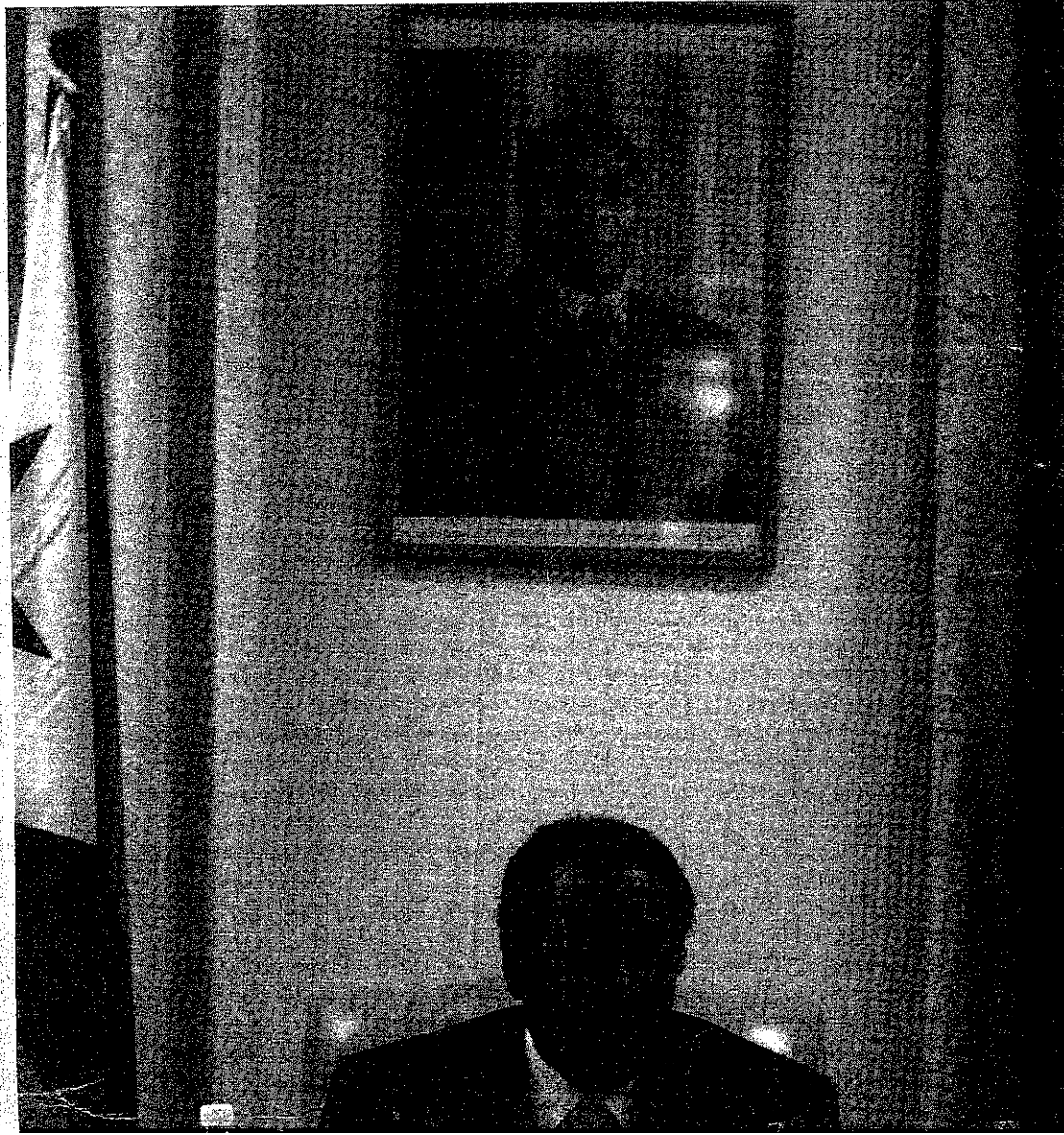
CHAPTER 6

Authoritarianism



INTRODUCTION

In 1994 members of the Hutu ethnic group in Rwanda slaughtered nearly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. In the immediate aftermath of the killings Rwanda's future looked grim. Ethnic groups feared and distrusted one another. Establishing a stable government seemed unlikely. Despite these gloomy prospects, the government of President Paul Kagame, who came to power in 2000, has made considerable progress. It has increased economic growth, reduced corruption, cut infant mortality, improved children's chances of getting an education, lengthened citizens' life expectancy, and promoted equality for women. In short, the government has had considerable success in improving capabilities—with one crucial exception: it has restricted civil and political liberties and retained power by authoritarian means. In the guise of preventing "divisionism" that might lead to renewed ethnic violence, the government has stifled criticism of its policies and intimidated its political opponents. The government gets to decide when opponents are practicing "divisionism" and can jail them when they cross the fuzzy line between what they are permitted to say and what they are not.[1]

President Kagame's success in improving citizens' capabilities while maintaining authoritarian rule raises uncomfortable questions for supporters of democracy. Is democracy inappropriate for all countries? Is it possible that in some circumstances, such as those in Rwanda, authoritarian rule is necessary? Is it sometimes necessary to limit civil and political rights to achieve improvements in education, health, and safety? If so, are some kinds of authoritarian rule more successful than others at improving capabilities?

Authoritarianism is a type of political system in which a single individual or small elite rules without constitutional checks on their use of power. They can use their power to change rules when it is to their advantage and to decide who gets to participate in politics. They also set the penalties for breaking the rules they have made. Citizens in authoritarian systems cannot hold rulers accountable. They have no recourse to independent courts of law or constitutional guarantees to free and fair elections.[2]

Authoritarianism has been the main form of government through most of recorded history. Czars, emperors, kings, and sultans have assumed the right to rule with no restraints on their power from ordinary people. Louis XIV, the absolute monarch of France from 1715 to 1774, proclaimed without any hint of humility:

> In my person alone resides the sovereign power . . . and it is from me alone that the courts hold their existence and their authority. That . . . authority can only be exercised in my name. . . . For it is to me exclusively that the legislative power belongs. . . . The whole public order emanates from me since I am its supreme guardian. . . . The rights and interests of the nation . . . are necessarily united with my own and can only rest in my hands.[3]

Although absolute monarchs like Louis XIV have disappeared, new forms of authoritarianism have taken their place. Like their premodern predecessors, modern forms of authoritarianism continue to concentrate state power in the hands of a small elite. What is new is their claim to have popular support and represent the will of the people.[4] Authoritarian leaders now feel obliged to make a show of ruling by democratic means.

make them authoritarian rather than democratic. First, power is concentrated in the executive branch of government, and within that branch it is concentrated further in the office of the chief executive. The legislature lacks power to influence government policies and the judiciary lacks power to assert the law independent of the executive. Second, governments are not accountable to citizens. Civil and political rights are restricted or denied.

Authoritarian governments were on the defensive between 1974 and 2000. The number of authoritarian governments in the world fell dramatically during these years. By the 1990s, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, many political scientists believed there was no credible alternative to democracy. They assumed it was only a matter of time until democracy triumphed in countries still under authoritarian rule. The transition to democracy might take longer in some countries than in others, but liberal democracy would eventually become "the final form of human government."[6]

More recently, however, that optimism has ebbed. A number of authoritarian regimes have displayed impressive staying power. This is especially true in the Middle East where not a single Arab country is a democracy. Authoritarianism is also prevalent in some parts of Africa and Asia, including China, the world's most populous country. To make matters worse, some countries that once appeared to be on their way to democracy have slipped back into authoritarian rule. Russia is the most significant example.[7] Democracy specialist Larry Diamond acknowledged in 2008: "In a few short years, the democratic wave has been slowed by a powerful authoritarian undertow, and the world has slipped into a democratic recession."[8]

Authoritarian leaders are now on the offensive. Some of them can claim considerable success in improving their citizens' lives. China's Communist Party leaders can take credit for one of the fastest economic growth rates of any country in history, which has raised more people out of abject poverty in a shorter time than any country in history. China is also a leader in terms of adopting green technologies.[9] Its leaders attribute their success to their ability to make decisions quickly and to make policy for the long run. They criticize the United States and other democracies for getting bogged down in endless arguments and for thinking no further into the future than the next election cycle. Democracies, they charge, are reluctant to change ineffective and outdated policies supported by entrenched interest groups in fear of offending them.[10]

This chapter begins by distinguishing between authoritarianism and its extreme form, totalitarianism. It then turns to a description of different kinds of authoritarian rule: monarchy, military, one-party, electoral authoritarian, and personal rule. A **regime** is a set of rules and procedures for choosing leaders and policies that exists in a country during a period of time, and the government that embodies these rules, not individual leaders.[11] The chapter next examines how leaders of numerous authoritarian regimes have managed to persist in an age of democratization, focusing on why there are no Arab democracies. The chapter ends with a comparison of how different forms of authoritarianism fare in promoting capabilities. The question of how authoritarianism fares in comparison to democracy, in terms of increasing citizens' life chances, is deferred until Chapter 7.

