

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS



Dino Bozonelos
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Victor Valley College

Comparative Government and Politics

Dino Bozonelos

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Instructor Resources

[Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics website](#)

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Preface

Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics is the first open educational resource (OER) on the topic of comparative politics, and the second OER textbook in political science funded by ASCCC OERI, in what we hope will become a complete library for the discipline. This textbook aligns with the C-ID Course Descriptor for Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics in content and objectives.

With chapter contributions from Dr. Julia Wendt at Victor Valley College, Dr. Charlotte Lee at Berkeley City College, Jessica Scarffe at Allan Hancock College, Dr. Masahiro Omae at San Diego City College, Dr. Josue Franco at Cuyamaca College, Stefan Veldhuis at Long Beach City College, Dr. Byran Martin at Houston Community College, and myself, the purpose of this open education resource is to provide students interested in or majoring in political science a useful textbook in comparative politics, one of the major subfields in the discipline.

It is organized thematically, with each chapter accompanied by a case study or a comparative study, one of the main methodological tools used in comparative politics. By contextualizing the concepts, we hope to help students learn the comparative method, which to this day remains one of the most important methodological tools for all researchers.

I chose to pursue this project as I felt that an OER textbook in comparative politics would otherwise never have been written. After many years of teaching at a community college, my colleagues and I realized a need existed for a zero-cost textbook. With the rising costs of education and textbooks, community college students may be deterred from exploring political science courses. I believe that this is where the next elected leader, policymaker or military strategist needs to come from. This is a grassroots textbook, written with these and future community college students in mind.

This open education resource is free to students and faculty and available under the Creative Commons - Attribution - Noncommercial (CC BY-NC) license. We hope that it will encourage them further their studies in comparative politics and in political science.

Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D.
May 2022

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About the Authors

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1: WHY STUDY COMPARATIVE POLITICS?

- 1.1: What is Comparative Politics?
- 1.2: Approaches to Comparative Politics
- 1.3: Outline of the Textbook
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1.1: What is Comparative Politics?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define key concepts within the discipline of comparative politics.
- Understand the scope of comparative politics and its place within the discipline of political science.

Introduction

Have you ever read the news and wondered,

- “Why is this country at war with another country?” or
- “Why did that world leader say or do that?” or
- “Why doesn’t this country trade with that country?” or maybe, very simply,
- “Why can’t all these countries just get along?”

If you have, you’ve already begun asking a few of the many questions scholars within the field of comparative politics ask when practicing their craft. Many of the questions and concerns within the realm of comparative politics are centered on a wide spectrum of social, political, cultural, and economic circumstances and outcomes, which provide students and scholars alike with robust and diverse opportunities for inquiry and discussion. The field of comparative politics is broad enough to enable provocative conversations about the nature of violence, the future of democracy, why some democracies fail, and why vast disparities in wealth are able to persist both globally and within certain countries. Whether a student watches or reads the news, or expresses any outward concern for global and current events, many of the problems and issues within comparative politics inevitably affect every person on the planet.

So, what exactly is comparative politics? What differentiates comparative politics from other subfields within political science? What can be gained from studying comparative politics? The following sections introduce the field, outlook, and topics within comparative politics that this textbook will further explore.

Overview

When defining and describing the scope of comparative politics, it is useful to back up and recall the purpose of political science from a broad perspective. **Political science** is a field of social and scientific inquiry which seeks to advance knowledge of political institutions, behavior, activities, and outcomes using systematic and logical research methods in order to test and refine theories about how the political world operates. Since the field of political science is so broad, it has a number of subfields within it that enable students and scholars to focus on various phenomena from different analytical lenses and perspectives. Although there are many topics that can be addressed within political science, there are eight subfields that tend to garner the most attention. These subfields include: (1) comparative politics, (2) American politics, (3) international relations, (4) political philosophy, (5) research methodology, (6) political economy, (7) public policy, and (8) political psychology. All of these subfields, to varying degrees, are able to leverage findings and approaches from a diversity of disciplines, including anthropology, economics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Given the vast scope of political science, and in order to understand where comparative politics fits within the discipline, it is useful to briefly consider each of these subfields.

Comparative Politics

This subfield of political science seeks to advance understanding of political structures from around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way. Scholars can, for instance, analyze countries, in part or in whole, in order to consider similarities and differences between and among countries. While the name of the field itself suggests a methodology of comparing and contrasting, there is ample room for debate over the best way to analyze political units side-by-side. In this chapter, we show different ways to prepare a comparison, whether one focuses on area studies, cross-national studies, or subnational studies.

Comparative politics involves looking first within countries and then across designated countries (this contrasts with international relations, which is described below, but entails looking primarily across countries, with less attention given to within-country analysis). Throughout this textbook, we discuss many of the themes for analysis, whether the scholar is focusing on “the state,” political institutions, democracies and non-democracies, political identity, collective action, or political violence. After briefly considering the other subfields within political science, we will revisit the question of the definition and scope of comparative politics.



Figure 1.1.1: Comparativists (those studying comparative politics) look within countries and then across designated countries to compare and contrast. One theme a comparativist may study is how types of leadership, and the associated political regime types (e.g., democracy, dictatorship), differ across countries. A scholar may ask: Who are the heads of state, where do they conduct their official government work, and how does this vary across countries? (Sources (from left to right): [White House](#) by Matt Wade is licensed under [CC-BY-SA 3.0](#); [Tokyo, Japan, Seimon Ishibashi Bridge](#) by Kakidai is licensed under [CC-BY-SA 3.0](#); [Madrid, Spain, Royal Palace of Madrid](#) by Bernard Gagnon is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#); [London, Britain, Number 10 Downing Street](#) by Sergeant Tom Robinson RLC is licensed under [Open Government License version 1.0](#); [Reykjavik, Iceland, Bessastaðir, Wohnsitz der isl. Präsidenten](#) by Balou46 is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

American Politics

This subfield of political science focuses on political institutions and behaviors within the United States. Those interested in American politics will focus on questions like: What is the role of elections in American democracy? How do interest groups affect legislation in the United States? What is the role of public opinion and the media in the United States, and what are the implications for democracy? What is the future of the two-party system? Do political parties delay important political action? Those who decide to specialize in American politics could find themselves with a variety of career opportunities, such as the following: teaching; journalism; working for government think-tanks; working for federal, state, or local governmental institutions; or even running for office.

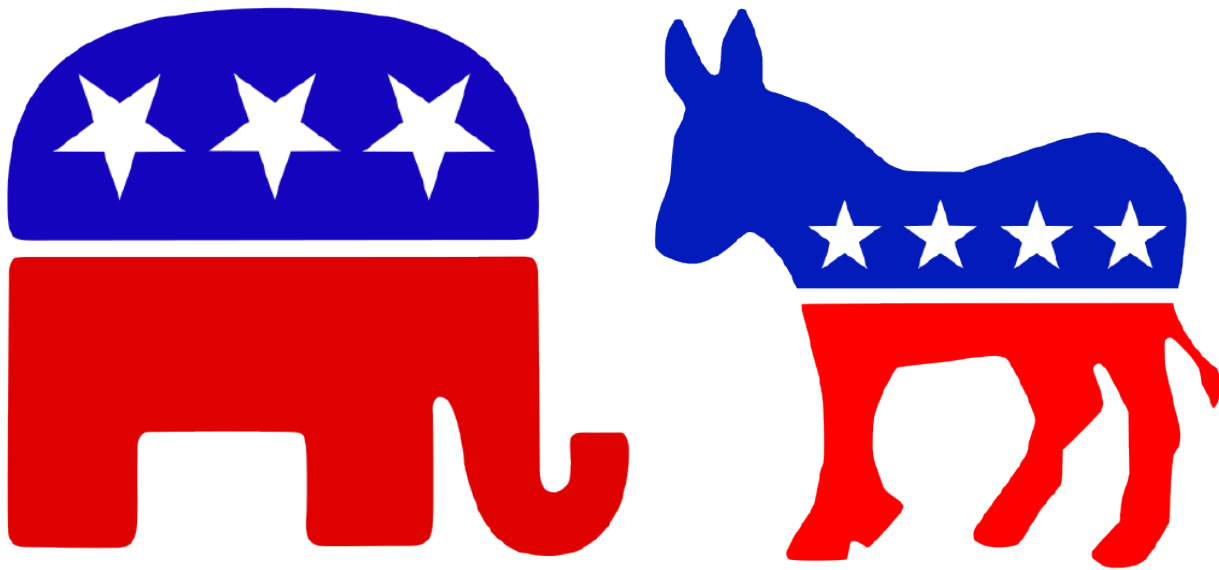


Figure 1.1.2: Political scientists who study American politics have a variety of research interests, and one area of inquiry is the study of political parties and partisanship in the United States. Political parties began forming almost immediately upon the United States' Declaration of Independence, though a number of founders, including George Washington, warned early on about the influence and possible dangers of political parties on the state of democracy. The two main political parties in the United States are the Republican Party (logo in the image on the left) and the Democratic Party (logo in the image on the right). (Sources (from left to right): [Republican Elephant](#) by Republican Party (United States) is licensed under [CC01 - Universal Public Domain](#); [Democratic Donkey](#) by Steven Braeger is licensed under [Public Domain CC0 1.0 Universal](#))

International Relations

Sometimes called world politics, international affairs, or international studies, international relations is a subfield of political science which focuses on how countries and/or international organizations or bodies interact with each other. Those interested in international relations consider questions like: What causes war between countries? How does international trade affect relationships between countries? How do international bodies, like non-governmental organizations, work with various countries? What is globalization and how does it affect peace and conflict? What is the best balance of power for the global system? Individuals interested in this field of political science may be looking for careers in teaching, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, or governmental think-tanks focused on foreign policy.



Figure 1.1.3: Academics involved in the study of international relations are often interested in themes of international conflict. To this end, some studies involve looking at members of the United Nations (headquarters in New York City pictured above). The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization formed in 1945 with the goal of promoting peace and preventing international conflicts. (Source: [The United Nations](#) by Tom Page is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

Political Philosophy

Sometimes called political theory, political philosophy is a subfield of political science that reflects on the philosophical origins of politics, the state, government, fairness, equality, equity, authority, and legitimacy. This field can consider themes in broad or narrow terms, considering the origins of political principles, as well as implications for these principles as they relate to issues of political identity, culture, the environment, ethics, distribution of wealth, and other social phenomena. Those interested in political philosophy may ask questions like: Where did the concept of “the state” arise? What were the different ancient beliefs regarding the formation of states and cooperation within societies? How is power derived within systems, and what are the best theories to explain power dynamics? Individuals who are interested in political philosophy may find careers in teaching, research, journalism, or consulting.



Figure 1.1.4: Political philosophers are interested in a large scope of issues relating to the nature and basis of political power. They consider concepts like authority, equality, freedom, justice, legitimacy, and rights. The above-pictured political philosophers considered many of these themes. (Sources (from left to right): [Confucious](#) by Kanō Sansetsu is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#); [Socrates](#), by Eric Gaba is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.5](#); [Al Farabi](#), by Unknown Author is [CC01 - Universal Public Domain](#); [Thomas Hobbes](#), Line engraving by W. Humphrys is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#); [John Locke](#), by Godfrey Kneller is licensed under [CC01 - Universal Public Domain](#); [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) by Maurice Quentin de La Tour is licensed under [CC01 - Universal Public Domain](#)).

Research Methodology

Research methodology is a subfield of political science that seeks to consider the best practices for analyzing themes within political science through discussion, testing, and critical analysis of how research is constructed and implemented. This subfield is concerned with finding techniques for testing theories and hypotheses related to political science. An ongoing and heated debate often arises out of the proper or applicable usage of quantitative versus qualitative research designs, though each inevitably can be appropriate for various research scenarios.

Quantitative research centers on testing a theory or hypothesis, usually through mathematical and statistical means, using data from a large sample. Quantitative research can be beneficial in situations where a researcher is looking to test the validity of a theory, or general statement, while looking at a large sample size of data that is diverse and representative of the subjects being studied. Scholars in many subfields of political science can, depending on the subject they are considering, find practical applicability for quantitative research methods. Someone interested in international relations, for instance, may want to test the influence of global trade on conflict. For this, the sample size of the study may be 172 countries engaged in international trade over a period of 10, 20, or even 50 years. Looking at data from this sample, the researcher may wish to test this theory: Trade improves relations between states, making conflict less likely. The researcher testing the theory would need to find ways to quantify the two key variables over time--trade relations and conflict--and collect data for the entire sample. The method for testing this theory quantitatively would then involve statistical analysis.

Qualitative research centers on exploring ideas and phenomena, potentially with the goal of consolidating information or developing evidence to form a theory or hypothesis to test. Qualitative research involves categorizing, summarizing, and analyzing

cases thoroughly to gain greater understanding. Often, given the need for detailed description, qualitative research will have a small sample size, perhaps only comparing a small number of countries at a time, or even examining an individual country as a single case study. Some of the methods for qualitative research involve conducting interviews, constructing literature reviews, and preparing ethnographies.

Regardless of a quantitative or qualitative approach, topics of interest within the subfield of research methodology focus on advancing discussions of best practices in research design; understanding causal relationships; considering how to validly and reliably measure social, economic, cultural, and political trends; and reducing errors due to issues like selection bias and omitted variable bias (among many others). This subfield is critical to all other subfields within political science, and this book will examine the topics identified above in greater detail in Chapter 2. Those who are interested in pursuing research methodology as a subfield will find career openings related not only to political science, but also to data science, mathematics, the nature of inquiry, and statistics.

Political Economy

This subfield of political science considers various economic theories (e.g., capitalism, socialism, communism, fascism), practices, and outcomes either within a country, or among and between countries in the global system. Those interested in political economy will become versed with the theories brought forth by Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, and Max Weber (among others) to gain greater understanding into economic systems, their outputs, and their effects on society. Political economy can be studied from the standpoints of a few other subfields in political science. For instance, a scholar of comparative politics may consider political economy when comparing and contrasting countries. A scholar of international relations may consider questions relating to global inequalities, relationships between poor and wealthy countries, or the role of non-governmental organizations or multinational corporations on international trade and finance. Those who are interested in political economy may pursue careers in analysis (e.g., of the stock market), economics, teaching, or research.

Public Policy

This subfield of political science explores political policies and outcomes, and focuses on the strength, legitimacy, and effectiveness of political institutions. Scholars in this subfield may ask questions similar to the following: How is the agenda for public policies set? Which public policy issues get the most attention, and why? How do we evaluate the effectiveness of a public policy? To what extent can a public policy hurt or help democracy? Those who are interested in public policy may seek careers relating to almost any item on the political agenda (e.g., education, healthcare, military affairs, welfare); they may go into teaching and research; or they may serve as public policy consultants for federal, state, or local governmental organizations.

Political Psychology

This subfield of political science weds together principles, themes, and research from political science and psychology to understand the psychological roots of political behavior. Is there a psychological reason world leaders behave in a certain way? Is a leader's behavior strategic and, consciously or not, rooted in some psychological basis? Can theories of cognitive and social processes explain various political outcomes? Those who are interested in the psychological origins of political behavior may find interesting careers in teaching, research, and consulting.



Figure 1.1.5: Political psychologists are interested in the psychological roots of political behavior. To this end, they may conduct research and analysis on various personality types and potential psychological determinants for political behavior. Political psychologists have considered the personality characteristics of the three leaders pictured above: Kim Jong-Un (North Korea), Vladimir Putin (Russia), and Xi Jinping (China). (Sources (from left to right): [Kim Jong-Un](#), by Alexei Nikolsky is licensed under [CC-BY 4.0](#); [Vladimir Putin](#), by [The Presidential Press and Information Office](#) is licensed under [CC-BY 4.0](#); [Xi Jiping](#), by [Palácio do Planalto](#) is licensed under [CC-BY-SA](#))

Figure 1.1.6 provides a graphical representation of the subfields within political science, though it is important to point out that the subfields are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For instance, public policy, political economy, and political psychology can each be analyzed through the lens of American politics, but they can also be the key point of consideration for studies within comparative politics or international relations. All of these subfields will need some level of specialization in research methodology to enable the systematic analysis of their subjects of interest. Without a basis in research methodology, these subfields would not be able to advance knowledge in the field in a substantive way.

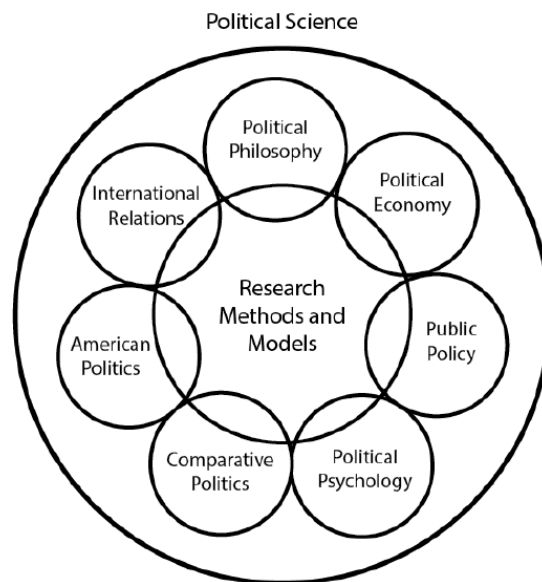


Figure 1.1.6: The diagram shows the subfields of political science in relation to each other with research methodology at the center, laying the basis for high-quality work in all subfields. (Source: Author Creation.)

Given the overall spectrum of subfields available within the field of political science, we will now take a closer look at comparative politics. In the following section, we will examine the origin of comparative politics, provide an expanded definition of the subfield, and highlight terminology frequently used by comparativists (those who study comparative politics).

A Brief History and Expanded Definition

In considering the other subfields within political science, it may not seem like a complicated process to define comparative politics. Comparative politics seems to be an area of study wherein scholars compare and contrast political systems, institutions, characteristics, and outcomes on one, a few, or a group of countries. In actuality, there has been ample debate over the ideal definition and scope of comparative politics. To consider comparative politics more thoroughly, it is helpful to consider its historical origins.

Most often, comparative politics is considered to have ancient origins, going back to at least Aristotle. Aristotle has sometimes been credited with being the “father” of political science, and attributed with being one of the first to use comparative methodologies for analyzing competing Greek city-states. The word politics derives from the Greek word, *politikos*, meaning “of, or relating to, the polis,” with polis being translated as city-state. Aristotle envisioned the study of politics to be one of the three major forms of science individuals could engage in. The first form of science, according to Aristotle, was theoretical science, and in modern terms, this refers closest to the studies of both physics and metaphysics, which he considered to be concerned with the pursuit of truth and knowledge for intrinsic purposes. The second form of science that Aristotle identified was practical science, which was the study of what is ideal for individuals and society. The final area of science Aristotle identified was productive science, which he envisioned as the making of important or beautiful objects. To Aristotle, political science fell within the realm of practical sciences, and political science (“the most authoritative science”) was of critical concern when discussing what is best for society. To Aristotle, political science must concern itself with what is “good” or “right” or “just” for society, as the lives of citizens are at stake given political structures and institutions.

It is not difficult to appreciate why Aristotle found political science, and comparative politics, so important given his overall beliefs on the function of politics within a society. In Aristotle’s time, the units of analysis were Greek city-states. If these city-states were stable, they enabled people to live productive lives; if these city-states were unstable, they did not produce such benefits. For Aristotle, it was critical to find ways to compare and contrast the city-states to understand how they operated and what outcomes they produced. To this end, Aristotle looked at the constitutions for various city-states, finding much variation in political outcomes. A city-state could have one ruler, who, depending on how the government was run, was either a rightful king or a tyrant running an authoritarian regime. Or, a city-state could have a few rulers, which, at best, could be an aristocracy, or at worst, could be an oligarchy where only the elite were included in decision-making and rewards. Finally, a city-state could have multiple rulers, balanced by a “middle” class that attempted to rule on behalf of the people’s interests. This “middle” group was not tremendously wealthy, nor woefully poor, and was able to understand the needs of society at large by virtue of being in the “middle.” While Aristotle considered democracy to have the possibility of being “deviant,” he also entertained the possibility that having more people involved in government could be a way to limit corruption. In either case, Aristotle spent much time comparing and contrasting political regime types to determine which produced the best outcomes for society.

Aristotle’s work influenced a number of thinkers to continue the tradition of scientifically approaching problems in political science and comparative politics, including Niccolo Machiavelli (author of *The Prince*, 1532), Charles Montesquieu, (author of *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748), and Max Weber (author of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905), to name only a few.

Despite its extensive history, scholars still disagree on the exact definition of comparative politics. Table 1.1.1 provides three definitions from textbooks in comparative politics.

Table 1.1.1: No, really... What is Comparative Politics?

Textbook	Definition of Comparative Politics
<i>The Art of Comparative Politics</i> (Lane, 1997, p. 2)	“What is comparative politics? It is two things, first a world, second, a discipline. As a ‘world,’ comparative politics encompasses political behavior and institutions in all parts of the earth... The ‘discipline’ of comparative politics is a field of study that desperately tries to keep up with, to encompass, to understand, to explain, and perhaps to influence the fascinating and often riotous world of comparative politics.”
<i>Essentials of Comparative Politics</i> (O’Neil, 2004, p. 3)	“Politics is...the struggle in any group for power that will give a person or people the ability to make decisions for the larger groups...comparative politics is a subfield that compares this struggle across countries.”
<i>New Directions in Comparative Politics</i> (Wiarda, 2000, p. 7)	“Comparative politics involves the systematic study and comparison of the world’s political systems. It seeks to explain differences between as well as similarities among countries. In contrast to journalistic reporting on a single country, comparative politics is particularly interested in exploring patterns, processes, and regularities among political systems.”

While the differences in Table 1.1.1 may appear small on the surface, debate on the definition of comparative politics can sometimes be contentious. For example, Zahariadis (1997) argued that comparative politics needs to be a study of *foreign* countries. If this is true, does it mean that someone who lives in a country is unable to study their own country and still call it comparative politics? Was Aristotle's study of city-states methodologically flawed since he occasionally lived in different city-states? As another example, comparativists often disagree on the appropriate sample size for inquiry. Does the definition of comparative politics mandate that a researcher study a certain number of countries at a time? When Alexis de Tocqueville wrote *Democracy in America* (1835), was this study flawed because it only considered the political lives of Americans? If we use Zahariadis' definition, de Tocqueville did focus on a *foreign* country, but since it was only *one* country, does it fall outside the realm of comparative politics? While we will not definitively answer these questions in this textbook, we will provide an overview of various research methodologies used within comparative politics in Chapter 2.

1.2: Approaches to Comparative Politics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between formal, informal, and political institutions.
- Describe the meaning and scope of area studies.
- Trace the origin and scope of cross-national studies.
- Identify the best application of subnational studies.

Introduction

Comparative politics involves looking inside countries, regions, institutions, or other entities and then comparing across them. But how do comparativists know what to compare? Comparativists often compare countries, but can they compare *any* two countries? What if those countries systematically differ? Do they *ever* want to compare countries that are systematically different? What best practices do comparativists follow when choosing cases? As we will discuss in Chapter 2, case selection is a foundational aspect of research design in comparative politics. However, before delving into the details of case selection, we first need to understand three broad approaches to comparative analysis: area studies, cross-national studies, and subnational studies. After defining key terms related to institutions that transcend the approaches, we will discuss each approach.

Institutions

No matter the approach to comparative analysis, comparativists often study institutions. **Institutions** are the beliefs, norms, and organizations that structure social and political life. They encompass the rules, norms, and values of a society. As March and Olsen (2006, p. 3) define, institutions are “a relatively enduring collection of rules and organization practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resistant to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and outside circumstances.” Peters (2019, p. 23) adds that institutions “transcend individuals to involve groups of individuals in some sort of patterned interactions that are predictable.”

Institutions are therefore predictable, stable, and affect individual behavior, yet they come in many shapes and sizes. There are **formal institutions**, which are based on a clear set of rules that have been formalized, often with the authority to enforce the rules through punitive measures. Examples include universities, sports leagues, and corporations. Formal institutions often (though not always) have physical tangibility, such as through a building or a location (e.g., a university campus).

There are also **informal institutions**, which are based on an unwritten set of rules that have not necessarily been formalized. Informal institutions are based on conventions on how one should behave, and there is no authority that monitors the behavior. An example of an informal institution is the societal expectation for waiting in line. While expectations for waiting in line will vary by location (e.g., in a school cafeteria, the line order will be first-come, first-serve; in an emergency room, the line order will depend on the severity of medical need), people are generally expected to self-regulate.

Finally, there are political institutions, which can be formal or informal. **Political institutions** are “structures that lend the polity its integrity” (Orren & Skowronek, 1995, p. 298). These are the spaces in which the majority of politics and political decisions take place. Formal political institutions include written constitutions, legislatures, judiciaries, executives, militaries, and police forces. Informal political institutions, as one example, include expectations during negotiations. During the lawmaking process, lawmakers may logroll, or exchange reciprocal promises of voting support for legislation. Without logrolling, the number of laws passed would likely decrease substantially. Other examples of informal political institutions include norms surrounding levels of corruption, political ideology, and political culture.

The study of formal, informal, and political institutions occurs in each of the three broad approaches to comparative analysis: area studies, cross-national studies, and subnational studies.

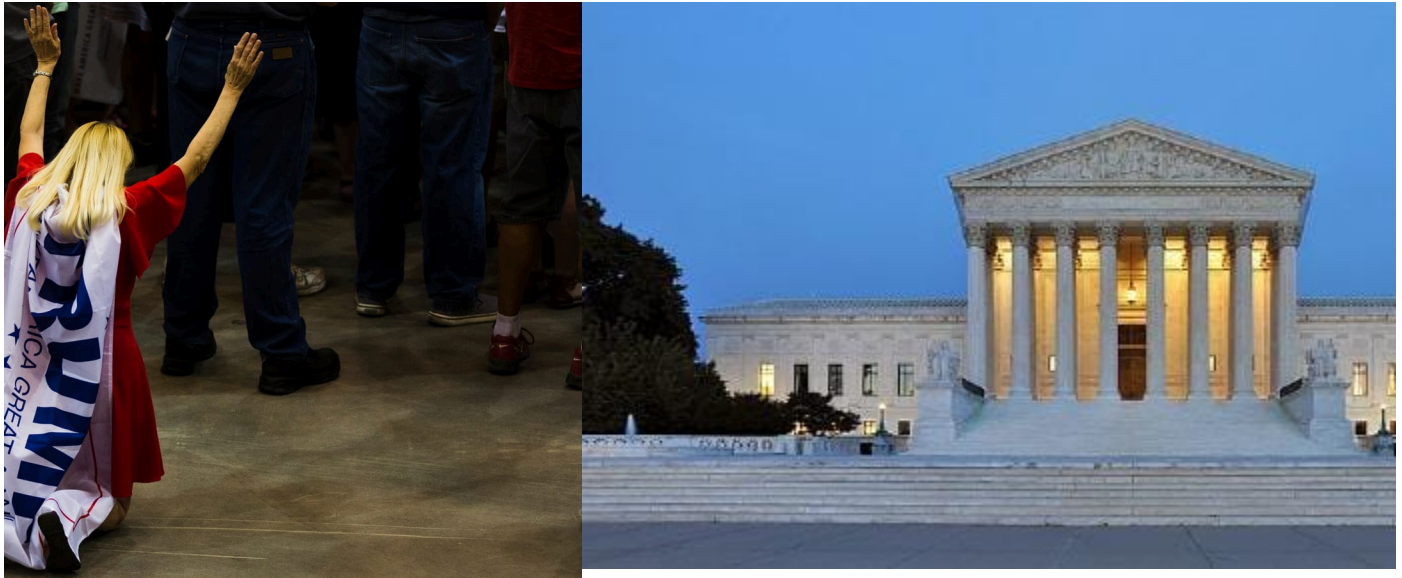


Figure 1.2.1: Political institutions can be either formal or informal. A Trump supporter, pictured on the left, represents informal political institutions through political culture. The Supreme Court, pictured on the left, is a formal institution. (Sources (from left to right): [Trump Supporter](#), by Johnny Silvercloud is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#); [The Supreme Court](#), by Joe Ravi is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), [Trump Supporter](#))

Area Studies

The first approach to comparative analysis is through area studies, in which scholarship is organized geographically. The field of **area studies** has its roots in the age of empires when European powers expanded their borders beyond the continent of Europe. As imperial forces, such as the British and the French, occupied more territory, the ‘enlightened’ Europeans attempted to understand the ‘exotic’ peoples and the indigenous languages, cultures, and social norms of the regions they conquered. Eurocentrism was the norm, with invaders filling their home museums with items stolen or ‘bought’ from other civilizations.

World War II transformed area studies from a colonial enterprise into a geopolitical imperative. In the United States, military campaigns in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and North Africa required deep understanding of terrain from area specialists. The Cold War further solidified the need for area studies. The conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union included proxy wars across many continents, pushing the U.S. military to rely on the university system for expertise. Universities established various centers, programs, and initiatives, such as the Center for Latin American Studies at Stanford University, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, and the Asian Studies Initiative at Boston University. The 1958 National Defense Act, moreover, provided funding for training in critical languages, and entities such as the Ford Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Council of Learned Societies contributed to the area-specific efforts.

Despite the controversial origins of this approach to research, area studies are important interdisciplinary segments of contemporary university curricula. Area studies can include disciplines such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, linguistics, literature, political science, religious studies, and sociology. Within the broad approach of area studies, there are also numerous (and sometimes contentiously-defined) fields corresponding to geographical areas. Table 1.2.1 provides select examples.

Table 1.2.1: Select Examples of Geographically-Defined Fields within Area Studies

Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	Middle East
African Studies	Asian Studies	European Studies	Amazonia Studies	Gulf Studies
Africana Studies	Asian-Pacific Studies	East European Studies	Caribbean Studies	Levantine Studies
East African Studies	East Asian Studies	Mediterranean Studies	Central American Studies	Maghrib Studies

Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	Middle East
Southern African Studies	South Asian Studies	Post-Soviet Studies	Latin American Studies	Middle Eastern Studies
West African Studies	Southeast Asian Studies	Southeast European Studies	Southern Cone Studies	Near Eastern Studies

Cross-National Studies

A second approach to comparative analysis is through **cross-national studies**, a type of research transcending national boundaries that is “*explicitly* comparative, that is, studies that utilize systematically comparable data from two or more nations” (Kohn, 1987, p. 714). In this sense, area studies may also be cross-national studies (within a defined geographical region), yet we distinguish cross-national studies from area studies as approaches to comparative analysis. Cross-national studies place much emphasis on appropriately measuring variables across cases to increase external validity, the extent to which a researcher can generalize their findings.

A good example of cross-national research is Arend Lijphart's (1999) book, *Patterns of Democracy*. In this seminal study, Lijphart examines 36 diverse democracies, comparing institutions ranging from electoral systems to the role of central banks to internal policy-making techniques. Another example is the cross-national analysis of the 38 countries making up the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization that facilitates dialogue on macroeconomic policies. OECD countries, which span multiple continents, have harmonized their economic indicators, allowing for easier comparisons. A final example of cross-national research is the Polity data series, which ranks countries from strongly democratic to strongly autocratic based on political regime characteristics. To summarize the commonalities among these examples, in comparative politics, cross-national studies often involve the comparisons of countries, or country institutions, across geographical regions and through quantitative analysis.

Due to the quantitative focus, one of the major critiques of cross-national studies relates to measurement. Can we properly measure variables and compare across large swaths of countries? Does consistent data exist across space and time? Do our measures have internal validity (that is, do they accurately reflect the concept we aim to measure)? Does our study have external validity (that is, is it generalizable)? These difficult questions have led some to reject cross-national research in comparative politics, but the attempt to systematize analyses across countries is important. Measurement is a problem that all social scientists face, and deliberations on how to appropriately measure concepts like democracy, capitalism, and election integrity are necessary to support shared understanding.

Subnational Studies

A third approach to comparative analysis is through **subnational studies**, research in which scholars compare subnational governments (any level of government lower than the national level). A researcher may compare subnational governments within one country (e.g., state, county, or city governments within the United States), or a researcher may compare subnational units across countries (e.g., provincial, regional, or municipal governments in multiple countries).

Across countries, subnational governments vary significantly in their level of sovereignty. **Sovereignty** is fundamental governmental power and authority in decision-making within a given territory. This fundamental power and authority means that a government has the power to coerce others to do things they may not want to do, such as paying taxes or not speeding on freeways. In some countries, sovereignty is shared between the national government and subnational governments. An example is the United States, in which power is shared between the national government in Washington, D.C. and the 50 state governments. Countries with this shared power structure have **federal governments**. Other countries do not share power in this manner. When the power is concentrated at the national level, a country has a **unitary government**. An example is France, where the majority of power lies in Paris in the hands of the president and parliament. When power is instead concentrated at a subnational level, a country has a **confederal government**. While few contemporary examples exist, Switzerland offers one; within Switzerland, there are 26 subnational governmental units called cantons, and each canton has its own constitution.

Subnational research traces its roots to the 1970s. At this time, there was a surge in the number of democracies worldwide and an increase in the empowerment of subnational governments through the process of decentralization (Snyder, 2001). This process is known as devolution. **Devolution** occurs when the central government in a country deliberately transfers power to a government at a lower level. Examples of devolution include the creation of parliaments in Scotland and Wales and the creation of the Catalan,

Basque, and Galician autonomous regional governments in Spain.

To study questions of sovereignty and devolution, subnational research can take two approaches. The first approach is a within-nation comparison. In a **within-nation comparison**, a researcher studies the subnational governments or institutions within a single country. For example, a researcher within the subfield of American politics might analyze and compare all 50 states' policies toward COVID-19. The second approach is a **between-nation comparison**, in which a researcher compares subnational governments across different countries. As an example, a researcher studying postcolonial Africa may study contiguous subnational governments because tribal, ethnic, and religious group boundaries often overlap national borders.

1.3: Outline of the Textbook

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the range of substantive areas for inquiry within comparative politics.
- Identify the relevance of substantive areas within comparative politics.
- Consider limitations to the field of comparative politics.

Approaching this Textbook

Although students could, in theory, read chapters in this textbook according to their order of interest, it is most helpful to read this book from a linear perspective to ensure understanding of foundational terminology. Chapter 2, in particular, provides necessary information to understand how the authors selected case studies in subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 introduces key terminology; reviews quantitative and qualitative research methods; addresses how the scientific method manifests in comparative politics; and provides an introduction to posing research questions, developing theories, and testing hypotheses.

Following the discussion of research methodology in Chapter 2, this textbook contains three major sections: institutions and institutional change, intersections and boundaries, and comparative political behavior.

- Institutions and institutional change: Part one delves into many of the basic terms and questions within comparative politics. What is the state? How do we identify important institutions for analysis, and how do comparativists understand how and why institutions change? What is a political regime? How do regime types vary, and how do transitions between them occur?
- Intersections and boundaries: Part two considers how important internal structures and components differ across countries, focusing on political identity and political economy. While the concept of political identity is incredibly large in scope, this textbook will consider the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, nationalism, religion, and class on collective political outcomes.
- Comparative political behavior: Part three examines several manifestations of political behavior, such as how social movements vary, how public opinion influences political outcomes, and how political violence occurs.

By reading this textbook in a linear manner, students will gain a progressively wider understanding of the scope of topics and issues within comparative politics. The following sub-sections provide additional details about the three major sections of the textbook.

Part One: Institutions and Institutional Change

Chapter 3 introduces a focal point of comparative politics by addressing how “the state” can vary so greatly from place to place. The chapter discusses the historical foundations of “the state,” and differentiates important terms like state, regime, nation, and government. Chapter 3 also delves into concepts such as the social contract, sovereignty, power, authority, and legitimacy. The chapter culminates with case study comparisons of two states: Botswana and Somalia. Botswana, sometimes considered one of Africa’s longest standing and most stable democracies (with some level of debate here), juxtaposes itself from Somalia, a place which some have argued operated with more stability under, paradigmatically, stateless conditions. This chapter will help acquaint students with a number of the basic terms used in comparative politics, while also raising questions about why and how states can be so different, even when they share similarities in location, heritage, regime type, and other factors.

Chapter 4 introduces a foundational discussion in contemporary studies of comparative politics: the characteristics and nature of democracy and democratization. More than one-half of all countries currently in existence identify as democracies, and yet many questions remain over the quality, stability, and different types of democratic governments that exist. Is democracy the best form of government? Are there certain predictable characteristics that arise from states experiencing regime transitions to democracy? This chapter culminates with a comparison of Iraq and South Africa, considering movements toward democracy through the process of democratization.

Chapter 5 considers non-democratic regimes and the potential for democracies to “backslide” into non-democratic regimes.

While many democracies now exist globally, there have been ample occasions where previously democratic regimes, for various reasons and circumstances, engaged in political trajectories that took away the liberal aspects of their governance. There can be political, cultural, economic, and social factors that contribute to democratic backsliding. The chapter concludes with a case study of Russia, which has experienced multiple periods of non-democratic rule.

Part Two: Intersections and Boundaries

Chapter 6 introduces political socialization and the importance of political identity relating to key factors such as culture, race, ethnicity, and gender. Political identity can be of critical importance when attempting to understand political behavior and decisions being made within a state. To this end, this chapter compares the history of the caste systems in Japan and India in an attempt to understand how caste systems influenced, and continued to influence, the political systems within.

Chapter 7 continues the discussion of political identity by considering the concepts of nationalism, religion, and class on the political behavior and outcomes within various countries. Nationalism and class are newer phenomena in politics, whereas religion is not. There were many instances of people in minority religions rising to prominence in the courts of empires, or of religious differences leading to conflict. However, their use as an identity and how one's identity can shape one's politics is even newer. As countries have democratized, these identities have taken on more meaning. This chapter compares the examples of political identities within Israel and Iran, where religion and nationalism both play significant roles in their societies.

Chapter 8 discusses political economy, which can be understood as a type of inquiry that explores the intersection and relationships between market systems and individuals, groups, and political outcomes within a state. In some respects, considering the interconnected relationship between economic markets and politics can seem like a chicken and egg problem. Does politics affect the economy? Or does the economy affect politics? In many cases, politics and the economy are deeply synergistic and connected, and combinations of different political systems and economic systems create manifestly different political outcomes for various states. The end of this chapter compares the highly government controlled economy of China and the moderately controlled economy of Germany.

Part Three: Comparative Political Behavior

Chapter 9 discusses collective action and social movements. The chapter examines how collective action, any activity in which coordination by and across individuals has the potential to lead to achievement of a common objective, has been observed in various places and with differing outcomes. It additionally considers the rise of social movements, which are organized activities not derived through established political institutions. This chapter concludes by comparing the cases of labor movements within Poland and China.

Chapter 10 introduces the study of comparative public opinion, an analysis of how the public thinks and believes in particular policy and political issues across at least two different countries. Rather than focus on a single country, this chapter considers how public opinion is measured using different metrics, and how this can vary from place to place.

Chapter 11 addresses political violence. The concept of political violence can be difficult to define, but many scholars consider various types of violence that can occur within states, whether the violence is sponsored or propagated by the state itself, or whether the violence stems from other groups not sponsored by state authority. In considering how political violence can come to an end, this chapter compares Turkey and Bangladesh, describing how an end to violence does not inherently lend itself to a peaceful outcome.

While the scope of this textbook is somewhat extensive, there remain many unanswered questions about the future of comparative politics as a discipline. Are the current scientific methodologies used in comparative politics sound? Are there advances that can be made in the way comparativists approach the problems within their field? Chapter 12, the final chapter of this book, raises a number of the immediate issues in the subfield today.

Organization of this Textbook

This textbook is an Open Educational Resource (OER) that consists of the 12 chapters described above. A team of eight political scientists at seven different community colleges in California co-authored this Open Educational Resource.

Title and Author(s) for Each Chapter

Chapter	Chapter Title	Authors
1	Introduction	Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D & Julia Wendt, Ph.D.
2	How to Study Comparative Politics: Using Comparative Methods	Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D., Julia Wendt, Ph.D., & Masahiro Omae, Ph.D.
3	States and Regimes	Julia Wendt, Ph.D
4	Democracies and Democratization	Julia Wendt, Ph.D, Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D. & Stefan Veldhuis
5	Non-Democracies and Democratic Backsliding	Charlotte Lee, Ph.D.
6	Political Identity: Culture, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender	Julia Wendt, Ph.D
7	Political Identity: Nationalism, Religion, and Class	Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D & Jessica Scarffe, Ph.D.
8	Political Economy	Jessica Scarffe, Ph.D. & Julia Wendt, Ph.D
9	Collective Action and Social Movements	Charlotte Lee, Ph.D.
10	Public Opinion	Bryan Martin, Ph.D. & Josh Franco, Ph.D.
11	Political Violence	Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D & Masahiro Omae, Ph.D.
12	Conclusion: The Future of Comparative Politics	Dino Bozonelos, Ph.D & Julia Wendt, Ph.D.

The structure of each chapter is consistent, including the following seven elements: chapter outline, chapter sections, key terms, summary, review questions, critical thinking questions, and suggestions for further study.

- The chapter outline provides a list of the chapter's sections. A reader click on the name of the chapter section to move directly to that section. This outline is important because it quickly and concisely provides you an overview of the chapter and a clear sense of its contents.
- The chapter sections include the substantive content of the chapter. While each chapter author has endeavored to write chapter sections as stand-alone parts, there will naturally be a flow and integration of the chapters.
- The key terms, listed in alphabetical order, serve as a repository of definitions of key terms used throughout the chapter sections. In some instances, key terms are linked to external content for students and faculty to explore the term further. Additionally, key terms are linked within chapter sections, meaning you can click on the key term and be directed to the section on key terms.
- The summary of the chapter provides a one paragraph synopsis of each section of the chapter. The goal is to distill each chapter section into a bite-sized chunk that can be quickly referenced, but the summaries should not be viewed as replacements for reading chapter sections.
- The review questions include at least five questions that could serve as a pop quiz, clicker questions, student self-check, or as part of a question bank used for a summative assessment.
- The critical thinking questions include at least three questions that can serve as a short or long essay prompt for an in-class or at-home assessment.
- The suggestions for further study section includes links to websites, journal articles, and books related to the chapter topic. The goal is to build a robust repository of resources, both open access and not, that students and faculty can explore.

As noted in the first sub-section on this page, for most coherent use, the authors recommend that students read the chapters in the order presented. We do, however, recognize (and encourage) that some faculty may want to assign specific chapters to complement an existing textbook adoption.

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1.5: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **American politics** is a subfield of political science that focuses on political institutions and behaviors within the United States.
- **Area studies** is an approach to comparison in which scholarship is organized geographically.
- **Between-nation comparisons** are comparisons in which a researcher compares subnational governments across different countries.
- **Comparative politics** is a subfield of political science that seeks to advance understanding of political structures around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way.
- **Confederal government** is a system of government in which sovereignty is held at subnational levels.
- **Cross-national studies** is an approach to comparison involving two or more countries. Unlike area studies, the countries are not necessarily confined to one region.
- **Devolution** occurs when a country's central government deliberately transfers power to a government at a lower level.
- **Federal government** is a national or centralized authority differentiated from state and local governments.
- **Formal institutions** are based on a clear set of rules that have been formalized, often with the authority to enforce the rules through punitive measures.
- **Informal institutions** are based on an unwritten set of rules that have not necessarily been formalized, but rather come from conventions on how one should behave.
- **Institutions** are the beliefs, norms, and organizations that structure social and political life.
- **International relations** is a subfield of political science that focuses on how countries and/or international organizations interact with each other.
- **Political economy** is a subfield of political science that considers various economic theories, practices, and outcomes either within a state, or among and between states in the global system.
- **Political institutions** are the spaces in which the majority of politics and political decisions take place.
- **Political philosophy** is a subfield of political science that reflects on the philosophical origins of politics, the state, government, fairness, equality, equity, authority, and legitimacy.
- **Political psychology** is a subfield of political science that weaves together principles, themes, and research from political science and psychology to understand the psychological roots of political behavior.
- **Political science** is a field of social scientific inquiry that seeks to advance knowledge of political institutions, behavior, activities, and outcomes using systematic and logical research methods to test and refine theories about how the political world operates.
- **Public policy** is a subfield of political science that explores political policies and outcomes, focusing on the strength, legitimacy and effectiveness of political institutions.
- **Qualitative research** is a type of research that centers on exploring ideas and phenomena, potentially with the goal of consolidating information or developing evidence to form a theory or hypothesis to test. Qualitative research involves categorizing, summarizing, and analyzing cases thoroughly to gain greater understanding, often using a small sample.
- **Quantitative research** is a type of research that centers on testing a theory or hypothesis, usually through mathematical and statistical means, using data from a large sample.
- **Research methodology** is a subfield of political science that seeks to consider the best practices for analyzing themes within political science through discussion, testing, and critical analysis of how research is constructed and implemented.
- **Sovereignty** is fundamental governmental power and authority in decision-making within a given territory.
- **Subnational studies** is an approach to comparison in which researchers compare subnational governments.
- **Unitary government** is a type of government in which power is centralized at the national level.
- **Within-nation comparisons** are comparisons in which a researcher compares the subnational governments or institutions within a single country.

Summary

Section 1.1: What is Comparative Politics?

Comparative politics is a subfield of study within political science that seeks to advance understanding of political structures

from around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way. There is still ample scholarly debate over the definition and scope of comparative politics, with scholars occasionally disagreeing about the ideal methodological approaches and methods for case selection. Comparativists (those who study comparative politics) use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to advance the field. Beyond comparative politics, a number of other subfields exist within political science, including American politics, international relations, political philosophy, research methodology, political economy, public policy, and political psychology.

Section 1.2: Ways Comparativists Look at the World

Understanding the necessity to compare and contrast countries, comparativists approach comparison in three main ways: area studies, cross-national studies, and subnational studies. Area studies involve selecting countries from a similar geographic area, often in close proximity to each other, as a starting point for inquiry. Cross-national studies involve looking at at least two or more countries, but these countries may not be close in proximity or necessarily alike in basic ways. Subnational studies enable comparativists to look within a country, possibly over time and considering a number of themes, to draw out conclusions and test theories.

Section 1.3: Things that Comparativists Study and Say

Comparative politics is a diverse field that focuses on a number of different topical areas. One of the first areas of inquiry focuses on the origins of the state, considering the determinants of a strong versus a weak state in relation to political capacity. Another area of intense interest for comparativists is the study of institutions. The study of political institutions can lend greater understanding to different political outcomes among states, especially since the influence of strong and legitimate institutions within a state can contribute to the success or failure of prioritized public policy issues. The next topical area, extending from the discussion of the state and its institutions, is a state's political regime. Some states have democratic regimes, some states have authoritarian regimes, some states have a semi-democratic hybrid, and some states undergo regime transitions. Other topical areas of study for comparativists are political identity (relating to culture, race, ethnicity, gender, nationalism, religion, and class), collective action and social movements, and political opinion. Each of these areas can produce a robust and thorough picture of why and how states differ. A final topical area of study for comparativists is political violence, with aims to understand the types, causes, and outcomes of political violence.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following is not a subfield of political science?
 - A. comparative politics
 - B. comparative advantage
 - C. American politics
 - D. research methodology
2. Which approach to comparison focuses on state relations from similar geographic regions?
 - A. area studies
 - B. cross-national studies
 - C. subnational studies
 - D. none of the above
3. Who is considered the father of political science?
 - A. Socrates
 - B. Plato
 - C. Aristotle
 - D. Homer
4. A country's constitution is an example of which of the following types of institutions? Choose all that apply.
 - A. formal institution
 - B. informal institution
 - C. political institution
 - D. economic institution
5. Which of the following areas of inquiry falls outside the domain of comparative politics?
 - A. voting behavior
 - B. democracy and regime transitions
 - C. political violence
 - D. none of the above

Answers: 1.b; 2.a; 3.c; 4.a,c; 5.d

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are some of the key differences in studying comparative politics versus international relations? What tends to be the research methodologies of choice in each of these fields?
2. Consider the approaches of area studies, cross-national studies, and subnational studies. What can be the benefits or drawbacks of using these approaches? Which approach do you think would be most appropriate if considering the spread of COVID-19 or other pandemics? Similarly, which approach would be best if looking at climate change or environmental problems?
3. Considering how political science and comparative politics are defined, are these fields scientific? In what ways are these fields scientific, and how do they approach questions of politics in other countries?
4. What is the difference between quantitative and qualitative research? How can each of these methods be applied within comparative politics?
5. Some scholars have called for integration or merging of the subfields of comparative politics and international relations. What would be the pros and cons of doing this? Given the pros and cons, what is the preferable future for the study of comparative politics?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Journal for Comparative Politics](#)
- [Our World in Data](#)

Journal Articles

- Abadie, A., Diamond, A., & Hainmueller, J. (2015). [Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method](#). *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(2), 495–510.
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2: HOW TO STUDY COMPARATIVE POLITICS

2.1: The Scientific Method and Comparative Politics

2.2: Four Approaches to Research

2.3: Case Selection

2.4: References

2.5: Student Resources

2.1: The Scientific Method and Comparative Politics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Consider the factors that make political science, and thereby comparative politics, a science.
- Identify and describe the steps used in the scientific method.

Introduction

When many people consider the field of science, they think of laboratories filled with clinicians in white lab coats, chemical experiments with bubbling vials, and vast chalkboards of mathematical equations. These images represent the "hard sciences," such as chemistry, mathematics, and physics, and those researching in the hard sciences work to advance scientific understanding in the natural or physical sciences. Yet the "soft sciences," such as psychology, sociology, and political science, are also science. Those researching in the soft sciences work to advance scientific understanding of human behavior, institutions, society, government, decision-making, and power. Both hard and soft sciences provide significant contributions to the world of scientific inquiry and rely on the scientific method, yet they face different challenges. Highlighting a major challenge in the soft sciences, Physicist Heinz Pagels (1988) refers to the social sciences, those that scientifically study human society and relationships, as the "sciences of complexity." Numerous factors influence social phenomena and, in many cases, experimentation is not possible; it is inconceivable, for instance, to randomly assign a dictator to some countries and a democratic leader to others and then to measure how outcomes differ among the two sets of cases.

Despite this difficulty, **science** is simply the systematic and organized approach to any area of inquiry that utilizes scientific methods to acquire and build a body of knowledge, and political scientists use scientific methods to gain knowledge. As defined in Chapter 1, "comparative politics is a subfield of political science that seeks to advance understanding of political structures around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way." To this end, political scientists rely on the rules of scientific inquiry to conduct their research. In the sections below, we introduce how the principles of scientific methods apply to the study of comparative politics.

Why is Political Science a Science?

While ancient political thinkers like Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and Thucydides provided observations on their political worlds, they did not always operate under a strictly scientific scope. In some instances, these thinkers used a normative approach, focusing on how the political world *should* be. However, the modern conception of political science is one that, like the other social sciences, follows the scientific method. It also largely engages in **empirical research**, analysis based on experiment, experience, or observation (as opposed to normative analysis).

Summarizing the features of empirical scientific research within the field, Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba wrote *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (1994). Although much of the book discusses political science in relation to qualitative research methods, which we will discuss later in this chapter, it also considers the general approach to scientific research in political science.

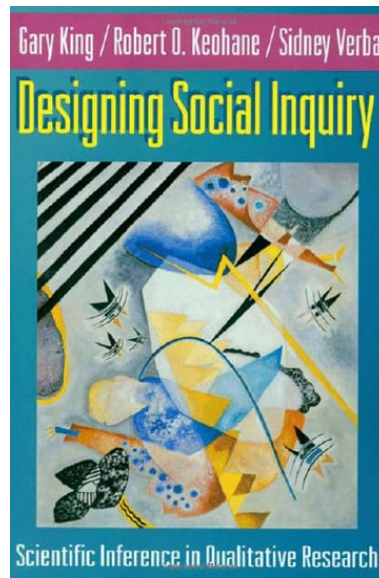


Figure 2.1.1: Book cover of *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, by Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. (Source: King G., & Keohane, R.O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.)

According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), scientific research has four main characteristics. First, one of the primary purposes of scientific research is to make descriptive or causal inferences. An **inference** is a process of drawing a conclusion about an unobserved phenomenon, based on observed (empirical) information. A descriptive inference summarizes observed data while a causal inference identifies the causes of observed effects. The accumulation of facts, by itself, does not make an effort scientific; this is true no matter how systematically a researcher collects the facts. In order for a study to be scientific, it requires the additional step of going beyond the immediately observable information in an effort to learn about something broader that is not directly observable. The process of making inferences can help us learn about the unobserved facts by describing them based on empirical information. For example, while we cannot directly observe the concept of "democracy," political scientists identify various characteristics of democratic states, which we can then use to describe and measure the concept.

Second, the procedures of scientific research must be public. Scientific research relies on "explicit, codified, and public methods" so that others can effectively assess the validity (accuracy) and reliability (consistency) of a study's results. As a condition for publication, publishers often require authors to share data files to ensure that other researchers can replicate the results, thereby allowing for ongoing assessment.

Third, because the process of making inferences is imperfect, the conclusions of scientific research are also uncertain. Researchers must therefore be aware of a reasonable estimate of uncertainty in their work to ensure that they can appropriately interpret, and qualify as necessary, their conclusions.

Fourth, scientific research depends on the method, not the content. This means that the manner of conduct, rather than the subject matter of study, is what determines whether a researcher's work is scientific. Scientific research must adhere to a set of rules related to inference, which relies on an understanding of the scientific method.

The Scientific Method

The **scientific method** follows a sequence of steps to standardize the research process: asking a research question, conducting background research, developing hypotheses, testing hypotheses, analyzing results, and reporting findings. Below, we discuss each step.

Step One: Asking a Research Question

The first step in the research process is to develop a clear, focused, and relevant research question. What characteristics define a good research question in political science?

First, the research question must be relevant to the real political world. This does not mean that a research question must address current political affairs; in fact, many political scientists study historical events and past political behaviors. However, the results of political science research are often relevant to the current political environment and may come with policy implications. Second, the question must be "falsifiable." **Falsifiability**, a term coined by Karl Popper, is the ability for a statement to be logically contradicted through empirical testing. Some research questions or claims are inherently **non-falsifiable**, meaning the question cannot be proven false. This occurs when questions are subjective (e.g., "Are oranges better than lemons?") and when technical limitations exist that make gathering evidence impossible (e.g., "Do angry ninja-robots live in Alpha Centauri?").

Suppose that a political scientist started with the following research question: "Is Argentina or Brazil better?" This question is subjective. What does "better" mean? This will vary according to an individual's taste. To refine this research question, the researcher will need to define "better." For example, the researcher may alter the question to the following: "Is Argentina or Brazil more economically productive?" This is a question on which a researcher can gather evidence. The researcher will describe metrics for what shows "economic productivity," then gather data and compare across the two countries.

Now consider a political scientist who asks: "Does investing heavily in a country's education system always mean that country will eventually become democratic?" This question has two technical limitation problems. First, the blanket statement that "investing heavily in a country's education system *always* leads to democracy" implies that a researcher will have to test every instance in which a country invests in education and democracy occurs (in addition to defining what "heavily" means). Second, and related, the word "eventually" implies that a country that invests heavily in education today may become democratic 500, 700, or 900 years from now. It is impossible to gather the evidence needed to test this research question.

Step Two: Conducting Background Research

The second step in the research process is to conduct background research. Before formulating hypotheses or gathering any data, researchers need to complete a "literature review" to situate themselves within the field. A **literature review** is a survey and synthesis of existing scholarly research that discusses prior research findings, best practices in methodology, existing theories, and remaining limitations related to the question of interest.

A literature review may take various forms, such as chronological, thematic, methods-focused, or theory-focused. Depending on the research question, a researcher may find that it makes the most sense to arrange the research in chronological order, beginning with the early research and culminating in the most recent research on a topic. Or, a researcher may find that previous scholars' works naturally fall into themes or categories (e.g., scholars A, B, and C argue that democracy leads to economic growth; scholars X, Y, and Z argue that economic growth leads to democracy). Or, a researcher may find that the most interesting part of previous research relates to the varying methods or theories used to explain the topic and therefore choose to organize the literature review accordingly.

No matter the form it takes, conducting background research to create a literature review is a key step in the research process. It allows a scholar to showcase, summarize, and synthesize previous research, and it also allows a researcher to demonstrate why their specific research question deserves attention.

Step Three: Developing Hypotheses

The third step in the research process is to develop a hypothesis, or a set of hypotheses. A **hypothesis** is a specific and testable prediction about the relationship between variables. A **variable** is any factor that can vary (i.e., take on different values). In a hypothesis, the researcher will identify a minimum of two types of variables: (1) an independent variable and (2) a dependent variable. In a cause-and-effect relationship, an **independent variable** (also called an "explanatory variable") is the presumed cause. A **dependent variable** (also called an "outcome variable") is the assumed effect. The independent variable leads to a change in the value of the dependent variable; in other words, the dependent variable's value depends on the changes in the independent variable. While a hypothesis is a testable prediction, a **theory** is a statement that explains how the world works based on experience and observation. An existing theory will often help a researcher build their hypotheses and, over time, repeated testing of hypotheses may lead to a new theory.

To develop, and later test (step four), a hypothesis, researchers may use either inductive or deductive reasoning. **Inductive reasoning** occurs when researchers make specific observations and attempt to form a hypothesis (and eventually a broader theory). **Deductive reasoning** occurs when researchers start with a broad theory and then test it with specific observations. While inductive reasoning uses a bottom-up approach (using specific observations to develop general theories), deductive reasoning uses a top-down approach (starting with general theories and testing with specific observations).

Steps Four and Five: Testing Hypotheses and Analyzing Results

The fourth and fifth steps in the research process work in tandem: testing hypotheses and analyzing results. The precise manner in which a researcher tests hypotheses depends on the research method that they employ (we will expand on types of research methods in the following section), but all testing requires a researcher to make observations of the relationship between the variables in the hypothesis.

When the testing is complete, researchers analyze their results and draw conclusions about the findings. Do the results provide evidence against the hypothesis? If not, this provides some evidence in support of the hypothesis and suggests the researcher may be on the right track. If so, the researcher will need to go back to the drawing board, develop a new hypothesis, and conduct testing again.

Step Six: Reporting Findings

The sixth step in the research process is to report findings. While not all research will result in academic publication, researchers can still share findings through research conferences, books, articles, or digital media. This information-sharing helps others to provide feedback and conduct their own research on the topic. It can also spawn new and interesting directions of research for the future.

Why is reporting findings so important? Consider the difference between two pandemics.

During the Spanish Flu, a pandemic in 1918, many countries of the world did not have freedom of press. In the midst of a hindered press and the lack of freedom of speech, doctors were unable to communicate their ideas and treatment plans for handling flu patients. Inundated with swarms of patients and flummoxed by the nature of a flu that was killing young, healthy adults, but largely sparing older individuals, doctors tried many treatment methods, yet were unable to broadly share their results.

In contrast, during COVID-19, many doctors worldwide worked on treatment plans, and were able to share their ideas on how to best treat patients. As one example, while there was a heavy reliance on ventilators initially, in time, doctors found that repositioning patients on their stomachs provided more time for patients to recover prior to resorting to a ventilator.

This contrast illustrates how the sharing of results can be critical to learning about a research question. If researchers are unable to share what they learn, it can stall the advancement of knowledge.

2.2: Four Approaches to Research

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between correlation and causation.
- Compare and contrast four different approaches to research.

Introduction

In empirical research, there are four basic approaches: experimental methods, statistical methods, comparative methods, and case study methods. Each of these methods is an attempt to understand the relationship between two or more variables, which may be correlational or causal. Each method involves crafting good research questions, using existing theories to inform the understanding of the research problem, and generating and testing hypotheses. We will first discuss the difference between correlation and causation, and we will then provide an overview of each research approach.

Correlation and Causation

When assessing relationships between variables, such as between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y), these relationships may reflect correlation or a causal relationship. A **correlation** is a relationship between two variables. If two variables show "positive correlation," they increase or decrease together (i.e., as X increases, Y increases; as X decreases, Y decreases). If two variables show "negative correlation," when one variable increases, the other decreases (i.e., as X increases, Y decreases; as X decreases, Y increases). If the two variables show "no correlation," there is no apparent linear relationship. A **causal relationship** is more than a correlation; it is a cause-and-effect relationship between two variables (i.e., X *causes* Y).

Correlation does not imply causation. If a researcher observes a correlation (a relationship) between two variables, this does not mean that one variable *caused* the other. Correlations may be spurious, or false. For instance, suppose a researcher observes a positive correlation between ice cream sales and crime rates (i.e., as ice cream sales increase, crime rates increase). This does not mean that ice cream sales *cause* crime. Rather, something else (called a "confounding variable") likely explains the increase in both ice cream sales and the increase in crime (in this case, both variables tend to increase with warm weather). In research, spurious relationships often appear if a researcher leaves out particular variables that influence both the independent and dependent variables in their analysis (referred to as "omitted variable bias").

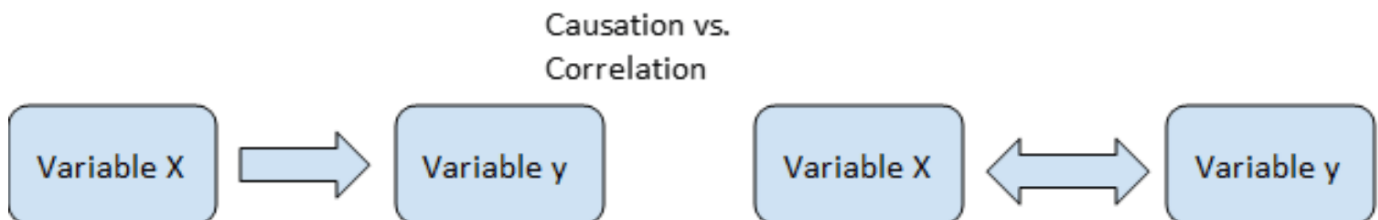


Figure 2.2.1: This image illustrates the difference between causation and correlation. On the left, we see causation: Variable X directly leads to Variable Y. On the right, we see correlation: Variable X and Variable Y show a relationship. The arrows indicate that there is no way to assess causality (i.e., Does X lead to Y or does Y lead to X?).

As an example, in comparative politics research, there appears a positive correlation between economic development and democracy. That is, countries with higher levels of economic development (e.g., as measured by GDP per capita) tend to be more democratic (e.g., as measured by a democracy index). This is not a causal relationship. Perhaps economic development causes democracy; perhaps democracy causes economic development; perhaps there is an additional variable, Z, that causes *both* economic development *and* democracy (e.g., stability stemming from the absence of war (Z) may allow both economic development and democracy to flourish); or perhaps there is an intervening variable, A, that connects economic development and democracy (e.g., economic development leads to an accumulation of wealth (A), which then leads to

democracy). There are too many possibilities here to assert a causal relationship; rather, the researcher is stuck with only a correlation. And, in fact, there are numerous exceptions to this positive correlation. Oil-producing countries in the Persian Gulf, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have high levels of economic development without democracy; countries like Senegal and India are democratic, but lack high levels of economic development.

These potential contradictions force researchers to be very careful when making causal inferences in political science. Causality is always difficult to establish, but this is especially true when the unit of analysis involves countries, which is often the case in comparative politics.

