COMPARATIVE POLITICS

INTEGRATING THEORIES, METHODS, AND CASES | THIRD EDITION

J. Tyler Dickovick
Jonathan Eastwood

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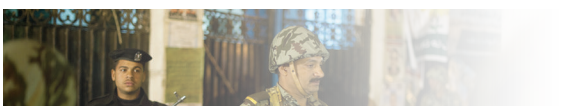

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Preface

The field of comparative politics is changing, not only in how it's studied but in how it's taught. We set out to write this textbook because we saw the need for a new approach—one that is truly comparative, that goes beyond a litany of facts or abstract ideas. In the process, we had to rethink what a book for this course should look like. We started with a central aim: to get students to think like comparativists. Toward that end, we have integrated theories and methods with a range of country case applications to address the big questions in comparative politics today.

Many undergraduates take a course in comparative politics because they are broadly interested in world affairs. They want to understand issues such as democracy and democratization, economic and social development, transnational social movements, and the relationship between world religions and conflict around the globe, just as we did as students (and still do!). This book focuses squarely on these big issues and offers a framework for understanding through comparison.

Our job is to teach students how to think critically, how to analyze the world around them. We want our students to do more than just memorize facts and theories. Ultimately, we want them to learn how to *do* comparative politics. This course is successful if students can use the comparative method to seek out their own answers. We are successful as educators if we give them the analytical skills to do so.

What's New in This Edition?

We have updated this edition of *Comparative Politics* to reflect feedback we received from numerous readers, instructors, and students, not to mention our own experiences of teaching with the book. We are truly grateful to those who have shared their perspectives with us, and we have made the following revisions throughout the book:

- Amplified and enhanced discussions on the United States, Russia, China, and North Korea to incorporate the most current developments
- Updated information on international elections and the Trump administration in the United States, with further coverage on the growth of populist and nationalist movements across the globe
- Revisions and updates to the Country Profiles and Thinking Comparatively features
- New Case Studies and Insights, and revisions, where necessary, to existing ones
- Broad revisions to figure and table data, as well as maps.

An Integrative Approach

One of the distinctive features of this book is the *way* we have integrated theories, methods, and cases. Rather than focusing on either country information or themes of comparative politics, we have combined these approaches while emphasizing application and analysis. By providing students with the tools to begin doing their own analyses, we hope to show them how exciting this kind of work can be. These tools include theories (presented in an accessible way), the basics of the comparative method, and manageable case materials for practice, all in the context of the big questions.

We thus take an integrative approach to the relationship between big themes and country case studies. This text is a hybrid containing sixteen thematic chapters plus linked materials for twelve countries of significant interest to comparativists. The country materials following the thematic chapters include both basic country information and a series of case studies dealing with specific thematic issues.

We link the country cases to the thematic chapters via short "call out" boxes—**"Cases in Context"**—at relevant points in the chapters. For example, a "Case in Context" box (titled "Democracy's Success in India: What Can We Learn from a Deviant Case?") in a discussion of theory in chapter 6, "Democracy and Democratization," points students to a full **case study** on democratization in India, included at the back of the text.

CASE IN CONTEXT

Democracy's Success in India: What Can We Learn from a Deviant Case?

PAGE 466

India is a major anomaly for modernization theories of development. In essence, the relationship between its political and economic development has been the inverse of what modernization theory would predict. India is the world's second largest society and its largest democracy—consider, therefore, the share that Indian citizens hold in the world's broader democratic population. This anomaly has potentially serious implications and makes the puzzle of Indian democratization all the more intriguing.

For more on the case of democratization in India, see the case study in Part VI, p. 466. As you read it, keep in mind the following questions:

1. What, if anything, does Indian anti-colonial resistance have to do with the country's democratization?
2. What, if anything, does Indian democratization suggest about the importance of individual actors, leadership, and institutional design?
3. Can you think of a way to "save" modernization theory in the face of the case of India?

Indian Voters, 2017, in Uttar Pradesh state. India is the world's largest democracy.

CASE STUDY

Democracy's Success in India: What Can We Learn from a "Deviant Case"?

CHAPTER 6, PAGE 136

How does modernization theory account for low-income democracies such as India? As discussed in chapter 6, modernization theory predicts that economic development will lead to democratization and democratic consolidation. Indeed, this relationship generally holds. More often than not, increasing economic development increases the probability that any given society will have democratic politics. India, however, poses a major anomaly for some versions of modernization theory. Given that India's population is approximately one-seventh of the world's population, this anomaly is not easily dismissed.

Why does India constitute an anomaly or "deviant case" for modernization theory? India only recently began to see notable economic development; and for most of the twentieth century, the country was profoundly poor. Modernization would lead us to suspect authoritarian governance under these conditions. Yet after decolonization, India defied pessimists and built the world's largest democracy, one that has now endured for decades. There are several conclusions that one could draw from this. We could decide that this anomaly disproves or refutes modernization theory, and turn to some other theory of democratization. For example, we could turn to institutional theories of democratization as an alternative. Perhaps something about the parliamentary form of government rather than presidential government contributed to India's rather successful democracy (as is discussed in chapter 10); one could consider the Indian case to test this hypothesis. For example, has the parliamentary system with its multiparty coalitions and governments that are accountable to the legislature resulted in more power-sharing and less "winner-take-all" politics? Has it resulted in a prime ministerial "style" that is less centralized than in presidential systems? There is evidence both for and against the argument that parliamentarism has been a cause of India's democratic success.

Another alternative, though, would be to use a deviant case like India's democracy to amend or clarify the nature of the original theory. What if modernization theory is not making the law-like generalization that development leads inevitably to democratization, but rather a "weaker" claim that economic development *facilitates* democratization and democratic consolidation? Why would this be different? Because the theory would now say that it is *unlikely* that India could successfully democratize without first achieving a higher level of economic development, but not that it is *impossible*. A more flexible theory of modernization might be compatible by including insights from other theories. For example, perhaps modernization theory could be linked to institutional theories, like the one on parliamentarism mentioned previously. Maybe parliamentarism is particularly called for as a form of institutional design when the society in question has a relatively low level of economic development. We are speculating here for the sake of argument and not proposing this theory; India's history of development and democracy does not and cannot prove this assertion. Rather, it might suggest this hypothesis, which we could then test through the examination of other well-selected cases. In general, deviant cases are useful. We should be pleased when we find them, as they help us to critically assess existing theories, modifying or rejecting them as appropriate.

Another "Case in Context" box in chapter 6 (titled "Is China Destined for Democracy?") invites students to consider whether democratization in China is inevitable. Other boxes in that chapter focus on issues of democracy and democratization in Brazil and the United States.

Using these short "linking" boxes has enabled us to integrate a complete set of case materials without interrupting the narrative flow of the chapters. The kind of reading we suggest with the structure of this text is similar to following hyperlinks in online text—something students do easily. This flexible design feature also

caters to the diversity of teaching styles in today's political science. Instructors can choose to have students follow these links to case studies as they go, using all or just some of them, or they can choose to teach thematic chapters and country materials separately.

The text integrates theories, methods, and cases in other ways as well. **"Insights"** boxes make connections by briefly summarizing important scholarly works representative of the major schools of thought.

INSIGHTS

Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity

by Liah Greenfeld

Greenfeld argues that nationalism is fundamentally *cultural* and needs to be understood as an imaginative response to social conditions. To understand nationalism's emergence and growth, we must understand why the idea spread that humanity is divided into distinct "peoples" who are "sovereign" and "equal." For Greenfeld, the key preconditions for the development of national identity are problems in *stratification systems* through which societies hierarchically divide themselves, such as the class structure. Elite *status inconsistency*—a condition present when the stratification system breaks down and elites are no longer sure of their status—leads some groups to seek to transform identity, and national identity often seems to such groups to serve their interests well. Greenfeld examines this hypothesis against a number of cases (including England, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan), finding pronounced status inconsistency in each case in the key groups that are most central in redefining their societies as nations. At the same time, Greenfeld acknowledges the importance of institutions like the state prior to national identity's emergence in helping to shape the type that develops in any given case. Scholars working with this theory also note that political institutions play an important role in spreading and preserving national identity.

Liah Greenfeld, Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. *Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.*

Each chapter after the introduction chapter (chapter 1) closes with a **"Thinking Comparatively"** feature, which focuses on *a* case or set of cases to illustrate how students can apply the theories discussed in the chapter.

Why Did Zimbabwe Become and Remain Authoritarian?

Authoritarian regimes come in many varieties, and they come from many different origins. We have emphasized that there is no single thing called "authoritarianism" that one theory can explain. Rather, authoritarian regimes have distinct features and exhibit many different types of transitions (and non-transitions). Scholars have developed a number of explanatory models to account for these. Some of the main general factors in most cases, though, include (1) historical relationships between contending groups, (2) the strength and form of existing institutions, (3) a country's level of economic development, (4) political-cultural traditions and tendencies, and (5) the strategic situations and choices of key actors. Of course, as we have seen in other chapters, it is not enough to merely list such contributing factors; we must figure out how such factors interact and which are most important. What do you think? And how could we test your ideas empirically?

THINKING COMPARATIVELY

KEY METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

Evidence and Empirical Critiques

One reason that many theories continue to endure in different areas of comparative politics is that most of the major theories have some empirical support. This makes it challenging to determine which theory is the most accurate. In reality, most theories will not be accurate under all circumstances, but rather each will explain some outcomes better than

In these features we highlight important methodological tools or strategies, such as the use of deviant cases and the most-similar-systems (MSS) design. We then model for students how to use these analytical tools in practice.