AUTHORITARIAN AND TOTALITARIAN REGIMES

Political scientists distinguish between authoritarianism and the extreme ver-

societies in accord with ideological goals. Totalitarian regimes have five things in common. First is an encompassing ideology that offers a critique of existing society, a vision of a radically different and supposedly better society, and a program for realizing that vision. Second, they have a single political party usually led by one dominant leader. Third, the state controls newspapers, radio, television, and book publishing to promote its views and stifle alternatives. Fourth, totalitarian regimes make continuous efforts to mobilize enthusiastic mass support for the party and leader through the media, rallies, and propaganda. Finally, they use terror and violence on a massive scale to intimidate or destroy not only political opponents but entire categories of people. These regimes do not necessarily achieve their goals, but they go farther in trying to control citizens' private lives than any other type of regime. Examples of totalitarian regimes include the Soviet Union under the leadership of Joseph Stalin from the early 1930s until his death in 1954, China under the leadership of Mao Zedong from the late 1950s until 1976, and Germany under the leadership of Hitler from 1933 until 1945. The only current example is North Korea.

Authoritarian regimes differ from totalitarian governments on each of these points. Authoritarian regimes use ideologies to justify their rule, but these are not as elaborate or ambitious as those of totalitarian regimes. While some authoritarian regimes have been ruled by one party, they do not seek total control over citizens' behavior and thoughts or a total transformation of societies. Authoritarian regimes also sometimes allow limited freedom of the press, as long as the media do not directly criticize the regime's top leadership. Nor do authoritarian regimes try to mobilize fervent mass support. They prefer politically apathetic citizens who obey the regime and do not challenge it. Finally, while they use torture, violence, and even murder to intimidate opponents and eliminate perceived threats to their rule, authoritarian rulers do not use those methods on the massive scale of totalitarian regimes.

TYPES OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

In this section, we examine five types of authoritarian rule: monarchy, military, one-party, electoral authoritarian, and personal rule.[12] We focus only on "pure" regime types. For each regime type we discuss who rules, how rulers justify their domination, and how they stay in power.[13]

Monarchies

In 2005, there were more ruling monarchies in the world than there were one-party or military regimes. This is surprising, since monarchy is an ancient form of rule that seemed unlikely to survive into the twenty-first century. Indeed, monarchies have not just survived, but—measured by length of tenure in office—have been the most successful of all authoritarian regimes. In a **monarchy**, the

Monarchs are not just symbolic heads of state like the Queen of England or the King of Sweden, but make major policy and personnel decisions. Most of them rule Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan. Some, such as Saudi Arabia, have abundant oil reserves. Others, such as Jordan, do not. All of these monarchies, however, rule countries in an area of the world of great strategic interest for Western Europe and the United States.

Contemporary ruling monarchs are challenged to justify their right to rule and claim legitimacy. **Legitimacy** is the willingness of citizens to acknowledge that a regime rightfully holds and exercises political power.[15] In democracies, governments claim legitimacy by being elected. Since monarchs are not elected, they need other ways of making their rule legitimate. One way is to claim legitimacy on the basis of long-standing tradition. In Arab countries they can link their rule to traditional Islamic practices. Monarchs can also seek legitimacy by presenting themselves as effective rulers who promote the well-being of their subjects. Huge oil deposits have provided several of the Arab monarchies with the means to do so. These monarchies can use oil revenues to provide free health care, education, and housing for citizens, as well as government jobs.

Monarchies stay in power not just by appealing to traditional religious practices or providing citizens with welfare state benefits, but through fierce repression. All of them have large security forces. Their secret police and intelligence agencies are well funded, and have been very effective at disrupting movements critical of the monarchy and crushing dissent.

Military Regimes

Military regimes were one of the most common forms of rule from the end of World War II through the 1980s. During these decades the military intervened in politics in nearly two-thirds of the less developed countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Nowhere was the entry of the military into politics as extensive as in Latin America. In 1960, nine out of ten countries in Latin America were democracies. A dozen years later, that number had fallen to just two.

In **military regimes**, "a group of military officers decides who will rule and exercises some influence on policy."[16] Officers take and hold power, using or threatening to use force. The sudden, violent use of force to overthrow a government is known as a **coup d'état**. In a coup d'état armed troops converge on the office of the civilian president or prime minister, arrest or kill him, and seize control of key government ministries. In some coups, such as the one that occurred in the West African country of Niger in 2010, only a small number of troops are involved and few people are injured or killed. In others, such as the coup that overthrew the elected government of Chile in 1973, several thousand people are killed.[17]

Governing over the government, trying to rule by relying on force is costly and inefficient. The military leaders need to convince people that they have a right to hold office.[18] Leaders often try to assert their legitimacy by promising a quick return to democratic rule after they clean up problems created by the civilian government. For example, the leaders of the Niger coup signaled that intention by calling themselves "the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy."[19] Military leaders also try to gain legitimacy by holding elections. In such elections the military establishes a political party, which is given considerable advantages over competing civilian parties. The most important is that "the incumbents have guns, whereas the opposition does not."[20] Finally, some military regimes seek legitimacy by claiming to defend the nation from domestic or foreign threats. In the 1960s and 1970s, military regimes in Asia and Latin America frequently invoked the menace of communism to secure support from the population. In South Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia military regimes pointed to the threat posed by China. Military regimes in Latin America in the 1970s and the 1980s pointed to the threat posed by Cuba.

Seeking legitimacy goes only so far in helping military governments consolidate control. Officials of the ousted civilian government and many other citizens are unlikely to accept the legitimacy of a military government that seized power illegally. These critics often protest the illegal seizure of power by organizing mass protests and criticizing the military government in newspapers and journals. Military governments control such opponents by declaring **martial law**, which gives them the authority to set curfews, ban protests, and public assemblies. They also use spies and informants to find dissidents and arrest them. The military governments of Chile and South Korea even had spies in the United States to inform on citizens living there who were critical of the military. Military governments also ban opposition newspapers and journals. Suspected opponents are arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. Military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile killed thousands of people, never informing friends and relatives who they had murdered or where they were buried. The Indonesian military was responsible for the deaths of an estimated 500,000 people in the two years following its seizure of power in 1965.

Military regimes do not rule by martial law and coercion alone. They also attempt to build support by crafting policies that benefit particular groups in society. In a few cases, these policies benefit a large cross section of the population. The military regime that ruled South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s enacted land reform policies that helped poor farmers and educational policies that helped the sons and daughters of workers. In other cases they benefit a small number of cronies of the military rulers or narrow constituencies. Military governments in Latin America, such as those in Brazil and Chile, enacted policies that benefited narrow constituencies. The main beneficiaries of their rule were big businesses and commercial farming interests. Low-wage

Single-Party Regimes

In **single-party regimes,** one party controls access to political office and policy making. According to political scientist Barbara Geddes, in these regimes the party organization "exercises some power over the leader at least part of the time, controls the selection of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to vote and show support for party leaders."[21] In many single-party regimes, no other parties are permitted to exist. If other parties are allowed, they serve a purely symbolic function and cannot challenge the rule of the dominant political party.[22] The three main types of single-party regimes have been communist, fascist, and nationalist. All three led mass movements, and once in power, legitimized their rule with ideologies promising a better future for their followers. Single parties can be used to construct either totalitarian or authoritarian regimes. For example, Joseph Stalin used his control of the communist party in the Soviet Union to construct a totalitarian regime, but subsequent leaders of the party eased totalitarian controls to create authoritarian regimes. Communist parties ruled 16 countries in the 1980s,[23] but are now found only in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cuba. Fascist parties ruled Germany and Italy from the 1930s until the end of World War II, but there are now no countries with ruling fascist parties. Finally, nationalist parties led successful independence movements against colonial powers in the 1950s and 1960s and became the ruling parties of these newly independent countries. Most of these single-party regimes were located in Africa. A number of them have been overthrown by military coups d'état, but a dozen remained in 2009.[24] In the remainder of the section, we focus on communist and fascist political parties because these two types of political parties have had enduring effects on the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

In communist regimes, leadership positions are staffed by members of the communist party. Internally **communist parties** are hierarchically organized, with real power concentrated in the hands of a small number of leaders who determine public policy. In theory these leaders are elected by lower-ranking party organizations, but in reality such elections are a façade to legitimize the rule of the leaders. Communist parties have five main features. First, their avowed goal is to lead workers and peasants in revolution to take power and build communism. Second, they are vanguard parties. Their members form an elite group that provides leadership for working class and peasant movements. Third, there is an elaborate ideology based on Marxism-Leninism. Fourth, communist parties ruthlessly eliminate opposition political parties and independent associations in society. Finally, communist parties penetrate deeply into society with party branches in local governments, factories, schools, and organizations of all kinds.

Communist parties have come to power in two ways. First is through **revolution,** which "is a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social

communist parties came to power in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Vietnam. Communist parties also achieved power by being imposed on neighboring countries. The Soviet Union imposed communist rule on a number of countries in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II.

