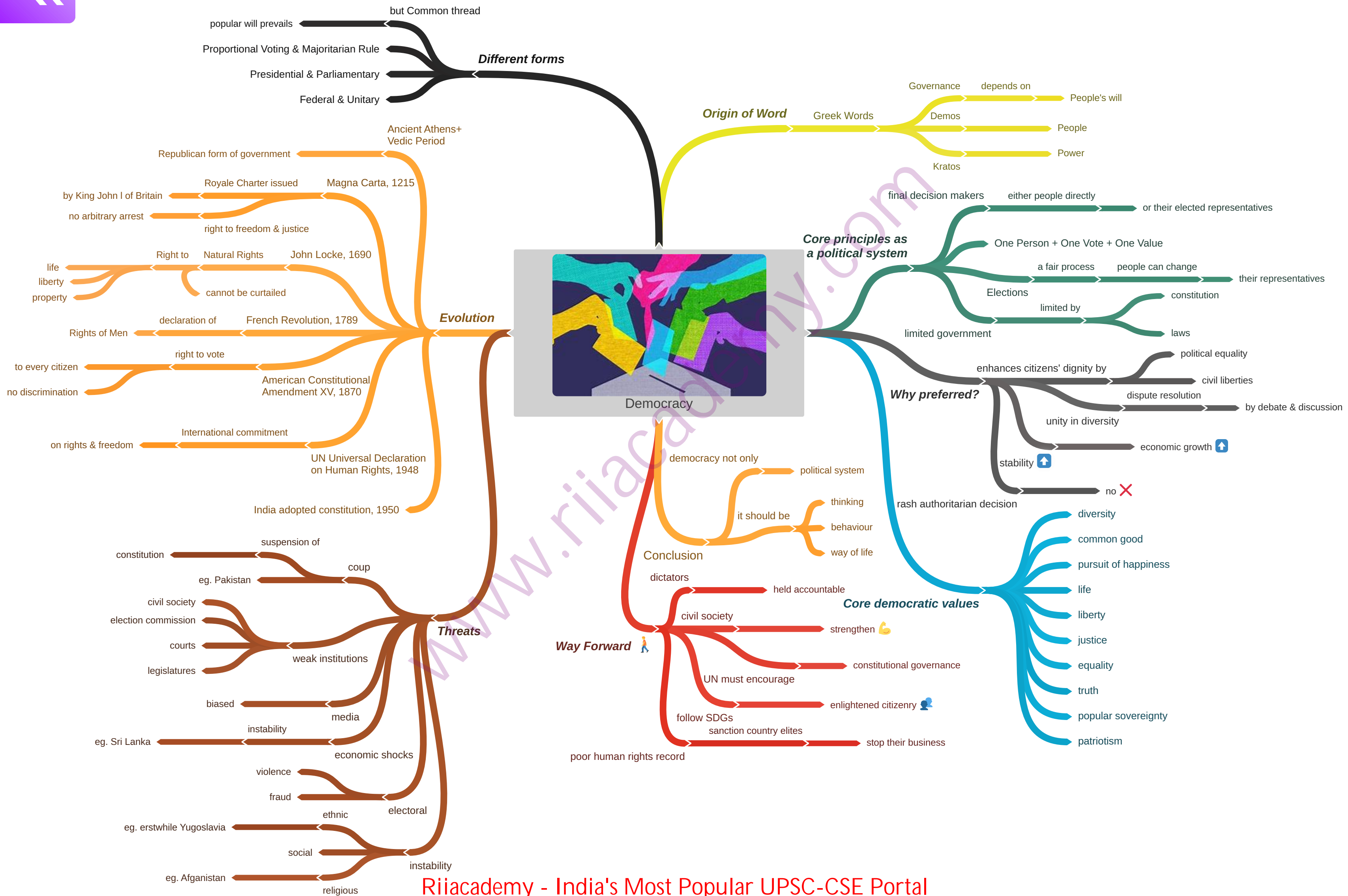




STPOL083

## IAS RED NOTES





## Democracy

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### Origin of Word:

The term originates from Greek words: "Demos" meaning "people" and "Kratos" meaning "power." This breakdown emphasizes that democracy is fundamentally about the power of the people.

### Core Principles as a Political System:

It includes concepts like "One Person One Vote," "Free and Fair Elections," "Limited Government," and "Influence Citizens Dignity." These principles underscore the idea that democracy is about ensuring equality, participation, and protection of individual rights.

- **One Person One Vote + One Value:** This emphasizes the egalitarian nature of democracy, where each individual's voice is considered equal.
- **Free and Fair Elections:** This highlights the importance of regular, transparent, and competitive elections as a means for citizens to choose their representatives.
- **Limited Government:** This suggests that in a democracy, governmental power is constrained by laws and a constitution to prevent tyranny and protect individual liberties.
- **Influence Citizens Dignity:** democracy enhances citizens' dignity through political equality and guaranteed rights and liberties.

