'Asian democracy'. For example, the rulers of Malaysia and Singapore explicitly reject the Western interpretation of liberal democracy based on individual rights. They favour an approach that gives more weight to Asian values, including respect for authority, avoiding public conflict and accepting the primacy of the group. Democracy is defined in almost familial terms, with the elected leader adopting a paternal style. The state leads society, and democracy therefore depends less on the independent groups and associations which provide the foundation for Western democracy.

The institutional consequences of 'Asian democracy' include a subservient media and judiciary. In addition, the police and security forces become more aggressive in their approach to criminals and dissenters. But is there really a distinctive form of democracy in Asia or is democracy a universal principle?

The case for

The attempt to develop non-Western models of democracy derives in part from the natural cynicism of former subjects to their colonial masters. Asian leaders reject what they see as imperialist attempts to universalize Western democracy. Dr Mahathir, when Prime Minister of Malaysia, condemned Western democracies 'where political leaders are afraid to do what is right, where the people and their leaders live in fear of the free media which they so loudly proclaim as inviolable'. A former foreign minister of Vietnam exposed Western hypocrisy more bluntly: 'Human rights? I learnt about human rights when the French tortured me as a teenager' Thompson (2001, p. 160). Further, the Asian model has delivered economic growth by allowing leaders to focus on long-term modernization free from electoral pressures. Thus Prime Minister Goh of Singapore suggests that

> our government acts more like a trustee. As a custodian of the people's welfare, it exercises independent judgement on what is in the long-term economic interests of the people and acts on that basis. Government policy is not dictated by opinion polls or referenda (Wang, 2002, p. v).

The case against

Critics allege that 'Asian democracy' is simply an excuse for failing to move beyond semi-democracy. Putzel (1997, p. 253) roundly declares that 'claims for "indigenous forms of democracy" appear to be no more than justifications for authoritarian rule'. And Brzezinski (1997, p. 5) suggests that 'the "Asian values" doctrine is nothing but a rationalization for a certain phase of historical development'. By this he means that through accidents of history Western societies have more experience with protecting individual freedom. Asia, Brzezinski suggests, is still playing catch-up, both economically and politically. And resolving the financial crisis that engulfed East Asia in 1997 required most countries in the region to somewhat reduce state intervention in the economy, yielding a rather more liberal form of democracy. Finally, a Western human rights activist argues that democracy and human rights are inherently universal:

> There is nothing special about torturing the Asian way. Rape is not something that is done an Asian way. Rape is rape, torture is torture and human rights are human rights.
>
> (Vatikiotis, 1995, p. 98)

Assessment

The debate on Asian democracy can not be resolved easily. It mixes ideology and colonial memories in an explosive combination. But three points are clear. First, Asia has never been a single category. China is still authoritarian, Indonesia largely so, Singapore is a semi-democracy and Japan is an established democracy. Second, rather than referring to 'Asian' democracy, it might be more useful to consider the kind of democracy best suited to economic development. The 'Asian' approach may be more effective in countries which are still growing their industrial capacity even if the Western model is more appropriate for developed economies. Third, the liberal form of democracy found in the West reflects a long-term project to tame the power of secular and religious rulers. If Asia is to 'catch up', it will take generations to do so.

Further reading: Bell *et al.* (1995), Diamond and Plattner (2001), Thompson (2001).

has also ruled with competence. Similarly, President Putin's willingness to pull all the levers of power available to him has not dented his support among the Russian public; it may indeed have endeared him to them.

Once elected, semi-democratic presidents rule the roost and the assembly and the judiciary are cowed into insignificance. Ordinary 'citizens' may have a vote and their rights are tolerably secure when the interests of the regime are not at stake. But citizens are sensitive to the sound of gunfire. They know when to lie low. With good reason, this form of semi-democracy is sometimes called illiberal or electoral democracy (O'Donnell, 1996).

In a semi-democracy based on a dominant party or individual, power is concentrated in a few hands. But there is a *second* form of semi-democracy in which elected rulers have too little rather than too much power. Here elected rulers are puppets rather than despots. In this version, 'power is shifted to the military, bureaucracy or top business groups' (Case, 1996, p. 439). Like weak monarchs surrounded by powerful noblemen in medieval Europe, these elected politicians must continue to govern alongside military, ethnic, religious and regional leaders determined to maintain their established privileges.

When the president is merely a frontman, the outcome is an unconsolidated democracy in which elections are established but do not function as definitive statements of who should exercise final decision-making power. In Thailand, Turkey and Pakistan, for example, the military stands as a guardian of the nation, exerting a 'silent veto' over civilian decisions (Gills *et al.*, 1993, pp. 21–8). Such semi-democracies are sometimes called supervised or even façade democracies.

Some post-soviet republics, including central Asian republics such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, exemplify this pattern of limited authority for elected politicians (Fairbanks, 2001). Real power comes from patronage and from deals with regional and ethnic power brokers or even with criminal gangs. In this type of semi-democracy ('disguised authoritarianism' might be more accurate), power gives the capacity to take elected office but elected office does not add much power. In these circumstances, the president is merely the mouthpiece of a dominant and corrupt elite, and

elections are just plebiscites to confirm the elite's choice of top leader. Democracy fails because presidents are impotent rather than despots.

The ways of semi-democracy are a sobering reminder to those who take a naive view of the triumph of democracy. Simplistic counts of the number of democracies tell only part of the story. As quantity has increased, quality has fallen. Why is it, then, that so many new democracies turn out, on closer inspection, to be only semi-democratic? There are two answers, the optimist's and the pessimist's.

The optimist's view is that semi-democracy is merely transitional, a temporary staging post in the world's pilgrimage from authoritarian rule to established democracy. This scenario possesses a certain plausibility. After all, nearly all Western democracies passed through a stage in which the contest for power became open and legitimate, a phase which preceded the introduction of universal suffrage. Even in the United States, democracy took decades to establish.

But it is prudent to consider a more pessimistic account of semi-democracy: that it is a stable method of governing poor and unequal societies, particularly now that blatant dictatorship has become less acceptable. When poverty coincides with extreme inequality, and when ethnic divisions are strong, the prospects of creating a democratic community of equals are slender indeed. Further, semi-democracy is usually sufficient for the ruling elite to meet the conditions of aid set by the World Bank, the IMF and donor governments. While these international bodies may welcome democracy, in practice they give higher priority to economic reform.

The heart of the matter is perhaps that semi-democracy is a tacit, but stable, compromise between domestic elites and international organizations. For such reasons, Case (1996, p. 464) concludes that semi-democracy is not 'a mere way station on the road to further democracy'.

Key reading

Next step: *Dahl* et al. *(2003) is a wide-ranging collection on the nature, conditions, procedures and impact of democracy.*

Dahl (1989, 1998) offers lucid accounts of democracy. The 1989 book is more advanced, the 1998 volume more introductory. Other overall assessments include Arblaster (2002) and Held (1996). Democratization has spawned an outstanding literature: Huntington (1991) and O'Donnell *et al.* (1986) are influential, while Pridham (1995) is a collection of classic articles. Also on democratization, Grugel (2002) provides an introductory overview while Diamond (1999) focuses on consolidation. Carothers (2002) discusses the end of the transition paradigm as countries enter a seemingly permanent grey zone of semi-democracy. For democracy in the developing world, see Haynes (2001); for Islam and democracy, Diamond *et al.* (2003) and for democracy after communism, Diamond and Plattner (2002). Gill and Marwick (2000) review Russia's stillborn democracy. Agüero and Stark (1998) remains an excellent survey of post-transition Latin America.