Traditionally, communist parties have sought legitimacy by appealing to ideology, nationalism, and protection from internal and external threats. Communist ideology is based on **Marxism.** According to Karl Marx, all societies rest on the exploitation of one social class by another. What slave-holding, feudal, and capitalist societies share is an economic structure in which one class owns the means of production and lives off the surplus produced by others. The state and legal system reinforce these relations of exploitation. Just as slavery was replaced by feudalism, which, in turn, was replaced by capitalism, so will capitalism be replaced by communism. Capitalism, according to Marx, cannot help but produce a revolutionary working class that will overthrow it and institute a new order dedicated to economic equality and the ability of all individuals to develop their creative capacities. Marx assumed that communist societies will have highly developed industrial economies. They will have no specialization of labor in which some persons are privileged because of the kind of work they do. Social classes will disappear and with them so will the state, a tool of the ruling class to dominate other classes. Communist societies will be societies of abundance in which the criterion for the production and distribution of goods and services will be "from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs." This vision of communism might be an improbable fantasy to readers today, but it attracted many workers and intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Communist parties have also appealed to nationalism to legitimize their rule. Soviet leaders won support from their population by leading the country to victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, and by transforming it into one of the two "super powers" of the Cold War period. Soviet citizens took pride in their country's rise to the status of a world power. China's leaders have similarly won support for transforming China from an impoverished country in 1949 to a major economic and military power today. The 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, which showcased China's achievements, was a source of great national pride.

Finally, communist parties claim legitimacy on the basis of defending their countries from foreign attack and preventing domestic instability. Communist parties' allegations that their countries were threatened by foreign attack were credible to citizens. Soviet leaders could point to U.S. troops in Europe and ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads targeted at Soviet cities, and China can make similar assertions about U.S. intentions today. In addition, both the Soviet and Chinese communist parties claimed that their tight control over society was necessary to prevent political instability and turmoil.

Where the velvet glove fails, communist parties can rely on the iron fist.

opponents. Mao Zedong gave a classic description justifying the use of such force when he wrote,

> A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined and so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence in which one class overthrows another.[26]

Communist party repression has been used to destroy the economic and political power of entire social classes, such as capitalists in cities and large landholders in the countryside. Their assets and land were seized, many were killed, and millions of others were sent to prison or to labor camps. After communist parties were firmly in power, they continued to use security forces to control societies through the use of surveillance, informants, and arrests.

State ownership of the economy provided another means of control. Every worker worked in a state-owned factory. Workers' housing and health care and their children's schooling were tied to the firm where they worked. Similarly, rural citizens' lives were controlled by forcing them to live on state-organized cooperative or collective farms and placing tight restrictions on their ability to move from one part of the country to another.

Another means of control has been state-sponsored organizations for workers, youth, women, and intellectuals. These organizations were controlled by the communist party rather than by leaders selected by their members.

Finally, communist parties have enacted social and economic policies that benefit particular social classes and groups in society in order to win and maintain their support. In the initial decades of communist control, urban workers benefited from guaranteed jobs in state-owned firms, state-provided housing, and state-sponsored health care. The jobs paid low wages, living quarters were cramped, and the quality of health care was often low. On the other hand, workers never lost their jobs, they had roofs over their heads, and low-quality health care was better than none at all. Peasants received some benefits in the form of education and health care, but communist parties gave them lower priority than urban workers. In recent decades communist parties have reversed some of these policies and begun to pursue policies that benefit businesspeople in the private sector. Workers do not receive the same priority they did from the 1950s through the 1970s. China has closed hundreds of state enterprises, throwing tens of thousands of people out of work. Today, high-ranking communist party officials and their children are among the main beneficiaries of communist rule. Every economic transaction offers opportunities for party officials to demand payoffs and bribes. As David Remnick writes in *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, "the communist party apparatus of the Soviet Union "was the most gigantic mafia the world has ever known."[27] Corruption is also pervasive in China, where party officials use their power to enrich themselves.

Italy's fragile democracy. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and proceeded to create the Third Reich on the ashes of the beleaguered Weimar Republic. Fascism was on the move elsewhere in Central Europe as Austria succumbed to the fascists a year after Germany and powerful fascist movements contended for power in Romania and Hungary.

Fascist political parties were organized differently from communist political parties. While communist parties retain the façade of elected leaders who are responsible to party members, fascist parties are distinguished by "unadorned centralization with overall command exercised by an individual leader figure." This leader was called *der fuhrer* in Germany and *il Duce* in Italy. Fascist parties copied the hierarchical structure of military organization complete with military-style uniforms and salutes.[28]

Fascist parties use ideology, the façade of democracy, and charismatic leaders to gain legitimacy. Ideologically, they presented themselves as anticommunist mass movements drawing support from all social classes. Their popular appeal was rooted in ultranationalism. Instead of emphasizing class struggle as communist parties do, fascists emphasized the importance of a cohesive, "organic" nation. The harmony of the nation allegedly permitted them to transcend the kinds of social conflicts that afflicted other societies such as the conflict between labor and capital.[29] On the other hand, fascist political parties drew clear boundaries between those who were part of the nation and those who were not. Ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities threatened the unity of the nation and were defined as "others." The most destructive outcome of such policies was the Nazi regime's murder of six million Jews.

Fascist political parties in Germany and Italy also claimed the mantle of democracy to shore up their legitimacy. Citizens were stripped of civil and political rights, and free elections were ended, but the Nazi Party in Germany claimed to represent the will of the people in a "German democracy." Mussolini described Italy as an "authoritative," "organized," and "centralized" democracy representing the will of the Italian people.[30] In both cases, the leaders presented their version of democracy as superior to that of parliamentary democracy in Western Europe and North America. They claimed to speak for all of the people who were part of the "organic" nation, unlike leaders in other democracies who represented the narrow interests of particular groups in society.

Finally, fascist parties relied heavily on charismatic leaders for legitimacy. Supporters of Adolf Hitler and, to a lesser extent, Benito Mussolini, saw them as extraordinary, superhuman beings with abilities far beyond those of ordinary politicians. They inspired fanatical support that was cultivated through mass rallies of tens of thousands of people, featuring martial music, and elaborate pageantry. They embodied the promise of an integrated, organic nation led by "a single, cohesive will."[31] The state was the institutionalized expression of the unified nation, and within the state, the unity of the nation was expressed in the authority of the supreme leader.

their populations. The Nazi party used paramilitary thugs to intimidate its electoral opponents. Mussolini became the leader of Italy in 1922 by having the Fascist militia march on Rome and intimidate the king into naming him as the prime minister. Once in office, fascist parties use security forces to terrorize citizens and strip them of rights and due process of law. "There are no citizens in the Fascist state," one observer commented, "there are only subjects."[32] Citizens had no way to select or remove their leaders, who ruled through charisma and intimidation. Fascist parties in Germany and Italy made extensive use of informants to report citizens who did not support party policies. Finally, the fascist state commandeered autonomous civic organizations, such as labor unions and social clubs, in an effort to create and express the organic community. An independent public sphere outside the state was suppressed. As Mussolini proclaimed, "Everything in the State, nothing against the State, nothing outside the State."[33] The boundary between the public and private spheres collapsed. "The only private individual" under fascism, it was quipped, "was someone asleep."[34]

Fascist regimes permitted business owners to retain their property, but they also reserved the right to control how that property was used. Private interests were protected but subordinated to the national interest. While differences between labor and capital were supposed to be subordinated to the interests of the nation as a whole, the interests of capitalists prevailed over the interests of labor.

The fascist regimes in Germany and Italy ended with crushing defeats in 1945, and their leaders met ignominious ends. Hitler committed suicide in his bunker. Mussolini was killed by Italian guerilla fighters who hung his body upside down from a meat hook in Milan and left it to be ridiculed and abused by passersby. The failure of these regimes was so complete that no current authoritarian regime is based on fascist principles.

Electoral Authoritarian Regimes

In the 1980s and 1990s, large numbers of authoritarian regimes were washed away by the wave of democratization sweeping across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The remaining authoritarian rulers learned to adjust to pressures for democratization coming from the United States, Western Europe, and from their own societies. The main form this change took was for leaders of dominant ruling parties to make opposition parties legal and permit regular elections. These regimes "institute the *principle* of popular consent, even as they subvert it in *practice*."[35] They are now the most common form of authoritarian rule in the world.[36]

Electoral authoritarian regimes hold regularly scheduled elections for chief executives and members of national parliaments, and allow multiple political parties to vie for power. The elections are not free and fair, and election rules are tilted strongly in favor of the ruling political party. Opposition

opposition parties have even managed to win the presidency, transforming an electoral authoritarian system into a democracy.[37] In most of these regimes, however, winning leadership position requires being a member of the ruling party or faction, and opposition parties have little chance of gaining power. Prominent examples of such regimes include Russia, Malaysia, and Egypt.[38]

Electoral authoritarian regimes are not unique in holding elections. Some monarchies, many military regimes, and one-party regimes have also done so. Two features make electoral authoritarian regimes distinctive from the other types of authoritarian regimes. One is that multiparty elections determine who holds powerful leadership positions in the country. In monarchies and communist party regimes, voters never get to vote for or against the monarch or leader of the communist party. Second, elections can be meaningful in electoral authoritarian regimes. While it is highly unusual for leaders of these regimes to lose office as a result of elections, it does happen.

