

A photograph of a globe showing the Eastern Hemisphere, resting on a stack of several thick, dark-colored books. The books are arranged in a slightly overlapping, non-linear fashion across the frame. The globe is positioned towards the top left, casting a soft shadow onto the books below.

Second Edition Update

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

David J. Samuels



Comparative Politics

SECOND EDITION UPDATE

David J. Samuels
University of Minnesota



Pearson

Please contact <https://support.pearson.com/getsupport/s/contactsupport> with any queries on this content.

Copyright © 2021, 2018 by Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates, 221 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030. All Rights Reserved. Manufactured in the United States of America. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permissions, request forms, and the appropriate contacts within the Pearson Education Global Rights and Permissions department, please visit www.pearsoned.com/permissions/.

Acknowledgments of third-party content appear on the appropriate pages within the text, which constitute an extension of this copyright page.

PEARSON, ALWAYS LEARNING, and REVEL are exclusive trademarks owned by Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates in the U.S. and/or other countries.

Unless otherwise indicated herein, any third-party trademarks, logos, or icons that may appear in this work are the property of their respective owners, and any references to third-party trademarks, logos, icons, or other trade dress are for demonstrative or descriptive purposes only. Such references are not intended to imply any sponsorship, endorsement, authorization, or promotion of Pearson's products by the owners of such marks, or any relationship between the owner and Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates, authors, licensees, or distributors.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Samuels, David, author.

Title: Comparative politics / David J. Samuels.

Description: Second edition. | Hoboken, NJ : Pearson, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "Students who enroll in an introductory course on comparative politics should be prepared to encounter some tough but fascinating questions: Why are some states democracies while others are not? Why does ethnicity seem to be at the heart of so much conflict in the world today?"—Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020006626 | ISBN 9780135709894 (paperback) | ISBN 9780136598619 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Comparative government.

Classification: LCC JF51 .S25 2021 | DDC 320.3—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020006626>

2nd Edition Update Access Code Card:

ISBN-10: 0-13-570297-6

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-570297-0

2nd Edition Update Rental Edition:

ISBN-10: 0-13-570989-X

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-570989-4

2nd Edition Update Instructor's Review Copy:

ISBN-10: 0-13-570613-0

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-570613-8

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode



Brief Contents

Detailed Contents	ix	8 Gender and Politics	191
Preface	xiv	9 Collective Action	218
Maps	xx		
1 Doing Comparative Politics	1	10 Political Violence	246
2 The State	27	11 Political Economy of Development	274
3 Democratic Political Regimes	55	12 The Political Economy of Redistribution	302
4 Non-Democratic Political Regimes	85	13 Globalization	330
5 Regime Change	113		
6 Political Identity	139	Glossary	360
7 Religion and Politics	164	Subject Index	368
		Name Index	380

This page is intentionally left blank

Detailed Contents

Preface	xiv	State versus Nation	33
Maps	xx	State versus Society	35
1 Doing Comparative Politics			
CHAPTER QUESTION: Why study comparative politics?		Understanding Early State Formation	36
Studying Comparative Politics	1	Political Interests and Early State Formation	37
The Foundations of Comparative Politics	2	The Natural Environment and Early State Formation	40
The Comparative Method	4	Understanding Late State Formation	41
Asking Questions	5	Political Interests and Late State Formation	42
Formulating Hypotheses	8	The Natural Environment and Late State Formation	44
Using the Comparative Method	8	The Consequences of Late State Formation	45
Challenges of Comparative Research	12	HYPOTHESIS TESTING: A Colonial Legacy	
Separating Correlation from Causation	16	Always Results in a Weak State: Comparing	46
Identifying Causation	16	Zimbabwe and Botswana	47
Assessing Unreliable Information	17	Measuring State Strength	48
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Montesquieu's Theory of Climate	18	The Fragile States Index	49
Approaches to Doing Comparative Research	19	How the Index Works	50
Quantitative Research	21	Conclusion	51
Qualitative Research	21	<i>Key Terms 52 • Review Questions 52 • Suggested Readings 53 • Notes 53</i>	
Conclusion	22		
<i>Key Terms 25 • Review Questions 25 • Suggested Readings 25 • Notes 26</i>	23	3 Democratic Political Regimes	55
2 The State			
CHAPTER QUESTION: Where do "states" come from?		CHAPTER QUESTION: What is democracy?	56
Balancing Individual and Collective Interests	27	Defining Democracy	57
The Prisoner's Dilemma	27	Accountability	57
Hobbes's Problem	29	Participation	57
Hobbes's Solution	28	Contestation	58
Establishing Institutions	30	Requirements for Democracy	60
Sovereignty	29	Elected Government	60
State versus Government	30	Civil Liberties	61
	31	Fair and Frequent Elections	61
	32	Assessing the "Quality" of Democracy	62
	32	Madison's Dilemma: Balancing Limited and Effective Government	63
	33	Unitary versus Federal Constitutions	64

Executive–Legislative Relations	66	Theocracies	103
Presidentialism	66	Personalistic Regimes	104
Parliamentarism	67	HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Corruption Is Worse in Personalistic Non-Democracies:	
Hybrid Systems	67		
Addressing Madison’s Dilemma	69	Comparing Congo and China	107
Judicial Review versus Parliamentary Supremacy	72	Conclusion	109
Majoritarian versus Proportional Electoral Systems	72	Key Terms 110 • Review Questions 110 • Suggested Readings 110 • Notes 111	
Plurality Rule	74		
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Plurality Rule Discriminates against Small Parties: Comparing the UK and India	74	5 Regime Change	113
Majority Rule	75	CHAPTER QUESTION: What are the causes of regime change?	
Proportional Representation	77		114
Mixed Electoral Rules	78	Historical Trends	115
Conclusion	80	Domestic Causes of Regime Change	116
Key Terms 82 • Review Questions 82 • Suggested Readings 83 • Notes 83	81	The Civic Culture	117
		Economic Change	119
		The Role of the Military	122
		HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Weak Landowning Elites and a Weak Military Can Sustain Democracy: the Case of Costa Rica	126
		International Causes of Regime Change	127
	85	U.S. Foreign Policy	127
		Soviet Foreign Policy	128
Understanding the Principles of Non-Democracy	86	Changes in the Catholic Church	129
Differentiating Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes	87	The European Union	129
Use of Ideology	87	Globalization	130
Extent of Coercive Mobilization		Short-Term Catalysts of Regime Change	131
Degree of Social and Political Pluralism		The Future of Regime Change	132
Differentiating Communist and Fascist Ideologies	89	Illiberal Democracies	133
Communism	89	From Illiberal Democracy to “Not Free”?	134
Fascism	90	Conclusion	135
Comparing Totalitarian Ideologies	90	Key Terms 136 • Review Questions 137 • Suggested Readings 137 • Notes 137	
Comparing Institutions of Non-Democratic Regimes	94		
Monarchies	94	6 Political Identity	139
Single-Party Regimes	95	CHAPTER QUESTION: When does identity become politicized?	
Military Regimes	96		140
Oligarchies	98	Forms of Political Identity	141
	99	Karl Marx and Economic Identity	142
	100	Max Weber and Cultural Identity	143
	101	Interests and Identity for Marx and Weber	144

Politicizing Identity: Primordialism			
Samuel Huntington and Global Conflict	145	Conclusion	187
Huntington's Critics	146	Key Terms 189 • Review Questions 189	
Evaluating Primordialism	147	• Suggested Readings 189 • Notes 189	
Politicizing Identity: Constructivism			
Identity and Individual Choice	149	8 Gender and Politics	191
Identity and the Social Context	149	CHAPTER QUESTION: How do attitudes	
Constructivism and Racial and National Identity in Brazil	150	about gender influence politics?	192
Constructivism and Nationalist Identity in Europe	152	Defining "Gender"	193
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Collective Memory Influences the Construction of Political Identity: Comparing the United States and Brazil	155	Gender as a Category	194
Conclusion	155	Gender as a Political Process	194
Key Terms 161 • Review Questions 161	158	Attitudes about Gender around the World	196
• Suggested Readings 161 • Notes 162	160	Modernization and Attitudes about Gender	196
7 Religion and Politics	164	Attitudes about Gender, Attitudes about Democracy	197
CHAPTER QUESTION: What is the relationship between religious identity and democracy?	164	Gender Gaps in Established Democracies	199
Religion and Democracy	165	The "Traditional" versus the "Modern" Gender Gap	199
Christianity and Democracy	166	Shaping the Modern Gender Gap	200
Protestantism and Democracy	167	Women Shaping Gender Relations	202
Catholicism and Democracy	168	HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Gender Quota Laws are the Only Way to Dramatically Increase the Number of Female	
Islam and Democracy	169	Legislators: Comparing Costa Rica and South Africa	204
Separation of Religion and the State under Islam	170	Politics Shapes Gender Roles	207
The Status of Muslim Women	172	Similar Societies, Different Outcomes: Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria	208
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: In a Democracy Deeply Divided by Religious Disputes, Treating Everyone Equally Is the Best Way to Promote Domestic Stability and Peace: The Case of India	173	Similar Societies, Different Outcomes: Wealthy Democracies	209
Islam and Politics in Arab Societies	174	Conclusion	214
Modernization, Secularization, and Democracy	175	Key Terms 215 • Review Questions 215	
Evidence of Secularization	177	• Suggested Readings 215 • Notes 216	
Connecting Modernization, Secularization, and Democratization	180	9 Collective Action	218
	181	CHAPTER QUESTION: Why do people participate collectively in politics?	219
	184	Resolving Collective Action Problems	219
	180	Coercing	220
	181	Appealing	221
	184	Enticing	222
	184	Political Leadership	223