Chapter **4**

Authoritarian rule

Brooker (2000, p. 1) writes that 'non-democratic government, whether by elders, chiefs, monarchs, aristocrats, empires, military regimes or one-party states, has been the norm for most of human history'. As late as 1981, Perlmutter (p. xi) could still claim that 'the twentieth century is the age of political authoritarianism'. Certainly that brutal century will be remembered more for the dictatorships it spawned – including Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, Mao's China and Pol Pot's Cambodia – than for the democratic transitions at its close.

But studying non-democracies remain far more than an historical exercise. Authoritarian rulers may be under more pressure as democratization spreads but the species is far from extinct. Indeed, September 11, 2001 brought non-democratic regimes into sharper focus. Most of the terrorists involved in the attacks on the United States, including Osama bin Laden, were nationals of Saudi Arabia, a leading example of an authoritarian Islamic state. More generally, the Arab world contains a high proportion of the world's stock of both authoritarian governments and oil.

Other non-democratic regimes are also of international significance. In China, for instance, a nominally communist ruling elite continues to govern a quarter of the world's population and a rapidly expanding economy. China's distinctive combination of authoritarian politics with a partly free economy has acquired global significance particularly since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001.

We begin by examining authoritarian rule in the traditional style, a form common to non-democratic rulers past and present, before turning to the new forms of authoritarianism which emerged in the twentieth century, namely communist, fascist and military rule (Box 4.1). We then consider contemporary authoritarianism in the Arab and Muslim worlds and we conclude with an examination of China.

Traditional authoritarian rule

Traditional authoritarianism is a distinct form of non-democratic rule in which authority is owed to the ruler himself rather than to a more abstract entity such as a communist or fascist party. The people are subjects, not citizens, and the ruler is constrained neither by law nor by competitive election. Nonetheless, the ruler is expected to take responsibility for his people, just as a father should look after his children, in a format known as patrimonial rule. The abstract idea of a state linking rulers and citizens is missing, as are such modern notions as constitutions, rights, the separation of powers and the rule of law. Rather, the law (if it exists at all) expresses the wishes of the ruler.

Definition
Weber's notion of **patrimonial rule** is based on the personal authority of a leading male who rules as if he were the head of a large family. As a father-figure, the ruler claims to care for his dependants but at the same time his dominant position affirms a relationship of inequality. Patrimonial rule is traditional – patrimony literally means an inheritance from one's father – but remains common in authoritarian regimes today (Gerth and Mills, 1948).

The major forms of traditional rule were chiefdoms and monarchies, though these sometimes extended to larger empires such as Imperial China, Mesopotamia and the Aztecs (van Creveld, 1999). With the rise of the modern state, traditional rule

BOX 4.1
Forms of authoritarian rule

Form	Definition
Authoritarian rule	(1) Any form of non-democratic rule. (2) Those non-democratic regimes which, unlike totalitarian states, do not seek to transform society and the people in it
Traditional authoritarian rule	Allegiance is owed to an individual ruler who often claims a religious mandate passed down through family succession. The chief, monarch or president rules his subjects as if he were the head of an extended family
Communist states	Political systems in which the communist party monopolized power, leading to an all-encompassing bureaucratic state. In theory, the object was to implement Marx's vision of a classless society; in practice, the party sought to protect its position through social control
Fascism	An anti-liberal doctrine that glorified the nation and advocated a warrior state, led by an all-powerful leader, to whom the masses would show passionate commitment and submission. Advocated by Mussolini in Italy and, supplemented by Aryan racism, the basis for National Socialism in Nazi Germany
Military rule	Government by the military, often ruling through a junta comprising the leader from each branch of the forces. Half the countries in Africa were under military control as late as 1987

has become less common. However, presidents governing in the traditional style are still common in Africa and the Arabian Gulf.

Whether chief, monarch, emperor or president, the authority of the traditional ruler is technically unlimited. The leader's authority is typically based on religion, as with the divine right of kings in pre-modern Europe and the mandate of heaven claimed by Chinese emperors. Succession is often based on heredity, maintaining the fictional descent from God, but in practice is often acquired through usurpation. Succession can be either to the eldest son or (as with many ruling families in the Middle East) to the eldest capable relative. The latter method is less clear-cut, inviting short-term conflict.

However, even when an outsider does become ruler, the method of governing often continues unchanged. Thus, traditional authoritarian rule can provide a settled political framework, especially for static agricultural societies with little need of government.

For all their theoretical authority, the power of most traditional non-democratic leaders is neither unlimited nor arbitrary. For one thing, rulers who claim divine authority must ration those actions contradicting the religious code. More important, in the absence of an extended bureaucracy, rapid transport and modern communications, rulers lack direct means of controlling their subjects. They are forced to administer their kingdoms and empires indirectly, calling on the services of local leaders. Kings, and emperors even more so, have little choice but to govern by making deals with provincial notables.

Finer (1997, p. 38) suggests that palace politics is the characteristic mode of traditional authoritarianism. Befitting the personal character of authoritarian governance, in palace politics the officers of state are nothing more than servants of the ruler. Thus, the Keeper of the King's Purse and Minister of Finance are one and the same. Because allegiance is owed to the ruler rather than to rules, palace politics is based on personal relationships. Finer's examples of pure 'palace-type political systems' include ancient Egypt, the Roman empire and some eighteenth-century absolute rulers in Europe, such as the court of Louis XIV in France.

While palace politics can provide stable governance, the danger of traditional authoritarian rule is that it becomes insular and introverted; too much politics and not enough government. Further, the court constitutes a tax on society: money comes in from the authority of officials to grant licences and take bribes. This intensely polit-

ical economy discourages economic development and is increasingly unpopular with international agencies. With good reason, traditional authoritarian leaders rightly regard not just democracy, but also development and the agencies which promote it, with suspicion.

Communist, fascist and military rule

The twentieth century raised the political stakes. Unlike their traditional counterparts, modern dictators could exploit the political power of an extended state, the economic resources of the Industrial Revolution and the communications facilities of national media. These developments permitted unprecedented mobilization and control of mass populations. Authoritarian leaders were no longer just masters of their palace; their decisions now impinged directly on ordinary people. In extreme cases such as Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany, the result was the systematic murder of millions. So although much traditional rule continued in the twentieth century, our focus in this section will be on that century's new cast of dictators: communist, fascist and military leaders.

Both communist and fascist rulers claimed to be seeking a reconstruction of human nature and society. Communist states notionally aimed for a classless utopia while fascist rulers sought to renew the nation's strength through submission to a dominant leader. These bombastic declarations were not always matched by political reality but even so, such bold aspirations were far removed from the traditional authoritarian regime, with its overriding commitment to maintaining the ruler's position. Certainly, a distinctive feature of communist and fascist regimes was what Perlmutter (1981, p. xi) terms the 'conspicuous political innovations' of twentieth-century authoritarianism, namely:

the unopposed single party, the party-state, political police, the politburo [top party committee], revolutionary command councils, storm troops, political youth movements, cadres and gulags, propaganda machinery and concentration camps.

> *Definition*
> A **totalitarian** regime aims for total penetration of society in an attempt, at least in theory, to transform it. As defined by Linz (2000, p. 4), a totalitarian system is 'a regime form for completely organizing political life and society'. During the Cold War, communist and fascist states were bracketed as totalitarian, a connection which served to link communist regimes with disgraced fascism (Gleason, 1995).

Below, we will outline communist and fascist rule before turning to the large number of military governments – usually authoritarian rather than totalitarian – which ruled many developing countries for part of the second half of the twentieth century.