Holding regularly scheduled multiparty elections is the main way that electoral authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy. Some of them, such as the ones in Malaysia and Russia, have also relied on economic growth and raising citizens' standard of living as means of gaining legitimacy. Rising incomes in those countries have enabled urban middle class citizens to wear trendy clothes, rent nice apartments, and drive luxury cars. Leaders can even add restoring national pride to their list of accomplishments. The current leaders of Russia take credit for reinstating Russia as a world power following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Electoral authoritarian regimes in Asia and the Arab world pursue broadly similar economic and social policies. They have implemented market-oriented economic reforms, privatizing firms and permitting more foreign investment, but the state still plays a considerable role in the economy. Market-oriented policies have both economic and political goals. They are designed to promote faster economic growth and win the support of businesspeople who benefit from such growth.[39]

Leaders of these regimes use coercion to control groups in society, but make less use of open violence and terror than military and one-party regimes. Security forces intimidate political opponents and arrest citizens who cross the often fuzzy line between what is politically permissible and what is not. Courts apply laws in ways that allow the regime to shut down human rights groups and labor unions. Election commissions manipulate voting results in favor of the ruling elite.[40] The commissions decide which opposition candidates are allowed to run for office, control access to media needed to publicize opposition parties' policies, and alter vote counts to ensure the victory of the ruling party.[41]

This uneven playing field creates dilemmas for leaders of opposition parties. They know they are competing in a rigged game. If they choose to participate they run the risk of legitimizing the rules of the game. If the ruling party wins elec-

and has wide support. Repeated losses by large margins can demoralize leaders of opposition parties and convince them that it is useless to challenge the regime. Such losses also demoralize citizens who voted for the opposition parties and cause them to drop out of politics. If this happens, the regime wins by default.

Allowing multiple political parties to compete for offices also creates dilemmas for ruling elites. It means the regime must give up any pretence that there is a generally agreed upon common good that the ruling elite em bodies, and concedes that there are cleavages in society.[42] Regime leaders have to decide which particular means of manipulating the election they will use and to what degree. Which opposition candidates will they allow or disallow? What restraints will they place on candidates' abilities to have rallies and move about the country? There is the risk that even with all of these restraints an opposition candidate for the chief executive will prove more popular than anticipated.[43] Then they face the question of how to manipulate vote totals without sparking public outrage and mass demonstrations. The Iranian presidential election of 2009 provides an example of how a ruling elite can misgauge an opposition candidate's popularity. When the opposition candidate did unexpectedly well, the Iranian leadership clumsily rigged the vote totals so their candidate, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, won the presidency by an implausible margin. The announcement of Ahmadinejad's victory ignited massive street demonstrations by supporters of the losing candidate, and growing divisions and struggles within the regime itself.

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Why Do Some Authoritarian Regimes Survive Elections While Others Do Not?

Problem

Even when authoritarian regimes hold elections, they are not free and fair. Political scientists disagree on whether such elections can lead to full democratization. Some political scientists believe such elections can be used to build support for more democratic rights and thereby destabilize authoritarian regimes. Others believe they strengthen authoritarian regimes by acting as a safety valve for dissent. In *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* Jason Brownlee suggests a third possibility. Whether elections lead to instability or not depends on regimes' capacity for weakening and marginalizing candidates from opposition political parties in elections.

Hypothesis and Method

Brownlee hypothesizes that authoritarian regimes with a ruling political party are likely to face less serious opposition challenges to their rule and remain more durable than authoritarian regimes without such a party. Ruling parties lead to greater durability for two reasons. First, they provide party elites with benefits for themselves and their followers that make it worthwhile to stick with the ruling party rather than defecting to the opposition. Ruling parties also provide a forum for working out differences among leaders. Countries without a ruling party are much more likely to experience serious disagreement between members of the governing elite and defectors, which strengthens the opposition. Brownlee uses the comparative case study method to test the hypothesis, comparing half a century of historical experiences in Egypt, Malaysia, the Philippines under authoritarian rule in the 1970s and 1980s, and Iran.

Operationalizing Concepts

Brownlee defines the two central concepts as follows:

- A ruling party is a "national organization with mass membership and a sustainable decision making structure."
- A regime's capacity to marginalize the opposition is measured by the percentage of seats won by the regime's principal party or factions in legislative elections and its percentage of the popular vote in presidential elections.

Results

The comparative case studies confirm Brownlee's hypothesis. Egypt and Malaysia differ from each other in many ways. What they share is a strong ruling party and durable authoritarianism. Iran and the Philippines are likewise different in many ways. What they have in common is the lack of a strong ruling party. The authoritarian regime in the Philippines, led by Ferdinand Marcos, was overthrown in 1986 and followed by an unstable, fragmented democracy. The Iranian regime is still in power, but Brownlee's analysis helps us understand why it has been less stable than the regimes in Egypt and Malaysia. His analysis also helps explain why the regime's candidate for president in 2009 faced such strong opposition and why protests and political unrest continued after the election.

For Further Discussion

1. How can Jason Brownlee's analysis be used to project which electoral authoritarian regimes are likely to survive and which are not?
2. Would it be desirable to have an electoral authoritarian regime, such as the one in Egypt, collapse, even if radical Muslim parties won ensuing free elections and gained control of the government?

Personal Rule

The leaders of monarchies, military, single-party, and ruling parties in electoral

power in their own hands and loosen organizational restraints on what they can do. When they accumulate so much power that they can impose their decisions without significant constraints from other leading members of the regime, the result is **personal rule**. It can emerge from any of the four regime types discussed previously.[44] Personal rulers gain control over personnel as well as policy decisions and tend to stay in power for life. They "range from vicious psychopaths to benevolent populists."[45]

Personal rule usually emerges from power struggles in a ruling political party or military regime after it has seized control of the state. Joseph Stalin came to power in the Soviet Union through such a struggle, as did Mao Zedong in China. In both cases, Stalin and Mao continued to have the support of the communist party, but were able to make decisions without being accountable to it.[46] The best current example of personal rule is North Korea, where the leader controls the Korean Workers' Party rather than being controlled by it.

Personal rulers can come to power in countries with strong state institutions as well as weak ones. In the Soviet Union and China, dictators commanded relatively strong states that were capable of enforcing policies throughout the territory they claimed to control. This has also been the case with Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, who transformed "a semidemocratic one-party regime into something more closely resembling personalized authoritarian rule" during the 1990s.[47] But most cases of personal rule occur in very poor countries with weak political and economic institutions. The political scientist Barbara Geddes lists 22 countries governed by personal rule in 2009. Twelve of them were in sub-Saharan Africa where weak institutions prevail.[48]

Weak party and state institutions also shape the ways in which personal rulers hold on to power. These countries do not have strong and capable civil services that rulers can depend on to implement policies, nor do they have strong institutional protection from attempts to overthrow them. In these circumstances, personal dictators seek loyalty by using patronage to fill posts in the military, police, and civilian bureaucracy with members of their extended family, or people from their region, religious group, or ethnic group. In return for their loyalty, these officials are given the opportunity to enrich themselves through corruption. Recent examples of personal rule in Africa include Sese Seko Mobutu, the onetime dictator of Zaire (now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the current president of Chad, Idris Derby, who took power in 1990.

Personal rulers sometimes appear to have overwhelming power, but that appearance can be misleading. They do have strong despotic power, but infrastructural power is weak. **Despotic power** is power to make decisions without having to follow organizational procedures or consult with groups in society. Personal rulers can decide to remove officials from office, intimidate journalists, and have opponents arrested. Despotic rulers use their security forces to abduct, torture, and murder opponents. But most of these rulers have weak

effectively. This requires effective bureaucracies[49]. Leaders of democracies can have much stronger infrastructural power than personal rulers. For example, democratic Costa Rica has much stronger infrastructural power than authoritarian Chad. As we saw earlier, Costa Rica has an extremely effective health care delivery system in rural areas for expectant mothers and their newborns. In contrast, a 2004 study in Chad that tracked what happened to government money intended for rural health clinics found that "only 1 percent of it reached the clinics."[50] The rest was siphoned off by corrupt officials. The consequence is that in Costa Rica only 9 infants die in their first year of life, compared with 99 in Chad.

THE GOOD SOCIETY IN DEPTH

Zimbabwe: How Personal Rule Wrecked an Economy and Lowered Capabilities

Zimbabwe won its independence in 1980 after a prolonged civil war. At the time it was one of the most economically promising countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with fertile soil, thriving commercial agriculture, and strong export earnings. It also had a major problem. During British colonial rule, white farmers took control of 70 percent of the arable land, leaving black farmers with arid plots that were ill-suited for agriculture. President Robert Mugabe, whose picture is at the beginning of the chapter, has used controversies over how to correct this imbalance in land distribution to consolidate and perpetuate his power. The result has been economic disaster and falling capabilities for Zimbabwe.

Mugabe initially supported gradual reforms predicated on the willingness of whites to sell farm land to blacks. This policy achieved little. By the 1990s thousands of poor black Zimbabweans, including veterans of the civil war, pressed for faster transfers of land, and began to invade land owned by white farmers. To maintain their support, Mugabe proposed a new constitution in 1999 that would allow the government to seize white farmers' land without payment and give it to blacks. The proposed constitution would also extend his term in office well beyond what was allowed at the time. These proposed constitutional changes were rejected in a referendum in 2000.

Mugabe retaliated for this defeat in two ways. One was by going after the white farmers. He accused them of stirring up and financing opposition to his rule, and he encouraged veterans and landless blacks to occupy their land. The second was by ruthlessly attacking the opposition. Newspapers were closed, leaders were arrested, and demonstrators were beaten.

These decisions set off a downward spiral. Agricultural production plummeted, resulting in lower export earnings and lower government revenues. To make up for the lost revenue, Mugabe printed money, which led to accelerating inflation. By

Continued

2007, a beer cost one million Zimbabwe dollars. In late 2008, citizens were restricted to borrowing a maximum of $100,000,000 from their bank account each week. Although that figure sounds like a huge amount, it was the equivalent of only $2.50 in U.S. currency.