Social Movements			
Characteristics of Social Movements	225	Conclusion	270
How Social Movements Form	225	Key Terms 271 • Review Questions 271	
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Political Context	227	• Suggested Readings 271 • Notes 272	
Shapes Social Movement Mobilization:			
Comparing Indigenous Movements in			
Bolivia and Peru			
The Dilemma of Formalization	228		
Interest Groups	230	CHAPTER QUESTION: How do states	275
Characteristics of Interest Groups	231	promote economic development?	276
How Interest Groups Form	232		
Illustrating Corporatism: The Case of	233	States and Markets	277
Sweden	234	What All States Take: Taxes	277
Political Parties	235	What Some States Give: Protection	277
Characteristics of Political Parties	236	against Market Failures	277
Party Systems	237	Democracy versus Non-Democracy	281
Origins of Parties and Party Systems	238	Degrees of State Intervention	285
Conclusion	239	Free Markets versus Command	285
Key Terms 243 • Review Questions 243	240	Economies	285
• Suggested Readings 243 • Notes 244	241	Social Democracies and State-Led	285
	242	Development	287
	243	Colonial Legacies	292
	244	Colonization and Long-Term Paths of	292
		Development	293
10 Political Violence	245	HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Nature Shapes	295
CHAPTER QUESTION: What causes political	246	Colonization Strategies and Long-Term	295
violence?	247	Paths of Economic Development	295
Defining Political Violence	248	Post-Colonial Status and Economic	297
Civil Wars	249	Development	297
Opportunities for Civil War	250	Conclusion	299
Interests and Civil War	251	Key Terms 300 • Review Questions 300	300
Revolutions	252	• Suggested Readings 300 • Notes 301	300
State Weakness	253		
Widespread Popular Grievances	254		
Consequences of Revolution	255		
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: The Iranian	256	12 The Political Economy of	302
Revolution Constitutes a Case of “Real”	257	Redistribution	302
Revolution	258		
Terrorism	259	CHAPTER QUESTION: Why do some	303
Hard Targets	260	wealthy democracies engage in more	303
Religious “Warfare and Welfare”	261	economic redistribution than others?	303
Genocide	262	The Welfare State	304
Ethnic War and Absent International	263	Measuring the “Size” of the	304
Response	264	Welfare State	304
Government Pressure	265	Comparing Health Care	305
	266	Spending	305
	267	Comparing Childcare and Poverty	305
	268	Relief Programs	306
	269	Comparing Labor Laws	306

Why Welfare States Exist	308	Political Globalization	334
Progressive Taxation	308	Consequences for State Sovereignty	335
Social Insurance Provision	312	Consequences for Democracy	337
Debating the Welfare State	316	Economic Globalization	339
Explaining Economic Globalization	318	Explaining Economic Globalization	340
Globalization and Poverty	318	Globalization and Social Welfare	342
Globalization and Social Welfare	318		345
HYPOTHESIS TESTING: Poor People in Developing Countries Oppose Economic Globalization: The Case	319		
of Bolivia	320		348
Cultural Globalization	321		350
Globalization Homogenizes World Culture	324	Globalization Homogenizes World Culture	350
Globalization Allows Cultures to Flourish	327	Globalization Allows Cultures to Flourish	354
Conclusion	327		355
Key Terms 327 • Review Questions 328 • Suggested Readings 328 • Notes 328		Key Terms 356 • Review Questions 356 • Suggested Readings 357 • Notes 357	
13 Globalization	330	Glossary	360
CHAPTER QUESTION: How has globalization shaped politics in the world's states?	331	Subject Index	368
Defining Globalization	331	Name Index	380

Preface

Students who enroll in an introductory course on comparative politics should be prepared to encounter some tough but fascinating questions: Why are some states democracies while others are not? Why does ethnicity seem to be at the heart of so much conflict in the world today? Can religious extremism coexist with democracy? How and why do men and women participate in politics differently around the world? What prompts people to become politically active? Why are some countries increasingly rich while others remain desperately poor? These questions touch upon just a few of the themes that comparative politics explores today.

Students and scholars of comparative politics are trained to use these kinds of questions to delve into their own particular interests. I wrote *Comparative Politics*—using a question-driven approach—to mirror the process of good political science research. I aimed to make this text different from other introductions to comparative politics by focusing on asking the sorts of questions that engage *anyone* with an interest in politics—citizens, students, and scholars—and on *answering* those questions in ways that are meaningful to undergraduates.

What is the pedagogical payoff from a thematic, question-driven approach to comparative politics? I know from personal experience as well as from countless conversations with colleagues around the world that, in the classroom, we often struggle to teach students how to recognize a good argument in political science, not to mention the effort we put into teaching them to make their own arguments—that is, how to formulate a thesis, connect statements logically, determine whether evidence is confirmatory or

contradictory, and bring everything together in a strong conclusion.

Comparative Politics not only introduces students to the main questions comparative politics explores; it introduces them to how scholars go about *doing* comparative politics. Our discipline is fundamentally about constructing arguments, and an introductory course should focus on developing not just informed and engaged citizens, but informed, engaged, and *analytical* citizens—the last being a core element in a liberal arts education. This may seem like a tall order, yet I have written *Comparative Politics* with this goal as a central organizing principle. Students who use this text will learn to identify and discuss questions central to our subfield. They will also learn to recognize competing hypotheses, apply research to arguments by analyzing and critically assessing evidence, and relate different perspectives to each other analytically.

Features

Approach

To support the question-driven approach described above, each chapter of *Comparative Politics* begins with a question that focuses on a core aspect of what politics is all about around the world. Framing the chapter's subject as a question provides a narrative thread for students to follow as they read the chapter; it also fosters classroom discussion, illustrates how scholars go about answering similar questions, and provides a clear reference point for students to articulate answers on their own that they can use for assignments and exams. To help students grasp the importance

of the chapter-opening question, a real-world example is provided. For example, in Chapter 6, the opening image shows a French Muslim woman in a red, white, and blue headscarf, and the example explores the French separation of church and state; both set up the question, “When does identity become politicized?”

After the main question is introduced, each chapter is organized around the ways scholars have attempted to answer it. For example, Chapter 10 asks, “What causes political violence?” It then guides students through the various facets of the topic and ways to critically assess and weigh sources of conflict. Every chapter in *Comparative Politics* follows a similar approach, posing a question that introduces a theme, and then exploring different ways to answer that question. Throughout every chapter, more real-world examples are employed to ground the question and clarify the discussion. Although the chapter topics are sometimes complex, they are all tightly organized and written in clear and accessible prose.

Furthermore, as each chapter progresses, the core chapter question is supported by subquestions that appear in the margins to encourage students to examine more than one facet of a political puzzle. For example, political economy can be an intimidating topic for many. The main question in Chapter 11 is “How do states promote economic development?” To answer that question, students must first understand how states and markets are intertwined. Therefore, the first section of the chapter asks and answers the question, “What is the relationship between states and markets?” Every subquestion relates back to the chapter’s core question and builds toward the next subquestion, and each chapter concludes by returning to the chapter question and summarizing what was learned. In short, each chapter shows students how political scientists engage a smaller piece of a larger puzzle and then explore, debate, and articulate plausible answers to key questions about politics in the world today.

Coverage

Comparative Politics introduces students to the full breadth of our subfield by exploring common themes like institutions and interests, as well as topics that are often downplayed, particularly how political identities bridge institutions and interests. An understanding of political identity is vital today, because many of the most pressing and contentious political issues around the world—issues that students find personally compelling—touch on such questions as the tension between ethnicity and political instability, gender and political change, and religion and democracy.

Chapter 1 poses the question some undergraduates might ask their instructors—“Why study comparative politics?”—and focuses on the methods we use to ask and answer these sorts of questions. At its simplest, the comparative method involves comparing and contrasting cases that share attributes but differ on outcomes, or that differ on attributes but share outcomes. The goal of such comparisons is to generate hypotheses that offer plausible answers to our questions about what politics is all about.

Chapter 2 asks the foundational question “Where do ‘states’ come from?” and begins to answer it by unraveling Hobbes’s collective action problem. Chapters 3 and 4 define and differentiate the different kinds of states: democratic and non-democratic political regimes. Chapter 5 focuses on the causes of transitions from democracy to non-democracy, or vice versa.

The next few chapters shift the focus toward political identities, keeping in mind that they cannot be fully separated from political institutions or interests. After all, institutions shape how identities gain representation in the formal realm of politics—and political identity is often the raw material from which individuals and groups construct their political interests. Chapter 6 asks, “When does identity become politicized?” and explores the conditions under which ethnicity and

nationalism become politicized. Chapter 7 turns to another significant question—"What is the relationship between religious identity and democracy?"—while Chapter 8 explores the political consequences of changing conceptions of gender around the world.

The next two chapters turn to the question of how and why individuals' political interests and identities are mobilized collectively. Chapter 9 explores peaceful forms of collective action—interest groups, social movements, and political parties—while Chapter 10 asks why people sometimes take up arms against the established political order.

The last three chapters turn to pressing questions at the intersection of politics and economics. Chapter 11 asks, "How do states promote economic development?" while Chapter 12 explores why some countries tax and spend more than others. Finally, Chapter 13 investigates the question of globalization and its impact.

Pedagogy

Extensive pedagogy is also included in every chapter to help students comprehend key concepts and apply them.

- Hypothesis Testing boxes allow students to apply what they have learned in every chapter. As opposed to asking questions, each box opens with a statement that can be tested by exploring real-world country cases. Every box is consistently structured to walk students through the process of "Gathering Evidence" in order to "Assess the Hypothesis." Each exercise is meant to engage students actively with the process of comparative politics, providing them with opportunities to learn how to recognize and ultimately construct their own arguments.
- Every major section concludes with a summary table that reviews key concepts in an organized and easy-to-read format.