Communist states

The 1917 October Revolution in Russia was a decisive event of the twentieth century. It signalled the international advent of a regime, an ideology and a revolutionary movement which sought to overthrow the capitalist democracies of the West. Although communism failed to become a governing force in the affluent West, communist power did expand dramatically in Eastern Europe and Asia. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) – effectively a new Russian empire – was formed in 1924, extending from the Ukraine in the west to the central Asian republic of Kazakhstan in the east (Table 4.1 and Map 4.1). By area, the USSR became the largest country in the world.

After 1945, Eastern European countries such as Poland and Romania became satellite territories of this new empire. In Asia, the Chinese revolution of 1949 established an additional if distinctive communist state. During the Cold War, several developing countries such as Benin and the Congo also declared a nominal Marxist allegiance. Until the decisive collapse of the communist order in the late 1980s and early 1990s, regimes claiming Marxist inspiration ruled more than 1.5 billion people: about one in three of the world's population.

In seeking to understand communist rule, we should note the sharp contrasts between ideology

Table 4.1 Post-communist states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union

State	Population estimate, 2003 (million)	Gross domestic product per head, 2002	Ethnic groups comprising over 10% of the population, 2002 (listed by size of group)
Eastern European states formerly under the control of the Soviet Union			
Albania	3.6	$4,500	Albanian
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.0	$1,900	Serb, Bosnian, Croat
Bulgaria	7.5+	$6,600	Bulgarian, Turk
Croatia	4.4	$8,800	Croat
Czech Republic*	10.2+	$15,300	Czech, Moravian
Hungary*	10.0+	$13,300	Hungarian
Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of	2.1	$5,000	Macedonian, Albanian
Poland*	38.6	$9,500	Polish
Romania	22.4	$7,400	Romanian
Serbia and Montenegro	10.7	$2,370	Serb, Albanian
Slovakia*	5.4	$12,000	Slovak, Hungarian
Slovenia*	1.9	$18,000	Slovene
States formed from the Soviet Union			
Armenia	3.3+	$3,800	Armenian
Azerbaijan	7.8	$3,500	Azeri
Belarus	10.3+	$8,200	Belarusian, Russian
Estonia*	1.4+	$10,900	Estonian, Russian
Georgia	4.9+	$3,100	Georgian
Kazakhstan	16.8	$6,300	Kazakh, Russian
Kyrgyzstan	4.9	$2,800	Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek
Latvia*	2.3+	$8,300	Latvian, Russian
Lithuania*	3.6+	$8,400	Lithuanian
Moldova	4.4	$2,500	Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan/Romanian
Russia	144.5+	$9,300	Russian
Tajikistan	6.9	$1,250	Tajik, Uzbek
Turkmenistan	4.8	$5,500	Turkmen
Ukraine	48.0+	$4,500	Ukrainian, Russian
Uzbekistan	26.0	$2,500	Uzbek

* Joined the European Union in 2004.
\+ Falling population.

Source: CIA World Factbook at http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook.

Map 4.1 Post-communist Eastern Europe and Central Asia

KEY:

1   Albania
2   Armenia
3   Azerbaijan
4   Bosnia-Herzegovina
5   Croatia
6   Czech Republic
7   Estonia
8   Former Yugoslav Republic
     of Macedonia
9   Lithuania
10 Moldova
11 Slovakia
12 Slovenia
13 Serbia and Montenegro

and practice. In his theoretical writings, Karl Marx (1818–83) had envisaged an equal, classless and stateless utopia in which goods would be distributed from each according to their ability to each according to their need. In *The Communist Manifesto* (1848, p. 244), Marx and Engels claimed that 'in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the free development of all'. In the transition to this utopia, Marx suggested that the state would be converted 'from an organ superior to society to one completely subordinate to it'.

Practical revolutionaries, though, faced a more immediate problem: how to overthrow the existing capitalist order. Here Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), the Russian revolutionary, made a pivotal contribution. He argued that the communist party should serve as a vanguard organization, leading the workers into political activity that would further enhance their revolutionary consciousness. By assuming the party possessed a deeper understanding of the true interests of the working class than did the workers themselves,

Lenin provided the crucial rationale for the monopoly position which communist parties created once in power. In this way, the dictatorship of the party supplanted Marx's utopian dreams.

In power, ruling communist parties dominated society. Lenin's view that the workers must be forced to be free simply resulted in no freedom whatever. Communist regimes were strongly authoritarian, brooking no opposition, stage-managing elections, acting above the law, rewriting constitutions, determining all major appointments to the government, controlling the media and spying on their populations. Far from disappearing as anticipated by Marx, the state under the party's tutelage became an enveloping presence. Economies were brought under public control as part of the push to industrialize; the elaborate five-year plans produced in the Soviet Union were undoubtedly the most ambitious, detailed and comprehensive attempts at economic planning the world has ever seen. The party controlled and the state implemented.

This new form of party-state snuffed out inde-

pendent organizations, creating a social wasteland of distrust in which true political beliefs could only be expressed safely within the family (and sometimes not even there). Not only was active opposition suppressed but explicit support – in the form of attendance at demonstrations, party-led meetings and elections – was required. This insistence on active if ritual support was one factor distinguishing totalitarian from merely authoritarian regimes.

As communist states retreat into history, we should be careful to avoid stereotyping their characteristics. Communist regimes varied among themselves and also over time. In parts of Eastern Europe, for example Poland, local communist leaders governed with a lighter touch than in the communist heartland of the Soviet Union. China followed an even more independent path, with the triumph of the communist revolution in 1949 owing as much to nationalism as to Marxism, and resulting from the efforts of the army as well as the party (Selden, 1995).

Similarly, communist states grew less totalitarian as they matured. Once the initial thrust to industrialize had been achieved, many such regimes settled into the routines of middle age. The Soviet Union is a striking example. During the 1930s, under Stalin's brutal dictatorship, Russia had achieved forced industrialization and the collective ownership of agriculture. But after the tyrant's death in 1953, a programme of 'de-Stalinization' quickly emerged. Nikita Khrushchev, the new party secretary, famously denounced Stalin in his secret speech to the party elite in 1956. Terror ceased to be a routine political tactic and the Soviet Union came to offer a more predictable environment to its citizens.

Yet far from stabilizing the party's control, the attempt to transform communist rule into more rational and orderly governance eventually proved its undoing. State-led planning achieved speedy industrialization but proved incapable of delivering the advanced products and services found in the West. 'Advanced socialism' proved to be a contradiction in terms. Communism reached its dead end. The party lost its mission and continued to rule only because it had done so in the past. In such circumstances, reform was always likely to escalate into revolution.

When Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985, his intention was modernization but the outcome was dissolution. In Eastern Europe, communist rule fell apart in 1989 once the new Russian leader made it clear that the USSR would no longer intervene militarily to protect the puppet rulers of its satellite states. The following year, the Soviet Union itself dissolved into 15 constituent republics (Table 4.1). In Russia, by far the most important of these republics, the Communist Party was outlawed, a humiliating fate for what had been the most powerful party on earth.

Even where nominally communist rule still survives, as in China, Vietnam and Laos, most economic development now occurs outside the state sector. In the twenty-first century, communism's major significance lies in its legacy for successor regimes. As a system of rule and a method of economic organization, communism is finished. It was the future that didn't work.

Fascist states

Fascism was the twentieth century's second remarkable contribution to authoritarian rule. Located at the extreme right rather than the far left of the ideological spectrum, fascist regimes nonetheless sought – like communist states – to dominate the societies they ruled. But fascist regimes were rarer and less stable than their communist equivalents. Although we can still observe the consequences of communism in the twenty-first century, fascism's challenge was confined to the period bordered by the two world wars.