Organization

The sixteen thematic chapters of this book are divided into five parts:

- Part I (chapters 1 and 2) focuses on basic methods in comparative politics, covering conceptualization, hypothesis testing, the formation of theories, and the use of evidence. The goal in these first two chapters is not to focus on the details of methodology, which can be taught in more specialized courses, but on the overarching logic of comparative inquiry.
- Part II (chapters 3 through 7) focuses on the state (chapter 3), political economy (chapter 4), development (chapter 5), democracy and democratization (chapter 6), and the various forms of authoritarian regimes (chapter 7).
- Part III (chapters 8 through 11) focuses on the analysis of political institutions, giving students the tools to analyze institutional design in constitutional structures and judiciaries (chapter 8), legislatures and elections (chapter 9), executives (chapter 10), and political parties and interest groups (chapter 11).
- Part IV (chapters 12 through 15) focuses on issues that link comparative politics to political sociology, such as the study of revolution and other forms of contention (chapter 12), national identities and nationalism (chapter 13), race, gender, and ethnicity (chapter 14), and religion and ideology (chapter 15).
- Part V consists of a single chapter, 16, which links comparative politics to international relations, emphasizing how global politics has produced new sets of problems that both comparativists *and* international relations scholars must analyze. As such, the book points to another kind of integration, pushing students to see connections between comparative politics and other courses in political science.

After chapter 2, the thematic chapters follow a common format. They are divided into three main sections:

- **Concepts:** covers basic definitions and develops a working vocabulary.
- **Types:** discusses useful typologies, such as the major types of dramatic social change that interest political scientists.
- **Causes and Effects:** walks students through the major theories that aim to explain causes and effects, ending with the "Thinking Comparatively" feature to model analysis.

The final part of the book, Part VI, comprises country **"profiles"** and in-depth **"case studies."** We selected twelve countries after surveying more than

CASE STUDY

The French Revolution

CHAPTER 12, PAGE 289

The French Revolution took place amid major structural problems in eighteenth-century French society (Furet 1995; Doyle 2003). In this period, France, like much of early modern Europe, remained an "estate society," divided into three groups: a nobility with special privileges, the clergy, and commoners. The social status of the nobility, however, was weakened by the ongoing efforts of the centralizing, absolutist crown. As the monarchy and its state grew stronger, the nobility felt increasingly marginalized. At the same time, the French absolutist state, largely through its involvement in foreign wars (especially the American Revolution), faced major fiscal difficulties (Doyle 2003). Indeed, by the late eighteenth century, it was nearly bankrupt. Meanwhile, periodic problems in food distribution and rural poverty ensured that much of France's rural population felt discontent. Finally, the spread of the Enlightenment and of nationalism provided the bases for an intellectual critique of the old regime (Greenfeld 1992; Bell 2001).

The revolution began as a series of efforts to reform the French state. The crown called an "Assembly of Notables," but the assembly declared that the Estates General, which had not met since the early seventeenth century, needed to be called. When the Estates General convened, it was divided in the customary manner into the three estates mentioned previously. However, before long, politics and propaganda forced representatives of the first two estates to join the latter one, the core idea being that the French nation shouldn't be divided by estates because all of its members should be equal. The third estate *was* the nation, as Sieyes declared (Furet 1995: 45–51). In other words, the Estates General was reinterpreted as being something like a modern, national legislature (though the leaders of the Estates General remained bourgeois and nobles, along with some clergy, and not "popular" actors).

Reform quickly devolved into a novel form of collective behavior that was surprising even to its most central participants and those who attempted to lead and control it. Street actions began, and mobs attacked the Bastille prison on July 14, 1789, wishing to destroy a reviled symbol of the arbitrary authority of the monarch to imprison opponents at will. By 1792, the monarchy had fallen amid increasing violence—much perpetrated by mobs known as the "*sans culottes*"—opening a period known as the "Terror" in which perceived enemies of the revolution were murdered in large numbers. Robespierre was a key figure in this period, perpetrating the paranoid violence that ultimately consumed him. This was followed by a period of relaxation known as the "Thermidorian reaction," and, finally, by the rise of Napoleon. On one hand, Napoleon appears a conservative figure, since, for example, he declared himself emperor. But on the other hand, he can be viewed as a revolutionary whose mission was to spread the French Revolution to the rest of Europe, through an imperial war.

What struck so many contemporaries was the Revolution's *destructive* nature. It seemed intent on an eradication of the old society and the replacement of all of its forms by new, "revolutionary" ones. This included the creation of a new, revolutionary calendar, the efforts to destroy the Church and its teachings, the war on the nobility, the destruction of many architectural sites, and so forth. The French revolution subsequently became the model for many later revolutionaries and its ideals inspirational for nationalists and republicans everywhere. At the same time, it surprised nearly everyone involved, and those who attempted to control it quickly learned that they had helped to unleash social forces beyond their ability to lead (Arendt 1963).

150 instructors of comparative politics to see which they considered most crucial for inclusion. The cases are Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This selection offers broad coverage of every major world region, democratic and authoritarian polities, every major religious tradition, highly varying levels of economic and social development, and quite different institutional designs.

For each country, we first provide a "profile": an introduction with a table of key features, a map, and pie charts of demographics; a timeline and historical overview; and brief descriptions of political institutions, political culture, and political economy.

Following each profile is a set of case studies (five or six for each country) that we reference in the thematic chapters as described earlier (via the **"Case in Context"** boxes).

The case sets end with research prompts to help students get started as comparativists.

Flexibility in Instruction: Ways of Using This Text

The chapters are arranged in a logical order yet written in such a way that instructors might easily rearrange them to custom fit a course. Some instructors, for example, may wish to pair chapter 3 (on the state) with chapter 13 (on nationalism and national identity). Others might wish to assign chapter 15 (on religion and ideology) alongside chapters 6 and 7 (on democratic and authoritarian regimes). We have written the book with the flexibility to facilitate such pairings. Indeed, while we strongly suggest beginning with chapters 1 and 2, students will be able to follow the text even without reading them first.

Similarly, the book's structure supports a range of options for using the country materials. Some instructors may wish to teach selected country materials at or near the beginning of a course. Some may wish to make reference to country materials as the course proceeds, assigning students to read them as they are clearly and visibly "called out" in the text. One approach could require all students in a course to familiarize themselves with only a subset of the countries detailed here, rather than all twelve. Another might require each student to select three or four countries, following rules or categories of countries as laid out by the instructor.

The book also works with or without supplemental materials chosen by the instructor. The "Insights" boxes throughout the text provide indications of excellent options for further readings. Many other choice readings are noted in the "References and Further Reading" section at the back of the text, organized by chapter. A companion book of classic and contemporary readings is available, in addition to a reader on current debates (see Packaging Options, p. xxv). In short, instructors can use this text alone or link it seamlessly to other readings.

Summary of Features

We have built a number of useful features into the text, some of which we have already mentioned:

- **"Case in Context"** boxes tie in to the narrative of the main chapters, pointing students to full case studies in the book's final part.
- **"Insights"** boxes illustrate causal theories by describing the work of key authors in the field, making this work accessible to introductory students.

- **"Thinking Comparatively"** sections at the end of every chapter (after chapter 1) model the application of theories and the testing of hypotheses. Each "Thinking Comparatively" section includes a **"Key Methodological Tools"** feature, which introduces key skills and strategies for doing comparative political analysis and reinforces lessons learned in the first two chapters.
- **"Thinking It Through"** questions close every chapter. These help students test their ability to apply comparative politics theories to cases.
- Every section of case studies offers a series of **"Research Prompts"** that can be used to develop comparative projects and papers, applying what students have learned as they start to do comparative analysis.
- Every chapter ends with a **"Chapter Summary,"** enabling students and instructors to review the main points at a glance.
- At the back of the text, we include **"References and Further Reading"** by chapter that students can use to dig deeper into the issues raised or as they begin their own research.
- A **running glossary** in the margin of the text highlights the meaning of key terms as they appear and serves as a quick study reference.

Supplements

Oxford University Press offers instructors and students a comprehensive ancillary package for qualified adopters of *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases.*

Ancillary Resource Center

The Ancillary Resource Center (ARC) at https://arc2.oup-arc.com/ is a convenient, instructor-focused, single destination for resources to accompany this book. Accessed online through individual user accounts, the ARC provides instructors with up-to-date ancillaries while guaranteeing the security of grade-significant resources. In addition, it allows OUP to keep instructors informed when new content becomes available.

The ARC for *Comparative Politics* contains a variety of materials to aid in teaching:

- **Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Item File**—The Instructor's Resource Manual includes chapter objectives, detailed chapter outlines, lecture suggestions and activities, discussion questions, video resources, and Web resources. The Test Item File includes more than eight hundred test questions selected and approved by the authors, including multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.

- **Computerized Test Bank—**Using the test authoring and management tool Diploma, the computerized test bank that accompanies this text is designed for both novice and advanced users. Diploma enables instructors to create and edit questions, create randomized quizzes and tests with an easy-to-use drag-and-drop tool, publish quizzes and tests to online courses, and print quizzes and tests for paper-based assessments.
- **PowerPoint-Based Slides—**Each chapter's slide set includes a succinct chapter outline and incorporates relevant chapter graphics.
- **CNN Videos—**Offering recent clips on timely topics, this collection includes fifteen films tied to the chapter topics. Each clip is approximately 5–10 minutes, providing a great way to launch your lectures.

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Companion Website

Comparative Politics is also accompanied by an extensive companion website at www.oup.com/us/dickovick. This website includes a number of learning tools to help students study and review key concepts presented in the text. For each chapter, you will find learning objectives, key-concept summaries, quizzes, essay questions, web activities, and web links.

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Anastasia Kuz-Grady
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Anna Brigevich
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Jeffrey Lewis
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Rahsaan Maxwell
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Mary M. McCarthy
Drake University

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Tufts University

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Emory University

Emmanuel Teitelbaum
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Anca Turcu
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Rollin F. Tusalem
Arkansas State University

Cheryl Van Den Handel
Northeastern State University

Adryan Wallace
University of Hartford.