- Every chapter includes a marginal glossary to support students' understanding of new and important concepts at first encounter.
- For easy reference, key terms from the marginal glossary are repeated at the end of each chapter, along with review questions and an annotated list of suggested readings.
- Numerous color photos and figures are integrated into the text to enliven the narrative.

New to This Update

- **Updated figures and tables** that support the narrative through the presentation of pertinent data that concisely illustrate key concepts.
- **Revised discussion of how political scientists measure "state strength" using the Fragile States Index**, with new, more intuitive discussion of the index's application to real-world events.
- **Updated discussion of electoral institutions** to account for results of elections in Israel, Portugal, France, India, and Germany.
- **Revised exploration of the topic of "illiberal democracies" and the future of regime change** to enhance relevance and promote discussion of recent pessimistic views of global politics, which predict a weakening or even collapse of democracy around the world.
- **Expanded coverage of nationalism** in Chapter 6 to take into account recent events such as Brexit in the United Kingdom, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and the spread of anti-immigrant sentiment in Western Europe.
- **Updated discussion of the political consequences of globalization** to tie the topic to current events in Europe and elsewhere.

- **Numerous new examples** introduced throughout the text, recognizing the need to continuously update and refresh the material; politics involves constant change, and to keep the text relevant to disciplinary questions, many examples have been replaced or updated.

Revel™

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the author's narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Learn more about Revel

www.pearson.com/revel

- **Current Events Bulletins** feature author-written articles that put breaking news and current events into the context of comparative politics.
- **Videos** bring to life chapter contents and key moments in comparative politics. Topics include Brexit, populism, and current heads of state.
- **Assessments** tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.
- **Integrated Writing Opportunities**, helping students reason and write more clearly, are offered in several forms:
 - **Journal prompts** ask students to synthesize and apply what they have learned after each module.
 - **Shared writing prompts** encourage students to think critically about the concepts and challenges laid out in the chapter.

Through these discussion threads, instructors and students can explore multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other's viewpoints.

- **Essay prompts** are from Pearson's Writing Space, where instructors can assign both automatically graded and instructor-graded prompts. Writing Space is the best way to develop and assess concept mastery and critical thinking through writing. Writing Space provides a single place within Revel to create, track, and grade writing assignments; access writing resources; and exchange meaningful, personalized feedback quickly and easily to improve results.

Learning Management Systems

Pearson provides Blackboard Learn™, Canvas™, Brightspace by D2L, and Moodle integration, giving institutions, instructors, and students easy access to Revel. Our Revel integration delivers streamlined access to everything your students need for the course in these learning management system (LMS) environments. Single Sign-on: With single sign-on, students are ready on their first day. From your LMS course, students have easy access to an interactive blend of authors' narrative, media, and assessment. Grade Sync: Flexible, on-demand grade synchronization capabilities allow you to control exactly which Revel grades should be transferred to the LMS gradebook.

Supplements

Make more time to engage with your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement.

Pearson's partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *Comparative Politics*. Several of these supplements are available for instant download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

- **Test Bank**

Evaluate learning at every level. Reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this material's learning objectives with true/false, multiple-choice, and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, PDF, and BlackBoard versions are available on the IRC, and Respondus versions are available on request from www.respondus.com.

- **Pearson MyTest**

This powerful assessment generation program includes all of the questions in the Test Bank. Quizzes and exams can be easily authored and saved online, and then printed for classroom use, giving you ultimate flexibility to manage assessments anytime and anywhere. To learn more, visit www.pearsonhighered.com/mytest.

- **Instructor's Resource Manual**

Create a comprehensive road map for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor's Resource Manual includes learning objectives; chapter summaries and outlines; lecture and discussion suggestions;

and activities for in or out of class. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

- **PowerPoint Presentation**

Make lectures more enriching for students. The PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture outline and figures from the book and Revel edition. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

Acknowledgments

My students at Minnesota initially inspired me to write *Comparative Politics*. When I agreed to teach our Introduction to Comparative Politics class, I found that no existing text fit the way that I wanted to teach. So I developed and tinkered with lectures over a few years, "learning by doing" what worked well—and what didn't—from my students. Although he probably doesn't remember, I thank Jamie Druckman for nudging me to turn my lectures into textbook chapters. I also owe a debt to Phil Shively for inspiration, and for his hard-earned wisdom gained from decades of experience writing textbooks—and dealing with editors! For helpful comments on different chapters, I also thank Ethan Scheiner, Dara Strolovitch, Teri Caraway, Frances Rosenbluth, Edward Gibson, Leander Schneider, Druscilla Scribner, Kathleen Collins, Jeremy Weinstein, Wanjiru Kamau-Rautenberg, and Donna Lee Van Cott.

The editorial team at Pearson provided tremendous support and encouragement at every stage of what turned out to be a lengthy and sometimes difficult writing process. Many years ago, Jude Hall came into my office to sell me on Pearson's texts—but perhaps for the first time in her career, I sold *her* on an idea, and she made the initial contact with Eric Stano. Vik Mukhija shepherded the project most of the way to publication, and I owe him thanks for his support and guidance. Susan Messer helped shape the chapters in their early stages, but I owe the biggest debt to Angela Kao, development

editor extraordinaire. She patiently put up with my frustrations, always succeeding in winning me over with her “kinder and gentler” approach. I learned a great deal from her—mostly, but not exclusively, about textbook writing.

I would also like to thank the many reviewers who helped shape *Comparative Politics*:

Dauda Abubakar, *Ohio University*

Janet Adamski, *University of Mary Hardin-Baylor*

Rebecca Aubrey, *University of Connecticut*

Steve Barracca, *Eastern Kentucky University*

Kathleen Barrett, *University of West Georgia*

Leah Blumenfeld, *Barry University*

Matthew Bradley, *Indiana University at Kokomo*

Cheryl L. Brown, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

Nic Cheeseman, *Oxford University*

Katy Crossley-Frolick, *Denison University*

Kevin Deegan-Krause, *Wayne State University*

Jason Enia, *Sam Houston State University*

Farideh Farhi, *University of Hawaii at Manoa*

Mark Frazier, *University of Oklahoma*

Lauretta Frederking, *University of Portland*

Daniel Fuerstman, *State College of Florida*

Wynford Grant, *University of Warwick*

Kenneth S. Hicks, *Rogers State University*

Jonathan Hollowell, *SUNY Brockport*

Carolyn Holmes, *Mississippi State University*

Debra Holzhauer, *Southeast Missouri State University*

Carrie Humphreys, *University of Utah*

Wade Jacoby, *Brigham Young University*

Mike Jasinski, *University of Wisconsin Oshkosh*

Ellis S. Krauss, *University of California, San Diego*

Eric Langenbacher, *Georgetown University*

F. David Levenbach, *Arkansas State University*

Yitan Li, *Seattle University*

Staffan Lindberg, *University of Florida*

Daniel Lynch, *University of Southern California*

Shannan Mattiace, *Allegheny College*

Julie Mazzei, *Kent State University*

Michael Mosser, *The University of Texas at Austin*

Anthony O'Regan, *Los Angeles Valley College*

Angela Oberbauer, *San Diego Mesa College*

Rebecca K. Root, *State University of New York at Geneseo*

James C. Ross, *University of Northern Colorado*

Amy Forster Rothbart, *University of Wisconsin at Madison*

John Scherpereel, *James Madison University*

Tracy H. Slagter, *University of Wisconsin Oshkosh*

Boyka Stefanova, *University of Texas San Antonio*

Tressa E. Tabares, *American River College*

Gunes Tezcur, *Loyola University Chicago*

Erica Townsend-Bell, *University of Iowa*

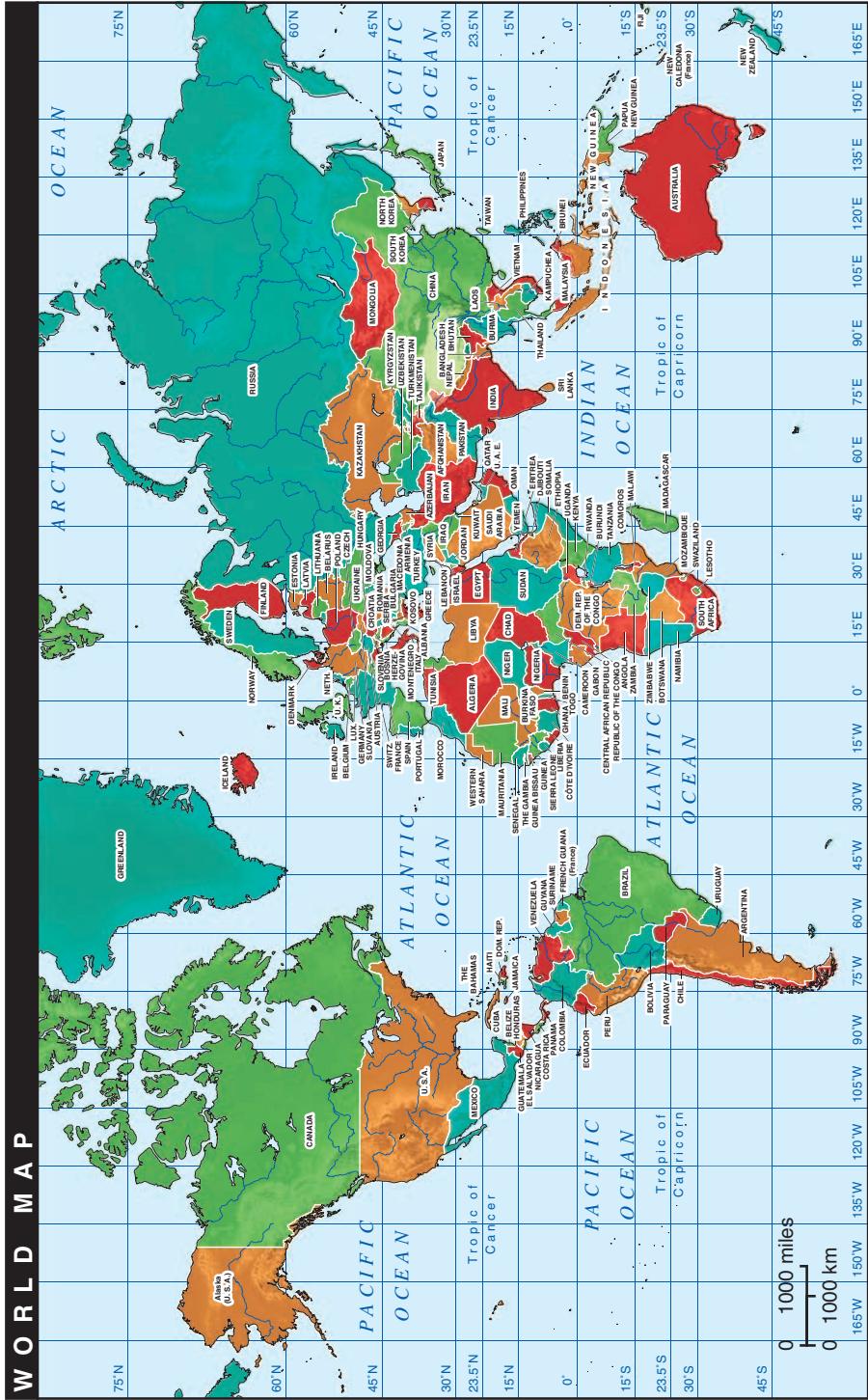
Anca Turcu, *University of Central Florida*