The economic problems have had devastating consequences for capabilities. Many hospitals and rural clinics lack basic supplies. Infant mortality rose from 54 per 1,000 in 1990 to 69 in 2000 before declining to 56 in 2009. Life expectancy, which stood at 61 years in 1990, had plummeted by 2005 to just 41.5 years.

For Further Discussion

1. How does Mugabe fit the characteristics of personal rule?
2. Mugabe argues the land seizures were justified. Whites took the land from Africans during the colonial era and blacks are now taking the land back. Do you agree?

* World Development Indicators. www.google.com/public data.

IN BRIEF

Types of Authoritarian Rule

- Monarchy—the ruler is someone of royal descent who inherits the position of head of state in accordance with accepted practice or the constitution. The king of Saudi Arabia is an example.
- Military—rule by a military officer or group of officers backed by a country's military. Prototypical examples include military rule in Brazil and Chile in the 1970s and 1980s and Burma (Myanmar) currently.
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  - Communist—a vanguard political party based on Marxism claiming to represent the working class. The prototypical example is the Communist Party of China.
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- Electoral authoritarian—These kinds of regimes hold regular elections for chief executives and members of national parliaments, and allow multiple political parties to participate in the elections. The election rules are so tilted in favor of the regime that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for opposition parties to win the most important leadership positions. Malaysia and Russia are prototypical examples.
- Personal rule—rule by a single leader who controls decision without organizational

Finally, leaders can reach beyond their borders to seek support from powerful countries. During the Cold War personal rulers made efforts to win support from either the United States or the Soviet Union. Both superpowers supported a number of repressive regimes. The United States gave substantial economic aid to the Mobutu regime in Zaire, in part to keep the country out of Soviet hands and in part to ensure access to its valuable mineral wealth. Mobutu used this aid to enrich himself and his supporters and help maintain the patronage network he used to keep control of the state and society.

EXPLAINING AUTHORITARIAN PERSISTENCE

The late twentieth century was particularly auspicious for democracy. Between 1974 and 1995, the number of democracies rose from 40 to 117. Yet many authoritarian regimes survived—some types more than others. The number of military and one-party regimes declined dramatically, but the number of monarchies remained largely unchanged, while the number of electoral authoritarian regimes increased. Not only did the democratic wave remove some forms of authoritarianism more than others, but its geographic reach was uneven as well. Democracy swept away numerous authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In contrast, the Middle East remained a solid block of authoritarian resistance. Israel was the only liberal democracy in the region in1974, and this remained the case in 2010.

IN BRIEF

Distinguishing between Middle Eastern and Arab Countries

The Middle East is a geographical concept. It usually refers to the countries located between Turkey and India including those on the Arabian Peninsula. There are differing opinions about which specific countries belong to the region. The countries included by most authors are Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Some authors include Egypt in the region, but because it is located in North Africa it is often omitted from the list.

The term *Arab* is a linguistic and cultural concept, referring to people who speak Arabic and practice Arab customs. Arabic countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. It is important to bear in mind that not all Middle Eastern countries fall into this category. Two notable exceptions are Israel and Iran. The population of Israel is predominantly composed of Jews who speak Hebrew. The population of Iran is largely composed of Persians, who speak Farsi. Although ethnically and linguistically different from Arabs, most

The persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world remains a puzzle in an "age of democracy."[51] Some scholars attribute the failure of democracy to take root in the Middle East to Islam. The political scientist Samuel P. Huntington maintains that authoritarianism in the Arab world "has its source at least in part to the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts."[52] Those who agree with Huntington believe that democracy requires a willingness to challenge political authority and the acceptance of pluralism, competition among ideas, equality of rights, and different lifestyles. They argue Islam rejects these values. Democracy also requires vesting authority in secular government rather than religious authority, whereas Islam supposedly regards God as "the sole source of political authority and from whose divine law must come all regulations governing the community of believers."[53]

Others scholars reject the assertion that Islam is incompatible with democracy. They point out that there is no single interpretation of Islam that is accepted by all Muslims, as the previous authors imply. Citizens living in predominantly Muslim countries differ greatly in their attitudes toward political authority, rights for women, and acceptance of different lifestyles. This is the case even in Iran, the only country in the world where Islamic clerics control the state.

Until recently, the debate about whether Islam is compatible with democracy was based on a selective reading of Islamic texts and on impressionistic views of what citizens in predominantly Muslim countries believe. Empirical research based on carefully conducted interviews allows us to correct a number of misconceptions. One of the main findings of this research is that Muslim populations can strongly support democracy. World Values Surveys in 1995–1996 and in 2000–2002 in six Arab countries asked interviewees whether they agreed with the statement, "Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government." A higher percentage of respondents in Arab countries expressed agreement than did those in European countries.[54] A Pew Foundation survey of Muslim populations in 2003 likewise found that large majorities supported Western-style democracy.[55] These findings contradict assertions that Islamic publics are hostile to democracy.

At the same time, the surveys discovered other, less encouraging results. High levels of popular support for democracy are not a good predictor of whether a country will become and remain a democracy. People living in countries with authoritarian regimes may like what they take to be the results of democracy but not like its procedures. Some may associate democracy with the economic wealth of the United States and Europe and believe it will bring similar prosperity to their country. Others imagine that in a democracy people like themselves will have more influence over government policies, but do not like the idea of people with different values having more influence. It turns out that a better predictor of whether a country will become a democracy is its

these values include a willingness to challenge political elites, and support for both free speech and freedom in choice of lifestyles. Surveys find lower levels of enthusiasm for these values in predominantly Muslim countries than in Europe and North America. Over half of the citizens surveyed in five Arab countries favor "men of religion" having influence "over government decisions" and in another set of countries half of the respondents believed Islamic *sharia* law should be the law of the land.[57]

In summary, the evidence concerning whether Islamic values are compatible with democracy is inconclusive. There is a problem, however, with using only Arab countries to test the hypothesis. To test the hypothesis adequately, we need to examine *all* predominantly Muslim countries, not just ethnically Arab ones.[58] It happens that eight countries in which Muslims comprise a majority of the population are electoral democracies that use "free and fair elections to determine who rules."[59] One of them is Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world and by far the most populous Muslim country. Indonesia was ruled by a military regime from 1965 until 1998. After the military regime collapsed, the first democratically elected president was Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of the country's largest Islamic organization. Wahid was a prankster and joker who loved Western classical music. He once teased a friend by suggesting that Christians must be closer to God than Muslims because Christians only have to whisper for God to hear them, while Muslims have to shout from loudspeakers. Wahid supported the right of people of all religions to worship as they chose. Indonesia, and the other seven Muslim majority countries that have free and fair elections, are evidence that Islam is not an insuperable obstacle to democracy.

But this leaves the question of why so many Muslim countries in the Middle East are autocratic. One possible explanation has to do with low levels of economic and social development. A strongly supported generalization in the social sciences is that the higher the level of a country's economic development, the higher the chance that it will be a democracy. That explanation is not persuasive in this case. While Yemen is a low-income country, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria are lower-middle-income countries, and Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are wealthy countries. In 2009 Qatar enjoyed the second highest GDP per capita in the world and Kuwait the seventh highest.[60]

An alternative explanation for the persistence of authoritarian rule in Arab countries has to do with state dependence on oil revenues. Eleven of the sixteen Arab countries derive the bulk of their revenues in that manner. Oil is a scarce and valuable natural resource that produces high incomes, or rents, for the states that own rights to the oil. States that benefit from abnormally high profits from such natural resources are called *rentier states*. Governments use oil rents to buy support by providing extensive public services and large numbers of government jobs without having to tax their

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Juarez in Mexico and El Paso, Texas in the United States are separated by the narrow band of the Rio Grande River. The two cities are so close to each other that the Mayor of El Paso can actually see downtown Juarez from his office window. But the quality of life for residents of the two cities could not be more different. In 2008, El Paso was ranked as the third safest city over 500,000 in the United States, with only 16 homicides, while over 1,550 people were murdered in Juarez that same year. The infant mortality rate—the number of newborns who die before their first birthday—in El Paso was 6.6 per 100,000 births. In comparison, the infant mortality rate was five times higher across the river in Juarez, and while 63 percent of El Paso residents completed high school, only 10 percent did so in Juarez.