Meredith Weiss
University at Albany—SUNY

Aubrey Westfall
Virginia Wesleyan College

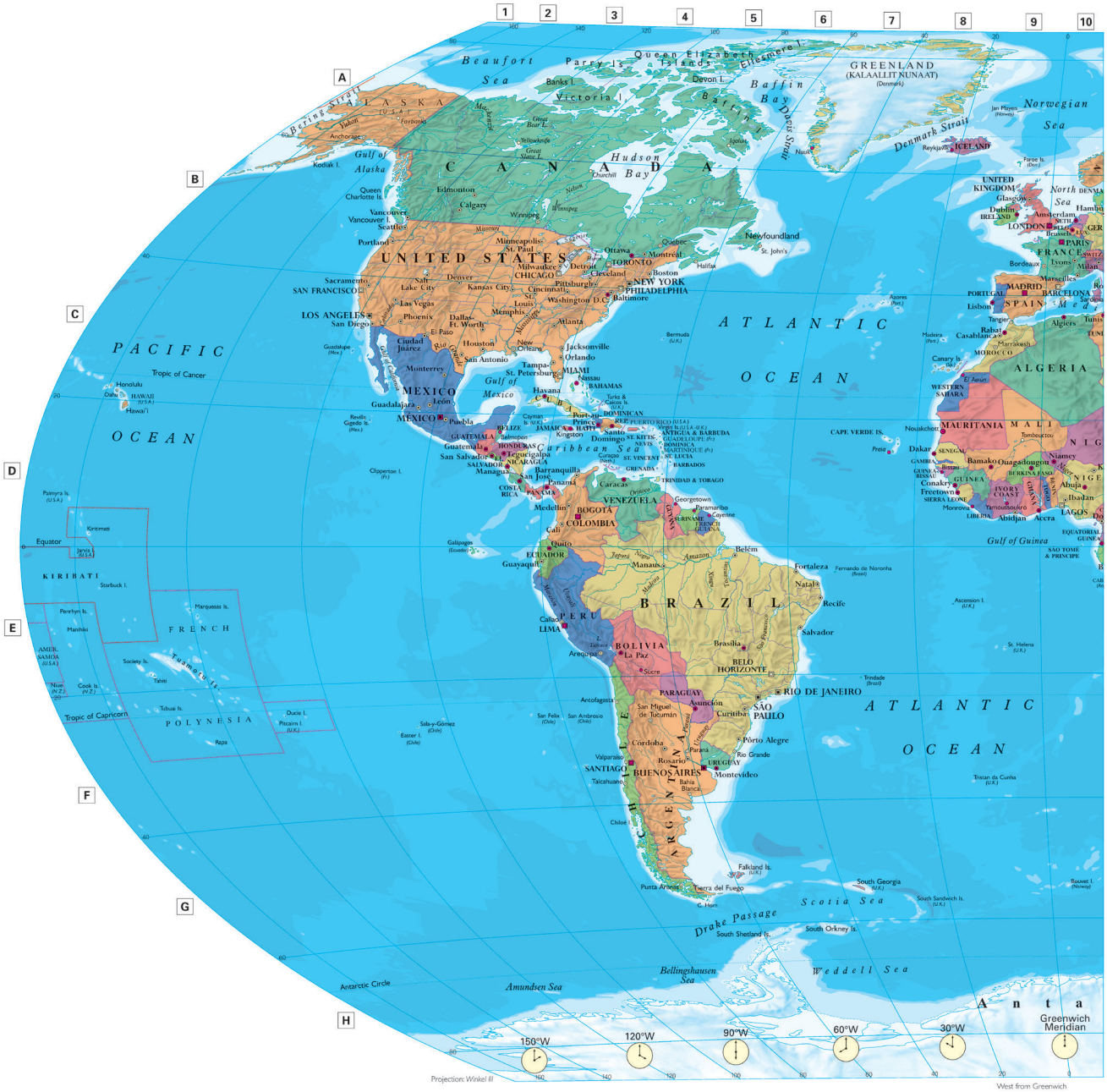
Jennifer J. White
University of Georgia

Fiona Yap
University of Kansas

Gamze Cavdar Yasar
Colorado State University

Jiangnan Zhu
University of Nevada—Reno

The field of comparative politics is always changing, and a book of this sort covers a huge array of research areas. As such, we anticipate a need to update this text in the future. We are very eager for suggestions, corrections, and other comments that instructors or students might make. We have established an e-mail address specifically for these inquiries, and all comments will go to and be read by the authors. The address is **comparative.politics@oup.com**. So if you have any suggestions for future issues, or find any errors or omissions, please let us know. We hope you enjoy the book.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Beaufort Sea
Parry Is
Queen Elizabeth Islands
Ellesmere I.
GREENLAND
(KALAALLIT NUNAAT)
(Denmark)
Baffin Bay
Davis Strait
Baffin I.
Banks I.
Victoria I.
Devon I.
Norwegian Sea
Denmark Strait
ICELAND
Reykjavik
Bering Strait
ALASKA
(U.S.A.)
Yukon
Fairbanks
Anchorage
Kodiak I.
Gulf of Alaska
Hudson Bay
CANADA
Churchill
Nelson
Winnipeg
Edmonton
Calgary
Queen Charlotte Is.
Vancouver
Vancouver I.
Seattle
Portland
Mackenzie
Yellowknife
Great Bear L.
Great Slave L.
Iqaluit
Nuuk
Newfoundland
St. John's
Halifax
Quebec
Ottawa
Montreal
TORONTO
Boston
NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA
Baltimore
Washington D.C.
Pittsburgh
Cleveland
Detroit
Milwaukee
CHICAGO
Minneapolis
St. Paul
Saskatchewan
Missouri
UNITED STATES
Sacramento
SAN FRANCISCO
Salt Lake City
Denver
Kansas City
Cincinnati
St. Louis
Memphis
Las Vegas
Phoenix
LOS ANGELES
San Diego
Dallas
Ft. Worth
El Paso
Houston
New Orleans
Atlanta
Jacksonville
Orlando
Tampa
St. Petersburg
MIAMI
San Antonio
Ciudad Juárez
Rio Grande
Colorado
Monterrey
Gulf of Mexico
Havana
Nassau
BAHAMAS
Turks & Caicos Is. (U.K.)
MEXICO
León
Guadalajara
Puebla
Guadalupe (Mex.)
Revillagigedo Is. (Mex.)
Cayman Is. (U.K.)
JAMAICA
HAITI
Port-au-Prince
Kingston
Santo Domingo
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
PUERTO RICO (U.S.A.)
Virgin Is. (U.S.A.) (U.K.)
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
GUADELOUPE (Fr.)
DOMINICA
MARTINIQUE (Fr.)
ST. KITTS NEVIS
ST. LUCIA
ST. VINCENT
GRENADA
BARBADOS
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Caribbean Sea
Curaçao (Neth.)
BELIZE
Belmopan
GUATEMALA
Guatemala
HONDURAS
Tegucigalpa
NICARAGUA
SALVADOR
San Salvador
Managua
COSTA RICA
San José
PANAMA
Panama
Barranquilla
Caracas
VENEZUELA
Maracaibo
Orinoco
Georgetown
GUYANA
SURINAME
Paramaribo
FRENCH GUIANA
Cayenne
Medellín
BOGOTÁ
COLOMBIA
Cali
Quito
ECUADOR
Guayaquil
Galápagos (Ecuador)
Clipperton I. (Fr.)
Tropic of Cancer
Equator
Tropic of Capricorn
PACIFIC
OCEAN
Honolulu
Oahu
HAWAII (U.S.A.)
Hawai'i
Palmyra Is. (U.S.A.)
Kiritimati
KIRIBATI
Starbuck I.
Jarvis (U.S.A.)
Peirhyn Is.
Manihiki
Marquesas Is.
FRENCH
POLYNESIA
Society Is.
Tahiti
Tuamotu Is.
Cook Is. (N.Z.)
Niue (N.Z.)
Tubuai Is.
Rapa
Ducie I. (U.K.)
Pitcairn I. (U.K.)
AMER. SAMOA (U.S.A.)
Easter I. (Chile)
Sala-y-Gómez (Chile)
San Felix (Chile)
San Ambrosio (Chile)
Antofagasta
PERU
LIMA
Callao
Arequipa
BOLIVIA
La Paz
Sucre
PARAGUAY
Asunción
San Miguel de Tucumán
Córdoba
Valparaíso
SANTIAGO
Talcahuano
CHILE
ARGENTINA
BUENOS AIRES
Bahía Blanca
Rosario
Paraná
URUGUAY
Montevideo
Río Grande
Pôrto Alegre
Curitiba
SÃO PAULO
RIO DE JANEIRO
Trindade (Brazil)
Vitória
Belo Horizonte
Brasília
Salvador
Recife
Natal
Fortaleza
Fernando de Noronha (Brazil)
Belém
Manaus
Tapajós
Amazon
Madeira
Tocantins
São Francisco
Paraguay
Paraná
Uruguay
BRAZIL
Guiana Basin
Equatorial Countercurrent
Falkland Is. (U.K.)
Punta Arenas
Tierra del Fuego
C. Horn
Drake Passage
Scotia Sea
South Georgia (U.K.)
South Sandwich Is. (U.K.)
South Orkney Is.
South Shetland Is.
Weddell Sea
Bellingshausen Sea
Amundsen Sea
Antarctic Circle
Antarctica
Tristan da Cunha (U.K.)
Bouvet I. (Norway)
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Azores (Port.)
Bermuda (U.K.)
Cape Verde Is.
Praia
Ascension I. (U.K.)
St. Helena (U.K.)
Gulf of Guinea
SÃO TOMÉ & PRINCIPE
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
Norwegian Sea
North Sea
UNITED KINGDOM
Glasgow
Dublin
IRELAND
Amsterdam
LONDON
Brussels
PARIS
FRANCE
Bordeaux
Lyons
Milan
Marseilles
MADRID
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
BARCELONA
Lisbon
Tangier
Algiers
Rabat
Casablanca
Marrakesh
MOROCCO
Madeira (Port.)
Canary Is. (Sp.)
El Aaiún
WESTERN SAHARA
ALGERIA
MAURITANIA
Nouakchott
Tombouctou
MALI
Dakar
SENEGAL
GAMBIA
Bamako
Ouagadougou
BURKINA FASO
Niamey
GUINEA
Conakry
Freetown
SIERRA LEONE
IVORY COAST
Abidjan
Accra
LIBERIA
Monrovia
Tamoudoukro
Ibadan
Abuja
LAGOS
Greenwich Meridian
150°W
120°W
90°W
60°W
30°W
Projection: Winkel III
West from Greenwich