Wendy N. Whitman, *Santa Fe College*

Mark Wolfgram, *Oklahoma State University*.

David Samuels

Maps



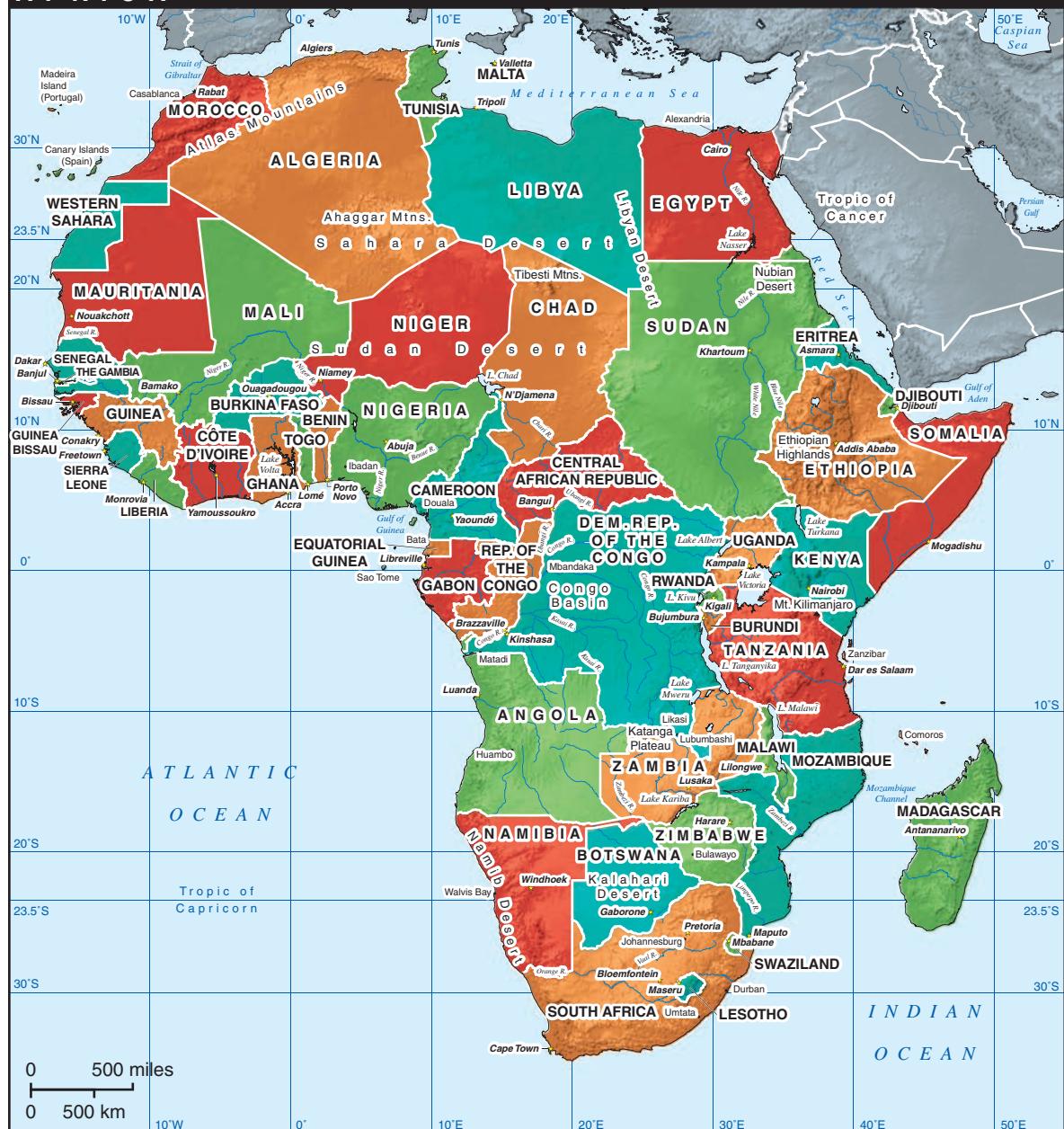
NORTH AMERICA



SOUTH AMERICA



A F R I C A



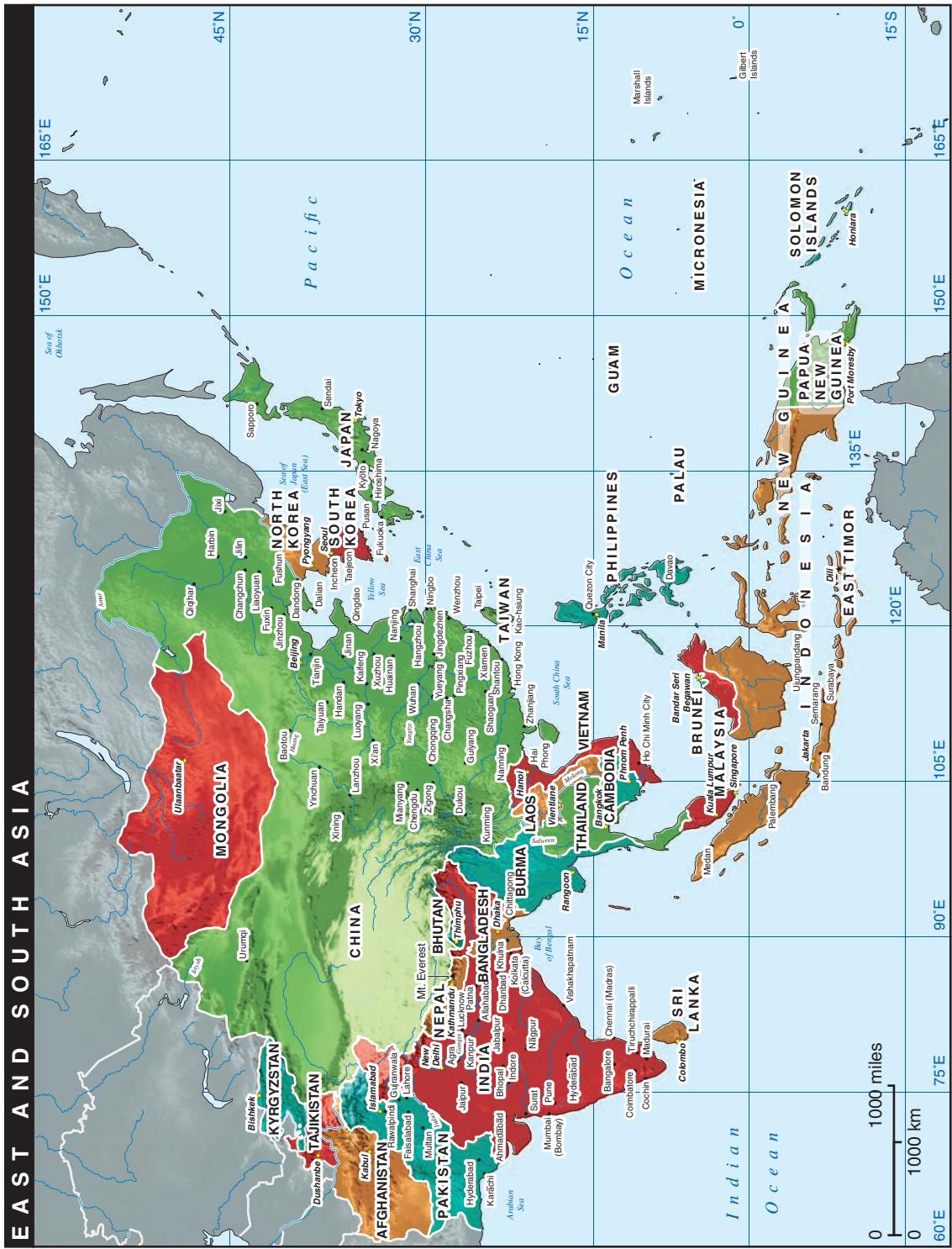
EUROPE



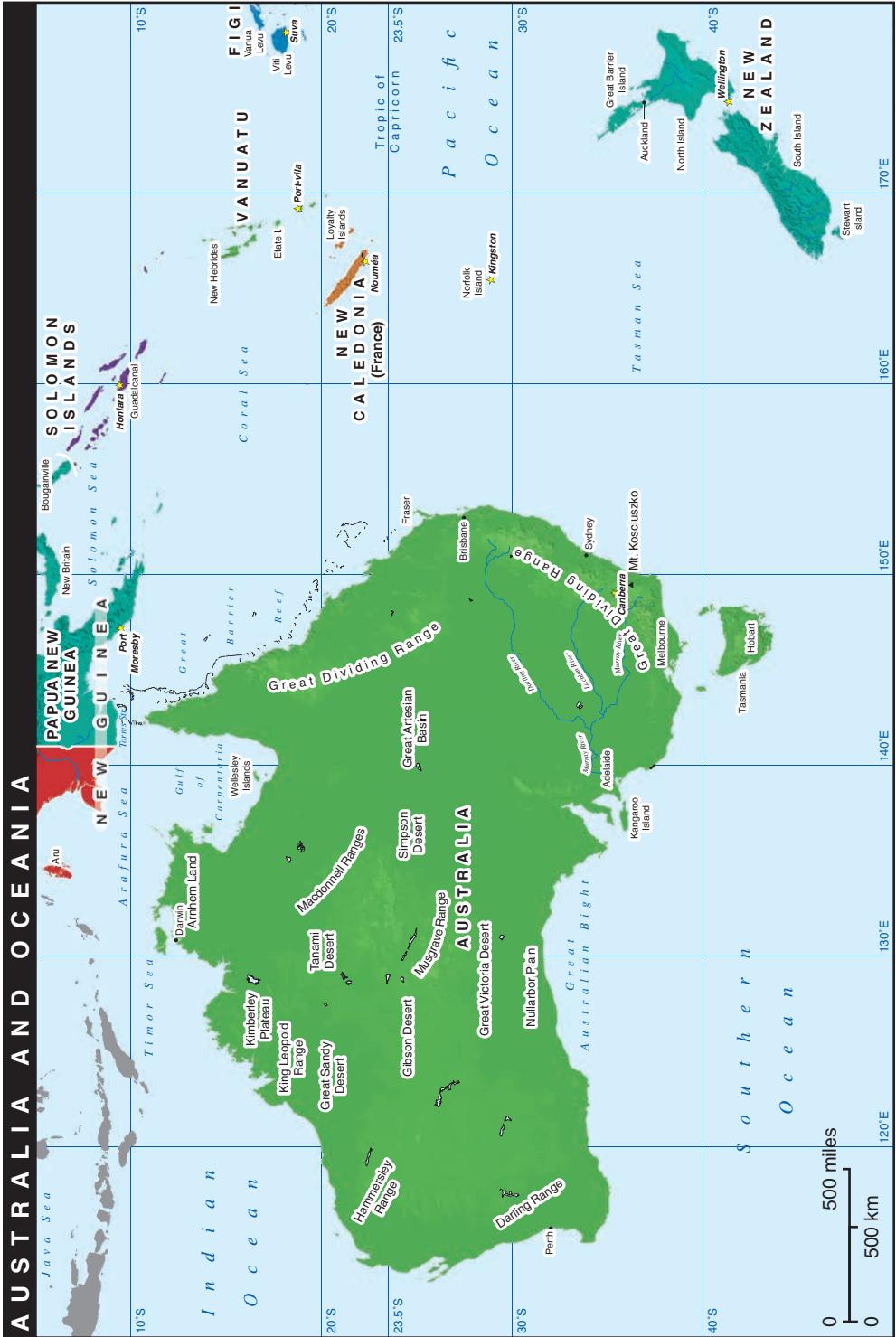
THE MIDDLE EAST



EAST AND SOUTH ASIA



AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA



This page is intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

Doing Comparative Politics



Paulo Fridman/Sygnia/Getty Images

Brazilians gather in the streets to demand the resignation of President Fernando Collor de Mello, who was accused of corruption.



Learning Objectives

- 1.1** What is comparative politics all about?
- 1.2** What sorts of questions do we ask in comparative politics?
- 1.3** How do we build arguments in comparative politics?
- 1.4** What challenges confront building arguments in comparative politics?
- 1.5** How do we obtain evidence to build arguments in comparative politics?

Why study comparative politics?

After I graduated from college, I wanted to travel. In 1992 I ended up staying in Brazil for several months, living as the guest of a politician serving in Brazil's Congress. Brazil had recently emerged from a long military dictatorship, and its politicians had written an entirely new constitution—the country's seventh since independence in 1822. My friend and his colleagues in Congress were engaged in a high-stress and high-stakes effort to impeach Brazil's president, its first popularly elected leader since the military took power in 1964. Just a few years after the military had turned power over to civilians, things were not working out as millions of Brazilians had hoped.

One day, my friend turned to me in frustration and asked, "How did you *gringos* manage to write a constitution that has survived for 200 years, while we Latin Americans seem stuck with unstable governments and military takeovers? Your founding fathers must've been intellectual giants—but the people who've written our constitutions, not so much. Why? We're no different from you, really. But why are our politics so different?"

I had no answer—and political scientists still debate whether Latin America has put instability and military influence behind it—but my friend's query stuck with me. He had asked this question because he knew that I take for granted rights for which he had fought for years, such as freedom of speech. With 20/20 hindsight, I now know that he exaggerated the political challenges Brazil faced: despite successfully impeaching that president (and impeaching another one in 2016), it remains a stable democracy. Moreover, for the most part militaries around the region no longer meddle in politics like they used to.

Even so, posing a contrast I'd never thought about before—why *was* political instability so common historically in Latin America, but not in the United States?—and my own frustrating inability to offer an answer at that time—sparked a deeper interest not just in politics, but in political science, and over the years I have returned to my friend's question time and again in my teaching and research. What I've discovered is that the best way to think through any question about politics is to ask questions and pose comparisons.

Consider for a moment what happened a few years ago in the Middle East. Almost uniformly, dictators have long ruled the countries in the region. Yet in early 2011 massive popular protests exploded in several Arab countries. What made people so upset all of a sudden—and why would they risk going to jail just to complain about the government? Moreover, why did these protests quickly lead to the ouster of the long-term rulers of Egypt and Tunisia, but not those elsewhere in the region? And why did Tunisia then adopt democratic rules and institutions, while in Egypt a new dictator replaced the old one? Can democracy spread further in the Middle East?

Now consider recent developments in China. When I was growing up in the 1970s my dad would force me to eat all my vegetables at dinner because "kids are starving in China." Seeing the gleaming skyscrapers and traffic jams of Beijing or Shanghai today, one would hardly know that the country had been considered an impoverished global weakling just a few decades ago. Can more poor countries just "become" rich, in the span of one generation? How did they do it?