### Why Preferred?

Democracy is considered a desirable form of governance. It highlights the benefits of democracy, such as "Unity in Diversity," "Economic Growth," and "Mobility."

- **Unity in Diversity:** This emphasizes democracy's ability to accommodate and integrate diverse populations and viewpoints.
- **Economic Growth:** This suggests that democratic systems can foster economic development by promoting stability, innovation, and participation.
- **Mobility:** This implies that democracy allows for social and economic mobility, enabling individuals to improve their status and opportunities.

### Core Democratic Values:

It includes values like "Constitution," "Civil Society," "Atmosphere," and "Constitutional Governance." These values underscore the importance of rule of law, civic engagement, and accountability in a democratic system.

- **Constitution:** This highlights the importance of a written or unwritten set of fundamental principles and laws that govern a nation.
- **Civil Society:** This refers to the network of non-governmental organizations and institutions that operate independently of the state and play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and holding the government accountable.



- **Atmosphere:** This suggests that democracy thrives in an environment characterized by openness, tolerance, and respect for diverse opinions.
- **Constitutional Governance:** This emphasizes the importance of governing in accordance with constitutional principles and norms.

## Evolution:

Democracy is not a static concept but has evolved over time through various historical struggles and movements mentioned as follow:

- **Ancient Athens:** This acknowledges the historical roots of democracy in ancient Greece, where direct democracy was practiced in some city-states.
- **Magna Carta 1215:** This highlights the significance of this document in establishing the principle of rule of law and limiting the power of the monarch.
- **French Revolution 1789:** This underscores the importance of this event in advancing the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which are central to modern democracy.
- **American Constitutional Amendment XV 1870:** This acknowledges the significance of this amendment in granting voting rights to African American men in the United States.
- **UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948:** This highlights the global recognition of human rights as fundamental to democracy and human dignity.

## Threats:

Democracy is not immune to challenges and that constant vigilance is required to safeguard its principles and institutions. It includes factors like "Weak Institutions," "Media," "Economic Shocks," "Electoral Fraud," "Social Instability," and "Religious Intolerance."

- **Weak Institutions:** This highlights the importance of strong, independent, and effective institutions for the functioning of democracy.
- **Media:** This underscores the role of a free and independent media in informing the public and holding the government accountable.
- **Economic Shocks:** This acknowledges that economic instability and inequality can undermine democratic stability and legitimacy.
- **Electoral Fraud:** This highlights the importance of ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections to maintain public trust in the democratic process.
- **Social Instability:** This acknowledges that social divisions and conflicts can threaten democratic stability and cohesion.
- **Religious Intolerance:** This underscores the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in a democratic society.

## Way Forward:

Strategies and approaches for strengthening and advancing democracy includes ideas like "Constitution," "Civil Society," "UN SDGs," and "Improve Human Rights Record."



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- **Constitution:** This underscores the importance of upholding and strengthening constitutional principles and norms.
- **Civil Society:** This highlights the role of civil society organizations in promoting civic engagement, accountability, and human rights.
- **UN SDGs:** This suggests aligning democratic efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which promote inclusive and sustainable development.
- **Improve Human Rights Record:** This emphasizes the importance of respecting and protecting human rights as fundamental to democracy.

## Conclusion

Democracy is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that encompasses a wide range of principles, values, and practices. It is a system of governance that places power in the hands of the people, protects individual rights and liberties, and promotes equality, participation, and accountability. However, democracy is not without its challenges and requires constant effort to safeguard its principles and institutions.

### Did You Know?

- Article 326 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to vote to all citizens aged 18 and above.
- The United States, since its constitution was ratified in 1788, is often referred to as one of the longest-running modern democracies.
- Some democracies, like Estonia, have embraced technology and introduced online voting for greater convenience.







## Democracy

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### What It Is?

- **Form of Government:** Democracy is defined as a form of government where "rulers are elected by people." This emphasizes the fundamental principle of popular sovereignty.
- **Four Core Values:** The four core values that underpin democracy are:
  - **Final Decision-Making Power Rests with Elected Representatives:** This highlights the principle of representative democracy, where elected officials make decisions on behalf of the people.
  - **One Person, One Vote, One Value:** This emphasizes political equality, where each citizen's vote carries equal weight.
  - **Government Rules Within Limits Set by the Constitution:** This underscores the importance of the rule of law and constitutionalism, ensuring that the government's power is constrained.
  - **Constitutional Mechanisms for Peaceful Transformation of Government:** This highlights the importance of institutionalized processes for changing governments, ensuring stability and preventing violent transitions.