11
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ARCTIC OCEAN
Barents Sea
Kara Sea
Laptev Sea
East Siberian Sea
Bering Sea
Sea of Okhotsk
Sea of Japan
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
SOUTHERN OCEAN
Antarctica
Franz Josef Land (Russia)
Severnaya Zemlya
Novaya Zemlya
New Siberian Is.
Wrangel I.
Aleutian Is. (USA)
Arctic Circle
Tropic of Cancer
Tropic of Capricorn
Equator
International Date Line
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
CHINA
SINKIANG
TIBET
JAPAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
TAIWAN
PHILIPPINES
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
Borneo
Celebes
Molucca Sea
Banda Sea
Timor Sea
Arafura Sea
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
AUSTRALIA
Great Australian Bight
Tasman Sea
NEW ZEALAND
Coral Sea
South China Sea
Philippine Sea
Java Sea
Gulf of Thailand
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Gulf of Aden
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
L. Baikal
L. Balkhash
Yellow Sea
East China Sea
Ross Sea
Mozambique Channel
Gulf of Carpentaria
Great Barrier Reef
Torres Strait
Great Australian Bight
Tasman Sea
Coral Sea
Severnaya Zemlya
Franz Josef Land
Novaya Zemlya
Kara Sea
Laptev Sea
East Siberian Sea
Bering Sea
Sea of Okhotsk
Sea of Japan
Barents Sea
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East China Sea
South China Sea
Philippine Sea
Java Sea
Arafura Sea
Timor Sea
Banda Sea
Molucca Sea
Celebes
Borneo
Java
Sumatra
Gulf of Thailand
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Gulf of Aden
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
L. Baikal
L. Balkhash
Yellow Sea
Ross Sea
Mozambique Channel
Gulf of Carpentaria
Great Barrier Reef
Torres Strait
Great Australian Bight
Tasman Sea
Coral Sea
Severnaya Zemlya
Franz Josef Land
Novaya Zemlya
Kara Sea
Laptev Sea
East Siberian Sea
Bering Sea
Sea of Okhotsk
Sea of Japan
Barents Sea
Yellow Sea
East China Sea
South China Sea
Philippine Sea
Java Sea
Arafura Sea
Timor Sea
Banda Sea
Molucca Sea
Celebes
Borneo
Java
Sumatra
Gulf of Thailand
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Gulf of Aden
Red Sea
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Aral Sea
L. Baikal
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Yellow Sea
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30°E
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120°E
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30°W
The time at this longitude when it is 12.00 (noon) at Greenwich
East from Greenwich


RUSSIA
1 Adygea
2 Karachey-Cherkessia
3 Kabardino-Balkaria
4 North Ossetia
5 Ingushetia
6 Chechenia
7 Dagestan
8 Mordvinia
9 Chuvashia
10 Mari El
11 Tatarstan
12 Udmurtia
AZERBAIJAN
13 Naxçivan
GEORGIA
14 Ajaria
15 Abkhazia
1:47 000 000
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
CHINA
INDIA
IRAN
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
SAUDI ARABIA
TURKEY
SYRIA
IRAQ
YEMEN
OMAN
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
TAJIKISTAN
NEPAL
BHUTAN
BANGLADESH
BURMA
THAILAND
LAOS
VIETNAM
CAMBODIA
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES
JAPAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
TAIWAN
SRI LANKA
MALDIVES
SEYCHELLES
BRUNEI
SINGAPORE
EAST TIMOR
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
AUSTRALIA
ETHIOPIA
SOMALI REP.
KENYA
TANZANIA
EGYPT
ERITREA
DJIBOUTI
SUDAN
COMOROS
Africa
Europe
UKRAINE
BELARUS
FINLAND
SWEDEN
NORWAY
GERMANY
POLAND
ROMANIA
BULGARIA
GREECE
CYPRUS
ISRAEL
JORDAN
LEBANON
KUWAIT
QATAR
BAHRAIN
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
AZER.
LATVIA
LITH.
ESTONIA
UNITED KINGDOM
Barents Sea
Kara Sea
Laptev Sea
Bering Sea
Sea of Okhotsk
Sea of Japan (East Sea)
Yellow Sea
East China Sea
South China Sea
Sulu Sea
Celebes Sea
Java Sea
Banda Sea
Arafura Sea
Timor Sea
Andaman Sea
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
INDIAN OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Gulf of Oman
G. of Aden
North Sea
G. of Thailand
Tropic of Cancer
Arctic Circle
Equator
International Dateline
Projection: Bonne
East from Greenwich
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15


200 0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 1400 1600 1800 km
200 0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 miles
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B C D E F G H J K
ATLANTIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
Mediterranean Sea
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Gulf of Guinea
Sahara
Syrian Desert
Mozambique Channel
UNITED KINGDOM
LONDON
NETH.
BELG.
GERMANY
POLAND
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
Warsaw
Kiev
Volgograd
PARIS
FRANCE
SWITZ.
CZECH REP.
Prague
Vienna
SLOVAK REP.
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
UKRAINE
ROMANIA
Odessa
Aral Sea
B. of Biscay
CROATIA
SERBIA
BOS.-HERZ.
MONT.
KOS.
BULGARIA
MAC.
ALB.
GREECE
Athens
GEORGIA
ARM.
AZER.
Baku
TURKMEN.
Marseilles
Corsica
Rome
ITALY
Adriatic Sea
Sardinia
Sicily
BARCELONA
MADRID
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Lisbon
Azores (Port.)
Ponta Delgada
Gibraltar (U.K.)
Ceuta (Sp.)
Melilla (Sp.)
Oran
Algiers
Annaba
Constantine
Tunis
MALTA
TUNISIA
Sfax
Chott Djerid
Rabat
Casablanca
Fès
MOROCCO
Marrakesh
Madeira (Port.)
Funchal
Canary Is. (Sp.)
Santa Cruz de Tenerife
Las Palmas
El Aaiún
WESTERN SAHARA
Dakhla
Tropic of Cancer
Fdérik
Ras Nouâdhibou
Tripoli
Misrātah
Benghazi
Crete
CYPRUS
Aleppo
SYRIA
Mosul
Tigris
Euphrates
Damascus
LEB.
Tel Aviv -Jaffa
ISRAEL
Jerusalem
JORDAN
BAGHDAD
IRAN
Esfahān
TEHRĀN
Basra
KUWAIT
ALGERIA
In Salah
LIBYA
Sabhā
Al Jawf
EGYPT
Alexandria
Port Said
Suez
CAIRO
El Faiyûm
Asyût
Aswân
Nile
SAUDI ARABIA
BAHRAIN
QATAR
RIYADH
Medina
Jedda
Mecca
Wadi Halfa
Port Sudan
Atbara
Abbara
Omdurmân
KHARTOUM
Asmera
ERITREA
Massawa
Sana'
YEMEN
Socotra (Yemen)
G. of Aden
Ras Asir
DJIBOUTI
Djibouti
Berbera
SOMALILAND
Harer
Addis Ababa
ETHIOPIA
SUDAN
White Nile
Blue Nile
L. Tana
El Fasher
El Obeid
Wād Medanī
Malakal
Bahr el Jebel
Wau
SOUTH SUDAN
Jubā
CENTRAL AFRICAN REP.
Bangui
CHAD
N'Djamena
Abéché
L. Chad
Chari
NIGERIA
Kano
Maiduguri
Kaduna
Abuja
Niger
Benue
Ibadan
Enugu
Port Harcourt
Bight of Benin
Lagos
Porto Novo
Benin City
Accra
Sekondi-Takoradi
Abidjan
Monrovia
LIBERIA
SIERRA LEONE
Freetown
Conakry
GUINEA
GUINEA-BISSAU
Bissau
Banjul
GAMBIA
Dakar
SENEGAL
C. Vert
St-Louis
Praia
CAPE VERDE IS.
Nouakchott
MAURITANIA
Tombouctou
Agadès
MALI
Ouagadougou
BURKINA FASO
Bobo-Dioulasso
Bamako
Niamey
IVORY COAST
Yamoussoukro
Bouaké
GHANA
Kumasi
TOGO
Lomé
CAMEROON
Douala
Yaoundé
Rey Malabo
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
SÃO TOMÉ & PRÍNCIPE
Libreville
GABON
Annobón (Eq. Guinea)
C. Lopez
Port Harcourt
Equator
CONGO (DEM. REP. OF THE)
Kisangani
Mbandaka
Bandundu
Kananga
Matadi
Kinshasa
Brazzaville
Pointe-Noire
CABINDA (Angola)
Congo
Chiloango
Kasai
Cuanza
Luanda
Mbuji-Mayi
ANGOLA
Lobito
Huambo
Namibe
Cuene
Cubango
Kolwezi
Likasi
Lubumbashi
ZAMBIA
Ndola
Lusaka
Kariba L.
Zambezi
Lilongwe
MALAWI
L. Malawi
L. Mweru
L. Tanganyika
L. Albert
L. Edward
L. Kivu
Kigali
RWANDA
Bujumbura
BURUNDI
Victoria L.
Kampala
Kisumu
Nairobi
UGANDA
KENYA
Mombasa
Zanzibar
Dodoma
Dar es S alaam
TANZANIA
Kismayu
Jubba
Shabeli
Mogadishu
SOMALI REP.
L. Turkana
Omo
Ascension I. (U.K.)
St. Helena (U.K.)
Tristan da Cunha (U.K.)
Aldabra Is. (Seychelles)
C. Delgado
COMOROS
Maroni
Mamoudzou
Mayotte (Fr.)
Antsiranana
Mahajanga
Toamasina
Antananarivo
MADAGASCAR
Fianarantsoa
MAURITIUS
St-Denis
Port Louis
Réunion (Fr.)
SEYCHELLES
Victoria
MOZAMBIQUE
Mozambique
Beira
Limpopo
Zambezi
Harare
ZIMBABWE
Bulawayo
Livingstone
Gaborone
BOTSWANA
Windhoek
NAMIBIA
Pretoria (Tshwane)
Johannesburg
Maputo
SWAZ.
Mbabane
Vaal
Orange
Kimberley
Maseru
LESOTHO
Durban
SOUTH AFRICA
Cape Town
C. of Good Hope
C. Agulhas
East London
Port Elizabeth
Tropic of Capricorn
Projection: Azimuthal Equidistant
West from Greenwich
East from Greenwich
COPYRIGHT PHILIP'S
Dakar Capital Cities


