

Regime Type

Definitions of “Democratic,” “Authoritarian,” and “Hybrid”

Democratic: Democratic regimes are those in which citizens can participate in the selection of political leaders and government policies. They have competitive elections, constraints on the powers of the executive, such as a system of checks and balances, and civil liberties guaranteed to citizens in their daily lives and in acts of political participation, such as freedom of the press.

Authoritarian: Authoritarian regimes are those that sharply restrict or suppress competitive political participation. The executive is selected within a political elite and exercises power with few institutional constraints. Authoritarian regimes often lack concern for political freedoms and exercise a high degree of control over social and economic activity.

Hybrid: Hybrid regimes possess a wide mixture of democratic and authoritarian characteristics. The ruling elites generally keep themselves in power, despite the presence of some institutional features of democracy. Elections are often not competitive, and political liberties may be constrained.

Source: Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers, “Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800 – 2006,” College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm> (accessed April 16, 2008). Also see Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2005* (College Park: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, May 2005), <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/publications/publication.asp?pubType=paper&id=15> (accessed December 13, 2007).