Fascism began with the emergence of revolutionary groups (*fascia*) in Italy during the First World War (1914–18). As a serious force, it ended with the defeat of Germany in 1945. Fascist elements continued to be found in Spain under General Franco and even Portugal under Salazar, two dictators whose right-wing rule continued well into the 1960s. But these were conservative authoritarian regimes rooted in the army and the church; they sought merely to recover traditional national glories rather than to build a new and self-consciously modern order (Linz, 2000). Similarly, the right-wing anti-immigrant parties found in contemporary Europe do not embrace all

AUTHORITARIAN RULE AS A RECIPE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Can authoritarian rule be defended as an effective method for economic development? If so, we will have a powerful critique of democracy's claims to be universally the best form of government since we would nearly all prefer to eat under a dictator than to starve in a democracy. In addition, we could reasonably anticipate that democracy is unlikely to consolidate in poor countries over the long term if the cost is slower economic development.

The case for

Sørensen (1997a, p. 65) points out that 'in the twentieth century there was no case of successful economic development without comprehensive political action involving enormous state intervention in the economy'. The reason is clear: industrialization requires massive investment in infrastructure such as transport, communications and education; initially, these can only be funded by the state. And authoritarian rulers can generate the surplus needed for investment precisely because they can resist short-term pressures for immediate consumption. Simply put, they can kick-start development because they can ignore the squeals of those whose consumption is initially held down.

Consider some examples. The communist revolution in Russia initiated a remarkably rapid transformation from a rural to an industrial society. Similarly, the Chinese economy has grown under communism at twice the rate achieved by democratic India. Between 1960 and 1985, authoritarian Indonesia, Singapore and South Korea were among the fastest-growing economies in the world. In parts of Latin America, too, technocrats operating under more or less authoritarian governments succeeded in the final decades of the century in imposing coherent economic policy on unruly societies. Even some military rulers have initiated worthwhile modernization: for example, the land reforms introduced by General Abdel Nasser (President of Egypt, 1956–70) mean that nearly all Egyptians now have access to safe water, an accomplishment as yet unmatched by India.

The case against

A few non-democratic regimes may initiate economic development but the vast majority do not. Many traditional rulers, such as the ruling families in the Middle East, continue to resist modernization. Other dictators, for example Nigeria's military 'lootocrats', set back economic development by decades. An overall assessment by Przeworski *et al.* (2000) concludes that there is no 'cruel choice' to be made between democracy and development. If industrialization really does require forgoing immediate consumption, rulers should attempt to persuade the people of the need for sacrifice, not impose dictatorial solutions. Besides, even if non-democratic rule can lead to industrialization, that point does not excuse the abuses of power and human rights which are an inherent danger of authoritarian regimes. For example, China's path of communist modernization involved the brutality of the Great Leap Forward, in which around 40 million people died between 1958 and 1963 as a result of a bungled experiment in forced collectivization. Who is prepared to say – indeed, who is entitled to say – that economic growth is justified at such a massive human price?

Assessment

Perhaps economic development in the twentieth century could only be achieved by a stable authoritarian elite capable both of extracting resources for investment and of providing state leadership for emerging private industries. But in the twenty-first century, globalization has given developing countries access to new sources of capital through multinational corporations, overseas banks and the World Bank. To access these resources, developing countries benefit from convincing lenders that their economy is market-based and that their politics takes the form of a tolerably liberal democracy. The twentieth century may prove to have been the pinnacle of 'the developmental state' led by authoritarian rulers; in the new century, markets and democracy may belong together in developing as well as developed countries.

Further reading: Przeworski *et al.* (2000), Robinson and White (1998), Sørensen (1997a).

aspects of the interwar ideology. Even though these protest parties are frequently condemned as fascist, their essential character is post-fascist (Ignati, 1992).

Even in its interwar heyday, fascist regimes were rare on the ground. Mussolini's leadership of Italy, lasting from 1922 until *il duce* was deposed in 1943, is the main example. However even this dictatorship was fascist more by bombastic declaration than by institutional reality. In Hitler's Germany, the Nazi party espoused an ideology that certainly included fascist principles. However, these elements were blended with crude Aryan racism to form the compound known as national socialism.

Yet the fascist worldview cannot be ignored; it represents an important nationalist response to the rise of communism. Its significance for the twentieth century – and for six million European Jews in particular – was profound.

What, then, was the doctrine expressed by the classic fascist regimes? Fascism was an extreme glorification of the nation, often defined in racial terms. The notional purpose was to create an all-embracing nation to which the masses would show passionate commitment and submission. An autocratic ruler and a single party would personify the state. State and nation would become one.

Fascism lacked the theoretical sophistication of communism; it offered an ideological impulse more than a coherent plan. It sought to use the power of the state, as revealed by the First World War, to revive the countries defeated in that conflict. Religion, liberalism, parliamentary democracy and even capitalism were condemned as weak distractions from the key task of national revival. Fascists claimed that a strong, self-sufficient, warlike nation could mobilize the population more effectively – and in a more modern way – than any other type of regime. 'Everything in the state: nothing against the state: nothing outside the state', said Mussolini. Fascism, not liberalism, was the defence which proud nations should adopt against the communist threat. In short, fascism was the twentieth-century doctrine of nationalism taken to extremes (Griffin, 2004).

In power, fascist regimes governed very differently from ruling communist parties, even though both forms are often grouped under the totalitarian label. Certainly, fascist rulers were com-mitted to mobilizing the population in an organized effort at national rebirth, just as communist regimes claimed to be constructing a classless society. And both ideologies gave primacy to politics: nothing could compete with the authority bestowed on the supreme fascist leader, just as ruling communist parties dominated their own societies.

But fascism lacked the organized character of communist rule. It favoured the risky 'leader principle' in which governance depended on a single individual rather than a well-developed party. Hitler, for one, never showed much interest in administration, preferring to leave his underlings to fight their own bureaucratic battles (Kershaw, 2000). Mature communist states often ran on auto-pilot, with an anonymous party functionary in charge, but fascism – a doctrine of constant movement and change – never developed comparable routines of rule.

Fascist parties were essentially personal vehicles through which the leader managed his rise to power; unlike communist parties, they lost significance once the state was won. In power, neither Mussolini nor even Hitler achieved the domination of society found under communism. Mussolini proved incapable of abolishing even the Italian monarchy while Hitler preferred to exploit rather than nationalize German industry. For all its impact on the twentieth century, fascist practice often seemed to present politics as theatre: marches, demonstrations, symbols and speeches. It was no surprise that fascism's collapse in 1945 preceded that of its better-organized communist bogeyman.

Military rule

Military rule is our final form of twentieth-century authoritarian government. Most military regimes lacked the ideological underpinnings of communism or even fascism; indeed, they typically lacked any theoretical justification at all. Nonetheless, military government was an important aspect of twentieth-century government. As Pinkney (1990, p. 7) writes,

the involvement of soldiers in politics is not new, and can be traced back at least as far as

Roman times. The phenomenon of military government, in the sense of a government drawn mainly from the army and using the army as its main power base, is much newer and belongs essentially to the last 50 years.

The contrasts between military regimes, on the one hand, and communism and fascism, on the other, are acute. Most military coups came later in the century, between the 1960s and 1980s, and, more significantly, they occurred in post-colonial countries in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia where the state had not achieved the penetration found in Europe. While fascism and communism sought to exploit the power of the modern state, many military coups (especially in smaller African countries) were made possible precisely because the state remained simple and underdeveloped. An ambitious general just needed a few tanks, driven by a handful of discontented officers, to seize the presidential palace and the single radio station.