Experimental Methods

Given the discussion above, one manner in which a researcher can attempt to establish causality is through experimental methods. **Experiments** are "laboratory studies in which investigators retain control over the recruitment, assignment to random conditions, treatment, and measurement of subjects" (McDermott, 2002, p. 32). In an experiment, the researcher controls the "treatment," the independent variable of interest, meaning that the researcher will randomly assign the treatment to some cases in the experiment (the "treatment group") and not others (the "control group"). The researcher will then observe the effect that this treatment has on the outcome, the dependent variable of interest. Through random assignment, the researcher is able to "control" for any potential confounding variables--observable or unobservable--because the randomization process evenly distributes participants across the treatment and control groups. The experimental method therefore reduces bias (Druckman, et. al. 2011) by ensuring comparability across groups, and this allows a researcher to isolate the causal impact of the treatment.

While a laboratory experiment provides the best chance for researcher control over experimental conditions, conducting a laboratory experiment at the country-level is impossible. There are, however, field experiments and natural experiments, both of which are frequently used by comparativists in an attempt to establish causality. A **field experiment** is an experiment that takes place in a real-world setting instead of in a laboratory. For example, a researcher may want to learn about how a political candidate's ethnic background (X) influences voter behavior (Y). Prior to an election, the researcher may send out information to a group of voters; one randomly-selected group will receive a flyer that includes a candidate's ethnic background (the "treatment" group) while another randomly-selected group will receive a flyer that does not include the candidate's ethnic background (the "control" group). The researcher will then measure the effect of the treatment on voting. In comparison to a laboratory experiment, the researcher worries more about bias in a field experiment because they are not able to retain as much control over the environment.

A "natural experiment" is technically not an experiment, but instead an "observational study." An **observational study** is a type of research in which researchers do not control a treatment (as in a laboratory or a field experiment), but simply observe outcomes. What makes a **natural experiment** interesting, however, is that it occurs when random assignment of a "treatment" occurs naturally or due to some factor other than a researcher. For example, suppose that a government randomly selects subnational units to receive an influx of money to put toward education. Setting aside ethical concerns in this hypothetical example, a researcher could exploit the government's randomization to measure how the money provided to the treatment group influenced education outcomes in comparison to the control group. If true randomization exists in a natural experiment (something that a researcher will need to demonstrate), the researcher will be able to make causal inferences.

Statistical Methods

Beyond experimental methods, statistical methods are another approach to research analysis. As a reminder from Chapter 1, statistical methods reflect quantitative research. Quantitative research centers on testing a theory or hypothesis, usually through mathematical and statistical means, using data from a large sample. Statistical methods work well to discern correlations among variables in large-N research, meaning in situations where there is a large population size (i.e., a large number of observations). Statistical methods are an *analysis tool* and their use, on its own, does not allow researchers to claim causation.

Many researchers default to the use of statistical analyses to uncover correlations in "applied research." **Applied research** is "research that attempts to explain social phenomena with immediate public policy implications" (Knoke, et. al., 2002, p. 7). Researchers will conduct statistical analysis on existing data from various sources--such as government agencies, think tanks, and other researchers--and probe for correlations among the variables to test their hypotheses (Omae and Bozonelos, 2020). Researchers also use statistical methods to analyze survey data (for a discussion of survey data and comparative political opinion, see Chapter 10).

Comparative Methods

Unlike experimental and statistical methods, comparative methods can reflect either quantitative or qualitative research (and many researchers use "mixed-methods" approaches that combine the two). As defined in Chapter 1, qualitative research is a type of research that centers on exploring ideas and phenomena, potentially with the goal of consolidating information or developing evidence to form a theory or hypothesis to test. Qualitative research involves categorizing, summarizing, and analyzing cases thoroughly to gain greater understanding, often using a small sample.

All comparative methods focus on analyzing the differences and/or similarities between cases, which necessitates clear processes of conceptualization and operationalization (making concepts measurable). As Merriam-Webster defines, a concept is "an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances." For political scientists, concepts are "generally seen as nonmathematical and deal with substantive issues" (Goertz, 2006). For example, if we want to compare democracies, we must first define what exactly constitutes a democracy, and we must formulate measurements that appropriately reflect our conceptualization.

Comparative methods involve "the analysis of a small number of cases, entailing at least two observations." This includes "too few [cases] to permit the application of conventional statistical analysis" (Lijphart, 1971; Collier, 1993, p. 106). This means that comparative methods involve more than a single case study, but fewer cases than included in a large-N statistical analysis (sometimes called "intermediate-N," reflecting the analysis of anywhere from a few to a few dozen cases).

Case Study Methods

Moving from intermediate-N to "single-N" research, a **case study** is an intensive look into a single case, often with the intent that the single case will help researchers to better understand a particular variable of interest. A **case** is a "spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time, or over some period of time" (Gerring, 2007). Others define a case as "factual description of events that happened at some point in the past" (Naumes and Naumes, 2015). A case could be an individual, a family household, a group or community, an institution, or a subnational unit within a country. Often, comparativists observe the country as the case of interest.

While a case study traditionally conducts an in-depth examination into one case, a **comparative case study** is a study compares two or more cases. There can also exist a **subnational case study** that focuses on subnational governments, rather than countries, as the cases of interest. Subnational case studies may occur entirely within a country (e.g., examining a policy response within all Mexican states) or across countries (e.g., examining a policy response among autonomous subnational governments in countries within the European Union).

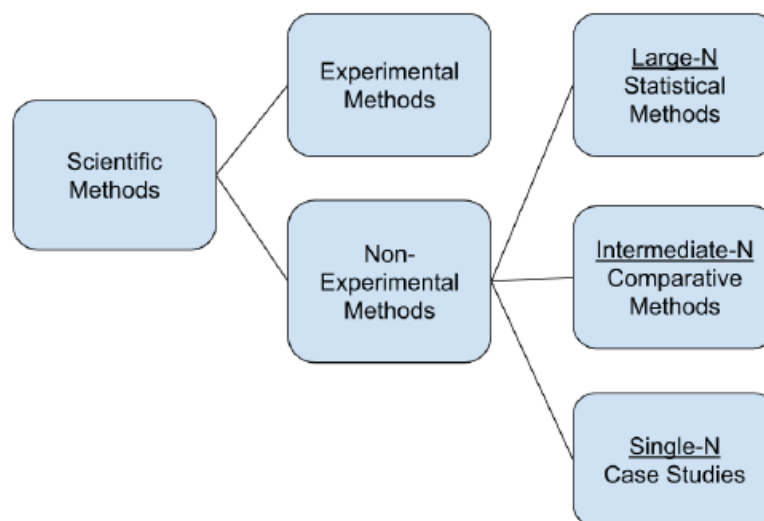


Figure 2.2.2: Diagram summarizing empirical research approaches. There are experimental methods. There are also non-experimental methods, including large-N (statistical) methods, intermediate-N (comparative), and single-N (case studies).

Use of Case Studies in Comparative Politics

Case studies are vital to theory development in political science. They are the cornerstones of different discourses in the discipline. Blatter and Haverland (2012) note that a number of case studies have reached "classic" status in political science. These include Robert Dahl's *Who Governs?* (1961), Graham T. Allison's *Essence of Decision* (1971), Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (1979), and Arend Lijphart's *The Politics of Accommodation* (1968). Each of these classics is a seminal study into an important aspect of political science. Dahl's work popularized the concept of pluralism, where different actors hold power. Allison studied the decision-making processes during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, and this work was influential for public policy analysis. Skocpol's book laid out the conditions from which a revolution may take place. Lijphart defined concepts that remain central to comparative studies of democracy, such as "politics of accommodation" and "consensus democracy."

As mentioned earlier, cases in comparative politics historically focus on countries (typically referred to as "states," as we will describe in Chapter 3). Comparisons often involve regime types (democratic and non-democratic), political economies, political identities, social movements, and political violence. All of these comparisons require scholars to look within countries and then compare. As stated in Chapter 1, "looking within" is what separates comparative politics from other subfields of political science. Thus, as the country is the most relevant political actor (though others exist, such as subnational, non-state, and transnational actors), this is where the emphasis tends to be.

2.3: Case Selection

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of case selection in case studies.
- Consider the implications of poor case selection.

Introduction

Case selection is an important part of any research design. Deciding how many cases to include--and which cases to include--determines the appropriate research analysis methods. For instance, if a researcher decides to select a large number of cases (e.g., a survey of 1500 individuals), they will use statistical methods to conduct large-N analysis, as described in the previous section. In many facets of comparative politics, particularly if using the country as the unit of analysis, researchers rarely reach the number of cases needed for large-N analysis. If the focus is on one case, or a few cases, what strategies should researchers use to choose those cases?

A number of factors can drive case selection in comparative politics. First, case selection can derive from the interests of the researcher(s). For example, if a researcher lives in Germany, they may want to research a topic within that country, possibly using a subnational approach to compare an outcome among German states. Second, case selection can derive from an area studies-focus (e.g., a desire to understand a topic within the member-states of the European Union). Third, researchers may choose cases to facilitate a particular *type* of case study. Below, we discuss case selection among various types of case studies.

Types of Case Studies

As John Gerring (2017) categorizes, case studies can be descriptive or causal. **Descriptive case studies** are "not organized around a central, overarching causal hypothesis or theory" (p. 56). In a descriptive case study, a researcher simply seeks to describe what they observe. Suppose, for instance, that a researcher wants to describe how political institutions function in Switzerland. The researcher may discuss Switzerland's federalist system, how the Swiss use elements of direct democracy, or how the presidency rotates annually. The goal in such a study is not to make a claim about *why* Switzerland has a federalist system that uses direct democracy and a rotating presidency; the goal is simply to describe what exists.

Depending on the research question, a researcher may choose cases that are typical or cases that offer diversity. Suppose, for instance, that a researcher is investigating the effects of the pandemic on medium-sized cities within the United States. If choosing a typical case, the researcher will want to find a medium-size city that exhibits key characteristics of medium-sized cities throughout the entire country. This will require the researcher to define "medium-size city" and establish the important characteristics of medium-sized cities. With those definitions, the researcher can work to identify a typical case. If choosing cases that offer diversity, the researcher may decide to examine a range of medium-size cities that vary on some dimension, such as geographical location.

Unlike descriptive case studies, **causal case studies** are "organized around a central hypothesis about how X affects Y" (Gerring, 2017). In a causal case study, the researcher identifies a **causal mechanism**, which "explain[s] how and why a hypothesized cause, in a given context, contributes to a particular outcome" (Falleti and Lynch, 2009). Case selection in causal case studies may follow an exploratory, estimating, or diagnostic approach, depending on how the researcher aims to develop a hypothesis.

Researchers use exploratory case studies to identify potential causal hypotheses. They single out the independent variables that seem to affect the outcome, or dependent variable, the most. The case study provides context that allows the researcher to assert a potential causal mechanism. If the scholar is looking to develop an "ideal-type" through their case study, they might seek out an extreme case. For example, if the researcher aims to understand the ideal-type capitalist system, they may want to investigate a country that practices a pure, or extreme, form of the economic system.

Researchers use estimating case studies when they already have a hypothesis in place. They want to use the case study to gather

evidence and test the hypothesis. The appropriate case to use therefore depends on the existing hypothesis.

Researchers use diagnostic case studies to "confirm, disconfirm, or refine a hypothesis" (Gerring 2017). In a diagnostic case study, a researcher may choose a least-likely case, or a case that provides surprising evidence against the hypothesis. For example, India's high level of ethno-linguistic diversity, its relatively underdeveloped economy, and its low level of modernization through large swaths of the country suggest that it should *not* have democratized, or it should have *failed* to remain a democracy. In reality, India has been a democracy for over 70 years, making it at "least-likely" case that can provide evidence against a hypothesis about a necessary relationship between economic development and democracy.

Methods of Agreement and Difference

The discussion above tends to focus on case selection when it comes to a single case. When conducting comparative case studies, as we do in comparative politics, we must select more than one case. This presents a set of challenges. First, how many cases do we pick? Second, how do we apply the previously mentioned case selection techniques? Do we choose typical, diverse, extreme, or least-likely cases?

John Stuart Mill, an English scholar (1806-1873), developed several approaches to comparison with the explicit goal of isolating a cause within a complex environment. Two of these methods, the "method of agreement" and the "method of difference," are particularly important in comparative politics. In the "method of agreement," a researcher compares two or more cases for their commonalities. The researcher aims to isolate the characteristic, or variable, that the cases have in common (the reason for their similarities). In the "method of difference," a researcher compares two or more cases for their differences. The researcher aims to isolate the characteristic, or variable, that the cases do *not* have in common (the reason for their differences). From these two methods, comparativists developed two approaches.

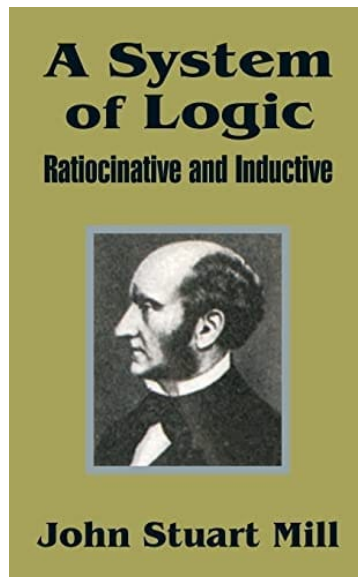


Figure 2.3.1: Book cover of *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*. John Stuart Mill developed several approaches to comparison. (Source: Mill, J.S. (1843). *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*. University of Toronto Press.)

Most Similar Systems Design

The Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) stems from Mill's "method of difference." In a MSSD, researchers select cases for comparison that are similar to each other, but in which the outcomes differ. In this approach, a researcher aims to ensure that as many of the independent variables as possible are similar across cases. While the researcher does not have randomization to rely on, as in an experiment, this case selection method attempts to "control" for as many observable confounding variables as possible. A researcher asks: If these cases look similar on variables A, B, C, D, and E, why do they have different values on the dependent variable? The researcher then aims to identify the potential cause for the difference in outcomes.

For example, if a researcher wants to study the existence of publicly-accessible national health systems as the dependent variable, they may choose to compare Canada and the United States. Both of these countries have English heritage, English language

use, liberal market economies, strong democratic institutions, high levels of wealth, and high levels of education. Yet, despite these similarities, the outcome differs: Canada has a robust publicly-accessible national health system; the U.S. does not. A MSD design would aim to describe *why* these two seemingly similar cases differ on the outcome (e.g., one explanation may relate to varying political culture within Canada and the U.S.).

Most Different Systems Design

The Most Different Systems Design (MDSD) stems from Mill's "method of agreement." In a MDSD, researchers select cases for comparison that are different from each other, but in which the outcome is the same. In this approach, a researcher aims to select cases with the same value on the dependent variable, but that are quite different from one another in terms of other variables.

As an example, a researcher may be interested in learning how different countries reach the same classification of "economically liberal." In its Index of Economic Freedom, The Heritage Foundation lists countries as varied as Australia, Chile, Estonia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, and Taiwan as either free or mostly free. Yet these countries differ greatly from one another. Singapore is a non-democratic regime, whereas Estonia is a democratic regime. Australia and New Zealand are wealthy, whereas Malaysia is not. Chile and Taiwan became economically free countries under authoritarian military regimes, whereas Switzerland did not. A researcher will ask: Why do these different systems produce the same outcome?

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2.5: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Applied research** is "research that attempts to explain social phenomena with immediate public policy implications."
- **Case** is a "spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time, or over some period of time."
- **Case study** is an intensive look into a single case, often with the intent that the single case will help researchers to better understand a particular variable of interest.
- **Causal case studies** are case studies "organized around a central hypothesis about how X affects Y."
- **Causal mechanism** "explains how and why a hypothesized cause, in a given context, contributes to a particular outcome."
- **Causal relationship** is a cause-and-effect relationship between two variables.
- **Correlation** is a relationship between two variables.
- **Comparative case study** is a study that compares two or more cases.
- **Deductive reasoning** occurs when researchers start with a broad theory and then test it with specific observations.
- **Dependent variable**, also called "outcome variable," is the assumed effect.
- **Descriptive case studies** are case studies "not organized around a central, overarching causal hypothesis or theory."
- **Empirical research** is analysis based on experiment, experience or observation.
- **Experiments** are "laboratory studies in which investigators retain control over the recruitment, assignment to random conditions, treatment, and measurement of subjects."
- **Falsifiability**, a term coined by Karl Popper, is the ability for a statement to be logically contradicted through empirical testing.
- **Field experiment** is an experiment that takes place in a real-world setting instead of in a laboratory.
- **Hypothesis** is a specific and testable prediction about the relationship between variables.
- **Independent variable**, also called "explanatory variable," is the presumed cause.
- **Inductive reasoning** occurs when researchers make specific observations and attempt to form a hypothesis (and eventually a broader theory).
- **Inference** is a process of drawing a conclusion about an unobserved phenomenon, based on observed (empirical) information.
- **Literature review** is a survey and synthesis of existing scholarly research that discusses existing knowledge and remaining limitations related to the question of interest.
- **Most Different Systems Design (MDSD)** is a research design in which the cases selected for comparison are different from each other, but the outcomes are similar.
- **Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD)** is a research design in which the cases selected for comparison are similar to each other, but the outcomes differ.
- **Natural experiment** is an observational study that occurs when random assignment of a "treatment" occurs naturally or due to some factor other than a researcher.
- **Non-falsifiable** refers to a research question or claim that cannot be proven false.
- **Observational study** is a type of research in which researchers do not control a treatment (as in an experiment), but simply observe outcomes.
- **Science** is the systematic and organized approach to any area of inquiry that utilizes scientific methods to acquire and build a body of knowledge, and political scientists use the scientific method to gain knowledge.
- **Scientific method** is a process by which knowledge is acquired through a sequence of steps, which generally include the following components: question, observation, hypothesis, testing of the hypothesis, analysis of the outcomes, and reporting of the findings.
- **Subnational case study** is when subnational governments, such provincial governments, regional governments, and other local governments often referred to as municipalities, are the cases that are compared.
- **Theory** is a statement that explains how the world works based on repeated experiences and observations.
- **Variable** is a factor that can vary vary (i.e., take on different values).

Summary

Section 2.1: The Scientific Method and Comparative Politics

Comparative politics is a social science that follows the scientific method as a way to advance knowledge in the field. The scientific method follows a sequence of steps: asking a research question, conducting background research, developing hypotheses, testing hypotheses, analyzing results, and reporting findings. Each step is critical to exercising sound methodological practices to answer clear and substantive research questions.

Section 2.2: Four Approaches to Research

There are four basic approaches used in empirical research: experimental methods, statistical methods, comparative methods, and case study methods. Experimental methods rely on randomization of a treatment, which allows researchers to make causal inferences. There are laboratory, field, and natural experiments (though natural experiments are technically observational studies). Statistical methods are the use of mathematical techniques to analyze collected data, and researchers use them to discern correlations, or relationships, between variables. Comparative methods involve "the analysis of a small number of cases, entailing at least two observations." Case studies are an intensive look into a single case, often with the intent that the single case may help a researcher better understand a particular variable of interest. There are also comparative case studies and subnational case studies.

Section 2.3: Case Selection

Case selection is an important part of any research design. Deciding how many cases to include--and which cases to include--determines the appropriate research analysis methods. In many facets of comparative politics, researchers rarely reach the number of cases needed for large-N analysis. If the focus is on one case, or a few cases, case selection will depend on the type of case study: descriptive or causal. When considering one case, descriptive case studies are "not organized around a central, overarching causal hypothesis or theory" while causal case studies are "organized around a central hypothesis about how X affects Y" (Gerring, 2017). When considering more than one case (a comparative case study), case selection may follow a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) and Most Different Systems Design (MDSD). In MSSD, the cases selected for comparison are similar to each other, but the outcomes differ. In MDSD, the cases selected are different from each other, but result in the same outcome.

Review Questions

1. The scientific method involves following steps. Which of these steps comes first?
 - a. conduct an experiment
 - b. form Hypotheses
 - c. ask a question
 - d. communicate findings
2. What is an inference?
 - a. a process to acquire knowledge through a sequence of steps
 - b. an educated guess
 - c. a process of drawing a conclusion about an unobserved phenomenon based on observed information
 - d. the ability for a statement to be proven true or false
3. Who coined the term "falsifiable"?
 - a. Plato
 - b. Karl Popper
 - c. John Locke
 - d. Sidney Verba
4. Consider this question: Is chocolate ice cream better than vanilla ice cream? Why is this question NOT falsifiable?
 - a. it is not specific enough
 - b. it is too technical
 - c. it is subjective
 - d. it IS falsifiable
5. When might using a comparative case study be ideal?
 - a. when using a large sample size of data from a number of countries

- b. when comparing many countries at once
- c. when considering a small number of countries
- d. when a researcher wants to make a sweeping statement about many countries

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.b, 4.c., 5.c

Critical Thinking

1. Provide two examples relevant to comparative politics of an inductive versus deductive approach to hypothesis formation.
2. Construct a list of three falsifiable questions that could serve as the basis for political science research. What are the challenges in devising questions that are falsifiable?
3. Of the four approaches to research described in this chapter, which do you find most appealing? Why? What challenges might you face in your choice of research approach?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Our World in Data](#)
- [World Development Indicators](#)

Journals

- Achen, Chris. (2005). "Let's Put Garbage Can Regressions and Garbage Can Probits Where They Belong." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 22(4), 327-339.
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3: STATES AND REGIMES

3.1: Introduction to States

3.2: The Modern State and Regime Types

3.3: Comparative Case Study - Botswana and Somalia

3.4: References

3.5: Student Resources

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3.1: Introduction to States

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define, and distinguish between, key terms including government, state, country, and nation.
- Describe the historical development of the state.
- Differentiate between types of power and types of legitimacy within modern states.

Introduction

What is a government? Is government necessary? Why do governments exist?

There are approximately eight billion people on the planet and nearly 200 identified countries worldwide, each of which has a government running the country. A **government** is the organization, or the group of people, with the power to set rules, to manage, and to regulate a political unit. Yet the question of *why* most people live under a government, or in a country that has rules and societal norms, can be difficult to grasp. Why do people consent to being ruled over? The existence of nearly 200 countries for eight billion people suggests that, while daily life for the average person may be filled with myriad to-do lists and activities, political powers *also* influence daily life in small and big ways.

To this end, this section considers the historical formation of political power within countries and introduces several pieces of foundational terminology in the field of comparative politics.

Social Order and the Social Contract

Let's begin with some critical questions: Why does government exist? Is government necessary?

A society without government or central leadership is one that lives in anarchy. **Anarchy** is a situation in which there is a lack of societal structure and no established hierarchy of power or central governing authority. While many scholars have considered the phenomenon and applicability of anarchy, it has not been a norm within the communities of humans living over the past 15,000 years. Even prior to the establishment of formal governments and formalized institutions, human beings organized themselves for survival purposes. Over the course of human history, humans began to understand that survival seemed more feasible when they cooperated with one another. While they did not have established, written laws, early humans did have informal rules and norms for how they handled themselves in society. Informal leaders also sometimes guided small groups, mostly composed of family members, in their pursuit of survival.

Take a moment to consider your own family when you were a child. Were there rules within your household? Who was in charge? Who told you what to do and when to do it? Whether your household had many or few rules, consider now how those rules contributed to the manner in which your family worked and lived. Did rules help your family? Did you think the family leaders were legitimate? Did you follow their rules voluntarily?

Over time, the small family groupings banded together into tribes with the common goal of surviving. These tribes then formed their own rules and norms for how their group should act. Over time, the sophistication of these tribes' survival techniques increased, moving from a hunter-gatherer approach--in which humans hunted for their food and gathered fruits, berries, and other available plant life--toward farming.



Figure 3.1.1: Painting of a Kali'na hunter with a woman gatherer. (Source: [A Kali'na hunter with a woman gatherer](#) by Pierre Barrère is licensed under [Public Domain - US](#))

Approximately 12,000 years ago, developments during the Agricultural Revolution allowed humans to stay in one place for longer. Humans learned to grow crops by tilling the land and introducing early irrigation methods. With the ability to stay in one place for longer, rather than moving around constantly to hunt and gather, human groups began to aggregate in common locations. This aggregation also led to human population growth. A larger number of people living closer together led to the need for formal societal organization. To ensure successful coexistence, and ultimately survival, humans needed order. Rather than by pursuing an anarchical system, humans calculated that a strong set of rules would improve the status quo (individually and collectively), and therefore embraced mutual cooperation in a rules-based society.

This ultimately led to the development of ideas by philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to create what we now term "social contract theory." In short, a **social contract** is a formal or informal agreement between the rulers and those ruled in a society. Those who are ruled submit to the laws of the rulers in exchange for certain benefits.

Social contract theory developed gradually. Hobbes (1588-1679) acknowledged that all people act within their own self-interest, and in acting in their own self-interest, make calculations to ensure their survival. This selfish nature of human beings creates an unstable and dangerous state of nature. According to Hobbes, a government is therefore necessary, and beneficial, to control the masses. Locke (1632-1704), in his *Two Treatises of Government*, took a more positive view of human nature. He argued that all people are born with "certain, unalienable" rights, which governments should protect through their political institutions and structures. Rousseau (1712-1778), in *The Social Contract*, argued that society does not lend itself to equal and equitable treatment, and a government is therefore only legitimate if it comes from the consent of the people. He argued that there must be a "unified will" that takes into consideration the interests of the people for the common good.

We observe an early form of the social contract in Ancient Greece, where elite men participated in government and representatives worked on behalf of the people. While a **direct democracy** is a political system in which all citizens are involved in political decision-making, an **indirect, or representative, democracy** is one in which the people elect representatives to serve on their behalf to make the laws and rules of society. Though Ancient Greece excluded many members of the population from decision-making processes and therefore did not have a true democracy, people *did* submit to the ruling class, through a type of representative leadership, in order to gain protection from the political system---a social contract.

As a second historical example, we can consider the development of feudalism. **Feudalism** was a system of social order that arose out of the Middle Ages, particularly in Europe, wherein peasants (sometimes called Serfs) were forced to provide members of the upper class with their crops, goods, services, and loyalty. The upper class, usually Nobles, would provide some level of protection to the Serfs in exchange for their products and services. Though not the ideal social contract, the Serfs were able to exchange their goods and services for some level of protection of their lives and property.

Today, we observe social contracts in almost every type of political system, democratic and non-democratic, and these social contracts can be voluntary or involuntary. A voluntary social contract is one in which the people agree to submit to the ruling class. The benefits of doing so may be as simple as military protection. In the United States, for example, citizens are expected

to obey the laws of the land, as expressed (in part) through the U.S. Constitution. This is in exchange for protection of their "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," as famously written in the Declaration of Independence. Though a social contract may be voluntary, it does *not* always mean that those who are ruled enjoy privileges like freedom of speech. Rather, the people may simply need protection from outside threats, and they may voluntarily agree to submit to the ruling class *without* any guarantees of other protections like civil liberties. Alternatively, an involuntary social contract is when the ruling class dominates in a given territory and demands obedience from the people. In this case, those being ruled are coerced into a social contract.

There are also implicit social contracts. For example, most U.S. citizens are born into their social contract because the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees birthright citizenship. By being born into citizenship, Americans may never need to actualize, or act upon, their citizenship. They benefit from a system that protects their rights and liberties, even when they choose *not* to obey the law. In contrast, there are other U.S. citizens who are not born into this social contract, and instead go through a formal process, called naturalization, for citizenship. **Naturalization** is the process by which non-citizens formally become citizens of the country they reside in. Naturalization is a long process that requires multiple steps, including but not limited to background checks, oral examinations, paperwork, and pledging allegiance to the host country in a formal ceremony. The process of naturalization is an example of a voluntary and formal social contract.



Figure 3.1.2: Naturalization Ceremony at Harriet Tubman National Historical Park on August 8, 2019. (Source: [Naturalization Ceremony at Harriet Tubman National Historical Park](#) by Mary O'Neill is licensed under [Public Domain - US](#))

To summarize, our understanding of and need for government comes from this historical reckoning of the social contract and the drive for social order. We will now define several related, but distinct, terms that are foundational to the study of comparative politics.

Defining Terms

One of the most frequently used words in the study of comparative politics is the word "state." For many students, "state" implies a subnational government, such as states within the United States like California, Louisiana, Montana, and Rhode Island. In comparative politics, however, a **state** is a national-level group, organization, or body that administers its own legal and governmental policies within a designated region or territory. As a reminder from a term introduced in Chapter 1, a state must have **sovereignty**, which is fundamental governmental power and authority in decision-making within a given territory.

States, then, are the major political actors in global politics. The United Nations, in fact, includes 193 member-states. Outside of the comparative politics discipline, many people tend to use the terms state, country, nation, and government interchangeably. Within comparative politics, each of these terms is distinct, and each term has different implications when observing political landscapes around the world.

If a state is a national-level organization that administers its own legal and governmental policies within a designated region or territory, what are nations and countries? While a state relates specifically to how a designated territory operates politically through institutions (e.g., legislatures, courts, the military), a **nation** is broadly defined as a population of people joined by

common culture, history, language, and/or ancestry within a designated region or territory. It is therefore possible for a nation to exist *without* sovereignty. A **country** is similar, and the term that most people tend to use colloquially, but this term can encompass aspects of *both* the nation *and* the state. A country is a nation, which may have one or more states within it. Finally, as a reminder from the introduction to this section, a **government** is the group of people in charge of running a state. The government therefore changes over time (e.g., in a democracy, the government may change after an election).

As an example to better differentiate these terms, we will briefly consider the case of Spain. Spain, meaning all of the political institutions that manage the Spanish territory, is a state. Within Spain, there are several nations with unique languages, cultures, and traditions, such as the Basques, the Catalans, and the Galicians. When we speak of Spain as a country, we include *both* the political institutions making up the state *and* the diverse nations within the Spanish territory. Finally, the leadership in power at a given time--in Spain, a prime minister and their cabinet--is the Spanish government. When a new election takes place, the government may change, but the state remains the same.

As noted above, one of the crucially important characteristics of a state is its ability to independently organize its policies and goals. Sovereignty is not only fundamental governmental power to coerce, but it also involves the ability to manage the state's affairs independently from outside interference (external sovereignty) and the ability to deflect internal resistance (internal sovereignty). If a state does not have the ability to manage its own affairs and issues, it will not be able to maintain power.

Power, broadly defined, is the ability to get others to do what you want them to do. **Soft power** means being able to get others to do what you want them to do using the methods of persuasion and attraction, such as through diplomacy or cultural influence. **Hard power**, in contrast, is the ability to get others to do what you want using physical, military might and/or aggressive economic measures. While hard power aims to coerce, soft power aims to persuade, and both types of power hold critical places in the world of politics.



Figure 3.1.6: On the left, a photo of the United Nations General Assembly Hall. Negotiating for ideal political terms is an example of soft power. On the right, a photo of a Test launch of an LGM-25C Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile at Vandenberg Air Force Base in the United States, 1975. Launching a missile would be an example of trying to exercise hard power. (Sources: From left to right, [United Nations General Assembly Hall](#) by Patrick Gruban is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#); [An LGM-25C Titan II missile is launched at Vandenberg Air Force Base](#) by the U.S. Air Force is licensed under [Public Domain - US](#))

Whether a state has power, and whether it can operate effectively, depends on its authority and legitimacy. **Authority** is the state's power to get things done. **Legitimacy** is the state's ability to establish itself as a valid power over its citizens. If we put these two terms together, a state is legitimate in its operations if it has the authority to make decisions and carry out its policy goals.

A state's leaders (i.e., its government) can garner legitimacy through multiple means. **Traditional legitimacy** occurs when states have the authority to lead based on historical precedent. For example, the legitimacy of a king may stem from the passing down of the throne through one family over time. **Charismatic legitimacy** occurs when citizens follow the rules of a state based on the charisma and personality of the current leader. **Rational-legal legitimacy** occurs when states derive their authority through firmly established laws, rules, regulations, and procedures. This type of legitimacy often derives from a state's **constitution**, which is a written document describing the basic principles and laws of the state.

Each of these forms of legitimacy, especially when taken together, can enhance a state's ability to function. If, for instance, there is a written and adopted constitution, and that document has been transparently drafted and considered by representatives of a state, individuals will know what the rules are within their state (rational-legal legitimacy). In time, as laws and norms are followed and accepted, this process establishes a historical precedent that individuals are more likely to accept (traditional legitimacy). Finally, if there happens to be an especially appealing or inspirational leader, that person may be able to garner further support from the people to deepen a state's legitimacy (charismatic legitimacy).

Keeping in mind the differences in the terms government, state, country, and nation, the next section will provide two further distinctions. First, we will consider how to differentiate "weak" versus "strong" states. Second, we will start to consider one additional foundational term, political regime, which we will expand on in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

3.2: The Modern State and Regime Types

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the differences between strong and weak states.
- Compare and contrast examples of political capacity in different states.
- Define political regime and identify the difference between democratic and non-democratic regimes.

Introduction

The rise of the so-called "modern state" is usually attributed to the end of the European Middle Ages, wherein states were critical to the organization and survival of certain societies. Being a member of a state brought benefits to those included. Having a recognized state meant there was a recognized authority by which states could trade and do business with each other. Trade prompted economic development, which further solidified trading relationships. With economic development, states were able to pursue technological innovations. The advent of trade enabled states to improve the way day-to-day activities were run, and it enabled states to build further military power. Advances in technology helped European states improve engineering, map-making, mathematics, and weapons development. All of these advances contributed to some semblance of political stability for a state's inhabitants. When protected by a recognized, and at least partially unified, state, ordinary people had greater chances for survival.

As described in the previous section, not all social contracts and state authority are created equal; in fact, there is great variation in the way states manifest in different regions and under different ideological perspectives. This section considers several key factors that comparativists use to compare states.

State Strength

The first key factor on which to compare states is state strength. All states grapple with the balance between how much freedom the state will grant its citizens and how much authority the state will wield. This contributes to a variety of political outcomes. Some states are powerful, strong, effective, and stable. Other states are disorganized, chaotic, weak, and unstable. How can we tell the difference between strong and weak states?

Strong states are those which are able to work their political agendas effectively and to make sure basic political tasks are completed. Strong states are able to defend their territory and interests, collect taxes from their citizens, enforce laws, manage their economies, and promote civil and political stability within their domain. Regardless of where authority is derived, the state has legitimacy to act because the citizens have accepted the terms of the social contract.

Weak states are those which are unable to perform basic political tasks or complete their political agendas effectively. Weak states are typically unable to defend their territories and interests. They do not have enough legitimacy, or are not institutionalized well enough, to collect taxes, enforce their laws, and/or manage their economies effectively. Weak states may also struggle to ensure domestic stability, likely because they lack the legitimacy and authority to act on their constituents.

Failed states are those in which the structures of the state are so weak that the state breaks down. A failed, or failing, state does not necessarily imply a situation of anarchy. While a central authority may be unable to effectively control its territory in a failed state, there may remain some semblance of government intact and other societal structures, such as markets, may still function.

These definitions of varying state strength rely on the concept of state capacity. **Capacity** is the ability of a state to use its power, as derived through authority and legitimacy, to get things done and promote its own interests. A state's strength therefore also implicitly relies on our previously-defined term of **sovereignty**, fundamental governmental power and authority in decision-making within a given territory. A state with low capacity or impediments to its sovereignty is weak; a state with high capacity and no impediments to its sovereignty is strong.

Political Regime

The second key factor on which to compare states is political regime. A **political regime** is the set of rules that structures access to political power within a state, which is usually institutionalized through a state's constitution. A state's political regime has implications for the ways in which a state chooses to wield its power to enforce laws, rules, and norms of political life.

We typically separate political regimes into two broad types: democracies and non-democracies. A **democracy** is a political regime in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people. We will discuss democratic institutions, systems of democracy, and democratic consolidation in Chapter 4. A **non-democracy** is a political regime that denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being. Non-democracies are often referred to as "dictatorships" or "authoritarian regimes" or "autocracies." We will discuss non-democratic strategies for staying in power, types of non-democracies, and democratic backsliding (toward a non-democratic regime) in Chapter 5.

As a brief preview and to clarify the differences between democratic and non-democratic regimes, we can compare the ways in which the rules structure access to political power within a state. In a democracy, rulers come to power through free and fair elections; in a non-democracy, rulers do not come to power through free and fair elections.

As one example of a non-democracy, we can consider a **personalist regime**, a type of political regime in which power lies with a single, charismatic, and all powerful person who drives all actions of the state (typically referred to as a "dictator"). While non-democracies can range in the extent to which the state intervenes in the private lives of citizens, most non-democracies do not permit independent media or protect civil liberties like freedom of speech and association. A current example of a personalist regime is North Korea.

The current Supreme Leader of North Korea is Kim Jong-Un, who has served since 2011. Kim Jong-Un took over the title of Supreme Leader after the death of his father, Kim Jong-Il. Similarly, Kim Jong-Il took over the title of Supreme Leader in 1994 after the death of his father, Kim Il-Sung. The people of North Korea do not elect their Supreme Leader; rather, the method to access political power is through dynastic succession (i.e., power is passed down within the Kim family). The state's legitimacy therefore relies on charismatic legitimacy stemming from the Kim family, which enjoys a cult of personality. A **cult of personality** occurs when a state leverages all aspects of a leader's real and exaggerated traits to solidify the leader's power. In North Korea, the media promotes propaganda to endow its leader with divine-like status.



Figure 3.2.1: Image of Kim Jong-Un, Supreme Leader of North Korea, in 2019. (Source: [Kim Jong-un](#), by Alexei Nikolsky is licensed under [CC-BY 4.0](#))

As a second example of a non-democracy, we can consider a **military regime**, a type of political regime characterized by military elites, rather than civilians, running the government. This small group of military leaders is called a **junta**. Similar to the personalist regime example, within a military regime led by a junta, the leaders do not come to power through elections. In many cases, rather, a junta initially forms as resistance to or rebellion against an existing government, then gains power through a military-led coup d'état. A **coup d'état** (often simply called "coup") is an attempt to abruptly, unlawfully, and sometimes violently

seize power from an existing government. In Myanmar in 2021, for instance, the military (Tatmadaw) seized control, overthrowing a democratically-elected government. After a parliamentary election in November 2020 that resulted in a decrease in the number of military-aligned political party seats, Myanmar's military alleged election fraud and requested that the government delay the opening session of parliament. The government rejected this request and, in response, the military seized power, detained those who had won the election, declared a state of emergency, and handed control of all branches of government to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as junta leader (with the official title of Chairman of the State Administration Council).

In each of the two examples above, the commonality that distinguishes non-democratic from democratic regimes is that rulers come to power through means other than free and fair elections.

It is important to note that political regimes are not fixed. A **political regime transition** occurs when there is a change in political regime (e.g., from democracy to non-democracy, from non-democracy to democracy, or from one type of non-democracy to another).

Consider the example of the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany during the 1920s. Following World War I, a weak democracy was installed in Germany called the Weimar Republic, but the state suffered from a number of problems. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the peace treaty that formally ended World War I, put Germany into dire social and economic straits. Germany was forced to pay high reparations, which left the German people impoverished. High unemployment, high inflation, and general discontent made it difficult for the Weimar Republic to enforce its political agenda. In the midst of these circumstances, Hitler crafted a cult of personality to rally many Germans against the Weimar Republic. Through his use of manipulation and incendiary speech, Hitler was appointed as Chancellor of Germany in 1933. He (and the Nazi Party) effectively abolished the Weimar Constitution through decrees and laws that consolidated his power while eroding the rights and liberties of the German people, turning Germany into a non-democratic regime. At the end of World War II, and after Hitler's death, Germany experienced another regime transition, but this time from non-democracy to democracy.

While comparativists study regime transitions, regime types, and state strength, they also study states by considering many aspects of political institutions, political and cultural identity, political economy, and political violence. We will discuss these topics in detail in subsequent chapters.

3.3: Comparative Case Study - Botswana and Somalia

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare and contrast how the historical context in Botswana and Somalia influenced political outcomes.
- Apply the concept of capacity in Botswana and Somalia.

Introduction

Why compare and contrast Botswana and Somalia when discussing the state? This selection provides an example of a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD). As reviewed in Chapter 2, the MSSD requires comparativists to consider at least two cases that are similar in terms of underlying conditions (control variables), yet have an outcome of interest (the dependent variable) that differs. Botswana and Somalia have a number of geographic and historical circumstances in common, and yet the resulting political outcomes have been very different. The primary difference between these two countries is their form of legitimate authority.

Botswana



Figure 3.3.1: Map of Botswana. (Source: [Map of Botswana](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

- **Full Country Name:** Botswana, Republic of Botswana
- **Head(s) of State:** President
- **Government:** Parliamentary Republic
- **Official Languages:** Setswana, English
- **Economic System:** Market-Oriented Economy
- **Location:** Southern Africa
- **Capital:** Gaborone
- **Total land size:** 224,610 sq. miles
- **Population:** 2,254,069
- **GDP:** \$18.726 billion
- **GDP per capita:** \$7,817
- **Currency:** Pula

The Republic of Botswana is located in Southern Africa, and it is a landlocked country. Botswana is bordered by South Africa to the south, Namibia to the northwest, and Zimbabwe to the northeast. Botswana has a long history, and is credited with perhaps being the "birthplace" of all modern humans dating back over 200,000 years. Much of what is known about the ancient Botswana region is derived from archeological and anthropological research, which has traced evidence of human civilization through ancient tools, cave drawings, and evidence of farming practices that existed through the region over time. Although there is robust evidence of the region's population adopting agricultural practices and having tribal norms and values that were followed, the first actual written records of life in Botswana did not exist until the 1820s.

Botswana was one of many African countries affected by the **Scramble for Africa**, sometimes also called the Conquest of Africa, wherein Western European powers attempted to control and colonize all parts of Africa. The Scramble for Africa occurred between the years of 1880 to 1914, with countries like Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, and Italy invading and colonizing much of Africa. Botswana was dominated by Britain. Under British rule, the region of Botswana was called the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Part of the reason the region was called a protectorate was that Britain **annexed**, or took over, the region on the basis that they were "protecting" the main tribes from the Boers. The Boers were descendants of Dutch colonists in Southern Africa, and would frequently attempt to take over the territory of Botswana tribes. To protect their economic and military interests in Botswana, Britain permitted the Bechuanaland Protectorate to operate under its own leadership and rules, but supplied resources to protect the region from the Boers. A **protectorate** is defined as an area or nation that is managed, possessed, controlled, and protected by a different state. The area or nation is dependent in that it relies on the security provided by another state, but is still allowed, to some extent, to dictate its own local politics and activities.

At the beginning of the 20th century, more and more power started being shared with the various tribes and councils within Southern Africa. Various proclamations enabled tribal powers to have some level of power over how they conducted themselves. Nevertheless, it was not until 1964 that Britain allowed Botswana to declare its independence. Botswana was able to hold its first elections in 1966, following the creation of its own constitution in 1965.

Today, Botswana is considered Africa's oldest and most stable democracy, though it is not without some issues (which will be discussed below). Botswana's Constitution provides the supreme law of the land and the basis for rule. There are components of Botswana's constitution that seek to protect the citizens of Botswana by providing for certain civil liberties. **Civil liberties** are individual rights that are protected by law to ensure the government does not unreasonably interfere (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly). Botswana is a parliamentary republic, which is a system of government where the executive branch is given its powers by the legislative branch. In Botswana's case, the president serves as both the head of state and head of government, and is elected by, and held accountable by, Botswana's Parliament.

Although Botswana has three branches of government with defined powers according to their constitution, and even though free and fair elections do occur, there is some question as to the true level of freedom within Botswana. The Freedom in the World Index categorizes Botswana's democracy as free, but a number of global indexes for democracy, including the Democracy Index, categorize Botswana as having a flawed democracy. (Chapter 4 will discuss the various manifestations of democracy worldwide in detail, but it is worth noting that not all democracies qualify as *fully* democratic. Instead, analysts measure democracy on a spectrum based on multiple characteristics. One such characteristic is whether a democracy has more than one political power that is able to reasonably vie for power.)

One area of concern among some analysts is Botswana's party system. Botswana has been dominated by single party rule since independence, which may be an indication that there is a lack of fair competition. A second area of concern relates to perceived threats to Botswana's freedom of speech and freedom of press. A third cautionary issue is how Botswana's government treats migrants, refugees, and the LGBTQIA+ community; all of these groups face constant discrimination under the law.

While Botswana's current situation shows a number of democratic flaws, Botswana still has one of the oldest, most stable democracies in Africa. In addition, according to most indexes, Botswana is one of the least corrupt democracies in Africa, earning it the nickname of the "African Exception." Why has Botswana been reasonably successful in comparison to other African states?

One explanation is cultural. At the time of Botswana's independence in the mid-1960s, life for the people of Botswana was fairly traditional and undisturbed. There was a clear changing of the seasons, which led to predictable crops and management of agriculture. As agriculture was the dominant economic activity of the time, life in Botswana was relatively stable. In addition, prior to the move to formal independence vis-a-vis the creation of a government and the adoption of a constitution, the loose agreements with Britain within the protectorate structure allowed the region to operate with its own leaders within tribes. The people of Botswana therefore had experience with a hierarchical power dynamic where tribal decisions were based on the consensus and agreement of the tribes, a type of informal democracy. The combination of experience in a power hierarchy and the tradition of gathering consent of the people may have contributed to the successful adoption of a democratic form of

government. A saying in Setswana seems to capture this sentiment prior to the adoption of a constitution: "Kgosi ke Kgosi ka batho," meaning "A chief is a chief by the will of the people" (Lewis, 2020).

Another explanation is resource-based. The British lacked interests in Botswana's geographical resources. Britain had been interested in other locations within Africa, so many other countries in Africa were exploited for their resources. Interestingly, Botswana was largely left alone. It has been said that a government official in Botswana quipped, "The British left us with nothing!" He then paused, thoughtfully, and added, "On the other hand, the British left us with nothing" (Lewis, 2020). For democratic development, it may have been helpful that the British left Botswana alone, allowing the state to largely develop its own institutions and governmental practices. This helped Botswana transition from previous practices with, relative to other countries, a higher level of ease.

Somalia



Figure 3.3.2: Map of Somalia. (Source: [Map of Somalia](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

- **Full Country Name:** Somalia, Federal Republic of Somalia
- **Head(s) of State:** President, Prime Minister
- **Government:** Federal parliamentary republic
- **Official Languages:** Somali, Arabic
- **Economic System:** Informal
- **Location:** Eastern Africa
- **Capital:** Mogadishu
- **Total land size:** 246,201 sq miles
- **Population:** 15,893,219
- **GDP:** \$5.218 billion
- **GDP per capita:** \$348
- **Currency:** Somali Shilling

Somalia is a country located in Eastern Africa, the Horn of Africa, and bordered by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Like Botswana, Somalia has a long history. In fact, Somalia is thought to have been settled by the first human beings (homo sapiens) on the planet, who are thought to have emerged roughly 300,000 years ago. Archaeological digs have unearthed pyramids, tombs, ancient cities, tools, burial grounds, homes, and walls. Over time, the land that is now Somalia was affected by various civilizations and outside influences given its location for trade. Somalia was a stopping point that enabled profitable trade to occur between what is now the Middle East, connecting trading pathways with India and China. In the 9th century, Islam was introduced to the region of present-day Somalia by Muslims fleeing persecution. Over time, Islam grew to be the main religion of Somalia.

Somalia, like Botswana, was a target within the Scramble for Africa, though the influence of colonial powers differed in Somalia. Botswana had been under British control, while Somalia was partially dominated by Britain, and partially dominated by Italy. The two colonial powers fought for control over Somali territory, to the detriment of the Somalis. In World War I, Italy, which had turned fascist under the rule of Benito Mussolini, sought to annex Ethiopia. Italian troops, along with some Somali troops,

were able to take back parts of Somalia formerly dominated by the British. Years later, during World War II, Britain was able to successfully take back its former Somali territory, as well as those parts that were held by Italian forces. The battle between Britain and Italy to dominate Somalia often put the Somalians in difficult positions where they had to side with one or the other.

After years of dispute in the international community, including between Britain and Italy, Somalia formed the Somali Republic in 1961. A referendum was put forth for the people to accept a constitution, which would set the foundations for their own government. Unfortunately, most Somalians were not allowed to participate in the voting for the new constitution. A president and prime Minister were put into place, but their positions were not the product of voting. In 1969, the President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated during a military coup d'état. The leader of the military at that time, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, initiated the coup, became the leader of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), and controlled the country. The country became an authoritarian regime, with the SRC dissolving the legislature and the judiciary, and suspending the constitution. For a time under this control, the SRC renamed Somalia, the Somali Democratic Republic, though there was no constitution nor any democratic institutions. In 1976, Mohamed Siad Barre disbanded the SRC and formed the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party. Barre's administration was a communist regime that attempted to wed the Islamic traditions of the region with socialist ideas of equality.

Regardless of the lofty goals of Major General Barre, decades of military rule left the Somali people restless and disillusioned. In 1991, in the face of increasingly authoritarian rules, Barre's rule came to an end through the combined efforts of different clans who opposed Barre's rule. Together, the clans were able to oust Barre. The northern part of the country, previously occupied by Britain, declared independence from the rest of Somalia, though it has never been recognized as independent by the global community. The rest of Somalia became a power vacuum; a civil war began where the clans that had ousted Barre fought for dominance. During the civil war, many political scientists began calling Somalia a failed state because there was no dominant authority able to reign supreme. Instead, the region was dominated by many groups vying for authority, but no group was able to gain longstanding legitimacy or create durable political institutions.

In 2000, the Transitional National Government (TNG) was established, and Abdiqasim Salad Hassan was selected to be the president. Ideally, this government was put in place to help Somalia transition to a formal and legitimate government authority, but this time period remained unstable. For example, the prime minister's office turned over four times within the first three years of the TNG's establishment. Finally, in 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia was formed, which has been the most permanent central government authority in place since 1991. This government utilizes a federal parliamentary republic, though it is not a democracy and Freedom House categorizes Somalia as "not free." The civil war that began in 1991 has not ended, and internal disputes still wreak disastrous consequences on the Somali people. The federal government lacks widespread support, there is constant political infighting, and massive corruption exists. The government is also inefficient, unable to collect taxes, unable to stimulate economic productivity, and operates on an insufficient government budget. When considering the impact of all of these factors combined with ongoing drought conditions, millions of Somalians have been displaced.



Figure 3.3.3: Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia. These individuals are displaced largely because of the ongoing civil war, but also as a consequence of drought. (Source: [Somaliland Drought](#), by Oxfam East Africa is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

Although both Botswana and Somalia were deeply affected by the Scramble for Africa, one of the key differences may have

been the way in which the colonial governments left the respective regions. While the British largely left Botswana to its own devices, Somalia did not have the same luck. Instead, Somalia was initially dominated partly by Italy and partly by Britain. In time, Somalia was also affected by World War I and World War II in ways that Botswana was not. The persistent disruptions and foreign interventions faced by Somalia left it fragile. Lacking the pre-existing conditions that Botswana benefited from--for instance, its relatively seamless transition to democratic institutions and the benefit of Britain leaving without further resource exploitation--and having suffered from a number of internal and external issues, Somalia continues to struggle.

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3.5: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Anarchy** is a lack of societal structure and order, where there is no established hierarchy of power.
- **Annex** is to take over a region.
- **Authority** is having the power to get things done.
- **Capacity** is the ability of a state to use its power, as derived through authority and legitimacy, to get things done and promote its own interests.
- **Charismatic legitimacy** is a type of legitimacy in which citizens follow the rules of a state based on the charisma and personality of the current leader.
- **Civil liberties** are individual rights that are protected by law to ensure the government does not unreasonably interfere (e.g., freedom of speech).
- **Constitution** is a written document describing the basic principles and laws of the state.
- **Country** is a nation, which may have one or more states within it.
- **Coup d'état** (often simply called "coup") is an attempt to abruptly, unlawfully, and sometimes violently seize power from an existing government.
- **Cult of personality** occurs when a state leverages all aspects of a leader's real and exaggerated traits to solidify the leader's power.
- **Democracy** is a political regime in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people.
- **Direct democracy** is a type of democracy in which all citizens are involved in political decision-making.
- **Failed states** are those in which the structures of the state are so weak that the state breaks down.
- **Feudalism** was a system of social order that arose out of the Middle Ages, particularly in Europe, wherein peasants (sometimes called Serfs) were forced to provide members of the upper class with their crops, goods, services, and loyalty.
- **Government** is the organization, or the group of people, with the power to set rules, to manage, and to regulate a political unit (e.g., a state).
- **Hard power** is the ability to get others to do what you want using physical, military might and/or aggressive economic measures.
- **Indirect (representative) democracy** is a political system in which the people elect representatives to serve on their behalf to make the laws and rules of society.
- **Junta** is a governing body within a type of non-democracy, a military regime, in which there is a small, military group of elites who rule state activities.
- **Legitimacy** is a state's ability to establish itself as a valid power over its citizens.
- **Military regime** is a type of political regime characterized by military elites, rather than civilians, running the government.
- **Nation** is a population of people joined by common culture, history, language, and ancestry within a designated region or territory.
- **Naturalization** is the process by which non-citizens formally become citizens of the country they reside in.
- **Non-democracy** is a political regime that denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being.
- **Personalist regime** is a type of political regime in which power lies with a single, charismatic, and all powerful person who drives all actions of the state.
- **Political regime** is a set of rules that structures access to political power within a state, usually institutionalized through a constitution.
- **Political regime transition** is when there is a change in political regime (e.g., from democracy to non-democracy, from non-democracy to democracy, or from one type of non-democracy to another).
- **Power** is the ability to get others to do what you want them to do.
- **Protectorate** is an area or nation that is managed, possessed, controlled, and protected by a different state.
- **Rational-legal legitimacy** is a type of legitimacy that exists when states derive their authority through firmly established laws, rules, regulations, and procedures (e.g., through a constitution).
- **Scramble for Africa**, sometimes called the Conquest of Africa, is when Western European powers attempted to control and colonize all parts of Africa.
- **Social contract** is a formal or informal agreement between the rulers and those ruled in a society.
- **Soft power** is the ability to get others to do what you want them to do using the methods of persuasion or attraction, such as through diplomacy or cultural influence.
- **Sovereignty** is fundamental governmental power and authority in decision-making within a given territory.

- **State** is a national-level group, organization, or body which administers its own legal and governmental policies within a designated region or territory.
- **Strong states** are those that are able to work their political agendas effectively and to make sure basic political tasks are completed.
- **Traditional legitimacy** is a type of legitimacy that exists when states have the authority to lead based on historical precedent.
- **Weak states** are those which are unable to perform basic political tasks or complete their political agendas effectively.

Summary

Section 3.1: Introduction to States

A state is a national-level group, organization, or body that administers its own legal and governmental policies within a designated region or territory. There has been ample research regarding the formation of states globally, and it is important to be able to distinguish between the terms "government," "state," "country," "nation," and "regime." Social contract theory is a critical concept in considering state formation because it lays the foundations for why individuals might enter into a social contract with government powers. Ideally, the social contract is the mechanism through which individuals surrender some of their individual rights for protections provided by the governmental powers.

Section 3.2: The Modern State and Regime Types

Social contracts and state authority are not the same everywhere. Modern states can fall into the categories of strong and weak states. Strong states are those which are able to work their political agendas effectively and to make sure basic political tasks are completed. Weak states are those which are unable to perform basic political tasks and unable to complete their political agendas effectively. The difference between strong and weak states can often be delineated through calculating a state's political capacity. Political capacity is the ability of a state to use its power, as derived through authority and legitimacy, to get things done and promote its own interests. A political regime is a set of rules that structures access to political power within a state, usually institutionalized through a constitution. A state may fall into one of many types of political regime, which can fall on a spectrum of democracies to non-democracies.

Section 3.3: Comparative Case Study – States and the Stateless: Botswana and Somalia

Although Botswana and Somalia have a number of geographic and historical circumstances in common, the resulting political outcomes differ. Botswana is considered to have one of the oldest and most stable democracies in Africa, while Somalia does not have a consolidated government authority that has widespread approval of the population. Botswana is recognized as a functional state, whereas Somalia has occasionally been considered stateless, a failed state, or a failing state. One of the features that may have been pivotal in the political outcomes of both Botswana and Somalia is the extent to which external powers interfered with their establishment of government authority. Botswana, though formally annexed by Britain, was able to establish its own government, whereas Somalia was considered to be of too much geopolitical importance to be supported in its pathway to eventual independence.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following influential thinkers was NOT a social contractarian?
 - a. Thomas Hobbes
 - b. John Locke
 - c. King George
 - d. Jean-Jacques Rousseau
2. What is one way to gauge the difference between a strong and weak state?
 - a. military strength
 - b. economic strength
 - c. political capacity
 - d. regime type

3. What is the name of the governing body within a military regime that has a small group of military officers in charge?
 - a. democracy
 - b. aristocracy
 - c. anarchy
 - d. junta
4. What do we term a state that has structures so weak that the state breaks down?
 - a. failed state
 - b. strong state
 - c. institutionalized state
 - d. weak state
5. What do we call the change from a democracy to a dictatorship, or from a dictatorship to a democracy?
 - a. weak state
 - b. strong state
 - c. regime transition
 - d. consolidated government

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.d., 4.a, 5.c

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the state and what is its relationship to the social contract? Consider the various ways in which the social contract can manifest to contribute to varying state outcomes.
2. How is the strength of a state derived? How can we tell the difference between weak and strong states? Provide examples.
3. Are some societies better off without the state? Are there circumstances where the formation of a state would be detrimental? Describe these circumstances.

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [Our World in Data](#)
- [The World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)
- [The World Factbook, CIA](#)

Journal Articles

- Gabriel A. Almond. (September 1988) "The Return of the State," and replies by Eric A. Nordlinger, Theodore J. Lowi and Sergio Fabbrini, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 82, pp. 875-901.
- Stephen D. Krasner. (January 1984) "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics*, 16, pp. 223-246.

Books

- Martin Carnoy. (1984) *Political Theory and the State*.
- Mancur Olson. (2000). *Power and Prosperity*. New York: Basic Books.
- Robert Putnam. (1993). *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
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4: DEMOCRACIES AND DEMOCRATIZATION

- 4.1: What is Democracy?
- 4.2: Institutions within Democracy
- 4.3: Systems of Democracy
- 4.4: Democratic Consolidation
- 4.5: Comparative Case Study – South Africa and Iraq
- 4.6: References
- 4.7: Student Resources

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4.1: What is Democracy?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define democracy.
- Recognize the origins and characteristics of democracies.
- Distinguish between direct and indirect democracy.

Introduction

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

— Winston Churchill, November 11, 1947

More than half of the governments currently in existence operate under some variation of democracy. The global trend toward democratization worldwide during the 20th century prompted some to conclude that democracy is simply the best, or most ideal, form of government. Indeed, near the end of the 20th century, political scientist Francis Fukuyama wrote a book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, in which he argued humanity had reached the end of history because many states had adopted forms of liberal democracy. His book was a best-seller that energized many about the prospects of a world that, by embracing democracy, would not again suffer the likes of major world wars. More than two decades after this publication, however, and in light of events like the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of China, the backsliding toward authoritarianism in Russia, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the eventual fall of Afghanistan back to authoritarian rule, Fukuyama mostly retracted his conclusion that the world had accepted democracy as the standard. Instead, he now asserts that issues related to political identity threaten the security of geopolitical stability. The many challenges facing democracy, democratization, and democratic backsliding (discussed in Chapter 5), prompts us to take a hard look at democracy, its types, its institutions and models, and various manifestations throughout the world. Is democracy the best form of government? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

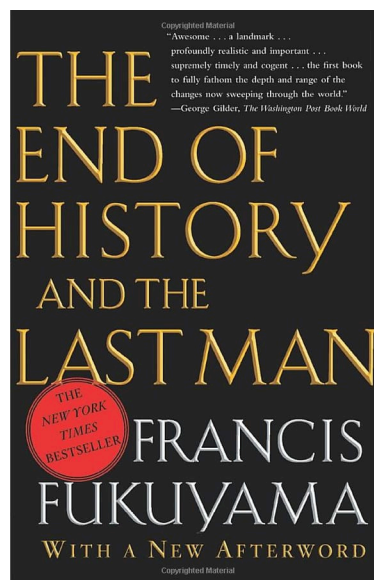


Figure 4.1.1: Cover of Fukuyama's (1992) book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, which prompted discussion over whether the world had reached the end of history because so many states had adopted liberal democracy as their form of government.

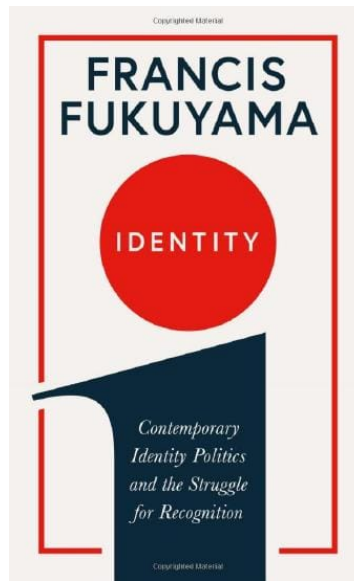


Figure 4.1.1: Cover of Fukuyama's (2018) book, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, which veered away from the belief that the world had accepted liberal democracy. Instead, Fukuyama argued that political identity and the weight of historical disputes may impede the potential for long-term peace.

Origins, Definitions, and Characteristics of Democracy

There is evidence of what anthropologists designate "primitive democracy," wherein small communities have face-to-face discussions to make decisions, as far back as 2,500 years ago. However, the first formal application of democratic institutions and processes is generally attributed to Ancient Greece, with the city of Athens often credited as "the birthplace of democracy." In its simplest terms, **democracy** is a political regime in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people. Democracy comes from the Greek word, *dēmokratīā*, where "demos" means "people" and "kratos" means "power" or "rule." Prior to the formation of legal reforms, Athens operated as an aristocracy.

An **aristocracy** is a form of government where power is held by nobility or those considered to be of the highest class within a society. Aristocracy proved troublesome for Athens, and the people eventually rallied under an Athenian leader named Solon (circa 640 - 560 B.C.E.). In trying to meet the demands of the people, Solon attempted to satisfy all classes of the Athenian population, rich and poor alike, to devise a form of government that satisfied all. To this end, in 594 B.C.E., Solon created legal reforms and a constitution, which provided the foundations for citizen participation in government affairs and abolished slavery of Athenian citizens. Under this construct, adult males who had completed their military training were given the right to vote, and as much as 20 percent of the population was active in making laws. Eventually, democracy in Athens failed due to both internal and external factors. Internally, there was heavy criticism that the aristocracy was still in force and able to pervert and manipulate legal outcomes to its benefit. Further, the works of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle--all of whom criticized the merits and feasibility of democracy due to a desire for political stability and a worry of the consequences from "rule of the mob"--led to the erosion of trust in democracy in Athens. Externally, and tied to the prospect of political stability, Athens faced frequent challenges to its democracy from the outside. The Peloponnesian War, the changes in leadership from King Phillip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great, and the rise of the Roman Empire all contributed to the eventual decline of democracy in Greece. After the fall of democracy in Greece, the prospect of democracy did not reemerge as a feasible, or even desired, option until the Early Modern Era in the 1600s.