ICELAND
Reykjavik
Arctic Circle
Norwegian Sea
Faroe Is (Den.)
Tórshavn
Shetland Is.
Lerwick
Orkney Is.
Kirkwall
Stornoway
Hebrides
UNITED KINGDOM
SCOTLAND
Aberdeen
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Belfast
IRELAND
Dublin
Cork
Manchester
Liverpool
Leeds
Sheffield
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
WALES
Cardiff
Birmingham
ENGLAND
Bristol
LONDON
Southampton
Plymouth
ATLANTIC OCEAN
North Sea
Amsterdam
The Hague
Rotterdam
NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
Antwerp
Brussels
Lille
English Channel
Channel Is.
Le Havre
Rouen
Brest
PARIS
Seine
Luxembourg
LUX.
Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
Nantes
Loire
Dijon
Strasbourg
Rhine
Stuttgart
Nuremberg
Frankfurt am Main
Cologne
Dortmund
Essen
Bonn
Hamburg
Bremen
Hannover
Berlin
Magdeburg
Leipzig
Halle
Chemnitz
Dresden
Prague
CZECH REP.
GERMANY
Elbe
Oder
Wroclaw
Poznan
Lodz
Katowice
Ostrava
Krakow
Vistula
POLAND
Gdansk
Szczecin
Bydgoszcz
Bialystok
Warsaw
Lublin
Skagerrak
Kattegat
Aalborg
Aarhus
Copenhagen
Malmo
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
Kiel
Gotland
Oland
Kaliningrad (Russia)
LITHUANIA
Kaunas
Vilnius
LATVIA
Riga
Sjaremaa
ESTONIA
Tallinn
Gulf of Bothnia
Vaasa
Tampere
Turku
Helsinki
Aland
FINLAND
SWEDEN
Trondheim
Bergen
Stavanger
Oslo
Gavle
Uppsala
Orebro
Vattern
Jonkoping
Gothenburg
Stockholm
NORWAY
Tromso
Narvik
Kiruna
Lulea
Murmansk
White Sea
Arkhangelsk
KOMI
Oh
KARELIA
N. Dvina
L. Onega
Kotlas
Perm
Nizhniy Tagil
Yekaterinburg
Chelyabinsk
Kirov
Vologda
L. Ladoga
Wyborg
ST. PETERSBURG
L. Chudskoye
Rybinsk Res.
Kostroma
Yaroslavl
Ivanovo
Nizhniy Novgorod
Kazan
MARIEL
CHUVASHIA
TATARSTAN
UDMURTIA
Ufa
BASHKORTOSTAN
Magnitogorsk
Cheboksary
Ulyanovsk
Samara
Orenburg
MORDVINIA
Penza
Volga
MOSCOW
RUSSIA
Smolensk
Tula
Orel
Tambov
Saratov
Uralsk
Vitebsk
W. Dvina
Minsk
Mahilyow
BELARUS
Brest
Pripet
Gomel
Chernihiv
Kursk
Voronezh
Volgograd
Ural
Atyrau
KAZAKHSTAN
Zhytomyr
Kiev
Dnepr
Kharkov
Donetsk
Taganrog
Don
Astrakhan
Caspian Sea
KALMYKIA
UKRAINE
Lviv
Dniester
Dnepropetrovsk
Krivoy Rog
Zaporozhye
Bug
Kherson
Nikolayev
Odessa
Rostov
Stavropol
NORTH OSSETIA
CHECHENIA
Makhachkala
DAGESTAN
KARACHAY-CHERKESSIA
KABARDINO-BALKARIA
INGUSHETIA
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
Baku
AZERBAIJAN
ARMENIA
Yerevan
Black Sea
CRIMEA
Sevastopol
Constanta
Danube
Bucharest
Ploiesti
Braila
Galati
Timisoara
ROMANIA
Cluj-Napoca
Debrecen
Miskolc
Budapest
HUNGARY
Kishinev
MOLDOVA
Bratislava
SLOVAK REP.
Vienna
Linz
Salzburg
Innsbruck
Graz
AUSTRIA
Munich
Zurich
LIECH.
Bern
Geneva
SWITZERLAND
Ljubljana
Zagreb
SLOVENIA
CROATIA
Trieste
Venice
Milan
Turin
Genoa
Bologna
Grenoble
Lyons
St-Etienne
Dijon
Rhone
Loire
Garonne
Gironde
Limoges
Toulouse
Bordeaux
Bilbao
La Coruna
Vigo
Porto
Douro
Valladolid
Madrid
Tagus
Lisbon
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Guadiana
Seville
Cordoba
Guadalquivir
Cadiz
Malaga
Granada
Murcia
Alicante
Valencia
Ebro
Zaragoza
ANDORRA
Andorra la Vella
Barcelona
Balearic Is.
Minorca
Palma
Majorca
Ibiza
Gibraltar (U.K.)
Str. of Gibraltar
Tangier
Ceuta
Melilla (Sp.)
Algiers
ALGERIA
MOROCCO
Africa
Marseilles
Nice
MONACO
Monte-Carlo
Toulon
Corsica
Ajaccio
Sardinia
Cagliari
Mediterranean Sea
Tyrrhenian Sea
Rome
ITALY
San Marino
Florence
Naples
Bari
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Thessaloniki
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GREECE
Ionian Sea
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Sicily
Catania
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MALTA
Valletta
Constantine
Annaba
Aegean Sea
Patra
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Crete
Rhodes
Lesbos
Chios
Izmir
Bosporus
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Antalya
Adana
Aleppo
Euphrates
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St. Pierre et Miquelon (Fr.)
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NEW BRUNSWICK
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Jacksonville
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Georgetown
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Gulf of Panama
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Putumayo
Amazon
Marajó I.
Belém
Manaus
Santarém
Iquitos
Marañón
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São Luís
Fortaleza
Madeira
Tapajós
Xingu
MARANHÃO
Teresina
CEARÁ
RIO G. DO NORTE
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Purus
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Corrientes
Salado
SANTA CATARINA
Uruguay
RIO GRANDE DO SUL
Pôrto Alegre
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Montevideo
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Robinson Crusoe
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Río de la Plata
Talca
Concepción
Bahía Blanca
Mar del Plata
Colorado
Valdivia
Viedma
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Puerto Montt
Chubut
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CHAPTER 1

The Comparative Approach: An Introduction

Germany's Angela Merkel and Russia's Vladimir Putin converse at the World Cup in Brazil, July 2014.

Pop quiz. Fill in the blank in the following sentence:

In _____, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

A large proportion of American students who have completed elementary school will be able to answer correctly: *fourteen hundred ninety-two*.

This recollection from childhood illustrates the ways we first begin to learn about societies and their histories. We learn important events and the dates, names, and places associated with them. We learn simple facts: that Columbus set sail in 1492 and "discovered" the New World. For many of our formative years, this is what we think learning means in our courses on social studies, history, world affairs, or current events.

Scholarship is not defined, however, by knowledge of facts alone, and the learning we do as adults must be different: it must be based on more than just description and recall. The task now, at the collegiate level, is to develop analytical skills. In this book, we examine the similarities and differences in politics within and between countries around the world, using comparisons and contrasts as our central tools. We cover more than just facts about the politics of China, or India, or France. We *analyze* politics *comparatively*.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Asking Why: Research Questions in Comparative Politics

To illustrate the type of learning this book promotes, we turn to another mnemonic device from primary school:

List the "Five W's" used to ask questions.

You may easily recall the answer (or be able to reconstruct it):

Who, What, Where, When, and *Why. (And to this list we often add "How.")*

Now ask yourself about the relative merits of these "Five W's." Which of these questions are the most profound and lead us to learn the most? Are we likely to gain a deep understanding of the social and political world from questions of the general form "Who did this?" or "Where did this happen?" or "When did this

happen?" For the most part, these relatively simple questions lead us to answers based on simple facts, such as prominent historical figures (*Who*), or places (*Where*), or dates (*When*). Consider how most of the "Five W's" are answered in the sentence *In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue*. Who is the subject? Columbus. Where did this event occur? The ocean blue. When did it happen? 1492. What did the subject do (or how did the event happen)? He sailed. Within one easily remembered rhyme, we have answers to a host of basic questions. And, of course, the same is true for more contemporary politics. For instance, saying "In 2017, Emmanuel Macron was elected president of France" also provides answers to *who*, *where*, *what*, and *when* questions.

Even if we don't know certain facts, we can often find them easily in modern life, and we do not need rhymes, other mnemonics, or even reference books. Online search engines (e.g., Google) provide virtually free access to basic facts (though they can also provide access to inaccurate information). Smartphones, laptops, and other devices make basic information accessible almost anywhere. Try typing some basic questions using the "Five W's" into a search engine. Who is the president of Brazil? Where (or what) is the capital of Estonia? When did Tanzania become a free and independent nation? For these questions, the correct and complete answer is available almost instantly. Some knowledge of basic facts is obviously important, but this is not the type of question that interests us in this text. We will not focus simply on *descriptions* of *who* did *what* and *when*, nor on *where* things happened.

Now try searching for "*Why* did Columbus sail the ocean blue?" or "*Why* did Tanzania gain independence from its colonizer?" or "*Why* was Emmanuel Macron elected president of France?" Your search will probably lead to an essay full of reasoning and argumentation as well as facts. Of course, the essay may or may not be reliable, and more comprehensive searching—using scholarly articles and book chapters—could provide you with other essays that offer contrary perspectives. These *why* questions lend themselves to richer discussions and debates than *who/what/when/where* questions. We cannot answer many *why* questions in one or two sentences. Answering *why* correctly requires more research, more reasoning, and more debate than the preliminary factual questions about who did what, where, and when.