Scholars will be grappling with these questions for some time—but at least we have some tools to use to develop useful answers. *Why study comparative politics?* We study comparative politics because we want answers to questions like those posed above. A comparative perspective on politics calls for analysis that pays close attention to the experiences of different countries. However, we don't study comparative politics just because we want to learn about this or that country—and, in any case, the world's political and cultural diversity presents a challenge to any comparative politics textbook: the danger is that we might become overwhelmed by the details of the world's nearly 200 countries, without learning how to answer any of the questions that grab our attention.

My friend's question certainly encouraged me to learn more about Brazilian politics—but it also forced me to rethink what I thought I knew about American politics, as well as to wonder what I could learn about the sources of political stability and chaos, in general. The only way to do that was to think about whether I could plausibly compare Brazil against the experience of other countries.

Scholars do not do comparative politics research simply by learning about a few countries. They approach their subject by asking interesting and important questions about our world. Although this is a textbook, it will become clear that the questions we ask in comparative politics are not merely academic. Because comparative politics grapples with questions about the world in which we live, our inquiries are not mere intellectual flights of fancy or exercises in balancing angels on the head of a pin. The questions we ask have practical relevance for the lives of people all over the world.

The primary way this text differs from other introductory comparative politics texts is that it focuses on asking and answering questions. First, it considers a set of key questions about politics around the world. Out of necessity, it cannot consider every question, or even every “important” question. However, the chapters cover the full range of important topics scholars and students explore today.

Second, this text helps you understand how we go about developing answers to the questions that we ask. Most people discuss and debate politics based on their opinions—but opinions can be fallible, particularly when confronted with uncomfortable facts or puzzling counterexamples. There is a difference between voicing an opinion and formulating an argument—and learning a comparative approach to the study of politics will help you learn how to build stronger arguments. To move from expressing an opinion based on intuition or feeling to articulating an argument based on facts and logic, political scientists put their curiosity to work—by asking questions in a particular way, and by employing particular methods that test the strength of their arguments. Studying politics this way helps us narrow down the range of plausible answers to questions like the one my friend posed.

This text is designed to give you the tools to learn how to critically engage key questions and build your own arguments about politics—to articulate strong answers to those questions we all have about how politics works. It is designed to help you learn how to gather evidence and articulate your own answers to important questions about poverty and wealth, democracy and dictatorship, and war and peace. Each chapter explores a key question about politics around the world and considers the ways in which scholars have sought to answer that question.

The payoff from this question-driven approach to comparative politics is that you will learn to recognize competing arguments and learn the basics of how to begin to construct your own arguments—how to formulate a thesis, connect statements logically, and determine whether evidence confirms or contradicts an argument.

Political science is fundamentally about constructing arguments. This text will give you the tools to identify and discuss questions central to our subfield, recognize competing hypotheses, apply research to arguments by analyzing and critically assessing evidence, and relate different perspectives to each other analytically. In short, this text teaches you how to actually “do” comparative politics. This introductory chapter explains how we go about doing comparative politics and considers several challenges to comparative politics research.

Studying Comparative Politics

1.1 What is comparative politics all about?

politics

the making of authoritative public choices from private preferences.

comparative politics

the systematic search for answers to political questions about how people around the world make and contest authoritative public choices.