Ancient manifestations of democracy differ greatly from modern conceptualizations and applications. One of the key differences is in the way power from the people is channeled, which becomes apparent when comparing a direct democracy with an indirect democracy. A **direct democracy** enables citizens to vote directly, or participate directly, in the formation of laws, public policy, and government decisions. In this system, citizens personally become involved in all aspects of politics; they are able to change constitutions, recommend referendums and make suggestions for laws, and mandate the activities and actions of government officials. To some extent, Athens exercised a direct democracy in that adult male citizens, who had completed their military training, could participate directly in the making of laws. It was not a perfect democracy in that not all citizens--male and female, rich and poor--could participate, but it did have a mechanism for participation from a subset of citizens. In contrast, **indirect democracy**, also called "representative democracy," channels the power of the people through representation, where citizens

elect representatives to craft laws and make government decisions for them. In this scenario, citizens are granted **suffrage**, which is the right to vote in political elections. In a healthy democracy, elections occur on a regular basis, and elections are free and fair. **Free elections** are those in which all citizens are able to vote for the candidates of their choice. The election is free if all citizens who meet the requirements to vote (e.g., a minimum age requirement) are allowed to participate. **Fair elections** are those in which all votes carry equal weight, the vote totals are counted accurately, and the election results are accepted by all parties. Ideally, a free and fair election meets the following standards:

Before the Election

- Eligible citizens can register to vote
- Voters are given access to reliable information about the ballot and the elections
- Citizens can run for office

During the Election

- All voters have access to a polling station or some method of casting their vote
- Voters can vote free from intimidation
- The voting process is free of fraud and tampering

After the Election

- Ballots are accurately counted
- Election results are publicly announced
- The results of the election are accepted, respected, and honored

The integrity of elections is of paramount importance in democracies. If the election process is not free and fair, it violates the core definition of a democracy: the supreme power of government must be vested in the people.

Indirect democracy is the system that most democratic states use today. This is partly due to logistical considerations. In the United States, for example, how would every adult citizen directly participate in the making of laws? Requiring a vote for every decision would not be time efficient or logistically feasible. The choice of indirect democracy is also partly due to worries over whether voting is always the best option to determine just, equitable, or ideal outcomes. In a representative democracy, citizens outsource the power of lawmaking to those who, ideally, have more expertise in crafting legislation and who have access to a greater depth of information on policy issues.

Although most democratic states practice indirect democracy, there are sometimes mechanisms that align with direct democracy. For instance, the United States has a representative democracy, but voters in some states can put forth initiatives and referendums, also referred to as ballot propositions, for citizens to vote on directly.



Figure 4.1.2: A voter filling in their ballot at a polling place on Election Day in the United States. (Source: [Voters in Des Moines](#) by Phil Roeder, via [Flickr](#), is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

Conceptualizing and Operationalizing (Measuring) Democracy

Beyond the necessity of free and fair elections that occur on a regular basis, scholars point to additional requirements for what they term "liberal democracies." A **liberal democracy** not only facilitates free, fair, and regular elections, but ensures protections of civil liberties (e.g., freedom of speech) and civil rights (i.e., freedom from discrimination). As political scientists Robert Dahl, Ian Shapiro, and Jose Antonio Cheibub (2003) assert, every vote in a representative democracy must carry equal weight, and the rights of citizens must be equally protected by a well-defined and clear "law of the land" (typically, a constitution).

In a similar vein, Larry Diamond (2004), a political sociologist and scholar of democracy, details that a democracy must include the following four characteristics:

1. A system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections
2. Active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life
3. The protection of human rights of all citizens
4. A rule of law in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens

Yet others disagree with such rigid definitions. Karl Popper (2002), for instance, provides a blunter definition of democracy: "I personally call the type of government which can be removed without violence 'democracy,' and the other, 'tyranny.'" Here, Popper emphasizes the importance of citizens having access, availability, and opportunity to control their leaders without violence, retribution, or revolution.

There are hundreds of critiques and frameworks for defining and categorizing democracies, and scholars are generally not in full agreement on what constitutes a perfect democracy. This disagreement also manifests when comparing organizations or indicators that measure levels of democracy across states. There are at least eight major attempts to quantify the existence and health of democracies worldwide: the Democracy Barometer, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index, the Human Freedom Index, the Polity Project (Polity5), Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), the Polyarchy Index, and the World Governance Indicators. In Table 4.1.1, we highlight some of the indicators that three of these organizations use when assessing democracy, illustrating how organizations operationalize (measure) the concept of democracy in slightly different ways.

Table 4.1.1: Operationalizing (Measuring) Democracy

Index	Economist Intelligence Unit	Freedom House	Varieties of Democracy

Components Measured	Elections Participation Functioning of government Civil liberties Political culture	Elections Participation Functioning of government Individual rights Organizational rights Free expression Rule of law	Elections Participation Individual rights Deliberation Egalitarianism
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The different operationalizations yield different outcomes across these three organizations. For instance, as of 2018, Freedom House identifies 86 democracies and 109 non-democracies while Varieties of Democracy identifies 99 democracies and 80 non-democracies. As a reminder from Chapter 3, a **non-democracy** is a political regime that denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being.

Given that both scholars and these organizations acknowledge different conceptualizations and operationalizations of democracy, the next section will discuss how institutions vary within democracies.

4.2: Institutions within Democracy

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Distinguish the functions of legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.
- Define electoral systems and political parties.
- Determine the implications of political party composition and organization.

Introduction

Aside from considering the varying conceptualizations and operationalizations (measurements) of democracy, we can examine institutions that are common within democracies. Democracies, for example, typically have three branches of government: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. These branches are akin to building blocks; each block has a distinct function, wields a distinct form of power, and operates within a system of separation of powers with checks and balances. **Separation of powers** is a system that divides government functions into three branches: the legislative branch, tasked with making laws; the executive branch, tasked with carrying out or enforcing laws; and the judicial branch, tasked with interpreting the constitutionality of laws. These three branches generally operate under a system of **checks and balances**, which provides the different branches with powers to limit one another in an effort to ensure that no branch becomes too powerful (e.g., the executive may have the power to veto, or reject, a law passed by the legislative branch).

Other hallmark institutions of democracies are their electoral systems and political parties. **Electoral systems**, simply put, are voting systems; an electoral system provides a set of rules that dictates how elections are conducted and how results are determined and communicated. **Political parties** are organized groups of people who unite under shared values to get their preferred candidates elected to political office.

This section provides a brief overview of these institutions. When taken together, variations within these institutions allow us to assess the many unique democracies that exist in the world today.

Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches

While some elements and characteristics of democracy vary, one commonality is the separation of powers among the branches of government.

The **legislative branch** generally performs three main functions: (1) it makes and revises laws; (2) it provides administrative oversight to ensure laws are properly executed; and (3), it represents members' constituents in the government, ideally enacting laws related to citizens' interests. There are three main types of legislatures. The first is a **consultative legislature**, which is a type of legislative body that advises the leader, or group of leaders, on issues relating to laws and their applications. In the consultative legislature, members may be elected or appointed. The second is the **parliamentary legislature**, which is a type of legislative body in which members are elected by the people, enact laws, and choose and hold accountable the head of government (typically, a prime minister). We will expand on the parliamentary system in the next section of this chapter. The third type of legislature is the **congressional legislature**, which is a type of legislative body in which groups of legislators, elected by the people, make laws and share powers with other branches within the government. In comparison to a parliamentary legislature, a congressional legislature does not have the ability to choose the head of government.

Interestingly, while most of the legislatures in North and South America are congressional legislatures (with the exception of Canada), European legislatures tend to be parliamentary. As an example of a congressional legislature, we can consider the United States. The U.S. Congress, a bicameral legislature composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate, enjoys substantial powers through its constitutional mandate; it can levy taxes, borrow money, spend money, regulate interstate commerce, establish a national currency, establish a post office, declare war, raise and support an army and navy, establish courts, and pass all laws "necessary and proper" to complete its work. Congress can also propose amendments to the constitution, call for a constitutional convention, and admit new states to the country. What it cannot do, however, is choose the U.S. President, and

each of the other two branches of government has the ability to "check" the legislature's power.

The U.S. President is an example of an official who falls within the executive branch of government. The **executive branch** is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws made by the legislature. It is typically led by a president or a prime minister, though many systems include a second-ranking position beneath the chief executive (e.g., a vice president); a small group of leaders who have institutional powers (e.g., a cabinet); and numerous agencies, sometimes referred to as "departments" or "ministries" (e.g., Department/Ministry of Defense, Department/Ministry of Education, Department/Ministry of State). The chief executive may serve the role of the head of government and/or the head of state. The **head of government** runs and manages the day-to-day business of the state. The **head of state** is the symbolic representative of the state; for example, the head of state may represent the state internationally by attending ceremonial gatherings.

The final branch is the **judicial branch**, which refers to the part of government that resolves disputes (through courts) and interprets, applies, and determines the constitutionality of laws. Many states provide the courts with the power of judicial review as a "check" on the other branches of government. **Judicial review** is the ability of courts to interpret the constitutionality of laws and government actions. A state may allow for judicial review within its existing court system, or a state may create a special "Constitutional Court" for this purpose.

Electoral Systems and Political Parties

As defined in the introduction, an electoral system provides a set of rules that dictates how elections are conducted and how results are determined and communicated. In a democracy, an **election** is the mechanism by which leaders are chosen for political office and, as discussed in 4.1, the election must be conducted in a free and fair manner. An electoral system may include rules about when elections occur, who can vote, who can run as a candidate, how and where voting takes place, how to collect and count ballots, and what constitutes an electoral victory. Voting rules may be enshrined in constitutions, election laws, and/or other legal mandates.

There are *many* different types of electoral systems, and we will only introduce three here. First, the **plurality voting system** is one in which the winning candidate simply earns the most votes. In this system, there is no requirement that a candidate attain a majority of votes, and this system is sometimes called the "first-past-the-post" system. Second, the **majoritarian voting system** is one in which a candidate must win a majority (at least one-half of the votes) in order to win the election. If no candidate wins a majority, there will be a subsequent "runoff election" between the top two vote-earners from the first round. Third, the **proportional voting system** is one in which the distribution of seats (e.g., in a legislature) reflects the overall distribution of votes by the population. For instance, if 20 percent of the population votes for Political Party A, then the state's legislature will provide Political Party A with (approximately) 20 percent of its seats.

These three systems are common, but they do not represent the entire spectrum of electoral systems. As only a few examples of electoral system complications, some states employ mixed voting systems, in which they utilize different systems in different types of elections (e.g., presidential vs. legislative); some states employ quotas, rules that aim to guarantee a certain amount of representation for historically underrepresented groups (e.g., they allocate specific percentages of seats to women, religious minorities, and/or ethnic minorities); and some states employ election thresholds, rules that require a minimum percentage of votes before a political party can gain any seats in a legislature.

Political parties are therefore another crucial institution within democracies. Political parties are organized groups of people who unite under shared values to get their preferred candidates elected to political office, and political parties also play integral roles in accomplishing their political agendas once in office. In relation to electoral systems, a plurality voting system ("first-past-the-post") generally results in two powerful political parties that vie to control power (e.g., the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States). A proportional representation system, alternatively, generally yields a larger number of political parties. Israel, as one example, often has at least 10 political parties represented in its legislature (the Knesset).

This discussion of branches of government, electoral systems, and political parties leads logically to our next section, in which we combine the information above to identify the three major systems of democratic government: presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential.

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4.3: Systems of Democracy

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the defining characteristics of presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential systems of democratic government.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each of the systems of government.

Introduction

Depending on the relative distribution of power between the legislative and executive branches within a democracy, there are three potential systems of government: the presidential system, the parliamentary system, and the semi-presidential system. Each of these systems was designed to fit the context and culture of its democracy, and each has its share of advantages and disadvantages.

Systems of Government

The **presidential system**, sometimes called the "single executive system," is one in which an elected president leads the executive branch, acting *both* as the head of government *and* as the head of state. There is a clear separation of powers in this system, with the executive branch and the legislative branch distinct, and with the president elected independently from the legislature. Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States are all examples of states with presidential systems. In each state, the president serves a fixed term. In Colombia, as one example, the president can serve a single term of four years; in Mexico, as another example, the president can serve a single term of six years.

The **parliamentary system** is one in which the chief executive, usually a prime minister, is not directly elected and is instead chosen by the legislature (parliament). The prime minister typically serves as the head of government, but *not* the head of state. In the United Kingdom, for example, the British monarch serves as the head of state in a largely ceremonial role while the prime minister serves as the head of government who directs day-to-day political activities. Prime ministers must have the support of the legislature in order to take office and, should the legislature desire a change in executive leadership, it can remove the prime minister through a "vote of no confidence."

The **semi-presidential system**, sometimes called "the dual executive system," is one in which a state has both a president and a prime minister, and the dual executives share power. The president is typically directly elected and serves as the head of state. The Prime Minister is typically appointed by the president and serves as the head of government. In France, for instance, the president is directly elected and then appoints the prime minister, but the French legislature retains the ability to dismiss the prime minister through a vote of no confidence. In this way, the semi-presidential system combines elements from the presidential and parliamentary systems.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Each of the three systems of government has potential advantages and disadvantages.

The executive's popular election and fixed term within the presidential system is sometimes considered ideal, as it can ensure democratic legitimacy, produce stability, and provide voters with a clear understanding of the leadership timeline. Yet, at the same time, the direct election of the president can sometimes lead to a problem with personalization of power, where too much power centers on one person, which can lead to cronyism or the erosion of democratic institutions. It can also lead to gridlock, the inability to pass legislation, when different political parties control the executive and legislative branches. Finally, the fixed term can be a disadvantage if there is an unpopular president and no easy way to remove the executive (i.e., as there would be with a vote of no confidence). In the United States, for example, removal of a president requires either (1) impeachment and a trial conviction through the legislature or (2) the following of a process described in the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In

either case, removing a president from office is exceedingly difficult.

The executive removal process in a presidential system is far more cumbersome than in a parliamentary system. One advantage of a parliamentary system, therefore, is that the legislature can remove a prime minister from power at any time, and for any reason, by simply getting a majority consensus among the legislators. This is a dynamic and flexible model that has the ability to respond quickly when a lack of consensus arises. Yet while perhaps an advantage when a prime minister is unpopular and/or not completing their political agenda, the possibility for frequent changes in leadership can cause instability and uncertainty. Additional concerns related to instability exist because, in order to form a majority, parliamentary systems sometimes require political parties to form coalitions. **Coalitions** are temporary groupings between two or more political parties. These coalitions often contain fragmented political parties with widely divergent interests, which requires ongoing negotiations to please all sides.

The semi-presidential system may at first appear as if, by combining aspects of the presidential and parliamentary systems, it can avoid the flaws inherent in each. For instance, while the president (head of state) gains democratic legitimacy through elections, the prime minister (head of government) also faces accountability through the threat of a legislative vote of no confidence. In addition, it may seem to be an advantage to have a division of labor between a president and a prime minister. Yet a disadvantage of semi-presidential systems is that these roles can sometimes blur, causing confusion surrounding the responsibilities of the dual executives. This can also lead to power struggles between the dual executives, especially because the president's fixed term provides the head of state with an advantage over a prime minister who can be removed.

Table 4.3.1 summarizes a few of the advantages and disadvantages of the three systems of government identified above.

Table 4.3.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Presidential, Parliamentary, and Semi-Presidential Systems

	Presidential System	Parliamentary System	Semi-Presidential System
Advantages	1. clear separation of powers 2. president gains legitimacy through elections 3. president has a fixed term	1. head of government (prime minister) depends on legislative approval, providing accountability 2. legislature can remove the head of government through a vote of no confidence 3. collective leadership is present, reducing the risk of personalization of power	1. president gains legitimacy through elections 2. head of government (prime minister) depends on legislative approval, providing accountability 3. division of work between the dual executives can decrease the amount of bureaucracy
Disadvantages	1. potential for gridlock 2. difficult to remove president from power 3. potential for personalization of power	1. lack of separation of powers between head of government and legislature 2. head of government is not elected directly by the people 3. potential for instability in the head of government and/or governing coalitions	1. fixed terms tend to favor the president in the dual executive relationship 2. responsibilities for the dual executives can blur, leading to confusion 3. potential for power struggles between the dual executives

4.4: Democratic Consolidation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define democratic consolidation.
- Identify characteristics of democratic consolidation.
- Recognize theories of democratic consolidation.

Introduction

As a reminder from Chapter 3, a political regime transition occurs when a state experiences a change in its political regime, the set of rules that structures access to political power. **Democratization** is a political regime transition in which a state moves from a non-democratic regime to a democratic regime. After democratization occurs, states embark on **democratic consolidation**, a process in which new democracies evolve from fledgling democratic regimes to established, stable, and secure democratic regimes. Through this process, democracy becomes recognized as "the only game in town," with the state exhibiting strong and high-quality democratic institutions. These strong institutions reduce the state's risk of reverting to a non-democratic regime.

Scholars expect consolidated democracies to endure, but how can they tell when a democracy moves from fledgling to established status? What are the indicators of a consolidated democracy?

Two potential indicators of democratic consolidation are the "two-election test" and the "longevity test." The **two-election test**, also known as the "transfer of power test," asserts that a democracy becomes consolidated when a government that was elected through free and fair elections (election #1) is subsequently defeated (election #2), and all sides accept the election outcome. This test judges democratic consolidation by the peaceful transfer of power. One problem with using this test as an indicator of democratic consolidation is that some states have dominant party systems in which the same political party is elected to office repeatedly. Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), for example, has been in power almost continuously since its founding in 1955, and it was in power continuously for nearly four decades, from 1955-1993. Yet even in 1992, Freedom House ranked Japan as a "free" regime. It is difficult to imagine arguing that Japan was not a consolidated democracy prior to the 1993 election.

The second potential indicator of democratic consolidation is the **longevity test**, which asserts that a democracy becomes consolidated after it holds free, fair, and regular elections for an extended period of time (e.g., for more than two decades). Yet this test also has problems. If elections are held over time, yet those elections benefit only one party, the longevity test may not be a good indicator of democratic consolidation. Persistent elections do not necessarily indicate a high quality of democracy.

The problems with these two tests demonstrate that it can be difficult to identify indicators for consolidated democracy. Below, we briefly consider three theories related to the likelihood of democratic consolidation (note that this is an incomplete list; scholars have proposed *many* more than three theories on this topic).

Theories of Democratic Consolidation

Theory 1: *The regime type that existed prior to the democracy will affect whether a state reaches consolidated democracy status.*

This theory posits that some types of non-democratic regimes are, following a regime transition, more likely to lead to consolidated democracies than others. If a non-democratic regime, for example, held partially free or fair elections, or if that regime allowed for any institutions that were representative of the people, these pre-existing conditions may increase the likelihood of democratic consolidation following democratization. Alternatively, if the prior non-democratic regime centered leadership in a military junta, this may decrease the likelihood of democratic consolidation following democratization due to an increased likelihood of military interference in the new regime.

Theory 2: *The type of political regime transition will affect whether a state reaches consolidated democracy status.*

This theory questions whether the circumstances under which democratization occurs within a state matter. According to Huntington and Linz (1991), who (or what group) initiates the transition toward democracy helps to determine the likelihood of democratic consolidation. If external forces impose a transition to democracy (e.g., by overthrowing an existing dictator), the outsider-led rupture may make democratic consolidation less likely; if groups within the society initiate a transition to democracy (e.g., by protesting against the existing regime), this insider-led rupture may make democratic consolidation more likely.

Theory 3: *The likelihood of democratic consolidation increases with economic development.*

This theory argues that a state with a free market system is more likely to experience democratic consolidation, and economic growth acts as a catalyst for democratic consolidation. As Beethem (1994, pp. 164-165) describes:

"... a market economy disperses decisional and other forms of power from the state. This serves the cause of democracy in a number of ways: it facilitates the development of an autonomous sphere of 'civil society' which is not beholden to the state for resources, information or organisational capacities; it restricts the power and scope of a bureaucratic apparatus; and it reduces what is at stake in the electoral process by separating the competition for economic and political power into different spheres."

If a state shows a willingness to promote a free market with fair competition, it also shows that it is willing to loosen its grasp on an institution that it could otherwise control. By choosing not to control all market outcomes, the state is more likely to experience economic growth. And, the more that the economy improves, the more citizens within a state can experience prosperity and engage in political life, promoting democratic consolidation.

While these three theories give broad insight into factors that may promote or hinder democratic consolidation, in the following section, we compare the process of democratization and evaluate democratic consolidation across two specific cases: Iraq and South Africa. These two cases will elucidate a number of other factors that we must consider in studying the likelihood of democratic consolidation, such as historical context, political culture, identity politics, class structures, economic structures, and political institutions.

4.5: Comparative Case Study – South Africa and Iraq

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare and contrast democratization efforts in South Africa and Iraq.

Introduction

Political scientist Samuel P. Huntington popularized the concept of "waves of democratization." **Waves of democratization** are periods in history when multiple states move from non-democratic to democratic political regimes during the same time period. At the time of his writing, in 1991, Huntington argued that democratization worldwide occurred through three waves, with each wave followed by a reverse wave of democratic backsliding (discussed in Chapter 5). The most recent wave of democratization, the third wave, began with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974. Over the subsequent decades, the number of democratic regimes worldwide increased dramatically, with new democracies emerging (in roughly chronological order) across Southern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and Africa.

These democratic regimes emerged due to a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, non-democratic states experienced a decrease in legitimacy due to societal rejection of authoritarianism; economic growth, allowing them to modernize and improve institutions that support education and the working class; and changes in how religion and religious traditions affected political institutions. Externally, non-democratic states faced regional and global pressures. The "demonstration effect," for instance, allowed citizens in one state to observe other states successfully embarking on democratization efforts, and then use that inspiration to call for the same type of political regime transition. Globalization, moreover, provided citizens with the ability to access information quickly, exposing them to new ideas.

More than 50 years after the start of the third wave, scholars continue to study democratization by examining (among other things) how democratization efforts begin, how interim governments organize during political regime transitions to push toward elections, and whether the democratization efforts result in consolidated democratic regimes. Democratizing states experienced vastly different outcomes, and many states that attempted to democratize during and after the third wave did *not* become consolidated democracies. Rather, they simply transitioned into semi-authoritarian regimes or illiberal (flawed) democracies.

In this context of global patterns of democratization, we will examine the cases of South Africa and Iraq. Through the lens of the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), we will consider similarities in democratization efforts across these two states, and examine the differences in their political outcomes.

South Africa



Figure 4.5.2: Map of South Africa. (Source: [Map of South Africa](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Full Country Name: Republic of South Africa

Head(s) of State: President

Government: Parliamentary Republic (Unitary dominant-party / executive presidency)

Official Languages: 11 Official languages

(English, Zulu, Swazi, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Xitsonga, Xhosa, Tshivenda, isiNdebele)

Economic System: Mixed economy

Location: Southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa

Capital: Pretoria

Total land size: 1,219,090 sq km

Population: 56.9 million

GDP: \$680.04 billion note

GDP per capita: \$11,500

Currency: Rand

Like Botswana and Somalia in Chapter 3, South Africa's history is marked by frequent interventions and occupations by foreign powers through colonialism and imperialism. British and Dutch powers, attempting to expand their empires and grow their influence, colonized parts of South Africa at various points between the 1600s and 1800s. By the early 1900s, there was growing internal demand for South Africa to be independent from Britain. Multiple wars leading up to the 1900s, including the Boer Wars, contributed to deep racial divides between black and white citizens. White South Africans demanded independence from Britain, which eventually culminated in the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Union of South Africa modeled its government structure after the British system, but had a British leader installed as a ceremonial head of state. Full independence was achieved in 1931, giving South Africa's government the ability to act outside of, and without permission from, the United Kingdom.

Although South Africa's government had hallmarks of democratic government, such as three branches of government operating with checks and balances, its legacy of colonialism and racial divide made democratization difficult. Under British rule, a number of laws promoted segregation and the disenfranchisement of nonwhite citizens. Following World War II, a political party called the National Party stoked fears within the country that significant growth in the nonwhite population of South Africa was a threat. The National Party won the majority vote in the 1948 election and implemented a system of apartheid. **Apartheid** is a system of governance in which racial oppression is institutionalized. In the case of South Africa, this meant laws were implemented to ensure that South Africa's minority white population could dominate all political, social, and economic factors within the state. Apartheid in South Africa resulted in, among other things, the segregation and displacement of nonwhites into segregated neighborhoods and the prohibition of interracial marriage and relationships.

Despite fierce criticism from the United Nations and the global community, South Africa's system of apartheid endured until 1991.

In the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa experienced intense internal strife with clashes between those who supported the National Party and those who opposed apartheid. The main opposition to the National Party, the African National Congress (ANC), worked to bring down South Africa's system of apartheid. The ANC, having been forced into exile for many years, used a variety of tactics to force pressure upon the National Party, including using guerrilla warfare and acts of sabotage. Eventually, the National Party and the ANC began meeting to negotiate a way forward. The outcomes of these negotiations was the abolishment of apartheid and, in the coming years, the election of the first democratically elected President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela, was a member of the ANC who had been imprisoned for 27 years prior to his release in 1990. Under his leadership as President of South Africa, he oversaw the drafting of a new constitution which, in tandem with solidifying various democratic principles, heavily emphasized racial equality and the protection of human rights. Mandela saw it as his personal mission to heal the racial divides within the country, and he formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC investigated crimes committed both by the government (led by the National Party) and the ANC under the apartheid system. Though difficult to quantify, the TRC was widely held as a key factor in helping move South Africa forward.

Mandela stepped down as the President of the ANC in 1998, and he retired from politics in 1999. Although Mandela made strides in improving domestic conditions—including investing in education, welfare programs, and the protection of workers and prominent industries—a number of challenges remain. South Africa continues to struggle with racial tensions, as well as persistent xenophobia due to large influxes of legal and illegal migrants. One of the major criticisms of Mandela's term in office is his failure to fully address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For many years, the HIV/AIDS pandemic was so severe in South Africa that the average life expectancy was only 52 years. Failure to provide a strategic approach to combat the pandemic led to decades of poor health outcomes within South Africa.

For many years, South Africa's transition to democracy was heralded as a victorious example of democratization. Nevertheless, current challenges to South Africa's democracy include corruption, enduring racism, and increased rates of femicide and gender-based violence. Each of these realities has contributed to the Economist Intelligence Unit labeling South Africa as a "flawed democracy." A **flawed democracy** is one in which elections are free and fair, and basic civil liberties are protected, but issues exist that hamper the democratic process. These issues include corruption, racism, and gender-based violence.

Corruption is, at best, damaging to democracy and, at worst, fatal to democracy. Corruption can erode the public's trust in the government and its institutions, exacerbate inequality and poverty, and hinder economic development. In 2021, high-ranking political officials in South Africa faced allegations of corruption for misusing billions of dollars of foreign aid targeted toward COVID-19 relief. The government officials charged with corruption are undergoing investigations for their misuse of funds, particularly in allowing various private companies to exorbitantly price gouge the government. There are additional allegations of government corruption, particularly in the favoring of some private companies over others. Corruption within a country can also yield skepticism and condemnation from the global community, as trading partners may lose trust in conducting business with corrupt regimes.

Racism, too, can present threats to democracy. Failure to protect civil liberties and civil rights within a country can create illiberal or flawed democracies. Ongoing structural racism can exacerbate societal tensions and perpetuate violence. Unfortunately, racism is still an ever present force in South Africa. The last two decades have seen ongoing allegations of police and military forces engaging in racist activities. During COVID-19, a number of Black South Africans were killed by police officers violently enforcing lockdowns. Frequent instances of violence against Black citizens has prompted recurrent conversations over the implementation of hate crime legislation as well as appropriate rules for conduct regarding the use of force on citizens.

Finally, data shows continued increases in femicide and gender-based violence. Here again, democracies that are unable to protect civil liberties and civil rights of their citizens risk backsliding or inability to ever fully consolidate. To this end, equal protection of women under South African law is questionable. As of 2019, it was reported that 51 percent of women in South Africa experienced some kind of physical violence as a result of their gender. Violence towards women, which was already elevated prior to the pandemic, continued to increase during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Iraq



Figure 4.5.3: Map of Iraq. (Source: [Map of Iraq](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Full Country Name: Republic of Iraq
Head(s) of State: Prime Minister
Government: Federal Parliamentary Republic
Official Languages: Arabic & Kurdish
Economic System: Mixed economy
Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iran and Kuwait
Capital: Baghdad
Total land size: 169,235 sq mi
Population: 40 million
GDP: \$250.070 billion
GDP per capita: \$4,474
Currency: Iraqi Dinar

Iraq formed in the wake of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The Arab people of the regions of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra fought with the British to gain their independence. However, this did not quite happen. While Iraq was nominally independent, the country had signed an agreement with the British that gave them power over major segments of the country. British imperial authorities controlled the newly formed kingdom's military and foreign affairs and had major influence over its domestic political and economic affairs. In 1921, Britain established King Faysal II as ruler of Mesopotamia and officially changed the name to Iraq, which means "well-rooted country" in Arabic. Many Arabs in the region saw Iraq as an artificially created country, established by British authorities to maintain power in the region. As a result, many people saw the country, and its newly installed royalty, as illegitimate.

The British remained in Iraq for the next three decades, with military bases, transit rights for troops, and eventually British control over the growing oil industry. Still, the question of illegitimacy never left. King Faysal and his family were able to stay in power until 1958, when the grandson, Faysal II was overthrown in a coup d'état. The coup was led by a general that belonged to the Ba'athist Party. The **Ba'athist Party** was a transnational Arab political party that espoused pan-Arab nationalism and socialist economic policies. The party came to power in Iraq and Syria, but also exerted some power in Jordan, Lebanon, and Libya. After some turmoil between the Ba'athist party and the Iraqi military, the country eventually came under the command of Saddam Hussein. Hussein, who ruled until he was overthrown and executed during the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, was from a mostly Sunni tribe in Tikrit, a city north of Baghdad. His reliance on members of his tribe and the city, which were a minority group in the country, contributed to the eventual violence that would follow the 1991 Gulf War.

After fighting Iran for eight years to a stalemate in the Iran-Iraq War, the country found itself in debt to its neighbors, particularly Kuwait, located to the South. Kuwait itself had been a thriving autonomous trading community for centuries. Similar to Iraq, the British curried favor with the ruling as-Sabah family and eventually took control of their military and foreign affairs. Iraq historically claimed Kuwait as its 19th province, believing that the British had unfairly kept it from them. The debt burden and the geopolitical

advantage of Kuwait's geography led Hussein to invade and annex the country in 1990. The United States and a coalition of allies invaded Kuwait and Southern Iraq the next year. Coalition forces routed Iraq forces and heavily bombed Iraq. In 1992, the US set up two "no-fly zones" in the country to protect the Kurds in the north and the Shi'a in the south, who had rebelled against Hussein's rule. A no-fly zone is when a foreign power intervenes to prevent a state from gaining air superiority. The intervening power must be willing to use their military to prevent certain aircraft from flying over an established area.

The no-fly zones and an ensuing United Nations embargo on Iraq greatly weakened the Hussein government. However, the incoming U.S. Bush Administration strongly believed that Iraq was in the process of developing or acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Bush Administration pushed to invade Iraq a second time. The U.S. invaded in 2003, without much world support. Coalition forces captured Hussein later that year. He was put on trial, found guilty of crimes against humanity, and executed in 2006. During this time, a fact-finding mission found that there was no identifiable WMD program. They were, in the words of the official Presidential Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, "dead wrong."

The U.S. invasion and Hussein's fall had a dramatic effect on Iraq. Chaos ensued. The U.S. was not ready to govern the country. Millions were displaced within Iraq and millions more fled the country as violence spiked. Long-simmering sectarian and ethnic disputes erupted in a full-fledged civil war and insurgency. Shi'a militias were unhappy about American military rule. Sunni tribes were fearful of reprisals. The Kurdish minority in the northern part of the country sought independence. Remnants of the Ba'athist party loyal to Hussein mostly folded into al-Qaeda in Iraq, which bitterly fought U.S. forces in several major battles. American soldiers were caught in the middle of a conflict where peace was elusive. Eventually, a surge of U.S. troops in 2007 provided enough security to allow the country to stabilize. U.S. forces finally withdrew from Iraq in 2011.

In 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a successor terrorist group to al-Qaeda, rapidly grew into a massive presence in the region. Starting in Syria, ISIS took advantage of the security vacuum and moved into Iraq. ISIS surprisingly captured Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq. The terrorist organization used the revenues from the nearby oil fields to finance their violent activities. ISIS quickly expanded across the region and committed a series of terrorist attacks in Europe. However, by the end of 2017, ISIS had lost 95 percent of its territory. A combination of Russian-led Syrian forces and U.S.-led Kurdish forces, who sometimes worked together, defeated ISIS on the battlefield.

The majority Shi'a had always chafed under Hussein's rule. His departure meant that the Shi'a would gain political power for the first time in centuries. A transitional Iraqi Governing Council led to democratic elections in 2005, where a religious Shi'a party won the plurality of seats under Nouri al-Maliki. al-Maliki remained as prime minister until 2014, where he governed a tenuous coalition and had been accused of protecting Shi'a militias. al-Maliki also forged closer ties with neighboring Iran, much to the chagrin of the American authorities. In addition, Iraq's Kurdistan region declared independence in 2017. The referendum results were rejected by the Iraqi Parliament, and Turkey vehemently opposed the move. Kurdistan is still part of Iraq, though the region effectively functions as an independent country.

Today, Iraq is a tenuous confederation of three major groups: Sunni Arabs in the west, Kurds in the north, and Shi'a Arabs in the central and southern parts of the country. Iraq has a prime minister and a president, the latter of whom is elected by the Iraqi Parliament and has a largely ceremonial role. The state is mostly run through a sectarian apportionment system, *muhasasa taiifia* in Arabic, where the state is structured amongst the three major sectarian identities. Despite holding regular, competitive elections, the sectarian nature of the system--combined with weak political institutions, ongoing militia activity, and issues with corruption--leaves Iraq as a case in which efforts at democratization have not resulted in a consolidated democracy.

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4.7: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Apartheid** is a system of governance in which racial oppression is institutionalized.
- **Aristocracy** is a form of government where power is held by nobility or those considered to be of the highest class within a society.
- **Ba'athist Party** is a former transnational Arab political party that espoused pan-Arab nationalism and socialist economic policies.
- **Checks and balances** is a system that provides the different branches with powers to limit one another in an effort to ensure that no branch becomes too powerful.
- **Coalitions** are temporary groupings between two or more political parties.
- **Congressional legislature** is a type of legislative body in which groups of legislators, elected by the people, make laws and share powers with other branches within the government.
- **Consultative legislature** is a type of legislative body that advises the leader, or group of leaders, on issues relating to laws and their applications.
- **Democracy** is a political regime in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people.
- **Democratic consolidation** is a process in which new democracies evolve from fledgling democratic regimes to established, stable, and secure democratic regimes.
- **Democratization** is a political regime transition in which a state moves from a non-democratic regime to a democratic regime.
- **Direct democracy** is a government system that enables citizens to vote directly, or participate directly, in the formation of laws, public policy, and government decisions.
- **Elections** are the mechanism by which leaders are chosen for political office in a democracy.
- **Electoral systems** are voting systems; they provide a set of rules that dictates how elections are conducted and how results are determined and communicated.
- **Executive branch** is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws made by the legislature and typically led by a president or a prime minister.
- **Fair elections** are those in which all votes carry equal weight, the vote totals are counted accurately, and the election results are accepted by all parties.
- **Free elections** are those in which all citizens are able to vote for the candidates of their choice.
- **Flawed democracy** is a democratic regime in which elections are free and fair, and basic civil liberties are protected, but issues exist which may hamper the democratic process.
- **Head of government** is the chief executive who runs and manages the day-to-day business of the state.
- **Head of state** is the chief executive who is the symbolic representative of the state (e.g., the head of state may represent the state internationally by attending ceremonial gatherings).
- **Indirect democracy**, also called "representative democracy," is a type of democracy that channels the power of the people through representation, where citizens elect representatives to craft laws and make government decisions for them.
- **Judicial review** is the ability of courts to interpret the constitutionality of laws and government actions.
- **Judicial branch** is the part of government that resolves disputes (through courts) and interprets, applies, and determines the constitutionality of laws.
- **Legislative branch** performs three main functions: (1) it makes and revises laws; (2) it provides administrative oversight to ensure laws are properly executed; and (3), it represents members' constituents in the government, ideally enacting laws related to citizens' interests.
- **Liberal democracy** is a type of democracy that not only facilitates free, fair, and regular elections, but ensures protections of civil liberties (e.g., freedom of speech) and civil rights (i.e., freedom from discrimination).
- **Longevity test** asserts that a democracy becomes consolidated after it holds free, fair, and regular elections for an extended period of time (e.g., for more than two decades).
- **Majoritarian voting system** is an electoral system in which candidates must win a majority in order to win the election. If no candidate wins a majority, there will be a "runoff election" between the top two vote-earners from the first round.
- **Non-democracy** is a political regime that denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being.
- **Parliamentary legislature** which is a type of legislative body in which members are elected by the people, enact laws, and choose and hold accountable the head of government (typically, a prime minister).
- **Parliamentary system** is a system of government in which the chief executive, usually a prime minister, is not directly

elected and is instead chosen by the legislature.

- **Plurality voting system**, sometimes referred to as "first-past-the-post," is an electoral system in which the winning candidate simply earns the most votes.
- **Political parties** are organized groups of people who unite under shared values to get their preferred candidates elected to political office.
- **Presidential system** is a system of government, sometimes called the "single executive system," in which an elected president leads the executive branch, acting *both* as the head of government *and* as the head of state.
- **Proportional voting system** is an electoral system in which the distribution of seats (e.g., in a legislature) reflects the overall distribution of votes by the population.
- **Semi-presidential system** is a system of government, sometimes called "the dual executive system," in which a state has both a president and a prime minister, and the dual executives share power.
- **Separation of powers** is a system that divides government functions into three areas: the legislature, tasked primarily with the making of laws; the executive, who carries out or enforces these laws; and the judiciary, tasked with interpreting the constitutionality of laws.
- **Suffrage** is the right to vote in political elections.
- **Two-election test**, also known as the "transfer of power test," asserts that a democracy becomes consolidated when a government that was elected through free and fair elections (election #1) is subsequently defeated (election #2), and all sides accept the election outcome.
- **Waves of democratization** are moments in history when multiple countries transition to democracy during the same time period.

Summary

Section #4.1: What is Democracy?

Democracy is a political regime in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people. While scholars disagree on the exact conceptualization and operationalization (measurement) of democracy, some accepted democratic themes include (but are not limited to): free, fair, and regular elections (ideally, with the inclusion of more than one viable political party); respect for civil liberties (e.g., freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press) and civil rights (i.e., freedom from discrimination). Democracies that not only facilitate free and fair elections, but also ensure the protection of civil liberties are called "liberal democracies."

Section #4.2: Institutions within Democracy

While some elements and characteristics of democracy vary, one commonality is the separation of powers among branches of government. This separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches relies on a system of checks and balances to ensure that no branch has too much power. The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch carries out or enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets the constitutionality of laws. Two other hallmark institutions of democracies are their electoral systems and political parties. Electoral systems are voting systems; an electoral system provides a set of rules that dictates how elections are conducted and how results are determined and communicated. There are numerous electoral systems in place around the world, and three major ones include plurality voting systems, majoritarian voting systems, and proportional voting systems. Political parties are organized groups of people who unite under shared values to get their preferred candidates elected to political office.

Section #4.3: Systems of Democracy

Depending on the relative distribution of power between the legislative and executive branches within a democracy, there are three potential systems of government: the presidential system, the parliamentary system, and the semi-presidential system. Each of these systems was designed to fit the context and culture of its democracy, and each has its share of advantages and disadvantages. The presidential system, sometimes called the "single executive system," is one in which an elected president leads the executive branch, acting *both* as the head of government *and* as the head of state. The parliamentary system is one in which the chief executive, usually a prime minister, is not directly elected and is instead chosen by the legislature (parliament). The semi-presidential system, sometimes called "the dual executive system," is one in which a state has both a president and a prime minister, and the dual executives share power.

Section #4.4: Democratic Consolidation

Democratization is a political regime transition in which a state moves from a non-democratic regime to a democratic regime. After democratization occurs, states embark on democratic consolidation, a process in which new democracies evolve from fledgling democratic regimes to established, stable, and secure democratic regimes. The "two-term test" and the "longevity test" are two potential indicators of democratic consolidation, and many theories exist to explain democratization outcomes.

Section #4.5: Comparative Case Study – South Africa and Iraq

South Africa and Iraq experienced journeys toward democracy, but with differing success in means and ends.

Review Questions

1. In its most basic form, liberal democracy involves
 - a. economic advantage
 - b. social mobility
 - c. free and fair elections and the protection of civil liberties
 - d. none of these
2. Which part of an election is important to look at when determining if an election is both free and fair?
 - a. before the election
 - b. during the election
 - c. after the election
 - d. all of the above are correct
3. When a democracy starts moving in an undemocratic direction, it is called
 - a. a flawed democracy
 - b. a hybrid regime
 - c. democratic backsliding
 - d. autocracy
4. Groups of people who are organized under shared values to get their candidates elected to power are
 - a. juntas
 - b. electorates
 - c. selectorates
 - d. political parties
5. The three branches of government are:
 - a. electorate, legislative, and judicial
 - b. judicial, executive, and political parties
 - c. electoral system, separation of powers, and legislative
 - d. legislative, executive, and judicial

Answers: 1.c, 2.d, 3.c, 4.d, 5.d

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are common characteristics of democracy? What variations of democracy emerge out of these characteristics?
2. What are the differences between democratic and non-democratic regimes?
3. What is the relationship between voting and democracy? Is the characteristic of suffrage a critical component? What are the implications for democracy if suffrage is not included in its characteristics?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [International Forum for Democratic Studies](#)
- [Freedom House](#)
- [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\)](#)

- [Centre for Voting and Democracy](#)

Journals

- [Democratization](#), Routledge
- [Frontiers in Political Science: Peace and Democracy](#)
- [Journal of Democracy](#), International Forum for Democratic Studies, John Hopkins University Press

Books

- Dahl, R. A. (1998) On Democracy. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.
- Diamond, L. (1999) Developing Democracy. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Francisco, Ronald (2000) The Politics of Regime Transitions. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

5: NON-DEMOCRACIES AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

- 5.1: What are Non-Democracies?
- 5.2: Strategies for Staying in Power
- 5.3: Varieties of Non-Democracy
- 5.4: Democratic Backsliding
- 5.5: Case Study - Russia
- 5.6: References
- 5.7: Student Resources

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5.1: What are Non-Democracies?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify defining characteristics of non-democratic regimes.
- Describe how non-democratic regimes differ from democratic regimes in terms of accountability, competition, and freedom.

Introduction

There exists a rich vocabulary for referring to non-democracies, past and present. Scholars employ terms such as personalist dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, and totalitarian regime, among others, to describe this kind of political system. All of these, and many more, fall under a broad umbrella of regimes that we describe as non-democratic. As a reminder from Chapter 3, a **non-democracy** is a political regime that denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being. This can range from limited to no ability for public input in the selection of political leaders and limited to no decision-making power over the allocation of public resources. Non-democracies are often referred to as "dictatorships" or "authoritarian regimes" or "autocracies."

Non-democracies are quite diverse, even more so than democracies, and this variety extends across time and space. While there are varieties of democracy with different institutional configurations, such as the differences between presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential systems discussed in Chapter 4, across democracies there exist common principles such as divided government and accountability to the people. All democracies have electoral systems, an executive, a legislature, and a judiciary. Non-democracies, in contrast, do not have such common organizational features; instead, they run the gamut from rule by a single person with minimal institutionalization to complex bureaucratic systems under collective leadership. In this sense, non-democracies are a much broader and confounding collection of states to study.

Empirically, non-democracies are distinct from democracies in important ways. Non-democratic regimes are much more variable in their economic performance (Gandhi, 2008). Many have swung from enduring extreme levels of nationwide poverty to becoming economic dynamos, presenting sustained economic growth rates unseen in recorded human history. This is, for instance, the example set by China from 1978 to 2020. In a reversal of this pattern, the kingdom of Chad and the post-independence state of Chad (1960-present) made the dramatic turn from being a major trading empire during the ninth through the 19th centuries to becoming one of the poorest sub-Saharan states in Africa today. Non-democracies appear to experience deeper economic troughs and higher economic highs than their democratic counterparts.

While there exist many varieties of non-democracy, which we will describe later in this chapter, all non-democracies share several overriding characteristics. These relate to accountability, competition, and freedom.

Accountability

Political accountability refers to institutional channels for holding political leaders responsible for their decisions and actions, and it has many dimensions. Most critically in democracies, it exists between officials and the public via the institution of free and fair elections. Accountability exists via other channels, such as through the free flow of information about political decisions and developments in a society. A free and independent media can ensure this flow of information, and it can provide a monitoring function to act as a government watchdog. Accountability also exists when different branches of government have check and balances, such as being able to check one another through presidential vetoes, court rulings, and divided authority.

In a non-democracy, some or all of these forms of accountability are compromised. For example, elections are rigged or do not exist, the media is muzzled or state-owned, or government exists to carry out the will of an unchecked political elite. All non-democracies restrict channels for accountability of political authority. Take the example of Saudi Arabia. This kingdom is one of the few remaining absolutist monarchies in existence today, and all political authority lays with the Al Saud royal family. The Saudi king is the leader of this family, and he is also head of state and head of government of Saudi Arabia. There is no legislature

to pass laws in Saudi Arabia (though the Saudi Consultative Assembly can *propose* laws to the king and his cabinet), and Saudi citizens do not elect representatives or otherwise have institutional channels for providing input in the national policy-making process. In this state, the ruling Al Saud family is not accountable to the Saudi people.



Figure 5.1.1: The Royal Standard of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is an absolutist monarchy led by a king who is head of the royal family, Al Saud. The king is the head of government and the head of state. (Source: [Flag of Saudi Arabia](#) by [Saudi Arabia Royal Decree No. M/3](#), via [Wikipedia](#), is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Competition

Separate, but related, non-democracies have limited political competition. **Political competition** is the presence of multiple options in political life, such as the existence of more than one political party, more than one candidate for office, or more than one policy position. A lack of political competition may mean the absence of political parties, as in the case of Saudi Arabia. Some non-democracies, however, allow *limited* competition for public office. This was the case in Mexico under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI), which controlled Mexican political life for 71 years. Novelist Mario Vargas Llosa famously described the PRI as "the perfect dictatorship" because it managed to remain the ruling party of Mexico for decades despite the existence of opposition parties. These opposition parties began to win elections in the 1980s and, in 2000, the presidential candidate from the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) won national elections. The PAN victory overturned decades of single-party rule in modern Mexico. Political parties are one way to observe the degree of competition in a political system, and they are a proxy for a deeper and more meaningful competition of policy ideas. Whether this competition of ideas exists--and therefore whether a government tolerates debate, dissent, and diversity--provides a critical differentiation between democratic and non-democratic systems.



Figure 5.1.2: Protests against election manipulation in Mexico in 2012 after presidential elections were won by PRI candidate Enrique Peña Nieto. Protesters claimed widespread election fraud. In 2000, many decades of single-party rule by PRI ended, but PRI reclaimed the presidency in 2012. (Source: Protesting against PRI by Gabriel Saldaña via [flickr creative commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

Freedom

Non-democracies lack a commitment to individual freedom. While democracies have many institutional channels for individual voice, such as the examples of elections and independent media noted above, these institutional channels are often manipulated or censored in a non-democracy. To justify the abrogation of individual freedoms, non-democracies may promote alternative values, such as the importance of order and hierarchy over individual will or the need to subsume the individual to the larger collective will (as mediated by those in power).

The next section will describe how non-democratic regimes remain in power. Considering their lack of political accountability, lack of political competition, and lack of freedom, what strategies do leaders within these regimes utilize to ensure their survival?

5.2: Strategies for Staying in Power

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Evaluate various institutional strategies by which non-democratic regimes remain in power.
- Analyze cultural and ideological explanations for the persistence of non-democratic regimes.

Introduction

Those in charge within all political regimes possess a variety of means for staying in power. One common heuristic for thinking about these tools is through a simple "carrots" versus "sticks" breakdown of regime strategies. Carrots take the form of inducements or benefits that a government doles out to gain the loyalty of constituents. Sticks focus on meting out punishments as negative reinforcement of the rules.

One additional tool to add to the mix of carrots and sticks is propaganda. **Propaganda** is biased information meant to convince an audience of a particular perspective or narrative. Governments may expend resources to shore up their legitimacy in the minds of citizens by utilizing sophisticated propaganda bureaucracies to control information flows to the people. Deploying propaganda is neither a carrot nor a stick, but rather a powerful means to control citizens' perceptions and thoughts. Propaganda, as an ideational strategy, is in a category of its own, and it is especially powerful when it draws on existing cultural foundations in a society.



Figure 5.2.1: The leadership of a non-democratic regime may control media, such as television, radio, and the internet, to transmit pro-regime messaging. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; banlon1964 via flickr creative commons)

Leaders in all types of regimes utilize a mix of carrots, sticks, and ideas to stay in power. These strategies, though the exact manifestations differ, appear in both democracies and non-democracies. For example, internal investigative bureaucracies, such as the Ministry of State Security in China, have counterparts in democracies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States. Similarly, virtually all countries in the world, regardless of regime type, have police for maintaining domestic order. It is not the case that non-democracies are repressive while democracies are not. But compared to democracies, non-democracies are relatively unconstrained in their ability to use force or to manipulate information in order to ensure compliance with their rule. The lack of robust accountability mechanisms in non-democracies is a crucial difference in how public institutions are managed.

Institutional Channels

Political regimes are most likely to endure when their leaders build and maintain institutions. **Institutions** are shared rules, practices, norms, and organizations within a political system. One way to think about institutions is that they make up the "rules of the game," formal and informal, for all political and social life. Institutions structure the way those within a state complete tasks politically, and institutions constrain and organize citizens' interactions with the government and with other citizens. They are the source of a great deal of social and political power.

Because of the power of institutions, leaders in all political regimes have an interest in institutionalizing their rule. Non-democratic regimes may use institutional carrots by co-opting opposition, developing patronage networks, and promoting clientelism. Each of these institutions provides positive inducements for supporting the political regime. Non-democratic regimes may also use institutional sticks, such as the creation of domestic security bureaucracies and paramilitary groups. These sticks are strategies of repression that aim to extract obedience from the population. We will discuss each of these institutional channels in turn.

Institutions for Co-opting Opposition

All non-democracies face the problem of an opposition that might oust them from power. To blunt the force of an opposition, or even vocal critics with a following, a regime might invest in institutions that have the appearance of democratic representation. These include rigged elections, legislatures, courts, and the like. These institutions are actually "window dressing," or façades, for a tightly controlled political system. Judiciaries in these systems are not independent, nor do they provide a meaningful check on the authority of rulers. Many nondemocratic regimes have in place legislatures, but these legislatures lack authority to veto measures passed by those in power. Examples abound in the highly authoritarian Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or North Korea. North Korea has been ruled since the 1950s by a single Supreme Leader, yet formally it has a unicameral legislature. This Supreme People's Assembly includes nearly 700 deputies and, in theory, confers authority on the Supreme Leader. However, DPRK's Supreme Leader makes all governance decisions for the country and does not face any threat of veto by the legislature.



Figure 5.2.2: North Korea's legislature meets at Mansudae Assembling Hall, which is located in the North Korean capital city Pyongyang. (Source: [Mansudae Assembling Hall in Pyongyang, Parliament of North Korea](#) by Nicor via [Wikimedia Commons](#) in licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#))

Opposition parties or critics of the regime might agree to sit on such bodies as a means to have access to political leaders. They may also benefit materially from legislative or judicial seats. For example, they may draw a salary or receive other perks, such as a chauffeured car or a swanky office. Co-opting the opposition through such institutions can serve the ruling regime in multiple ways. Co-optation can boost the legitimacy of the rulers in the eyes of the public while simultaneously allowing rulers to closely monitor the positions and ideas of the opposition. This provides the ruling group with information that they can then choose to either counter or incorporate into their political agenda.

Patronage Networks

All politics hinge on relationships and the flow of resources. **Patronage networks** are relationships within political systems in

which a leader, or a group of leaders, with access to resources distributes those resources to those within their network in exchange for loyalty. Within a patronage network are reciprocal bonds that unite members of the network. A leader might take a portion of oil revenues and distribute those monies to their deputies scattered throughout the provinces; in return, those deputies might make sure that the leader's posters are prominently displayed in every local government office.

Patronage networks may be organized via many different kinds of organizations or social groups. Political parties are one way to distribute public resources in exchange for political obedience. Other major state organizations, such as the military or state-owned businesses, are also sites for building patronage networks. Non-state organizations may be part of patronage networks, such as private businesses or business associations. Identity groups, including those bound by ethnicity or tribe, may be the basis of patronage networks. The latter was evident in Syria under the al-Assad family, which ruled the state from 1971 to 2024. Major institutions of the state were controlled by the Alawite minority, a Shia Muslim group that makes up less than one-fifth of Sunni Muslim-dominated Syria. In return for political power, Alawite networks supported the ruling al-Assad family.

Broad-Based Clientelism

Related to, but separate from, patronage networks are institutions that promote clientelism on a broad scale. Clients are those who rely on a patron for resources; **clientelism** is a strategy whereby rulers seek to buy off the loyalties of broad swaths of the population. To do so, rulers may invest in social programs in which they mark clearly their sponsorship of these programs to the masses. Such broad-based distribution of resources has the effect of turning significant parts of a state's population into clients, or dependents, of the ruling regime.

One example of broad-based clientelism was in Mexico under the rule of the PRI from 1929 to 2000. Under President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), social programs were consolidated under a new government initiative called the National Solidarity Program (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad, commonly referred to as "Pronasol"). Pronasol distributed government funds to poor communities to build public works, such as schools, health clinics, water treatment facilities, and electric grids. This initiative reflected the national ambitions and reach of the PRI: At its height, there were nearly 250,000 Pronasol committees at the grassroots level to carry out community projects in collaboration with community leaders. The results were impressive. They included the renovations of 130,000 schools, the creation of 1,000 rural medical units, and plumbing access for 16 million Mexican residents (Merrill and Miró, eds., 1996). Looking back on this ambitious program, it represented a broad-based means to build support for PRI rule throughout the state, especially in the countryside.



Figure 5.2.3: A rural school in Mexico. Schools such as this were sponsored by the ruling PRI in Mexico as a means to build loyalty among rural citizens. (Source: [Rural School in Mexico](#) by Heather Paul via [flickr creative commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-ND 2.0](#))

Domestic Security Apparatuses

Moving away from institutions that provide positive inducements for supporting the political regime, non-democratic regimes also employ strategies of repression to extract obedience from the population and to ensure the ruling elite remains in power. Non-democracies are the creators of the modern secret police, beginning with the creation of the Cheka in 1917 during the Russian

Revolution under Lenin, which aimed to combat counter-revolution and used strategies of violence and terror. The Cheka became the NKVD--the internal secret police, another highly repressive group--under Stalin from 1934-1946 in the Soviet Union. Later, in 1954, the secret police organization became the KGB, which lasted until the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. Though often exceedingly violent, from the ruling elite's perspective, these institutions can serve critical purposes by collecting intelligence on potential dissent within a state and ensuring compliance by instilling fear among citizens through campaigns of terror.

One non-democracy that has developed sophisticated means for surveilling its population is China. Since 2010, the ruling Chinese Communist Party has spent more on domestic security than external defense. A vast network of surveillance programs exists throughout the country, including "Sharp Eyes" (xueliang), a project announced in 2015 that mandated video surveillance of all public spaces by 2020. Sharp Eyes included nonstop video feed of public squares, intersections of major roads, public areas in residential neighborhoods, and transit stations (among other areas). It also included the monitoring of select buildings, such as the entry points of radio, television, and newspaper offices, and combined video surveillance with facial recognition technology.

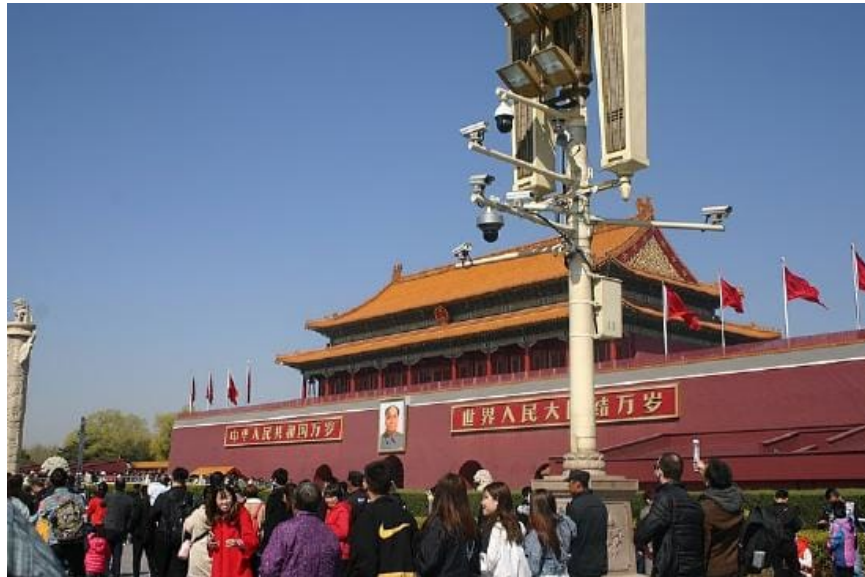


Figure 5.2.4: Pedestrians in a public square in Beijing are surveilled as part of a national system to record all public spaces. (Source: [Tiananmen Gate with surveillance cameras](#) by hmchang via [wikimedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

Paramilitaries

Another powerful instrument of repression is the creation of paramilitaries. **Paramilitaries** are groups with access to military-grade weapons and training, yet not part of the national military, that carry out violence on behalf of the state. They are "irregular armed organizations that carry out acts of violence against civilians on behalf of a state" (Üngör, 2020). Paramilitaries have been deployed by governments around the world, and they are an additional institutional layer of terror over citizens. Death squads are one kind of paramilitary organization employed by governments to carry out extrajudicial murders, usually of political enemies of the state. One tragic example of mass killing carried out by death squads occurred in Indonesia. During the height of the Cold War in the mid-1960s, Indonesian death squads were responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians believed to have leftist sympathies.

Taken together, non-democratic leaders possess a variety of means, both persuasive and coercive, to enforce their rule. These include positive inducements that can be narrow or broad in scope. Coercive institutions, such as secret police and paramilitaries, additionally offer an institutionalized means for non-democratic leaders to maintain their monopoly on the use of violence.

Cultural and Ideological Controls

Another powerful way to maintain authority is to convince people to believe in the legitimacy of non-democratic rule. This is in some ways the most efficient way to stay in power because it preempts resistance. Non-democratic leaders thus invest in creating strong ideational foundations for their rule. These ideas may derive selectively from deeper cultural traditions in a society, including those linked to faith traditions, or they may stem from the dissemination of non-democratic ideologies to the masses.

Undemocratic concepts such as hierarchy and unaccountable authority are embedded in many cultural traditions. Monarchies of Europe and empires of the Americas were supported by ideas focused on the divine right of rulers. Virtually all major religions of the world promote authoritarian and undemocratic systems of governance and social order, from the rigid patriarchy of the Roman Catholic Church to the castes of Hinduism. Several East Asian societies--China, South Korea, and Japan, to name a few--have strong Confucian influences. Confucius, a scholar of antiquity, argued that the hierarchical relationship between ruler and ruled was one of several hierarchical relationships that constitutes an orderly society. This supplemented the idea that Chinese emperors possessed the mandate to rule "all under heaven" (tian xia). To this day, Chinese leaders draw from Confucius' writings to argue for a "harmonious society" and legitimate a culture that frowns upon dissent.



Figure 5.2.5: Confucius (551-479 BCE) argued that several hierarchical relationships, such as between ruler and ruled, formed the foundation for an orderly society. Some have suggested that the influence of Confucius' undemocratic ideas supported persistent authoritarianism in East Asia. (Source: [The teaching Confucius](#). Portrait by [Wu Daoz](#) via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [CC01 - Universal Public Domain](#))

One ongoing debate is whether "persistent authoritarianism" is an inevitable consequence of certain cultural traditions. The evidence on this count is that undemocratic cultural elements are not necessarily barriers to eventual democratization. While arguments have been proffered for the incompatibility of democracy and Islam and democracy and Confucianism, there are many examples of modern democracies that have emerged out of these anti-democratic cultural traditions. Indonesia is an example of a Muslim-majority democracy, while South Korea demonstrates that a society with Confucian influences can become a robust democracy.

Beyond cultural traditions, certain powerful political ideologies support non-democratic rule. Two of these are communism and fascism. Countries organized according to these ideologies have been uniformly non-democratic. They lack mechanisms of accountability between ruler and ruled, and they lack basic freedoms for citizens. Fascist states, for instance, are characterized by extreme social hierarchies, with the ruling party controlling all aspects of society.

A narrower tool employed by non-democratic leaders to remain in power is the creation of a cult of personality. As described in Chapter 3, a cult of personality occurs when a state leverages all aspects of a leader's real and exaggerated traits to solidify the leader's power. Drawing on institutions like propaganda bureaus and state-controlled media, a cult of personality creates the illusion of mass support for, and even adulation of, the ruler. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was famous for creating such a cult around his personal rule, and this was taken to new heights by other 20th century rulers, such as China's Mao Zedong and Romania's Nicolae Ceaușescu. Fanning a cult of personality is a powerful way to create emotional links between citizens and ruler. A cult of personality also creates the appearance of invincibility on the part of the ruler, which can serve to stave off challenges to their rule.

5.3: Varieties of Non-Democracy

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the benefits and drawbacks of typologies.
- Identify the defining characteristics of types of non-democratic regimes.
- Recognize past and present empirical examples of non-democratic regimes.

Introduction

Given the diversity of non-democratic political regimes, a first attempt at achieving analytical clarity is to devise a typology to categorize non-democracies according to their essential defining features. A **typology** is a descriptive means to divide a category into sub-categories based on underlying characteristics of items in the category. This section will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using typologies, provide a typology of non-democratic regimes, and introduce examples that correspond with each type of non-democratic regime.

Typologies

Creating a typology is an important descriptive exercise. It helps to establish the "lay of the land" and distinguish key characteristics of items within a category. Typologies can be a helpful first step for further analysis. After dividing non-democracies into types A, B, C, and D, for example, a researcher can then ask deeper questions. Which type of non-democratic regime lasts longest, on average? Which type of non-democratic regime tends to fall into conflict or remain at peace for the longest stretch of time? Which type of non-democratic regime enjoys the most economic stability? Do certain types of non-democratic regimes tend to cluster in certain regions of the world?

When creating a typology to categorize non-democratic regimes, as in Table 5.3.1, the typology is an example of a nominal measure. That is, the items in this typology are not ranked, or ordinal, in relationship to one another. Rather, non-democratic regimes are divided into sub-groups based on certain characteristics, and there is not a hierarchy between the sub-groups.

In Table 5.3.1, the type of non-democracy depends on two factors: (1) leadership characteristics and (2) common source(s) of legitimacy. The first factor, leadership characteristics, focuses on whether the core leadership within the political regime comprises one or several people and whether all leaders come from a particular institution (e.g., the military, a political party, or a religious group). The second factor, common source(s) of legitimacy, identifies the animating ideas that tend to lend legitimacy to the regime, whether those are traditional, charismatic, or rational-legal forms of legitimacy. As a reminder from Chapter 3.1, traditional legitimacy occurs when states have the authority to lead based on historical precedent; charismatic legitimacy occurs when citizens follow the rules of a state based on the charisma and personality of the current leader; and rational-legal legitimacy occurs when states derive their authority through firmly established laws, rules, regulations, and procedures.