Just as the Rio Grande divides Mexico from the United States, the Moie River forms the border between Thailand and Myanmar. And like the Rio Grande, the Moie River is so narrow in some places that people can actually swim across it. But if they were to do so, they would find conditions of life to be very different from one shore to the other. In Thailand, most people have enough to eat, receive good health care, and can afford modern amenities. There are shopping malls, and traffic jams, and citizens have intermittently enjoyed political freedom. In Myanmar, however, many people suffer from malnutrition, health care is primitive, and poverty is widespread. The shelves in stores are bare, people use bicycles as their main form of transportation, and a brutal military government deprives people of basic human rights.[1]

This tale of two rivers is at the heart of our book *The Good Society*, whose central theme is: Why are some countries more successful than others at creating conditions that promote their citizens' well-being? Why do people in Thailand or the United States live so much better than those who live just across the border in Myanmar and Mexico, respectively? How can a river loom as wide as an ocean in terms of the quality of life for those who live on opposite shores? These questions give unity to a wide range of topics in comparative politics by asking how political institutions in different countries affect citizens' quality of life. Students are interested in comparative politics—and appropriately so—because of what it might teach them about how different political institutions affect people's lives. It is our experience that few students who enroll in "Introduction to Comparative Politics" are intrinsically curious about the details of other countries' political institutions or about the conceptual repertoire of comparative politics. But they are curious why some countries do a better job than others of providing for their citizens. Students want to know how political systems work because they are interested in how they

[1]Thomas Fuller, "Across the River: 2 Divergent Paths in Southeast Asia," *New York Times* (October 25, 2007), p. A8.

for major executive offices and for national legislatures, and in some extremely unusual cases have even stepped down from power after losing elections. Nevertheless, they remain authoritarian regimes whose leaders intend to maintain their hold on power. Egypt is one of the best known examples of such a regime, and receives a Polity IV rating of only – 3. Its presidential and parliamentary elections are tightly controlled to eliminate any real opposition from gaining power. Russia is another example of an electoral authoritarian regime, but has a higher Polity IV rating of 5.

CONCLUSION

The resilience of authoritarian regimes has forced political scientists to reassess their assumption of the 1990s that in the post-Cold War era authoritarian regimes were relics that would be replaced by democracies. In the past 10 years, political scientists have devoted considerable attention to explaining why they have survived.[70] Their findings lead to four conclusions. First, the types of feasible authoritarian regimes have been narrowed. Fascism—one of the main forms of authoritarian rule in the twentieth century—has been completely discredited. Communist regimes have either collapsed as in the case of the Soviet Union, or been forced to make substantial changes. They have moved away from economic models based on state ownership and central planning and toward a significant role for markets. They have also given their citizens greater freedom to decide where to live, what to buy, and what to believe. Leaders of nearly all authoritarian regimes, excepting North Korea and Cuba, assume that the only effective economic system is one that relies extensively on markets.

Second, democracy today is the only widely accepted way of gaining political legitimacy. Amartya Sen writes, "While democracy is not yet universally practiced, nor indeed universally accepted, in the general climate of world opinion, democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right."[71]

Third, there are no ideologies comparable to Marxism that have appeal for large numbers of people in different parts of the world. Fundamentalist forms of Islam might gain some traction in a few countries outside the Middle East, but even if regimes based on fundamentalist Islam can be established, it remains to be seen how effective and enduring such regimes can be. Iran, the only country governed by Islamic clerics, is badly divided between supporters of the Iranian theocracy and supporters of a more secular regime. The country has lacked political stability for several years.

Finally, while electoral authoritarianism is the most prevalent kind of authoritarianism, it does not ensure authoritarian persistence. The political scientist Andreas Schedler suggests that electoral authoritarianism represents the last and weakening "line of authoritarian defense in a long history of struggle that has been unfolding since the invention or modern representative institutions"[72] As the 2009 presidential elections in Iran demonstrated, elections have the potential to destabilize authoritarian

regimes with strong party and state institutions will be able to remain in power for the foreseeable future. But without strong party and state institutions, these regimes are vulnerable. This is especially true of *rentier* states that use revenues from valuable natural resources sales to stay in power by buying off support. Falling resource prices could threaten their stability. In summary, while authoritarian regimes proved more resilient than many political scientists predicted in the 1990s, many of them may be more vulnerable than they appear.[73]

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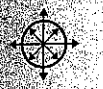

ASSESSMENT
Review this chapter using learning objectives, chapter summaries, practice tests, and more.

FLASHCARDS
Learn the key terms in this chapter; you can test yourself by term or definition.

VIDEO CASE STUDIES
Analyze recent world affairs by watching streaming video from major news providers.

COMPARATIVE EXERCISES
Compare political ideas, behaviors, institutions, and policies worldwide.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Why are rulers of authoritarian regimes more hopeful about their prospects today than they were in the 1990s?
2. Is authoritarian rule justified if a leader can achieve improvements in citizens' capabilities, as President Paul Kagame has done in Rwanda?
3. How do communist and fascist regimes differ, and why have communist regimes been more enduring?
4. Why do electoral authoritarian regimes present dilemmas for both rulers and opposition?
5. Is one form of authoritarianism better than another?

KEY TERMS

The literacy record of military regimes tracks their record with infant mortality. South Korea had a relatively high literacy rate at the beginning of military rule and the rate was even higher by the time the military stepped down from power. Brazil and Chile also raised literacy rates, but with big differences among income groups. The African military regimes lag well behind, as they did with infant mortality. When the military stepped down from power in Nigeria in the late 1990s, literacy rates were only 55 percent.

Communist one-party regimes also have literacy rates that parallel their records in reducing infant mortality. According to the United Nations Development Programme, Cuba has the highest literacy rate of any country in the world. Other communist regimes do not have such stellar records, but China and Vietnam have literacy rates over 90 percent. Laos lags behind, as it did with infant mortality rates.

Electoral authoritarian regimes vary greatly in literacy as they did in infant mortality. Very poor ones tend to have very low literacy rates, such as Mozambique's 54 percent, while wealthier ones such as Malaysia have literacy rates above 90 percent.

Safety

In this category of capabilities, monarchies are the clear winners. Even Bhutan with the highest homicide rate of 4.3 per 100,000 has a lower homicide rate than the United States. Most of the Middle Eastern monarchies have homicide rates matching those of advanced European democracies. The average homicide rate for the nine monarchies for which such data are available is only 1.7 per 100,000.[66]

Military regimes have some of the lowest and highest homicide rates of any type of authoritarian regime. Some, such as Syria, have homicide rates as low as many advanced democracies, while others such as Rwanda, have among the highest homicide rates in the world. Homicide rates are a misleading indicator of safety in many military regimes. Military regimes threaten, beat, and jail suspected opponents, and some kill thousands of people as they take power and consolidate their control. Military rulers in Brazil and Chile killed thousands of suspected opponents, while the Indonesian military killed hundreds of thousands in the 1960s.

Communist party regimes generally have low homicide rates, although we lack data for homicide rates in North Korea. Of today's other four communist party regimes, only Cuba has a higher homicide rate than the United States, and this is by the slim margin of 6 per 100,000 compared with 5.9 in the United States. As with the case in military regimes, homicide rates can be a misleading indicator of safety. These regimes also use intimidation, mass campaigns against class enemies, and prison sentences to punish their enemies or suspected enemies. They also killed many more people while taking power and consolidating it than have military regimes. The highly respected China scholar Andrew Nathan puts the human cost of communism in China in the tens of millions.[67]

Electoral authoritarian regimes tend to have either very low or very high homicide rates. Several, including Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, and Tunisia have homicide rates below 2 per 100,000. Others, including Mozambique, Russia, Tanzania, and Zambia, have rates over 20 per 100,000, placing them among countries with the highest homicide rates in the world. No single variable seems to explain the differences. For example, Singapore has a very high income per capita and a very low homicide rate, but Egypt's rate is almost identical to that of Singapore, and Egypt is a much poorer country.

Democracy

While monarchies were the winners in having the lowest average homicide rates, they are losers in democracy ratings. The most authoritarian rating used by Polity IV is – 10 and both Qatar and Saudi Arabia receive a – 10. Most other monarchies do little better, with the exception of Jordan, which receives a – 3. The average for nine contemporary monarchies is – 7.2. This makes them the most authoritarian regime type, even more authoritarian than communist single-party regimes. They rule without constitutional checks on their power, and citizens do not have recourse to independent courts of law or constitutional guarantees to free and fair elections to change leaders. In addition, some of the Arab monarchies—Saudi Arabia in particular—severely restrict women's freedom to make decisions about their lives. Women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia, and the sexes are strictly separated in public places. Women are not so restricted in other Arab monarchies. In Kuwait, for example, women can drive cars and serve as members of parliament.

Most military regimes are less authoritarian than monarchies. Four current military regimes average a – 4 in Polity IV rankings, but this average hides extremes.[68] At the most repressive extreme is Myanmar (Burma) in Southeast Asia—with a ranking of – 8—where the military has been in power since 1962 and has ruthlessly beaten down resistance to its rule. The authors of the Polity IV Country Report on Myanmar for 2008 point out, "There are few institutional constraints on the executive, particularly as the unicameral legislature has never convened."[69] Algeria practices a less authoritarian form of military rule and has a Polity IV ranking of 2. It allowed several candidates to compete for the presidency in 2004, but real power remains in the hands of the military rather than in the hands of voters.

Communist one-party regimes all receive a – 7 ranking from Polity IV. They are among the most authoritarian types of regimes along with monarchies, and like monarchies rule without constitutional checks on their power. Their citizens do not have recourse to independent courts of law or constitutional guarantees to free and fair elections to change leaders. China has initiated some limited experiments with democratic elections at the local level but has no intention of extending them to the national level, or allowing challenges to the communist party's hold on power.

Finally, electoral authoritarian regimes are the most democratic of the types of authoritarian rule. As we have noted, they allow competitive elections

used to stifle dissent. At first glance this appears to be of great benefit to citizens, but the cost of not having to pay taxes is a lack of government accountability. In Samuel P. Huntington's words, "'No taxation without representation' was a political demand; 'no representation without taxation' is a political reality."[61] States that get their revenues from taxes have to be responsive to citizens who want a voice in how their money is spent. The *rentier* phenomenon may explain why authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, with oil and gas reserves, such as Saudi Arabia, stay in power. However, this is not the whole answer, since autocratic governments persist in Arab countries like Jordan, which lacks such resources.