What is politics all about? Political scientist Harold Lasswell (1902–1978) provided perhaps the best direct answer by defining politics as “who gets what, when, and how.”¹ More specifically, **politics** is the process of making and contesting authoritative public decisions about the distribution of rights, responsibilities, wealth, and power. How do groups of people come to make a choice that all members of the community agree to respect? And what kinds of decisions must these groups of people make? Political choices determine how order is imposed in societies, which political institutions will be created, and which policies are enacted. Other choices involve whether or when to contest the established order, and if so, what new institutions to construct or policies to reform. Interesting political science research focuses on these kinds of questions, which become increasingly focused and specific.

Political science is the study of politics. Political scientists search for explanations of political behavior and events by breaking down “who gets what, when, and how” into specific and targeted queries. The academic field of political science is divided into four subfields: American politics, which studies politics within the United States; political theory, which focuses on philosophical questions concerning the nature and purposes of politics; international relations, which studies politics between countries; and comparative politics.

Comparative politics is the systematic search for answers to political questions about how people around the world make and contest authoritative public choices. In essence, it compares and contrasts why people around the world make similar decisions under different political rules—or why they make different decisions under similar rules. Unlike international relations, comparative politics focuses on politics within different countries around the world—both in terms of how countries are similar, and how they differ—while international relations studies the interactions between countries.

We study comparative politics because we don’t just want to describe “who gets what, when, and how” in different countries—we seek to explain how politics works around the world. Political scientists do not claim that their explanations will

always be definitive, but they try to identify arguments that are more convincing than others. This is the process of moving from opinion to explanation. More often than not, widely held opinions about politics—sometimes called the “conventional wisdom”—fall flat when confronted with comparative evidence.

Being the conventional wisdom doesn’t mean an opinion is wrong. Political scientists use particular methods to show when the conventional wisdom is right, and when it is misleading. A comparative approach to understanding politics around the world seeks to ask questions, generate hypotheses that offer plausible potential answers to those questions, and test those hypotheses against evidence we gather from the real world to develop strong arguments, using what we call the *comparative method*. At its simplest, the comparative method involves comparing and contrasting cases (a set of countries, for example) that share attributes or characteristics but differ in terms of the outcome you’re exploring—or that have diverse attributes but experience the same outcome. The goal of such comparisons is to generate hypotheses that provide convincing answers to our questions about what politics is all about. Each chapter poses a question and uses examples from around the world to compare and contrast different ways to address that question. Let us first consider how comparative political scientists go about posing interesting questions.

The Foundations of Comparative Politics

1.2 What sorts of questions do we ask in comparative politics?

It’s one thing to say that we study comparative politics because we want answers to questions about how politics works around the world—but it’s another to recognize that comparative politics asks a set of “big” questions that in some cases we have been asking for centuries, but in other cases have emerged over time. It’s also important to acknowledge that in attempting to offer answers that are more informative and convincing—better—than others, changes in world politics force us to continually re-examine both our questions and our answers.

The foundations of comparative politics were established in ancient times and evolved through history into the discipline we study today. Some of the questions that comparative politics research asks today are quite old, while others have become relevant only recently. Aristotle (384–322 BC) may very well have become the first comparative political scientist when he asked, “What sort of constitution best combines political stability and good government?” Aristotle then challenged his students to compare and contrast the constitutions of every country in the world known to ancient Greeks. He was convinced that the only way to answer his question was to explore evidence from the real world—the same approach scholars and students employ today when considering the question of how to combine limited and effective government to sustain democracy in the Middle East or elsewhere around the world.

Prior to the 1700s, the study of politics was rooted in moral and religious principles. All this began to change during Europe’s so-called Age of Enlightenment, when

new scientific discoveries justified a logical and empirical approach to studying the natural and social world and chipped away at the influence of religious dogma. During the Enlightenment, scholars increasingly considered questions about politics to be secular matters, casting aside arguments based solely in religion. For example, the work of philosophers such as Montesquieu (1689–1755), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), John Locke (1632–1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) asked whether a rational and secular basis for government existed independently of arguments for monarchy rooted in divine right, and whether there was room for individual rights and freedoms in such a secular political order. Their arguments provided the foundation for the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and sparked questions we explore in upcoming chapters: What is the state, and where does it come from? How can limits be imposed on government authority to protect individual liberty? What is the relationship between religious identity and democracy?

In the 1800s, new questions arose as a result of the Industrial Revolution, which caused massive socioeconomic change, particularly in Western Europe. Scholars such as Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Max Weber (1864–1920) considered the political impact of the shift from rural, agrarian societies to urban, industrial societies. Their work finds echoes to this day, as scholars continue to explore questions about the relationship between political and economic power: How can governments promote economic development? Why do some governments redistribute wealth more than others?



ib_L/Alamy Stock Photo

Old neighborhoods being swallowed up by new construction in Shanghai, China. China's government has carefully managed the country's amazing economic growth—a fact that raises the question about the proper level of government intervention in the market.

New questions emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s about the sources and consequences of nationalism and forms of political ideology such as fascism and communism. Nationalism was blamed for igniting World War I (1914–1918); communism sparked revolutions in Russia (in 1917) and China (in 1949) and bloody rebellions elsewhere; and fascism inspired the regimes that started World War II (1939–1945). Scholars wondered why nationalism took a benign form in some countries but a virulent form in others, and they puzzled over why some people found communism appealing, while others found inspiration in fascism. Because so many dictators ascended to power in the 1930s, political scientists even wondered whether democracy would survive. This fear proved unfounded, yet although fascism and communism have virtually disappeared as governing philosophies, non-democratic political ideologies continue to challenge the stability of democracy all over the world, pushing scholars to ask new questions: What differentiates democracy from non-democracy? What causes peaceful political mobilization—and what causes political violence? Why does democracy sometimes collapse into non-democracy?

In the 1960s and 1970s, the emergence of so many new nations in the wake of European decolonization generated a host of new questions, particularly about what might foster economic development and political stability in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Some scholars assumed that poor nations were doomed to perpetual exploitation by wealthier nations, but the rapid economic rise of “Asian Tigers” such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore invalidated such ideas and pushed scholars to ask whether economic development was due to political culture, non-democratic political institutions, or the ways in which governments intervened in and manipulated economic markets. The recent rapid growth of countries such as India and especially China has pushed scholars to reconsider some questions: What political factors can encourage economic development? To what extent does globalization impact politics?

By the 1990s, dozens of dictatorships around the world had adopted democracy, forcing political scientists to take yet another look at the question of why some non-democratic rulers relinquish their hold on power. These changes generated optimism about the future of democracy. Many even wondered whether the world was witnessing the twilight of the idea of dictatorship and the end of non-democratic ideologies once and for all. Still, given democracy’s roots in Western Europe, scholars also wondered if democracy could survive in so many different cultures. And given the recent rise of right-wing populist movements even in many of the world’s oldest democracies, scholars have once again begun to wonder about democracy’s long-term health.

Recently, political scientists have also focused increased attention on questions related to the expanding role of women in politics, the growing influence of religion, and the impact of globalization on domestic and international politics. More and more women are winning elections around the world, leading scholars to ask: How do different attitudes about women’s rights influence politics? The impact of religion seems obvious, but many assume that religious faith is a recipe for irreconcilable conflict between groups—while others call that assumption into question. And globalization brings us back to the sorts of questions Hobbes and Locke were asking hundreds of years ago: Given the rising importance of transnational actors in world politics, such as corporations, terrorists and human rights activists, will the sovereign state wither away?

This is where we find comparative politics today—asking a series of questions about how politics works and offering a method to help you make sense of the rapid and confusing political change happening around the world. At its essence, comparative politics is an argument for the existence of patterns—whether similarities or differences—across countries, and for undertaking a systematic effort to understand why different outcomes occur in similar places, or similar outcomes occur in different places. These efforts help us make sense of and simplify these complex patterns, offering simpler yet convincing answers to the questions that concern real-world political events.

The Comparative Method

1.3 How do we build arguments in comparative politics?

The questions we ask in comparative politics are always inspired by real-world events; there are no easy answers. The worst sorts of arguments in comparative politics are based on opinions rooted in stereotypes, in the belief that the past predicts the future, or on generalizations drawn from specific facts. For example, someone might stereotypically claim, “Democracy can never take root in Iraq because Iraqis are naturally anti-democratic,” or “Iraq will never be a democracy simply because it has never been a democracy.” Such arguments are unconvincing because they fail to engage available evidence—for example, public-opinion polls consistently reveal that Iraqi citizens want a democracy; and obviously every democratic country today was not always so. Someone might also offer the opinion, “Kuwait is next door to Iraq, and it’s not a democracy, so obviously there’s no way Iraq can become a democracy.” This approach seems logical on the surface—but it too fails to consider the range of evidence. One cannot assume that if something happens in one place it is bound to happen in other places.

Asking Questions

So how does a comparative approach to politics move beyond merely stating an opinion? First, it takes a particular approach to asking and answering questions about political events that might seem inevitable or that might seem to have an “obvious” explanation: by exploring as wide a range of possible cases that have similar characteristics but that experience different outcomes—or vice versa, by looking at the set of cases with different characteristics that experience similar political outcomes. Both of these situations force us to dig deeper in such cases to find more viable explanations:

- Countries that share attributes but experience different political outcomes are puzzling because we expect countries with the same features to undergo similar experiences.
- Likewise, when a diverse set of countries experiences the same political outcome, the reason cannot be mere coincidence.

To illustrate the kinds of questions comparativists ask, consider an example of a dictatorship turned into a democracy: South Korea in 1987. How has democracy prevailed in South Korea? To answer this question, comparativists would not focus only or even largely on what transpired in South Korea in the 1970s or early 1980s. Instead, we would look to the broader world to find out if democratization in South Korea is part of a larger pattern of similar events that occurred in similar *and* dissimilar societies.