Table 5.3.1: Typology of Non-Democracies

Type of Non-Democracy	Leadership Characteristics	Common Source(s) of Legitimacy
theocracy	single leader or collective rule (all from a given religious group)	traditional
personalist regime	single leader	charismatic
monarchy	single leader	traditional, rational-legal
single-party regime	collective rule (all from one political party)	traditional, rational-legal
oligarchy	collective rule	traditional, rational-legal
military regime	single leader or collective rule (all from the military)	charismatic, rational-legal

Type of Non-Democracy	Leadership Characteristics	Common Source(s) of Legitimacy
illiberal regime	single leader or collective rule	rational-legal

All typologies present challenges. A first challenge is that, while a typology may work for a certain period of time, it may fail to capture changes over time, such as the emergence of a new political regime type or the expiration of old political regime types. The rise of modern fascist and communist regimes in the 20th century prompted some scholars to argue that a new type of non-democracy, a "totalitarian regime," had arisen. A **totalitarian regime** is a non-democratic regime that seeks total control over society by a single ruler or group of political elites. To this day, scholars debate whether totalitarianism is a useful term.

A second challenge is one of fit. Some observations may not slot neatly into the types offered by a given typology. Rather, they may combine characteristics of two or even more types. This kind of combination is observable in the real world of non-democratic regimes, cases that we sometimes label as "hybrids." **Hybrid regimes** are non-democratic regimes that combine features of more than one type of non-democracy. North Korea, for example, is a "triple hybrid" that has a single-party system led by a personalist leader (from the Kim dynasty) with a politically powerful military. As another example, China under President Xi Jinping may be moving toward a hybrid of personalist and single-party rule. These cases highlight how types within the typology above are not mutually exclusive. A state may fit several types or change types over time.

Below, we discuss each of the types of non-democracies identified in Table 5.3.1.

Theocracy

Theocracies are as old as organized religion. A **theocracy** is a non-democratic regime in which the authority of political leaders is grounded in a sacred text, a form of traditional legitimacy. These texts provide divine legitimacy to political leaders, and those leaders are not accountable to the public. Within theocracies, political institutions are organized in accordance with prescriptions in a sacred text, such as the executive office, the legal code, and the legal system. Saudi Arabia and Iran are two examples of current theocracies organized around Islam. The Vatican, another theocracy, is organized around Roman Catholicism.



Figure 5.3.1: The Holy See, or Vatican City, is a contemporary example of a theocracy. It is governed by Roman Catholic texts and led by a pope. Consecrated in 1626, St. Peter's Basilica (pictured here) is the largest Christian church in the world. (Source: [Facade of St. Peter's Basilica](#) in Vatican City by [CIA World Factbook](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Personalist Regime and Monarchy

A **personalist regime** is a non-democratic regime ruled by a single leader. That leader may derive their legitimacy from a variety of sources. These include the personal charisma of that leader or their ability to serve as a convincing interpreter of a political ideology for all of society (charismatic legitimacy). An example of the former is Idi Amin of Uganda (in power from 1971-1979), and an example of the latter is Fidel Castro of Cuba (in power from 1959-2008). Some personalist leaders come to power through

family dynasties, such as the al-Assad family in Syria. In all cases, personalist leaders are not subject to formal mechanisms of accountability.

Personalist rule often relies on strong institutions to maintain a leader's power. For example, a charismatic leader may rely on the organizational heft of a ruling political party or the military to remain in power. Idi Amin was a commander in the Ugandan Army; Fidel Castro led the formidable organizational apparatus of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

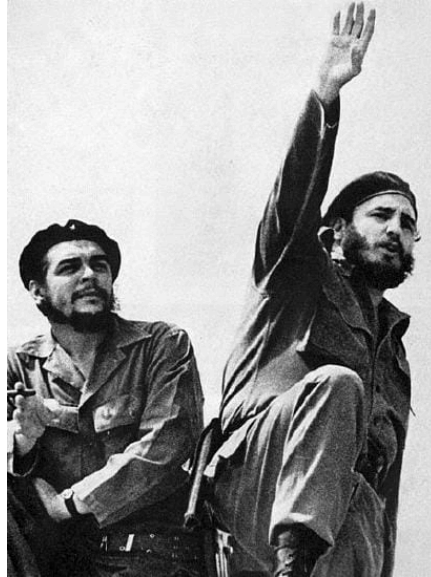


Figure 5.3.2: Fidel Castro was a charismatic leader of Cuba. He is pictured here (right) next to fellow revolutionary Che Guevara. (Source: [Che Guevara & Fidel Castro](#) by Alberto Korda [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

A personalist regime can be more unstable than other types of non-democratic regimes due to problems of succession. A personalist ruler might be hesitant to designate a successor because that successor would then have incentives to depose them from power. At the same time, if a successor is not designated, a leader's death may lead to instability as those remaining vie for political power.

A **monarchy** is similar to a personalist regime in that there is a single leader, but the basis of legitimacy tends to be grounded in sacred texts (traditional legitimacy). The Vatican, introduced previously as a theocracy, is also self-described as an "absolute monarchy" because it is led by a pope. The Kingdom of Bahrain is an example of a constitutional monarchy (a combination of traditional and rational-legal legitimacy) that has been led by the Al-Khalifa family since 1783.



Figure 5.3.3: High-rise buildings and shopping malls surround a mosque in the capital city of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Manama. (Source: Mosque east of Bab-al-Bahrain via CIA World Factbook is Public Domain)

Single-Party Regime and Oligarchy

In contrast to personalist regimes and monarchies, single-party regimes and oligarchies are shaped by collective leadership. **Oligarchies** are an older form of non-democratic regime. In these systems, elites control political office and national resources and are not accountable to the public for their actions. The Roman Republic was a kind of oligarchy in that only the very wealthy could hold high political office. Political scientist Jeffrey Winters (2011) theorizes that there are two key dimensions to oligarchies: First, the wealth of oligarchs is difficult to seize and disperse and, second, their power extends systemically across the entire regime. In the contemporary world, some point to Russia as subject to a great deal of political influence by oligarchs, though it is not formally an oligarchy.

The overriding characteristic of a **single-party regime** is leadership by members of one political party. Prominent examples include the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1917-1991) and the PRI of Mexico (1929-2000). As described earlier in this chapter, the PRI is especially interesting because PRI rule took place in an environment of multi-party competition, but the competition was so skewed in favor of the PRI that Mexico was subject to single-party rule for decades.

Single-party regimes can be quite stable. For this reason, single-party regimes have been on the rise worldwide since the 1970s. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, over the period 1972 to 2005, non-democracies led by a ruling party increased from 60 percent of all non-democracies to 85 percent.

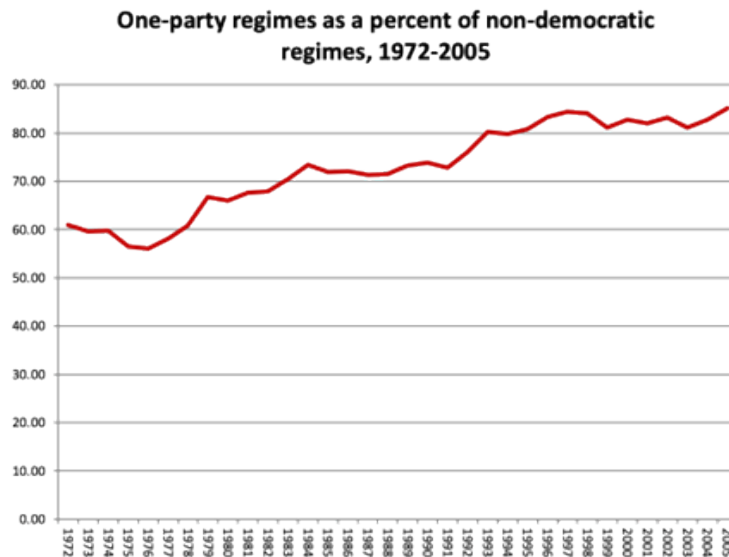


Figure 5.3.4: Single-party regimes as a percent of non-democratic regimes over the period 1972-2005 (Data source: Hadenius and Teorell, 2007) (Source: One-Party regimes as a percent of non-democratic regimes, 1972-2005, by Charlotte Lee is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#))

Today one of the most powerful countries in the world, the People's Republic of China, is an example of a single-party regime. Political leadership over the billion-plus people of China resides in the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party, a body comprising around 20 individuals. Within the Politburo is the Politburo Standing Committee, a body typically comprising between seven and 12 high officials; from this inner group emanate all major decisions guiding contemporary China.

Military Regime

A **military regime** is a non-democratic regime characterized by military elites, rather than civilians, running the government. There are various reasons why militaries rise to political power in a society. One is that they possess the material means--the weapons and organizational capacity--to seize control over a society. On the demand side, a population might support military rule because of popular perceptions of the competence of the military, especially if there are charismatic or well-known generals leading the military. In some cases, the military might appear to be a particularly stable and orderly institution during a time of political turmoil. This in turn may appeal to certain segments of society (such as economic elites, who especially value stability) or entire war-weary societies. The military may therefore enjoy a combination of charismatic and rational-legal legitimacy.

There exists a continuum for thinking about the role of militaries within a polity. On one end of this continuum, developed democracies are grounded in civilian control of the military. In the example of Canada, the commander-in-chief of the Canadian military is the Canadian monarch. The reverse, total military control over the civilian population, falls on the opposite end of this continuum, and in these non-democratic situations the military is not accountable to the public, even for gross human rights violations. Burma is a prominent example of a country that has been subject to repressive military rule for significant chunks of its post-colonial independence since 1948. The Burmese military, known as the Tatmadaw, appeared to allow some liberalization and turn toward civilian leadership during the 2010s, but in the 2020s it again asserted control over the country and its political apparatus.



Figure 5.3.5: Burmese Defense Services personnel (Air Force) meeting a Thai delegation. (Source: [Burmese Defence Services personnel \(Air Force\)](#) by Thai government via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

The number of military regimes rose and fell in frequency during the 20th century. In the post-World War II period, military regimes peaked at 40 percent of all non-democracies, then fell to approximately 15 percent of non-democracies by the turn of the 21st century (Gandhi, 2008).

Illiberal Regime

The idea of an **illiberal regime**, one that exhibits some characteristics of a liberal democracy but is decidedly illiberal in other respects, emerged in the 20th century when it became clear that many aspiring democracies born immediately after the end of the Cold War (between approximately 1989-1991), from Romania to Kazakhstan, were sliding into non-democratic habits. Even more, this seemed to be a trend affecting many young democracies that had emerged earlier in the 20th century.

An illiberal regime might have multiple political parties, a partially free media, and partially free and fair elections. Institutions that are central to a liberal democracy are, in an illiberal context, weak and subject to manipulation by those with economic power and political influence. In an article exploring the rise of this form of government, Fareed Zakaria (1997, p. 24) observes that, "Far from being a temporary or transitional stage, it appears that many countries are settling into a form of government that mixes a substantial degree of democracy with a substantial degree of illiberalism." In short, illiberal democracies exist in an in-between zone where there are non-democratic institutions or practices in place, yet also some of the common markers of democracy.

Russia since 1991 is an example of an illiberal democracy, and we will return to this case later in this chapter. To provide a basis for that discussion, we will first discuss democratic backsliding.

5.4: Democratic Backsliding

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Evaluate indicators of democratic backsliding.

Introduction

The 21st century has been marked by a weakening of democratic institutions in many once-robust democracies. This is not a new trend. The history of modern democracy is littered with examples of countries that adopted representative (indirect) democracy, only to later return to a non-democratic form of government. **Democratic backsliding** occurs when a democracy degrades and the state becomes more illiberal and autocratic over time. This process can take the form of weakening electoral systems and attenuation of the rule of law, repression or infringement of civil and political liberties, and corrupt governance that enjoys weakening accountability. Importantly, democratic backsliding is often gradual and protracted, which makes it difficult to identify. This presents challenges for those who might wish to stop the backsliding because there are sometimes only small or subtle shifts that might not be an immediate cause for alarm by a critical mass of democrats within a society. While political regime change from democracy to non-democracy can happen via spectacular and sudden events, such as a coup d'état or a popular revolution, democratic backsliding is more insidious and stymies those who might want to organize to combat it.

There are many reasons for democratic backsliding, and in this section we will explore three major explanations: institutional, cultural, and international factors.

Institutional Explanations

Certain institutions render a country more vulnerable to non-democratic rule. Presidential systems are famously unstable (Linz, 1990). They tend to centralize power in a single individual, and there are fewer mechanisms in place to check that individual from abuse of office. Compared to a parliamentary system, where executives are appointed by the legislature and subject to votes of no confidence, presidents are relatively difficult to dismiss before they complete their term of office. During this time, they may opt to abuse their power or degrade the democracy in significant ways.

States that lack strong institutions of accountability, such as independent judiciaries and independent anti-corruption bureaus, are also more susceptible to democratic backsliding. When courts do not check those in power, and when there is only weak rule of law, serious and flagrant abuse of public office is more likely. Significant and pervasive **corruption**, the misuse of public resources for private gain, can also degrade a democracy, both in practice and in the legitimacy of that regime. Well-resourced, robust anti-corruption bureaus or inspectors general are an important bulwark against this kind of internal decay.

Another major institution that can threaten a democracy is a politically-motivated military. When a military is subject to weak or inadequate civilian oversight, it can become a politicized actor and even seize control, culminating in non-democratic military rule. Building a professional military that is focused on its security responsibilities and ability to prevail in complex military operations, rather than be tempted by political power, is a deep and ongoing challenge for many governments.

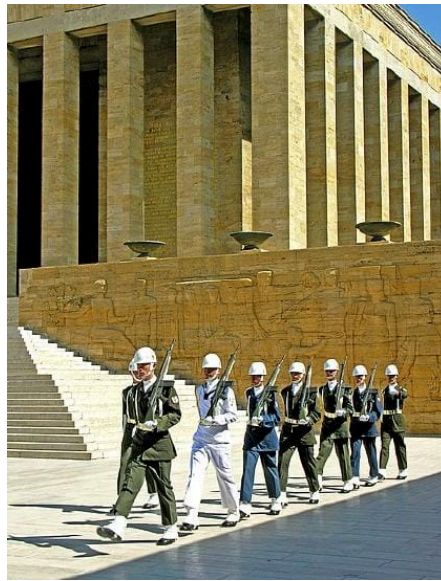


Figure 5.4.1: Turkish soldiers guarding the mausoleum of Turkish President Kemal Atatürk (in office 1923–38), who was a proponent of a secular Turkey shaped by a powerful military. A professional military subject to civilian oversight is a bulwark against democratic backsliding by a too-powerful military. (Source: [Turkey-1658](#) by Dennis Jarvis via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

Cultural Explanations

Popular and elite beliefs in the appropriateness of democratic rule can shape political outcomes. When there are strong democratic norms in place, this takes on a self-perpetuating quality in which a society supports and reinforces democratic practices and institutions. Yet democratic "habits of the heart" can take long periods of time to mature and gain a taken-for-granted status in a society. Civic education can play a role in this endeavor, especially education that addresses liberal values such as liberty, fairness, representativeness, and accountability. When people in a society think critically about where authority and power should rest, and when they believe that they are empowered to challenge non-democratic rule, there exists a societal buffer against democratic backsliding.

Charismatic, autocratic leaders can gain a national following and move a democracy toward non-democracy. Such leaders may call upon a variety of tactics to gain a mass following. Many of these strategies might appeal to cultural fault lines or vulnerabilities within a society. An aspiring autocrat might make populist appeals to in-group grievances and label an out-group as the culprit. They might appeal to nationalist ambitions or exploit ethnic divisions. They might present themselves as messengers with a holy message. They might offer promises of a return to a golden past or a golden future. Such autocratic leaders take a variety of forms, but one common goal is a degrading of democratic institutions in order to consolidate power in non-democratic forms of governance.

One chilling example of this interplay between culture and political leadership can be found in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. In the early years of the republics that formed after the collapse of communist Yugoslavia, one fiery Serb nationalist named Slobodan Milošević argued that a newly independent Serbia should reclaim territories once occupied by the Serb nation. His calls fell on fertile nationalist ground, which intersected with religious and ethnic fault lines in these Slavic territories. Milošević, who was elected President of Serbia during the 1990s, was a major political leader and instigator during a brutal civil war that ensued between former republics of Yugoslavia. He was eventually indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Figure 5.4.2: Map of states that emerged from the break-up of Yugoslavia (Source: [Map of former Yugoslavia including Kosovo independence](#) by ljanderson977 via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#))

International Factors

A state may be susceptible to democratic backsliding as a result of international factors. These can include the "neighborhood effect" (also referred to as "diffusion" or the "demonstration effect"). If a state resides in a region where states are trending non-democratic, or if there is a high regional concentration of non-democratic regimes, that state is more likely to become a non-democracy. Conversely, a neighborhood which is pro-democracy, such as the European Union, can pull countries in the direction of embracing democracy.

International pressures for a democracy to backslide can be carried out via technological means. New information and communication technologies encourage countries to defy geographical constraints and reach into target countries to wage influence campaigns. These influence campaigns serve to undermine democratic governments around the world through the dissemination of misinformation via social media platforms and the internet. This kind of **sharp power** tactic is a means to destabilize democracies by sowing division within populations and undermining democratic institutions, such as the free flow of information and electoral integrity.

5.5: Case Study - Russia

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare aspects of non-democratic rule in Russia and the Soviet Union.
- Understand features of monarchy, communist party rule, and illiberal regimes in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Introduction

Russia has undergone many transitions over the past many centuries of its existence, from czarist rule to the center of a communist party-led federation known as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). At the end of the 20th century, the USSR collapsed and Russia emerged as an illiberal democracy with stubbornly authoritarian tendencies, but also a vibrant and sophisticated civil society.



Figure 5.5.1: Map of Russia. (Source: Map of Russia by CIA World Factbook is licensed under Public Domain)

- **Full Country Name:** Russia, Russian Federation
- **Head(s) of State:** President, Prime Minister
- **Government:** Semi-presidential federation
- **Official Languages:** Russian
- **Economic System:** Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Eastern Europe and Northern Asia
- **Capital:** Moscow
- **Total Land size:** 6,601,670 sq miles
- **Population:** 145,478,097
- **GDP:** \$1.710 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$11,654
- **Currency:** Russian Ruble

Monarchical Rule, 1613-1917

For centuries, Russia was a key node in the trade routes that wound throughout Afro-Eurasia. Russian explorers traded furs and

other animal products for the goods available along these ancient routes: gold, people, and spices. Political consolidation gained momentum during the 16th century under Ivan the Terrible, who claimed the title of czar and ruled from 1547 to 1584. He joined with the powerful House of Romanov by marriage and this began a three-century period of czarist rule that would last until revolution in the 20th century.

During this czarist period, Russia was organized as a feudal state in which power was consolidated in the czar, but local power also existed in noble houses. Ivan the Terrible consolidated the czar's power in Moscow through the creation of standing armies and noble councils. The Orthodox Church provided the religious foundation for political power and state legitimacy. Ivan expanded the territorial reach of Russian rule after defeating khanates (regions ruled by a khan) in what is now modern-day Russia, along the northwestern shores of the Caspian Sea at the mouth of the Volga River. Subsequent czars, such as Peter the Great (in power from 1682-1725), initiated reforms to modernize Russia with military upgrades and the building of a navy, construction of public buildings in European architectural styles, and support for industrialization.



Figure 5.5.2: Portrait of Peter the Great on his deathbed, by Ivan Nikitich Nikitin. (Source: [Peter I on his deathbed, 1725 by Ivan Nikitich Nikitin](#) via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Throughout these centuries of czarist rule, Russia struggled with forging its own path on a vast continent. To the west, new ideas were bubbling up during the Enlightenment, and industrialization and modernization were taking off. To the east, empires of Asia were economically dynamic and some, such as Japan, were also rapidly modernizing. In comparison to European counterparts, Russia was slow to industrialize.

Yet Russian society was not immune to modern ideas, and the abolishment of serfdom in 1861 presented a break with the past. This was not enough to contain growing mass discontent with a brittle political system of czars and noble houses, and revolution broke out in the early years of the 20th century.

As with much of the world, the 20th century was a decisive time of change for Russia. In 1905, mass protests broke out in the cities and resulted in Czar Nicholas II creating a legislature. Unrest continued, and this period presented a moment for republican revolution and unprecedented transformation in Russia. The moment passed, however, with the Revolution of 1917. This revolution was led by Vladimir Lenin and political parties that adhered to socialism and communism as the path forward for Russia. A vicious civil war ensued, with the Bolsheviks emerging triumphant. Lenin took the mantle as Russia's paramount political leader and forged a federation under single-party rule.

Single Party Rule, 1922-1991

Organized as a multi-ethnic and multi-national federation, the USSR became the largest sovereign state on the planet, stretching from the Baltics to the eastern shores of Siberia. The USSR's first leader, Vladimir Lenin, carried out radical whole-scale reorganization of the state and society. State-led modernization and industrialization became the watchwords of this time; the countryside was squeezed for the products that would feed urban industrial centers.

In this single-party system, led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the state was pervasive in all aspects of life. Economically, free markets were abolished and replaced by centralized economic planning; production would proceed according to five-year plans set by a vast planning bureaucracy. The countryside was organized into communes, with production quotas and set prices. The state owned all "commanding heights" of industry, from energy production to steel foundries. Again, production and prices were set, and workers were assigned to workplaces. In this world, there was no inflation and no unemployment, but there existed scarcity and supply-side distortions.



Figure 5.5.3: Production quotas were set by the state in the USSR. This included the cotton harvest in Armenia, which was part of the USSR. This photo was taken in the 1930s and sought to demonstrate the abundance of the Soviet system. (Source: [Cotton picker from Armenian SSR](#) via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Socially and culturally, the CPSU controlled all aspects of life. The media was entirely state-run, across all communication technologies such as radio, print, and television. The party organized youth groups and women's federations, and it provided for leisure spaces. While the party was officially atheist, it permitted state-sanctioned places of worship. There was no independent organized social life for Soviet citizens.

Politically, the party maintained control through a competitive selection process for party membership; the most desirable offices in the party and state bureaucracies were open only to party members. Appointments were carefully controlled through party personnel bureaucracies, which maintained classified files on all citizens. To enforce party rule through force, Lenin created a secret police known as the Cheka (as noted earlier in this chapter, the Cheka was the forerunner to the KGB). While there existed paramount leaders within the CPSU, beginning with Lenin and then the disastrous totalitarianism of Stalin, leadership was also collective in some ways. Major party decisions were made through bodies such as the Politburo and disseminated through the party and state apparatus.

Communist party rule lasted for seven decades. Internal weaknesses festered, from ethnic resentments to economic distortions to political stagnation. By the 1980s, reform-minded leaders such as Mikhail Gorbachev attempted small steps toward loosening economic and social controls. By then, it was too late. The 1980s were a restive time throughout the USSR, from the Baltics to the Caucasus. In 1989, a string of revolutions in client states of the USSR led to the overthrow of communist parties in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Romania, among others. In 1990, there was an attempted coup d'état in Moscow. Through a cascade of shocking events in 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved; one after another, republics seceded from the federation and declared themselves independent. On December 25, 1991, the Soviet flag was lowered from the Kremlin and the Russian flag replaced it.

Illiberal Regime, 1991-Present

In the decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, institutions created by the CPSU were dismantled. Central planning, state-owned industry, and communes went into the dustbin of history. Russia and many of the 14 other post-Soviet republics adopted liberal market economies, to varying degrees, and multi-party political systems. The transition was rocky in every case.

The Russia that emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union had many assets. It possessed great energy reserves and mineral wealth and a highly educated population base, along with thousands of nuclear weapons and a sophisticated military-industrial complex. All of this was leveraged to maintain Russia's status as a regional power. Today Russia is a major energy provider to the European Union, and it has maintained client states in Eurasia such as Belarus and Syria.



Figure 5.5.4: Gas pipelines connecting Russia to Europe. Russia has the largest natural gas reserves in the world. (Source: [Map of the major existing and proposed Russian natural gas transportation pipelines in Europe](#) by Samuel Bailey via [Wikipedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](#))

While there was hope that Russia would join the liberal European fold in the early 1990s, those hopes have since been dashed. Since the breakup of single party rule under the CPSU, Russia has maintained an illiberal regime. Elections are neither free nor fair according to election observers. Non-state organizations are allowed to exist, but they are subject to harassment by state security agencies if they promote rights considered taboo by conservative Russian leaders and the Orthodox Church. While there are some media freedoms in the country, it remains a dangerous, and even deadly, place for investigative reporters. The courts are not independent, nor does it appear that presidents such as Vladimir Putin are subject to the rule of law.

There appears to be an expansionary imperative to this illiberal Russian state. In 2014 and 2022, Russian military assets were used to annex Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and invade Ukraine in its entirety, respectively. One powerful rationale was to consolidate the Russian nation--despite popular Ukrainian assertions of a distinct Ukrainian identity--and Russia's future as a disruptive, undemocratic force remains problematic for the region and beyond.

In summary, Russia has experienced centuries of non-democratic rule, and multiple types of non-democracy are evident when tracing the history. There were moments when it appeared that republicanism might prevail, such as early in the 20th century and at the end of that same century, but those moments were fleeting. Each non-democratic regime established institutions to maintain social order and economic and political control; each succeeded for varying lengths of time. Feudal rule under czars persisted for centuries, and Russia's modernization lagged as a result. Single-party rule by the CPSU created a totalitarian system of large-scale economic tragedies and political repression. Today, there are comparatively more spaces for freedom in illiberal Russia, but they remain highly circumscribed.

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5.7: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Clientelism** is a system of exchange in which political elites obtain political loyalty by distributing resources to clients.
- **Corruption** is the misuse of public resources for private gain.
- **Democratic backsliding** occurs when a democracy degrades and the state becomes more illiberal and autocratic over time.
- **Hybrid regime** is a non-democratic form of governance that exhibits characteristics of different types of non-democracies.
- **Illiberal regime** is a non-democratic regime that presents a façade of liberal institutions.
- **Institutions** are shared rules, practices, norms, and organizations within a political system.
- **Military regime** is a non-democratic regime ruled by a state's military elites.
- **Monarchy** is non-democratic rule by a single individual, with legitimacy typically based in tradition and/or divine right.
- **Non-democracy** is a regime which denies citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being.
- **Oligarchy** is non-democratic rule by a political elite with control over national wealth and resources.
- **Paramilitaries** are groups with access to military-grade weapons and training, yet not part of the national military, that carry out violence on behalf of the state.
- **Patronage networks** are relationships within political systems in which a leader, or a group of leaders, with access to resources distributes those resources to those within their network in exchange for loyalty.
- **Personalist regime** is a non-democratic regime ruled by a single leader, with legitimacy typically based in charisma and/or other political authority, such as a ruling ideology or tradition.
- **Political accountability** refers to institutional channels for holding political leaders responsible for their decisions and actions.
- **Political competition** is the presence of multiple options in political life (e.g., more than one political party, candidate for office, or policy position).
- **Propaganda** is biased information meant to convince an audience of a particular perspective or narrative.
- **Sharp power** is an effort by one state to use information war and diplomatic tactics to undermine the institutions of a target state, often a democracy.
- **Single-party regime** is a non-democratic regime ruled by one political party.
- **Theocracy** is a non-democratic regime in which the authority of political leaders is grounded in a sacred text, a form of traditional legitimacy.
- **Totalitarian regime** is a non-democratic regime that seeks total control over society by a single ruler or group of political elites.
- **Typology** is a descriptive means to divide a category into sub-categories based on underlying characteristics of items in the category.

Summary

Section 5.1: What are Non-Democracies?

Non-democracies comprise a diverse array of states. Commonalities across these states include limited to no accountability for political elites and limited to no competition for public office. All non-democracies also limit the freedoms of citizens in significant ways.

Section 5.2: Strategies for Staying in Power

Non-democratic leaders draw from a variety of strategies to remain in power. "Carrots" include the creation of institutions to co-opt opposition and distribute resources via patronage networks or broad-based clientelism. "Sticks" involve surveilling and terrorizing populations through domestic security bureaucracies and paramilitaries. Powerful propaganda bureaus control ideas and discourse. Promotion of non-democratic cultural traditions or ideological controls also serves to legitimize the regime and delineate permissible activity in society.

Section 5.3: Varieties of Non-Democracy

Non-democracies are a diverse category of regimes. Many scholars have sought to identify patterns across non-democracies by devising qualitative typologies that capture common characteristics across specific cases. New types of non-democracy have been identified over time. Some common types of non-democracy include theocracy, personalist rule and monarchy, single-party rule and oligarchy, military rule, illiberal regime, and hybrid regime.

Section 5.4: Democratic Backsliding

Democratic backsliding is the process of a democracy becoming more illiberal and autocratic. This phenomenon has been observed among modern democracies from the 19th century through the present. There are many factors which can contribute to democratic backsliding. These may be institutional, cultural, and international in nature.

Section 5.5: Comparative Case Study - Russia

Russia from the 17th century to the present has experienced several types of non-democratic rule. Monarchical, or czarist, rule existed until the 20th century, when revolution led to single-party rule under the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, only to usher in a period of illiberal rule.

Review Questions

Please select the most appropriate answer for each of the following questions.

- Which of the following are characteristics of non-democracies?
 - public officials are subject to limited or no accountability for their actions
 - limited to no competition for public office
 - limited to non-existent freedoms for citizens
 - all of the above
- Which of the following type of non-democracy is characterized by political leadership that all belongs to the same political party?
 - military rule
 - single party rule
 - theocracy
 - personalist rule
- Non-democracies may have which of the following institutions?
 - free and fair elections
 - full civil and political liberties for citizens
 - a cult of personality
 - independent judiciaries and highest leaders subject to the rule of law
- True or false: A hybrid non-democracy may exhibit characteristics of more than one type of non-democracy, such as a combination of personalist and single-party rule.
 - true
 - false
- Which of the following is NOT a kind of non-democracy observed in Russia?
 - single-party rule
 - monarchical rule
 - theocracy
 - illiberal regime

Answers: 1.d, 2.b, 3.c, 4.a, 5.c

Critical Thinking Questions

- Consider a non-democratic country. What are some of the institutions used by leaders to stay in power? What are some of

the carrots, sticks, and ideas employed by rulers?

2. Consider the non-democracy that you chose for critical thinking question #1. What type of non-democracy is it? Is it a single type or a combination of types? Has this non-democracy changed types over time?
3. Is there evidence of democratic backsliding in any democracies in the world today? Provide evidence to support your response.

Suggestions for Further Study

Books

- Greitens, Sheena. (2016). Dictators and their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levitsky, Steven and Way, Lucan A. (2010). Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
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Datasets and websites

- [Authoritarian Regimes Dataset](#). Comprehensive dataset on authoritarian regimes in the world from 1972 to 2014.
- [Freedom House](#). Reports and maps on levels of political and civil rights in countries of the world.
- [Polity Project](#). Multi-factor measure of regime types for countries of the world from 1946 to the present.

Films

- Sørensen, Signe Byrge, Köhncke, Anne, and Uwemedimo, Michael (Producers), & Oppenheimer, Joshua, Cynn, Christine, and Anonymous (Directors). (2012). The Act of Killing. Indonesia: Det Danske Filminstitut and Dogwoof Pictures.
- Wiedemann, Max and Berg, Quirin (Producers), & Henckel Von Donnersmarck, Florian (Director). (2006). The Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen). Germany: Buena Vista International.

6: POLITICAL IDENTITY - CULTURE, RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER

6.1: Introduction to Political Identity

6.2: Culture

6.3: Race and Ethnicity

6.4: Gender

6.5: Comparative Case Study - India and Japan

6.6: References

6.7: Student Resources

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6.1: Introduction to Political Identity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define political identity, political socialization, and political mobilization of identity.
- Identify the ways in which individuals undergo political socialization.
- Consider the connections between political identity and political mobilization.

Introduction

Identity, broadly considered, answers fundamental and personal questions: Who am I? How do I want to be perceived by others? How do I want to be seen in the future? A person's identity develops from a combination of factors, including (but not limited to) personal experiences; interpersonal relationships; perceptions of the world; calculations of risks and threats; and observations of societal mores, morals, and values. Identity forms through a process of socialization, in which an individual discovers themselves and where they think they fit within the social order. Identity, and the calculation of one's identity, has sweeping implications in society. Once formed, identity can section people into groups of "sameness" and "differentness," and sometimes conflict can follow as a result.

Political Identity

Not surprisingly, the term "political identity" shares almost all of the same traits as the term identity, except taken from a political perspective. **Political identity** is how a person, or group of persons, think of themselves in relation to the politics and government of a state. It refers to the labels and characteristics an individual chooses to associate with based on a multitude of factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, a person's perception of political ideologies, political parties, and platforms, as well as how a person views their identity from national, racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and gender perspectives.

There are many political identities that political scientists consider because the mobilization of these identities has observable political consequences. Political identity may facilitate or hinder state formation, and political identity may serve as the basis for conflict. If a state's population is fairly homogeneous, or similar in identity, it may prove easier to have laws and policies that align with the political identity of the people. If a population is heterogeneous, or different in identities, there may be more conflict and less ability to unite people under similar laws and norms. This does not mean that a diverse society cannot be a peaceful or efficient one, but when identities are different enough in terms of values and concerns, conflict is more likely to arise.

While some of these identities may be fixed and out of an individual's control (e.g., race, biological sex), many are instead the result of an individual's choice with roots in symbolism, religion, and/or patriotism. Often, the observable implications of these identities occur through "political mobilization." **Political mobilization** is a process of organizing and motivating individuals with shared identities to take action on a particular political issue. There are *many* examples of political identity serving as the basis for political mobilization.

Consider the Arab Spring, which was a series of protests and uprisings against oppressive governments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that started in Tunisia in December 2010. Protests occurred not only in Tunisia, but also in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, and many of the protests resulted in violence. Across the MENA region, large numbers of protesters tended to be from two political identity groups. The first political identity group was the youth; young people were dissatisfied with the existing non-democratic regimes and wanted to usher in democracy. The second political identity group comprised those belonging to unions; under the existing non-democratic regimes, unions had been under constant threat. In this example, the youth and union-members wanted recognition of their identities and the ability to be represented politically, and they used that shared desire to mobilize to demand change.

A more recent example is the January 6, 2021 United States Capitol Attack, an event in which approximately 2,000-2,500 supporters of then President Donald Trump attacked the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. with the intent of overturning Joseph Biden's victory in the 2020 Presidential Election. These protests were planned and instigated by Trump supporters who identified

with a faction within the Republican Party that believed there was widespread election fraud. Organizing through social media, and then attending a Trump speech on January 6, the protesters mobilized their shared political identity to march to the Capitol, attack and infiltrate the building, assault law enforcement officers, and vandalize property.

In the following sections of this chapter, we will discuss multiple types of political identities (e.g., culture, race, ethnicity, gender). First, though, we must understand how political identities form and solidify.

Political Socialization

Individuals form their political identities through a process called "political socialization." **Political socialization** is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time. Numerous actors and institutions influence this process.

One of the first places an individual begins their political socialization is with their family. The process can start out simply and implicitly. If a parent, guardian, or mentor shares their beliefs and perceptions about society or politics, a child may begin to adopt similar perceptions. In some ways, whether a child adopts the same views as their parents, guardians, or mentors will depend, at least partly, on whether the child recognizes these actors as legitimate. If the child recognizes these actors as legitimate sources of authority, they may be inclined to adopt similar perspectives; if a child does not see these actors as legitimate sources of authority, they may adopt opposing stances.



Figure 6.1.1: Families are one of the first places individuals begin to form their sense of political identity. (Source: [American Family](#), by Wazzle via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#)).

A second place where political socialization occurs is in schools. Schools are institutions that provide students with information about the world around them. Teachers and those involved with the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities of their students can influence how students perceive the societal and political organization around them. These actors can sometimes have an influence similar to a family member. A student may ask: Do I trust this teacher? Do I think this teacher knows what they are talking about? If a student does trust the teacher, that student may adopt similar views; conversely, if the student does not trust the teacher, they may adopt opposing views. Many times, students in primary grades are more likely to trust teachers; as adolescence arrives, students typically begin to ask questions more critically.



Figure 6.1.2: During a student's high school years, the attitudes, beliefs, and values of their peer groups or teachers may influence their political identity. (Source: [Hibbing High School, Hibbing, Minnesota, USA](#) by McGhieever via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#))

A third place where political socialization occurs is through interactions with friends and peers. As children move into adolescence, research shows that adolescents are heavily influenced by their peers. This influence can be extreme, though it may not be representative or predictive of an individual's political identity later in life. Adolescent youths, in an attempt to fit in or please their friends, can be easily--though sometimes only temporarily--influenced by the thoughts, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that are most popular among their peer group.

A fourth way in which individuals become politically socialized is through media. Over the last 40 years, the traditional media's influence has grown substantially, moving to a 24-hour news cycle with a proliferation of news outlets available in various modalities. Observers are able to access local, national, and global news at any time in their preferred format. Rather than coming from a position of complete objectivity, many of these news outlets offer judgments based on political ideological leanings (e.g., in the United States, news stations that are explicitly conservative- or liberal-leaning). In addition to traditional media, social media applications give individuals the ability to project their own thoughts, beliefs, and political judgments, while also absorbing the thoughts of others within their networks and observing stances taken by famous individuals with a wide reach. While opinions are readily available and amplified through social media, these opinions are generally not subject to editing, management, correction, or fact-checking by any overarching method of review to ensure accountability (e.g., a set of journalistic integrity principles, a process of academic peer review). Depending on the amount consumed by an individual, traditional and social media can be a strong force for political socialization.

There are many additional actors and institutions that can influence the process of political socialization. Religious institutions, for example, may take clear political stances on what they see as social and moral issues, such as the Catholic Church's opposition to abortion. Whether a religious institution influences an individual's political identity will depend on how central religion is to that individual's life. Moreover, an individual's political socialization will occur differently depending on their socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, and many other factors. An individual's experience on each dimension of their identity will provide a lens through which political socialization and political mobilization occurs.

In the following sections, we will consider the influence of four key identity groups as they relate to political mobilization and socialization: culture, race, ethnicity, and gender.

6.2: Culture

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define culture and norms.
- Consider the implications of cultures that have strict or loose norms.
- Distinguish between different political culture systems.

Introduction

Culture, broadly defined, is the combination of customs; social institutions; art; media; and social, economic, and political achievements of a social group. In many ways, culture is a "catch-all" for many factors that influence social behavior, habits, and traditions found in a society. This includes **norms**, which are standard practices, rules, patterns, and behaviors considered acceptable in a society. In some situations, the inability or unwillingness to abide by norms can result in punishments and violence, and some scholars argue that norms have significant influence on political behaviors.

Michele Gelfand (2018), for instance, argues that states that enforce strict adherence to norms tend to have greater control over their own populations, which manifests in lower crime rates and the promotion of self-control among individuals. In contrast, states that do not promote strict adherence to norms may be more disorganized and have higher crime rates. Yet, the states without strict adherence to norms may also be more open to other ideas and cultures, and they may perform better economically. In explaining how cultures tend to adopt strict or loose adherence to norms, Gelfand writes:

There's a hidden logic for why these differences evolve: Groups that have experienced a lot of threat tend to be tighter. The threat can come from a variety of sources, such as a high level of natural disasters and famine, a scarcity of resources, the potential of invasions, a high population density, economic uncertainty, etc. It makes sense: Groups under threat need rules to coordinate to survive. Cultures that have less threat can afford to be more permissive.

Cultures therefore develop as a result of a combination of factors, including historical origins, present-day strains and stresses, and ambitions to acquire or attain certain goals. Cultural norms evolve to adapt to their environment. In evaluating data on political, social, and economic measures among 30 different countries, Gelfand finds that cultures with either too-strict or too-loose adherence to cultural norms have lower levels of happiness and higher rates of suicide. Conversely, cultures that have more moderate adherence to norms are among the happiest and most economically successful countries.

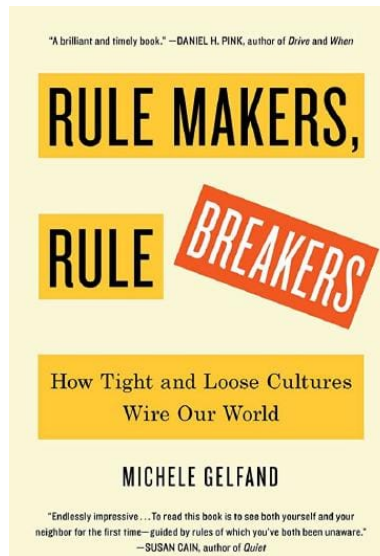


Figure 6.2.1: Gelfand's book argues that different adherence to cultural norms affects political and economic outcomes within a state. (Source: Gelfand, M. (2018). *Rule Makers, Rule Breakers: How Tight and Loose Cultures Wire our World*, Scribner.)

Political Culture

While societal culture and norms fundamentally shape the political system, we must also consider the narrower concept of "political culture." **Political culture** is a shared set of ideological views and beliefs held by a population about the political system under which they live.

A number of factors relate to how political culture manifests in different states. First, trust, the extent to which citizens believe in the reliability and validity of their government, plays a significant role in political outcomes. For instance, if citizens do not trust the electoral process, they may be unwilling to accept election results. As discussed in Chapter 4, accepting election results is a foundational feature of any democracy. If trust does not exist, democratic institutions are unlikely to perform their functions effectively. The odds for political conflict, and even political violence, may increase as the level of trust within a given political culture decreases. Second, "post-materialism" influences how political culture manifests in a given state. **Post-materialism** is the extent to which a political culture focuses on or cares about issues that are not of immediate physical and material concern, such as human rights and environmental concerns.

While we highlight only two (of many) factors that influence political culture, we can also identify three distinct types of political culture that relate to political participation and regime type. As Almond and Verba (1963) describe in *The Civic Culture*, there are three systems of political culture: a parochial system, a subject system, and a participant system. A **parochial system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are not involved, engaged, or interested in the political operations in their state. A **subject system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are somewhat aware and responsive to their governmental systems, but their involvement is heavily controlled and legislated by their governments. In this system, there is no room for opposition or dissent; citizens are merely subjects to the government and must abide by the laws or face punishment. This system tends to align with non-democratic regimes. The **participant system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are aware of government actions and able to influence and participate in governmental decisions, but they still must abide by the laws of the state. This system tends to align with democratic regimes.

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6.3: Race and Ethnicity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define and distinguish between the terms race and ethnicity.
- Consider how race and ethnicity influence political mobilization.

Introduction

Race and ethnicity are often used, mistakenly, as though they are interchangeable terms. According to Merriam-Webster, **race** is "a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits." To this end, race is a narrow term that is associated with biological characteristics, such as skin color and hair texture. Ethnicity is a broader term than race. Again using Merriam-Webster's definition, **ethnicity** categorizes groups of people "according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin[s] or background[s]."

The terms race and ethnicity are both political categorizations of identity that raise problems, especially as the options available to those having to answer a question pertaining to their race and ethnicity may not be comprehensive or representative of their actual identities. On an official government document, for example, a person may hesitate to share their race or ethnicity due to fear of government reprisals against a minority group. In addition, if provided with a series of options to choose from, an individual may not believe that a given race or ethnicity appropriately captures their identity.

Race, Ethnicity, and Political Mobilization

Race and ethnicity play a major role in politics around the world, and each of these factors can be politically mobilized to influence political outcomes.

Within the United States (U.S.), for example, we can consider the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. This social movement aimed to ensure equal treatment under the law for Black and African American citizens. The momentum for the movement came from civil rights activists and protesters who sought to end racial oppression, segregation, voter suppression, and discriminatory employment and housing practices. Through racially- and ethnically-based political mobilization, including sophisticated organizational efforts that were sustained over time, the Civil Rights Movement successfully pushed for numerous court rulings (e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954; *Loving v. Virginia*, 1967), major legislative changes (e.g., the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965), and new policies (e.g., affirmative action).



Figure 6.3.1: Participants and leaders marching from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington. (Source: [Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C.](#) by U.S. Information Agency Press and Publications Service via the National Archives and Records Administration is licensed under [Public Domain](#)).

Remaining with the U.S. example, scholars today continue to study how race and ethnicity affect not only political mobilization, but also trends in political attitudes. Comparing the two major parties in the U.S., members of the Republican Party are more likely to say that great advances have been made in racial equality in the U.S., while members of the Democratic Party are more likely to state that more needs to be done. The majority of Black Americans, according to the Pew Research Center, believe that most of the institutions in the U.S. are biased and need to be "completely rebuilt," illustrating how fundamentally race and ethnicity can interact with the political system.

More generally, across the globe, comparativists study how race and ethnicity impact (among other things) the quality of democracy, representation in political institutions, public opinion, electoral outcomes, inequality, health outcomes, and economic outcomes.

6.4: Gender

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define and distinguish between gender and sex.
- Consider how factors such as gender identity and biological sex influence political, social, and economic outcomes.

Introduction

The political consequences of gender have been an area of increasing consideration in political science over the last two decades. Similar to previous sections in this chapter, how a term is defined has implications for how it is discussed, so it is important that we begin with clear terms. **Gender** encompasses a spectrum of characteristics ranging from feminine to masculine, and gender depends on a person's internal sense of self. Crucially, gender is a distinct concept from sex (or sometimes "biological sex"), which refers to biological differences. According to the World Health Organization, **sex** refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs." Sex is typically assigned at birth based on a set of physical characteristics. Gender, however, is more nuanced.

Gender refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. The concept of gender includes five important elements: relational, hierarchical, historical, contextual, and institutional. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviors – including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities, and work places. When individuals or groups do not 'fit' established gender norms, they often face stigma, discriminatory practices, or social exclusion – all of which adversely affect health." (World Health Organization)

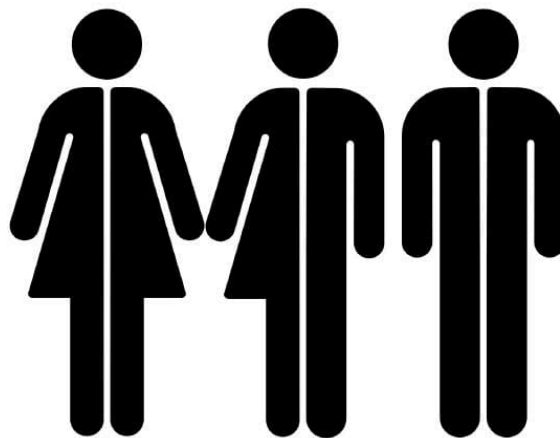


Figure 6.4.1: Three icons for people with different gender identities, adapted from an image by Dan Brunsdon for The Noun Project (Source: by Arkirkland via Wikimedia Commons is licensed under [CC0 1.0 Public Domain](#))

Gender and Politics

The divide between male and female has often influenced politics. Women in many societies have been historically

underrepresented and discriminated against. Looking globally at women's suffrage, the right of women to vote in elections, over 180 countries now allow women to vote in some capacity. But beyond the right to vote, women's rights globally are often not fully institutionalized, upheld, or prioritized.

In most countries, women who work do not earn the same as men in similar positions, even when their credentials and experience meet or exceed their male counterparts. An interesting case study of the unequal treatment for women's rights can be seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, which, in most countries, tended to push women out of the workplace. In the United States alone, female workforce participation dropped to 57 percent, the lowest level since 1988. Of the 1.1 million people who were pushed from the workforce, 80 percent were women. Economic projections calculate it will take women twice as long as men to recover from their economic circumstances as a result of the pandemic. Outcomes outside of the United States were similarly poor for women. Women account for 39 percent of all jobs worldwide, but their participation in the workforce dropped by 54 percent with the pandemic. These findings have led a number of scholars to note that the pandemic had a globally regressive effect on gender equality.

Beyond economic outcomes, another area of concern is the acceptance (or lack thereof) of gender identity and sexual orientation in different states. **Sexual orientation** is the sustained pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of opposite sex or gender, same sex or gender, or both. The five top-ranked states in the world for acceptance of different gender identities and sexual orientations are Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada. On the flip-side, numerous states are accused of mistreating their citizens based on gender identities and sexual orientations, including Malawi, Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. Many of these states have laws or legal codes that discriminate against members of the LGBTQIA+ community, such as so-called "morality laws" that criminalize a person's identity. The states may also engage in propaganda campaigns and mete out harsh punishments--long prison sentences and state-sanctioned violence, such as flogging--to those who do not align with the government's belief system.

According to a report published by UCLA's School of Law that analyzed the social acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people across 175 states between 1981-2020, 56 states experienced improvements in rates of social acceptance, 57 states experienced decreases in rates of social acceptance, and 62 states experienced no change in the rate of social acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community (Flores, 2021).

6.5: Comparative Case Study - India and Japan

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare aspects of two different states that struggle with gender gaps.

Introduction

In the 21st century, conversations related to political identity frequently center on how individuals choose to identify themselves and categorize themselves into groups. The burden here tends to rest on individuals locating and assigning themselves an identity that matches their preferences and motivations. There are many examples of this from around the world, relating to racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender preferences.

Consider racial identity in Brazil. In April 2021, over 40,000 political candidates were able to categorize their own racial identities differently than in previous elections. According to political scientist Andrew Janusz, political candidates in Brazil "have some latitude to fluctuate on how they present themselves" in order to attract the voters they want to turn out at the polls.

Now consider gender identity around the world. As of late 2021, there were 16 states that allowed citizens to choose between male, female, non-binary, or third genders on their passports. These states included Argentina, Austria, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, India, Nepal and the United States. In looking at democracies in Western Europe and the United States, the Pew Research Center found that views on political and cultural identities have "become less restrictive and more inclusive in recent years." Factors that were historically important toward justifying one's political identity--birthplace, religion, sharing a state's customs and beliefs, and the ability to speak the dominant language in a country--have decreased in importance for defining political identity in these locales.

Considering these examples, some might argue that the 21st century brought more opportunities for societies to design and assign their own identities in alignment with their preferences and ambitions. Drawing this conclusion, however, downplays the reality that there are still many states in the world where political identity, as well as other forms of identity, tend to be imposed, rather than chosen. Debate surrounding political identity remains heated.

Although Japan and India are both democracies, and both have constitutions that ensure equal treatment of citizens under the law as well as freedom from discrimination, both countries have struggled greatly with improving gender equality. Generally, gender gaps are measured in regards to women in the economy (their participation and earnings relative to men), women's access to health, and women's representation in politics. In all three areas, India and Japan have struggled. Using the method of Most Similar Systems Design, we will compare two states that have had difficulty with their policy approaches to decreasing gender gaps. Both states struggle with historical and cultural remnants of gender roles that continue to pervade all aspects of women's lives today.

Japan's Gender Gaps



Figure 6.5.1: Contemporary map of Japan. (Source: [Map of Japan](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Full Country Name: Japan
Head(s) of State: Emperor and Prime Minister
Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Official Languages: Japanese
Economic System: Mixed Economy
Location: Island in East Asia
Capital: Tokyo
Total land size: 145,937 sq mi
Population: 125 million
GDP: \$5.378 trillion
GDP per capita: \$42,928
Currency: Japanese Yen

Japan is an island in East Asia off the coast of China and Taiwan. Today, Japan has one of the oldest democracies in East Asia, and it is the 11th most populous state in the world. Japan's government system is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy where the emperor is the head of state, the prime minister is the head of government, and the cabinet directs the executive branch. Legislative power is vested with the National Diet, which is a legislature that includes both a House of Representatives and a House of Councillors. Judicial power is vested in a supreme court and some lower courts. The supreme law of the land is derived by the 1947 Constitution, which was created under the American occupation of Japan following World War II. Overall, Japan's democracy is considered consolidated and stable, as the country has upheld free and fair elections, the rule of law, and freedom of the press. Nevertheless, an area of continuing concern in Japanese society is gender equality. Japan ranks 118 out of 148 states worldwide according to the World Economic Forum's 2025 Gender Gap Index.

Following the creation of the 1947 Constitution in Japan, which ended the reign of Emperor Meiji and the Meiji Period, Japanese powers were encouraged to initiate their own democracy and enforce democratic reforms. While the 1947 Constitution was mostly drafted by Americans, Japanese scholars reviewed and modified it to ensure that it did not contradict the previous Meiji Constitution. The hope in doing this was that the people of Japan would more readily accept the new constitution.

Some of the main additions within this constitution were those given to individual rights, including (but not limited to) equality before the law (freedom from discrimination); democratic elections; the prohibition of slavery; separation of church and state; freedoms of assembly, speech, association, and press; and the rights to property and due process. Women were granted the right to vote prior to the new constitution being formally adopted (women's suffrage was granted in 1945) and, combined with the individual rights emphasized in the new constitution, the hope was that women would enjoy equal rights and treatment as men. For a variety of reasons, women in Japan faced great challenges over the decades since World War II in gaining equal treatment; the delay and slow progress may be due, in part, to historical context and culture.

Within the Meiji Era, women did not have legal rights of any kind, and they were expected to perform only household duties as directed by the male head of the household. From a historical and cultural standpoint, expectations of women were strict. Women are expected to be modest, tidy, courteous, obedient, and self-reliant. Women were to look well-kept and to be silent and compliant with male expectations and needs. In this vein, both male and female children were to be completely obedient to their parents. Women who expressed themselves or communicated their needs were considered troublesome or overly needy, which were not desirable characteristics. Female children were directed to perform duties to help around the house, while male children were given opportunities for schooling and eventual employment in various vocations. Although the 1947 Constitution did introduce sweeping changes that should have affected the status of women, many of the cultural norms from the Meiji Era remained. The societal expectation is for women to be submissive and modest.

The treatment of gender does not seem to match the reality of life in Japan. The vast majority, almost 70 percent, of adult Japanese women work. Yet Japan has one of the worst documented gender gaps in terms of equal pay for women based on similar credentials and occupational levels as men. Indeed, the OECD notes that Japan has the second worst gender wage gap in the world.

Following other trends around the world with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment prospects and data worsened for Japanese women. Indeed, Japan's women experienced larger reductions in their work hours, had a higher tendency to be furloughed, and were generally pushed from the workforce at a far greater rate than men were in the midst of the pandemic (so much so, in fact, that the exodus of women in the workplace in Japan has been called the 'she-cession'). Although some recent gains in employment for women have occurred, economic recovery for women in the workforce has been slow. The effect of the pandemic was particularly difficult for Japan's women because of their traditional values related to gender roles. Many believed, in the face of the lockdown and quarantines, that women should be at home helping their children and tending to household responsibilities. Many women bore the brunt of all family-related obligations during the pandemic, and the ensuing sluggish economic growth did not improve opportunities for women to return to work.

Inequality in the workplace is not the only area of concern for women in Japan today. Another area of concern is the lack of female representation within political structures. On the first point, although political parties in Japan have prioritized increasing the representation of women in their organizations, growth has been slow. Survey results within Japan indicate that voters are not necessarily biased against candidates due to their gender, but rather that few Japanese women run for political office. In line with the belief that women need to be submissive, modest, and unambitious, running for office creates problems for each of these characteristics. In addition, the current structure of Japan's welfare system is not conducive to women running for office or holding high-level jobs in the workplace. This is because there is a perception that men need to be the main "breadwinners" of the household, and if a woman is unemployed, the family is eligible for more government support to help with raising children. If women work in tandem with their husbands, they are not eligible for this extra government assistance.

India's Gender Gaps

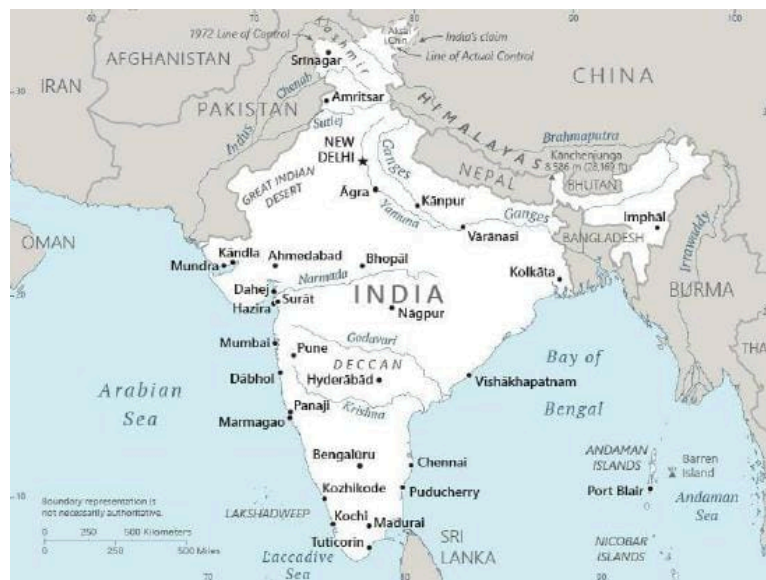


Figure 6.5.2: Contemporary map of India. (Source: [Map of India](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Full Country Name: Republic of India
Head(s) of State: President
Government: Federal parliamentary constitutional republic
Official Languages: Hindi, English (plus over 430 native languages)
Economic System: Middle Income Developing Market Economy
Location: South Asia
Capital: New Delhi
Total land size: 1,269,219 sq mi
Population: 1.3 trillion people
GDP: \$3.050 trillion
GDP per capita: \$2,191
Currency: Indian Rupee

India is a country in South Asia, bordered by Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. India gained its independence from Britain in 1947, and redrafted its constitution to install a democracy as a federal parliamentary republic. Under its new constitution, India's government has all three components of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive branch contains a president with largely ceremonial duties and a prime minister as head of government. The prime minister role is appointed by the president with the support of the majority party in parliament at the time. The executive branch's powers are secondary to legislative powers. The legislative branch is tasked with making laws and performing all legislative functions. Finally, India's judiciary is a three-tiered system that includes a supreme court and a number of high and lower courts.

India's Constitution is substantially longer than Japan's Constitution, and fundamental rights--such as equality before the law and the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth--are enumerated in the first few sections of the document. While India is a democracy (though not as consolidated as in Japan), it also has severe problems with gender equality and treatment. India ranks 131 out of 148 states worldwide according to the World Economic Forum's 2025 Gender Gap Index. Like Japan, India has a long history of abiding by strict gender roles. In Indian society, men are the "breadwinners" tasked with earning for their families, whereas women are submissive to the head of the household and responsible for the reproduction of heirs and handling home duties.

Historically, women in India never held roles equal to men. Men drove all social, political, and economic choices, and women were seen only as subordinate wives and mothers. A large part of the role of the women was to ensure, oftentimes, a male child. Male children hold significant roles in the family and, eventually, are tasked with performing last rites for the elders in the family, as well as ensuring the continuation of the family line. Under this system, women were expected to be highly moral and faithful, while men were encouraged to ensure male progeny, even if it meant being unfaithful. Over time, women's rights in India did not improve, but steadily declined. The birth of a daughter was not seen as welcome news; often, it was more profitable to sell a daughter or woman as a commodity, rather than to keep one in the family.

Although India's Constitution recognizes equal rights and freedom from discrimination based on sex, many conceptions of the role of women in society seem to persist today. The historical and cultural foundations of women in society are difficult to overcome. One of the reasons for India's gender gap ranking is because of India's practice of sex selective abortion, a practice of terminating a pregnancy once the sex of the infant is known (namely, if the infant is female). While abortion is legal with certain restrictions in India, the practice of sex selective abortion is not. Nevertheless, observers believe that sex selective abortions take place at a high rate given the grossly uneven ratio of males to females in Indian society. According to the United Nations, both India and China account for more than 90 percent of all sex selective abortions worldwide, with an estimated 1.5 million missing female births recorded each year globally.

Additional reasons for India's low ranking in terms of gender equality include the lack of women's representation in politics, the lack of women in technical and leadership roles, unequal access to health care, major gaps between male and female literacy levels, expanding gender wage gaps, and an overall decrease of women in the workplace.

Conclusion

Following the end of World War II, Japan's 1947 Constitution was well-received by the public, and it enabled Japan to maintain its historical and cultural origins while adopting democratic values. The Japanese Constitution had all the basic ingredients for building a liberal democracy with respect for civil liberties and civil rights. India's situation was, in some ways, similar to that in Japan. For instance, India's Constitution also ensured equal protection under the law and prohibited discrimination. Both India and Japan are democracies that continue to rank poorly and struggle with gender gaps, and yet, they differ in their overall trajectories of progress. Although prior to the pandemic, India had made major leaps in terms of narrowing gender gaps,

the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked terrible outcomes for the treatment of women, particularly in terms of access to affordable and quality healthcare. Although Japan's women also bore difficult outcomes from the pandemic, the Japanese government established a new direction for many of its policies and initiatives relating to decreasing the gender gaps. One of its plans, the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equity, calls for major changes to support women in the workplace and to increase their representation in political parties and politics in general.

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6.7: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Culture** is, broadly defined, the combination of customs; social institutions; art; media; and social, economic, and political achievements of a social group.
- **Ethnicity** categorizes groups of people "according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin[s] or background[s]."
- **Gender** encompasses a spectrum of characteristics ranging from feminine to masculine, and gender depends on a person's internal sense of self.
- **Norms** are standard practices, rules, patterns, and behaviors considered acceptable in a society.
- **Parochial system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are not involved, engaged, or interested in the political operations in their state.
- **Participant system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are aware of government actions and able to influence and participate in governmental decisions, but they still must abide by the laws of the state.
- **Political culture** is a shared set of ideological views and beliefs held by a population about the political system under which they live.
- **Political identity** is how a person, or group of persons, think of themselves in relation to the politics and government of a state.
- **Political mobilization** is a process of organizing and motivating individuals with shared identities to take action on a particular political issue.
- **Political socialization** is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time.
- **Post-materialism** is the extent to which a political culture focuses on or cares about issues that are not of immediate physical and material concern, such as human rights and environmental concerns.
- **Race** is a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits.
- **Sex** (or "biological sex") refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs."
- **Sexual orientation** is the sustained pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of opposite sex or gender, same sex or gender, or both.
- **Subject system** is a type of political culture in which citizens are somewhat aware and responsive to their governmental systems, but their involvement is heavily controlled and legislated by their governments.

Summary

Section 6.1: Introduction to Political Identity

Political identity refers to the labels and characteristics an individual chooses to associate with based on a multitude of factors including, but not limited to, their perception of political ideologies, platforms and parties, as well as how they see themselves from national, racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and gender perspectives. One of the main reasons political scientists focus on political identity is because human attachment to these identities has been mobilized with political consequences. Political mobilization is a process of organizing and motivating individuals with shared identities to take action on a particular political issue. Political socialization is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time. Political socialization occurs within families, schooling, church communities, and through all engagement individuals have with the outside world.

Section 6.2: Political Culture

Culture is, broadly defined, the combination of customs; social institutions; art; media; and social, economic, and political achievements of a social group. Culture includes norms, which are standard practices, rules, patterns, and behaviors considered acceptable in a society. States that enforce strict adherence to norms tend to have greater control over their own populations, and often less crime, and the promotion of self-control among individuals. In contrast, states that do not promote strict adherence to norms may be more disorganized and have potentially higher crime, but are more open to other ideas, cultures, and ways of life.