Yet because the post-colonial state's penetration through society remained limited, life outside the capital would continue unchanged after the coup. Lacking the economic resources and governance tools of modern states, most military rulers were modest in their policy aspirations. The state in uniform lacked the grand objectives of both communist and fascist regimes; in some cases, the aim of the generals was little more than to steal public money. Military government was always authoritarian and sometimes brutal, not least during Latin America's phase of repressive army rule from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. But, reflecting the societies in which the military came to power, army rule was rarely totalitarian.

> **Definition**
> A **military coup** is a seizure of political power by the armed forces or sections thereof. The term conjures up images of a violent, secretive and unwelcome capture of power against the opposition of civilian rulers. In fact, many coups replaced one military regime with another, involved little if any loss of life and were more or less invited by the previous rulers.

In many of the post-colonial countries created in the 1950s and 1960s, generals soon seized power from civilian rulers – and then from other generals. Sub-Saharan Africa is the major arena. Here, 68 coups occurred between 1963 and 1987 (Magyar, 1992). But military takeover was not restricted to new states. In Latin America, where colonies had gained independence in the nineteenth century, only Mexico and Costa Rica were immune from military government in the postwar period. Military governments became far more numerous than communist and fascist regimes combined.

> **Definition**
> The **Cold War** refers to the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union which lasted from the late 1940s to the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. The Cold War reached a high intensity of confrontation, particularly before détente began in the late 1960s. Its end was an event of the first magnitude, releasing the waves of globalization, regionalization, nationalism and democratization which characterize the twenty-first century.

Why did military coups cluster in the decades following the Second World War? As with other aspects of politics during this era, the Cold War was a crucial factor. In this period, the United States and the Soviet Union were more concerned with the global chessboard than with how post-colonial countries were governed internally. Each superpower sought allies and did not enquire closely into the background, civilian or military, of a country's rulers. Thus, governing generals could survive through the political, economic and military backing of a superpower even though they might lack support in their own country. Simple contagion, in which a coup in one country was emulated by its neighbours, was another influence.

Inclusionary and exclusionary regimes represented the two extremes of military rule (Remmer, 1989). In the former, the military leaders sought to build a base of support among the political class – and even, on occasion, in the wider population – often by exploiting the population's respect for a strong leader. Civilian politicians were represented

in a cabinet and the bureaucracy continued to make important decisions.

The modernizing regime of Colonel Juan Perón in Argentina was an example. Perón came to power in a coup in 1943, serving as president between 1946 and 1955 and again in 1973–74. He undertook a populist programme of state-led industrialization based on a strong trade union movement and a commitment to social welfare for the urban working class. This Peronist amalgam, based on a distinctively Catholic commitment to both order and reform, continues to influence Argentinian politics (Norden, 1996).

But most military governments were exclusionary rather than inclusionary. In classic authoritarian fashion, the generals sought to prevent popular participation so as to entrench their own position. Opposition was always monitored and suppressed as necessary. Consider General Pinochet's bloody rule of Chile between 1973 and 1989. Pinochet eliminated all potential sources of popular opposition. He exterminated, exiled or imprisoned thousands of labour leaders and left-wing politicians, concentrating power in the hands of his ruling military clique (Drake and Jaksic, 1989).

The standard institutional form of an exclusionary military regime was the junta (council), a small group made up of the leader of each branch of the armed forces. In Chile, Pinochet himself acted as chief executive while a classic four-man junta representing the army, navy, air force and national police took over legislative tasks.

Just as military governments prospered during the Cold War, so they shrivelled after its close. As Wiseman (1996, p. 4) writes, 'authoritarian African political leaders [such as the generals] were more strongly placed to resist the pressures of African democrats when they could turn to outside pressures to help them stay in power'. By the 1990s, these rulers could no longer rely on their sponsoring superpower; instead, conditionality ruled the roost. Aid and technical assistance flowed to civilian regimes that adopted democratic forms and offered at least some protection to civil rights. International bodies such as the World Bank stipulated market-based economic policies that did not sit comfortably with military rule.

Just as contagion had accelerated the diffusion of military coups in the 1960s and 1970s, so also did it encourage generals to return to their bases in the 1980s and 1990s. In Latin America, even before the Cold War ended, and later in most of Africa, the military withdrew from formal rule, transforming the pattern of government around the world. The last Latin American generals were back in their barracks by 1993 and any coups since then have been sporadic affairs confined to smaller countries in the region (Figure 4.1).

For now at least, military governments – like communist states – are known mainly for their impact on successor regimes. So we conclude this section by examining the difficult legacy of military rule for contemporary civilian leaders. The main problem is that long periods of army rule led to an interweaving of civilian and military power. In many Latin American countries, senior officers had become accustomed to such privileges as

▶ guaranteed seats in the cabinet
▶ a high level of military expenditure
▶ sole control of the security agencies
▶ personal profit from defence contracts
▶ exemption from civilian justice.

The ending of military government did not mean an end to these resources. Indeed, some of these privileges were entrenched before military rulers could be persuaded to relinquish their occupancy of the state.
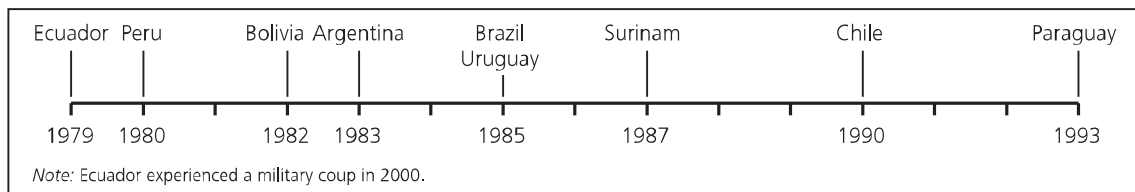
Ecuador	Peru	Bolivia	Argentina	Brazil Uruguay	Surinam	Chile	Paraguay
1979	1980	1982	1983	1985	1987	1990	1993

Note: Ecuador experienced a military coup in 2000.

Figure 4.1 The ending of military rule in Latin America

Profile **NIGERIA**

Population: 134m, the tenth largest in the world (HIV/Aids, 6 per cent).
Gross domestic product per head: about $345 but with marked inequality.
Main groups: Hausa-Fulani (29 per cent) in the north, Yoruba (21 per cent) in the southwest and Ibo (18 per cent) in the southeast.
Religions: Muslim 50 per cent, Christian 40 per cent, traditional religions about 10 per cent. Nigeria has the fifth largest Muslim population in the world.
Form of government: a presidential republic. Civilian rule was reintroduced in 1999 following 15 years of military rule.
Territorial basis of power: federal, with the number of states increasing from 12 in 1967 to 37 in 2003.

In April 2003, Olusegun Obasanjo was reelected civilian president of Nigeria in elections considered to have been only partly rigged. Hardly an inspiring summation, we might think, except that this was the first time since independence that two successive elections had occurred without an intervening period of military rule (even in 2003, the two leading candidates were former military heads of state). Nigeria illustrates many of the difficulties faced by countries with an authoritarian history in consolidating democracy.

Under General Sani Abacha, the country's military ruler from 1993, governance had been corrupt, sordid and self-serving. Nigerians called the regime a lootocracy because it consisted of stealing public assets for personal benefit. After the general's death in 1998 – popularly known as God's coup – his wife was caught fleeing to Saudi Arabia with 38 suitcases full of foreign currency. A son was intercepted carrying the considerable sum of $100m in cash. Later governments have devoted considerable effort to securing the return of these monies from deposit accounts in the City of London.