Think about the implications of focusing exclusively on South Korea. Perhaps, you reason, there is something about Korean culture that is inherently pro-democracy. Yet if that were true, then all countries that share Korean culture should have democratized—or at a minimum, we would see popular demand for democracy in such countries. South Korea is most similar to North Korea, which was and remains a non-democratic regime. Both countries share centuries of language, culture, and history. If Korean people were inherently pro-democratic, and if political outcomes followed from similar characteristics, then North Korea should also be a democracy. Yet despite sharing many attributes, North and South Korea have taken different political paths.

Comparativists shy away from building arguments based exclusively on the particulars of a single case. A good comparativist would ask, “Is the emergence of democracy in South Korea just one example of a pattern?” and would explore not just whether democracy has emerged in other similar places at the same time, but also whether it has emerged in different places at the same time. Depending on what we observe from the real world, we can begin to discount some answers and gain confidence in others.

It turns out that South Korea is an example of a common phenomenon—democratization—which becomes puzzling when we see that many other very different countries—such as Argentina, Turkey, the Philippines, and Poland—all experienced the same political outcome around the same time. To a comparativist, this pattern cannot be a coincidence, which calls into question the relative importance of factors unique to South Korea and suggests that only by identifying the factors these diverse countries share will we be able to explain the pattern. South Korea’s democratization raises interesting comparative politics questions both because similar countries (like North Korea) have not taken its path, and because different countries (like those listed above) have.

To nail down how comparativists ask questions about politics, consider how we might search for answers to the question of what causes civil wars. Let’s apply the same logic as above. Suppose you had just read an article about ongoing violence in the West African country of Nigeria, and you wanted to understand why the conflict started. If you went online, it would take you just a few minutes to learn two key things about Nigeria: it’s relatively poor, and it’s divided between Christians and Muslims. “Ah!” you might say. “They’re fighting over scarce resources, inspired by religious dogma.” These are both plausible answers—a decent start to an argument that explains the causes of conflict, both in Nigeria and in general.

However, think about the implications of these two hypotheses. If they were true, we should see civil wars in similarly poor and religiously divided societies. And if you spent another few minutes on the Internet, you would discover that civil

war also recently plagued Côte d'Ivoire, another poor and religiously divided West African country—but you'd also probably find out that Ghana and Benin, next-door neighbors to Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, respectively, are also poor and religiously divided, but they have remained peaceful.

This again leaves us with a set of similar countries with divergent outcomes. And of course, if you did just a bit more research, you'd find a number of very different countries that have also experienced civil war—countries that are neither so poor nor so religiously divided as Nigeria. A comparativist will approach questions about specific political events or dynamics—such as democratization in South Korea and civil war in Nigeria—by putting those events in perspective of what's happened (or not) elsewhere. The question comparativists are interested in answering is why we see particular political outcomes in some similar places and times, but not in other comparable places and times—and why we see those same outcomes in very different places. We want to know why we don't see democratization, for example, in other countries that are similar to South Korea—and we want to know why we sometimes do see civil war in countries that are very different from Nigeria. To come up with convincing answers to these sorts of comparative politics questions, we first have to formulate hypotheses, and then apply the comparative method.

Table 1.1 Asking Questions in Comparative Politics

1. Look for cases that have similar attributes, but different outcomes.
 2. Look for cases that have different attributes, but similar outcomes.
-

Formulating Hypotheses

hypothesis

an argument linking cause to effect.

A **hypothesis** is an argument that links cause to effect. A reliable hypothesis has been tested across more than one case. Therefore, those who study comparative politics search for patterns of attributes and outcomes—their presence or absence—across cases. Scholars engaged in comparative research cannot always gather information from all cases, but their research always involves more than one country. The goal of such comparisons is to generate hypotheses that seek to answer our questions. Hypotheses have two important characteristics: they are causal, and they are testable.

First, implicitly or explicitly, hypotheses posit causal relationships between attributes and outcomes. For example, the hypothesis “Democracy will not survive over the long term in Iraq because Islam and democracy are incompatible” suggests a relationship between Islam (cause) and democracy (effect). In this hypothesis, some aspect of a country’s dominant faith is said to influence a political outcome, democracy. In comparative politics—as in all social sciences—hypotheses should clearly articulate the relationship between cause and effect. In this case, a researcher must develop an argument that explains what it is about Islam that conflicts with democracy.

However, making a good argument that “X causes Y” is insufficient. Hypotheses must also be testable. It is not enough to simply seek out and find evidence that

supports the hypothesized connection between cause and effect—comparativists must also account for discrepancies. For example, we would not just point to all of the non-democratic countries that are also predominantly Muslim. Instead, hypotheses in comparative politics must be **falsifiable**—they must be formulated to allow for the possibility that the hypothesized relationship can be shown, through observation, to be incorrect.

Approaching hypotheses this way—by thinking about how evidence from the world might falsify them—helps us narrow down potential explanations for political outcomes. A falsifiable hypothesis can potentially be proven incorrect, because it logically generates predictions about what we would find if we explored available evidence. In this case, “Islam and democracy are incompatible” implies that we should never see evidence of democracy in Muslim countries. We can then go out and see which countries are Muslim and which are democracies. If we find just one Muslim democracy, the hypothesis is falsified.

This particular hypothesis can, in fact, be falsified, because democracy has emerged (even if imperfectly) in several Islamic countries, including Tunisia, Indonesia, and Turkey (which is no longer classified as a democracy). When we find evidence that falsifies a hypothesis, we have to go back to the drawing board and come up with an alternative hypothesis. These new arguments cannot put an ad hoc twist on the original argument simply to explain away the anomalies. Instead, we must adopt one of two options: modify the original hypothesis in a way that can also be tested against the facts or replace it with an entirely new hypothesis. For example, after finding examples where Islam and democracy appear to be compatible, we might propose, “For reasons of geopolitics, the way that Islam has evolved in Middle Eastern Muslim countries has made it unlikely that democracy will survive in Iraq, but more likely to survive in countries further from the Middle East, such as Tunisia or Indonesia.” This hypothesis shifts the causal focus away from Islam itself. Or we could shift the causal focus entirely and hypothesize, “Democracy is unlikely to survive in predominantly Islamic countries that depend economically on oil production.”

Some kinds of hypotheses—those for which no plausible evidence exists—are not falsifiable, and these are to be avoided when building arguments in comparative politics. For example, the hypothesis “This civil war was inspired by God’s will” cannot be refuted because there is no way to obtain direct and irrefutable evidence to falsify the proposition. In the social sciences, we are not satisfied with guessing—good arguments will offer hypotheses that are falsifiable against evidence from the real world.

Arguments in comparative politics proceed by asking questions that put world events in comparative perspective, and then by formulating causal hypotheses that can be falsified against the evidence. The degree to which a hypothesis stands up to attempts at falsification is a measure of its strength; the more explanations we can rule out, the stronger our arguments become. This approach to testing our arguments—by comparing and contrasting across cases, focusing on patterns rather than idiosyncrasies—pushes us to avoid generalizing from the specific, which is akin to stereotyping. To better understand this process of hypothesis-formation, let’s explore how we “do” comparative politics in greater detail.

falsifiable

the possibility that a hypothesized relationship can be shown to be incorrect.



Muslims praying at a Mosque in Tunis, Tunisia. Since 2011, Tunisia's government has been democratic—a fact that calls into question the alleged incompatibility of Islam and democracy.

Using the Comparative Method

comparative method

a way to examine patterns of facts or events to narrow down what is important in terms of building a convincing comparative politics argument.

To assess the degree to which hypotheses can be falsified or can stand up against the facts, we use the **comparative method**, a way of examining patterns of facts or events to narrow down what is important in terms of building a convincing comparative politics argument. There are two basic approaches to the comparative method:

1. The method of agreement compares and contrasts cases with different attributes but shared outcomes.
2. The method of difference compares and contrasts cases with the same attributes but different outcomes.

Let's illustrate these two ways of answering questions in comparative politics by focusing on the question, "What causes civil war?"

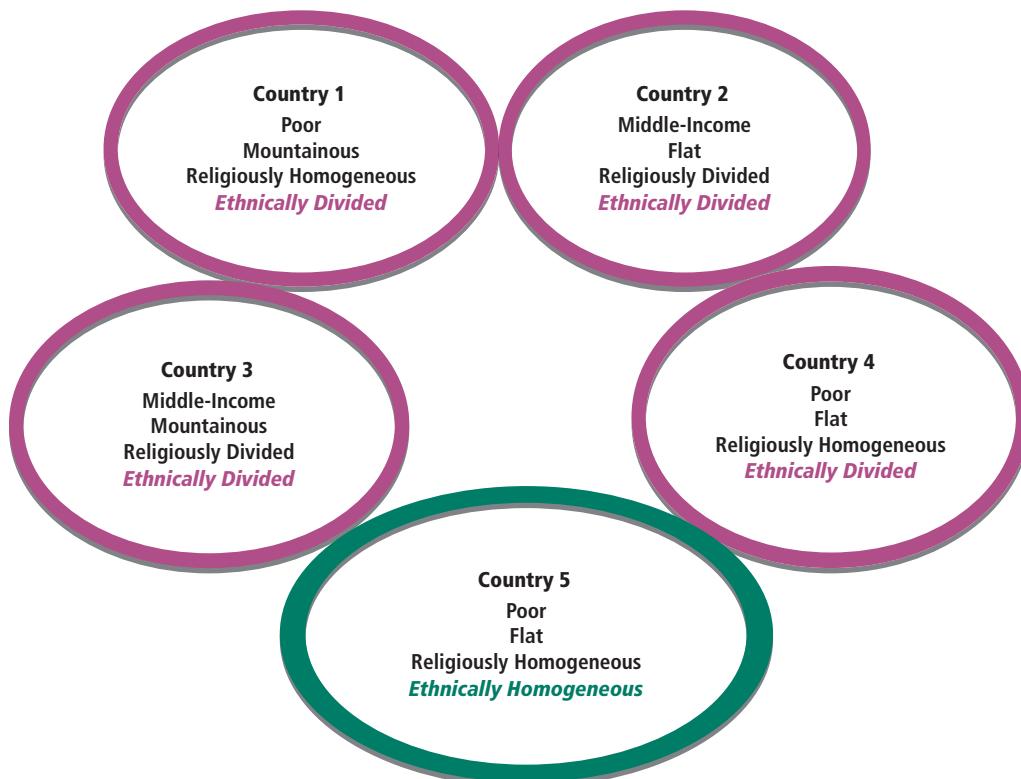
THE METHOD OF AGREEMENT We'll start with cases that differ in attributes but share outcomes. The outcome we're interested in is civil war. To start your research, you would first define civil war. Then, you'd look for cases of conflict that fit this definition. The logic of the **method of agreement** (see Figure 1.1) is the following: if two or more examples of a particular phenomenon have only one of several possible causal attributes in common, then the attribute that all the cases share ("agree on") is the cause of the outcome.