### Why it is Preferred?

- **Better Opportunities:** Democracy fosters an environment conducive to economic growth and development, leading to "better opportunities" for citizens.
- **Facilitating Consultation:** Democracy promotes dialogue and deliberation, reducing "rash decision-making" and ensuring that policies are well-considered.
- **Political Equality, Civil Liberties, and Dignity of Citizens:** Democracy upholds fundamental rights and freedoms, ensuring "political equality," "civil liberties," and the "dignity of citizens."
- **Correction of Its Own Mistakes:** Democratic systems have mechanisms for self-correction, allowing them to address their shortcomings and improve over time.
- **Public Discussion:** Democracy encourages open debate and "public discussion," leading to better-informed decision-making.
- **Unity in Diversity:** Democracy provides a framework for managing diversity and promoting "unity" among different groups.
- **Resolution of Differences:** Democratic processes offer peaceful and constructive ways to "resolve differences" within society.
- **Abating Internal Armed Conflict and Terrorism:** Democracy promotes peaceful conflict resolution, reducing the likelihood of "internal armed conflict" and "terrorism."
- **Global Security:** Democratic nations tend to be more peaceful and cooperative, contributing to "global security."



- **Ensures Stability:** Democratic institutions and processes provide a foundation for "stability" and predictability.
- **Fair Opportunity to People to Change Current Rulers:** Regular elections provide citizens with the opportunity to change their government peacefully.

## Evolution

- **1215: King John Issued Magna Carta:** This landmark document established the principle of limited government and the rule of law.
- **1690: John Locke Pitched for Civil Government:** Locke's ideas on natural rights and government by consent laid the foundation for modern democracy.
- **1789: Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (France):** This document enshrined the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.
- **1870: Amendment XV to the Constitution of the US:** This amendment granted voting rights to African American men.
- **1948: UN Declaration of Human Rights:** This document established a universal standard for human rights.
- **1950: Indian Constitution with Universal Adult Suffrage:** India's constitution enshrined the principles of democracy and granted voting rights to all adult citizens.

## Challenges

- **Rise of Polarization:** Increasing social and political divisions threaten democratic institutions and processes.
- **Influence of Nondemocracies:** Authoritarian regimes are increasingly assertive, seeking to undermine democratic norms and institutions.
- **Effect of COVID-19:** The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and created new challenges for democracy.
- **Breeding Ground of Conflict:** Democratic backsliding and instability can create conditions conducive to conflict.
- **Climate Change:** Environmental degradation and resource scarcity can exacerbate social tensions and undermine democratic governance.
- **Low Economic Growth, High Unemployment, Poverty, etc.:** Economic dissatisfaction can fuel social unrest and undermine support for democracy.
- **Economic Dissatisfaction:** As mentioned above, economic issues can lead to discontent with democratic systems.
- **Digitization & Disinformation:** The spread of misinformation and disinformation online poses a significant threat to democratic discourse.
- **Fragile Nascent Democracies:** Newly established democracies are particularly vulnerable to backsliding and authoritarianism.



- **Weakening of Democratic Institutions:** The erosion of checks and balances, judicial independence, legislative oversight, and election processes undermines democratic governance.

## Way Ahead

- **Global Efforts:** International cooperation is essential to support democracy and counter authoritarianism. International standards and monitoring mechanisms are needed to ensure free and fair elections
- **Ensure Environmental Sustainability:** Addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development are crucial for long-term democratic stability.
- **Prevent Coups:** Strengthening civilian control of the military and promoting democratic norms are essential to prevent coups.
- **Strengthen Political Institutions and Processes:** Building strong and resilient democratic institutions is essential for long-term stability.
- **Address Grievances of Disgruntled Voters:** Addressing the concerns of marginalized and disaffected groups is crucial for maintaining social cohesion.
- **National Efforts:** Domestic policies and initiatives are essential to strengthen democracy. : Building strong and resilient democratic institutions is crucial for long-term stability.
- **Recraft Social Contracts:** Renewing the social contract between citizens and the state is crucial for building trust and legitimacy.
- **Strengthen Civil Society Organizations:** Vibrant and independent civil society organizations play a vital role in promoting democracy.
- **Media Integrity:** Promoting media literacy and combating disinformation are essential for maintaining a healthy public sphere.
- **Judicial Independence:** Ensuring the independence of the judiciary is crucial for upholding the rule of law.
- **Legislative Oversight:** Strengthening legislative oversight of the executive branch is essential for maintaining checks and balances.
- **Election Process:** Ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections is fundamental to democracy.
- **Civil Society Participation:** Engaging civil society in democratic processes is essential for ensuring accountability and responsiveness.

### Did You Know?

- India, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion, is the largest democracy in the world.
- Democracies can be classified into two main types: direct democracy, where citizens participate in decision-making directly, and representative democracy, where elected representatives act on behalf of citizens.
- The first country to grant universal adult suffrage was New Zealand in 1893.