The transition to civilian rule under Obasanjo was remarkably smooth, raising hopes that Nigeria would begin the road to recovery after decades of authoritarian misrule. Yet so far the results have been limited, demonstrating not just the long-term damage inflicted by the military but also the deeper problems facing many African states. Apart from an expanding mobile telephone system, Nigeria's economy remains in poor condition. In the oil-producing Niger Delta, wealthy executives employed by multinational companies extract the vital commodity while local people subsist in squalor amid a degraded environment. The government's foreign debt remains an imposing $30bn, denting its international credibility.

The infrastructure which might permit rapid economic recovery has also decayed. Electricity is irregular while endemic corruption scares off many foreign investors; Nigeria is probably the most corrupt country in the world. The civil service is massively overstaffed, with many illiterates appointed to posts requiring documents to be processed. Inefficiency is rife: over $5bn of public money has been invested in a steel mill that has not yet produced any steel. Military equipment is in a chronic condition: the navy has more admirals than seaworthy ships. In a major oil-producing country, petrol is sometimes rationed.

Ethnic and religious conflict, superimposed on provinces operating in a federal framework, holds back post-military recovery. The central government became an arena for conflict between regions and between ethnic groups, leading to civil war in 1967. Even today, divisions between Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibos are entrenched. Because a gain for one group is defined as a loss by the others, the national interest is subordinated to conflicts between North and South and between Muslims and Christians. These divisions, leading to around 10,000 deaths in Obasanjo's first administration, have intensified with the introduction of traditional Islamic law to some northern states.

The transition from authoritarian rule has thrown Nigeria's continuing difficulties into sharper relief. An aimless continuation of the status quo is perhaps the most likely prognosis but neither national disintegration, nor even another phase of military rule, can be ruled out. Partly free elections notwithstanding, Nigeria seems to be incapable of developing into a consolidated, united democracy.

Further reading: Holman and Wallis (2000), Maier (2002), Momoh and Adejumobi (2002).

Chile illustrates the difficulties of full disengagement. Before returning power to civilians in 1980, General Pinochet ensured that the new constitution secured military autonomy. The armed forces were granted exemption from prosecution in civilian courts and retained their position as guarantors of the 'institutional order' and 'national security'. Similarly, Ecuador's armed forces were guaranteed 15 per cent of the country's oil revenues until 2010. Such conditional transitions, characteristic of Latin America, helped the shift to, but weakened the depth of, the post-military regime. They signal the continued perception of the military as a source of order for the nation and they leave a difficult bequest for new democracies (Pion-Berlin, 2001).

The Arab and Muslim worlds

In the twenty-first century, authoritarian regimes form a more diverse group than ever before; no longer are their ranks dominated by military governments and communist party states. Instead, we are presented with a varied collection including Chinese Communist Party leaders, Pakistani generals, Iranian clerics, Saudi princes and assorted authoritarian presidents in some of the smaller states of Central Asia, Africa and Latin America. These rulers have little in common beyond their rejection of Western democracy. It is tempting to dismiss this ragged band as twentieth-century leftovers, soon to fall victim to an American-inspired embrace of democracy and capitalism. But such a judgement is certainly premature, involving a risky bet on yet another wave of democratization.

In this section, we will focus on the authoritarian regimes of the Arab and Muslim worlds, the main enclaves of non-democracy today. These two categories overlap but not completely. The *Arab* world is centred on the Arabian peninsula and North Africa. It includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Syria. There is no established democracy in Arab countries.

Muslim countries – those with an Islamic majority – include the Arab heartland but extend beyond it. For example, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey are populous Islamic but non-Arab countries. Again, most but not all Muslim countries are

Table 4.2 Islam and democracy, 2001

Is the government elected by democratic means?	Countries with an Islamic majority	Non-Islamic countries
Yes	11	110
No	36	35
(Total number of countries)	(47)	(145)

Source: Adapted from Karatnycky (2002).

authoritarian, with democracy confined to part of the Islamic periphery, notably Turkey (Map 4.2).

Table 4.2 shows the strong statistical relationship between Islam and non-democratic rule. It demonstrates not only that Islamic democracies are rare but also that Muslim countries comprise one in two of the world's authoritarian regimes.

With their massive oil reserves, the Arab and Muslim worlds have always attracted interest from Western commentators. But this attention was of course magnified by 9/11 and the resulting American-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Suddenly, the authoritarian governments of the Arab and Muslim worlds became a focus of Western interest, with some American policymakers beginning to seek ways of promoting both democracy and market economies in a region characterized by poor governance and low growth.

Why have Arab and Muslim countries resisted the waves of democratization which have lapped against the shores of other authoritarian states? There can be little doubt that Islam and democracy are difficult bedfellows. In Islam – unlike Christianity – religious and secular authority are combined rather than separated. Religious values suffuse politics, limiting the space for an independent political will expressed through democratic means. Just as Islam dominates culture, so religious figures take the lead in guiding politics. Yayla (2002, p. 3), for example, concludes that 'in all Islamic countries decision-making is over-centralized, power-sharing mechanisms are very few, civil society is extremely weak and the spontaneous forces of society are strictly limited'.

Certainly, the form taken by Islam varies across time and space. Contemporary Turkey demonstrates that tolerably democratic politics can be

achieved in an Islamic society. But even in Turkey the combination has been difficult to sustain. At times, Turkey's army has intervened to maintain the secular vision of the country's modern founder, Kemal Atatürk (Altunisik and Kavli, 2003). Elsewhere in the Muslim world, Islamic traditions have hindered the spread of democracy.

But we should also recognize the West's historical role in shaping the political environment within the contemporary Arab and Muslim worlds. At least until 9/11, most Western powers had shown little interest in democracy promotion. Instead, Western influence has worked in three main ways against the establishment of democracy in the East.

First, the Middle East consists of what are, in effect, post-colonial states. As elsewhere, Europe imposed the state form on areas that had previously been organized differently – mainly as provinces of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. With the collapse of this Empire after the First World War, the British and the French became effective masters of the region. Operating under a mandate from the League of Nations, Western powers ruled in colonial style, creating arbitrary state boundaries, new administrative centres and a forceful bureaucracy more concerned with internal security than social development. The absence of an indigenous state tradition and the post-colonial legacy combined to inhibit the development of stable democracies of the region.

Second, the Middle East has proved to be a fulcrum of world politics where forms of government have historically taken second place to superpower strategy. 'For the last two centuries,' as Brown (1984, p. 3) observes, 'the Middle East has been more consistently and more thoroughly ensnared in great power politics than any other part of the non-western world.' The region's oil reserves, and the continuing conflict over Israel, have certainly engaged Western attention. But when its strategic interests were at stake, the West – and especially the USA – showed little concern about the internal organization of Arab states.

For example, the United States was content to build a relationship with the authoritarian rulers of oil-rich Saudi Arabia, even though the presence of America troops between 1991 and 2003 in a country containing the holy Islamic cities of Mecca

and Medina fuelled resentment throughout the Muslim world. Strategic calculation has dominated the West's approach to the Middle East, as President George W. Bush acknowledged in a speech to the National Endowment for Democracy in November 2003:

> sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe – because stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty.

Third, the contemporary vigour of Islam, particularly in its fundamentalist forms, is in part a reaction against Western preeminence. As the economic, scientific and military superiority of the West has become apparent, so radical and explicitly anti-Western variants of Islam have gained ground. Some Muslims take refuge in the era long gone when Islamic civilization was indeed more advanced than the West, concluding that their task is to restore this pure culture against its external desecration. Once Islamic voices articulate this anti-Western turn, the task of importing democracy from its European and American heartlands becomes even more challenging.

