

Comparison Criteria	Liberal Democracies	Illiberal Democracies	Authoritarian Regimes
<b>Some countries with this political system</b>	USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany	Russia, Venezuela, Egypt (don't write this)	China, Iran, North Korea, Chad
<b>How easily can the governed choose their leaders or change their government?</b> (Frequency and freedom of elections, limits on terms)	Regular actions, based on free and fair near-universal suffrage (i.e. almost all adult citizens can vote); elected officials usually have fixed terms and can be removed from office	Elections may be irregular and not offer universal suffrage (certain groups excluded), officials may not have fixed terms of office and be difficult to remove	Few or no elections – citizens may not be able to choose their leaders; officials generally have no fixed terms and may remain in power indefinitely.  For example: In countries such as China, the succession plan, and details of successor are released years in advance. In Iran, the ayatollah.
<b>What is the degree/level of political participation?</b> (Joining political parties and running for office)	Very high; almost all adult citizens (usually excepting criminals and the mentally ill) are free to join political parties and run for office	Political participation is possible but discouraged or limited through fear; citizens are generally free to run for office but face significant obstacles	Very limited: no political parties or only one that everyone is a member of; few have opportunities to run for office unless appointed  For example: The designated leaders in China are picked decades in advance (as decided by the committees)
<b>How limited is the power of the government?</b> (separation of powers, checks and balances)	High degree of separation of powers – presidential democracies usually have distinct executive and legislative branches vs parliamentary democracies – with clear limits on powers and checks on each branch by others	Leaders (the executive) may exert influence over legislative and judicial branches and override formal measures to check power	Few/no limited on government/state power despite formal separation of functions; leaders may be above the law and arbitrarily exercise extra-judicial powers
<b>How free are people to express their political views?</b>	High degree of respect for individual rights and freedoms of speech, usually to the extent of legal (constitutional or statutory) protection	Individual rights and freedoms may lack legal protection, be curtailed by certain laws, or limited through fear	Very limited freedom of political expression: criticism or dissent is generally prohibited either by law or through use of fear
<b>How free or independent are the news media?</b> (Freedom of news/information from government control)	Generally large number and variety of news media that enjoy a high degree of freedom to seek and publish information, sometimes to the extent of having legal protection.	Some degree of press freedom, but news media are generally monitored, regulated by the state	News media are either state-controlled or very heavily influenced; censorship and propaganda is commonly used to restrict the flow of information

<b>How independent are non-government organizations of the government?</b> (Distinction between public and private spheres)	Civil society and business are clearly separate from the state, with some possible exceptions (SOEs and state funded NGOs)	NGOs exist but may be closely monitored and regulated by state, which may also participate heavily in business (SOEs or government-linked enterprises)	Almost all formal organizations are closely controlled or co-opted as part of the state; most business entities may also be owned and/or controlled by the state
<b>What are the strengths of this political system?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greatest protection of individual rights and freedoms</li> <li>- Clear communication channels allow highest degree of feedback and interest articulation</li> <li>- Fixed terms and regular elections allow greatest ease of peaceful regime change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offers compromise between the need to cater to many conflicting interests and need to make difficult and fast decisions</li> </ul> <p>For example: In the Asian financial crisis (1997) the Monetary Authority of Singapore got the banks to sell off many other investments. Although this was unpopular with the general populace, they prevented the economy from collapsing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Citizens ability to peacefully change governments while giving governments the greater stability of tenure (no limits on term)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Able to make extremely unpopular but necessary or expedient decisions</li> <li>- Capable of exerting large extent of power/authority.</li> </ul> <p>For example: Jordan is doing very well as a monarchy, because they have well-educated and benevolent leaders who place importance on maintain peace in the middle east.</p>
<b>What are the weaknesses of this political system?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government lacks ability to make unpopular but necessary decisions (i.e. policies); decisions may tend to be populist</li> <li>- Higher degree of political conflict between competing interest groups, resulting in slower decision-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Like authoritarian systems, lack of effective monitoring systems, lack of effective monitoring can lead to corruption and abuses of power</li> </ul> <p>Example: Gerrymandering seen in countries such as Malaysia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governments may become more preoccupied with regime survival than meeting needs of the people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government prone to abuses of power and corruption without effective monitoring mechanisms</li> <li>- No guarantees of individual rights and limited interest articulation may marginalize minorities</li> <li>- Limited feedback mechanisms and opportunities for regime change may cause unrest and violence</li> </ul>

Things to read up on:

- Sunnis vs Shiites (Conflicts, Oppressions, Rebellion)
- Syrian Uprising
- US Government Shutdown

### **Singapore's Political System**

- Degree of level of political participation: between that of liberal and illiberal democracy
  - o Almost all citizens are free to join political parties/run for office (should the application pass even with national security concerns)
- Limitations on the power of the government: similar to that of liberal democracy
  - o PAP exerts a strong influence on the executive and judiciary arms of the government
  - o Some formal measures to check power (such as NGOs which fight for certain causes, and for certain laws to be modified)
- Freedom of expression: largely illiberal (while there is a movement towards greater freedom of expression, it is mostly limited)
  - o People are able to express their views through media such as Speaker's Corner, Hong Lim Park – but this requires permits by the police force
  - o "Lee dynasty" – getting sued for libel (a published false statement)
- Press freedom: between liberal and illiberal
  - o Monitored, regulated, and influenced by government (raid of SPH for attempting to print a section on homosexual marriage)

### **Notes: Ask PM Lee video**

- The changing needs of the people, presented by the changing times and the changing worlds is the driving factor behind the change in policies.
  - o Examples of such changes include housing subsidies, medicare, elderly provisions, etc.
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