We can debate the correct answer to *why* questions. You may think you have a simple answer to why Columbus set sail: he was an explorer by nature, intellectually curious, and seeking adventure. But a classmate may offer an equally compelling answer: the exploration westward across the Atlantic was promoted and financed by the Spanish crown (King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella), who were forced by geopolitical rivalries and strategic concerns to extend and expand their territories. Who is correct? In your answer, you focus on Columbus himself, whereas your classmate makes reference to impersonal factors (such as geopolitical strategy) that push individuals toward certain actions. Both of you include facts in defending your answers, such as the relevant actors (who), the period in which this took place (when), and the country from which Columbus set sail (where). But the debate is not easily resolved, even with these basic facts. We can respectfully disagree on the primary cause of why something happened. We construct **arguments** by supplying evidence in a logical form in support of positions or claims, and the relative merit of our arguments depends on who has the better supporting evidence.

argument The placement of evidence in logical form in support of a position or claim.

Generally, we do not debate at great length about *when* an explorer set sail, *who* he was, or *where* he left from and where he went.[1] We either know these facts or don't. Anyone who has watched *Jeopardy!* or played trivia games will notice that such games almost never ask *why* something happened. The answers would surely be too long and almost certainly too debatable. Basic factual knowledge may earn you points on a game board, but it alone cannot be the route to a deeper understanding of the social and political world.

Questions that begin with that little word—*why*—are often not answered with a simple fact; rather, the answers begin with another deceptively powerful word: *because.* Note that the root of the word *because* is *cause*. *Why* questions give rise to answers that talk about the causes of events, and they turn basic facts (who, what, where, when, and how) into evidence supporting a claim about cause and effect.[2] This is the core pursuit of **comparative politics**: We seek to develop strong claims about cause and effect, testing various *hypotheses* (i.e., possible answers to our questions) using factual evidence and developing larger theories about why the world operates the way it does. Through most of this book, we will provide some basic information necessary to speak the language of comparative scholars, but our emphasis is on asking and trying to answer *why* questions.

comparative politics The subfield of political science that aims to analyze multiple cases using the comparative method.

We do not ignore factual information when we ask questions. Indeed, some knowledge of a particular case usually makes us interested in a topic and motivates the questions we want to ask. We find some set of facts that do not fit with our intuition, and we pursue it further. We are intrigued by facts that present us with puzzles. The number of such puzzles is virtually infinite, but certain major questions take center stage in comparative politics. Many are easy to ask but challenging to answer. As we note later, some may be phrased as *how* questions, but the logic behind them is the same: We seek to understand causes and effects to comprehend the world around us.

Few political phenomena are *monocausal*, or caused by just one thing. Often many factors combine to produce an outcome. Explaining something does not amount to simply naming one or another of these factors. Rather, we try to explain by identifying not just the *necessary* conditions to produce an effect but those that are *sufficient* to produce it. For example, the fact that a given community is divided into different groups might be a *necessary* factor of civil war. But because most such divided countries are not engaged in civil war most of the time, the condition of being divided is clearly not *sufficient* to produce this effect by itself, and thus probably cannot be said to be the main cause of war.[3]

Major Questions in Comparative Politics

Comparative politics focuses on certain key questions that researchers have debated for years. Some important questions that we examine in this book are listed in Table 1.1. All of these are about causes and effects and we can attempt to answer them, at least partly, by comparing and contrasting the politics of different countries. Some such questions, like the last two in the table, may also imply research on relations between countries as well as politics within countries.

The questions in the table are very general, and we would likely begin research by asking a more specific version of such questions about one or two countries. Rather than "Why do countries go to war?" we might ask, "Why did France opt

TABLE 1.1 Prominent Questions in Comparative Politics

Why are some countries democratic and others not?
Why are some countries rich and others not?
Why do countries have different institutions and forms of government?
Why do countries have different policies in a variety of areas?
Why do some social revolutions succeed and endure while others fail?
Why do some countries develop strong senses of statehood and nationhood and others not?
Why do countries go to war or establish peace?
Why are some societies subjected to terrorism and others not?

not to support the Iraq War in 2003?" This question is more specific but also open-ended enough to have many possible answers. In scientific terms, this question can have several competing hypotheses we can test out using evidence, as we discuss later in this chapter and in the next. Possible answers may be based on France's strategic interests and calculations, its position in global affairs, French attitudes or culture with respect to war, and/or other possibilities.

Contrast this question with a more leading one, such as "How did French defeat in World War II lead to France's decision not to support the Iraq War?" In this version, the questioner presumes he or she knows the answer to why France decided not to support the war. The researcher is entering the research expecting to confirm one particular answer.

Given our own human biases, this researcher may well choose evidence selectively, neglecting that which does not fit that researcher's assumptions and preconceptions. It is highly unlikely that someone asking this leading question will answer with "France's defeat in World War II had no effect." Moreover, the leading question may imply that the analyst should ignore or fail to consider potential alternative explanations. This type of question can therefore lead to a biased argument.

Forming questions with *why* is a good rule of thumb, but good questions may also begin with other words, such as *how*. The questions in Table 1.2 also lead to debates about cause and effect. The first question asks about "consequences," which is just another way of asking about the effects of certain causes (in this case, the causes would be institutions). The question is also **open-ended**; that is, no hunch or expected answer is built into it, so the researcher can remain open to what the evidence reveals. The second question is just a bit more specific, identifying a certain consequence and a certain institution, but it is also open-ended. As we get more specific, we must take care not to commit the error of building the answer into the question or assume that what we are researching is the only answer. In this case, we would not want to assume that a presidential versus a parliamentary system of government is the main factor that shapes education policy.[4] The next question asks "under what conditions" democracies form, which is just another way of asking about the causes of democracy, if we compare and contrast where and

open-ended question A question that, in principle, is open to numerous possible answers.

Students in Paris, France, protest the Iraq War in 2003. Why did France opt not to support the Iraq War?

when and how it happens. So too does the final question in Table 1.2 ask about cause and effect, as shown by the verb *affect*. These are all valid research questions, even if they don't begin with *why*.

Some questions that begin with *why* may be poor questions, or at least they may be ill-suited to cause-and-effect research. Contrast the following two questions in which the *how* question is a more open-ended and better question than the *why*:

- Why did the United States foolishly invade Iraq in 2003 for no good reason?
- How did the decision to initiate military action against Iraq come about?

It is perfectly legitimate to ask "why the United States invaded Iraq" as an open-ended social science question, but the tone of the *why* question here suggests

TABLE 1.2 Additional Research Questions About Cause and Effect

What are the consequences of different kinds of institutions for policy?
What are the consequences of presidential versus parliamentary systems of government for education policy?
Under what conditions will democracies emerge and consolidate?
How do major social revolutions affect subsequent political developments in their respective countries?

that it is focused more on the issue of right and wrong than on cause and effect. That leads to a different kind of question, one focused on the ethical evaluation of policy decisions (discussed further in the next section).

In any case, while there are many ways to ask good questions in comparative politics, the key to most of them is keeping our minds open to the possibility that any of several hypotheses may have the power to explain what we want to explain.

Empirical Arguments Versus Normative Arguments

The issue of right and wrong relates to the issue of *causal* or *empirical* arguments versus *normative* arguments. In this text, we mainly address **empirical** arguments: arguments that link cause and effect, uncovering answers to why the political world operates as it does. **Normative** arguments, by contrast, emphasize the way things should be. The following pair of questions highlights the distinction:

- Why are some countries democratic and others authoritarian? (causal/empirical)
- Why is democracy preferable to authoritarianism? (normative)

empirical Drawn from observations of the world.

normative Concerned with specifying which sort of practice or institution is morally or ethically justified.

Comparativists answer questions like the first more often than the second, though we care about the answers to both types of questions. We are not primarily concerned in this book with resolving normative arguments about what is right and wrong. This is not because comparativists are indifferent to moral concerns. To the contrary, most social scientists hold strong convictions, indeed probably *stronger* normative views about politics than the average citizen, given their choice of career. Comparativists would overwhelmingly express a preference for democracy over authoritarianism if asked, though some might point to some limitations of democracy or argue that authoritarian rule has sometimes coincided with economic growth. Yet, as comparativists, we do not usually spend our intellectual energy coming up with new arguments for why democracy is morally superior to authoritarianism. Rather, we spend this energy trying to solve the puzzle of why democracy and authoritarianism arise in the first place.

So the point of analyzing politics comparatively is not to come up with good arguments in favor of democracy, or greater wealth, or peace. Rather, our job is to find what causes these things, and we can assume that a commitment to uncovering the causes comes from some interest in the outcome. Comparativists are like doctors diagnosing social problems: instead of explaining why it is better to be healthy, we focus on understanding how we can be healthy as a political society (which, in the terms discussed in this chapter, often involves explaining why preferred political outcomes happen when they do). Comparative political scientists often have an ethical or moral passion that drives research, as we may wish to make government and society more effective, efficient, equitable, just, responsive, and accountable. Yet our principal role in that process is to describe what is and explain why rather than proclaim what ought to be.

Solving Intellectual Puzzles: A Contemporary Analogy

Social science is a process of problem solving. By way of analogy, we can glimpse the sort of intellectual puzzles we solve through the mirror of pop culture. Among the most successful TV shows in the world today (apart from reality shows)

are those in which researchers, academics, and scientists are presented with a puzzle that they must solve, usually within a short period. Medical dramas, legal dramas, and crime dramas all fit this mold. The researchers may be doctors trying to diagnose a potentially fatal disease, detectives trying to solve a murder using forensic evidence, or attorneys trying to prosecute a case against a presumed perpetrator. Examples are legion: *NCIS, The Mentalist*, *Sherlock* (or the Sherlock Holmes adaptation *Elementary*), and the long-running *CSI*: *Crime Scene Investigation*, among others.