The final explanation for the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East is that many of the region's leaders have learned how to "upgrade authoritarianism" to keep pace with changing economies and societies.[62] There is no single formula that fits all of the countries, but the essence of upgrading authoritarianism has been to combine looser political controls with selective repression. Leaders allow controlled elections that have electoral rules designed to ensure regime victories. They split their opposition by convincing secular opponents that they dare not risk allowing radical Islamic parties to come to power.

In conclusion, Islam has been used to help establish and legitimize authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Like many major religions, its religious texts can be interpreted to support authoritarian rule. Rulers such as the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 revolution in Iran that installed the Islamic Republic of Iran, promote versions of Islam that are antidemocratic, but that does not prove that Islam is antidemocratic or that it cannot be interpreted in ways supportive of democracy. Leaders such as Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia have shown that it can.

AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

While some authoritarian regimes such as China's have had success in promoting economic growth and improving citizens' capabilities, many have not. In this section we assess the records of the four different kinds of authoritarian regimes and how well they do at improving capabilities.

Physical Well-Being

Several Middle Eastern monarchies have had considerable success in lowering infant mortality rates. Oman has had the greatest success, lowering rates from nearly 100 infant deaths for every 1,000 births in 1975 to only 11 deaths in 2007. The United Arab Emirates has also had considerable success with only 7 deaths per 1,000.[63] These statistics approach those achieved by some European countries. Other Middle Eastern monarchies have not had this level of success, but all have lowered infant rates. Bhutan and Morocco have been the least successful monarchies with much higher infant mortality rates than the Middle Eastern monarchies.[64]

While the Arab monarchies have all succeeded in lowering infant mortality rates, military regimes vary dramatically in their level of success. South Korea had one of the most successful military regimes in the world from 1961 to the late 1980s. During these years the regime sharply reduced infant mortality rates, from nearly 100 to just 8 infants per 1,000. Other military regimes were not as successful as South Korea, but nevertheless lowered infant mortality rates significantly. These include the military regimes in Brazil (1964–1985), Chile (1973–1988), and Indonesia (1965–1998). All three countries had high infant mortality rates when military regimes came to power. In 1970 Brazil's infant mortality rate was nearly 100 per 1,000, while Indonesia's was even higher. Indonesia still had a relatively high rate of 40 per 1,000 when the military was forced out of office in 1998. The Chilean military regime reduced the infant mortality rate to 18 per thousand during the years it ruled. In contrast to the successes of the military regimes in South Korea and Latin America, military regimes in sub-Saharan Africa have failed to promote sustained economic development or measurably improve citizens' well-being. The military governments that controlled Nigeria from the early 1970s until the late 1990s provide a striking example. Infant mortality rates remained at 120 per 1,000 from 1975 until 1995 near the end of military rule.

Communist one- party regimes have also had very different levels of success in improving infant mortality rates. Cuba has a lower infant mortality rate than the United States, despite having a much lower per capita income. China, Laos, and Vietnam have all succeeded in bringing down infant mortality, but infant mortality rates in Laos were still 48 per 1,000 in 2008, which is only slightly lower than Haiti's rate. North Korea is one of the few countries in the world to have rising infant mortality rates since 1980. In short, communist party rule is no guarantee of great success in lowering infant mortality.

Electoral authoritarian regimes also vary dramatically in infant mortality rates. This is true in large part because they are found in countries with very different levels of economic development. Mozambique in sub-Saharan Africa is among the poorest countries in the world, while Malaysia in Southeast Asia has a much higher income per capita. It is not surprising to find that infants in Malaysia have a much higher probability of living past their first year of life than those in Mozambique. Malaysia's infant mortality rate is 16 per 1,000 while Mozambique's stands at 106.[65]

Informed Decision Making

The different types of authoritarian regimes have the same general patterns for informed decision making that they do for infant mortality. The Middle Eastern monarchies have relatively high rates of adult literacy, ranging from 83 per cent in Saudi Arabia to 94.5 percent in Kuwait. Bhutan and Morocco do much worse, with the literacy rate in Bhutan being only 52 percent

The persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world remains a puzzle in an "age of democracy."[51] Some scholars attribute the failure of democracy to take root in the Middle East to Islam. The political scientist Samuel P. Huntington maintains that authoritarianism in the Arab world "has its source at least in part to the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts."[52] Those who agree with Huntington believe that democracy requires a willingness to challenge political authority and the acceptance of pluralism, competition among ideas, equality of rights, and different lifestyles. They argue Islam rejects these values. Democracy also requires vesting authority in secular government rather than religious authority, whereas Islam supposedly regards God as "the sole source of political authority and from whose divine law must come all regulations governing the community of believers."[53]

Others scholars reject the assertion that Islam is incompatible with democracy. They point out that there is no single interpretation of Islam that is accepted by all Muslims, as the previous authors imply. Citizens living in predominantly Muslim countries differ greatly in their attitudes toward political authority, rights for women, and acceptance of different lifestyles. This is the case even in Iran, the only country in the world where Islamic clerics control the state.

Until recently, the debate about whether Islam is compatible with democracy was based on a selective reading of Islamic texts and on impressionistic views of what citizens in predominantly Muslim countries believe. Empirical research based on carefully conducted interviews allows us to correct a number of misconceptions. One of the main findings of this research is that Muslim populations can strongly support democracy. World Values Surveys in 1995–1996 and in 2000–2002 in six Arab countries asked interviewees whether they agreed with the statement, "Democracy may have problems, but it's better than any other form of government." A higher percentage of respondents in Arab countries expressed agreement than did those in European countries.[54] A Pew Foundation survey of Muslim populations in 2003 likewise found that large majorities supported Western-style democracy.[55] These findings contradict assertions that Islamic publics are hostile to democracy.

At the same time, the surveys discovered other, less encouraging results. High levels of popular support for democracy are not a good predictor of whether a country will become and remain a democracy. People living in countries with authoritarian regimes may like what they take to be the results of democracy but not like its procedures. Some may associate democracy with the economic wealth of the United States and Europe and believe it will bring similar prosperity to their country. Others imagine that in a democracy people like themselves will have more influence over government policies, but do not like the idea of people with different values having more influence. It turns out that a better predictor of whether a country will become a democracy is its population's support for self-expression values.[56] As we discussed in Chapter 4, these values include a willingness to challenge political elites, and support for both free speech and freedom in choice of lifestyles. Surveys find lower levels of enthusiasm for these values in predominantly Muslim countries than in Europe and North America. Over half of the citizens surveyed in five Arab countries favor "men of religion" having influence "over government decisions" and in another set of countries half of the respondents believed Islamic *shari'a* law should be the law of the land.[57]

In summary, the evidence concerning whether Islamic values are compatible with democracy is inconclusive. There is a problem, however, with using only Arab countries to test the hypothesis. To test the hypothesis adequately, we need to examine *all* predominantly Muslim countries, not just ethnically Arab ones.[58] It happens that eight countries in which Muslims comprise a majority of the population are electoral democracies that use "free and fair elections to determine who rules."[59] One of them is Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world and by far the most populous Muslim country. Indonesia was ruled by a military regime from 1965 until 1998. After the military regime collapsed, the first democratically elected president was Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of the country's largest Islamic organization. Wahid was a prankster and joker who loved Western classical music. He once teased a friend by suggesting that Christians must be closer to God than Muslims because Christians only have to whisper for God to hear them, while Muslims have to shout from loudspeakers. Wahid supported the right of people of all religions to worship as they chose. Indonesia, and the other seven Muslim majority countries that have free and fair elections, are evidence that Islam is not an insuperable obstacle to democracy.

But this leaves the question of why so many Muslim countries in the Middle East are autocratic. One possible explanation has to do with low levels of economic and social development. A strongly supported generalization in the social sciences is that the higher the level of a country's economic development, the higher the chance that it will be a democracy. That explanation is not persuasive in this case. While Yemen is a low-income country, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria are lower-middle-income countries, and Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are wealthy countries. In 2009 Qatar enjoyed the second highest GDP per capita in the world and Kuwait the seventh highest.[60]

An alternative explanation for the persistence of authoritarian rule in Arab countries has to do with state dependence on oil revenues. Eleven of the sixteen Arab countries derive the bulk of their revenues in that manner. Oil is a scarce and valuable natural resource that produces high incomes, or rents, for the states that own rights to the oil. States that benefit from abnormally high profits from such natural resources are called ***rentier*** states. Governments use oil rents to buy support by providing extensive public services and large numbers of government jobs without having to tax their citizens. The revenues also pay for large and powerful state security institution-

The literacy record of military regimes tracks their record with infant mortality. South Korea had a relatively high literacy rate at the beginning of military rule and the rate was even higher by the time the military stepped down from power. Brazil and Chile also raised literacy rates, but with big differences among income groups. The African military regimes lag well behind as they did with infant mortality. When the military stepped down from power in Nigeria in the late 1990s, literacy rates were only 55 percent.

Communist one-party regimes also have literacy rates that parallel their records in reducing infant mortality. According to the United Nations Development Programme, Cuba has the highest literacy rate of any country in the world. Other communist regimes do not have such stellar records, but China and Vietnam have literacy rates over 90 percent. Laos lags behind, as it did with infant mortality rates.