Section 6.3: Race and Ethnicity

Race is "a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits." Ethnicity is a broader term than race that categorizes groups of people "according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin[s] or background[s]." Race and ethnicity play a major role in politics around the world, and each of these factors can be politically mobilized to influence political outcomes. Comparativists study how race and ethnicity impact (among other things) the quality of democracy, representation in political institutions, public opinion, electoral outcomes, inequality, health outcomes, and economic outcomes.

Section 6.4: Gender

Gender encompasses a spectrum of characteristics ranging from feminine to masculine, and gender depends on a person's internal sense of self. Crucially, gender is a distinct concept from sex (or sometimes "biological sex"), which refers to biological differences. According to the World Health Organization, sex refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs." Sex is typically assigned at birth based on a set of physical characteristics. Relating to biological sex, the divide between male and female has often influenced politics. Women in most societies have been historically underrepresented and discriminated against. Concerns continue to abound related to the acceptance of gender identity and sexual orientation in different political systems.

Section 6.5: Comparative Case Study - India and Japan

Japan and India are both democracies with new constitutions formed in the post World War II period. Within both countries' constitutions, there is emphasis on equal treatment under the law for all citizens and freedom from discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and other factors of importance. Nevertheless, both countries have struggled with large gender gaps in relation to women in the workplace, women's earnings with equal credentials and positions as men, access to healthcare, and representation in politics. Women in both countries struggled significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and gender gaps widened. Japan has instituted new policies to try to narrow the gender gap, while India has struggled to devise new policies to improve the gender gap.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following is the process of organizing and motivating individuals with shared identities to take action on a particular political issue?
 - a. political activities
 - b. political identity
 - c. political mobilization
 - d. Arab Spring
2. What is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time?
 - a. society
 - b. political mobilization
 - c. political socialization
 - d. political identity
3. How can an individual become politically socialized?
 - a. through their families
 - b. through their schooling
 - c. through their church or religious community
 - d. all of the above
4. What is the combination of customs; social institutions; art; media; and social, economic, and political achievements of a social group?
 - a. culture
 - b. norms
 - c. political identity
 - d. political mobilization
5. What is true of states that have loose norms?
 - a. they tend to be more open to other cultures
 - b. they tend to experience worse economic outcomes

- c. they tend to experience better political outcomes
- d. all of the above

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.d, 4.c, 5.a

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Consider your national or local political environment. How is political activity, engagement, and behavior shaped by cultural influences and broader social norms, codes, and values?
2. In what ways do cultural and political identities such as race, ethnicity, and gender become politicized?
3. How can consideration of political identity inform, or broaden, our understanding of social movements, the economy, and/or political institutions?

Suggestions for Further Study

On Political Identity and Culture

Books

- Amitav Ghosh, (1988) *Shadow Lines*, Ravi Dayal Publishers
- Samuel Huntington, (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster.
- Anna Tsing, (2004) *Friction, An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton University Press

On Race and Ethnicity

Books

- Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*
- Melissa Harris-Lacewell, *Barbershops, Bibles and BET* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)
- Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*
- C. Van Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*
- Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (1997)
- Paula McClain and Stewart, *Can We All Get Along? Racial & Ethnic Minorities in Amer. Politics* (2005)
- Abigail and Stephan Thernstorm, ed. *Beyond the Color Line* (2002)
- Wolbrecht, Tillery, and Hero, ed. *The Politics of Democratic Inclusion* (2005)
- Wilkins, David E. 2002. *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*, 2d. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Reimers, David M. 1992. *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America*, 2d. New York: Columbia University Press. *Selections from the CQ Researcher*. 2005. *Issues in Race, Ethnicity, and Gender*, 3d. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

On Gender

Books

- *Gender and Elections: Shaping the Future of American Politics*, 3rd Edition edited by Susan Carroll and Richard Fox. 2010.
- *Women and Politics* by Julie Dolan, Melissa Deckman, and Michele Swers. 2011.

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7: POLITICAL IDENTITY - NATIONALISM, RELIGION, AND CLASS

- 7.1: Political Identity and Identity Politics
- 7.2: National Identity
- 7.3: Religious Identity
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7.1: Political Identity and Identity Politics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe how identity politics differs from political identity.

Introduction

What does it mean for people to consider themselves American, Chinese, Italian, Nigerian, Peruvian, or Russian? What makes a person identify as conservative or liberal? How does a person's gender, ethnic, religious, or class identity influence their political identity? How does politics influence a person's sense of gender, ethnic, religious, or class identity? These questions are complex, intertwined, and important. A person's identity influences their politics, and politics also influences a person's identity.

As a reminder from Chapter 6, **political identity** is how a person, or group of persons, think of themselves in relation to the politics and government of a state. Everything that makes up a person's sense of self is a component of their political identity, including factors like a person's ethnicity, race, religion, gender, class, ideology, nationality, and age.

Understanding how individuals and groups see their political identity is critical to the analysis of the political system of any state. For example, identity can be the driving force behind a social or political movement calling for systemic change. Yet identity can also be the *goal* of a social or political movement; the movement may aim to gain acceptance of an identity or to redefine traditional identities (Bernstein, 2005). Attempts at change sometimes occur through the organizational lens of "identity politics."

Identity Politics

As Britannica defines, **identity politics** refers to "political or social activity by or on behalf of a racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, or other group, usually undertaken with the goal of rectifying injustices suffered by group members because of differences or conflicts between their particular identity (or misconceptions of their particular identity) and the dominant identity (or identities) of a larger society." Identity politics may lead groups "to form exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional broad-based party politics" (Lexico, n.d.), and by challenging dominant identities, identity-based groups may have "the goal of greater self-determination" (Heyes, 2020). While identity politics can provide a sense of belonging and purpose for a group of people, it also can lead to division and a sense of "us versus them" because it focuses the lens of specific identities and their differences. If the sense of belonging and membership in one group outweighs the sense of belonging and membership in a broader group, it can become more difficult for a society to address issues facing all people in the state.

We can better understand this difficulty when considering the difference between pluralism and hyperpluralism. A **pluralist society** is a society comprised of many identity groups that have different backgrounds, religions, and traditions, but where an overarching identity exists that includes everyone living within the state. A **hyperpluralist society** has many identity groups, but those groups have priorities that are so divergent that it is near impossible to find compromise and agreement on shared values with everyone living within the state.

Identity politics is complicated because people often identify with more than one group, such as in Israel. The creation of the state of Israel was done specifically to provide a homeland for Jewish people after World War II. As such, to identify as Israeli for many people is to *also* identify as Jewish. Those who live in Israel but are *not* Jewish fall into a different identity group with a different set of allegiances. This division creates a sense of exclusion and separation, making political unity and agreement more difficult.

The following sections will expand on the identities introduced in Chapter 6 to include national identity, religious identity, and class identity. It is important to remember that all of these identities can interact with each other in ways that affect politics differently. This is referred to as **intersectionality**, a concept that describes how the interconnectedness of various identities and categories can lead to the marginalization (or to the privilege) of particular people and/or groups.

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7.2: National Identity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define national identity.
- Explain how nationalism fuels irredentist and separatist movements.
- Describe how citizenship is different from national identity and political identity.

Introduction

Political identity is not the same as "national identity," but the concepts are interrelated. While political identity is how we view ourselves in a political sense, including our political interests, affiliations, and priorities, **national identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values and traits of a nation. This can range from a relatively narrow ethnic identity to a broader civic identity that encompasses many ethnic and religious groups. In Canada, for example, there is the concept of a "cultural mosaic" of many different types of people, including immigrants, who make up the nation. This is a broad and inclusive definition of national identity. On the other end of the spectrum, some South Asian nations, such as India, are viewed as practicing a narrow and exclusionary form of national identity (Chakraborty, 2014).

As a reminder from Chapter 3, a **nation** is broadly defined as a population of people joined by common culture, history, language, and/or ancestry within a designated region or territory. A **nation-state** is a state where all or most of the people in that state belong to a single nation. In Hungary, Poland, and the United States, for example, people tend not to separate between their nation and state. A **multinational state**, alternatively, is a state that contains multiple nations, such as India and Russia.

National identity, just like other aspects of identity, creates a feeling of belonging. Symbols--such as a national flag, bird, or anthem--are commonly used to reflect the values and priorities of a nation's identity, and their easy recognition helps to inspire and bind people together. In the United States, the Pledge of Allegiance was popularized after the Civil War (and formally adopted by Congress in 1942) as a means to unite the state as one nation, yet a number of southern states continue to use imagery reminiscent of the Confederate Battle Flag (suggesting a distinct identity). In Germany, after Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933, the flag colors changed from black, red, and yellow to black, white, and red, and they subsequently reverted back after World War II. These symbols provide a visible cue to reinforce a person's sense of attachment to a nation. As Haas (1986) describes, national identity implies a "principle of identity based on impersonal ties, remote ties, vicarious ties," and these ties are arbitrated through common symbols and forms of communication.

Nationalism

While these symbols can reinforce national identity, they are also powerful tools of "nationalism." **Nationalism**, according to Britannica, is "an ideology that elevates one nation or nationality above all others and that places primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations, nationalities, or supranational groups." Haas (1986) adds that nationalism is "the convergence of territorial and political loyalty irrespective of competing foci of affiliation." In the ideology of nationalism, national identity matters more than one's other identities. As Hechter (2001) explains, nationalism is "collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit." In other words, the ideology of nationalism aims to ensure the boundaries of the nation and the state are the same.

Nationalism is naturally tied to the development of the modern nation-state; before a national identity can exist, the nation must exist. As Benedict Anderson (1983) argues, nationalism developed in part due to the advent of the printing press, which was introduced in Europe in the 1400s. As more and more people became literate, they read newspapers ("print capitalism"). This ritual of buying and reading newspapers--and the knowledge that many others were completing the same ritual at the same time--allowed people to feel connected. People therefore no longer saw themselves as detached populations, but as "imagined communities." In this way, nations, and therefore nationalism, were socially constructed.

Scholars identify numerous varieties of nationalism in the world today, and here we will only focus on two broad

distinctions. **Exclusionary nationalism** is the idea that a nation is superior or exceptional, and this type of nationalism can lead to the marginalization of others and/or violence (i.e., it promotes an "us versus them" mentality). **Liberal nationalism** is the idea that every group of people with a clear national identity should have their own state that adheres to liberal principles (e.g., the protection of individual rights). This type of nationalism can lead to independence movements, or it can develop during or after an independence movement motivated by other factors.

Nationalism can therefore serve as the ideological basis for "irredentist movements" and "separatist movements." An **irredentist movement** is an attempt by one state to restore a territory that previously belonged to it. Russian President Vladimir Putin, for example, views Ukraine (a former republic of the Soviet Union that declared independence in 1991) not as a sovereign state, but as a crucial piece of the Russian nation with shared historical and cultural identities that should rejoin Russia. A **separatist movement** is an attempt by members of a group of people with shared identity to establish their own government, separate from the state they reside in. In Canada, for instance, there have been calls for secession by Quebec, also thought of as "French Canada." Supporters of this effort are represented by a political party called Bloc Québécois. According to *The New York Times*, about 30 percent of Quebec's citizens support secession. Far more, however, are focused on maintaining the values, language, and identity of French Canada. Similar to Quebec, the Catalonia region of Spain has its own language and traditions, and it held an independence referendum and declared the establishment of an independent Catalan Republic in October 2017. Though this independence declaration was not recognized by other states or the Spanish government, it illustrates how separatist movements can be both centralizing forces that bring people with shared identities together, but also be decentralizing or damaging to the state. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, as quoted by the BBC, "Spain risked being downgraded from a 'full democracy' to a 'flawed' one over its handling of the situation."



Figure 7.2.1: Holding hands for Catalan Independence. (Source: [Catalan independence protest in Times Square, NYC](#) by Liz Castro via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

Identity and Citizenship

While national identity and political identity imply a feeling of belonging, **citizenship** is a legal status of being a citizen of a particular state. A person can feel a sense of belonging to a nation *without* being a citizen of the state in which the nation exists.

Roughly 30 states grant citizenship at birth (Serhan and Friedman, 2018), and almost all states have a process whereby a person can become a citizen. The difficulty of the process depends on the state; some states require lengthy residency requirements before allowing a citizenship application (e.g., 10 years in Switzerland) while other states require little more than proving ancestry from that state (e.g., "citizenship by descent" in Ireland). Citizenship typically brings certain legal rights and privileges, such as the right to vote, to hold elected office, and to be issued a passport.

Citizenship is often closely tied to **patriotism**, pride in one's state, rather than nationalism. This is because even though being a citizen confers certain rights and privileges, it also involves special duties. For example, some states like Israel, Russia, and Turkey have **conscription** for a set of citizens, which is compulsory enlistment for military service. While there are over 100 nationalities in Russia, regardless if a male citizen between the ages of 18-30 is an ethnic Chechen, Russian, Tartar, or a member

of another group, all must serve a 12 month term in the military.



Figure 7.2.2: Russian guards in uniform. (Source: [Russian Guard](#) by Unknown Author via [pxhere.com](#) is licensed under [CC0](#))

7.3: Religious Identity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare religious identity to national identity.
- Define primordialism and constructivism.
- Define religiosity and differentiate between the four "b's" (believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding).

Introduction

As mentioned in previous sections, individuals can have multiple identities. Just as a national identity is closely tied to a person's sense of belonging to a nation, a **religious identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values of a particular religion and/or religious sect. Yet while nations are a modern construction, religion is a far older concept.

Contrary to national identity coming only *after* the formation of a nation, some argue that religious identity may actually come *before* the development of religion. Émile Durkheim, for example, writes that religion is an eminently social thing. Rather than focusing on deities and/or supernatural elements, the formation of a religion centers on collective consciousness and community. The rituals and practices that people collectively participate in lead to a sense of unity, and this development of a unified identity is what then leads to organized religion (Wetherell and Mohanty, 2010).

Durkheim wrote about pre-modern societies, which were mostly clan or tribe-based. However, if religious identity is indeed ascribed, or collectivity-based, then it can also be free from geographical constraints. As the clan or tribe shifts from one territory to the next, the religious identity should continue as long as the community remains cohesive. Again, this is different from national identity, where lines drawn on a map strongly influence who develops a national identity. A religious identity can be detached from the land it originated, as we see historically through the growth of religions through proselytizing.

Religious Identity and Politics

How, then, does religious identity affect politics?

If religious identity precedes religion itself, many people consider it their "primordial identity." Originally coined to discuss ethnic identities, primordialism helps us understand the salience of religious identities in politics. **Primordial identity** means that individuals have only a single religious identity, and that this identity is fixed in the present and the future. Some contend that one's religious identity is biologically determined; that is, a person is born into a religious identity. Others suggest that religious identity develops through socialization and education in childhood. Regardless of the exact timing, primordialists believe that once a person acquires an identity, it becomes immutable (Chandra, 2001).

This approach may describe the pre-modern world, but it falls short in the modern context where individuals often *choose* to join a community. Particularly in secular societies, religious identity is often a matter of choice; it is not determined by the clan, the tribe, or the nation a person is born into. Those subscribing to this choice-driven view consider religious identity a "constructivist identity." **Constructivist identity** means that individuals have multiple identities and that, as people change, so can the importance of a particular identity. Over time, individuals may even adopt a new identity altogether. Given the transitory nature of people in the modern world, there is a greater likelihood that an individual could acquire multiple religious identities in their lifetime. We see this, for example, with Protestant Christians in the United States who go "church shopping," meaning they visit different congregations before settling down on one church that best fits their needs.

This discussion of primordial versus constructivist identity helps us understand how religious identity plays a role in modern politics. When groups see their religious identity as primordial, as immutable, they are less willing to compromise politically on issues that violate their belief systems. Compromise will appear anathema to a community with a primordialist view of identity. This reasoning has been used, as one of many hypotheses, to explain why conflict may erupt between two or more religious

groups.

Dimensions of Religious Identity

When measuring religious identity, we can rely on what has been referred to as the **four 'b's'**: believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding.

Believing is religious belief or believing in certain religious propositions. It involves the way people conceptualize their relationship with supernatural forces. Most religions are theistic, which involve belief in a god (monotheism), gods (polytheism or henotheism), or some omnipresent force. Even among non-theistic traditions, such as Buddhism, adherents often profess a belief in a version of external transcendence, and that "there is some sort of spirit or life force" (Saroglou, 2011). **Belonging** is religious affiliation or belonging to a religious faith, a religious tradition, or a denomination/sect within a particular religion. Denomination is a term associated with Christianity--such as Catholics, Southern Baptists, and Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)--and often refers to a "religious community or (transhistorical) group with a common history and future" (Hoogendoorn, et. al., 2016). **Behaving** is religious commitment or behaving according to values privileged by religion. It involves norms and defining what is right and what is wrong. It can also provide an individual with a sense of purpose. **Bonding** is religious ritual or bonding by means of spiritual practices and rituals. It can include prayer, meditation, worship, religious ceremonies, and pilgrimages.

Given the complexity inherent in these four dimensions of religious identity, scholars in religion and politics prefer to use the term **religiosity** to describe "the strength of a person's attachment to organized religion" (Macaluso and Wanat, 1979), which they then attempt to measure in various ways to reflect the four 'b's.' Macaluso and Wanat (1979, p. 160), for instance, measure religiosity "as the frequency of attendance at the place of worship." Legee and Kellstedt (1993), however, contend that using attendance at the place of worship as the only measure of religiosity is too simplistic, particularly because some religions and/or denominations emphasize individual devotion or non-collective traditions.

Religiosity, the strength of a person's commitment to religion, is important for understanding the intersection of religion and politics as it can influence how a person votes, how a person views certain policies, and whether a person supports a certain political party. At the state level, religious identity can also influence political regimes (e.g., theocracies), the acceptable range of government actions (e.g., if they must adhere to religiously-based moral codes), and the relationship between church and state (e.g., whether an official state religion exists). The comparative case study at the end of this chapter, comparing Israel and Iran, will examine some of these influences.

7.4: Class Identity

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define class identity, economic class, and social class.
- Explain the connection between class identity, power, and politics.

Introduction

Class identity relates to both economic and social class. **Class identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves in relation to others in society based on their economic and social position. Class identity is inherently about power. As Robertson (2020) writes:

Classes can be divided according to how much relative power and control members of a class have over their lives. On this basis, we might distinguish between the owning class (or bourgeoisie), the middle class, and the traditional working class. The owning class not only have power and control over their own lives, their economic position gives them power and control over others' lives as well.

Class identity, and its connection to power, also manifests in politics. One of the theories of power is called the "elite theory." **Elites** are the upper socio-economic class, or the "ruling class, among those business, government, and military leaders whose decisions and actions have significant consequences" (Mills, 1956). **Elite theory** posits that elites not only have power, but that they use that power for their own self-interests. One of the components of being a member of the elites is to have **social capital**, in this case meaning a network to call on for help in finding things like a new job, new clients, and new customers. The well-connectedness of elites provides them (and their families and other close contacts) with clear benefits. Today, elite theory encompasses not only elite individuals, but elite organizations, such as major oil companies and global military contractors (Horowitz, 1981).

Socioeconomic Class

While defining and measuring economic status is quite similar across cultures, based on measurable characteristics like money and material resources, the same cannot be said for social status. Different societies have different social values and, therefore, assign social class positions in different ways.



Figure 7.4.1: Wealth in South Florida. (Source: [Miami Millionaire Row](#), by Thank You via [flickr](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

In terms of economic status, the photo above shows a sleek yacht. This is one indicator of wealth because of the high cost of the yacht. Therefore, we presume that the owner of the yacht is from the upper economic class. Homes, cars, and jewelry are other commonly observed indicators of economic class.

There are other markers of economic class, however, that are not always as easy to interpret. Fashion and grooming styles are examples. In the past, perhaps, these were more fixed. In contemporary society, they are more fluid. Consider the 1794 image of the wife of a wealthy Spanish diplomat below.



Figure 7.4.2: Portrait of the wife of a wealthy Spanish diplomat, 1794. (Source: [Matilda Stoughton de Jaudenes](#) by Metropolitan Museum of Art via [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) is licensed under [CC0 1.0](#))

It is quite easy to know that this is an image of a wealthy person with high status. Yet, such markers of wealth are not always visible today. The picture of Elon Musk below offers no clues that he is one of the wealthiest persons on Earth.



Figure 7.4.3: In blue jeans and a black t-shirt, it is difficult to spot Elon Musk's wealth based on his clothing alone. (Source: [Elon Musk at the 2016 Tesla Annual Shareholder's Meeting](#), by [Steve Jurvetson](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

When we combine economic factors, such as income and wealth, with social factors, such as level of education and occupation, we have **socioeconomic class**. This intersection occurs because a person's social factors often influence their economic class. However, as noted by the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching, "An individual's socioeconomic status does not always align with their social class identification. In the U.S., for example, those who identify as middle class vary on every indicator of socioeconomic status (e.g., level of education)."

As noted above, components of social class vary significantly across cultures. In some societies, for example, it is considered more prestigious to be a religious leader than a medical doctor. Different states also place different levels of respect for teachers. According to a 2018 report from the Varkey Foundation, "In Malaysia and China, teachers are compared to doctors – seen as the highest status profession in our sample, but [in most countries] it is most common for teachers to be compared with social workers having a mid-range status."

Class Identity and Politics

Class identity, both economic and social, is a major component of politics. Class identity often influences political affiliations and attitudes. Politicians appeal to class identity as a means of gaining support for their policies. Class identity often drives political and social movements.

One example of the relationship between class identity and political movements is Marxism (named after Karl Marx). **Marxism**, which we will discuss more in Chapter 8, is an approach to political economy that is based on the idea of class conflict between the owner and worker classes. Marxism focuses on the exploitation of workers by owners and seeks to mobilize the working class to demand a change in the power dynamic. Marxists seek to change the economic class structure and, as a consequence, the political structure. Marx saw such class struggle as inevitable due to exploitation, and he believed that political revolution was inevitable. By overthrowing the owner class, this revolution would usher in a socialist system (Sociology Boundless, n.d.). But, before such an uprising could happen, the working class had to see *itself as working class* and recognize that—as a class—it was being exploited by the owner class.

Marx viewed class in objective terms, whereby a person's social class was "determined by his or her position within the system of property relations that constitute[d] a given economic society" (Little, n.d.). Therefore, it was not just about being a member of a certain class that had political significance, but it was also one's class identity (a feeling of belonging to a particular class) that was politically important.

Class identity is not only at the core of certain social or political movements, it is often a key focus of political campaigns seeking to win votes or support. A recent example of this in the United States is the intense interest in the working class—those engaged in manual-labor occupations or industrial work, often without a four-year college degree—during the presidential election campaign of 2015-16. Unionized working class Americans had been fairly solidly united behind the Democratic Party since the 1930s, but

over the past 30 years, the Democratic Party lost its solid support from working class voters, making them a constituency of voters that candidates believed were up for grabs in the election (Zweig, 2017). At that time, Bernie Sanders characterized his run for the presidency as one focused on the working class, and such class-based appeals "also figure prominently in debates concerning the success of right-wing populist politicians such as Marine Le Pen in France, Luigi Di Maio in Italy, and Donald Trump in the US" (Robertson, n.d.).

Turning our attention to the role of class identity in Israeli politics, we see something a bit different. Rather than identity politics being a way to bring attention to groups who feel "left behind" in some way, in Israel there is a class-based identity politics movement evident in the more economically secure middle class. As Kaplan explains:

Whereas theories of identity politics tend to focus on the socially disenfranchised, we look at how the higher-ranked may use others' essentialisation of culture and identities for their own advantages. We explain the secular middle class's turn to Judaism as an attempt to reestablish or reclaim the social power they feel entitled to, under changing cultural, social and material conditions. [Kaplan, et al, 2017]

Kaplan's analysis also highlights the intersection of class, culture, and politics:

In as much as Israel is an advanced-capitalist and a Jewish state, our middle-class participants have re-adjusted to the changing terms of belonging to the Israeli collectivity. In doing so, they may very well advance the 'Judaisation' of Israeli culture, yet not merely as an explicit political process, but also as a class distinction practice. [Kaplan, et al, 2017]

This example from Israel reminds us that even groups who generally are seen as having well-established economic, social, and political power can feel their identity is threatened and, in this case, seek to redefine important aspects of that culture to help maintain their place in the hierarchy.

7.5: Comparative Case Study - Israel and Iran

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe how religion relates to identity in Israel and Iran.

Introduction

As a reminder from Chapter 2, one methodological approach used in comparative politics is the Most Different Systems Design (MSSD). This approach examines cases that are quite different from one another, yet have the same outcome. Because the dependent variable is the same across cases in a MSSD, researchers aim to answer: Why do different systems produce the same outcome?

When examining the cases of Iran and Israel, the dependent variable of interest is a set of political outcomes that favor religion. In Iran, the religion is Shi'a Islam; in Israel, the religion is Judaism. Though the religions themselves differ, they dominate in each state in similar ways. First, the legal codes in each state favor their respective religion (Stern, 2017; Pargoo, 2021), and the judicial system in each state includes religious courts. Second, each religious group has economic access and favorable economic treatment. Third, each state provides favorable treatment for religious students and religious education. Fourth, each religion enjoys political representation, and each state has religious political parties or factions within its political system. Across these two cases, we observe similar outcomes.

Yet despite similar observations on the dependent variable, the two cases differ in potential independent (explanatory) variables. Israel is a democratic regime while Iran is a non-democratic regime (Marshall & Elzinger-Marshall, 2017). Israel has a liberal market economy while Iran has a non-market (or emerging market) economy. Israel ranks higher than Iran on socioeconomic indicators, with Israel ranking 27th and Iran ranking 75th out of 193 states and territories in the United Nations Development Programme's 2025 Human Development Report. While Israel and Iran each have a mix of secular and religious authority, Israel today has a more secular orientation than Iran. Finally, Israel maintains much closer relationships with the West than Iran, shown particularly through annual direct military and economic support sent to Israel from the United States.

Israel



Figure 7.5.2: Map of Israel. (Source: Map of Israel by CIA World Factbook is licensed under Public Domain)

- **Full Country Name:** State of Israel
- **Head(s) of State:** President, Prime Minister
- **Government:** Unitary Parliamentary Republic
- **Official Languages:** Hebrew
- **Economic System:** Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Western Asia
- **Capital:** Jerusalem
- **Total land size:** 8,522 sq miles
- **Population:** 9,508,220
- **GDP:** \$478.01 billion
- **GDP per capita:** \$50,200
- **Currency:** New shekel

Religion and nationalism play a central role in the identity of most Israelis. Most Israelis identify as Jewish. Strongly related to this is the concept of Zionism. Zionism is the ideological drive for an independent Jewish state. This political movement has its roots in the late 1800s, when Jewish minorities faced severe oppression in Europe, particularly in the Russian Empire. This pressure, combined with a British takeover of the former Ottoman region of Palestine, led to a series of aliyahs, or migrations. As the situation for Jewish minorities worsened in Europe, these migrations took on more urgency. Ultimately, conflict erupted between the migrated groups and the Arab population that had existed there for centuries. Unable to maintain military power, the British vacated Palestine, with Jewish groups uniting to declare independence in 1948.

The independence of the State of Israel cemented the importance of a Jewish identity. Israel is a state explicitly created as a homeland for the Jewish people. Jewish identity in Israel takes two forms: a cultural Jewish identity and a religious Jewish identity. Quite a few Israeli citizens, and to a larger extent Jewish people in other countries, identify as culturally Jewish. For these folks, being Jewish is a matter of ancestry and culture, and not necessarily religious practice, which can vary from a complete lack of participation to observation of major holidays. While these people belong, they may not necessarily believe or behave. Religious Jews are much more likely to incorporate religious belief and practice into their daily lives; they believe, behave, and belong, which explains their strong bonding.

Israeli political identity is also informed by a focus on maintaining a Westphalian vision of sovereignty. This can be traced to the creation in 1947, by the United Nations (UN), of a partition plan where the Jewish and Arab groups would be divided into two states (Heaphy, 2021). This decision to give the Jewish people a homeland was largely a reaction to the genocide of Jews in the Holocaust during World War II. The creation of the State of Israel led almost immediately to war. The initial war in the aftermath of the creation of Israel, as well as subsequent conflicts, led to significant expansion of territory claimed by Israel that Palestinians (and other Arabs) consider to be their own territory. Maintaining control over territory granted by the UN and gained in war, therefore, is a key driver of political identity for Israeli Jews.

Religion also plays a central role for those who feel left out of Israeli politics. Ultra-Orthodox Jews "reject Jewish nationalism as they perceive Jews as a religious group that should not be politically sovereign" until the end of times for humankind. Arab Israelis "oppose the exclusive Jewish elements" promoted by the state.

The importance of religion in Israeli identity is seen in the religious imagery on the Israeli passport and flag.



Figure 7.5.3: An Israeli diplomatic passport. (Source: [Israeli Passport](#) by Nitzan Army via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))



Figure 7.5.4: The flag of the State of Israel. (Source: [Israeli Flag](#) by Paul Brennan via [PublicDomainPictures.net](#) is licensed under [CC0 1.0](#))

Iran



Figure 7.5.5: Map of Iran. (Source: [Map of Iran](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

- **Full Country Name:** Islamic Republic of Iran
- **Head(s) of State:** Supreme Leader
- **Government:** Unitary Khomeneist Theocratic Presidential Islamic Republic
- **Official Languages:** Persian
- **Economic System:** Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Western Asia
- **Capital:** Tehran
- **Total land size:** 8,522 sq miles
- **Population:** 83,183,741
- **GDP:** \$1.573 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$20,261
- **Currency:** Iranian rial

Religion and religious identity also play a major role in Iran. Iran is located geographically in the Middle East, with Farsi as its dominant language and Islam as its dominant religion. The majority of Muslims in Iran, approximately 90-95 percent, identify as Shi'a.

Shi'ism is a branch of Islam, encompassing approximately 10-13 percent of the total global Muslim population. The vast majority of Muslims worldwide are Sunni Muslims. Shi'ites believe that, after the Prophet Muhammad's death (in 632 CE), leadership of the umma, or religious community, should have passed to Ali ibn Ali Talib. Instead, Abu Bakr became the Prophet Muhammad's successor, the first caliph. Ali eventually became caliph 20 years later, but was assassinated approximately five years after that. His son, Husayn ibn Ali, subsequently took up his father's cause until he was killed at the Battle of Karbala (680 CE). For Shi'a Muslims, Husayn's martyrdom is a major event that is commemorated yearly through a day of mourning (Ashura).

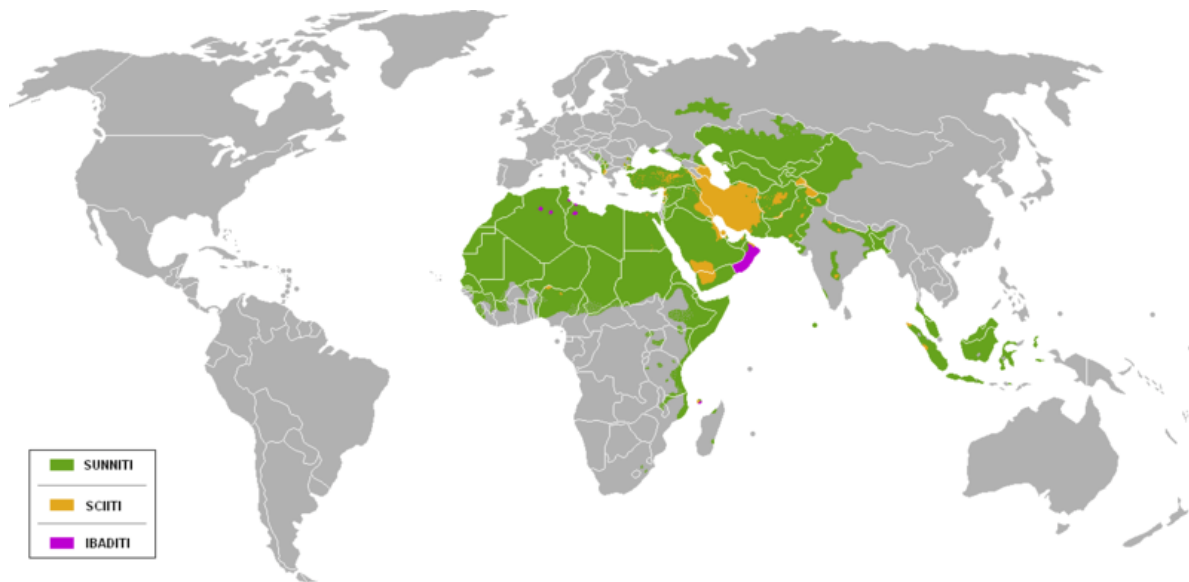


Figure 7.5.6: World map of the branches in Islam. Sunni Muslim majority countries are in Green. Shi'a Muslim majority countries are in orange. Ibaditi Muslim majority countries are in purple. (Source: [The distribution of the predominant Islamic sectarian affiliations followed in majority-Muslim countries and regions](#) by Keltorrics via Wikimedia Commons is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

This very brief glimpse into history provides a foundation for understanding Iranian politics today. While Sunni Muslims bask in the glory of previous empires, Shi'a Muslims instead see a history of oppression and mistreatment, and Husayn's martyrdom provided a rallying cry for Shi'a during years of subjugation under Sunni Muslim rulers. The 1979 Iranian Revolution, which brought religious Shi'a to power in Iran, is seen as a culmination of this struggle.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution is a watershed moment in history, driven by a series of factors. First, the Shah, or King of Iran, promoted a strongly secular state, where Shi'a clergy were persecuted and Islamic holidays were minimized. The Shah promoted an Iranian identity uncoupled from religion through his desire to modernize the country, including the emancipation of women and reforms that aggravated the landed wealthy. He often reached back to ancient history, most notably lavishly celebrating the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire in 1971. The Shah's approach backfired, as most Iranians had high levels of religiosity. They believed, belonged, and behaved. Thus, the efforts to modernize and reclaim ancient heritage was an affront to their sensibilities. Second, the modernist efforts in Iran were supported by Western powers, particularly by the United States. As the presence of U.S. business interests, primarily related to oil, and the subsequent presence of the U.S. military grew, resentment among Iranians increased (Schweitzer, 2019). The strong sense of religious identity created strong bonding among religious Iranians which, when combined with resentment toward the West, allowed clerics to become the main political opposition.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was an outspoken critic who lived in exile. His message of an Iran based on the "laws of God" and the abolishment of monarchical rule appealed to the mass public. When the Shah left Iran in 1979, ostensibly for medical treatment, Khomeini took advantage of his absence and returned to Iran. His return was greeted by millions and he immediately went to work transforming the country into the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Figure 7.5.7: Ayatollah Khomeini, a senior religious figure in Iran, returning after exile. (Source: [Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran after 14 years of exile in 1979](#), by [en:User:Sa.vakilian](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

Identity in Iran is multi-faceted. As discussed earlier in the chapter, multiple identities can coexist successfully within one state. However, when those different identities claim to be the "true" identity, conflict (peaceful or violent) can ensue. To be Iranian can include several things. It can mean being Persian, being Muslim, or speaking Farsi. It can focus on the Islamic Revolution of 1979, or it can focus on Iranian culture before the revolution (Saleh, 2013). It can also depend on a political identity based in part on Iran's relationship with the West, particularly stemming from a revolution rooted in anti-Western sentiment (Hassan, 2016).

Another complication related to identity in Iran revolves around the Kurdish population. The Kurds are an indigenous ethnic group with a shared language who historically live in parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurds do not have their own state, but there is an identifiable area of land often called "Kurdistan" (Britannica). Although the Kurds have lived in the area that is now Iran for centuries, they do not identify as Iranian. They feel "excluded from the political system...and do not exhibit any emotional connection with Iranian identity." The Kurds have been seeking independence since at least the middle of the 20th century and armed conflicts have been common in and near Kurdish areas of Iran (as well as those in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria). Since the Iranian government sees this as "an affront to the official rhetoric of ethnic unity," it has reacted with military force (Akbarzaheh, et al, 2019). In 2017, when the Kurds announced a referendum on independence, the Iranian government threatened to "close all border crossings" and hinted at the possibility of "more forceful and frequent military action" (Nadimi, 2017).

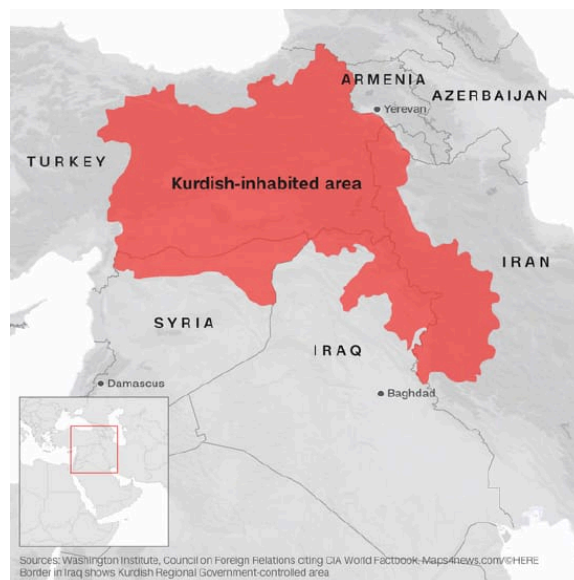


Figure 7.5.8: Geographical map of Kurdish inhabited areas of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. (Source: [Map of Kurdistan](#) by CIA via [CIA World Factbook](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

Similar to Israel, religion features prominently in Iranian symbols, such as its flag and currency.



Figure 7.5.9: The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Source: Iran's Flag by [Mehregaan](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

Above, the green stripe represents the Islamic faith, the white stripe stands for peace, and the red stripe represents courage. After the 1979 Revolution, the inscription "Allahu akbar" (translated as "God is great") was added above and below the center symbol. The phrase is repeated on the flag 22 times, a reference to the date of the revolution.

Below, the Iranian banknotes also feature religious imagery.



Figure 7.5.10: Currency of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Source: Bank notes from Iran, by [Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery](#) via [flickr](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#))

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7.7: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Behaving**, one of the four dimensions of religious identity, is religious commitment or behaving according to values privileged by religion.
- **Believing**, one of the four dimensions of religious identity, is religious belief or believing in certain religious propositions.
- **Belonging**, one of the four dimensions of religious identity, is religious affiliation or belonging to a religious faith, a religious tradition, or a denomination/sect within a particular religion.
- **Bonding**, one of the four dimensions of religious identity, is religious ritual or bonding by means of spiritual practices and rituals.
- **Citizenship** is a legal status of being a citizen of a particular state.
- **Class Identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves in relation to others in society based on their economic and social position.
- **Conscription** is compulsory enlistment for military service.
- **Constructivist identity** is a theory positing that individuals have multiple identities and that, over time, those individuals may adopt new identities or reevaluate the importance of a particular identity.
- **Elites** are the upper socio-economic class with consequential political power and social capital.
- **Elite theory** is the idea that the elites not only have power, but that they intentionally use it for their own benefit.
- **Exclusionary nationalism** is the idea that a nation is superior or exceptional, and this type of nationalism can lead to the marginalization of others and/or violence.
- **Four 'b's'** identifies four dimensions of religious identity: believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding.
- **Hyperpluralist society** is a society with many identity groups that have different backgrounds, religions, and traditions, and those groups have priorities that are so divergent that it is near impossible to find compromise and agreement on shared values with everyone living within the state.
- **Identity politics** refers to "political or social activity by or on behalf of a racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, or other group, usually undertaken with the goal of rectifying injustices suffered by group members because of differences or conflicts between their particular identity (or misconceptions of their particular identity) and the dominant identity (or identities) of a larger society" (Britannica).
- **Intersectionality** describes how the interconnectedness of various identities and categories can lead to the marginalization (or to the privilege) of particular people and/or groups.
- **Irredentist movement** is an attempt by one state to restore a territory that previously belonged to it.
- **Liberal nationalism** is the idea that every group of people with a clear national identity should have their own state that adheres that adheres to liberal principles (e.g., the protection of individual rights).
- **Marxism** is an approach to political economy that is based on the idea of class conflict between the owner and worker classes.
- **Multinational state** is a state that contains multiple nations.
- **Nation** is broadly defined as a population of people joined by common culture, history, language, and/or ancestry within a designated region or territory.
- **National identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values and traits of a nation.
- **Nationalism** is "an ideology that elevates one nation or nationality above all others and that places primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations, nationalities, or supranational groups."
- **Nation-state** is a state where all or most of the people in that state belong to a single nation.
- **Patriotism** is pride in one's state.
- **Pluralist society** is a society comprised of many identity groups that have different backgrounds, religions, and traditions, and where an overarching identity exists that includes everyone living within the state.
- **Political identity** is how a person, or group of persons, think of themselves in relation to the politics and government of a state.
- **Primordial identity**, in the context of religious identity, means that individuals have only a single religious identity, and that this identity is fixed in the present and the future.
- **Religious identity** is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values of a particular religion and/or religious sect.
- **Religiosity** is the strength of a person's commitment to religion.
- **Separatist movement** is an attempt by members of a group of people with shared identity to establish their own

government, separate from the state they reside in.

- **Social capital**, in elite theory, is having connections and access to networks of other elites so as to increase one's influence beyond just economic resources.
- **Socioeconomic class** is the combination of economic factors, such as income and wealth, with social factors, such as level of education and occupation.

Summary

Section 7.1: Political Identity and Identity Politics

Political identity consists of the traits and beliefs that make us who we are, from gender to religion to ethnicity to political affiliation. Understanding different political identities is critical to any analysis of political systems. Identity politics refers to "political or social activity by or on behalf of a racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, or other group, usually undertaken with the goal of rectifying injustices suffered by group members because of differences or conflicts between their particular identity (or misconceptions of their particular identity) and the dominant identity (or identities) of a larger society" (Britannica). While identity politics can provide a sense of belonging and purpose for a group of people, it also can lead to division and a sense of "us versus them" because it focuses the lens of specific identities and their differences. If the sense of belonging and membership in one group outweighs the sense of belonging and membership in a broader group, it can become more difficult for a state to address issues.

Section 7.2: National Identity

National identity is how a person or group of persons thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values and traits of a nation. This can range from a relatively narrow ethnic identity to a broader civic identity that encompasses many ethnic and religious groups. National identity can be inclusive or exclusive, as can the ideology of nationalism, which aims to ensure the boundaries of the nation and the state are the same. Nationalism can serve as the basis for irredentist and separatist movements. While national identity and political identity imply a feeling of belonging, citizenship is a legal status of being a citizen of a particular state. A person can feel a sense of belonging to a nation *without* being a citizen of the state in which the nation exists.

Section 7.3: Religious Identity

Religious identity is how a person, or group of persons, thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values of a particular religion and/or religious sect. Religious identity has four dimensions, referred to as the four 'b's': believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding. Like national identity, religious identity can be a centralizing force leading to unity or a decentralizing force leading to exclusionary behavior or conflict. There is some debate about whether religious identity can come before the formation of a specific religion. Religious identity is not bound by geography, yet the intensity of religious identity - and its influence on politics - does vary across different countries.

Section 7.4: Class Identity

Class identity has two main components: economic and social. Economic class is about a person's relative income and/or wealth in society. It is easier to measure and define than social class, though it is not always easy to see. Economic class is about power. Social class can be tied to or independent of economic class. Typically, those of high economic class also have high social status, yet social class is about how highly a person is respected and how well connected they are in their society. The subjective nature of social class means it varies across cultures and countries.

Section 7.5: Comparative Case Study - Israel and Iran

Using the Most Different Systems Design, we compare Israel and Iran on the dependent variable of political outcomes that favor religion (though the dominant religion differs in each case). The two states look similar on the dependent variable despite differing in numerous ways, such as in their respective types of government, economic policies, levels of secularization, amount of cooperation with the West, and socioeconomic indicators.

Review Questions

1. What are the components of political identity?
 - a. ethnicity and religion
 - b. gender and class
 - c. ideology and nationality
 - d. all of these
2. How does understanding political identity relate to the study of comparative politics?
 - a. political identity helps us understand and analyze political movements and systems
 - b. political identity helps us understand why all wealthy people are conservatives
 - c. political identity is a constant, rather than a variable, in studying comparative politics
3. What are the 4 “b’s” of religious identity?
 - a. believing, belonging, behaving, bonding
 - b. believing, beholding, behaving, bonding
 - c. bonding, behaving, belonging, bending
 - d. behaving, binding, believing, beholding
4. What political outcomes help demonstrate the dominance of Judaism in Israel and Shia Islam in Iran?
 - a. legal codes that favor each group
 - b. judicial system that includes religious courts
 - c. favoritism and preferences for religious students and religious education
 - d. the role of religious parties and factions in each country’s political system
 - e. all of these answers are correct
5. What is an example of political identity in Iran?
 - a. the importance of the Iranian Revolution
 - b. the inclusion of Kurds in Iranian politics
 - c. the exclusion of religion as part of Iranian identity

Answers: 1.d, 2.a, 3.a, 4.e, 5.a

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Predict how national identity, including national symbols, might change in Iran if it became more secular.
2. Choose one of the focus countries from this chapter and explain whether you think religious identity there is primordial or constructivist.
3. How does your class identity inform your political views?
4. Explain how having a nation is necessary, but not sufficient, to have national identity.
5. Israel and Iran are starkly different countries. Why study two states that are so different?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [Identity Politics: Friend or Foe?](#)
- [Pew Research Center-National Identity](#)
- [Pew Research Center-Religion](#)

Journal Articles

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8: POLITICAL ECONOMY

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8.1: What is Political Economy?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe political economy as a field of study.
- Define key terms associated with political economy.

Introduction

Political economy, as defined in Chapter 1, is a subfield of political science that considers various economic theories (e.g., capitalism, socialism, communism, fascism), practices, and outcomes either within a country, or among and between countries in the global system. In its simplest form, political economy is the study of the relationship between the market and powerful actors like a state's government. The **market** is the exchange of goods and services within a given territory. This almost always involves the forces of supply and demand and the allocation of resources through private economic decision-making. The interaction between the state and the market through political, economic, and societal institutions can frame deliverable outcomes, such as public goods. This can occur not only within a country, but also between them. **Public goods** are goods and services provided by the state that are available for everyone in society. They are non-excludable and non-rival in nature. Examples include public roads, public hospitals, and libraries. Clearly, political economy involves the mixing of political and economic policy goals. Finally, political economy also studies how individuals interact with the market and society (Britannica, n.d.)

Political economy overlaps with other fields and subfields in the social sciences, most notably economics. Political economists aim to understand how the state affects the market. A good example is the concept of wealth distribution within a state. **Wealth distribution** is how a state's goods, investments, properties, and resources--collectively known as "wealth"--are divided amongst its population. The wealth distribution in some states is quite even, whereas the wealth distribution in other states is quite uneven. States with uneven wealth distribution are more susceptible to political tension, as some groups may feel that they have been denied their "fair share of the pie." Political economists look not only at how the state affects the market, but also at how the market affects the state. For example, market forces can force elected politicians to change their perspectives or tactics. A downturn in the market tends to correlate with a decrease in the election chances of incumbent politicians. Just ask George H.W. Bush, former President of the United States, who won a decisive victory in the 1991 Gulf War, but suffered a loss to Bill Clinton in the 1992 Presidential Election after an economic downturn. In describing President Clinton's victory, political strategist James Carville famously coined the phrase, "It's the economy, stupid!"

Given the expansive scope, areas of research within political economy are quite diverse. Broadly speaking, political scientists study both how the economy affects politics and how political forces affect the economy. For the purposes of this chapter, we will focus on foundations, key terms, and political economic systems.

Foundations

Scholars have been thinking about the interaction between society and the economy for centuries. Ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, wrote about the *oikos*, which is the Ancient Greek word for house. Aristotle saw the *oikos* as the basic unit within the *polis*, or city. From *oikos* is derived the English word *econ*-omy, or the study of household accounts, which over time translated into the study of a state's wealth and assets.

Formal study of political economy began in the mid-1700s. Adam Smith's 1776 work, *The Wealth of Nations*, is often considered the starting point, as it discusses concepts like free markets, division of labor, wealth, and trade. Smith's work was followed by David Ricardo, who wrote about comparative advantage. **Comparative advantage** refers to the goods, services, or activities that one state can produce or provide more cheaply or easily than other states. Because states have different allocations of resources--such as land, labor, and capital--each state enjoys a comparative advantage in producing those goods that rely on its abundant resources. Complementing Smith's thoughts on the "invisible hand" of the free market, Ricardo's contributions pointed to the mutual benefits that states can gain from specialization, cooperation, and voluntary trade. A few decades after Ricardo came the writings of Karl Marx, whose reactions to the free market and capitalism still provide much of the basis for

contemporary criticism. Over time, the field garnered more widespread attention. As early as 1891, political economy's growth as a discipline in universities was apparent. As Charles F. Dunbar (1891) states in an article in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*:

It is the perception of the scope and importance of the questions with which political economy deals that turns the popular current so strongly towards it today. It is keenly felt that on the right answer of these questions must depend not only the future progress of society, but also the preservation of much that has been gained by mankind in the past.

The scope and importance of political economy extends to concepts including private goods, property, and property rights. In contrast to public goods, **private goods** are economic resources that are acquired or owned exclusively by a person or group. Public and private goods can vary greatly between states. For instance, healthcare is a public good in most states, but examples exist in which it is a private good. A defining feature of private goods is their potential scarcity and the competition that can arise from this scarcity. **Property** is a resource or commodity that a person or group legally owns. Property can include tangible items, like cars and houses, or intangible items, like patents, copyrights, or trademarks. **Property rights** are the legal authority to dictate how property, whether tangible or intangible, is used or managed. These concepts help form the foundation for many studies in political economy.

Key Terms

States can affect the market through a variety of measures. First, they can pass laws that regulate the market. **Regulations** are rules imposed by a government on society. Various types of regulations exist, including rules to protect public interests, such as environmental policy. Regulation that affects the market is often referred to as regulatory policy, economic regulation, or fiscal regulation. For example, an effective form of regulation occurs through taxation. **Taxation** is the process of a government collecting money from its citizens, corporations, and other entities. A state can impose taxes on income, capital gains, and estates. Taxes are an important part of a functioning society, as governments use tax revenue to pay for public goods. A state can also use taxes to regulate economic activity. A state can impose higher taxes on a product, driving up the price, to dissuade people from using it. A good example is the tax imposed on cigarettes. Sometimes referred to as "sin taxes," these are taxes levied on products or activities that the state deems harmful to society. In the United States, for example, "sin taxes" exist on tobacco, alcohol, and gambling in almost every state. Taken together, taxation, spending, and regulation are referred to as **fiscal policy**.

In addition to fiscal policy, governments exercise monetary policy. **Monetary policy** includes all actions taken by a state's central bank to affect the money supply. Money is simply a medium of exchange. It is a way to store value and provide a unit of account in economic transactions. Printed money has no intrinsic value; its value is determined by the government that prints it. After European states began adopting the common currency of the Euro in 1999, for example, the states' former currencies no longer retained any value; the German mark, the French franc, and the Greek drachma (among others) no longer had use in economic transactions.

A central bank can choose to expand the money supply in an aim to grow the economy and maximize employment. **Economic growth** is the process by which a state's wealth increases over time. A central bank can also choose to contract the money supply in an attempt to slow the economy and moderate inflation. An economic slowdown can be the result, which can take the form of a recession. A **recession** is two consecutive quarters of declining economic activity. Whether expanding or contracting, a central bank will manipulate the money supply through changes in interest rates. The **interest rate** is the percentage of a loan amount charged by a lender. When a central bank reduces interest rates, it hopes to stimulate economic growth. Lower interest rates make it easier for businesses to borrow money to expand production, increase hiring, or invest in research and development. Similarly, lower interest rates allow consumers to borrow money more easily to buy homes or other goods. If economic demand is growing too fast, however, a central bank can raise interest rates to "cool off" the economy. The higher interest rate aims to reduce spending and, in turn, to control inflation. **Inflation** is a general increase in prices, usually within a given period of time. Inflation may occur for numerous reasons, including higher consumer demand for products and services, higher labor costs, or increased costs of inputs (e.g., fuel).

Beyond domestic actions by a central bank, international trade can additionally affect a state's economy. **International trade** is the exchange of goods, services, and activities between states. Generally, international trade is a topic that falls within the specialization of **international political economy (IPE)**. IPE, a specialization within the subfield of international relations, is the study of political economy from a global perspective that focuses on topics like trade, finance, and international financial and monetary institutions. Because this textbook focuses on comparative politics, we will instead focus on the specialization of **comparative political economy (CPE)**. CPE is the comparison across and between countries of the ways in which politics and economics interact. Often, this comparison lends to observations of similar economic policies resulting in different political outcomes, or observations of similar political policies resulting in different economic outcomes. CPE generally focuses on the

politics of economic development, the domestic effects and implications of globalization, general economic and social policies across states, and the analysis of different political economic systems. In the next section, we will look closely at this final topic: political economic systems.

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8.2: Political Economic Systems

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define and discuss the significance of political economic systems.
- Compare and contrast four political economic systems.

Introduction

A **political economic system** describes the relationship between political and economic institutions within a given state. A major variable determining this system is the role the state plays in its economy. Does the government intervene in the economy? Or does the government let the market run free?

At one extreme, a government can take a *laissez-faire* ("let it be") approach. A **laissez-faire** approach is one in which the government chooses not to interfere in its economy (or to interfere only minimally); it instead relies on free market forces. At the other extreme, a government can take near complete control of its economy. A **command and control** approach to the economy is one in which the government owns most, if not all, means of production; it does not rely on the free market, and instead the state (or some agent representing the state, such as a political party) makes all economic decisions.

Almost all contemporary political economic systems fall somewhere between these two extremes, and they tend to cluster at particular points along the continuum of no state interference to full state interference in the economy. As examples, states that inherited their political economic systems from England, such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States, trend more toward less government interference. Other states, including states in Latin America and Europe, trend toward more government interference in the form of higher taxes and more regulations. There are also states in which state interference in the economy takes the form of coordination, such as when or where to invest, as it does in China, Singapore, and Vietnam.

In what follows, we will review four major types of political economic systems: mercantilism, capitalism, Marxism (socialism and communism), and social democracy.

Mercantilism

The oldest political economic system is mercantilism. **Mercantilism** is a political economic system that seeks to maximize a state's wealth through increasing exports and limiting imports. Use of the mercantilist system was most prevalent between the 16th and 18th centuries. Hallmarks of the mercantilist system at this time included the complete control of production and trade by state-led companies, high inflation, and taxes. Mercantilism also allowed for the expansion of the slave trade, as slaves were seen as necessary to an empire's economic well-being and power.

A good example of mercantilism is the British Empire. To achieve imperial economic growth, the empire strongly discouraged its colonies from importing competitive foreign products, encouraging only the importation of British products. This was often accomplished through taxation, as imperial authorities imposed tariffs on sugar and molasses imported from other states in order to promote its own monopoly on sugar from the West Indies. The British also put forth trade policies that promoted a favorable balance of trade for themselves, again in an effort to maximize power through wealth creation. Inevitably, as other empires enacted similar policies, this system led to open military conflict. The Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese Empires tried to promote their own economic interests and to protect their own colonial markets from British encroachment.

In theory, mercantilism created a strong relationship between the British Empire and its colonies. The empire protected the colonies from the threat of foreign nations, and money from the colonies fueled the imperial engine. In practice, however, mercantilism created conflict for the colonies, especially in the Americas, where the cost of imported goods from Britain was substantially higher than imports from other regions.

Although mercantilism is the oldest of the four types of political economic systems, it is not a relic of the past. Today, we refer to

mercantilist policies as "economic nationalism." **Economic nationalism** is attempts by a state to protect or bolster its economy for nationalist goals. Economic nationalists tend to favor protectionism. **Protectionism** is a set of policies aimed at protecting a state's domestic industry, such as by imposing tariffs; by implementing quotas; or by instituting **non-tariff regulatory barriers**, such as offering tax breaks or providing government subsidies for specific domestic industries. **Tariffs** are taxes imposed on imported foreign products with the purpose of making those products more expensive and, thus, making the domestically produced products more competitive. **Quotas** are limits on the number of foreign goods coming into a state. The idea is to ensure that domestic companies have a guaranteed share of the market for certain products.

As these examples of protectionist policies demonstrate, economic nationalists do not want the state to be dependent on other states for key resources. They prefer policies that lead to diversification of domestic production. While this is understandable in key sectors like agriculture, it is more controversial in sectors such as consumer products purchased with disposable income. For economic nationalists, some degree of free trade is fine if it furthers the goal of strengthening the power of the state. The common feature of political platforms espousing economic nationalism is a combination of "conservative economic proposals with nationalist stances on international trade and cooperation, as well as on immigration" (Colantone and Stanig, 2019).



Figure 8.2.1: U.S. President Donald Trump at a political rally encouraging Americans to "buy American," an example of economic nationalism (Source: [Speeches of Year One by Trump White House Archive](#), flickr is licensed under [Public Domain](#).)

Capitalism

A competing approach to mercantilism is capitalism. **Capitalism**, also referred to as "free market capitalism," is a political-economic system in which individuals and private entities are able to own land and capital needed to produce goods and services. The forces of supply and demand are determined freely by the market, ideally with little to no interference from the state (in its purest form, capitalism is laissez-faire). Capitalism centers on self-interest, competition, private property, and the limited role of government control in the market. In economics, **self-interest** is the means through which individuals can act on their own behalf to make choices that benefit themselves. Within capitalism, the self-interest of uncoordinated individuals is thought to contribute to better outcomes for society at large. **Competition** occurs when industries, economic firms, and individuals vie to obtain goods, products, and services at the lowest prices. By allowing competition and self-interest of consumers, market outcomes are thought to improve for all involved.

One concern about capitalism is at the international level, particularly when it comes to trade in goods, services, and activities. Trade imbalances may lead to the exploitation of poorer states by richer states. For example, imagine an underdeveloped state that wants to build up its tourism industry. If that state follows a wholly capitalist model and allows for trade and foreign investment, it runs the risk of large corporate hotel chains taking over its fledgling domestic tourism industry.

Still, even with the existence of major trade imbalances, economists demonstrate that international trade is not a "zero-sum game." A **zero-sum game** is a situation in which one person, or entity, gains at the equal cost of another; a loss must accompany each win. Modern international trade is not a zero-sum game, as there are gains to be made, even small ones. Still, there are so-called "winners" and "losers" in trade. Winners include consumers who have more choice at competitive prices. Businesses also

are winners, as they can sell products to consumers. Specialization through comparative advantage can lead to what is referred to as **economies of scale**, or the ability to "produce goods at a lower average cost" (Wolla and Esenther, 2017). States can benefit with an improved standard of living. Two examples are China and India. Both "have experienced growth and development that might not have happened without access to markets" (Wolla and Esenther, 2017).

In practice today, we often refer to capitalist states as "economically liberal." **Economic liberalism** relies on a set of policies to promote free market capitalism, namely through deregulation, privatization, and liberalization. **Deregulation** involves the removal of government power in a particular industry or economic area. An example includes former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's decision to deregulate the phone industry, over which AT&T had monopolistic control, in an effort to create competition, provide more choices, and lower prices for consumers. **Privatization** is the selling of government-owned assets. A good example includes the sale of a state-owned airport or harbor to a private company. Greece, a country in the European Union, was forced to do so under a deal to save its economy in 2012. **Liberalization** is the loosening of government controls (allowing for more free market-oriented policies).

Marxism (Socialism and Communism)

As free market capitalism was a critical response to mercantilism, Marxism became a critical response to free market capitalism. Developed by Karl Marx, this critique argues that capitalism is destructive, corrupt, and unable to survive as an economic system. According to Marx, capitalist systems inevitably lead to conflict between the working class (proletariat) and business owners (bourgeoisie), wherein the workers will eventually rise up against those who own the means of production. In considering more specifically its economic applications, **Marxism** is a philosophy in which the means of production are collectively owned by workers, not privately owned by individuals. This philosophy lends itself politically and economically to systems of socialism or communism.

Socialism is where property and the means of production are collectively owned. In most cases, production is owned and controlled by the state. Socialist theory does allow for individual ownership of property, such as one's house. The emphasis of a socialist system is to secure more equal outcomes and distribution of wealth through the collective ownership of resources and the means of production by the state. Few socialist countries exist today. The closest example we have is Venezuela.

Communism is where the state, usually dominated by one party, is in complete control of the political economic system, including all property. Communist theory suggests that, over time, the state will wither away, politics will become a relic of the past, and there will be equal distribution of resources. While Marx suggested that the communist struggle would begin in industrialized societies practicing capitalism, the first country to embrace communism was Russia, an imperial power that was largely agrarian and still used a serf political economy. In the Russian Revolution, communist forces loyal to Vladimir Lenin seized control, imposed communist rule through the state party apparatus, and renamed the country the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Joseph Stalin, the successor to Lenin, forcibly industrialized the country and led it through World War II. The egalitarian utopia that Marx predicted never occurred, and the USSR eventually collapsed in 1991.

Despite the decline of communism, Marxist thought still plays a prominent role in today's economic discourse, namely through policies of "economic structuralism." **Economic structuralism** describes a set of policies that aims to protect the working class from exploitation of the capital-owning class due to economic structures--domestically and internationally--such as inequality, uneven development, property rights and ownership, specialization, and trade. These policies played a significant role in the developing world, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

As one example, we can examine **import-substitution industrialization (ISI)** policies, which refer to state policies that attempt to reduce the state's dependence on foreign companies through increased domestic production. Grabowski (1994) describes ISI strategies as "utilizing a variety of policy instruments (tariffs, quotas, and subsidies) to protect the domestic market for many types of manufactured goods." Protectionism is therefore a major component of ISI strategies.

Social Democracy

A final political economic system to consider is social democracy. **Social democracy** is a system that favors heavy market regulation to achieve a more equal society. This approach argues that capitalism can lead to a highly uneven distribution of wealth, which is viewed as inconsistent with democratic principles (i.e., an individual is unable to have true freedom if they lack the means to survive). Another term for this is "democratic socialism," an ideology that seeks democracy not just in the political sphere but also in the economic sphere.

In social democracies, governments levy high taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals and redistribute the collected funds to poorer members of society through social welfare programs. While social democracies have a capitalist system as their base, that system is overlaid with a heavy system of regulation to protect society from the potential harm that a free market capitalist system can yield. At times, some social democratic countries will take over the means of production in a particular industry. A good example is Norway where the oil company is state-owned and the revenues from the sale of oil go to pay for social expenditures, such as education and health.

Social democracy became popular in Europe, where such policies were initially put in place to blunt the ability of communist movements to rally workers to their cause. These policies proved to be quite popular, and they have become an important feature in social democracies. Sweden, for example, has developed a political economy where its citizens enjoy quite a few benefits, including access to free health care, free education, and generous pensions. These benefits are paid for through higher taxes and societal expectations of corporate behavior. A state, such as Sweden, that has this type of a mixed economy is also often referred to as a "social market economy," meaning one that combines principles of capitalism with domestic social welfare considerations.

8.3: Comparative Case Study - Germany and China

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify and categorize the political economic systems in Germany and China.
- Analyze the implications of political economic systems on public policy.