What these shows have in common is the basic approach to puzzle solving used by the experts. The protagonist will typically be presented with a puzzle early in the episode and will then begin gathering evidence and formulating hypotheses. Usually, some of these hypotheses will be inconsistent with the evidence, or new evidence will emerge that contradicts a hypothesis. In such shows, this development is deliberate, of course, to build suspense and mislead the viewer. We may find, for example, that the person we were supposed to think was the killer had an alibi and was somewhere else on the night of the murder. By the latter part of the show, the protagonist usually comes across some piece of evidence that pulls the case together and gives it a logical interpretation. The episode typically concludes when a hypothesis is confirmed, sometimes signified by a criminal's confession or maybe by a medical treatment that succeeds.

Social scientists operate in a similar fashion to these puzzle-solving professionals, but comparativists face some additional constraints. (If we really want to solve our puzzles, we have to be even more clever than the people on TV.) The most obvious constraint is the lack of laboratories in comparative politics.[5] Whereas physicians, forensic scientist, and prosecutors often have recourse to physical evidence such as blood samples or DNA or cell phone records, scholars of comparative politics often rely on evidence of a more qualitative and historical nature. The evidence used by social scientists is often subject to interpretation. For example, one political scientist may deem Mexico a democratic success story since 2000 because an opposition party won a presidential election, and multiple parties now compete successfully for power. Another may argue that Mexico is not a democratic success story because the country still suffers from high levels of social and economic inequality and from unequal political participation.[6]

Many academics and other professionals rely on evidence and logic and reason to make persuasive arguments, even in the absence of absolute proof. Returning to our pop culture analogy, the detective Sherlock Holmes often rules out many options by process of elimination, gathers evidence that is consistent with a certain interpretation of the facts, and builds a hypothesis. Sometimes, Sherlock will have a particular hypothesis that is shown to be wrong by some new bit of evidence. In those instances, he must generate a new hypothesis to solve the case. Typically, at the end of a detective story, proof comes with a confession that reveals the full story. In courtroom dramas, to use another example, there may not be "proof" that someone committed a crime, but the jury may be convinced "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the accused is guilty. Again, in some instances, there may eventually be a confession by the perpetrator that does lead to "proof," once the hypothesis is backed by substantial evidence and the perpetrator is informed of the strength of the prosecution's case. Medical dramas are similar in that the doctors must

diagnose complicated cases using the evidence available to them. The solution usually takes the form of a treatment that cures or saves the patient. In all of these cases, the common theme is the need to solve a puzzle using a combination of evidence, logical reasoning, and educated guesses.

Unfortunately for social scientists, the world never confesses its secrets like some TV criminal, and we cannot typically administer some pharmaceutical in a controlled fashion to cure a body politic. The best social scientists can do is make the strongest and most persuasive case possible by using and interpreting the available evidence. Many social scientists who use statistical methods—including sociologists, political scientists, and most economists—even formalize standards for what is a persuasive finding. Some use 95 or 99 percent "confidence" in their ability to reject a claim of "no effect" as a crucial benchmark in examining hypotheses.[7] Much of comparative politics, though, deals with smaller numbers of cases and is less amenable to statistical analysis. However, even in these instances we seek evidence, examine hypotheses, make arguments, attempt to responsibly gauge the confidence we can have in those arguments, and contribute to theoretical debates.

We address theories and hypotheses in greater detail in chapter 2. First, however, we turn to the concepts, variables, and causal relationships.

Concepts

Social science works with **concepts**, abstract ideas that we formulate to ask and answer our questions. Examples of concepts are numerous, and major concepts of comparative politics include freedom, democracy (as well as liberal democracy, electoral democracy, delegative democracy, and many other subtypes), justice, nationalism, constitutionalism, federalism, identity, gender relations, special interests, and social movements, among many others. Working with concepts helps us think about the social world, which is too complex to analyze without them. We must be very careful in defining them, because bad concepts make for bad analysis.

concept An idea comparativists use to think about the processes we study.

Logically, concepts are categories. In some areas, such as physical and natural science, certain categories are relatively clear.[8] The elements of the periodic table are an example. Concepts like "helium" and "oxygen" describe things in the real world that have certain numbers of electrons and protons. Yet there are few such clear-cut categories in social and political life. Concepts like "democracy" and "revolution" do not define phenomena the same way that "hydrogen" refers to an atom composed of a single proton and a single electron. Social and political concepts like democracy and revolution shade into each other by degree. Thus, conceptual definitions typically do not capture exact boundaries between social and political phenomena in the real world, but we use them so that we can get a handle on that world. Reasonable concepts and categories help us make sense of all the events that take place.

Features of Good Concepts

What makes a concept worthwhile? Good concepts have several features, including clarity, coherence, consistency, and usefulness. The concept of "democratization" when used correctly is an example of a concept that is worthwhile on all these counts.

First, concepts must be clear and coherent.[9] Maybe you begin a research project because you are troubled by differences in levels of democratization across different

countries. At the beginning, you have a common-sense understanding of democratization. To do good comparative work, however, you must make the meaning of the term explicit and clear. What do you mean by democratization? What is it you are studying? You cannot say "democratization consists of all the positive things that happen when a society changes." This is neither clear nor coherent. A clearer and more coherent statement would be "democratization is the process by which civil liberties and political rights are extended to all adult citizens in a nation." We begin with common-sense concerns about specific problems, but we need to define our key concepts precisely.

Second, concepts must be logically consistent, both internally and from one to another. For example, one cannot conceptualize democratization in terms of "expansion of liberty and equality" without addressing the possibility that increasing liberty may lead to some degree of inequality. The issue here is whether our concept of democratization is *internally* consistent. Likewise, one cannot conceptualize democracy as being about a "set of institutional arrangements," such as elections, while viewing democratization as being about a "sort of political culture or set of values and norms." This is an issue of logical consistency *between* the concepts of democracy and democratization, which we presume are related, but which seem to point in different directions here.

Third, concepts should be useful. They must be specific enough that they allow you to draw distinctions in analyzing examples. The concept of democratization can be useful because we can meaningfully distinguish between countries that have democratized and those that have not. Our use of concepts is pragmatic because we identify concepts based on how they help us answer research questions.[10] For comparative analysis, concepts must allow us to identify *variations* between times and/or places, which the concept of democratization does: it allows us to differentiate and examine the variations between places that have undergone democratization and those that have not. To be useful, concepts must also allow us to measure variables, which we examine further later.

Conceptualization

conceptualization The deliberate process through which we create and select social-scientific concepts.

Using concepts may be creative because social scientists need to develop their own in many cases. The process of making up and defining concepts is called **conceptualization**. It is often necessary to come up with new ideas and definitions, though we must be self-conscious and thoughtful in how we conceptualize. In comparative politics, a good practice is to look at how scholars have already conceptualized major ideas in books (including textbooks) and articles. We should not coin a new phrase just for the sake of it, and we do not want to end up with a thousand different definitions of a concept like "democracy" when there are already several good and accepted definitions available. Too much creation of concepts could generate confusion and make discussion more difficult. Nonetheless, no concept is perfect, and you may need to conceptualize in novel ways on your own, depending on your specific projects.[11] Doing so can be part of an intellectual contribution as long as your concepts are clear, consistent, and useful.[12]

Some concepts are very general, while others are very specific. To take "nationalism" and "national identity" as an example, we might see the concept of collective identity (an individual's sense of belonging to a group) as being quite general.[13]

The Concept of Freedom

In societies such as the United States, freedom is seen as a core value. Virtually everyone is a supporter and defender of freedom, and popular images present the American nation as the "land of the free." Yet what it means to be free is not so clear, and the term has multiple, distinct, and perhaps even contradictory meanings.[14] Some view freedom in "negative" terms: people are free to the extent that nobody impinges on their ability to act in accordance with their will. Others view freedom in "positive" terms: One is free to the extent that one can engage in particular sorts of acts or ways of life. Others may view freedom in mystical terms, suggesting that one is free to the extent that one experiences transcendence through service to others through participation in collective action, or through spiritual contemplation. There are also Marxist-inspired interpretations of freedom holding that one is free to the extent that one is not *alienated* from others, from one's work, and from a sense of purpose or meaning. (And, last but not least, Janis Joplin sang that "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose.")

All of these understandings take freedom to be a quality of an individual. Yet many also speak of the collective freedoms of groups. For instance, many societies, in seeking independence from colonial powers, produce *authoritarian* regimes that do not promote individual freedoms. Often, the members of these societies nevertheless celebrate them as distinctively *free*. Note that all of these meanings of the term (and we could list many more) resonate with millions of people in the world today.[16]

Libyan women celebrate liberation from Qaddafi's rule. Tripoli, September 2011.

Greater specificity comes with adding more attributes to the concept, maybe by specifying that we are interested in those collective identities that are political or that have major implications for politics. More specific still, one can divide *political* identities into more specific subtypes, for example, political identities that say that everybody in your country is like you and that they are all equal. Some questions require more general concepts and others more specific concepts. This issue is sometimes referred to as "**Sartori's ladder of abstraction**."[15] The ladder ranges from general concepts at the top to very specific concepts at the bottom, and the rung one stands on depends on the specific questions being asked and the cases being examined.

Sartori's ladder of abstraction The idea that we can organize concepts on the basis of their specificity or generality.

Operationalizing: From Concepts to Measures

Once we have a clear notion of a concept, we need to be able to measure it; that is, we need to **operationalize** our concept. To operationalize a concept is to make it workable, mainly by making it measurable (which often means either being able to say whether the phenomenon in question is present or how much of it there is in a given case). When a concept is operational—or we have an operational definition—we can begin to explain what we are studying. We can start to explain cause and effect only when we have clarified what we are talking about and can measure it.

operationalization The process through which we make a concept measurable.

TABLE 1.3 Possible Operational Definitions of Democratization

A case of democratization occurs when . . .
• a country holds a free and fair multiparty election
• two turnovers of government at the ballot box have occurred, in which the ruling party loses an election and peacefully steps down from power
• free and fair elections are held, and a constitutional law is in place guaranteeing the rights of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion to all citizens
• there is no verifiable suppression of political participation and expression
• more than two-thirds of citizens in a survey express values that reject authoritarian rule

There may be many ways to operationalize a certain concept, as shown by the example of democratization in Table 1.3. All of these may be valid ways to operationalize democratization so long as the operational definition matches up with the concept. If we conceptualize democratization in terms of elections, we should measure it in terms of elections (not, for example, by values people hold). As we begin to measure our concepts, we move more toward the "real," or empirical, world we observe.