Electoral authoritarian regimes vary greatly in literacy as they did in infant mortality. Very poor ones tend to have very low literacy rates, such as Mozambique's 54 percent, while wealthier ones such as Malaysia have literacy rates above 90 percent.

Safety

In this category of capabilities, monarchies are the clear winners. Even Bhutan with the highest homicide rate of 4.3 per 100,000 has a lower homicide rate than the United States. Most of the Middle Eastern monarchies have homicide rates matching those of advanced European democracies. The average homicide rate for the nine monarchies for which such data are available is only 1.7 per 100,000.[66]

Military regimes have some of the lowest and highest homicide rates of any type of authoritarian regime. Some, such as Syria, have homicide rates as low as many advanced democracies, while others such as Rwanda, have among the highest homicide rates in the world. Homicide rates are a misleading indicator of safety in many military regimes. Military regimes threaten, beat, and jail suspected opponents, and some kill thousands of people as they take power and consolidate their control. Military rulers in Brazil and Chile killed thousands of suspected opponents, while the Indonesian military killed hundreds of thousands in the 1960s.

Communist party regimes generally have low homicide rates, although we lack data for homicide rates in North Korea. Of today's other four communist party regimes, only Cuba has a higher homicide rate than the United States, and this is by the slim margin of 6 per 100,000 compared with 5.9 in the United States. As with the case in military regimes, homicide rates can be a misleading indicator of safety. These regimes also use intimidation, mass campaigns against class enemies, and prison sentences to punish their enemies or suspected enemies. They also killed many more people while taking power and consolidating it than have military regimes. The highly respected China

Electoral authoritarian regimes tend to have either very low or very high homicide rates. Several, including Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, and Tunisia have homicide rates below 2 per 100,000. Others, including Mozambique, Russia, Tanzania, and Zambia, have rates over 20 per 100,000, placing them among countries with the highest homicide rates in the world. No single variable seems to explain the differences. For example, Singapore has a very high income per capita and a very low homicide rate, but Egypt's rate is almost identical to that of Singapore, and Egypt is a much poorer country.

Democracy

While monarchies were the winners in having the lowest average homicide rates, they are losers in democracy ratings. The most authoritarian rating used by Polity IV is – 10 and both Qatar and Saudi Arabia receive a – 10. Most other monarchies do little better, with the exception of Jordan, which receives a – 3. The average for nine contemporary monarchies is – 7.2. This makes them the most authoritarian regime type, even more authoritarian than communist single-party regimes. They rule without constitutional checks on their power, and citizens do not have recourse to independent courts of law or constitutional guarantees to free and fair elections to change leaders. In addition, some of the Arab monarchies—Saudi Arabia in particular—severely restrict women's freedom to make decisions about their lives. Women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia, and the sexes are strictly separated in public places. Women are not so restricted in other Arab monarchies. In Kuwait, for example, women can drive cars and serve as members of parliament.

Most military regimes are less authoritarian than monarchies. Four current military regimes average a – 4 in Polity IV rankings, but this average hides extremes.[68] At the most repressive extreme is Myanmar (Burma) in Southeast Asia—with a ranking of – 8—where the military has been in power since 1962 and has ruthlessly beaten down resistance to its rule. The authors of the Polity IV Country Report on Myanmar for 2008 point out, "There are few institutional constraints on the executive, particularly as the unicameral legislature has never convened."[69] Algeria practices a less authoritarian form of military rule and has a Polity IV ranking of 2. It allowed several candidates to compete for the presidency in 2004, but real power remains in the hands of the military rather than in the hands of voters.

Communist one-party regimes all receive a – 7 ranking from Polity IV. They are among the most authoritarian types of regimes along with monarchies, and like monarchies rule without constitutional checks on their power. Their citizens do not have recourse to independent courts of law or constitutional guarantees to free and fair elections to change leaders. China has initiated some limited experiments with democratic elections at the local level but has no intention of extending them to the national level, or allowing challenges to the communist party's hold on power.

used to stifle dissent. At first glance this appears to be of great benefit to citizens, but the cost of not having to pay taxes is a lack of government accountability. In Samuel P. Huntington's words, "'No taxation without representation' was a political demand; 'no representation without taxation' is a political reality."[61] States that get their revenues from taxes have to be responsive to citizens who want a voice in how their money is spent. The *rentier* phenomenon may explain why authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, with oil and gas reserves, such as Saudi Arabia, stay in power. However, this is not the whole answer, since autocratic governments persist in Arab countries like Jordan, which lacks such resources.

The final explanation for the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East is that many of the region's leaders have learned how to "upgrade authoritarianism" to keep pace with changing economies and societies.[62] There is no single formula that fits all of the countries, but the essence of upgrading authoritarianism has been to combine looser political controls with selective repression. Leaders allow controlled elections that have electoral rules designed to ensure regime victories. They split their opposition by convincing secular opponents that they dare not risk allowing radical Islamic parties to come to power.

In conclusion, Islam has been used to help establish and legitimize authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Like many major religions, its religious texts can be interpreted to support authoritarian rule. Rulers such as the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 revolution in Iran that installed the Islamic Republic of Iran, promote versions of Islam that are antidemocratic, but that does not prove that Islam is antidemocratic or that it cannot be interpreted in ways supportive of democracy. Leaders such as Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia have shown that it can.

AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

While some authoritarian regimes such as China's have had success in promoting economic growth and improving citizens' capabilities, many have not. In this section we assess the records of the four different kinds of authoritarian regimes and how well they do at improving capabilities.

Physical Well-Being

Several Middle Eastern monarchies have had considerable success in lowering infant mortality rates. Oman has had the greatest success, lowering rates from nearly 100 infant deaths for every 1,000 births in 1975 to only 11 deaths in 2007. The United Arab Emirates has also had considerable success with only 7 deaths per 1,000.[63] These statistics approach those achieved by some European countries. Other Middle Eastern monarchies have not had this level

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Informed Decision Making

The different types of authoritarian regimes have the same general patterns for informed decision making that they do for infant mortality. The Middle Eastern monarchies have relatively high rates of adult literacy, rang-

for major executive offices and for national legislatures, and in some extremely unusual cases have even stepped down from power after losing elections. Nevertheless, they remain authoritarian regimes whose leaders intend to maintain their hold on power. Egypt is one of the best known examples of such a regime, and receives a Polity IV rating of only – 3. Its presidential and parliamentary elections are tightly controlled to eliminate any real opposition from gaining power. Russia is another example of an electoral authoritarian regime, but has a higher Polity IV rating of 5.

CONCLUSION

The resilience of authoritarian regimes has forced political scientists to reassess their assumption of the 1990s that in the post-Cold War era authoritarian regimes were relics that would be replaced by democracies. In the past 10 years, political scientists have devoted considerable attention to explaining why they have survived.[70] Their findings lead to four conclusions. First, the types of feasible authoritarian regimes have been narrowed. Fascism—one of the main forms of authoritarian rule in the twentieth century—has been completely discredited. Communist regimes have either collapsed as in the case of the Soviet Union, or been forced to make substantial changes. They have moved away from economic models based on state ownership and central planning and toward a significant role for markets. They have also given their citizens greater freedom to decide where to live, what to buy, and what to believe. Leaders of nearly all authoritarian regimes, excepting North Korea and Cuba, assume that the only effective economic system is one that relies extensively on markets.

Second, democracy today is the only widely accepted way of gaining political legitimacy. Amartya Sen writes, "While democracy is not yet universally practiced, nor indeed universally accepted, in the general climate of world opinion, democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right."[71]

Third, there are no ideologies comparable to Marxism that have appeal for large numbers of people in different parts of the world. Fundamentalist forms of Islam might gain some traction in a few countries outside the Middle East, but even if regimes based on fundamentalist Islam can be established, it remains to be seen how effective and enduring such regimes can be. Iran, the only country governed by Islamic clerics, is badly divided between supporters of the Iranian theocracy and supporters of a more secular regime. The country has lacked political stability for several years.

Finally, while electoral authoritarianism is the most prevalent kind of authoritarianism, it does not ensure authoritarian persistence. The political scientist Andreas Schedler suggests that electoral authoritarianism represents the last and weakening "line of authoritarian defense in a long history of struggle that

regimes with strong party and state institutions will be able to remain in power for the foreseeable future. But without strong party and state institutions, these regimes are vulnerable. This is especially true of *rentier* states that use revenues from valuable natural resources sales to stay in power by buying off support. Falling resource prices could threaten their stability. In summary, while authoritarian regimes proved more resilient than many political scientists predicted in the 1990s, many of them may be more vulnerable than they appear.[73]

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CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Why are rulers of authoritarian regimes more hopeful about their prospects today than they were in the 1990s?
2. Is authoritarian rule justified if a leader can achieve improvements in citizens' capabilities, as President Paul Kagame has done in Rwanda?
3. How do communist and fascist regimes differ, and why have communist regimes been more enduring?
4. Why do electoral authoritarian regimes present dilemmas for both rulers and opposition?
5. Is one form of authoritarianism better than another?

KEY TERMS

Authoritarianism 139
Regime 140
Totalitarianism 140
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Single-party regimes 144
Communist party 144
Revolution 144
Marxism 145
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Personal rule 152
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