Introduction

From a political perspective, China and Germany have little in common. China is a socialist republic led by a single, communist political party and communist elites, while Germany is a democratic, federal parliamentary republic where two main political parties vie for dominance. China's political system is authoritarian where national political leaders are selected without nomination or election by the people; most political opposition is suppressed; and media, news, and information for the public is mostly controlled by the state. Germany's political system enables participation of its citizens in politics, representation of opposing views, a free media, and the protection of civil liberties.

China and Germany also operate under very different economic models. China's economy is a market-oriented, mixed economy where the majority of economic ventures are state-owned and dominated by the political interests of the single communist political party. Although not the direct opposite of China's controlled market economy, Germany's economy differs in a number of respects. It has a social market economy that brings in aspects of capitalism, particularly the prospect of free market competition, but also protects its economy from unbridled competition at the expense of its citizens. The main difference between the economic systems in China and Germany is the extent to which the government intervenes in the control and management of the market system. In short, the Chinese government dominates the market, mostly through state-owned enterprises, whereas the German government prefers to influence the market, mostly through regulation.

Although China and Germany differ in terms of their political and economic systems, they share some fascinating similarities in terms of their global trading approaches. Both China and Germany are political centers for regional trading blocs, and both maintain mutual dependency on their regional partnerships. Further, both China and Germany depend heavily on exports, with Germany's exports accounting for over 50 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) and China's exports accounting for almost 25 percent of its GDP. (For reference purposes, United States' exports amount to less than 15 percent of its GDP.)

This heavy reliance on exports leads both China and Germany to face similar economic challenges and vulnerabilities, namely that each state's domestic production surpasses its domestic capacity to use, consume, or acquire goods. If German exports were to unexpectedly decline, domestic consumption would need to increase to levels not feasible with Germany's current population. If Chinese exports were to unexpectedly decline, a large segment of the population would be unable to buy domestic goods due to a lack of purchasing power. Therefore, two very different political economic systems find themselves with a similar problem of managing their export economies carefully in order to ensure domestic economic and political stability.

In what follows, we will compare the historical trajectories of political economic systems in Germany and China. As a reminder from Chapter 2, this is a Most Different Systems Design, an approach that examines cases that are quite different from one another, yet have the same outcome. Here, the political economic systems differ, yet the cases face similar economic challenges stemming from those systems.

Germany



Figure 8.3.1: Map of Germany. (Source: [Map of Germany](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under Public Domain)

- **Full Country Name:** Federal Republic of Germany
- **Head(s) of State:** President and Chancellor
- **Government:** Federal Parliamentary Republic
- **Official Languages:** German
- **Economic System:** Social Market Economy
- **Location:** Central Europe
- **Capital:** Berlin
- **Total land size:** 137,847 sq. miles
- **Population:** 80 million (July 2021 est.)
- **GDP:** \$4,743 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$53,919
- **Currency:** Euro

According to its GDP, Germany is one of the largest economies in the world. It is also one of the largest global exporters. Germany has a highly developed political economic system that utilizes a social market economy, combining principles of capitalism with domestic social welfare considerations. It uses the capitalist principles of fair competition and competitive advantage. Fair competition affirms that industries will work to maximize their output and minimize costs to compete with similar industries, forcing the market to provide competitive options to consumers. While Germany's economy hinges on fair competition and competitive advantage, it does so with an eye toward mitigating the potential negative effects of capitalism on social welfare. It is useful to look at the roots of Germany's social market economy to understand the current status of Germany's economy.

Germany's social market economy was the product of dire economic conditions coming out of the first half of the 20th century. Following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which formally ended World War I, Germany was thrown into a weak democracy under the Weimar Republic. Germany suffered greatly, as the conditions of the Versailles Treaty forced Germany to drastically reduce its military, to relinquish some of its territory, to take full responsibility for World War I, and to pay exorbitant reparations to the Allies.

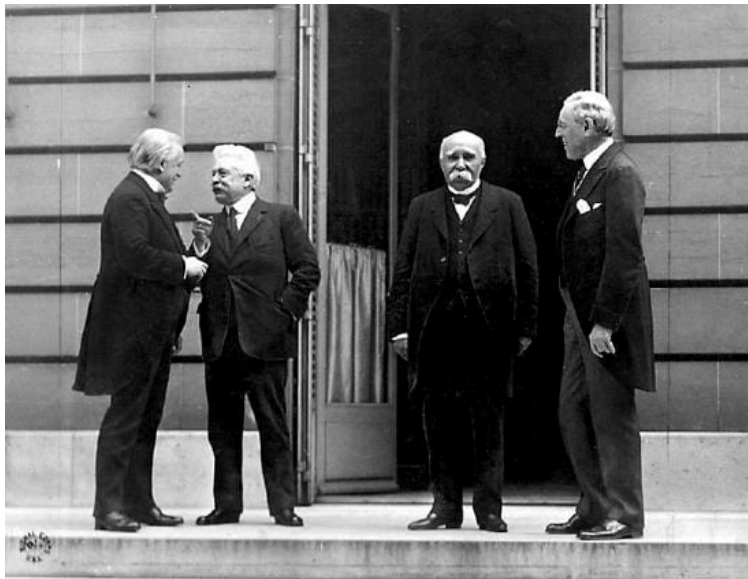


Figure 8.3.2: Political Leaders from the "Big Four" Allies (France, Italy, United Kingdom, United States) negotiating the end of World War I at the Paris Peace Conference on May 27, 1919. (Source: [Council of Four at the WWI Paris peace conference, May 27, 1919 \(candid photo\)](#) (L - R) Prime Minister David Lloyd George (Great Britain), Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (Italy), Premier Georges Clemenceau (France), President Woodrow Wilson (USA) by Edward N. Jackson, US Army Signal Corps, via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#)).

The main challenge facing the Weimar Republic was hyperinflation. **Hyperinflation** is a severe form of inflation (often defined as rates exceeding 50 percent per month) that can have deleterious effects on all aspects of a state's social, political, and economic situation.

When the Weimar Republic was forced to pay high reparations and war debts to the Allies (war debts totaled the equivalent of 33 billion U.S. dollars today), the German government tried to print more money. Germany abolished its use of the gold standard to produce more printed money, and in doing so, it induced a state of hyperinflation where inflation rates soared beyond 20,000 percent, with prices doubling every 3.7 days. Hyperinflation meant citizens could not buy basic goods, and many Germans went hungry. It also led to Germany to become delinquent on its reparation payments, leading France and Belgium to justify occupying the Ruhr Valley in Germany as payment. The German economy folded, and the Weimar Republic was forced to adopt a new currency (the *Reichsmark*) in 1924. The new currency stabilized the economy, but did not take away all of Germany's economic and social woes.

At the height of the economic woes of 1923, Adolf Hitler gained notoriety as he advocated for the politically right-wing party, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDP), also known as the Nazi Party. In November 1924, Hitler led an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Weimar Republic, an attempted coup d'état referred to as the "Beer Hall Putsch." The devastating economic conditions of hyperinflation, unemployment, and poor working conditions were some of the factors that drew NSDP members to support Hitler.

Over the coming decade, Hitler rallied the German people by lambasting the Treaty of Versailles, calling it a disgrace to the German nation. He promoted German pride and ultranationalism, promising to unite all the German people inside and outside of Germany. He scapegoated many of Germany's problems on minority groups, particularly Germany's Jewish population, and on the communists, denouncing their beliefs. In 1933, the Nazis emerged as the largest party in the German Parliament (the Reichstag). The President of Germany at that time, Paul von Hindenburg, was compelled to appoint Hitler as Chancellor of Germany. Hitler leveraged a manufactured hatred for the Jewish population, communism, and the architects of the Treaty of Versailles, to transform Germany into a one-party non-democratic regime with a state-controlled economy.

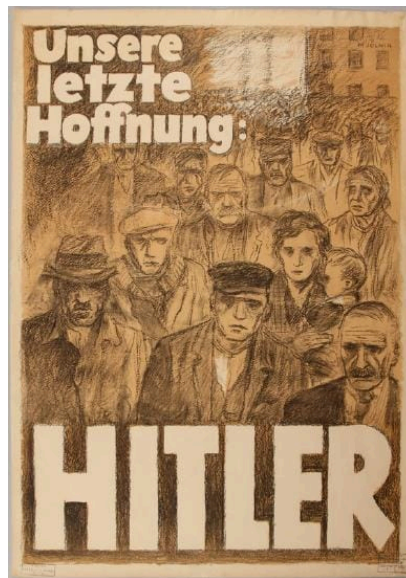


Figure 8.3.3: Adolf Hitler's campaign poster while running against President Paul von Hindenburg in 1932. (Source: [Unsere Letzte Hoffnung: Hitler, 1932](#) from the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#)).

Life under Nazi rule initially yielded strong economic outcomes. Hitler's leadership and command of a state-controlled economy enabled Germany to experience six years of rapid economic growth. This mercantilist approach allowed Germany to pursue its military objectives.

However, after Germany's surrender in World War II in 1945, it found itself in ruins. German leaders declared "Stunde Null," or "Zero Hour," where the country was going to need to rebuild itself in order to survive. Post-war German economists advocated for radical change, moving from a state-controlled approach toward one embracing greater free-market capitalist principles. At the same time, the German government wanted to ensure that the people's welfare, particularly the welfare of workers, was protected. Transitioning to a fully capitalist model was seen as too risky because leaders believed that not all workers would be able to compete effectively. This led to the adoption of a social democratic political economy.

China



Figure 8.3.4: Map of China. (Source: [Map of China](#) by [CIA World Factbook](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

- **Full Country Name:** People's Republic of China
- **Head(s) of State:** President
- **Government:** Communist Party-Led State

- **Official Languages:** Standard Chinese
- **Economic System:** Market-Oriented, Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Asia
- **Capital:** Beijing
- **Total land size:** 5,963,274.47 sq. miles
- **Population:** 1.3 billion (July 2021 est.)
- **GDP:** 19.91 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$14,096
- **Currency:** Renminbi

According to its GDP, China has the second largest economy in the world, and it is the world's largest exporter and trading nation. However, if measuring economies based on purchasing power parity (PPP), China has the world's largest economy. PPP is a metric used to compare the prices of goods and services to gauge the absolute purchasing power of a currency. China pursues a version of state capitalism, where a high level of state intervention exists in a market economy, usually through state-owned enterprises. Over 60 percent of China's industries and enterprises are state-owned. Part of the reason for the high state intervention stems from China's political system, which is a non-democratic regime under the sole leadership of a single political party, the Chinese Communist Party. It is useful to look at the roots of China's market-oriented, mixed economy to understand the current status of China's economy.

China's Communist Party came to power in 1949 after defeating nationalists in a brutal civil war. The leadership intended to modernize China as fast as possible, with a desire to become more powerful. From 1949-1952, the Chinese government prioritized projects to repair transportation, communications, and power grids. Military installations and equipment and basic transportation, communications, and power systems had been destroyed during the war and were badly in need of repair. Under government direction, the banking system was centralized under the People's Bank of China. Moving toward a state-controlled economy, the state acquired more and more control over various industries. By the end of 1952, only 17 percent of industries were *not* state-owned.

After stabilizing the economy, China prioritized industrialization, and government officials looked to the Soviet model. By the end of 1956, all firms were state-owned. In 1958, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, determined that the Soviet model was not working for China. Instead, Zedong introduced the Great Leap Forward, a plan to increase production in all sectors of the economy simultaneously. For this initiative, communes were created to make Chinese farmers and workers work together cooperatively to increase output. These communes often had 20,000-40,000 members at a time, all tasked with combining their resources to produce more agricultural output. While the agricultural sector was working to increase output, so was the industrial sector. The economic results of the Great Leap Forward were disastrous for China. The first year yielded strong outcomes for both the agricultural and industrial sectors, but the subsequent years yielded poor outcomes. Due to bad weather conditions, poor allocation of resources, and poorly constructed equipment, agricultural output plummeted from 1959 to 1961. Poor water management additionally contributed to widespread famine, resulting in approximately 15 million deaths and a significant drop in birth rates.

Between 1961 and 1965, China again tried to reconstruct its economy. China reformed all of its agricultural practices, including by lowering taxes and providing more equipment. The government attempted to decentralize control of various industries to local governments to allow them to manage resources based on their unique needs. By 1965, economic conditions were again stable, and the Chinese government focused on seeking balanced growth across both agricultural and industrial sectors.

In 1966, Mao announced the Cultural Revolution, which was a socio-political and economic movement that sought to expel capitalists and promote the communist ideology. Attacking capitalism, Mao alleged that the bourgeoisie (those who own most of a society's wealth and means of production) were attempting to infiltrate China to perpetuate their economic superiority. Mao attempted to incite young people to violence against those who he accused of perpetuating capitalist practices. In general, the Cultural Revolution had devastating effects on China's economy, and it led to many deaths. The distraction and disruption of political fighting did not improve agricultural or industrial output. Instead, the disruptions to economic output put a strain on resources, labor, and equipment.



Figure 8.3.5: Mao's Cultural Revolution did more to distract from the economy than to grow it. Economic output fell in all sectors as political turmoil grew. (Source: [Shenzhen Museum](#) by Woo King Tam gwiam, [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

Mao died in 1976. In 1978, the Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping moved the country in a new direction. China reduced government controls, enabled market mechanisms, and generally attempted to reform the economy. This was not a sudden move away from communism, but a gradual move toward a mixed economy, designed to stimulate growth. These reforms slowly opened China to global trade, which improved economic outcomes. This success encouraged China to keep pursuing this strategy, and to also invest heavily in the education and training of government officials and future business leaders. China became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001, cementing its transition from a command and control economy to a largely state capitalist society.

Conclusion

Despite having different political economic systems, the leaders of China and Germany share a similar problem today: how to handle economies that are largely export-based. The political leaders need to constantly and carefully balance the domestic concerns of their economies alongside their global customers who depend on their exports. If the global customer base fails, or switches trade partnerships, the Chinese and German economies may be unable to thrive. Beyond this, relying on exports leaves the states vulnerable to the economic conditions of those they trade with. If a trading partner is no longer able to afford the product or buy the goods, the exporting state will struggle. Depending on the severity, and as shown through the historical trajectories above, such struggles have the ability to cause unstable political conditions.

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8.5: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Bourgeoisie** refers to the upper middle classes, who often own most of a society's wealth and means of production.
- **Capitalism**, also referred to as "free market capitalism," is a political-economic system in which individuals and private entities are able to own land and capital needed to produce goods and services.
- **Command and control** is an approach to the economy in which the government owns most, if not all, means of production; it does not rely on the free market, and the state instead makes all economic decisions.
- **Communism** is where the state, usually dominated by one party, is in complete control of the political economic system, including all property.
- **Comparative advantage** refers to the goods, services, or activities that one state can produce or provide more cheaply or easily than other states.
- **Comparative political economy (CPE)** is the comparison across and between countries of the ways in which politics and economics interact.
- **Competition** occurs when industries, economic firms, and individuals vie to obtain goods, products, and services at the lowest prices.
- **Deregulation** involves the removal of government power in a particular industry or economic area.
- **Economic growth** is the process by which a state's wealth increases over time.
- **Economic liberalism** relies on a set of policies to promote free market capitalism, namely through deregulation, privatization, and liberalization.
- **Economic nationalism** is attempts by a state to protect or bolster its economy for nationalist goals.
- **Economic structuralism** describes a set of policies that aims to protect the working class from exploitation of the capital-owning class due to economic structures--domestically and internationally--such as inequality, uneven development, property rights and ownership, specialization, and trade.
- **Economies of scale** is the ability to "produce goods at a lower average cost."
- **Fiscal policy** collectively refers to a state's system of taxation, spending, and regulation.
- **Hyperinflation** is a severe form of inflation (often defined as rates exceeding 50 percent per month).
- **Import-substitution industrialization (ISI)** refer to state policies that attempt to reduce the state's dependence on foreign companies through increased domestic production.
- **Inflation** is a general increase in prices, usually within a given period of time.
- **Interest rate** is the percentage of a loan amount charged by a lender.
- **International political economy (IPE)** is the study of political economy from a global perspective that focuses on topics like trade, finance, and international financial and monetary institutions.
- **International trade** is the exchange of goods, services, and activities between states.
- **Laissez-faire** is an approach in which the government chooses not to interfere in its economy (or to interfere only minimally); it instead relies on free market forces.
- **Liberalization** is the loosening of government controls (allowing for more free market-oriented policies).
- **Market** is the exchange of goods and services within a given territory.
- **Marxism** is a philosophy in which the means of production are collectively owned by workers, not privately owned by individuals.
- **Mercantilism** is a political economic system that seeks to maximize a state's wealth through increasing exports and limiting imports.
- **Monetary policy** includes all actions taken by a state's central bank to affect the money supply.
- **Non-tariff regulatory barriers** are restrictions on trade not involving a tariff or a quota, such as offering tax breaks or providing government subsidies for specific domestic industries.
- **Political economic system** describes the relationship between political and economic institutions within a given state.
- **Private goods** are economic resources that are acquired or owned exclusively by a person or group.
- **Privatization** is the selling of government-owned assets.
- **Property** is a resource or commodity that a person or group legally owns.
- **Property rights** are the legal authority to dictate how property, whether tangible or intangible, is used or managed.
- **Protectionism** is a set of policies aimed at protecting a state's domestic industry through subsidies, favorable tax treatment, or by imposing tariffs on foreign competitors.
- **Public goods** are goods and services provided by the state that are available for everyone in society.
- **Quotas** are limits on the number of foreign goods coming into a country.

- **Recession** is two consecutive quarters of declining economic activity.
- **Regulations** are rules imposed by a government on society.
- **Self-interest** is the means through which individuals can act on their own behalf to make choices that benefit themselves.
- **Social democracy** is a political and economic system that favors heavy market regulation to achieve a more equal society.
- **Socialism** is where property and the means of production are collectively owned, but some individual ownership is allowed (e.g., one's house).
- **Tariffs** are taxes imposed on imported foreign products with the purpose of making those products more expensive.
- **Taxation** is the process of a government collecting money from its citizens, corporations, and other entities.
- **Wealth distribution** is how a state's goods, investments, properties, and resources--collectively known as "wealth"--are divided amongst its population.
- **Zero-sum game** is a situation in which one person, or entity, gains at the equal cost of another.

Summary

Section 8.1: What is Political Economy?

Political economy is a subfield of political science that considers various economic theories (e.g., capitalism, socialism, communism, fascism), practices, and outcomes either within a country, or among and between countries in the global system. In its simplest form, political economy is the study of the relationship between the market and powerful actors like a state's government. The foundations of political economy can be traced back to the works of Plato and Aristotle, though the most modern initiation of the discussion stems from Adam Smith's work in *The Wealth of Nations*. States can affect the market through a variety of measures, such as regulations, taxation, fiscal policy, and monetary policy.

Section 8.2: Political Economic Systems

A political economic system describes the relationship between political and economic institutions within a given state. A major variable determining this system is the role the state plays in its economy. At one extreme, a government can take a laissez-faire ("let it be") approach. A laissez-faire approach is one in which the government chooses not to interfere in its economy (or to interfere only minimally); it instead relies on free market forces. At the other extreme, a government can take near complete control of its economy. A command and control approach to the economy is one in which the government owns most, if not all, means of production; it does not rely on the free market, and instead the state (or some agent representing the state, such as a political party) makes all economic decisions. Almost all contemporary political economic systems fall somewhere between these two extremes. There are four main political economic systems: mercantilism, capitalism, Marxism (socialism and communism), and social democracy.

Section 8.3: Comparative Case Study - Germany and China

Germany and China have different economic systems, but both play prominent roles in the global community as major exporters. When countries are large exporters, they can experience similar problems despite their very different economic systems. Both China and Germany's political leaders need to constantly and carefully balance the domestic concerns of their economies alongside their global customers who depend on their exports. If the global customer base fails, or switches trade partnerships, the Chinese and German economies will be unable to thrive. Beyond this, relying on exports leaves states vulnerable to the economic conditions of those they trade with; if a state is no longer able to afford the product or buy the good, the exporter will struggle.

Review Questions

1. What is the field of political economy concerned with?
 - a. international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund
 - b. the relationship between political and economic policies
 - c. international monetary policies and domestic fiscal policies
 - d. comparative advantage and the balance of trade
2. Which theory in this chapter credits capitalism, globalization, and international trade with contributing to poverty in developing countries?
 - a. economic liberalism

- b. economic realism
 - c. economic nationalism
 - d. economic structuralism
3. Which option below best describes the concept of comparative advantage?
- a. countries compete by trying to produce all items and products within their own country, working to decrease reliance on imports
 - b. countries compete by trying to outsource all production, working to increase reliance on imports
 - c. countries cooperate economically, encouraging countries to produce what they are most efficiently and cheaply able to produce relative to other countries
 - d. none of the above
4. Which theory described in this chapter argues that once economic inequalities are apparent, they have a tendency to become self-perpetuating?
- a. feminism
 - b. economic liberalism
 - c. mercantilism
 - d. economic structuralism
5. What is autarky?
- a. a situation where countries trade freely with each other
 - b. a situation where a country does not trade with other countries
 - c. a situation where a country is only able to trade with a few countries
 - d. a situation where countries work to destabilize other economies

Answers: 1.b, 2.d, 3.c, 4.d, 5.b

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What contributed to the rise of political economy as a field of academic study? Describe the factors involved and discuss implications for future research and study.
2. What lessons can we learn from the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic about the importance of political economy?
3. There are a number of different belief systems about the appropriate role of government in economic affairs. How do these beliefs manifest in practical terms? Consider the application of these different belief systems in the context of energy and environment policies.
4. The effects of changes in climate and the environment can impact countries in uneven and, arguably, unfair/inequitable ways. To what extent do various economic systems respond or react to these inequalities/inequities? Are some economic systems more able to handle environmental and climate shifts? If so, how?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [Gini Index, World Bank](#)
- [Global Economic Indicators](#)
- [Our World in Data](#)
- [The World Bank, World Development Indicators](#)

Journal Articles

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9: COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

9.1: What is Collective Action? What are Social Movements?

9.2: Frameworks for Collective Action

9.3: A Framework for Explaining Social Movements

9.4: Comparative Case Study - Poland and China

9.5: References

9.6: Student Resources

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9.1: What is Collective Action? What are Social Movements?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Differentiate collective action from social movements.
- Understand links between collective action and social movements.

Introduction

Public education, elections, and lobbying—all of these are connected to collective action. Collective action pervades social and political life, and it is observable across all societies. **Collective action** is any activity in which coordination by and across individuals has the potential to lead to achievement of a common objective. At its broadest, collective action can lead to the provision of a public good. A society often decides that the common defense is a necessary public good and pools resources toward that goal. Beyond common defense, collective action is key for the provision of a variety of public goods—such as public education, healthcare, childcare, pensions, and infrastructure—in which individuals contribute tax revenues or labor, in a coordinated way, to support common goals. Yet collective action can also lead to the achievement of narrower objectives, such as when a focused interest group lobbies for tax breaks that benefit a smaller segment of society. Collective action can result in benefits for all or for the few. That it encompasses such a broad range of actors, actions, goals, and outcomes explains the enduring interest that political scientists have in this concept.

Societies flourish when there is the robust provision of public goods; public goods are the result of collective action. Once provided, a public good has certain characteristics. As defined in Chapter 8, public goods are defined as goods and services provided by the state that are available for everyone in society. They are non-excludable and non-rival in nature. Individuals cannot be excluded from enjoying them, and one person's enjoyment of that good does not impinge upon others' enjoyment of that good. These characteristics of a public good have the unfortunate effect of impeding the organizing of collective action to provide that good, a problem we will take up later in this chapter. So-called collective action problems are observable throughout societies, but societies also manage to solve them in various ways.



Figure 9.1.1: The lighthouse at Portland Head, Maine. A lighthouse is a classic example of a public good: No ship's captain can be excluded from benefiting from the light and each captain's enjoyment of the light does not impinge upon the ability of others to do likewise. (Source: Portland Head, Maine Lighthouse by quatro.sinko via [flickr creative commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

Collective action may also lead to narrower objectives than public goods, such as the provision of **common pool resources**.

These resources are non-excludable but rivalrous in consumption. A good example of a common pool resource is a river: Everyone can enjoy the river, but when a farmer diverts water from the river to irrigate their fields, that means others cannot enjoy the diverted water. Collective action also pervades the private sector, and we see this when industry advocacy groups procure favorable government policies such as tax breaks for all the firms in an industry or looser regulatory oversight.

Collective action is fundamental to the functioning of modern societies. A prominent example in our society is elections. Voting is a form of collective action, especially in a democracy where individuals' decisions to vote and cast ballots for a certain candidate or policy can determine a society's values and allocation of resources. When the electorate in a country is very large, as in the United States, collective action problems become evident. Each individual in a large electorate has disincentives to vote because they may believe their vote--out of hundreds of millions of eligible voters--will not matter. Hence, they may opt to stay home on election day (or not mail in their ballot) and save their time and energy for other purposes. Such individual-level breakdowns in collective action have the potential to lead to the collapse of any given collective action endeavor (in this case, the representativeness of a republic).

Yet history abounds with examples of collective action prevailing. It has led to social change and even revolution. While the example of voting demonstrates how collective action can work in tandem with established political institutions, collective action can also occur outside of existing political institutions. Because of this, collective action has the potential to destabilize societies and challenge existing structures. One illustration of this is when groups unite to demand the franchise (the right to vote) or when workers' strikes bring industry to a standstill.



Figure 9.1.2: In one example of collective action for political rights, women march for the right to vote in New York City in 1917. They are carrying placards with over one million signatures in support of this right. The right for women to vote in the United States was established nationally in 1920. (Source: [Suffragists](#) by Unknown Author via New York Times photo archive via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#)).

Social movements are a subset of collective action. All social movements rely on collective action, but not all collective action is a social movement. Social movements are coordinated and goal-oriented, but they are characterized by political activity outside of established institutions (extra-institutional). Notable examples of social movements in the 20th century United States include the Civil Rights Movement, which sought equal rights for racial minorities and an end to institutional racism at all levels of government, and various labor rights movements, such as those organized by farm-workers and industrial workers earlier in the century. These examples translate easily to a comparative context, as social movements for civil rights and labor rights have spanned the globe. The comparative cases in the final section of this chapter will explore comparative labor movements in the socialist and post-socialist world.

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9.2: Frameworks for Collective Action

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the "logic of collective action" and challenges to cooperation.
- Analyze the different factors that can facilitate collective action.

Introduction

As Luis Medina (2007, p. 4) notes, "A group can create power through coordination." Collective action hinges on coordination and cooperation, and political scientists have employed many frameworks and utilized the tools of game theory to explore the conditions under which collective action occurs as well as when that action is likely to be successful.

The Logic of Collective Action

One of the most influential frameworks for understanding collective action is given in Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965). Olson argues that collective action failures are to be expected given rational and self-interested individuals. Such individuals are disinclined to organize and contribute to the production of a public or collective good because each individual has incentives to stand by and let others do the hard work of achieving the goal, then enjoy the fruits of that collective good once provided. This is known as the **free rider problem**. Through this logic, Olson establishes the challenges to successful collective action.

Consider the example of climate change. Collective action in the form of everyone reducing their carbon footprint would yield an abatement of this problem. Yet a single state or an individual has weak incentives to reduce their carbon footprint for several reasons. A state's leaders might reason, "If we reduce our carbon emissions through a carbon tax, that might dampen economic growth. Our constituents will not like that, and that might hurt our global competitiveness." Or an individual might think, "Let everyone else reduce their consumption. I'll keep buying lots of stuff, driving cars, taking planes, and eating excessive amounts of animal protein. After all, what difference do my actions make? If enough of everyone else changes their lifestyles, I can enjoy a healthier planet without sacrificing any of my comforts!" The logic here is to free ride on the efforts of others, knowing that the benefits of others' work will apply to everyone regardless of their contributions. This behavior and thinking creates a free rider problem, where individuals are incentivized to refrain from contributing toward the provision of a collective good because they know they can eventually enjoy the benefits of that good if others work toward providing it. This problem raises issues of fairness, but even worse, a collective good may not be produced if enough people adopt a free rider mentality.

Beyond the free rider problem, there are challenges to collective action because it hinges on cooperation. The challenges to cooperation are well-illustrated through a simple and eponymous game, the so-called "Prisoner's Dilemma." This game illustrates the urge to free ride or "defect" in a situation where cooperation by all would yield better outcomes for all. Defection yields better than worst-case, individual-level outcomes, so it ends up being the outcome, albeit a sub-optimal one.

The set-up for this kind of **cooperation game** is simple, and it is a powerful illustration of challenges to cooperative endeavors. Imagine two children, Child Y and Child Z, who took cookies from the cookie jar at home--without asking and while no one was looking--and were then asked about the missing cookies by a parent. There is enough evidence (the missing cookies) to punish the children for their transgression, but not enough proof of a more serious crime (such as repeated taking of cookies from the cookie jar) to extend their punishment. The interrogating parent pressures each child to offer damning evidence of the other's guilt. What should each child do?

As with all games, each player has a set of choices. To keep things simple, the children can either stay silent (cooperate) or betray their partner in the cookie-sneaking business. The combination of possible outcomes to this game are the following: both stay silent, one stays silent while the other betrays, or both betray. In this game set-up, there are potential punishments for each outcome. If both children stay silent, they receive the lightest of possible punishments, a week without video games. If one child stays silent but the other talks, then the betrayer gets zero punishment while the betrayed receives a long punishment of three

weeks without video games. In this scenario, one child enjoys the best individual outcome but the other child suffers the worst individual outcome. If both children decide to betray each other, then both are not allowed video games for two weeks. The table below (a "payoff matrix") summarizes the players (the children), their strategies (stay silent, betray), and the potential outcomes.

A summary of the payoffs to a standard cooperation game. In each box, the first number indicates the punishment for Child Y and the second number indicates the punishment for Child Z (in weeks without video games).

Payoff: Child Y, Child Z	Z stays silent	Z betrays
Y stays silent	-1, -1	-3, 0
Y betrays	0, -3	-2, -2

This framework illustrates the interdependent nature of the game and the weak incentives for cooperation. Each individual, in considering these payoffs, sees the immediate personal gain to betrayal. The child knows that staying silent would be the best for all, but they still have strong incentives to betray because staying silent means putting themselves at risk for the worst possible punishment. The expected outcome is both children choosing to betray each other, and both suffering worse outcomes than if they had cooperated with one another (by staying silent). This result is sub-optimal for all.

Note that in the game above there is also a cost to pay for cooperating; if both children stay silent, they each lose one week of video games. This is the case for engaging in collective action: If an individual participates in collective action, they must donate some resource (a cost), such as their time.

To apply this game to a collective action scenario, imagine playing this game across more than two individuals. If there were one hundred players (or one million!), the problems of coordination and cooperation rapidly multiply. While this game may seem artificial and overly simplistic, we see the dynamics of this cooperation game playing out in the real world. To return to the example of climate change, we can simply replace the children's choices: staying silent (cooperating) is equivalent to making lifestyle changes to lighten one's carbon footprint, while betrayal (defecting) is equivalent to keeping a heavy carbon footprint. Viewed in this way, individuals' choices and individual-level outcomes make sense as well as the overall outcome for society. Such cooperation challenges are also evident beyond the individual level. For states, staying silent is equivalent to a government adopting major climate change mitigation policies, while betrayal is equivalent to doing nothing to address climate change.

While this simple cooperation game can highlight some of the costs and dynamics underlying strategic interactions that inform collective action, it is an imperfect means for capturing all the complexity of the social world. Cooperation may be challenging and costly in some ways, but it happens all the time. People can participate in collective action because they are true believers in a cause (not captured in this game) or because they have meaningful relationships and social ties with others. Child Y and Child Z may have a deep friendship and bonds of trust, something not reflected by the payoff structure given in the game, and this might affect their willingness to cooperate.

Factors Promoting Collective Action

Cooperation can be costly. *The Logic of Collective Action* highlights important barriers to coordinated action. Yet Olson's argument and the logic of the cooperation game discussed above should not be taken to mean that collective action is impossible. On the contrary, we observe it frequently in the social world.

The free rider problem, and the barrier it poses to collective action, can be resolved when a group is sufficiently organized. This is usually more likely for smaller groups, such as all the firms in a given industry or all the activists in a given geographical region. Economist Elinor Ostrom (2009b), who dedicated her Nobel Prize-winning career to understanding the dynamics of collective action, observed the power of smaller groups with unifying interests: "Mobs, gangs, and cartels are forms of collective action as well as neighborhood associations, charities, and voting." Olson's framework suggests that collective action is most likely to take place by groups with concentrated interests, where the effort expended is more likely to yield significant gains for each participant. This is what we observe with interest group lobbying in many wealthy democracies today.



Figure 9.2.1: The logic of collective action holds that collective action is most likely to be organized by special interest groups. In 2013, environmental groups in Vancouver, Canada pitted themselves against corporate agricultural interests on whether to permit genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the food supply. (Source: [March Against Monsanto Vancouver](#) by Rosalee Yagihara via [wikimedia](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

Collective action is also more likely when each individual participant anticipates some potential gain from exerting the effort to participate. Additional organizational factors can encourage collective action, such as the existence of competent leaders or a federated structure where smaller units contribute to a larger whole. It also matters when participants know each other, as this raises the level of accountability for any proposed action.

Other scholars, such as Thomas Schelling, have noted that the barriers to collective action are not quite as high as proposed by Olson. Collective action is possible when rational and self-interested individuals have reasonable expectations that others will join the movement. This can happen when there is something around which individuals can signal to each other that they are willing to join the movement. It can be wearing a certain color or seeing a certain number of people subscribed to an organizing website. Hence collective action can often be observed in seemingly sudden moments of rapid change, when everyone is joining the movement because they feel like many others around them are also in the movement.

This framework has its limits because it does not explain who or what is the spark that starts the collective action. One of the most elegant and intuitive frameworks for understanding the process of collective action is given by Timur Kuran (1991) in the article "Now Out of Never." In this framework, individuals are moved to act when they reach their individual threshold for tolerance on an issue. In a collective action situation, there are thus "first movers" who have the strongest preferences for change. These initial movers then create the momentum whereby the actions of one or a few cascade socially and others join. For example, individuals in a society have different tolerances for the effects of climate change. Some individuals want to see change immediately--and are publicly agitating for those changes or making more quiet personal adjustments--while others are quite tolerant of the real and projected consequences of climate change and see no need to act. Kuran's framework is powerful for connecting the individual-level psychology of collective action with what we observe in the streets.

Circling back to the simple cooperation game described above, scholars have also considered the implications of different variations on the game. What might happen if the game is repeated? That is, and as is the case for many scenarios in the world, what might happen if the game occurs with the same people again and again? This holds true for roommate situations and workplaces, all the way to negotiations between diplomats on high stakes policy issues. Kreps, et al. (1982) argue convincingly that when a cooperation game such as the Prisoner's Dilemma is repeated, players will eventually settle on a strategy of cooperation rather than the non-cooperation we observe when the game is played only once.

Elinor Ostrom (2009a) observed cooperative communities around the world to explore the conditions under which communities are able, over centuries in some cases, to preserve and sustain common pool resources such as irrigation canals, forests, and fisheries. Across her observations, she found that certain organizing principles may create an institutional framework that encourages sustainable collective management of resources. Organizing principles for sustainable collective action include collective decision-making, active monitoring of the shared resource, widely understood and enforced punishments for violations, and effective conflict resolution procedures. Bonds of trust between community members are integral for supporting these long-

term arrangements.



Figure 9.2.2: Collective action can lead to the sustainable management of forests, such as these near Manaslu, Nepal. (Source: [Nepal](#) by ydylg via [flickr creative commons](#) is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In short, there exists more than one logic of collective action. While there are clear barriers to collective action, such as group size, the temptation to free ride, and incentives for non-cooperation, there are also conditions under which collective action takes place. Instances of successful collective action can produce desired outcomes, such as the provision of public goods and sustained stewardship of natural resources. Understanding the conditions under which collective action is possible continues to be critical for organizing the people and resources to address global and community-level challenges.

9.3: A Framework for Explaining Social Movements

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Evaluate a framework of several factors that explain the emergence and success of a social movement.
- Recognize the impact of additional factors such as international influences and non-violent tactics.

Introduction

Social movements often embody big ambitions that cannot be realized without collective action. The 21st century has seen the rise of myriad social movements, from the Sunrise Movement to stop climate change to the #MeToo Movement for women's rights to the Black Lives Matter Movement for racial justice. Conservative social movements have included the New Christian Right and worldwide New Right movement. While the causes and participants vary greatly, scholars seek to identify common factors across social movements and explain the conditions under which a social movement may realize its objectives.

The study of social movements is an interdisciplinary enterprise. Social scientists bring the tools of their disciplines to bear in understanding the complex emergence of collective mobilization. Psychologists bring their focus on the individual level of analysis, while sociologists and political scientists focus on group dynamics and institutional factors that enable or cauterize a social movement. One framework for understanding social movements focuses on three major factors: opportunity, organization, and framing.

Political Opportunity

French novelist and poet Victor Hugo is credited with the observation, "Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come." When applying this hopeful insight to a social movement advocating for a cause, context matters. A moment of ideational awakening may lead to concrete change only when certain stars align. Scholars have found that a social movement is more likely to emerge and prevail when the broader political context is receptive to the ideas promoted by that social movement. Climate change advocacy gained momentum on the streets of wealthy democracies when there was discourse about this problem by political elites; the U.S. Gay Rights Movement gained the most momentum when elected officials signaled that they were willing to change policies on longstanding laws against sexual minorities.

Political opportunity is thus a structural factor that affects whether a social movement forms and might prevail in its goals. **Structure** here refers to larger social forces at play during a given moment: the institutions and norms, or widely shared beliefs and practices, which constrain individual action. Structure can include whether political institutions and elites are receptive to specific changes, and whether society is accepting of the message and tactics promoted by a social movement. As David Meyer (2004, p. 128) suggests, there must be a "space of toleration [in] a polity" for activists to mobilize. And that society must not repress activists so much that they lack either the vocabulary or means to lodge their complaints. Structure is the context within which a social movement might form and press for change. As illustrated in the figure below, within this structure, activists may choose from a range of tactics regarding how to organize, mobilize, and frame their goals.

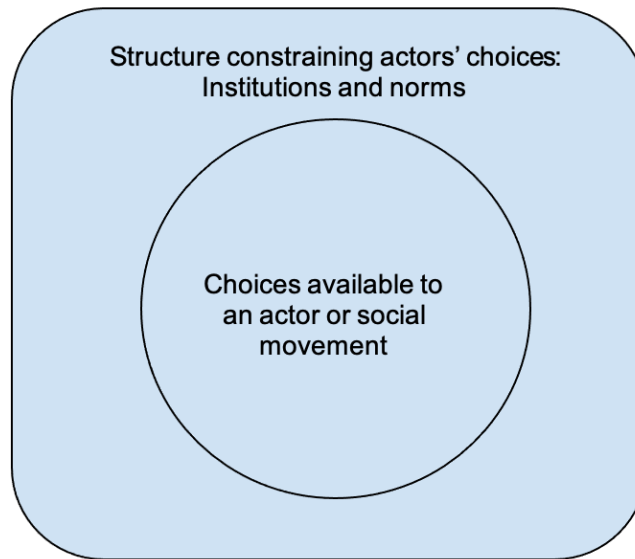


Figure 9.3.1: Structure is the broader context within which individuals or groups may act. (Source: Institutions and Norms by Charlotte Lee is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#))

In the case of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement that unfolded during the mid-20th century, markers of political opportunity can be identified in hindsight. These include the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, which declared unconstitutional the segregation of schools by race. Political leaders also signaled an opening, evident in public addresses such as President John F. Kennedy's 1963 Report to the People on American Civil Rights, in which he declared, "It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color." Such events signaled that powerful formal institutions were willing to change, and the time was ripe for a social movement to activate and accelerate that change.

Organization and Mobilization

While the emergence of a political opening is key, a social movement cannot be sustained without strong organizational structures in place. As Lenin observed, a revolution will succeed when carried out by a vanguard party that offers an "organizational weapon" by which revolutionaries may strike down existing institutions. Successful communist party movements, such as those in Russia, China, and Cuba, relied on disciplined, hierarchical party organizations that reached down to cells of activists at the grassroots level.

More contemporary social movements need not have such extreme organization, but organizational strength is a direct correlate of mobilizational power and momentum. Douglas McAdam has studied several key organizations that facilitated the successes of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. These backbone organizations included Black churches, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Black churches contained multigenerational communities united by bonds of faith and trust; HBCUs offered spaces for student organizing; and the NAACP provided organizational and political resources to advance civil rights through mass protests, coordinated activities, and legal action. All of these organizations had proven capacity for carrying out complex community actions under adverse circumstances; they were also spaces for pooling resources and communicating initiatives to a relatively large audience of proven and potential activists (McAdam, 1999).



Figure 9.3.2: U.S. Senator Kamala Harris, alumna of HBCU Howard University, meets with current students of HBCUs in 2019. HBCUs are an example of institutions that can support the organization of a social movement. (Source: [Kamala Harris speaks with HBCU students in Washington, D.C.](#) by Office of Kamala Harris via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is [Public Domain](#))

Organizational forms may be more decentralized and less hierarchical by design. The "leaderless" Black Lives Matter Movement in the U.S. is an example of this: There is no singular set of charismatic leading figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, or Bobby Seale to set the tone and agenda. Local actions are organized and executed without direction from an organizational headquarters. One strength of this evolution in the organization of a social movement is more cellular organization, with new protest repertoires and messages emerging to suit local conditions and audiences. A disadvantage is the potential for the movement to lose momentum without clearly articulated and unifying goals.

New **information and communication technologies (ICT)** have changed the ways a social movement might organize and mobilize. By the dawn of the 21st century, there was optimism regarding the possibilities for uniting activists via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Diamond and Plattner, 2012). So-called "liberation technologies" were heralded as a means to organize a social movement in defiance of geographical constraints and even repressive governments. However, this initial optimism has been followed by critiques of these new technologies as leading to "armchair activism" by individuals unwilling to invest real resources into a social movement. Social media platforms have also proven unruly spaces for organizing due to the challenges of misinformation, government interference, and weak bonds of trust between participants. The impact of ICT on the emergence and success of a social movement has thus yielded mixed results.



Figure 9.3.3: Organized protests that eventually became a revolution in Egypt tapped into the mobilizational power of social media platforms such as Facebook. January 25, 2011 marked the beginning of this movement to overthrow the government of President Hosni Mubarak.(Source: A man during the 2011 Egyptian protests carrying a card saying "Facebook, #jan25, The Egyptian Social Network". by Essam Sharaf via Wikimedia Commons is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

Framing

Political opportunity, organization, and mobilizational capacity are complemented by the framing of an issue. **Framing** refers to the ways in which a social problem is defined by, presented to, and resonates with members of a social movement and society more broadly. Framing is a key strategic move because the chosen frames must be culturally appropriate and meaningful.

The concept of frames explicitly brings a psychological and emotional element into our understanding of social movements: Individuals join because of an affinity for the cause rather than merely out of rational self-interest (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, 2001). They must actively engage in "sense making" and determine for themselves, as well as fellow activists, their purpose and goals. Framing can incite emotions such as anger over a perceived injustice but also psychological safety in the belief that one is part of a larger community with shared beliefs.

Framing takes place at the inception of a social movement. It can sustain the movement and attract additional adherents from society. Framing is critical when we consider how the modern environmental movement in the U.S. was galvanized by publications such as Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, which offered an evocative and powerful vision (a lifeless natural landscape) for understanding ecological disaster through the concrete example of overuse of chemical pesticides. This book helped to frame the problem and invoke the shock, anger, and anxieties that are part of the modern environmental justice movement.

International Influences

Many of the causes embraced by social movements span states, regions, and the globe. Given the extent of globalization since the end of the Cold War in 1991, seemingly faraway events may resonate with global audiences. For example, deforestation in Indonesia spark protests in European cities over unsustainable practices in the supply chains of furniture companies that source wood from Borneo. Environmental activists in Indonesia thus find common cause with counterparts in the Netherlands. Social movements may diffuse across borders, with activists sharing tactics, resources, and providing moral support to one another in their common cause. **Diffusion**, a concept briefly introduced in Chapter 5, is defined as the spread of an idea, movement, tactics, strategies, and other resources across international borders. One prominent example of international diffusion is the spread of liberal democracy around the globe in the decades spanning the 1990s to the 2000s.

International "democracy promotion" efforts are one driver of this worldwide increase in democracy since the 1990s, whereby international resources are directed toward pro-democracy domestic social movements. These have been led by wealthy democracies (such as those of North America, the European Union, and Japan) to strengthen younger democracies worldwide. Democracy promotion can include a wide range of activities such as government-supported grants to pro-democracy activists in

other countries, nonprofit exchanges of information and expertise, and more horizontal exchanges of knowledge and resources between democracy activists worldwide. Pro-democracy movements in countries as varied as Ukraine and Nicaragua receive support from international donors and advisors.



Figure 9.3.4: Map of countries that are members of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which promotes democracy worldwide. Founding members are indicated in green, members in blue, and observing members in red. (Source: [International IDEA members](#) by Goemon via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

The Role of Non-Violence

There are consequences to the tactics chosen by social movement leaders and participants. The range of tactics that a social movement may employ is vast, and social movements are constantly innovating and creating new repertoires based on changing contexts, cultural symbols, and new technologies. New strategies emerge with each social movement. Pro-democracy Hong Kong protesters, as part of their movement to secure democratic rights and autonomy within the People's Republic of China's "One Country, Two Systems" framework, created new forms of protest in 2019. One notable tactic was occupying terminals of Hong Kong International Airport. This served to disrupt the business of a global city reliant on the flow of businesspeople and tourists by air and draw global attention to their plight.

These protestors and others opted for non-violent strategies of protest, a tradition which has deep roots in various faith traditions dating back millennia. More recently, social movement leaders ranging from Mohandas K. Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., have made significant philosophical contributions and practical applications of non-violence to movements for social change.



Figure 9.3.5: In 1930, Gandhi (center) and what became millions of Indian followers engaged in non-violent civil disobedience on the 240-mile-long Salt March against British colonizers. (Source: [Gandhi leading the famous 1930 Salt March, a notable example of satyagraha](#) by Yann via [Wikipedia Commons](#) is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

Empirical research by Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) that compares non-violent and violent resistance campaigns finds that non-violent campaigns are twice as successful as their violent counterparts (53 percent compared with 26 percent). In this study, "campaigns" are "major non-state rebellions ... [which include] a series of repetitive, durable, organized, and observable events directed at a certain target to achieve a goal" (p. 8).

The success of non-violent social movements is attributed to various factors. It is due to higher public perceptions of the legitimacy of non-violent movements as well as greater public sympathy for movements committed to principles of non-violence. Non-violent movements also constrain government responses, as suppressing a non-violent movement with force can drive public support--domestic and international--even more toward the aims of the social movement.

9.4: Comparative Case Study - Poland and China

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Compare aspects of two different worker-based social movements.
- Apply components of social movement theory to empirical cases.

Introduction

The 20th century was a century of labor movements. These movements were supported by ideologies such as those stemming from the theories of Karl Marx (1818-1883), which framed society as divided between capitalists and workers. As a reminder from Chapter 8, the relationship between these two groups, or classes, is one of exploitation, whereby capitalists squeeze as much labor out of workers for the lowest wages. This is so capitalists might pocket the most profits possible and invest in global expansion; Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) famously observed the imperialism of the 19th and 20th centuries and declared it a time of high capitalism. Marx predicted that workers, in realizing the injustices of their situation, would eventually unite and revolt. They would then organize to create a socialist system characterized by economic redistribution. The socialist state would evolve to become a stateless communist society of liberated labor.

Ironically, workers of countries led by communist parties have continued to organize and press for more rights and better working conditions in the 20th and into the 21st centuries. In communist party-led states, labor unions are typically controlled by the communist party. But in communist Poland, workers organized an underground free union movement known as Solidarność (hereafter referred to as Solidarity) that eventually toppled the ruling communist party. In China, blazing economic reforms beginning in the 1970s, and the advent of a market economy and private enterprise, spurred workers to organize for stronger protections in the workplace and a more secure social safety net. While some policy concessions have been made toward workers in China, the ruling Chinese Communist Party remains firmly in control.

This comparative case study will apply the components of the social movement framework described in Section 9.3 to explore labor movements in Poland and China. The labor movements in each country yielded very different outcomes: While Poland's Solidarity Movement was the spark for opposition to eventually overturn communist party rule, in China workers' protests have remained on the fringes. In each case, we will examine the political opportunity structure, organization and mobilization, framing of the movement, and international factors to explore differences that might account for divergent outcomes.

Poland

From 1952 to 1989, Poland was under communist party rule. A mid-sized country located in Central Europe, Poland today neighbors Russia and many republics of the former Soviet Union (USSR). During the time of the Soviet Union (1922-1991), Poland was part of the Eastern Bloc of countries that were led by communist parties internally and shaped by the USSR externally. Poland's capital then and now is centrally located Warsaw, and it borders the Baltic Sea in the north.



Figure 9.4.1: Map of Poland. (Source: [Map of Poland](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under [Public Domain](#))

- **Full Country Name:** Republic of Poland
- **Head(s) of State:** President, Prime Minister
- **Government:** Unitary Parliamentary Republic
- **Official Languages:** Polish
- **Economic System:** Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Central Europe
- **Capital:** Warsaw
- **Total land size:** 120,733 sq miles
- **Population:** 38,179,800
- **GDP:** \$720 billion
- **GDP per capita:** \$19,056
- **Currency:** Zloty

Beginning in 1970, workers began to organize protests in Poland. One decade later, this movement culminated in a major strike in the port city of Gdańsk in 1980. The triggering event was the dismissal of a model shipyard worker from the Gdańsk shipyards, which are located in northern Poland on the Baltic Sea. The worker, Anna Walentynowicz, was a welder and crane driver who earned medals for her exemplary work, but she was dismissed for engaging in free union organizing in the shipyards (Kemp-Welch, 2008). Under communist rule, all unions were managed by the ruling party and free unions were forbidden. In response to Walentynowicz's dismissal, more workers organized and their resulting protests included calls for higher wages to offset the rising cost of basic foodstuffs in the state-controlled markets. Eventually, workers also demanded the right to form free trade unions with the right to strike.

These protests came at a time of political opportunity. Poland's economic situation was deteriorating, which placed communist party officials in a difficult situation. More and more workers joined the protests out of frustration with their material conditions. The protests spread nationally, which required a national-level response from the Polish Communist Party. Workers also found allies in Catholic Church officials and some media outlets. The movement gained momentum and for the first time in communist Poland's history, protesters were allowed to negotiate directly with communist officials in the Gdańsk shipyards. The workers' leader, an electrician named Lech Wałęsa, met with communist party negotiators, and the subsequent agreement led to recognition of the Solidarity trade union by the government.

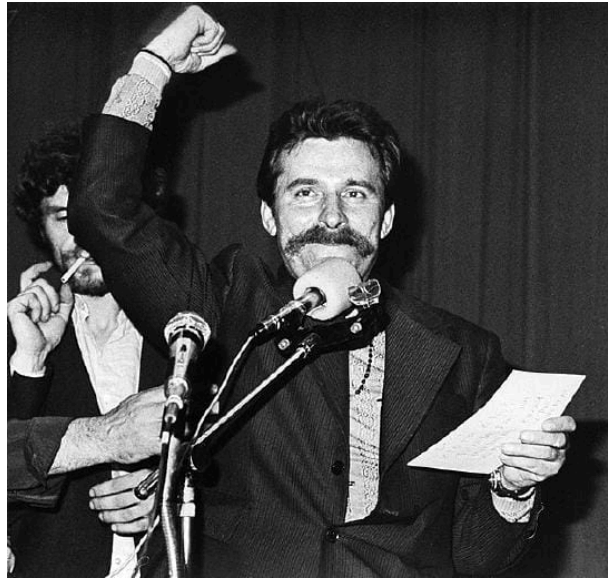


Figure 9.4.2: Lech Wałęsa during the strike at Lenin Shipyard in August 1980. (Source: [Lech Wałęsa](#) by Giedymin Jabłoński via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#))

Solidarity went on to attract millions of worker-members in the 1980s. Together with other opposition groups, Solidarity organized protests throughout the country for better working conditions and, eventually, political liberalization. At its height, 80 percent of state employees joined Solidarity. The popularity of this movement led Polish officials to declare martial law in 1981, and hundreds of Solidarity members were arrested. Within years, amnesty was declared and political prisoners released.

During this time, and until the end of communist rule in Poland in 1989, Solidarity led a non-violent movement that was robust in its organization and mobilizational capacity. Members and sympathizers could draw on a rich repertoire of non-violent tactics of civil resistance, including "protests; leaflets; flags; vigils; symbolic funerals; catholic masses; protest painting; parades; marches; slow-downs; strikes; hunger strikes; 'Polish strikes' in the mine shafts; underground socio-cultural institutions: radio, music, films, satire, humor; over 400 underground magazines with millions of copies distributed, including literature on how to scheme, strike, and protest; alternative education and libraries; a dense network of alternative teaching in social science and humanities; commemorations of forbidden anniversaries; and internationalization of Solidarity struggle" (Bartkowski, 2009).

The social movement anchored by Solidarity was framed in terms of human rights, with an emphasis on dignity for those groups traditionally championed by communist ideology: workers, peasants, and the downtrodden. This resonated with international supporters such as the Catholic Church's Pope John Paul II, who was Polish and brought moral authority to the movement's call for human rights and freedom of conscience. The geopolitics of the Cold War were also operative during this time, with the United States supporting the Polish opposition out of an interest in creating fissures in the Soviet Bloc.

From February to April 1989, the Polish political opposition, including Solidarity leaders such as Lech Wałęsa, sat down opposite communist party leaders for a series of negotiations. These resulted in the institution of democratic elections in Poland and other major economic and political reforms. In 1989, communist rule was overturned in Poland with the election of Wałęsa to the presidency in free and fair elections.

China

China has been under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The country's capital is Beijing, located in the northeast. China's center of economic gravity is in the wealthy urban centers of its eastern coastal region, which includes cities such as Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou. China's western flank includes the Himalayan highlands of Tibet and western deserts of Xinjiang, both gateways to the larger Eurasian landmass. Today the CCP rules over a vast and complex country of over one billion, of which hundreds of millions constitute its national workforce.

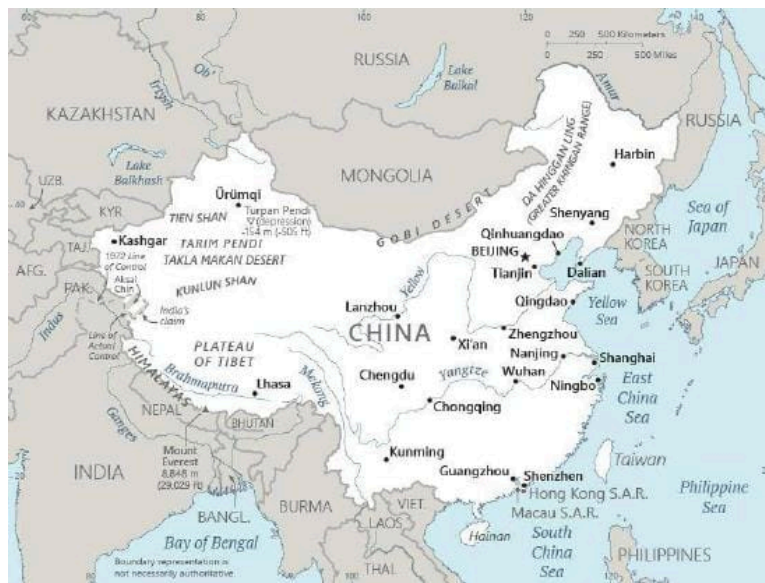


Figure 9.4.3: Map of China. (Source: [Map of China](#) by CIA World Factbook is licensed under Public Domain)

- **Full Country Name:** People's Republic of China
- **Head(s) of State:** President
- **Government:** Communist Party-Led State
- **Official Languages:** Standard Chinese
- **Economic System:** Market-Oriented, Mixed Economy
- **Location:** Asia
- **Capital:** Beijing
- **Total land size:** 5,963,274.47 sq. miles
- **Population:** 1.3 billion (July 2021 est.)
- **GDP:** 19.91 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$14,096
- **Currency:** Renminbi

Whereas the Soviet Union and many other communist party-led states collapsed during the turbulent years spanning 1989 to 1991, the CCP remained firmly in control of the Chinese state. The CCP did not emerge from this period unscathed, however. Major protests erupted nationwide in 1989, and these were accompanied by popular calls for liberalization of the political system. At the heart of this national movement was a student-led non-violent protest that lasted from April to June 4, 1989 in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The Tiananmen protests and the nationwide movement were violently suppressed in June 1989 when CCP leaders ordered the party's army, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), to clear demonstrators from public spaces.

Similar to other communist party systems, free unions in China are not allowed, and workers are instead represented through trade unions that fall under the CCP's United Front. These bargaining units are subsumed within the state structure, which implies that workers do not have an independent means to organize for their rights outside of official channels.

Beginning in 1978, China embarked on a massive "reform and opening" program that entailed liberalizing the economy--that is, moving away from a command economy based on centralized economic planning--and opening up to global trade. These reforms generated tremendous national economic growth, on the order of over nine percent annually during the period 1978 to 2020. This reform period also saw significant changes in the employment landscape for workers. Prior to 1978, the dominant employment model for urban workers was the danwei, or work unit, where workers could enjoy firm-based benefits and fixed wages.

Since 1978, there has been significant privatization of the Chinese economy, and the danwei system no longer provides workers with the security and material benefits that they once enjoyed. One estimate is that employment by private firms in China's cities grew from 150,000 in 1978 to 253 million in 2011 (Lardy, 2016). Related to the rise of the private sector are efforts to increase the productivity and profitability of state-owned enterprises; laying off workers is one tactic. When combined with the more volatile and unstable employment conditions in the private sector, this has spurred labor unrest in China.



Figure 9.4.4: The Beijing headquarters of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, a state-organized labor organization. (Source: [ACFTU Building](#) by N509FZ via [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

Throughout the reform period (1978–present), workers have organized protests in China. Workers were particularly restive during the 2008 to 2012 period. In one example of organized protest activity during this time, workers decided to strike at the Honda car factory in Guangdong province, which led to wage increases for workers. This and other protests may be due in part to shifts in the political opportunity structure (Elfstrom and Kuruvilla, 2014). A labor shortage, new labor laws such as the Labor Contract Law of 2008, and greater media openness provided an opening for organized labor to press for gains. The Labor Contract Law, which remains the most significant labor-related legislation in China, provides a legal basis to support workplace rights such as a 40-hour week, payment of wages, and paid leave. Enforcement remains a perennial challenge, which provides the basis for worker protests.

Workers have been strategic in their framing of grievances. In response to the repressive capacity of the Chinese state, protesters have framed resistance in terms of rights accorded them by the law. Such "rightful resistance," which has roots in rural China, draws on notions of justice that citizens should be entitled to in a society governed by laws (O'Brien and Li, 2006). This legalistic appeal has deep roots in China, where the philosophical tradition of legalism (fajia) dates to the first millennium BCE.

In terms of organization and mobilization, there are key differences between the Chinese and Polish cases. At present, there do not exist free labor unions in China, nor are workers organized under the banner of a non-state organization with national reach. There is no Chinese equivalent to Solidarity. Internationally, there is limited support for workers' rights in China due in part to laws that restrict the operation of foreign non-governmental organizations within China. Because of these various factors, the labor movement within China remains fragmented and decentralized, with protests breaking out in localities but no overarching national labor movement.

Conclusion

These case studies of labor movements across two communist party-led states illustrate the power of two key factors: political opportunity and broader organizational networks. Both labor movements framed their endeavors in terms of justice and dignity for the working class, which resonates with the dominant communist ideology in both states. Yet the political opportunity structure varied significantly across Poland and China. In Poland, there was an opening for government leadership to compromise with labor leaders, especially as the economy weakened. By comparison, in China, robust economic growth has supported the position of the CCP, which remains adamant in its state-organized union structure. In terms of organizational capacity, there are also stark differences. Chinese labor organizers have not had anything equivalent to the momentum enjoyed by Poland's Solidarity in the 1980s, which could mobilize over three-quarters of workers in the country in a variety of non-violent actions.

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9.6: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Collective action** is any activity in which coordination by and across individuals has the potential to lead to achievement of a common objective.
- **Common pool resource** is something provided to some or all in a society; it is non-excludable but rivalrous in consumption.
- **Cooperation game** is a strategic scenario illustrating how players have incentives to work together or not work together to realize common goals.
- **Diffusion** is the spread of an idea, movement, tactics, strategies, and other resources across international borders.
- **Framing** is the deliberate representation of a concept or problem to resonate with intended audiences.
- **Free rider problem** occurs when an individual seeks to benefit from the gains achieved by others but does not contribute to the achievement of those gains.
- **Information and communication technologies (ICT)** are platforms that provide the means for members of a social movement to communicate with one another and intended audiences. ICTs can include radio, television, social media platforms, and so forth.
- **Social movement** is a subset of collective action in which a group of people outside of established political institutions organize to achieve an objective.
- **Structure** is a social force that constrains the choices available to an individual or group at a given time; the broader social context within which action takes place.

Summary

Section 9.1: What is Collective Action? What are Social Movements?

Collective action is any activity in which coordination by and across individuals has the potential to lead to achievement of a common objective. Collective action can lead to the provision of public goods, collective goods such as common pool resources, or private goods. Social movements are a subset of collective action and comprise political activity outside of established institutions.

Section 9.2: Frameworks for Collective Action

Collective action is challenged by the free rider problem as well as problems associated with coordination and cooperation. A simple cooperation game can illustrate the incentives for non-cooperation. There is a "logic" to collective action whereby small groups united by an overarching goal are more likely to organize collectively. Yet mass collective action is possible and has occurred repeatedly. Factors that promote collective action include trust between participants, the possibility of repeated interactions, and long time horizons.

Section 9.3: A Framework for Explaining Social Movements

One framework for understanding social movements focuses on three major factors: opportunity, organization, and framing. Social movements are more likely to prevail when there is a "political process" or opportunity structure that supports the realization of the movement's goals. While the emergence of a political opening is key, a social movement cannot be sustained without strong organizational structures in place, and these can draw from organizations that predate the social movement. Social movements must frame the goals of their movement to mobilize people at an individual and societal level. International influences can also support or thwart a social movement. Finally, tactics matter. Empirical research comparing non-violent and violent resistance campaigns has found that non-violent campaigns are nearly twice as successful as their violent counterparts.

Section 9.4: Comparative Case Study - Poland and China

Two communist party-led states, Poland and China, experienced significant labor movements. Solidarity, a labor union in Poland,

led a decade of resistance activity (1980-1989) which culminated in the turnover of state power from communist party rule to liberal democracy. In reforming China (1978-present), the labor movement remains fragmented and decentralized, with the Chinese Communist Party firmly in control of labor organizations. Applying concepts from social movement theory, it appears that political opportunity and organizational and mobilizational capacity differed significantly across these cases.

Review Questions

Please select the most appropriate answer for each of the following questions.

1. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of a public good?
 - a. it is non-excludable, meaning you cannot exclude anyone from enjoying it
 - b. it is non-rival, meaning my enjoyment of that good does not affect your enjoyment of it
 - c. it is common pool, meaning common to all
 - d. some public goods are provided as a result of collective action
2. Which of the following is an example of free rider behavior?
 - a. in a group living situation, I wait for others to clean up the shared living area
 - b. in a workplace situation, I let someone else clean up the work sink area
 - c. in a study group, I wait for everyone else to post their study notes to the shared study space and don't post any
 - d. all of the above
3. Which of the following are factors that can help explain the emergence and success of a social movement?
 - a. framing
 - b. political opportunity
 - c. organization and mobilization
 - d. all of the above
4. True or false: Research has found that social movements which rely on non-violent tactics are twice as successful as social movements which employ violence.
 - a. true
 - b. false
5. Which of the following are factors that can help explain the success of Poland's Solidarity movement compared to China's labor movement? (Select all that apply.)
 - a. framing
 - b. political opportunity
 - c. organization and mobilization
 - d. international support

Answers: 1.c, 2.d, 3.d, 4.a, 5.b and c

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Consider a simple cooperation game in which two players can choose between cooperating and betraying the other player. Apply the dynamics of this game to a real world situation and map the choices of "cooperate" and "betray" onto the choices facing actors in this situation. Do we observe cooperation in your chosen real world situation? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. Research a social movement of interest to you. What were the objectives of that social movement? Were they met? If so, was this due to the social movement occurring during a time of political opportunity?
3. Present an example of a powerful frame employed by a social movement. Why is this frame powerful? Who is the audience (or audiences) and why might this framing of the problem resonate with them?

Suggestions for Further Study

Journal Articles

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Books

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Datasets and websites

- [China Labour Bulletin](#). Interactive maps of protests in China.
- [Mapping American Social Movements Project](#). University of Washington.
- [Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes \(NAVCO\) Data Project](#).

Podcast

- [How Narrative Drives Movements](#). Activist Marshall Ganz describes the essential role of storytelling in leadership and organizing. Harvard Kennedy School PolicyCast.

10: COMPARATIVE PUBLIC OPINION

10.1: What is Comparative Public Opinion?

10.2: Political Socialization and Public Opinion

10.3: Measuring Public Opinion

10.4: Comparative Case Study - Barometers Around the World

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10.6: Student Resources

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10.1: What is Comparative Public Opinion?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define comparative public opinion.
- Understand how public opinion is studied in a comparative context.

Introduction

Public opinion is, according to Britannica, "an aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community." Public opinion is typically measured through **polling**, the scientific use of survey questions and instruments to gauge the explicit and implicit opinions of individuals about political issues and policy topics. **Comparative public opinion** is the research and analysis of public opinion across two or more states.

Scholars of public opinion have been organized at the global level since the 1950s. For example, survey methodologists take part in the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), which has "promoted the highest professional standards, ethics and techniques for polling around the world. Their international membership represents the industry's most respected names in the survey and public opinion research field. Through publications, seminars, meetings and educational initiatives, WAPOR engages in a rich ongoing conversation about how best to collect data and maintain data quality not just in advanced democracies, but also in emerging democracies."

While state-specific public opinion research (e.g., public opinion polls assessing national sentiment around particular policy or political issues *within* Chile, or *within* France, or *within* Kenya, or *within* South Korea, or *within* the United States) has a longer history than comparative public opinion research, scholars and practitioners started creating various regional and continental public opinion surveys in approximately the year 2000, and these types of surveys are generally known as "barometers." **Barometers** are comparative public opinion surveys that encompass multiple states. The most recent round (round nine) of surveys making up the "Afrobarometer," for example, includes 39 of the 54 states in Africa. Scholars study public opinion in the comparative context at both the conceptual and operational level, and they make inferences by comparing survey responses between states, regions, or continents.

Evaluating Comparative Public Opinion

Evaluating research in comparative public opinion is both exciting and challenging.

It is exciting because we can see how individuals across different states think about similar concepts and their operationalizations (measurements). For example, we may wonder how people view housing availability across different states and, through a comparative survey, ask the following: "What role should the government play in providing housing to individuals in need?" When analyzing the results, we may realize that the notion of "housing" is conceptualized differently by people across the included states. Suppose that public housing is largely available to individuals in state one, while the government plays no (or little) role in the process of providing housing in state two. In response to the survey question, respondents in state two will not even associate their government with providing housing because it is not a part of the political institutions, culture, and expectations of people within that state.

Evaluating research in public opinion is also challenging because it involves grappling with the conceptual and operational level of ideas, things, and people that may not directly translate between states. This is especially difficult when language and cultural barriers exist. It is difficult for a researcher—who cannot have equal expertise in every state included in a comparative survey—to compare states given their stark political, social, linguistic, and cultural uniqueness.

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10.2: Political Socialization and Public Opinion

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe how opinions form from beliefs and attitudes.
- Understand how political socialization and public opinion interact.

Introduction

As described in the previous section, public opinion refers to the views and opinions of the public at large. In political science, we tend to focus on inherent political questions, such as the public's views regarding government leadership, political institutions, policy preferences, or the nature of the political regime. Common questions may include: How do you rate your overall satisfaction with your government? How do you rate your trust in the legislature? The court system? The electoral system? Which political issue do you consider the most pressing challenge facing your government today?

Knowing the public's opinion is valuable for numerous reasons. First, public opinion is information that officials need to take into account when determining what issues to focus on and how to solve problems, particularly under a democratic regime where the public can hold leaders accountable through elections. If public officials seeking re-election continually ignore their constituents, negative backlash may occur (e.g., they may lose the next election). Public officials need to know, and care about, what their constituency thinks of them and the issues they should focus on (Herrick, 2013). Second, and again particularly relevant in cases of democratic regimes with freedom of press, the results of public opinion research provide the media with the ability to inform citizens on others' views. This gives individuals the ability to self-evaluate their own views relative to their broader community. Third, knowing the public's view is valuable knowledge for scholars. There are entire subfields within political science (e.g., political behavior, as described within political psychology in Chapter 1) that primarily use public opinion as a data source, and scholars within these subfields study the impact(s) public opinion has on the polity.

Opinion Formation

Where do our opinions come from? Most people derive their opinions (and, in this case, political opinions) from their beliefs and attitudes, which form in early childhood (Key, 1966). Beliefs are our core views and values that guide us in how we make decisions or interpret the world. For example, a person may believe in a higher power or God. Having that belief in a higher power will inform what a person observes in the world and how to interpret it. As another example, a person may have a strong belief in equality. Having that belief in equality will help the person interpret if a specific policy is having its desired outcome.

Attitudes also impact our opinions. Attitudes are made up of our personal beliefs and our life experiences. For example, someone who has never had a good experience at a bureaucratic office (e.g., the Department of Motor Vehicles in the American context) may develop a bad attitude regarding government employees or civil servants. Or, someone who has had negative experiences with the police may have a suspicious attitude toward law enforcement. Conversely, someone who has had good experience with the police may have a trusting attitude toward law enforcement. As our beliefs and attitudes take shape during childhood development, we are also being "socialized." That is, we are learning how to respond to the world around us, either in thought or action.

Political Socialization

We are socialized into believing all sorts of things and having a variety of different views, and many (if not most) of these views stay with us throughout our lives (Zaller, 1992). Some things we are taught, and other things we learn from our experiences and those around us. As defined in Chapter 6, **political socialization** is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time. While 6.1 discusses political socialization in some detail, the agents of socialization are worth brief review to further draw out the connection with public opinion.

There are different agents to socialization that mold an individual's political views. First, since political socialization begins in

early childhood, family is typically the dominant influence (Davies, 1965). For example, if a child grows up in a household where caregivers vote, they may take a greater interest in voting themselves. Or, if a child's parents are politically active in a particular political party, that child may be exposed to the same information sources from which their parents base their views. Second, education is an impactful agent (Mayer, 2011), as it exposes an individual to an academic environment (i.e., information taught in the classroom by teachers) and to peer influences through classmates and friends. If a child grows up in a homogenous community, they may not encounter ethnic, linguistic, racial, or religious diversity until they go to school, and the exposure to new experiences with others may inform their politics. Third, an individual's faith or religion (depending on their level of religiosity) is another impactful agent (Lockerbie, 2013). If a person attends church regularly, they are more likely to agree with that church's doctrine or the messages communicated by church leadership, and those messages may inform their political views.

There are other, and in some cases less impactful, agents of socialization that can also help shape an individual's views, such as a person's race, gender, age, geographical location, or occupation; a history of military service; exposure to monumental historical events (Hall and Ross, 2015); and exposure to media, which can set the agenda by choosing to focus on certain issues (Cook, et al., 1983) or introduce new and/or biased perspectives.

Once our views are established, they still can continue to change through new agents of socialization. Out of these views, we derive our political ideology and our belief in the appropriate role and purpose of government.

10.3: Measuring Public Opinion

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe how to measure public opinion.
- Discuss common polling problems.

Public Opinion Polls

Researchers use a variety of techniques to gauge public opinion, and the most common tool that researchers use is a poll. To conduct a poll, a researcher selects a group of subjects, called a **sample**, from a broader pool of citizens, called the **population**. The subjects in the sample respond to polling questions, and researchers then use their answers to make inferences about the broader population. Why not simply poll the entire population? Imagine that a researcher is interested in comparing responses across India and China, the two most populous states in the world, with a combined population nearing three billion people. It would be impossible to poll *all* Indian *and all* Chinese citizens, so researchers must rely on representative samples of the Indian and Chinese populations. A **representative sample** is a sample from a population that accurately represents the characteristics of that population, which researchers achieve through the process of randomization. **Randomization** is when every individual in the population has an equal chance to be chosen as part of the sample. By analyzing the results from a random, representative sample, a researcher aims to make reasonable inferences about what the larger population believes.

As a simple example, imagine you are making a large pot of spaghetti sauce that you plan to serve at a party. Before serving it to others, you will taste-test the sauce. You will use a spoon to take a sample from the pot, then make a reasonable inference about the taste of the entire batch of sauce. In order for this sampling process to work accurately, the small spoon you use for your taste-test must contain all the ingredients and seasonings *at the same proportions* as they exist in the larger pot of sauce. This will give you a representative sample of sauce. A similar dynamic exists in polling (NBC News Learn, 2020); if a researcher wants to gauge what a given public (the population of interest) believes on a set of political issues, then their sample must include all the combinations of demographics and regional influences that exist in the larger body.

Even with a random sample, all polls have a "margin of error." The **margin of error** is a statistical estimation of the accuracy of the results from a sample. That is, the margin of error quantifies uncertainty; it offers a range of how much the results from a poll, based on a sample, may differ from the true values for the whole population. A larger random sample (all else equal) will have a smaller margin of error (it will be more accurate) than a smaller one.

Returning to the spaghetti sauce example, imagine the difference between taste-testing with a large versus a small spoon. If you use a large spoon, you are likely to get more of the ingredients and seasonings than if you use a small spoon. The sample from a large spoon will have a *lower* margin of error than a sample from a small spoon.

When reading poll results, the margin of error appears as a "+/-" classification. If the result of a poll (based on a random, representative sample) shows that 35 percent of respondents are satisfied with their government and the margin of error is "+/- 5 percent," this means that pollsters believe anywhere between 30 percent (35-5) and 40 percent (35+5) *of the population* is satisfied with their government. How does a researcher know if the actual number is 30, 32, 35, 37, or 40 percent? They simply do not know. If a researcher collects a larger sample (all else equal), they will be able to reduce the margin of error and provide a more precise estimate, but uncertainty will always exist when making inferences from a sample to a population. Polling is a tool that *estimates* public opinion.

To create these estimates, researchers design and field surveys in different ways. Some polls are conducted in person; some polls are conducted online; and some polls are conducted over the phone, including through a process called random digit dialing (RDD). RDD polls allow researchers to use computers to contact large numbers of people within a short period of time. By gathering a large sample, researchers can produce more accurate results. Yet RDD polls also have problems. They exhibit bias against individuals who do not own phones (and therefore cannot be included in the sample), and they also exhibit bias because some individuals will be more likely to answer their phones than others (e.g., an older, retired person may be more likely to answer than a younger, working person).

No matter the chosen survey design, in polling, concerns about bias, randomization, and sample size are ubiquitous.

Additional Concerns in the Comparative Context

Even if a researcher believes their poll has little bias, good randomization, and a sufficiently large sample, there remain well-known issues related to survey question design, and these can be especially difficult to overcome in the comparative context.

The first issue is called "priming." **Priming** influences a respondent's answer to a survey question by pushing a respondent to think about a certain subject matter that they otherwise may not have been thinking about (Lenz, 2019). As an example, imagine that a survey researcher wishes to study attitudes toward far-right political parties. If the researcher asks questions about national identity or immigration concerns *before* they ask about the respondent's feelings toward the far-right, that researcher has primed the respondent through the earlier questions. The respondent may not have been thinking about attitudes toward identity and immigration on their own, and priming in this manner can skew the survey results related to attitudes about particular far-right political parties. In the comparative context, the way respondents assess questions will vary significantly by state; in the prior example, respondents in states with a history of far-right political parties may respond differently to nationalistic priming than states without such a history. Trying to minimize priming effects is therefore especially difficult (yet crucial) in the comparative context due to the complexity of cases involved.

The second issue, which can also skew results, is called "framing" (Nelson and Oxley, 1999). **Framing** influences a respondent's answer to a survey question based on how the question is presented. This may occur if a researcher uses emotionally-charged language in a survey question. Suppose that, in the same study about far-right political parties, a researcher wants to measure the amount of support for a far-right political party within a state. A researcher could word the survey question as follows: "Some people argue that far-right political parties pose an existential threat to democracy. To what extent do you support the far right?" Or, a researcher could alternatively word the survey question in this manner: "Some people argue that far-right political parties give a voice to citizens who have otherwise been left behind by traditional parties. To what extent do you support the far right?" Both of these questions employ clear frames; the first frames far-right political parties as a threat while the second frames far-right political parties as centering the experience of the average person. Just as with priming, the way individuals respond to frames may vary significantly across states, making it especially tough (yet important) to minimize framing effects.

The third issue is social desirability bias. **Social desirability bias** occurs when respondents give answers to questions that they think the broader society (or an interviewer) sees as "right" or answers that they think will make them look "good" in some way. If a state has a history of violent far-right political parties, for example, a respondent may not feel comfortable admitting that they support a far-right political party's anti-immigration stance. Because the respondent worries about external judgment, they will not accurately report their views. In the comparative context, what respondents see as socially desirable can vary considerably across states, and this depends on a complex slew of factors from aspects of a state's history to a state's socioeconomic status to a state's cultural identity. And, if even a relatively small number of people in the sample misreport due to social desirability bias (for whatever underlying reasons), it will skew the survey results (Streb, et al., 2008).

While there are many well-founded concerns about public opinion polls, there are also many excellent researchers trained in techniques to minimize these problems. In the next section, we will examine a series of polls that aim to conduct analysis of comparative public opinion.

10.4: Comparative Case Study - Barometers Around the World

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define barometer as used in comparative politics.
- Identify, and evaluate the similarities and differences between, eight barometers around the world.

Introduction

As discussed throughout this chapter, comparative political opinion is the research and analysis of public opinion across two or more states. Rather than a traditional single case study or a comparative analysis of two states, this final section will introduce and compare global and regional public opinion surveys called "barometers." A **barometer** in comparative politics refers to a survey that measures public opinion with a regional or global focus, encompassing multiple states.

Barometers Around the World

The chart below lists eight well-known barometers. In what follows, we will briefly introduce each barometer.

Table of Barometers Around the World

Name	Year Established	Geographic Coverage	Website
Afrobarometer	1999	African continent	Afrobarometer
Arab Barometer	2006	Middle East and North Africa	Arab Barometer
Asian Barometer	2001	(mostly) Asian continent	Asian Barometer
Eurasia Barometer	1989	Eastern Europe	Eurasia Barometer
Latino Barometer	1995	Latin America	Latinobarometro
Comparative National Elections Project	1990	states vary	Comparative National Elections Project
AmericasBarometers	2005	Central, North, and South America	LAPOP
World Values Survey	1981	states vary	WVS

Afrobarometer

According to its website, Afrobarometer "is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that has been conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, the economy, and society since 1999. On a two- to three-year cycle, our national

partners in about 35 African countries carry out face-to-face interviews with nationally representative samples, then analyze the data and disseminate the findings."

Afrobarometer conducts rounds of questionnaires, and since 1999, it has completed nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries across all regions of Africa. Round 10 surveys were launched in January 2024 and, as reported on its website, its findings "represent the views and experiences of more than three-quarters of all Africans." The website includes freely-available data on all included states.

One example from Round 8 is the [questionnaire for the country of Botswana](#), located in the southern part of the African continent. The survey was conducted in 2019, written in English, and included over 100 questions ranging from personal demographics, views of the economy, politics and recent elections, the media, taxes, corruption, and how the government was handling different matters. To explore the results of the survey in Botswana, please visit the [summary of results](#).

Arab Barometer

Arab Barometer, according to its website, "is a nonpartisan research network that provides insight into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world. [It has] been conducting high quality and reliable public opinion surveys in the Middle East and North Africa [MENA] since 2006. [It is] the longest-standing and the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. [Its] findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics." As of June 2025, it has completed eight waves of surveys.

As one example, from July 2020 to April 2021, the Arab Barometer conducted its [sixth wave of surveying](#) across the MENA region, and specifically the countries of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Iraq. This wave consisted of three parts from July-October 2020, October 2020, and March-April 2021. For an overview of the results for Lebanon from part one, read the [Lebanon Country Report](#).

Asian Barometer

The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) describes itself as "an applied research program that aims to gauge public opinion across Asia on issues such as political values, democracy, and governance. The ABS covers virtually all major political systems in the region, including regimes that have followed different trajectories and are at different stages of political transition, offering valuable comparative data for researchers and practitioners."

There have been six completed waves of the [core questionnaire](#) of the ABS, with the fifth wave including 14 states: Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mainland China, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The survey results do not appear to be readily available for public consumption online.

Eurasia Barometer

Eurasia Barometer writes that it is a "non-commercial, non-governmental international social survey organization headquartered at the Institute for Comparative Survey Research 'Eurasia Barometer' in Vienna, Austria. Its main aim is to monitor political, social, and economic transformations in the countries of post-communist Europe and post-Soviet Eurasia in the opinion of their populations. The target geographical coverage of Eurasia Barometer includes countries of Eastern Europe (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria), the Balkans, Russian Federation, Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan). Eurasia Barometer is a network of research organizations and individual researchers operating in more than 25 countries and including over 50 social and political scientists and social survey researchers."

While it appears that the Eurasia Barometer has been inactive since 2018, this barometer included at least six different projects: New Democracies Barometer; Social and Political Trends in the CIS; Interplay of European, National, and Regional Identities; Living Conditions, Lifestyles, and Health; Models of Migration in New European Border Regions; and Health in Times of Transition. No survey results or summaries appear to be readily available online.

Latino Barometer

Latinobarómetro, according to its webpage, is a "public opinion study that annually applies around 20,000 interviews in 18 Latin American countries representing more than 600 million inhabitants. Corporación Latinobarómetro is a non-profit NGO based in

Santiago de Chile, solely responsible for the production and publication of the data. Corporación Latinobarómetro investigates the development of democracy, the economy and society as a whole, using public opinion indicators that measure attitudes, values and behaviors. The results are used by the region's socio-political actors, international, governmental and media actors."

Since 1995, this barometer has conducted 25 waves of surveys, available in both Spanish and English. Questions range from views on the government's role in society to integration across Latin American countries to views on immigration to who has the most power in a country. To see aggregate responses to specific questions for specific states in the region, visit [Latinobarometro](#).

Comparative National Elections Project

The Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP), hosted by The Ohio State University, describes itself as "a partnership among scholars who have conducted election surveys on five continents. Founded in the late 1980s, it now includes over 50 surveys from 1990 to 2021 in 30 different countries, with multiple election surveys in 16 countries. The geographical scope and theoretical concerns of the CNEP have substantially evolved over the past three decades, with essential items from earlier research foci retained in the common core questionnaire and merged dataset, creating time-series that for some countries stretch back over more than three decades."

The CNEP has developed, and maintained, a [common core of questionnaire items](#) that are asked in its state-specific surveys. Some of the themes include short-term campaign issues, communication channels in which individuals receive election information, socio-political values, and sub-national political identities and preferences for state structure.

The CNEP's website has publicly available survey results in the aggregate (all surveys merged together) and for specific states. For example, on the latter, one of its first reports is from the 1990 German elections and one of its more recent reports is from the 2024 Mexican elections (note that the data is not formatted for public consumption, but rather for analysis).

AmericasBarometer

The AmericasBarometer considers itself "the premier academic institution carrying out surveys of public opinion in the Americas, with over [30] years of experience. As a center for excellence in survey research, AmericasBarometer uses 'gold standard' approaches and innovative methods to carry out targeted national surveys; conduct impact evaluation studies; and produce reports on individual attitudes, evaluations, and experiences. The AmericasBarometer survey is the only scientifically rigorous comparative survey that covers 34 nations including all of North, Central, and South America, as well as a significant number of countries in the Caribbean. Each year it publishes dozens of high quality academic studies and policy-relevant papers."

The AmericasBarometer maintains a repository of questionnaires and sample designs. Like other barometers, it has a core questionnaire that has been administered 10 times since 2004, but recent surveys include two unique elements: (1) a "split-sample design," in which one-half of respondents received a certain subset of questions and one-half of respondents received a different subset of questions, and (2) experimental modules within the survey, in which questions were randomly assigned to survey respondents.

World Values Survey

The World Values Survey (WVS) writes that it is "an international research program devoted to the scientific and academic study of social, political, economic, religious and cultural values of people in the world. The project's goal is to assess which impact values stability or change over time has on the social, political and economic development of countries and societies."

The WVS is global in nature, transcending regions and continents, and it has conducted eight waves of surveys since 1981. It has a master survey questionnaire that consists of a core questionnaire, observations by the interviewer, and regional and thematic modules. Within the core questionnaire, there are hundreds of questions asked across a wide range of topics, including happiness and well-being, science and technology, and ethical values and norms.

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10.6: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Barometer** (as used in comparative politics) refers to a survey that measures public opinion with a regional or global focus, encompassing multiple states.
- **Comparative public opinion** is the research and analysis of public opinion across two more states.
- **Framing** influences a respondent's answer to a survey question based on how the question is presented.
- **Margin of error** is a statistical estimation of the accuracy of a sample.
- **Political socialization** is the process by which an individual's political beliefs and values form, change, and solidify over time.
- **Population** is the entire group of individuals that a researcher is interested in studying and making inferences about.
- **Priming** influences a respondent's answer to a survey question by pushing a respondent to think about a certain subject matter that they otherwise may not have been thinking about.
- **Polling** is the scientific use of survey questions and instruments to gauge the explicit and implicit opinions of individuals about political issues and policy topics.
- **Public opinion** is "an aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community."
- **Randomization** is when every individual in the population has an equal chance to be chosen as part of the sample.
- **Representative sample** is a sample from a population that accurately represents the characteristics of that population.
- **Sample** is a subset of the population used to gather data and then make inferences about the broader population.
- **Social desirability bias** occurs when respondents give answers to questions that they think the broader society (or an interviewer) sees as "right" or answers that they think will make them look "good" in some way.
- **Survey** is a set of questions that asks individuals, known as respondents, to share their beliefs, attitudes, and views on policy and political issues or individuals.

Summary

Section 10.1: What is Comparative Public Opinion?

Public opinion is the views and opinions of the public at large, while comparative public opinion is the research and analysis of public opinion across two more states. Comparative public opinion is of interest because it helps inform our understanding of the beliefs, attitudes, and views of individuals across states or regions.

Section 10.2: Public Opinion and Political Socialization

Political scientists use public opinion data to study a variety of different research questions. The foundations of public opinion depend on how we are socialized. There are different factors, or agents, that impact our views and begin in early childhood. Family, education, and religion are some of the more dominant factors, but other agents can also influence us extensively. Once our views are established, they still can continue to change, but out of these views we derive our political ideology and our belief in the appropriate role and purpose government plays in our lives.

Section 10.3: Measuring Public Opinion

The most common way to measure public opinion is through public opinion polls. If the goal of the poll is to make generalizations to a larger population of people, the sample must be representative of that larger body, and subjects chosen to respond must be selected randomly. There are different types of polling techniques, which allow researchers to measure public opinion in a variety of ways. All polling has potential problems, and polling in the comparative context can be especially fraught.

Section 10.4: Comparative Case Study - Barometers Around the World

There are at least eight barometers, or surveys, conducted throughout the world: Afrobarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Eurasia Barometer, Latino Barometer, Comparative National Elections Project, AmericasBarometer, and World Values Survey. Most barometers have questionnaires with a common, or core, set of questions that are asked in each fielding of the survey.

Review Questions

1. What is comparative public opinion?
 - a. is the research and analysis of public opinion across two or more states
 - b. is the research and analysis of public opinion across two or more continents
 - c. is the research and analysis of elite opinion across two or more states
 - d. is the research and analysis of elite opinion across two or more continents
2. Which of the following best describes political socialization?
 - a. where someone chooses to get their political information
 - b. how someone is raised and views the world from an ideological point of view
 - c. why someone chooses whether or not to vote
 - d. what political organization someone chooses to work or volunteer with
3. Which of the following is NOT a challenge of measuring public opinion?
 - a. social desirability bias
 - b. framing
 - c. priming
 - d. education
4. What is the mission of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR)?
 - a. promotes the highest professional standards, ethics, and techniques for polling around the world
 - b. international membership represents the industry's most respected names in the survey and public opinion research field
 - c. through publications, seminars, meetings, and educational initiatives we engage in a rich ongoing conversation about how best to collect data and maintain data quality not just in advanced democracies, but also in emerging democracies
 - d. all of the above
5. Which of the following is NOT a public opinion barometer?
 - a. Afrobarometer
 - b. Arab Barometer
 - c. Meximeter
 - d. Latino Barometer

Answers: 1.a, 2.b, 3.d, 4.d, 5.c

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In September 2020, [WAPOR hosted a webinar](#) on Advances in Comparative Survey Methods and discussed the continuing development of multinational, multiregional, and multicultural (3MC) survey research methodology. Watch the webinar and write in five or more sentences what you found most interesting and/or most perplexing?
2. Given the problems with polling, should we just stop polling individuals and trying to measure public opinion? Why or why not?
3. Select a barometer you are most interested in, and if available, review its questionnaire. Within the questionnaire, identify at least two questions and compare and contrast them for similarities and differences.

Suggestions for Further Study

Databases

- [Data | Afrobarometer](#)
- [Data Downloads – Arab Barometer](#)

- [WVS Database \(worldvaluessurvey.org\)](http://worldvaluessurvey.org)

Websites

- International Political Science Association's [Comparative Public Opinion](#) section
- [Global Barometer Surveys](#)
- [Afro Barometer](#)
- [Arab Barometer](#)
- [Asian Barometer](#)
- [Eurasia Barometer](#)
- [Latino Barometer](#)
- [CNEP](#)
- [LAPOP](#)
- [World Values Survey Association](#)
- [American Political Science Association > MEMBERSHIP > Organized Sections > Comparative Politics \(Section 20\)](#)
- [American Political Science Association > MEMBERSHIP > Organized Sections > Elections ,Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior \(Section 32\)](#)

Journal Articles

- [Oversight or Representation? Public Opinion and Impeachment Resolutions in Argentina and Brazil](#)
- [Cyber Terrorism and Public Support for Retaliation – A Multi-Country Survey Experiment](#)
- [Costly Signals: Voter Responses to Parliamentary Dissent in Austria, Britain, and Germany](#)

Books or Book Chapters

- Aalberg, Toril. 2003. *Achieving Justice: Comparative Public Opinions on Income Distribution*. BRILL.
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11: POLITICAL VIOLENCE

11.1: What is Political Violence?

11.2: State-Sponsored Political Violence

11.3: Non-State Political Violence

11.4: Post-Conflict Strategies

11.5: Comparative Case Study - Bangladesh and Turkey

11.6: References

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11.1: What is Political Violence?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define political violence.
- Differentiate between intrastate and transnational political violence.

Introduction

Political violence is a difficult term to define. We can start with the concept of **violence**. Kalyvas (2006) states that "[a]t the basic level, violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people." Although some scholars rightly consider non-physical aspects, such as social or economic oppression, as a form of structural violence, this chapter will focus on physical violence. **Physical violence** is the use of physical force to exert power. While harm can come in many forms, political violence exclusively focuses on physical violence. Examples include the use of weapons by criminal gangs, kidnappings, mass shootings, and torture. While these examples can also sometimes be considered political violence, the act of violence by itself does not make it political.

Rather, **political violence** occurs when political intentions motivate the use of physical harm. For example, if revolutionaries use violence to destroy a social order, or if a state uses violence to preserve a social order, it is political violence. Those seeking to challenge the status quo may use political violence, as may those seeking to defend the status quo.

Yet differentiating when an act of violence is political, rather than simply criminal, is sometimes tricky. Consider this question: Are actions by drug cartels in the Gulf of Mexico--such as targeting law enforcement, kidnapping the loved ones of government officials, or threatening the government--political violence? While these actions target the official capacity of the government, the cartels' primary interests are financial; they want to ensure the continued flow of narcotics from Central and South America to the United States. The cartels generally do not show interest in challenging the socio-political order (e.g., they do not call for regime change), and they tend to use violence only when their interests are threatened. This is therefore an example of criminal, rather than political, violence.

Types of Political Violence

While the definition of political violence above does not necessarily preclude interstate wars (wars between two or more states), the vast majority of political violence transpires within a state. To classify different forms of political violence, we must consider who is using violence against whom. **Intrastate political violence** is political violence that wholly or largely occurs within a state and, generally speaking, at least one of the parties involved is a "non-state actor." A **non-state actor** is any political actor not associated with a government or state. While not allied with the state, a non-state actor may have significant political influence (Lexico, n.d.). Non-state actors include a wide range of organizations and individuals, such as non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, and trade unions. Non-state actors include those with peaceful intentions, such as charitable organizations, and those that engage in political violence, such as insurgents, guerrilla groups, and terrorists.

Some non-state actors have a transnational presence. Transnationalism is "events, activities, ideas, trends, processes, and phenomena that appear across national boundaries and cultural regions" (Juergensmeyer, 2013). Thus, **transnational political violence** is political violence that occurs across different states or crosses state borders. If a non-state actor's goal is to overthrow a government or for a region to secede (formally withdraw or separate) from a state, political violence tends *not* to be transnational. This is often the case with insurgents and guerrilla groups. However, if a non-state actor's goal is to achieve political aims through violent cross-border attacks on civilians (as in some forms of terrorism), political violence is transnational.

In addition to the distinction between intrastate and transnational political violence, we can separate state-sponsored political violence from non-state political violence. **Internal state-sponsored political violence** occurs when a government uses violence against its own citizens while **external state-sponsored political violence** occurs when a government uses violence against foreign citizens, usually in neighboring states. **Non-state political violence**, political violence perpetrated by non-state actors, typically arises in civil wars, insurgencies, revolutions, and terrorism. We will discuss the distinction between

state-sponsored political violence and non-state political violence at length in the following two sections.

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11.2: State-Sponsored Political Violence

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between internal and external state-sponsored political violence.
- Identify different policies of repression.
- Evaluate different models of state-sponsored terrorism.

Introduction

As Max Weber (1919) famously defines, a state is a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." A state's institutions, such as the police and the military, have the authority to use violence, when necessary, according to the rules and regulations within a given state. Yet who creates those rules and regulations--namely, who deems which threats are necessary to combat with physical force--is crucially important.

In a democratic regime, threat determinations are often left to the executive branch of government. In a parliamentary system, the prime minister's cabinet may determine threats, often in consultation with the state's intelligence agencies; in a presidential system, the president may determine threats, often in consultation with a national defense council. In either democratic system, decisions related to threats ultimately face scrutiny by opposing politicians (who, in parliamentary systems, may be able to call for a vote of no confidence) and the public (who, in either system, can fail to reelect a leader with whom they disagree). There are built-in accountability mechanisms related to political violence within a democratic regime.

In a non-democratic regime, threat determinations again take place within the executive branch of government, but there are few or no accountability mechanisms. Those who disagree with the decision of an authoritarian leader have little to no recourse. The government will likely ignore or suppress an opposition political party expressing disagreement (if an opposition party exists), and the public is unlikely to remove leadership in sham elections (elections that are neither free nor fair). In comparison to a democratic regime, a non-democratic regime has fewer checks on those with the power to choose when violence is an appropriate response.

While these broad differences related to accountability between regimes types are important to keep in mind, we observe state-sponsored political violence in both democracies and non-democracies (though to different extents). **State-sponsored political violence** is "official government support for policies of violence, repression, and intimidation" (Martin, 2020). Below, we detail two types of state-sponsored political violence: internal, when threats exist within the borders of a state, and external, when threats exist outside the borders of the state.

Internal State-Sponsored Political Violence

Internal state-sponsored political violence occurs when a government uses violence against a perceived threat coming from its own citizens. Because the threat is internal, the state generally has the autonomy to use violence as it deems necessary given its sovereignty. As a reminder from Chapter 3, sovereignty provides the state with the ability to manage its affairs independently from outside powers and internal resistance. Internal state-sponsored political violence can take many forms.

First, the police may use force to arrest or detain those who act against the state. The police may also use lethal means, particularly if the government believes the threat to be existential (a threat to the existence of the state itself). For example, if protests erupt in support of a group espousing an apocalyptic ideology, an ideology lacking any political goals other than the destruction of the government, a state may choose to employ extreme measures to quell the protests.

Second, political violence may occur without formal sponsorship by the government, such as through vigilante groups, paramilitaries, or other armed groups that wage unofficial campaigns of violence and suppression against perceived internal threats. Even in democratic regimes, these groups may exist and--though they likely will not have the explicit support of the state--they may receive implicit support, such as by unofficially gaining information from the state's security apparatus.

Third, political violence may occur through a policy of **overt repression**, in which a state openly conducts political violence. In a non-democratic regime, violent tactics may even be official state policy. States such as the Soviet Union under Stalin, Germany under the Nazi Party, and Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge all adopted explicit repressive policies of violence toward certain segments of their populations. Stalin exiled hundreds of thousands of people to work camps in Siberia; the Nazis killed millions of people in death camps; and the Khmer Rouge massacred up to two million Cambodians in their attempt to transform the country into an agrarian utopian society.

Fourth, political violence may occur through a policy of **covert repression**, in which a state uses its secret police or domestic intelligence agencies to repress its citizens in a hidden manner. With covert repression, the violence aims to quell opposition and stifle dissent through secretive means, with the broader society unaware that the violence is occurring (or unaware of the scale of the violence). As one example, intelligence agencies in non-democratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, called the *mukhabarat*, are often integrated into a state's military structure. By surveilling the population, they can alert the military or law enforcement of any potential threats to the authoritarian regime's rule. Syria's Mukhabarat, for instance, played an instrumental role in the mass detainment, torture, and death of individuals deemed threats during the decades-long rule of the Assad family (1971-2024). Covert repression can also include non-violent means. The former communist country of East Germany (officially the German Democratic Republic) employed the *Stasi*, or the State Security Service, to create a network of informants to instill fear among East German citizens opposed to the regime.

External State-Sponsored Political Violence

External state-sponsored political violence occurs when a government uses violence against foreign citizens, usually in neighboring states. Because the threat is external, the state has less autonomy to use violence than when the threat is internal; the lack of a legitimate claim to sovereignty constrains states' actions.

One example of this type of violence is "state-sponsored terrorism." **State-sponsored terrorism** is government support for terrorist actions in other states. **Terrorism** is a violent act that generally targets non-combatants for political purposes. This tactic aims to spread fear among the general population, and the goal is that this widespread fear will pressure government leaders to make changes that are favorable to the terrorists.

Martin (2007) differentiates between two models of state-sponsored terrorism: the patronage model and the assistance model. The **patronage model** occurs when a state actively participates and encourages terrorist actions in other states. An example of this model is Iranian support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is both a political party and a militant organization. Founded during the devastating Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the organization remains active. Politically, Hezbollah directly translates as "Party of God" and represents Shi'a Muslim interests in Lebanon's Parliament. Militarily, Hezbollah maintains significant military capacity and uses its weapons against what it perceives as threats, including against the State of Israel. A number of states designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and accuse Iran of supporting it with weaponry, training, and funding (Robinson, 2021).

The **assistance model** occurs when a state tacitly supports and encourages terrorist actions in other states. An example of this model is Pakistan's tacit support for Lashkar-e-Taiba. Lashkar-e-Taiba roughly translates as "army of the righteous." It is a Pakistani-based militant and terrorist organization that is most famous for a 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, India during which operatives targeted the financial district, a famous hotel landmark, and a Jewish cultural center. Since the 2008 attack, Pakistan banned Lashkar-e-Taiba and prosecuted former members. However, the government tacitly supported the organization in the 1990s and it continues to operate within Pakistan through a number of offshoot groups (Macander, 2021).

11.3: Non-State Political Violence

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the differences between civil wars, insurgencies, and guerrilla warfare.
- Evaluate competing explanations of terrorism.
- Assess the necessary components for revolution.

Introduction

As described earlier in the chapter, non-state actors are any political actors not associated with a government or state. This grouping includes actors as varied as transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations (e.g., Greenpeace), and international drug trafficking rings. While most non-state actors are non-violent, there are some who engage in political violence, such as guerrillas, insurgents, and terrorists. Rather than focus on the type of actor (who can engage in various types of violent activities), we generally describe non-state political violence by the type of action. In this section, we will describe three types of action that non-state actors may participate in: civil wars, terrorism, and revolution.

Civil Wars

In the simplest terms, a civil war is an armed conflict within a state between two or more groups, and one of the combatants is the government. Because the definition of political violence requires that political intentions motivate the use of physical harm, political scientists further narrow this definition: A **civil war** is an armed conflict within the territory of an internationally-recognized state (with a population of at least 500,000) between two or more groups in which one of the combatants is the government, and in which the rebel group(s) is (are) politically- and militarily-organized with stated political objectives (Sambanis, 2004). By narrowing the definition in this manner, civil war excludes small-scale instances of violence, such as one-off armed engagements between street gangs and police units. A civil war requires sustained, multi-sided, and destructive violence (researchers typically use 1,000 deaths as a minimum threshold of destruction).

Given the power imbalance in civil wars, typically with a stronger state fighting against a weaker rebel group, the weaker side often relies on creative and innovative tactics to challenge the government, such as through rebellion, insurgency, or guerrilla warfare tactics. A **rebellion** is an act that violently challenges the government to bring attention to a status quo with which the challengers are dissatisfied. An **insurgency** is an act of uprising or revolt against a government and/or a state. Insurgents often claim that they represent the will of the people against a government that no longer represents them. **Guerrilla warfare** occurs when small, lightly-armed groups engage in unconventional, small-scale, fast-moving, and irregular attacks against the state. Unlike those engaged in insurgency tactics, guerrillas usually do not engage in mass mobilization. Guerrillas tend to represent the interests of certain groups rather than the entire population. The terms rebellion, insurgency, and guerrilla warfare often overlap.

No matter the rebel group or tactics used, there are common--yet competing--explanations for why civil wars occur. The first explanation focuses on grievances, arguing that political violence along communal lines is jointly a product of deep-seated grievances about the status of the group and the situationally-motivated political interests that political actors desire to pursue (Gurr, 1993). Grievances often revolve around economic, social, and political rights. A grievance-driven civil war is more likely when a group loses a level of political autonomy that it previously enjoyed. This grievance--resentment about the restriction on a group's political rights--can help leaders of the disadvantaged group by giving a legitimizing basis to their cause and easing recruitment efforts for rebellion.

Yet many scholars challenge the grievance explanation for civil war. The second explanation instead focuses on opportunity. Collier and Hoeffler (2004, p. 564) argue that "the incidents of rebellion are not explained by motive, but by the atypical circumstances that generate profitable opportunity." Because rebellion is an industry that generates profit from exercising control over resources, whether it will be an attractive option for opportunistic actors will depend on factors such as the cost of the rebellion, the availability of financing for the rebellion, the relative military advantage of the rebel group, and the pattern of demographic dispersion. If joining the rebel movement appears to be profitable for individuals, this belief

will incentivize participation, which will determine whether the rebellion is viable.

The third explanation for civil war is environmental and situational. Rather than emphasizing the necessity of strong, widespread support based on grievances, this explanation suggests that the viability of insurgency increases in states with mountainous terrain, with contiguous cross-border sanctuaries, and with an easily recruited population (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). These conditions favor insurgents given the asymmetric distribution of power between the rebels and government forces.

Terrorism

Many non-scientific analyses of terrorist attacks--violent acts that target non-combatants for political purposes--cite religion, ethnicity, race, and extreme political ideology as the primary motivations for extremist groups to resort to violence. However, mere membership in a particular religious or ethnic group is not cause to commit a terrorist attack. When and why do political extremist groups engage in terrorism?

There are two dominant schools of theoretical explanation: psychological and rational choice. The psychological explanation of terrorism relies on the idea that the violence itself is the desired outcome as opposed to being the means to the end. Post (1990) claims that "individuals become terrorists in order to join terrorist groups and commit acts of terrorism." While Post recognizes that this is a rather extreme claim, the psychological explanation posits that the core ideology of a terrorist group rationalizes an act of violence; by joining a terrorist group, participants are psychologically-compelled to commit acts of violence.

Conversely, scholars like Crenshaw (1990) rely on the rational choice explanation of terrorism. In this explanation, the use of terrorism is the result of a willful strategy based on a careful political calculation. Terrorism is an expression of political strategy in which the act of violence is one among many alternative choices for an extremist group. When the expected benefit of a terrorist act outweighs the cost of such behavior, then such an act becomes the most strategically sound option.

The evidence is mixed regarding the effectiveness of terrorism. Terrorist action can lead to a specific change in government policy, but there have been few notable overall shifts in foreign policy. For example, al-Qaeda bombed several train stations in Madrid in 2004 as a reaction to the Spanish government's involvement in the United States-led invasion of Iraq. The Madrid attacks took place right before national elections, and they influenced how Spanish citizens voted. Once the new government came in, they withdrew Spanish forces from coalition fighting in Iraq. However, the attacks in Madrid did not change the overall course of the Iraq War; other states refused to change course.

Terrorist action can also lead to changes in government policy that the extremist group did not intend. For example, the attackers who perpetrated the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States did not intentionally desire to change airport policies. However, the attacks had a dramatic impact, forcing all air travelers to endure more intrusive safety protocols and removing privileges that formerly existed (e.g., the ability to wait at a gate to welcome a loved one).

Terrorist action can also fail to achieve its stated goals. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), for instance, calls for the creation of a caliphate, a state run by Islamic political authorities. Yet despite the best efforts of ISIS, there is no such caliphate. Syrian, Russian, Kurdish, and American forces largely defeated ISIS in 2019. Even though ISIS committed atrocious violence and killed many non-combatants, the group ultimately failed to achieve its primary political goal.

Revolution

Though the term "revolution" appears frequently in the media and in protest slogans (e.g., "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times"), political scientists define revolution in a very specific way: **Revolution** is a public seizure of the state in order to overturn the existing government and regime (Skocpol, 1979).

This definition has three important pieces. First, there must be public participation in the movement. This characteristic differentiates a revolution from other types of political violence, such as a coup d'état (recall from Chapter 3 that a coup d'état is an attempt to abruptly, unlawfully, and sometimes violently seize power from an existing government, and it is often conducted by political elites). Second, a revolution's main purpose is the public seizure of the state. Other types of political violence do not require the seizure of the state. For example, some politically violent actors can achieve their goals with concessions from the state, such as an expansion of voting rights or meaningful protections of civil liberties and civil rights. A revolution, in contrast, requires control over the state apparatus. Third, once revolutionaries capture a state, there must be a political regime transition. Without regime change, the episode of political violence will fall in another category, such as civil war.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 is an example that meets the definition above. It marked the end of centuries of imperial Russian rule, with the assassination of the Romanov family in 1918. The ensuing civil war saw the communists, or Bolsheviks, fight under Vladimir Lenin. Their Red Army fought against the White Army, a loose association of loyalists, capitalists, and other elements. The success of the communists in 1923 led to a dramatic reordering of Russian society, with the introduction of new social norms and the collective industrialization (over decades) of a largely agrarian society.

In some cases, revolutions may occur without violence. **Non-violence movements** are movements that engage in non-violent practices (e.g., protests, boycotts, sit-ins, civil disobedience) to accomplish political goals. To meet the definition of revolution, a non-violent movement must still achieve all three elements: public participation, public seizure of the state, and regime transition. Unlike violent revolutions, non-violent revolutions tend to require military acquiescence to achieve their goals. The movement's leaders must convince the state's military (or some portion thereof) that the state would be better off under a new regime so that, when the time comes, the military will refuse to intervene on behalf of the existing regime. When that happens, the military authority will work with the new regime to maintain peace and security.

The fall of select communist regimes in 1989 illustrates the concept of non-violent revolution. In the aftermath of World War II, the Soviet Union installed loyal regimes in Eastern European states. As part of the Warsaw Pact, states such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland were satellite states, dependent on the Soviet Union for their legitimacy and survival. When popular uprisings occurred--such as in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968--Soviet forces rolled in, quelling any hopes of democratic regime change. However, when popular uprisings occurred again in these states in 1989, Soviet forces withdrew, allowing the puppet communist regimes to collapse and embark on economic and political transition.

11.4: Post-Conflict Strategies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the ways in which political violence can end.
- Describe negotiated settlements.
- Evaluate the difference between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Introduction

How does political violence end? How often does political violence reemerge? Do some conflict-ending methods lead to higher chances of lasting peace? Scholars study these questions, often in the context of civil wars, and offer various arguments. As one example, civil wars that end with a decisive victory for one side generally have a lower chance of conflict reemerging (Wagner, 1993; Licklider, 1995; Toft, 2009). If one side wins a decisive victory, this implies that the losing side no longer has the capacity to inflict substantial harm and the victor has the capacity to repress future mobilization. This lowers the probability that war will break out again.

As an example, we can consider the defeat of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was a Tamil militant organization based in northeastern Sri Lanka. Its aim was to secure an independent state of Tamil Eelam, and it carried out its first major attack on July 23, 1983, killing 13 soldiers. In response, an anti-Tamil pogrom called "Black July" occurred, leading to a 26 year civil war between the Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan government. In July 2006, the government launched a number of major military offensives against the LTTE, driving the LTTE out of the eastern province of the island. In 2007, the government shifted its offensive to the north, taking control of the area previously controlled by the LTTE. In May 2009, the LTTE admitted defeat and ultimately dropped its demands for a separate state in favor of a federal solution. While some small-scale violence has occurred in Sri Lanka since 2009, large-scale violence in the form of civil war has not again broken out.

Negotiated Settlements

While a decisive victory for one side can promote peace, another way that civil war can end is through a "negotiated settlement." A **negotiated settlement** is an agreement between combatants to end political violence. Hartzell (1999) argues that the key to an enduring peace agreement is the institutionalization of power-sharing mechanisms. This is because a negotiated settlement often involves the re-centralization of power in certain areas, such as a government reasserting its authority in policing or education. When rebels, insurgents, guerrillas, or terrorists disarm, they worry not only about their own safety, but also about the broader needs of those on whose behalf they were fighting. Power-sharing is therefore necessary to include former rebels in the decision-making process, to ensure proper political representation, and to protect economic interests. If a negotiated settlement aims to foster lasting peace, there must be safeguards in place to protect the interests of all sides.

Walter (1999, 2002), however, argues that power-sharing through a negotiated settlement still may not be enough for lasting peace. While two or more sides may formally agree to do something in a negotiated settlement to alleviate short-term security concerns, this does not mean that all actors will follow through on their promises, particularly when long-term problems in the post-war environment emerge. Because a negotiated settlement leaves at least some organizational capacity of all sides intact (Wagner, 1993), there must be a way to enforce these negotiated settlements. The simplest way to do this is through a "third-party guarantor." A **third-party guarantor** is an external force that can enforce the provisions of a negotiated settlement.

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

Peacekeeping forces are an example of a third-party guarantor. **Peacekeeping** refers "to the deployment of national or, more commonly, multinational forces for the purpose of helping to control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states" (Encyclopedia Princetoniensis, n.d.). Peacekeeping forces can contribute to the durability of peace established

through negotiated settlements by monitoring the behavior of former belligerents, enforcing the settlement's provisions, and acting as an intermediary to reduce miscommunications that could lead to the resumption of violence.

Peacekeeping has been relatively successful since it began in the 1940s, with one estimate suggesting that peacekeeping forces reduced the risk of war recurring by over one-half. It does not seem to make a difference whether the peacekeeping forces are invited or imposed (Fortna, 2008). While traditional peacekeepers are those invited by a conflict's belligerents, peace enforcement missions occur without invitation and/or consent. The latter happens when an outside organization, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), imposes a security force in an area, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo following the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Though peacekeeping has a relatively successful history in preventing conflict resumption, international peacekeeping forces also face staunch criticism and questionable legitimacy for numerous reasons. As one example, peacekeeping forces often have limited mandates and resources and are therefore unable to adequately protect civilians. As another, civilians have repeatedly accused peacekeepers of committing human rights abuses, such as sexual abuse, and investigating and doling out punishments for these crimes is difficult.

In addition to peacekeeping, peacebuilding is an important aspect of post-conflict reconstruction. **Peacebuilding** is the implementation of structures to promote sustainable peace. Peacebuilding efforts are relatively successful because they aim to restructure the political, economic, and social institutions in a state. This often includes building stronger institutions, encouraging mass political participation, and promoting respect for societal diversity. Doyle and Sambanis (2000) suggest that a successful peacebuilding strategy must address local sources of hostility, understand the local capacity for change, and determine the level of commitment from the international community. While peacebuilding does not require the use of peacekeepers or a peace enforcement mission, the likelihood of success increases with a combination of peacebuilding and peacekeeping measures.

11.5: Comparative Case Study - Bangladesh and Turkey

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand how low-intensity conflict can contribute to a resumption of full-scale conflict.
- Distinguish the difference between indiscriminate and selective violence.
- Explain how changes in counterinsurgency strategy can affect a conflict's outcome.

Introduction

Given the potential brutality and destructiveness of political violence, it is common to assume that all involved parties have an incentive to maintain peace, particularly after an especially violent episode like a civil war. However, in many cases, political violence still reoccurs. This political violence may reflect a low-intensity conflict in which the level of hostilities or use of military power falls short of a full-scale war (encyclopedia.com). Yet a low-intensity conflict may also transform into a full-scale conflict. What factors help us to understand when and why this happens?

We can assess post-conflict dynamics as one way to explain when political violence reoccurs. A government, for example, can incentivize or disincentivize an insurgency depending on how it treats the former rebels. In this section, we will compare two cases: (1) the relationship between the Kurds and the Turkish government and (2) the relationship between the Jummas and the Bangladeshi government.

These cases are similar in that they both reflect a conflict between a government and a minority ethnic group, and both minority ethnic groups originally sought secession as a solution for discriminatory treatment. In both cases, this discriminatory treatment included attempts to forcibly assimilate the group and ignore cultural differences; to impose exclusionary political, social, and economic policies and practices; and to use indiscriminate violence against civilians during periods of unrest.

Given these similarities, we use a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) with the dependent variable of the recurrence of political violence. The two cases employed different post-conflict tactics to counter insurgents, with the Turkish government using indiscriminate violence and the Bangladeshi government using selective violence, and the choice of counterinsurgency tactic contributed to a recurrence of violence in Turkey but not in Bangladesh.

Turkey

- **Full Country Name:** Republic of Türkiye
- **Head(s) of State:** President
- **Government:** Unitary Presidential Constitutional Republic
- **Official Languages:** Turkish
- **Economic System:** Free Market Economy
- **Location:** Eastern Europe
- **Capital:** Ankara
- **Total land size:** 302,455 sq. miles
- **Population:** 84 million (July 2021 est.)
- **GDP:** \$692 billion
- **GDP per capita:** \$8,080
- **Currency:** Turkish Lira

In the Turkish case, we explore the relationship between government forces and the Kurds. The Kurds are an ethnic group who speak an Indo-Iranian language and are native to the mountainous region of Kurdistan. This region crosses four states: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Following devastating civil wars, Kurdish groups gained a level of self-government in Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, the government formally recognizes Iraqi Kurdistan; in Syria, the Syrian government does not formally recognize Rojava Kurdistan, or simply Rojava, but it has de facto autonomy.

In Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant group and insurgency movement founded in 1978, historically represented Kurdish interests. The Turkish state used indiscriminate violence against the PKK, such as torture, kidnappings, disappearance, and summary executions. Such indiscriminate violence provided a strong incentive for Kurds to support the PKK.

In 1999, at a time when there was a growing sense of conflict fatigue among ordinary Kurds, the Turkish state captured PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. After his arrest, Öcalan publicly announced that a reliance on violence to resolve the Kurdish struggle was a mistake, and he endorsed the idea that the PKK seek a non-violent political solution. He ordered high-ranking PKK officers to surrender, and 16 individuals associated with the PKK turned themselves in. Many believed that Öcalan's statement served as a symbolic move to end the conflict, and Kurdish public opinion supported Öcalan's endorsement of a non-violent approach. In response to these events, PKK violence declined dramatically, as did Turkish government reprisals. For the first time in decades, the Kurdish region of Turkey experienced a period of relative calm.

The decrease in violence, however, did not mean that the underlying tension faded. Public demonstrations still took place, and these sometimes led to violent clashes between the two sides. Just a decade later, political violence resumed. This time around, rather than focusing only on Kurdish combatants, the Turkish government also targeted non-combatant villagers, including women and children (Yildiz, 2005; Yıldiz and Breau, 2010). That is, the government essentially reverted back to the reprisals it used prior to the capture of Öcalan.

The persistence of indiscriminate violence against the Kurdish minority after 1999, and especially Kurdish non-combatants, shaped the narrative of the overall conflict. For many, the capture of Öcalan should have meant the end of the insurgency, yet the subsequent period saw continued physical threats from the government. The post-conflict environment therefore motivated Kurds to continue to support the PKK, eventually leading to a resumption of political violence.

Bangladesh

- **Full Country Name:** People's Republic of Bangladesh
- **Head(s) of State:** President
- **Government:** Unitary Dominant-Party Parliamentary Republic
- **Official Languages:** Bengali
- **Economic System:** Developing Market Economy
- **Location:** South Asia
- **Capital:** Dhaka
- **Total land size:** 57,320 sq. miles
- **Population:** 161,376,708
- **GDP:** \$1.11 trillion
- **GDP per capita:** \$6,633
- **Currency:** Taka

In the case of Bangladesh, we see some similar conditions as in the Turkish case. There was an armed rebellion between the Bangladeshi government and the Jummas. The Jummas, or "hill people," are a group of ethnically distinct tribes living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This is an area in the northeast of the country, bordering India and Myanmar. Just like Turkey, Bangladesh attempted to forcefully and violently assimilate all minority groups. This prompted armed challenges from members who faced oppression, including the Jummas.

Originally, Bangladesh relied on the use of intimidation and coercion toward the Jummas, and the non-combatant population experienced indiscriminate violence, just like the Kurds in Turkey. However, a change in attitude and government policy toward the Jumma eventually facilitated peace. In 1983, Bangladesh offered general amnesty to all of the Shanti Bahini insurgents, one of the main Jumma groups fighting the government. In response, approximately 3,000 rebels surrendered, and over a period of more than ten years, the sides eventually fully achieved a peaceful resolution through negotiated settlement.

The change in the government's counterinsurgency strategy produced a different outcome than in Turkey. In Bangladesh, the government used selective violence, targeting only active participants in the conflict and those who committed political violence. As such, ordinary Jummas were able to stay neutral; they did not feel compelled to fight back because they were no longer threatened with indiscriminate violence.

Bangladesh's counterinsurgency strategy focused on the process of deliberation and transparency, coupled with a tremendous reduction in the use of force. This allowed for a relative period of peace to emerge and set the state for a series of peace negotiations that ultimately culminated in the Chittagong Hill Tract Peace Accord of 1997. Despite some lingering issues, the

negotiated settlement largely held.

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11.7: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Assistance model** is a model of state-sponsored terrorism in which a state tacitly supports and encourages terrorist actions in other states.
- **Civil war** is an armed conflict within the territory of an internationally-recognized state (with a population of at least 500,000) between two or more groups in which one of the combatants is the government, and in which the rebel group(s) is (are) politically- and militarily-organized with stated political objectives.
- **Covert repression**, when used toward state-sponsored political violence, is the hidden enforcement of repressive policy actions by secret police services or domestic intelligence agencies.
- **External state-sponsored political violence** occurs when a government uses violence against foreign citizens, usually in neighboring countries.
- **Guerrilla warfare** occurs when small, lightly-armed groups engage in unconventional, small-scale, fast-moving, and irregular attacks against the state.
- **Insurgency** is an act of uprising or revolt against a government and/or the state.
- **Internal state-sponsored political violence** occurs when a government uses violence against its own citizens.
- **Intrastate political violence** is political violence that wholly or largely occurs within a state or country.
- **Negotiated settlement** is an agreement between combatants to end political violence.
- **Non-state actors** are any political actors not associated with a government or state.
- **Non-state political violence** is political violence perpetrated by non-state actors.
- **Non-violence movements** are movements that engage in non-violent practices (e.g., protests, boycotts, sit-ins, civil disobedience) to accomplish political goals.
- **Overt repression**, when used toward state-sponsored political violence, is open violence (not hidden) that sometimes occurs through official state policy.
- **Patronage model** is a model of state-sponsored terrorism in which a state actively participates and encourages terrorist actions in other states.
- **Peacebuilding** is the implementation of structures to promote sustainable peace.
- **Peacekeeping** refers "to the deployment of national or, more commonly, multinational forces for the purpose of helping to control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states."
- **Physical violence** is the use of physical force to exert power.
- **Political violence** occurs when political intentions motivate the use of physical harm.
- **Rebellion** is an act of violently challenging the government in order to bring attention to a status quo with which the challengers are dissatisfied.
- **Revolution** is a public seizure of the state in order to overturn the existing government and regime.
- **State-sponsored political violence** is "official government support for policies of violence, repression, and intimidation."
- **State-sponsored terrorism** is government support for terrorist actions in other states.
- **Terrorism** is a violent act that generally targets non-combatants for political purposes, spreading fear among the general population to exert pressure on governments.
- **Third-party guarantor** is an external force that can enforce the provisions of a negotiated settlement.
- **Transnational political violence** is political violence that occurs across different states or crosses state borders.
- **Violence** is the deliberate infliction of harm on people.

Summary

Section 11.1: What is Political Violence?

Political violence is a form of violence. Political violence occurs when political intentions motivate the use of physical harm. Intrastate violence occurs within a country, whereas interstate (transnational) violence occurs across countries.

Section 11.2: State-Sponsored Political Violence

States have a monopoly on the use of violence, which means only states have the authority to use violence, when necessary. We

can divide state-sponsored political violence in two categories: internal and external. Internal state-sponsored political violence occurs when a government officially sanctions violence against an internal threat or enemy. External state-sponsored political violence occurs when a government uses violence against foreign citizens, usually in neighboring countries.. Different models of state-sponsored political violence exist, either through active or tacit support.

Section 11.3: Non-State Political Violence

Non-state actors also participate in political violence. Depending on the tactics they use, these non-state actors are also referred to as insurgents, guerrillas, or terrorists, and they can participate in rebellions and civil wars. Insurgents and/or guerrillas are often motivated by grievances, where political violence along communal lines is jointly a product of deep-seated grievances about the status of the group. Terrorist action can be explained through psychological or rational approaches. Revolutions are when the public seizes the state in order to overturn the existing government. Revolutions are often violent as the existing regime opposes such action. Non-violent revolutions can also occur, usually when a non-violent movement succeeds in its goals.

Section 11.4: Post-Conflict Strategies

There are various arguments on how political violence ends. In general, civil wars that end in a negotiated settlement have a higher chance of experiencing a renewed war in relation to the wars that end in a decisive victory. Negotiated settlements are successful discussions between combatants where an agreement is reached to end political violence. Sometimes, a third-party guarantor is needed to enforce the negotiated settlement. Peacekeeping forces are a good example of a third-party guarantor, which can be utilized either with or without a state's consent. Sometimes, peacebuilding is used rather than peacekeeping, especially when institutions need to be rebuilt.

Section 11.5: Comparative Case Study - Bangladesh and Turkey

The presence of a low-intensity conflict (LIC) can lead to a resumption of a full scale conflict. When a government uses indiscriminate violence, or random violence, against insurgents, it leads those who prefer peace to instead support the insurgents. This is what happened in Turkey. Alternatively, if a government uses selective violence in their counterinsurgency strategy, only targeting those who actively participate in political violence, then a negotiated settlement is possible. This is what occurred in Bangladesh.

Review Questions

1. What is political violence?
 - a. political violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people
 - b. the use of physical force to exert power
 - c. occurs when the use of physical harm is motivated by political intentions
 - d. violence that wholly or largely occurs within a state or country
2. State-sponsored political violence has also been referred to as:
 - a. government terrorism (when it is within a state or internal)
 - b. state-sponsored terrorism (when it is outside or external)
 - c. both responses are correct
 - d. neither response is correct
3. Which answer below is not an example of non-state political violence?
 - a. civil war
 - b. insurgency
 - c. guerilla warfare
 - d. Responsibility to Protect (R2P)
4. What are negotiated settlements?
 - a. an external force that can enforce the provisions of a negotiated settlement
 - b. successful discussions between combatants where an agreement is reached to end political violence
 - c. an external force that can enforce the provisions of a negotiated settlement
 - d. accessible natural resources, such as oil, minerals and precious metals that can confer wealth on those who own, mine or transport them
5. Which response below is NOT correct?
 - a. indiscriminate violence by a government's forces can lead to a resumption of conflict with insurgents

- b. indiscriminate violence by a government's forces can also be referred to as selective violence
- c. indiscriminate violence by a government's forces can be part of a state's counterinsurgency strategy
- d. countries can use indiscriminate violence to punish the supporters of an insurgent group

Answers: 1.c, 2.c, 3.d, 4.b, 5.b

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does political violence differ from other types of violence? Can a criminal act ever be considered political violence?
2. Describe the difference between state-sponsored and non-state terrorism. Which do you fear more?
3. How do civil wars and revolutions differ?
4. What is the difference between peacekeeping and peacebuilding? Which approach do you think is more effective? Why?
5. How can a low intensity conflict (LIC) lead to a resumption of full-scale conflict? In what situations will it not?

Suggestions for Further Study

Books

- Reiter, D. (2009). *How Wars End*. Princeton University Press.
- Weinstein, J. (2007). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

Journal Articles

- Fearon, J. (2004). Why Do Some Civil Wars Last so Much Longer than Others? *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 275–301.
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Datasets and Websites

- [Uppsala Conflict Data Program: Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research](#).

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12: CHALLENGES AND QUESTIONS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

12.1: Recurring Challenges

12.2: Globalization

12.3: Fragmentation

12.4: Concluding Thoughts

12.5: References

12.6: Student Resources

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12.1: Recurring Challenges

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe why states remain an important unit of analysis in the study of comparative politics.

Introduction

In this textbook, we introduced the study of comparative politics, a subfield within political science that seeks to advance understanding of political structures around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way. While the state remains the key unit of analysis in comparative politics, it is not the only actor to consider. International and supranational organizations, subnational governments, and non-state actors all play key roles in understanding state behavior. Supranational organizations sometimes take on roles traditionally considered state responsibilities, such as medical provision. Through subnational governments, minority groups sometimes pressure a state for increased autonomy or full secession. Non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, sometimes use political violence instrumentally to incentivize states to change their behavior.