Empirical Evidence

Questions demand answers. Social scientists do not ask questions just to ask them but to attempt to answer them. So how do social scientists answer their questions? In short, they couple empirical evidence with theory. In comparative politics, *empirical* means those observations we can make from looking at the real world rather than using abstract theories or speculation. We look at how theory and evidence interact in chapter 2. For the moment, we only highlight the forms of evidence most often used in comparative politics, since this is necessary for understanding the method. A key is the distinction between facts and evidence.

Facts and Evidence

evidence A set of facts or observations used to support a proposition or examine a hypothesis.

Facts—understood here as simple statements about what is or is not the case—are abundant, but evidence is more precious. As noted previously, online sources such as Wikipedia and Google provide almost costless access to a massive set of facts (though a lot of information found online is inaccurate). **Evidence** consists of facts used in support of a proposition or hypothesis. Notice something built into these definitions: evidence is indeed based on facts. So a point of view or an opinion, whether your own or someone else's, is not evidence. The fact that someone else believes something does not mean there is evidence for it, even if that opinion has been published by a prominent scholar or public figure. Evidence should be available for the reader to gather as well and not be simply based on hearsay, though research sometimes requires anonymity of sources. Wherever possible, research should be replicable by someone else.

To use a simple example of varying qualities of evidence, say we ask two students to make a simple claim about whether Saudi Arabia is a democracy and to back

this claim with evidence. In the two examples in Table 1.4, the difference between the two students is not the correctness of the claim, which is the same. Nor is it the facts, which are true on both sides. Rather, the difference is in how well evidence is used to back the claim. Successful comparativists are mostly known not for the correctness of their assertions but for the ways they empirically support their claims.

Strong evidence has several characteristics. Most obviously, it must be relevant to the issue at hand. If you are arguing about Saudi Arabia's democracy, the fact that the country is Muslim, or an oil exporter, is not an indicator of democracy. We may debate whether these factors help *cause* democracy or a lack of democracy, but they are not measures of democracy itself the way free and fair elections and civil rights are.

The evidence often should be at the same **level of analysis** as the claim you are making—that is, at the individual, organizational, or societal level, for example. We can ask good research questions at many levels of analysis: individuals, groups within a country, whole countries and societies, regions of the world, and the world as a whole. But we need to be careful that our evidence reflects our level of analysis, or at least that we deal with levels of analysis in a way that makes logical sense. Countries are made up of individuals, but individuals are not countries, and there are important differences between individuals, groups, and societies at large. We need to carefully ask ourselves which units (individuals, federal regions, countries, parties) our questions are about and make sure that our evidence comes from appropriate units.

level of analysis The level (e.g., individual, organizational, societal) at which observations are made or at which causal processes operate.

For example, it is appropriate to try to study how individual and regional differences in preferences about some policy question may influence policy adoption at the national level, but it would be a mistake to think that policy adoption simply reflects individual majority opinion in all cases. The same is true the other way around: if you are talking about an individual or a small group, you cannot assume you know everything about them just because of what country they come from; this is essentially stereotyping (and in social science is often called the "ecological fallacy," mistakenly attributing a contextual characteristic to all of the individuals who inhabit that context). Analysts risk committing logical mistakes if they do not pay attention to levels of analysis.

TABLE 1.4 Examples of Strong and Weak Use of Evidence

Student 1	Student 2
Claim: *Saudi Arabia is not democratic.*	Claim: *Saudi Arabia is not democratic.*
Evidence: Saudi Arabia has not held free and fair elections for its national government. Women do not have the same political and social rights as men.	Evidence: Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country whose economy is based on exporting oil. It is a long-time ally of the United States and is led by King Salman and a large royal family.
Claim: strong *Facts: correct* Evidence: ***strong***	*Claim: strong* *Facts: correct* Evidence: ***weak***

Cases and Case Studies

case In comparative analysis, a unit or example of a phenomenon to be studied.

Cases are the basic units of analysis in comparative politics. In many instances, our cases are countries, usually for a certain period. We may seek, for example, to explain North Korea's lack of democracy versus the (imperfect) progress of democracy in South Korea; the cases here are the two countries we are comparing, and perhaps our time frame will be the period after the Korean War of the 1950s.

A case is not always a country, however. To start with, we could consider other geographical units: we may be interested in the social history of the state of California or Texas, or in comparing the two. Or we may be interested in the state of Gujarat in India or in the city of Caracas, Venezuela. We may be interested in contrasting the European Union with the African Union or the "majority Catholic nations of southern Europe" with the "majority Protestant nations of northern Europe." In this instance, the case for study would still be a geographic area but not a country.

Cases can also take other forms. They may be political groups, organizations, specific institutions, historical processes, eras, or even discrete events. The civil rights movement in the United States may be a case of a social movement. To do a comparison, one might examine the "civil rights movement of the 1960s" in juxtaposition to the "women's suffrage movement of the early 1900s." Or one might examine the "presidency of John F. Kennedy" and the "presidency of Barack Obama" as two cases for comparison. The French Revolution may be a case of a social and political revolution, and so too may the "Revolutions of 1848" (which took place across many countries in Europe) be treated as a "single case" of social and political revolution. Finally, we may also look at comparisons over time within a single country. An example might be comparing "the politics of health care in 1960s America" with "the politics of health care in twenty-first-century America." The key is delineating one's case as a unit that can be usefully understood as a cluster of events or attributes.

Comparative politics studies vary considerably in terms of how many cases they handle. Some studies focus on a single case.[17] Most scholars feel that single cases can be illuminating but that they are not sufficient for testing all hypotheses. At the other end of the spectrum, some studies deal with *large-N* comparisons in which many cases are analyzed through statistical searches for common features (this is discussed further in chapters 2 and 13). In between these approaches, at the heart of traditional comparative politics, we find *small-N* comparisons of two or more cases.

The Comparative Method

Comparative politics—unlike, say, the study of American government or international relations—is defined by its method. It makes arguments about cause and effect through structured and systematic comparing and contrasting of cases.

Variables and Comparison

variable An element or factor that is likely to change, or vary, from case to case.

The causes and the outcomes we are trying to measure are called **variables** because they vary from one case to another. For instance, if we were to argue that the African country of Ghana has a high level of democracy because it was colonized by the British, while the neighboring country of Togo has a low level of democracy because it was colonized by the French, then both the supposed cause and the

effect vary from one country to the other. The effect (or **outcome**) is the level of democracy, which is high in one case and low in the other. The cause we would be proposing is the colonizer, which is British in one case and French in the other.

We will typically be seeking to explain a certain outcome or result or consequence. In the cause-and-effect story of X → Y, our research will center on investigating the various possible causes (you might think of them as "X factors") to explain "the Y." Since outcomes depend on the causes, a social science convention is to call the outcome the **dependent variable**, while the cause(s) is (are) called the **independent variable**(s). Many terms are used, but for our purposes, all of the expressions in each column in the following table are nearly synonymous.

Cause	→	effect (or result or consequence)
independent variable	→	dependent variable
explanatory variable	→	outcome
X variable	→	Y variable

If we compare or contrast two or more cases to make a causal argument, we will be looking for similarities and differences (also called **variations**) between the cases. Using just two countries for the moment (to keep it simple), we may look to explain why two countries have different outcomes, or we may look at variations in outcomes between two countries. We may ask why one country is wealthy but a neighboring country is poor. Or, conversely, we may ask why two very different countries had very similar outcomes, such as becoming democracies around the same time.

outcome Typically used as a synonym for "effect," something that is produced or changed in any social or political process.

dependent variable In hypothesis testing, the dependent variable is the effect or outcome that we expect to be acted on (or have its value altered) by the independent variable.

independent variable In hypothesis testing, an independent variable is one that we expect to "act on" or change the value of the variable.

variation Difference between cases in any given study of comparative politics.

The city of Nogales straddles the border between Mexico (left) and the United States, divided by a three-mile fence completed in 2011. Why do these neighboring countries have such striking differences?

To address such questions, we can use two simple tools as points of departure: *most-similar-systems* analyses and *most-different-systems* analyses.[18] These approaches use comparison for the same fundamental purpose: ruling out plausible explanations for certain phenomena as we attempt to build causal theories. That is, quite similar or quite different cases are used as comparative checks to see what arguments cannot account for a certain outcome. Ruling out these other arguments allows the researcher to narrow down the research process by focusing on the possible causes that remain and testing evidence supporting these causes. It is important to note that these designs work best for case comparisons in which we are expecting fairly deterministic, rather than highly probabilistic, relationships between "predictors" and "outcomes." If we anticipate "probabilistic" relationships between some predictor and some outcome (e.g., as members of a population become more educated, they will tend to become more tolerant), ruling out theoretical arguments based on single cases will not help us.

Most-Similar-Systems Design

most-similar-systems (MSS) A research design in which we compare cases that are similar with respect to a number of factors but with distinct outcomes.

The **most-similar-systems (MSS)** design is predicated on the logic that two cases (such as two countries) that are similar in a variety of ways would be expected to have very similar political outcomes. Thus, if two cases have variations in outcomes, we would look for the variations that can explain why the countries are dissimilar.

While Table 1.5 may make the analysis appear formal, people actually do this type of analysis informally all the time. Consider discussions you have with others about things seemingly as simple as why we like certain movies. Virtually all feature films released in cinemas are of similar length, are filmed for large screens, use professional directors and producers, have a plot with a protagonist (often a big star), use carefully

TABLE 1.5 Most-Similar-Systems Design

REGIME TYPES IN AFRICA

Variable	Case 1: Togo	Case 2: Ghana
Similarities		
Climate	Hot	Hot
Income	Low	Low
Ethnic Demography	Heterogeneous	Heterogeneous
Largest Religion	Christian	Christian
Other Religions	Islam, Traditional	Islam, Traditional
Outcome		
Regime Type	Authoritarian	Democratic
Cause		
Hypothesis: Colonizer	France	United Kingdom