With these points in mind, let us review three varied examples of authoritarian rule in Islamic countries: Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan (Map 4.2). Saudi Arabia is at the centre of the Arab world while Iran and Pakistan are major examples of non-Arab Muslim countries.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, possessed of the world's largest oil reserves, is of particular interest as a major source of both personnel and funding for anti-Western terrorism. The country also exemplifies authoritarian rule in the region, with the government led by the cautious and conservative Saud family. Advocates of Wahhabism, the dominant and puritanical strain of Islam found in the kingdom, have been particularly active in promoting Islam internationally.

Saudi Arabia's political style reflects the influence of King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. He led the Saudi state from its inception in 1902 until his death in 1953. In true patrimonial style, Ibn Saud

ran his kingdom as a gigantic personal household, using marriage as a vital political tactic. In total, he took 300 wives drawn from all the powerful families in the state. The king was in a position to control the political and personal fortunes of all the leading figures, and did so. The carrot was used more than the stick but the ruler's monopoly of both devices enabled him to combine rewards for supporters with ruthlessness towards opponents (Kostiner and Teitelbaum, 2000).

Like most authoritarian rulers, Ibn Saud was more concerned with protecting his position than developing his kingdom. Politics came before policy. Such developments as education (or more recently television and the internet) are always perceived as a threat by traditional rulers. Their main concern, after all, is to maintain the population's dependence on their own control of wealth and patronage. While American colonists raised the cry, 'no taxation without representation', the oil-inspired deal the Saudi king offered to his people was rather different: 'no taxation, therefore no representation'.

Slowly, however, social pressures in Saudi Arabia have begun to build. A predominantly young population, limited by inadequate education, has begun to experience unemployment even in a country which is still the world's largest oil exporter. Internal surveillance is extensive, the media practise self-censorship, male domination is virtually complete and political parties are banned. In such a controlled environment, society beyond the ageing ruling family consists largely of the mosque, meaning that radical Islamic movements provide one of the few outlets for expression which is formally separate from the state:

> The religious opposition groups are the only ones that have regular meeting places where they can assemble and have at their disposal a network not fully subject to the state. The more oppressive the regime, the more it helps the fundamentalists by giving them a virtual monopoly of opposition.
>
> (Lewis, 2003, p. 102)

Given the long-term alliance between Saudi's ruling family and the United States, verbal and physical assaults on the West by youthful members of such movements also represent implicit cri-

tiques of Saudi Arabia's own autocratic rulers (Niblock, 2003). But Islamic terrorists have also sought to strike at Saudi Arabia itself. One of al-Qaeda's earliest attacks, in 1995, was against the Saudi National Guard; more recently, compounds for foreigners have been targeted.

So the country is in an awkward position as both a source for and a victim of terrorist activity. With even the USA now beginning to look more critically at the country's funding of radical Islamic groups beyond its borders, the foundations of the House of Saud are beginning to shake, if not crumble.

Iran

Iran (formerly Persia) is our second example of authoritarian rule in an Islamic society. Although the Iranian population is predominantly Persian rather than Arab, the main contrast with Saudi Arabia – and with other Muslim countries – lies in the direct political role played by Iran's religious leaders. Whereas in Saudi Arabia, the royal family and the Wahhabis coexist uneasily, Iran exemplifies that rarest form of authoritarian rule: theocracy. The country illustrates with exceptional clarity the close relationship in Islam between church and state. However, even in Iran the political authority of the clerics (ayatollahs and mullahs) remains contested; indeed, increasingly so.

Definition
A **theocracy** is government by religious leaders. Although Christianity separates political and religious roles, clerics play a direct political role in some other religions. In ancient Israel, for example, God's laws were expounded and applied by holy men. The regime established in Iran after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979 is a more recent example of theocratic rule.

Iran's theocracy was a child of the 1979 revolution, the last great insurrection of the twentieth century. In this revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, a 76-year-old cleric committed to Islamic fundamentalism, overthrew the Shah of Iran. The Shah, an absolute monarch whose family had ruled the country since 1926, had supported Western-style economic development. In reaction the revolu-

Map 4.2 Asia and the Middle East, highlighting states discussed in this chapter

tionaries advocated a traditional Islamic republic free from foreign domination. 'Neither East nor West' became the slogan. In power, the ayatollahs created a unique Islamic state in which they governed directly rather than by overseeing secular rulers.

Iran's post-revolutionary constitution did incorporate a directly elected presidency and assembly. Yet the real power lay with the clerics, expressed in part through a 12-member Council of Guardians which certifies that all bills and candidates conform with Islamic law. In strictly enforcing traditional, male-dominated Islamic codes, the aya-

tollahs permeated society in a manner reminiscent of totalitarian regimes. The Interior Ministry still makes extensive use of informants while the state employs arbitrary arrests and even assassination as a form of control through terror. These are classic signs of totalitarianism.

But as with many radical Islamic movements, Iran's revolution was backward-looking, seeking to recreate the religion's former glories. Rule by ayatollahs has not delivered economic growth, even in a country with considerable oil reserves, and Iran's politics has turned into a lengthy battle between the now traditional clerics and liberal reformers.

The liberals are led by Mohammad Khatami, a moderate advocate of Islamic democracy who was first elected president in 1997. In a country where two-thirds of the population are under 25, it seems unlikely that religious leaders will be able to resist further reform indefinitely (Schirazi, 1998).

This division between an authoritarian establishment and a young population is also found in Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries. But the battle of generations and outlook is waged more openly in Iran than elsewhere, with the young relying on the internet, satellite television and mobile phones to circumvent official censorship. Although no counter-revolution to 1979 is guaranteed, how the conflict of generations is resolved in Iran will, in time, resonate through the Muslim world, possibly providing the opening for a more democratic politics throughout the region.

Pakistan

Pakistan provides our final case of non-democratic rule in an Islamic country. Pakistan is located in Asia rather than the Middle East but its population is overwhelmingly Muslim.

Unlike Iran, which has a long history as a sovereign state, Pakistan is more typically post-colonial. The country was created by the British in 1947 from the Muslim provinces of colonial India. The name 'Pakistan' is taken from the northwest provinces of British India: *P*unjab, *A*fhghan, *K*ashmir, *S*indh and Baluchi*stan*. In 1971, the country's separate eastern wing broke away to form independent Bangladesh.

In some ways, contemporary Pakistan is a curiously old-fashioned example of authoritarian government. For one thing, it provides a rare contemporary instance of military rule. Throughout its post-colonial history, military and civilian rule have oscillated in what is a large, poor, unequal and virtually feudal state lacking the oil wealth of Saudi Arabia and Iran. The current government, led by General Pervez Musharraf, is the fourth military regime since Pakistan was created from the partition of India in 1947. It dates from a coup in 1999 which followed several years of ineffective civilian rule, including a setback in the long-running conflict with India over Kashmir.

Together with the bureaucracy, Pakistan's army has long seen itself as the guardian of the national interest – and the common weal is indeed a concept remote from the workings of civilian politics in the country. Money has become the core political currency, with allegiances simply bought and sold. In these circumstances, it is neither difficult nor even implausible for the army to present itself as national guardian. Pakistan provides a continuing example of a political system in which the military supervises domestic politics, exerting a silent veto even when civilian rulers are nominally in charge (Constable, 2001).

In addition, President Musharraf has courted American support to bolster his own political position, a tactic associated with authoritarian rulers during the Cold War. Musharraf did not oppose the American invasion of Afghanistan. In consequence, America has so far had little choice but to acknowledge Pakistan's military regime (and its nuclear weapons), again in a manner reminiscent of Cold War realities. As the United States continues its attack on terrorism and its causes, it remains to be seen whether Pakistan's ruling general can continue to balance internal Islamic pressures against his dependence on the USA.