Given this complexity, is there value in studying states comparatively? Might a scholar be better off focusing only on global trends? Or, might a scholar be better off focusing only on within-state analysis? Why compare between states?

The short answer is that the state, as our world organizes itself today, remains the central actor. States face pressures from above and pressures from below, but these pressures are nothing new. They reflect recurring challenges, and the study of comparative politics provides scholars with the tools to assess these challenges in a systematic manner.

Competing Pressures on the State: An Example

Varying responses to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate how states face pressures from above and below.

First considering pressures from above, COVID-19 was a global pandemic that exerted significant pressure on all states, yet individual state governments overwhelmingly managed their own responses to the virus. Even within the European Union (EU), where 27 member-states agreed to give up some of their national sovereignty in the hope of promoting peace and prosperity, states struggled to coordinate their pandemic-response policies. The European Commission, the EU's main executive body, lagged in providing a coherent policy at the supranational level (Goniewicz, et. al., 2020). Rather, the state remained the unit on which to compare pandemic policy responses, and it is the unit used in various analyses, such as an analysis illustrating a bivariate relationship between a state's Global Health Security Index Score and its pandemic death rates.

The state also faced pressures from below due to COVID-19. Subnational governments looked to their national governments for policy coordination, funding, and political leadership. In federal states, where national and subnational governments share power or sovereignty, the pandemic laid bare existing disparities within a state. India, for example, is a federal state with 28 states and eight union territories. When a pandemic wave washed over India in April and May 2021, some subnational units such as Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra were caught off guard by the swift rise in cases. Per the Lancet (2021), the subnational units were "quickly running out of medical oxygen, hospital space, and overwhelming the capacity of cremation sites." In contrast, subnational units such as Kerala and Odisha were better disposed, with the ability "to produce enough medical oxygen...to export it to other [subnational] states." The disparity and the needs for resources across the subnational units exerted pressure on the Indian state from below.

Globalization and Fragmentation

The idea of a state facing pressures from both above and below may at first seem contradictory, yet it is not a new phenomenon.

In the early 1990s, right after the Cold War ended, Barber (1992) alluded to this duality of pressures in his work, *Jihad vs.*

McWorld. He argued that two principles, globalism and tribalism, were occurring at the same time and sometimes in the same place. Globalism ("McWorld" in the book title) stems from a market imperative that drives integration and homogeneity. Tribalism ("jihad" in the book title, the Arabic word for struggle) represents the fracturing of societies. Neither globalism nor tribalism is necessarily a democratic force; globalism requires "order and tranquility" and tribalism is "grounded in exclusion."

Globalization and fragmentation forces do not always explicitly appear in comparative studies that focus on the state as the unit of analysis. Previous chapters, however, illustrate their importance; as two of many examples, the force of globalization can directly impact comparative political economy while the force of fragmentation can directly impact political violence. In the following two sections, we will explicitly analyze how the forces of globalization and fragmentation impact the study of comparative politics.

12.2: Globalization

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define globalization.
- Discuss the differences between economic, political, and cultural globalization.
- Reflect on how globalization affects individuals and influences government policy.

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 permitted long-developing global trends and processes to become leading voices. Some claimed that democracy defeated authoritarianism; others claimed that capitalism defeated communism; still others asserted that the West, led by the United States, triumphed. Fukuyama, two years prior to the Soviet Union's collapse (in 1989), wrote that the end of the Cold War would mean that there would be no serious competition left. The implication of such strong statements was that liberalism would follow worldwide, ushering in an era focused on free market, capitalist economic activity; democratic political systems; and the protection of human rights.

While these statements were overzealous in their claims about the defeat of authoritarianism and communism worldwide, they point to economic, political, and cultural trends at the global level that we collectively refer to as "globalization." **Globalization** describes increased interconnectedness and interdependence among states, economies, and cultures.

The term became popular in the 1990s. In his bestseller, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Friedman (1999) describes globalization as an "overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every country." He claims that the driving force behind globalization is free-market capitalism, where economic deregulation, market competition, and privatization are the global norms. Over time, he predicts that these trends and processes will have a homogenizing effect, pushing for a new global society based on capitalism, democracy, and liberalism.

Steger (2020) argues that globalization is more than just the advent of economic capitalism or of Western values replacing local traditions. Globalization is the "thickening of the global-local nexus" (what he refers to as "glocalization"), and it refers to a process. As Steger relates, "globalization refers to expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space." More simply, "globalization is about growing worldwide interconnectivity."

This increase in interconnectivity is not a new phenomenon. We see increasing interconnectivity historically with ancient trade routes on land and sea, with empire-making and colonization, and with the advent of international economic institutions (e.g., the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund) after the end of World War II (Ritzer and Dean, 2015). Regardless of when an individual believes globalization began, there is no doubt that the process of growing worldwide interconnectivity has had an impact on citizens across all states.

From an academic standpoint, interests surrounding globalization include topics as varied as ecological worries over global supply chains; philosophical considerations of globalization's homogenizing effects; economic impacts of globalization on the leisure industry and over-tourism; spiritual effects when globalization impacts religious practices, such as pilgrimages; and the rapid spread of technological advancements worldwide. In what follows, we will focus on only three aspects of globalization: economic, political, and cultural.

Economic Globalization

As discussed above, one driving force in contemporary globalization is a push toward free-market capitalism, often referred to as "neoliberal" policies. **Neoliberalism** is an approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and a reduction of government intervention in the economy. This approach takes the classical liberal arguments in favor of private property, legal enforcement of contracts, and the "invisible hand" of the market (see Chapter 8), and pushes policy proposals like "deregulation (of the economy), liberalization (of trade and industry), and privatization (of state-owned enterprises)" through

leading international institutions (Steger, 2021). **International institutions** are bodies of authority above the state that codify, maintain, and sometimes enforce sets of rules that govern state behavior.

These international economic institutions stem from a conference held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 that aimed to arrange and manage international economic relations after World War II, creating the **Bretton Woods System**. Bretton Woods led to the creation of (1) the **World Bank**, an international institution that provides loans and financial assistance to developing states; (2) the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, which manages the global monetary system and provides loans to states that experience currency crises; and (3) the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which eventually became the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, formally established in 1995), which supervises trade agreements between states with the aim of promoting free trade. The collective efforts of these international economic institutions in promoting neoliberalism is referred to as "the Washington Consensus" (the World Bank and the IMF have headquarters in Washington, D.C.).

Scholars, policymakers, and politicians in favor of the Washington Consensus argue that a deregulation, liberalization, and privatization approach will lead to free trade between states and an increase in foreign direct investment (FDI). **Free trade** is unregulated trade of goods and services between states, usually through the reduction of import and export controls. **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** is domestic investment by a foreign company in the form of exports, the building of a production plant in the host country, an acquisition of a domestic company, or a joint venture.

The idea is that FDI will spur the creation of jobs within a state, leading to increased employment, and the advent of more wealth. Workers will benefit, and higher paying jobs will lead to more consumer spending, encouraging entrepreneurship. The importation of cheaper goods and services will help to lower the cost of living, and these changes will create the conditions for the development of a middle class. If all states were to adopt a neoliberal approach, then the triumph of free-market, capitalist liberal democracies would be complete.

Steger (2020) refers to this discourse as "market globalism," in which a "self-regulating market...serves as the framework for a future global order." For market globalists, capitalism is the end-game; a future in which integrated markets create a global society is one where everyone benefits. This is an optimistic view of economic globalization where people are allowed to participate in a global marketplace of ideas, goods, products, and services. In reality, while economic globalization has led to dramatic global economic growth, a reduction in poverty, and the creation of a sizable middle class, growth in wealth across states remains vastly uneven.

Political Globalization

Political globalization, increased political interconnectedness and interdependence among states, again stems largely from state participation in international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Some argue that the rise in the importance of international institutions eroded state sovereignty, but few (if any) believe that states are on a path to submitting to a world government. Rather, due to political globalization, states engage in **global governance**, the collective effort of the world's states to find lasting solutions to global problems through international institutions. This is sometimes attempted through institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

International institutions are not the only actors crowding the notion of state supremacy. As discussed in Chapter 11, non-state actors can act in a similar manner. These actors may include individuals with the ability to exert significant political influence (e.g., Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors and SpaceX, and Greta Thunburg, a young Swedish climate activist), multinational corporations (e.g., McDonalds and Starbucks), transnational criminal or terrorist organizations, armed resistance groups, and decentralized networks of like-minded individuals who engage in collective action.

Other prolific non-state actors are non-governmental organizations. **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** are private, voluntary organizations that unite, usually for action on specific issues. NGOs lie outside the traditional structure of international politics, but many have a significant impact on world affairs. NGOs derive their power from a variety of sources, most notably moral authority, where members believe that their cause is righteous. This includes many environmental NGOs, such as Greenpeace, that use the media and the strength of their individual activists to promote their cause.

Finally, the discourse of political globalization often focuses on the process of democratization. Neoliberalism assumes not only a convergence in terms of economic governance across states, but also political convergence. That is, the spread of democratic norms were to accompany the diffusion of capitalism. In theory, the increase in the size of a state's middle class stemming from neoliberal policies would ultimately lead to demands for political representation from these citizens. In reality, we have not seen a clear convergence on democratic regimes (for a review of non-democratic regimes and democratic backsliding, return to Chapter 5). Instead, in some states (e.g., Russia and China), we see the emergence of "bureaucratic authoritarianism." **Bureaucratic**

authoritarianism is the management of a state through a strong bureaucratic organization that excludes the popular will of the people, and where decisions are made by technocrats, or subject matter experts.

Cultural Globalization

Cultural globalization stems from the flow of people over the last few decades and the ever-growing flow of information from new technologies. In theory, some scholars argue that the peoples of the world will eventually coalesce into one global civil society, or what Steger (2020) calls the "global imaginary." The **global imaginary** refers to people's growing consciousness of global connectivity, where people think of themselves as global citizens first. Yet, thus far, we have not seen such a shared consciousness.

The end of the Cold War led to growth in **migration**, people moving from one place to another. These movements, usually between states, occur both intentionally and unintentionally. Intentional migration is when a person chooses to move from one place to another, and this includes both immigrants and sojourners. **Immigrants** are migrants who willingly and legally leave their home states to work and live in another state, often possessing needed skill sets or investment capital. **Sojourners** are migrants who temporarily live in a place and return to their home state (e.g., international students and temporary laborers).

Unintentional, or irregular, migration is when a person does not choose to move from one place to another. Unintentional migrants include refugees, asylum-seekers, and internationally-displaced people (IDPs). A **refugee** is a migrant who is outside their home state of nationality or habitual residence who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group. A **temporary asylee** is a migrant who intends to stay in a new place for a brief time, but subsequently cannot return home. **Internally displaced people (IDPs)** are migrants who remain within the borders of their home state, but have fled their homes due to safety concerns.

Cultural globalization stemming from the flow of people can result in new identities in diverse contexts. For example, migration can have a nativist effect on the receiving state. Too much migration often leads to a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment among the public, which is sometimes accompanied by xenophobia and discriminatory action.

Beyond the flow of people, cultural globalization stems from increasing flows of information, particularly through the internet and the rise in social media. Access to websites, document repositories, blogs, discussion communities, and instant news vastly expands individuals' abilities to garner greater social information. The internet, and particularly social media, acts as a sociopolitical venue to share information, democratizing access and allowing all to act as public intellectuals.

In the so-called Arab Spring, for example, youth movements organized through Internet webpages and social media. In Egypt, prior to former President Hosni Mubarak's downfall, activists, organizers, and supporters used Facebook and Twitter instrumentally to gather support in the lead up to the "Day of Revolt" in Cairo's central Tahrir Square (January 25, 2011). As al-Jazeera reported, "the week before Hosni Mubarak's resignation, the total rate of tweets about Egypt surged from 2,300 a day to 230,000 around the world." In response, the Mubarak regime blocked Internet use during the protests. Protesters then used proxy computers to get around censors; they connected to users in Sweden, using dial-up modems. Once the protesters were no longer subject to Egyptian authorities, they published an "Egypt Wiki page – a 'how-to' list for activists to get online and stay connected, [and they] started using text messages to organize their marches" (al Jazeera, 2016). For those unable to get online, protesters also went analog by creating handheld signs with instructions for demonstrating. Per al Jazeera, "If you could not look down at your phone for updates, you could look up and find signs that explained where and when to gather next." In this example, the Egyptian leader's choice to cut Internet access--and hence his attempt to temporarily wipe out a key component fueling cultural globalization--led to unintended consequences. Cutting off information may have led to more citizens taking to the streets, further fueling the revolution.

12.3: Fragmentation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define fragmentation.
- Discuss the differences between economic, political, and cultural fragmentation.
- Reflect on how fragmentation affects individuals and influences government policy.

Introduction

While the forces of globalization strengthen worldwide connections, the forces of fragmentation simultaneously threaten to tear apart existing global structures. **Fragmentation** is the fracturing of established orders, including economic, political, and cultural. Fracturing can take place at several levels, including the individual level, the domestic level, and the global level.

Individually, people have become less trustworthy of the world around them. Steger and James (2019) refer to this as the "**Great Unsettling**," a period in which earlier ways of acting and knowing were upended by globalization, causing uneasiness. The post-Cold War era saw rapid changes in the way individuals work, communicate, buy, learn, and in some cases, physically survive. These changes tend to unsettle relations between "people, machines, regimes, objects, [and] nature," and there is a desire by many to return to a "simpler," more settled, past.

Domestically, fragmentation appears both in election outcomes and in devolution policies. Voters around the world demonstrate less faith in established political parties, offering support to fringe or extremist political parties that had little support in the past. In an effort to better respond to voters' needs, particularly in states with significant ethnic or religious minorities, states use policies of devolution to deliberately transfer some power to subnational governments (for a review of devolution, see Chapter 1).

Globally, we see fragmentation through the resurgence of economic nationalism, attempts by states to protect or bolster their economies for nationalist goals (for a review of economic nationalism, see Chapter 8). We also see fragmentation through growing geopolitical tension between major powers, such as China, Russia, and the United States (U.S.).

In what follows, we will discuss fragmentation on the same three dimensions as we did for globalization: economic, political, and cultural.

Economic Fragmentation

Economic fragmentation links closely with a backlash against globalization, as processes of globalization do not provide equal economic benefits to all individuals within all states. Milanovic's (2016) analysis of global growth illustrates a curvilinear relationship between income growth and income group by percentile. Over the past four decades, the bottom 50 percent saw a total increase in wealth, yet a smaller capitalist elite gained the most. The top one percent saw their wealth grow by 27 percent, and they now control over 40 percent of the world's total wealth.

Globalization has therefore left many behind, with middle and working-class populations in developed economies seeing little to no benefit. This trend started in the 1990s and accelerated with the 2008 global financial crisis. For example, in the U.S., the wages of less-skilled workers, those without a college education, stagnated or declined, and the U.S. median household income remains below its peak in 1999.

Cumbers (2017) suggests that workers in these economies are "economically marginalized," suffering from low levels of social protection, employment rights, and democratic participation in economic decision-making. The deregulation inherent in neoliberalism produces environments where workers experience economic marginalization, fostering fragmentation.

Political Fragmentation

Processes of globalization and economic fragmentation have a direct effect on domestic politics in democracies. In particular, there is a correlation between economic misfortune among citizens and the rise of populism. **Populism** is a political approach that aims to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns go unheard by established political leaders. Populism exists on both ends of the ideological spectrum.

Left-wing populism (social populism) combines populism with socialism, viewing the worker as needing protection from the effects of globalization. Left-wing populists see capitalists as greedy and express a desire to prioritize class allegiance over national attachment. This movement views immigration as a weapon used by global capitalists to pit working class people against each other. This movement has had political success in Latin America in the 2000s.

Right-wing populism (national populism) combines populism with nationalism, viewing the nation as needing protection from the effects of globalization. Right-wing populists see globalists as an enemy that cares nothing about the states they fleece, and they tend to use nationalistic slogans such as "Take our country back!" or "Make our country great again!" Right-wing populist discourse generally centers on three threats: threats to employment, threats to cultural or national identity, and threats to personal security or physical safety. In the aggregate, right-wing populists oppose globalization, immigration, and Washington Consensus policies. Right-wing populists instead promise to give voice to those who feel neglected, if not held in contempt, by increasingly distant political elites (Steger and James, 2019). This movement has had political success in states such as the U.S., United Kingdom (U.K.), and Brazil.

Cultural Fragmentation

Processes of globalization also have impacts on cultural fragmentation. The 2008 global financial crisis exposed cracks in global civil society, causing unemployment levels to spike in highly-developed states and worsen already difficult situations in less-developed states. Since the financial crisis, protest movements erupted worldwide for numerous reasons. Anti-government protests occurred in Hong Kong, India, Iraq, Lebanon, and most of Latin America; so many demonstrations occurred in 2019 that it became widely-referred to as "a year of protests." Reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated protest culture. Even though most states shut down during the early phases of the pandemic, according to the The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), protests actually *increased* by 7 percent in 2020. All of these protests illustrate cultural fragmentation.

Beyond protest, cultural fragmentation can manifest through policy, as it did in "Brexit," the U.K.'s formal withdrawal from the European Union (EU) in 2020.

The EU is a supranational organization, where member-states agree to give up or share sovereignty on particular issue areas. The U.K. joined the EU in 1973 (called the European Economic Community at the time), with the intent of benefiting from closer economic ties. However, as the EU progressively became more political, successive U.K. governments balked. The U.K. opted not to enter into three major EU projects: the Schengen Agreement, where citizens of the EU can move freely without a passport; the European Monetary Union, where states adopted the Euro, a shared currency; and the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Traditionally, the U.K. was a global leader in the promotion of neoliberal policies, but the government's response to the global financial crisis led to general discontent. The Conservative Party adopted a policy of austerity, where the government preferred not to run large budget deficits to strengthen the economy. Austerity measures, such as spending cuts and tax increases, are generally painful for citizens, and they led voters to seek alternative parties, such as the right-wing populist UK Independence Party (UKIP). UKIP campaigned on an explicit anti-immigrant, anti-EU message. Worried about how UKIP's popularity would affect the Conservative Party, Prime Minister David Cameron called a referendum. On June 23, 2016, the U.K. held a referendum to gauge public support for continued British membership in the EU. The majority of voters chose to leave the EU, a radical departure from over 40 years of British involvement in European integration.

The U.K.'s decision to leave the EU resembled a vote of no confidence in the entire European project. Voters who voted to leave the EU frequently cited a greater need for U.K. sovereignty and deep anti-immigration attitudes, showing cultural fragmentation through a resurgence of national identity (and a decrease in commitment to a shared European identity).

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12.4: Concluding Thoughts

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Reflect on the scope and future of comparative politics.

This chapter's discussion of globalization and fragmentation, combined with the full content of this textbook, highlights the continuing importance of studying comparative politics. Comparative politics as a field of study has a wide scope. It examines issues as diverse as democratic and non-democratic regimes; the complex and fragile nature of class, cultural, ethnic, gender, national, political, racial, and religious identities; state-controlled and free market economic systems; economic and political inequalities; public participation in collective action and social movements; and the origins, causes, and consequences of political violence. The forces of globalization and fragmentation exert influence on all of these diverse issues.

Globalization and fragmentation--with their economic, political, and cultural forces--affect individuals across all states. Both can make the world feel "smaller."

The world feeling "smaller" is not inherently a bad thing. In some ways, the world became smaller due to the advent of shared scientific practices that advanced knowledge and understanding across, within, and between states. Cultivating an understanding of how and why social, political, and economic processes develop, and what outcomes these processes lead to (whether successful or unsuccessful), is a precondition for proposing solutions to complex global problems.

The study of comparative politics is unique in that a comparativist's job is to make systematic and intentional comparisons of political phenomena, especially those that are critical to security and stability. With the continuing forces of globalization and fragmentation exerting pressures on states in nuanced ways, new scholars will undoubtedly continue to extend the traditions of the field to new areas of inquiry.

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12.6: Student Resources

Key Terms

- **Bretton Woods System** is a system stemming from a conference held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 that aimed to arrange and manage international economic relations after World War II.
- **Bureaucratic authoritarianism** is the management of a state through a strong bureaucratic organization that excludes the popular will of the people, and where decisions are made by technocrats, or subject matter experts.
- **Free trade** is the unregulated trade of goods and services between countries, usually through the reduction of import and export controls.
- **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** is domestic investment by a foreign company in the form of exports, the building of a production plant in the host country, an acquisition of a domestic company, or a joint venture.
- **Fragmentation** is the fracturing of established orders, including economic, political, and cultural.
- **Global governance** is the collective effort of the world's states to find lasting solutions to global problems through international institutions.
- **Global imaginary** refers to people's growing consciousness of global connectivity, where people think of themselves as global citizens first.
- **Globalization** describes increased interconnectedness and interdependence among states, economies, and cultures.
- **"Great Unsettling"** is period in which earlier ways of acting and knowing were upended by globalization, causing uneasiness.
- **Immigrants** are migrants who willingly and legally leave their home states to work and live in another state, often possessing needed skill sets or investment capital.
- **Internally displaced people (IDPs)** are migrants who remain within the borders of their home state, but have fled their homes due to safety concerns.
- **International institutions** are bodies of authority above the state that codify, maintain, and sometimes enforce sets of rules that govern state behavior.
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** is an international institution that manages the global monetary system and provides loans to states that experience a currency crisis.
- **Left-wing populism (social populism)** combines populism with socialism, viewing the worker as needing protection from the effects of globalization.
- **Migrants** are people who move from one place to another, usually between states.
- **Neoliberalism** is an approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and a reduction of government intervention in the economy.
- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** are private, voluntary organizations that unite, usually for action on specific issues.
- **Populism** is a political approach that aims to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns go unheard by established political leaders.
- **Refugee** is a migrant who is outside their home state of nationality or habitual residence who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group.
- **Right-wing populism (national populism)** combines populism with nationalism, viewing the nation as needing protection from the effects of globalization.
- **Sojourners** are migrants who temporarily live in a place and return to their home state (e.g., international students and temporary laborers).
- **Temporary asylee** is a migrant who intends to stay in a new place for a brief time, but is subsequently unable to return home.
- **World Bank** is an international institution that provides loans and financial assistance to developing states, primarily by funding industrial projects.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO)** is an international institution that supervises the trade agreements between states, with the aim of promoting free trade.

Summary

Section 12.1: Recurring Challenges

States are not the only actors on the international stage, yet states remain the most important unit of analysis in comparative politics. The state faces recurring challenges due to pressures from above and below. Pressure from above comes in the form of globalization. Pressure from below comes through fragmentation.

Section 12.2: Globalization

Globalization is an overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every state. There are three areas in which we observe the effect of globalization on comparative politics: economic, political, and cultural. Economically, the ideology of neoliberalism is a driving force in the global economy. Politically, international institutions work with member-states to promote good global governance. Culturally, societal change stems from the flow of people and information through new technologies.

Section 12.3: Fragmentation

Fragmentation is the fracturing of established orders, and it can take place at the individual, domestic, and global levels. Just as with globalization, we observe the effect of fragmentation on comparative politics through three areas: economic, political, and cultural. Economically, fragmentation occurs due to the uneven benefits from globalization. Politically, fragmentation appears in the rise of populism. Culturally, we observe protests against the handling of state, regional, and global issues.

Section 12.4: Concluding Thoughts

Comparative politics as a field of study has a wide scope. It examines issues as diverse as democratic and non-democratic regimes; the complex and fragile nature of class, cultural, ethnic, gender, national, political, racial, and religious identities; state-controlled and free market economic systems; economic and political inequalities; public participation in collective action and social movements; and the origins, causes, and consequences of political violence. The forces of globalization and fragmentation exert influence on all of these diverse issues.

Review Questions

1. Which two pressures do contemporary states face, each of which reflects a recurring challenge?
 - a. COVID-19 and populism
 - b. globalization and fragmentation
 - c. politics and economics
 - d. migration and technology
2. What is globalization?
 - a. the driving ideology in contemporary globalization, which promotes free-market capitalist principles worldwide
 - b. the formal cooperation between three or more states on a particular issue
 - c. the fracturing of established orders, be they political, economic, or cultural
 - d. increased interconnectedness and interdependence among states, economies, and cultures
3. What is fragmentation?
 - a. the collective efforts of the world's states to find lasting solutions to global problems through the constellation of international institutions
 - b. people's growing consciousness of global connectivity, where people think of themselves as global citizens first
 - c. earlier ways of acting and knowing that have been upended through globalization, causing uneasiness among people
 - d. the fracturing of established orders, be they political, economic, or cultural
4. What was Brexit? How does it represent societal fragmentation?
 - a. the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the European Union
 - b. it led to serious economic and political consequences in the United Kingdom
 - c. both responses are correct
 - d. neither response is correct
5. Why are states still considered the most relevant unit of analysis in comparative politics?

- a. the state remains the central actor in international politics
- b. the impact of globalization is best understood at the state level
- c. the state is where the negative effects of fragmentation are fully realized
- d. all of the above

Answers: 1.b, 2.d, 3.d, 4.c, 5.d

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How have the forces of globalization impacted the state you live in? Has this impact has been positive or negative? Which one of the three aspects of globalization--economic, political, or cultural--has been the most relevant for your society?
2. Have the forces of fragmentation affected your state? If so, how? If not, why?
3. Of the two pressures, globalization and fragmentation, which do you think will have the greater effect in the next ten years? Why?

Suggestions for Further Study

Websites

- [World Policy Institute](#)
- [Yale Global Online](#)
- [UNESCO](#)

Articles

- Birdsall, N. (2012). "Global Citizens and the Global Economy." Center for Global Development.
- Guo, C. (2021). "Globalization and De-globalization." In M. K. Sheikh & I. Svensson (Eds.), Religion, Conflict and Global Society: A Festschrift Celebrating Mark
- Juergensmeyer (pp. 175–182). Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Stepputat, F., & Larsen, J. (2015). "Global political ethnography: A methodological approach to studying global policy regimes." Danish Institute for International Studies.

Books

- Stiglitz, Joseph. (2002) *Globalization and its Discontents*. W. W. Norton & Company
- Wolf, Martin. (2004) *Why Globalization Works*. Yale University Press; First Edition
- Baldwin, Richard. (2019) *The Great Convergence*. Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press; Reprint edition

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GLOSSARY

Chapter One

- **American politics** - a subfield of political science which focuses on political institutions and behaviors within the United States.
- **Area studies** - a traditional method for comparing where scholarship is organized geographically.
- **Between-nation comparisons** - where subnational governments are compared across different countries.
- **Comparative politics** - a subfield of study within political science that seeks to advance understanding of political structures from around the world in an organized, methodological, and clear way.
- **Confederal government** - a system of government where sovereignty is held at subnational levels. (Example: Switzerland, Iraq).
- **Cross-national studies** - a method for comparison similar to area studies but often considered unique as comparison occurs involving two or more countries, not necessarily confined to a single similar region.
- **Federal government** - national or centralized authority differentiated from state and local governments. Federalism is a system where governmental power is shared between the federal, state and local governments. (Example: United States, Canada)
- **Formal institutions** - institutions are based on a clear set of rules that have been formalized. Formal institutions often have the authority to enforce the rules, usually through punitive measures
- **Informal institutions** - institutions are based on an unwritten set of rules that have not necessarily been formalized. Informal institutions are based on conventions on how one should behave.
- **Institutions** - the beliefs, norms and organizations which structure social and political life.
- **International relations** - (sometimes called World Politics, International Affairs or International Studies), a subfield of political science which focuses on how countries **and/or international organizations or bodies interact with each other**.
- **Political economy** - a subfield of political science that considers various economic theories (like capitalism, socialism, communism, fascism), practices and outcomes either within a state, or among and between states in the global system.
- **Political institutions** - they are the space where the majority of politics and political decisions take place.
- **Political philosophy** - (sometimes called political theory), a subfield of political science which reflects on the philosophical origins of politics, the state, government, fairness, equality, equity, authority and legitimacy.
- **Political psychology** - a subfield within political science, which weds together principles, themes and research from both political science and psychology, in order to understand the potential psychological roots for political behavior.
- **Political science** - a field of social and scientific inquiry which seeks to advance knowledge of political institutions, behavior, activities, and outcomes using systematic and logical research methods in order to test and refine theories about how the political world operates.
- **Public policy** - a subfield of political science that explores political policies and outcomes, and focuses on the strength, legitimacy and effectiveness of political institutions within a state or society.
- **Qualitative research** - type of research approach which centers on exploring ideas and phenomena, potentially with the goal of consolidating information or developing evidence to form a theory or hypothesis to test.

- **Qualitative research** - type of research approach categorizing, summarizing and analyzing cases more thoroughly, and possibly individually, to gain greater understanding.
- **Quantitative research** - type of research approach which centers on testing a theory or hypothesis, usually through mathematical and statistical means, using data from a large sample size.
- **Research methods and models** - a subfield of political science in itself, as it seeks to consider the best practices for analyzing themes within political science through discussion, testing and critical analysis of how research is constructed and implemented.
- **Sovereignty** - fundamental governmental power, where the government has the power to coerce those to do things they may not want to do.
- **Subnational studies** - a method for comparison where subnational governments are compared.
- **Unitary government** - a type of government where power is centralized at a national level, sometimes with a President/ Prime Minister and a national Parliament. (Example: France, Britain).
- **Within-nation comparisons** - is studying the subnational governments or institutions within a single country.

Chapter Two

- **Applied research** - defined as “research that attempts to explain social phenomena with immediate public policy implications.”
- **Assumptions** - statements that are taken to be true, or statements that are accepted as true, without proof.
- **Case** - is defined as a “spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time, or over some period of time.”
- **Case study** - an intensive look into that single case, often with the intent that this single case may help us better understand a particular variable of interest.
- **Causal case studies** - case studies “organized around a central hypothesis about how X affects Y”.
- **Causal mechanism** - defined as “portable concepts that explain how and why a hypothesized cause, in a given context, contributes to a particular outcome”.
- **Causal question** - involves discerning cause and effect, also referred to as a causal relationship.
- **Comparative case study** - defined as a study that is structured on the comparison of two or more cases.
- **Deductive reasoning** - occurs when political scientists make an inference and then test its truth using evidence and observations.
- **Dependent variables (outcome variables)** - the assumed effect, their values will (presumably) depend on the changes in the independent variables.
- **Descriptive case studies** - case studies “not organized around a central, overarching causal hypothesis or theory”.
- **Empirical Analysis** - is defined as being based on experiment, experience or observation.
- **Experiment** - defined as “laboratory studies in which investigators retain control over the recruitment, assignment to random conditions, treatment, and measurement of subjects.”
- **Falsifiability** - is a word coined by Karl Popper, a philosopher of science, and is defined as the ability for a statement to be logically contradicted through empirical testing.
- **Hard sciences** - such as chemistry, mathematics, and physics, work to advance scientific understanding in the natural or physical sciences.

- **Hypothesis** - a specific and testable prediction of what you think will happen
- **Independent variables (explanatory variables)** - the cause, and these variables are independent of other variables under consideration in a study.
- **Inductive reasoning** - occurs when scientists look at specific situations and attempt to form a hypothesis.
- **Inference** - is a process of drawing a conclusion about an unobserved phenomenon, based on observed (empirical) information.
- **Literature review** - a section of your research paper or research process which collects key sources and previous research on your research question and discusses the findings in synthesis with each other.
- **Most Different Systems Design (MDSD)** - the cases selected for comparison are different from each other, but outcomes are similar in results.
- **Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD)** - the cases selected for comparison are similar to each other, but outcomes differ in results.
- **Non-falsifiable** - a question cannot be proven true or false under present circumstances, particularly when such questions are subjective.
- **Science** - is defined as the systematic and organized approach to any area of inquiry, and utilizes scientific methods to acquire and build a body of knowledge, political science, as well as comparative politics as a subfield of political science, embody the essence of the scientific method and possess deep foundations for the scientific tools and theory formation which align with their areas of inquiry.
- **Scientific method** - a process by which knowledge is acquired through a sequence of steps, which generally include the following components: question, observation, hypothesis, testing of the hypothesis, analysis of the outcomes, and reporting of the findings.
- **Social sciences** - which are the fields of inquiry that scientifically study human society and relationships.
- **Soft sciences** - like psychology, sociology, anthropology and political science, work to advance scientific understanding of human behavior, institutions, society, government, decision making, and power.
- **Subnational case study research** - when subnational governments, such provincial governments, regional governments, and other local governments often referred to as municipalities, are the cases that are compared.
- **Theory** - a statement that explains how the world works based on experiences and observation.
- **Variable** - is a factor or object that can vary or change.

Chapter Three

- **Anarchy** - defined as a lack of societal structure and order, where there is no established hierarchy of power.
- **Absolute monarchy** - when the monarch is wholly responsible for all decisions, and rules the state with absolute power over all political, economic and social matters.
- **Annex** - to take over a region.
- **Aristocracy** - a form of government where a group of social elites rule the state.
- **Authority** - defined as having the power to get things done. If we put these two terms together, a state is legitimate in its operations if it has the authority to make decisions and carry out its policy goals.
- **Charismatic legitimacy** - means that citizens follow the rules of a state based on the charisma and personality of the current leader.

- **Civil liberties** - defined as individual rights that are protected by law to ensure the government does not unreasonably interfere with certain specific individual rights (e.g. like freedom of speech, religion, assembly, etc.).
- **Constitution(s)** - a state's described laws of the land.
- **Constitutional monarchy** - when a monarch must abide by a state-adopted Constitution, which dictates the scope and depth of its power in all state-related activities.
- **Country** - defined as a nation, which may have one or more states within it, or may change state-type over time.
- **Coup d'etat** - an attempt by elites to overthrow the current government of a state through abrupt seizure of power and removal of the government's leadership.
- **Cult of personality** - occurs when a state leverages all aspects of a leader's real and exaggerated traits to solidify the leader's power.
- **Dictatorship** - a form of government where one person has sole and absolute power over the state.
- **Feudalism** - was a system or social order that arose out of the middle ages, particularly in Europe, wherein peasants (sometimes called Serfs) were forced to provide members of the upper class with their crops, produce, goods as well as their services, fealty and loyalty.
- **Hard power** - the ability to get others to do what you want using physical and potentially aggressive measures, for instance, like fighting, attacking or through war.
- **Junta** - a regime type where there is a small, military group of elites who rule state activities.
- **Legitimacy** - defined as the state's ability to establish itself as a valid power over its citizens.
- **Nation** - can be broadly defined as a population of people joined by common culture, history, language, ancestry within a designated region of territory.
- **Naturalization** - the process by which noncitizens formally become citizens of the country they reside in.
- **Oligarchy** - a form of government where elites rule, though there is not necessarily an assumption of nobility.
- **Personalist dictatorships** - where power lies with a single, charismatic and all powerful person who drives all actions of the state.
- **Political capacity** - the ability of a state to use its power, as derived through authority and legitimacy, to get things done and promote its own interests.
- **Power** - the ability to get others to do what you want them to do.
- **Protectorate** - an area or nation that is managed, possessed, controlled and protected by a different state.
- **Rational-legal legitimacy** - occurs when states derive their authority through firmly established, often written and adopted, laws, rules, regulations, procedures through a constitution.
- **Regime transitions** - occur when a formal government changes to a different government leadership, structure or system.
- **Representative democracy** - where the people elect representatives to serve on their behalf to make the laws and rules of society.
- **Scramble for Africa** - sometimes also called the Conquest of Africa, where Western European powers attempted to control and colonize all parts of Africa.
- **Social contract** - defined as either a formal or informal agreement between the rulers and those ruled in a society.
- **Soft power** - the ability to get others to do what you want them to do using the methods of persuasion or manipulation.

- **State** - defined as a national-level group, organization or body which administers its own legal and governmental policies within a designated region or territory.
- **Strong states** - are those which are able to work their political agendas effectively, to make sure basic political tasks are completed.
- **Traditional legitimacy** - occurs when states have the authority to lead based on historical precedent.
- **Weak states** - are those which are unable to perform basic political tasks, and unable to work the political agenda of the authority in charge. Weak states are typically unable to defend their territories and interests.

Chapter Four

- **Apartheid** - defined as a system of governance wherein racial oppression is institutionalized.
- **Aristocracy** - a form of government where power is held by nobility or those concerned to be of the highest classes within a society.
- **Autocracies** - forms of government where countries are ruled either by a single person or group, who/which holds total power and control.
- **Ba'athist Party** - a former transnational Arab political party that espouses pan-Arab nationalism and socialist economic policies.
- **Checks and balances** - a system that attempts to ensure that no one branch can become too powerful.
- **Congressional legislature** - one where groups of legislators, elected by the people, make laws and share powers with other branches within the government.
- **Consultative legislature** - where the legislature advises the leader, or group of leaders, on issues relating to laws and their application.
- **Democracy** - a government system in which the supreme power of government is vested in the people.
- **Democratic consolidation** - a type of regime transition whereby new democracies evolve from fledgling regimes to established democracies, making them less at risk to fall back into authoritarian regimes.
- **Direct democracy** - a government system that enables citizens to vote directly, or participate directly, in the formation of laws, public policy and government decisions.
- **Elections** - the mechanism through which leaders get chosen around the world.
- **Electoral** - an adjective which means relating to elections or electors.
- **Electoral democracy** - a form of representative democracy where political leaders are elected through an election (electoral) process to exercise political power and manage the basic tasks of government operations.
- **Electoral systems** - also known as a country's system of voting; an electoral system provides a set of rules that dictate how elections (and other voting initiatives) are conducted and how results are determined and communicated.
- **Executive branch** - typically made up of a singular leader, a leader with an assistant (vice-president) or a small group of leaders who have institutional powers.
- **Fair elections** - those in which all votes carry equal weight, are counted accurately, and the election results are able to be accepted by parties. Ideally, the following standards are met to ensure elections are free and fair.
- **Free elections** - those where all citizens are able to vote for the candidate of their choice. The election is free if all citizens who meet the requirements to vote (e.g. are of lawful age and meet the citizenship requirements, if they exist), are not prevented from participating in the election process.

- **Flawed democracies** - those where elections are free and fair, and basic civil liberties are protected, but issues exist which may hamper the democratic process.
- **Head of government** - refers to the chief executives who must run and manage the day-to-day business of the state.
- **Head of state** - refers to when the chief executive must represent the country in formal gatherings as well as for ceremonial responsibilities.
- **Illiberal democracies** - those regimes where elections occur, but civil liberties are not protected.
- **Indirect democracy** - channels the power of the people through representation, where citizens elect representatives to make laws and government decisions on their behalf.
- **Judicial review** - is the ability to interpret the constitutionality of laws, and in doing so, the ability to overturn decisions made by lesser courts when doing so.
- **Judiciary** - refers to the part of government where laws can be interpreted and enforced.
- **Legislative branch** - tasked with performing three main functions: (1) making and revising laws; (2) providing administrative oversight to ensure laws are being properly executed; (3) and providing representation of the constituents to the government.
- **No-fly zone** - when a foreign power intervenes to prevent that country or another country from gaining air superiority.
- **Majoritarian voting system** - an electoral system where candidates must win a majority in order to win the election. If they do not win a majority, there needs to be a runoff election.
- **Parliamentary legislature** - where members are elected by the people, enacts laws on their behalf, and also serves as the executive branch of government.
- **Parliamentary system** - sometimes called parliamentary democracy, a system of government where the chief executive, usually a Prime Minister, attains their role through election by the legislature.
- **Plurality voting system** - an electoral system where the candidate who gets the most votes, wins. In this system, there is no requirement to attain a majority, so this system can sometimes be called the first-past-the-post system.
- **Political parties** - groups of people who are organized under shared values to get their candidates elected to office to exercise political authority.
- **Presidential system** - a system of government, sometimes called a single executive system, where the head of government is a president who leads the executive branch of government.
- **Primitive democracy** - small communities have face-to-face discussions in order to make decisions.
- **Proportional voting system** - an electoral system where voting options reflect geographical or political divisions in the population to enable a proportional leadership when elected.
- **Semi-presidential system** - sometimes called the dual executive system, a system of government where a country has both a president and a prime minister and cabinet.
- **Separation of powers** - a term that divides government functions into three areas: the legislature, tasked primarily with the making of laws; the executive, who carries out or enforces these laws; and the judiciary, tasked with interpreting the constitutionality of laws.
- **Suffrage** - the right to vote in political elections and propose referendums.
- **Waves of democracy** - moments in history when multiple countries transition to democracy during the same time period.

Chapter Five

- **Clientelism** - system of exchange in which political elites obtain the political loyalty of clients by distributing resources to clients.
- **Corruption** - misuse of public resources for private gain.
- **Democratic backsliding** - when a democracy degrades and becomes more illiberal, authoritarian or autocratic.
- **Hybrid regime** - non-democratic form of governance that exhibits characteristics of different types of non-democracies.
- **Illiberal regime** - non-democratic form of governance that presents a façade of liberal institutions.
- **Military rule** - non-democratic rule by a country's military elites.
- **Monarchy** - non-democratic rule by a single individual, with legitimacy typically based in tradition and/or divine right.
- **Non-democracy** - regimes which deny citizens meaningful institutional channels for making choices about their collective well-being.
- **Oligarchy** - non-democratic rule by a political elite with control over national wealth and resources.
- **Paramilitary** - refers to state-affiliated groups with access to military tools and training, usually employed to carry out violence on behalf of the state.
- **Patronage networks** - refers to social relations that involve the exchange of resources in exchange for loyalty.
- **Personalist rule** - non-democratic rule by a single individual, with legitimacy typically based in charisma and/or other political authority such as a ruling ideology or tradition.
- **Political accountability** - institutional channels for holding political leaders responsible for their decisions and actions.
- **Political competition** - presence of multiple options in political life, for example more than one political party, candidate for office, or policy position.
- **Propaganda** - biased information meant to convince an audience of a particular perspective or narrative.
- **Sharp power** - efforts by one country to use information war and diplomatic tactics to undermine the institutions of a target country, often a democracy.
- **Single-party rule** - non-democratic rule by a political party.
- **Theocracy** - non-democratic rule by elites who are legitimated by sacred texts.
- **Totalitarian regime** - non-democratic rule that seeks total control over society by a ruler or political elites.
- **Typology** - descriptive means to divide a category into sub-categories based on underlying characteristics of items in the category.

Chapter Six

- **Arab Spring** - a series of protests against oppressive government regions in the Middle East that sometimes resulted in violence.
- **Biological sex** - refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, etc.
- **Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s** - a movement that attempted to ensure equal treatment under the law for Black and African American citizens in the United States.

- **Culture** - broadly defined, is the combination of customs, social institutions, arts, media, and social, economic, political achievements of a social group.
- **Ethnicity** - a broader term than race. Used to categorize groups of people according to their own relation to culture.
- **Gender** - broadly defined as a spectrum of characteristics ranging from feminine to masculine, and gender tends to have more to do with how a person wants to identify.
- **January 6th 2021 United States Capitol Attack** - an event in the United States where approximately 2,000- 2,500 supporters of then President Donald Trump attacked the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. with the intent of overturning the 2020 election results where Joseph Biden won the presidency.
- **Norms** - defined as standard practices, rules, patterns and behaviors that are considered acceptable in a society.
- **Parochialism** - a system where citizens are not involved, engaged, or remotely aware of the political operations in their country.
- **Participant system** - a system where citizens are aware of government actions, are able to influence and participate in governmental decisions, and at the same time, they must abide by the laws and rules of the government.
- **Political identity** - how a person or group of persons think of themselves in relation to the politics and government of a country.
- **Political mobilization** - defined as organized activities intended to motivate groups of participants to take political action on a particular issue.
- **Political socialization** - the process in which our political beliefs are formed over time.
- **Postmaterialism** - the extent to which a political culture focuses or cares about issues which are not of immediate physical and material concern, like human rights and environmental concerns.
- **Race** - defined “a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits.”
- **Sex-selective abortion** - a practice of terminating a pregnancy once the sex of the infant is known.
- **Sexual orientation** - defined as the sustained pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of opposite sex or gender, same sex or gender, or to both.
- **Society** - broadly defined, refers to a population which has organized itself based on shared ideas for how the world acts and should act through both formal and informal institutions.
- **Subject system** - a system where citizens are somewhat aware and responsive of their governmental systems, and at the same time, heavily controlled and legislated by their governments.
- **Trust** - the extent to which citizens believe in the reliability, validity, or truth of their government and their fellow citizens, plays a significant role in political outcomes.
- **Women’s suffrage** - the right of women to vote in elections, over 180 countries now allow women to vote in some capacity.

Chapter Seven

- **Behaving** - religious commitment, or behaving according to values privileged by religion.
- **Believing** - religious belief or believing in certain religious propositions.
- **Belonging** - religious affiliation, or belonging to a religious faith, a religious tradition, or a denomination/sect within a particular religion.
- **Bonding** - religious ritual, or bonding by means of spiritual practices and rituals. These are the experiences that people go through, either individually, but more likely together as a community.

- **Citizenship** - implies a legal status rather than a feeling of belonging. Different from national or political identity.
- **Class Identity** - how a person or group of persons think of themselves based on economic and/or social status.
- **Conscription** - an enrollment program that requires young men, and in a few cases young women, to compulsorily enlist in their militaries through a draft.
- **Constructivist identity** - the idea that people have multiple identities and that as people change, so can either the importance of a particular identity, or the adoption of a new identity altogether.
- **Elites** - the upper socio-economic class with consequential political power and social capital.
- **Elite theory** - the idea that the elite not only have power, but that they intentionally use it for their own benefit.
- **Exclusionary nationalism** - a form of nationalism that includes certain people and either implicitly or explicitly excludes others.
- **Four B's of religious identity** - believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding.
- **Hyperpluralist society** - a society with many groups, but groups whose priorities are so divergent as to make finding compromise and agreement on shared values with others in society unachievable.
- **Identity politics** - refers to the "tendency for people of a particular religion, race, social background, etc., to form exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional broad-based party politics."
- **Intersectionality** - a situation where the interconnectedness of various identities and categories can lead to the marginalization or to the privilege of particular people and/or groups.
- **Irredentism** - when one state wants a territory that previously belonged to it to rejoin it.
- **Liberal nationalism** - the idea that every group of people with a clear national identity should have their own state.
- **Marxism** - an approach to political economy that is based on the idea of class conflict - between the owner and worker classes.
- **Multinational state** - a state that contains multiple nations.
- **National identity** - how a person or group of persons think of themselves as belonging to and representing the values and traits of a nation.
- **Nationalism** - defined as an ideology where devotion and loyalty to one's state proves more important than other interests.
- **Nation-state** - a state where all or most of the people in that state belong to a single nation.
- **Patriotism** - described as pride in one's state.
- **Pluralist society** - a society with many identity groups, with different backgrounds, religions and traditions, but where an overarching identity exists that can include everyone living within the country.
- **Primordial identity** - the idea that one's identity is fixed at birth. A religious identity that claims to predate the religion itself.
- **Religious identity** - how a person or group of persons think of themselves as belonging to and representing the values of a particular religion and/or religious sect.
- **Religiosity** - the strength of a person's commitment to religion.
- **Separatist movements** - defined as attempts by members of a group of people who seek to establish their own government, separate from the country they reside in.
- **Social capital** - defined as having connections and access to networks of other elites so as to increase one's influence

beyond just economic resources.

- **Socioeconomic class** - defined as the combination of social factors, such as level of education and occupation.
- **Veil of ignorance** - a hypothetical system where people are asked to make policy decisions without knowing who would be affected. The argument is that people would create fair policies, without respect to class, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- **Working class** - defined as those engaged in manual-labor occupations or industrial work. Often, members of the working class are without a four-year college degree.

Chapter Eight

- **Bourgeoisie** - a term that refers to the upper middle classes, who often own most of a society's wealth and means of production.
- **Capitalism** - also referred to as free market capitalism, is a political-economic system where individuals and private entities are able to own land and capital needed to produce goods and services.
- **Command and control** - defined as a type of political economy where the government owns most, if not all, means of production in a society.
- **Communism** - where the state, usually dominated by one party, is in complete control of the political economic system, including all property.
- **Comparative advantage** - refers to the goods, services or activities that one state can produce or provide more cheaply or easily than other states.
- **Comparative political economy (CPE)** - defined as the comparison across and between countries of the ways in which politics and economics interact.
- **Competition** - occurs when industries, economic firms and individuals vie to obtain goods, products and services at the lowest prices.
- **Cultural Revolution** - a socio-political and economic movement that sought to expel capitalists and promote the Communist ideology.
- **Democratic socialism** - seeks democracy not just in the political sphere but in the economic sphere as well.
- **Economic growth** - the process by which a country's wealth increases over time.
- **Economic liberalism** - defined as a political economic ideology that promotes free market capitalism through deregulation, privatization and the loosening of government controls.
- **Economic nationalism** - defined as attempts by a state to protect or bolster its economy for nationalist goals.
- **Economic structuralism** - defined as a political economic system wherein the working class must be protected from exploitation of the capital owning class, but on an international scale.
- **Economies of scale** - the ability to "produce goods at a lower average cost"
- **Fair competition** - in capitalism affirms that industries will work to maximize their output and minimize costs to compete with similar industries, forcing the market to provide competitive options to consumers.
- **Fiscal policy** - collectively refers to a country's systems of taxation, spending, and regulation.
- **Great Leap Forward** - a plan which asked the Chinese people to spontaneously increase production in all sectors of the economy at the same time.
- **Import-substitution industrialization (ISI)** - refers to a country's attempt to reduce its dependence on foreign companies through increased domestic production.

- **Inflation** - defined as a general increase in prices, usually within a given time.
- **Informal sector** - also known as the informal economy, is that part of the economy consisting of people producing goods and providing services outside of regular employment.
- **International political economy (IPE)** - defined as the study of political economy from a global perspective or through international institutions.
- **International trade** - defined as the exchange of goods, services, and activities between countries.
- **Laissez-faire** - defined as a type of political system where the government chooses not to interfere or intervene in its national economy.
- **Market** - defined as the exchange of goods and services within a given territory.
- **Marxism** - defined as a political economic system wherein the means of production are collectively owned by workers, not privately owned by individuals.
- **Mercantilism** - defined as a political economic system which seeks to maximize a country's wealth through increasing exports and limiting imports.
- **Monetary policy** - defined as the actions taken by a state's central bank to affect the money supply.
- **Non tariff regulatory barriers** - restrictions on trade not involving a tariff or a quota.
- **Private goods** - defined as an economic resource which are acquired or owned exclusively by a person or group.
- **Property** - defined as a resource or commodity that a person or group legally owns.
- **Property rights** - defined as the legal authority to dictate how property, whether tangible or intangible, is used or managed.
- **Protectionism** - defined as policies protecting a country's domestic industry through subsidies, favorable tax treatment, or imposing tariffs on foreign competitors.
- **Public goods** - defined as goods and services provided by the state that are available for everyone in society; are nonexcludable and nonrival in nature.
- **Purchasing Parity Power (PPP)** - a metric used to compare the prices of goods and services to gauge the absolute purchasing power of a currency.
- **Quotas** - limits on the number of foreign goods coming into a country.
- **Recession** - defined as two consecutive quarters (three months) of declining economic activity.
- **Regulation** - defined as rules imposed by a government on society.
- **Self-interest** - the means through which individuals can act on their own behalf to make choices that benefit themselves.
- **Sin taxes** - taxes levied on a product or activity that are deemed harmful to society.
- **Social democracy** - defined as a political and economic system that favors heavy market regulation to achieve a more equal society.
- **Social market economy** - is a socioeconomic system that combines principles of capitalism with domestic social welfare considerations.
- **State capitalism** - where a high level of state intervention exists in a market economy, usually through state-owned enterprises (SOEs).
- **Statism** - defined as a political economic system where the government often takes on an enterprising role, usually through a state.

- **Tariffs** - taxes imposed on imported foreign products with the purpose of making those products more expensive
- **Taxation** - defined as the process of a government collecting money from its citizens, corporations, and other entities.
- **Versailles Treaty** - treaty which ended the first World War.
- **Wealth distribution** - defined as how a country's goods, investments, properties, and resources, or *wealth*, are divided amongst its population.
- **Zero-sum game** - a situation where one person, or entity, gains at the equal cost of another.

Chapter Nine

- **Collective action** - Any activity in which coordination by and across individuals has the potential to lead to achievement of a common objective.
- **Common pool resource** - Something provided to some or all in a society; it is nonexcludable but rivalrous in consumption.
- **Cooperation game** - A strategic scenario illustrating how players have incentives to work together or not work together to realize common goals.
- **Diffusion** - The spread of an idea, movement, tactics, strategies, and other resources across international borders.
- **Framing** - The deliberate representation of a concept or problem to resonate with intended audiences.
- **Free rider problem** - Occurs when an individual who seeks to benefit from the gains achieved by others but does not contribute to the achievement of those gains.
- **Information and communication technologies (ICT)** - Platforms which provide the means for members of a social movement to communicate with one another and intended audiences. ICTs can include radio, television, social media platforms, and so forth.
- **Social movement** - A subset of collective action in which a group of people outside of established political institutions organize to achieve an objective.
- **Structure** - Social forces which constrain the choices available to an individual or group at a given time; the broader social context within which action takes place.

Chapter Ten

- **Afrobarometer** - a public opinion survey focused on surveying people in countries across the African continent.
- **Agents of socialization** - different factors that have helped mold who we are today, and our political views.
- **AmericasBarometer (LAPOP)** - a public opinion organization focused on surveying people in countries across North, Central, South American and Caribbean regions.
- **Arab Barometer** - a public opinion survey focused on surveying people in countries across the Middle East and North Africa.
- **Asian Barometer** - a public opinion survey focused on surveying people in countries across the Asian continent.
- **Barometer** - another, more general term, for a survey.
- **Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP)** - a partnership of scholars who conduct election surveys on five continents.
- **Comparative public opinion** - the research and analysis of public opinion across two more countries.

- **Eurasia Barometer** - a public opinion survey focused on surveying people in countries across eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- **Focus group** - a small subset of individuals that are exposed to a treatment of some kind and then are asked about their impressions of that treatment.
- **Framing effects** - an effect that could influence a respondent's answer by how the question is presented.
- **Latino Barometer** - a public opinion survey focused on surveying people in Latin American countries.
- **Margin of error** - a statistical estimation of the accuracy of one's sample.
- **Priming effects** - questions that have a respondent thinking about a certain subject matter they may have not been normally thinking about or thinking about at that time.
- **Public opinion poll** - a random sample of subjects from a broader pool of citizens who are interviewed and whose answers are used to make inferences on that larger body.
- **Public opinion** - the views and opinions of the public at large.
- **Representative sample** - a sample that has all the same features and elements at the same proportions of the larger body.
- **Survey** - a set of questions that asks individuals, known as respondents, to share their beliefs, attitudes, and views on policy and political issues or individuals.
- **Survey questions** - included in surveys and consist of questions with multiple choice, true/false, and open-ended response options.
- **World Values Survey (WVS)** - an international research program devoted to the scientific and academic study of social, political, economic, religious and cultural values of people in the world.

Chapter Eleven

- **Assistance model of state-sponsored terrorism** - when a state tacitly supports and encourages terrorist actions in other countries.
- **Caliphate** - a political arrangement where the government is ruled based on the idea of Islamic rules.
- **Civil war (political science definition)** - a conflict between a rebel group and the government who are politically and militarily organized with stated political objectives that take place in the territory of a state that is a member of the international system with a population of at least 500,000.
- **Civil war (simple definition)** - an armed conflict between two or more groups where one of the combatants is the government.
- **Consent-based (traditional) peacekeepers** - peacekeepers that have been invited by the belligerents.
- **Counterinsurgency** - defined as a government's efforts to reduce and/or mitigate political violence instigated by insurgents.
- **Counterterrorism policies** - government's efforts to prevent terrorism from occurring.
- **Covert repression as policy** - actions undertaken by secret police services, or domestic intelligence agencies to enforce repressive policy.
- **Existential threat** - a threat to the existence of the state itself.
- **External sponsored political violence** - when a government uses violence against foreign citizens, usually in neighboring countries.

- **External threat** - a threat determined to be outside the borders of a country.
- **Grievance explanation** - says that political violence along communal lines is jointly a product of deep-seated grievances about the status of the group and the situationally motivated political interests that various political actors desire to pursue.
- **Guerrilla warfare** - a type of military conflict where small, lightly armed bands engage in guerrilla warfare from a rural base that targets the state.
- **Indiscriminate violence** - defined as the use of violence that is random in nature.
- **Insurgency** - an act of uprising or revolt against a government and/or the state.
- **Internal sponsored political violence** - when a government uses violence against its own citizens.
- **Internal threat** - a threat determined to be within the borders of a country.
- **Intrastate political violence** - political violence that wholly or largely occurs within a state or country.
- **Jummas (hill people)** - a group of ethnically distinct tribes living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area, so named due to their particular crop cultivation method of slash and burn.
- **Kurds** - an ethnic group, speaking a Indo-Iranian language, native to the mountainous region of Kurdistan.
- **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)** - the name of the Kurdish insurgency movement in Southwestern Turkey.
- **Lootable resources** - defined as accessible natural resources, such as oil, minerals and precious metals that can confer wealth on those who own, mine or transport them.
- **Low-intensity conflict (LIC)** - is defined as a level of hostilities or use of military power that falls short of a full-scale conventional or general war.
- **Monopoly on the use of violence** - only the state and its institutions, such as the police or the military, have the authority to use violence, when necessary.
- **Negotiated settlements** - defined as successful discussions between combatants where an agreement is reached to end political violence.
- **Non-state actors** - political actors not associated with a government.
- **Nonviolence movements** - defined as movements that engage in nonviolent practices to accomplish political goals. Tactics can include protests, boycotts, sit-ins, and civil disobedience.
- **Overt repression as policy** - state repression through official state policy.
- **Patronage model of state-sponsored terrorism** - when a state actively participates and encourages terrorist actions in other countries.
- **Peacebuilding** - defined as the implementation of structures to promote sustainable peace.
- **Peace enforcement missions** - occur when consent is not required or peacekeeping forces were not invited by the belligerents.
- **Peacekeeping forces** - refer "to the deployment of national or, more commonly, multinational forces for the purpose of helping to control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states".
- **Physical violence** - the use of physical force to exert power.
- **Political violence** - the use of physical harm is motivated by political intentions.
- **Psychological explanation of terrorism** - the idea that the violence itself is the desired outcome as opposed to being

the means to the end.

- **Rational choice explanation of terrorism** - the idea that the use of terrorism is a result of a willful strategy based on a careful political calculation.
- **Rebellion** - an act of violently challenging the government or existing ruler in order to bring attention to the status quo with which the challengers are dissatisfied.
- **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** - if a state refuses to protect its own citizens, then other states are expected to intervene in the state where abuses are occurring.
- **Revolution** - is a public seizure of the state in order to overturn the existing government and regime.
- **Secession** - defined as the act of formal withdrawal or separation from a political entity, usually a state.
- **Selective violence** - when a government only targets active participants in the war and/or those who commit political violence.
- **Spoilers** - disaffected individuals who may disagree with a negotiated settlement and prefer political violence to peace.
- **State-sponsored political violence** - characterized as “official government support for policies of violence, repression, and intimidation”.
- **State-sponsored terrorism** - government support for terrorist actions in other states.
- **Terrorism** - defined as a violent act that generally targets noncombatants for political purposes.
- **Third-party guarantor** - defined as an external force that can enforce the provisions of a negotiated settlement.
- **Transnational** - defined as “events, activities, ideas, trends, processes and phenomena that appear across national boundaries and cultural regions”.
- **Transnational political violence** - defined as political violence that occurs across different countries or crosses state borders.
- **Violence** - the deliberate infliction of harm on people.

Chapter Twelve

- **Bretton Woods System** - a conference held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944 to arrange and manage international economic relations after World War II.
- **Brexit** - the term used to describe the UK's decision to leave the European Union.
- **Bureaucratic authoritarianism** - the management of a country through a strong bureaucratic organization that excludes the popular will of the people, and where decisions are made by technocrats, or subject matter experts.
- **Digital immigrants** - people who did not grow up with today's technology.
- **Digital natives** - people who were raised with technology.
- **Economic marginalization** - an environment where workers feel like they have no control over their economics, and to a lesser extent, their lives.
- **Free trade** - the unregulated trade of goods and services between countries, usually through the reduction of import and export controls.
- **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** - the domestic investment by a foreign company, where the investment can be in the form of exports, the building of a production plant in the host country, an acquisition of a domestic company, or a joint venture.

- **Fragmentation** - understood as the fracturing of established orders, be they political, economic, or cultural.
- **Geopolitics** - defined as the study of the geographical aspects of political phenomena.
- **Global governance** - the collective efforts of the world's countries to find lasting solutions to global problems through the constellation of international institutions.
- **Global imaginary** - refers to people's growing consciousness of global connectivity, where people think of themselves as global citizens first.
- **Globalization** - an overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every country. Defined by Steger as growing worldwide interconnectivity.
- **Glocalization** - defined by Steger as the "thickening of the global-local nexus".
- **Great Unsettling** - earlier ways of acting and knowing that have been upended through globalization, causing uneasiness among people.
- **Immigrants** - migrants who willingly and legally left their home countries to work and live in another country.
- **Intentional migration** - migrants who choose to move from one place to another.
- **Internally displaced people (IDPs)** - unintentional migrants who have not crossed a border to find safety.
- **International institutions** - bodies of authority above the state that codify, maintain and sometimes enforce, sets of rules that govern state behavior.
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** - an international institution that manages the global monetary system and provides loans to countries that experience a currency crisis.
- **Internet** - an interconnected global computer network that allows for communication and information sharing that rose to prominence in the 1990s.
- **Leftist-populism** - characterized by a combination of populism with some form of socialism. In leftist-populism, the 'worker' needs protection from globalization.
- **Market globalism** - Steger defines it as a discourse where a "self-regulating market...serves as the framework for a future global order."
- **Migrants** - people who move from one place to another, usually between countries.
- **Multilateralism** - the formal cooperation between three or more states on a particular issue.
- **National-populism** - characterized by a combination of right-wing populism with nationalism. In national-populism, the 'nation' needs protection from globalization.
- **Neoliberalism** - the driving ideology in contemporary globalization. It promotes free-market capitalist principles worldwide.
- **Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** - private, voluntary organizations that unite, usually for action on specific issues.
- **Populism** - denunciation of the elites in a country and the idea that politics should be an expression of the general will.
- **Refugee** - a person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group.
- **Sojourners** - migrants who temporarily live in a place & return to their home country. This included international & study abroad students and also temporary labor.
- **Supranational** - where member-states agree to give up or share sovereignty on particular issue areas. The European Union (EU) is an example.

- **Temporary asylee** - a person who intends to stay in a new place for a brief time, but is subsequently unable to return home.
- **Unintentional migration** - migrants who do not choose to move from one place to another.
- **Washington Consensus** - the collective efforts of the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO to promote neoliberalism. So named because the World Bank and the IMF are headquartered in Washington, DC.
- **World Bank** - an international institution that provides loans and financial assistance to developing countries, primarily by funding industrial projects.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO)** - an international institution that supervises the trade agreements between countries, with the aim of promoting free trade.

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