China in transition

Just as the Arab and Muslim worlds attracted more Western attention after 11 September, so the People's Republic of China (PRC) has drawn more Western interest with its emergence at the start of the twenty-first century as a powerful force in the global economy. China's population, estimated at 1.28 bn and growing at 0.6 per cent per year, is already the world's largest. Its increasingly open economy has grown fourfold since 1978 and is likely to become the world's largest in the first half of the century. The country is the world's fourth largest exporter, with particular strengths in assembly and manufacturing, resulting in massive reserves of American dollars ('China lends while America spends'). China's massive trade surplus with the USA attracts increasing criticism from American labour unions. Already a regional power, the country is destined to become a world force – perhaps *the* world force – over the course of the present century (Kennedy, 1993). The world is

learning the truth of Napoleon's observation: 'when China wakes, she will wake the world'.

Contemporary China is now rediscovering historic strengths. As Manion (2004, p. 422) points out,

> imperial China was the longest-lasting major system of government in world history, enduring as a centralized state for more than two millennia until the fall of the Qing, the last dynasty, in 1911.

This period established an authoritarian tradition in which the emperor governed through an elaborate social hierarchy, supported by a small bureaucratic elite, all rationalized by the Confucian philosophy of harmony and piety. Democracy has played little role in Chinese governance, past or present, a fact which may have important if unpredictable consequences for the world as the country engages with a mainly democratic external environment.

The seizure of power by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, following nearly four decades of internal upheaval, reinforced the authoritarian traditions established under the emperors. Initially, the CCP followed the Soviet model of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. However, from the late 1950s Mao Zedong followed an increasingly independent strategy in which politics took priority, culminating in the Cultural Revolution (1966–77) which reduced the country to near anarchy. It was only in 1978, two years after Mao's death, that the current era of economic modernization began. All these developments, including the contemporary commitment to economic growth, have been initiated from the top and have reflected the internal politics of the party.

Contemporary China is of particular interest to students of authoritarian regimes. Together with Vietnam, it has helped to define a distinctive transition in which ruling communist parties loosen their control of the economy while retaining a dominant political position. The key question facing China's ruling party is whether its political monopoly can be sustained as the economy continues to grow. The answer may be that since China is still a developing economy, there remains room for a dominant party to oversee economic growth. As with communist Europe, the decisive moment may not arrive until the party comes to be seen as a brake on further development.

So far, at least, Mao's successors have shown considerable skill in giving priority to economic growth while maintaining the party's leadership of society. Reformers have reduced the state's role in direct economic production while creating a somewhat more predictable legal environment for transactions that are not politically sensitive. Reformist propaganda slogans have included 'to get rich is glorious' and even 'some get rich first', astonishing contrasts to the theme of 'politics in command' adopted during Mao's Great Leap Forward of 1958.

China's political system is no longer communist in any traditional sense. With the acceptance of private wealth, the country has become one of the most unequal in Asia (Saich, 2004). Successful businessmen are officially labelled model workers and awarded May Day medals. At the party's congress in 2002, an entrepreneur even won a seat on the party's central committee. However, governance remains deeply authoritarian. The Communist Party is above the law because the party still makes the law. Its members occupy many leading posts in the public sector, reflecting the traditional communist theory that the party should guide the state.

The key reform has been the reduction of central control from Beijing, rather than the introduction of markets. As a result, local state officials have gained a strong role in economic development through licensing and regulation. On the ground, informal networks of power-holders determine 'who gets rich first'. These alliances are composed of well-placed and increasingly well-heeled men in the party, the bureaucracy and the army. So far, China's transformation has involved the decentralization of economic, and to some extent political, power more than a shift towards a Western market economy operating within the rule of law. China is situated somewhere between Marx and the market, an unusual political economy with distinctly Chinese characteristics.

True, a growing number of thriving companies operate outside the inefficient and overmanned state sector. However, even supposedly private companies operate in a context where local political influence is crucial (Dittmer and Gore, 2001). Overseas companies arrive in China expecting to find a clear distinction between public and private

spheres; they quickly discover that the two sectors remain interwoven in the country's socialist market economy. As ever in China, informal political connections (*guanxi*) remain important for economic success.

China's rulers are aware of the tensions induced by decentralization. One problem unleashed by the loosening of central political control has been an explosion of corruption at lower levels. In the new environment, public employees are quick to recognize that their position can be turned to their own advantage. In one port city, a smuggling racket responsible for about 10 per cent of China's total imports of gasoline was found to include the deputy mayor, the head of customs and over 100 other officials, six of whom were sentenced to death after the scheme was uncovered (Gong, 2002).

While the central party elite is concerned about corruption, its policy often seems to consist of little more than exemplary punishment for the few cases that happen to come to light. Some officials even blame the problem on foreigners: 'you can't open the door without letting in a few flies'. But such glib assertions merely increase suspicion. Wang (2002, p. 3) notes that 'the continuing invocation of socialist values in an increasingly capitalist society has only deepened cynicism, allowing neither socialist nor capitalist values to gain a firm foothold'. Here, perhaps, is one of the party's major dilemmas: it can only attract members by offering opportunities to acquire resources but the dubious manner in which these are obtained increases the distance between party and society.

An additional difficulty is the growing contrast between the richer coastal regions and the poorer internal provinces, a division which potentially threatens the survival of the state itself. In the 1990s, mechanization and the introduction of the profit motive resulted in the loss of about six million jobs per year from the countryside. The resulting movement of the rural unemployed to the cities created an impoverished floating population of about 200m migrants seeking work, a resentful group which will be further enraged if the many remaining state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are shut down. The danger of unrest arising from reducing the public sector too rapidly is one reason why China's rulers must steer a delicate middle course, reforming at a socially acceptable rate.

In theory, China's long-delayed entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 should encourage further moves towards a genuine market economy. The entry agreement, after all, required the government to protect private property rights, separate government from enterprise, limit bureaucratic corruption and reduce the role of the military in business (Fensmith, 2001).

Yet the withering away of the party, and the reduction of the state to the role of umpire, are still far distant. China's entry to the WTO took 16 years to negotiate and will doubtless take even longer to implement. In any case, the idea of 'politics in command' is entrenched in Chinese history; the country's rulers have traditionally acted as guardians of stability in what is a fragmented but dynamic country. China's continuing political experiment is of worldwide significance but the final outcome – if there is to be one – is most unlikely to be a Western-style liberal democracy in which a market economy operates under the rule of law.

Key reading

> **Next step:** *Linz (2000) is an influential and insightful guide to authoritarian rule.*

Brooker (2000) is a wide-ranging source on non-democracy. Classic works on totalitarianism include Arendt (1966) and Friedrich and Brzezinski (1965); Gleason (1995) is a more recent review. For fascism, see Griffin (2004) and, for communist states, Harding (1984). Kershaw and Lewin (1997) compare these two forms of dictatorship. For twentieth-century authoritarianism, see Perlmutter (1981 and 1997). Jackson and Rosberg (1982) remains the key account of personal rule in Africa, while Chebabi and Linz (1998) examine sultanistic regimes. On military governments, see Finer (1962) and for Africa specifically, Keih and Ogaba (2003). For military disengagement, consider Howe (2001) for Africa, Cottey *et al.* (2001) for Eastern Europe and Silva (2001) for Latin America. Owen (2000) offers a useful background on Middle Eastern politics while Lewis (2002 and 2003) places Islamic politics in the context of September 11. On China, Saich (2004) is a reliable guide.