To illustrate, suppose four countries all experience civil conflict. You posit that one of several characteristics might cause civil conflict: poverty, rough terrain, ethnic diversity, or religious diversity. When you assess the characteristics of each country, you find that all four countries share ("agree on") only one attribute—ethnic diversity. The method of agreement leads you logically to infer that ethnic

method of agreement
compares and contrasts cases with different attributes but shared outcomes, seeking the one attribute these cases share in common to attribute causality.

Figure 1.1 Using the Method of Agreement

Countries 1 through 4 all went to war, and by comparing them against each other, you will note that they "agree" on only one attribute: ethnic diversity. The country that did not "agree" on this characteristic also did not go to war. The method of agreement finds the thing that all countries have in common—and in this example leads to the conclusion that ethnic diversity is a cause of civil war.



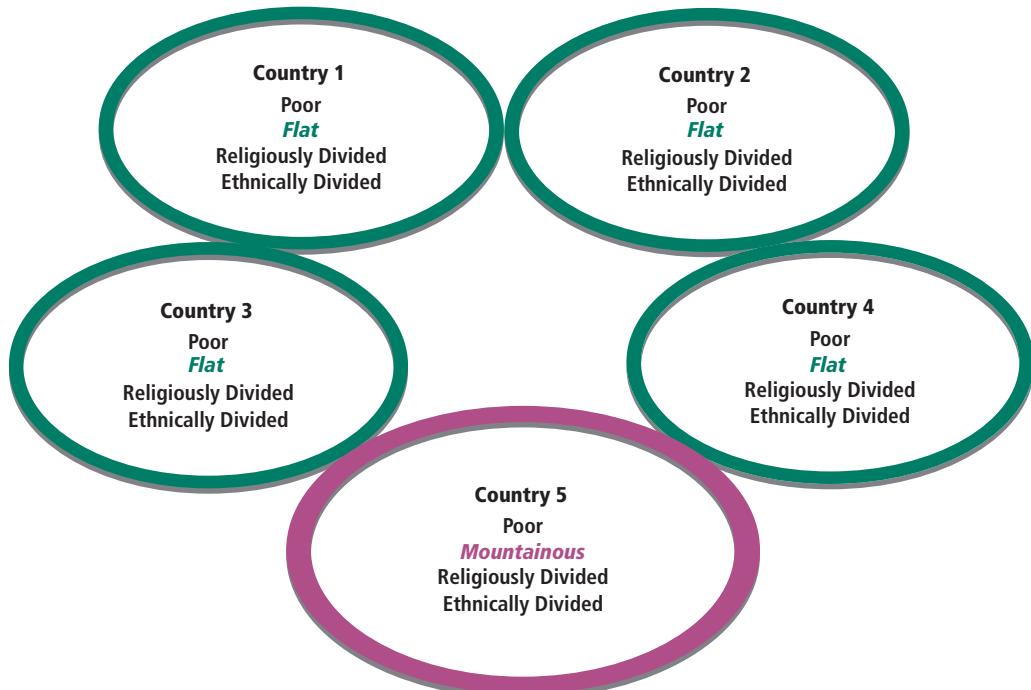
diversity causes civil war. This approach to figuring out causality pushes you to find the thing that is always associated with an outcome, or that when absent is never associated with the outcome. Suppose now that there is a fifth, ethnically homogenous, country—and that this country did not experience civil conflict. Such evidence lends further support to the hypothesis that ethnic diversity somehow causes civil war.

After consulting the evidence from real-world examples, we find that certain country attributes always match to certain outcomes, and that the method of agreement helps us generate strong causal hypotheses. However, the method of agreement is usually not the best way to build arguments. First, it is typically not the case that certain attributes always match up with certain outcomes. More often than not, countries “agree” on the key attribute but do not agree on the outcome. For example, although the example above implies that ethnic diversity is associated with civil conflict, many ethnically diverse societies have never experienced civil war. The more examples like this that we find, the weaker our original hypothesis becomes.

Second, even though our original example points to the connection between ethnic diversity and civil war, it cannot rule out the possibility that other things may

Figure 1.2 Using the Method of Difference

Countries 1 through 4 all remained at peace—and all share several characteristics. Country 5 went to war, and the only way it differs from the other countries is in its terrain. Using the method of difference in this example suggests a causal relationship between rough terrain and civil war.



cause civil war, too. Some countries experience civil war for reasons having nothing to do with ethnic tensions. Although the method of agreement helps us think through potential hypotheses and rule out some plausible explanations, the method of difference offers a stronger guide to causal inference.

THE METHOD OF DIFFERENCE The **method of difference** (see Figure 1.2) looks for some attribute that is present when an outcome occurs but that is absent in otherwise-similar cases when that outcome does not occur. Suppose you were doing lab research on plant growth, and you added the same quantities of plant food, water, and sunlight to five genetically identical seedlings. All five grow to exactly the same height. If you then did a second experiment in which you gave four seedlings identical amounts of food, water, and light, but gave the fifth seedling only water and light, you'd expect the fifth seedling to be scrawny. If four seedlings got three "inputs" and grew, and the fifth only got two "inputs" and did not grow, you could be pretty certain that decreasing the amount of food causes stunted growth.

The method of difference works by comparing and contrasting the presence and absence of characteristics of our objects of study. For example, suppose you could only find one case of civil war that fits your definition, and you wanted to know what caused it. A truly weak approach would study only the case where we see civil war. If we did that, we would have several hypotheses (for example, "poverty causes war," "mountainous terrain causes war," "ethnic divisions cause war," and "religious divisions cause war"), but no way to assess their relative strength.

The way to assess the relative strength of each of these hypotheses would be to adopt a comparative approach, using the method of difference. To do so, you'd compare the country that experienced war (Country 5) against other countries to discover what it is that is "different." This approach helps isolate causal factors and develop stronger arguments. Suppose that four countries share the following attributes: poverty, flat terrain, ethnic diversity, and religious diversity. A fifth country is also poor, and ethnically and religiously diverse—but it is mountainous rather than flat. The terrain is the only thing that differentiates this country—and this is the only country that experienced war. This approach allows you to rule out poverty and ethnic and religious diversity as potential causes of civil war in the fifth country. Perhaps mountains offer rebels secure places to hide from government troops, while flat countries offer few such places from which to foment rebellion.

This approach is called the method of difference because it focuses on the country that "differed" on the outcome relative to other cases—it experienced war while the others remained peaceful—even though it "agreed" with other countries in terms of several of its attributes. Because it shared those attributes but differed on the outcome (war), those attributes cannot logically have caused the war. Only one attribute was present when war occurred and was absent when war did not occur. Therefore, only this attribute explains the different outcomes.

The two approaches to the comparative method, as summarized in the table above, make doing comparative research appear straightforward. Whether you choose to use the method of agreement or the method of difference, you'll compare the relationships between cause and effect, and all comparative politics research employs

method of difference

compares and contrasts cases with the same attributes but different outcomes and determines causality by finding an attribute that is present when an outcome occurs but that is absent in similar cases when the outcome does not occur.

these two approaches in some way. Unfortunately, most of the time when we're trying to answer a real-world question about politics, it is not a simple matter to match attributes and outcomes; comparative politics research involves several difficulties.

Summary Table

The Comparative Method

Method of Agreement	When several cases share an outcome but have only one attribute in common, that attribute is the cause of the outcome.
Method of Difference	Determines the cause by finding an attribute that is present when an outcome occurs but that is absent in similar cases when the outcome does not occur.

Challenges of Comparative Research

1.4 What challenges confront building arguments in comparative politics?

Why study comparative politics? We study comparative politics because we want to develop convincing arguments explaining how and why politics works around the world. Testing hypotheses confronts a series of challenges. Doing comparative research is hard work, because evidence from the world is often unclear or subject to multiple interpretations, and because—in contrast to studying microbiology, physics, or chemistry, for example—the objects of study in comparative politics change every day. Peaceful countries erupt into civil war; a dictatorship becomes a democracy; poor countries grow rich within a generation or two. All arguments in comparative politics are necessarily provisional, because research confronts the challenges of separating causation from correlation, identifying causation, and assessing the reliability of “data” not obtained in a lab.

Separating Correlation from Causation

Suppose that after systematically gathering information we discover that civil war is more likely in ethnically diverse societies. What we've uncovered is a **correlation**—a measure of observed association between two variables. However, this is not a complete explanation—that is, a correlation between ethnic diversity and civil war does not allow us to say that the former causes the latter. We say that two variables, X and Y, are correlated when change in the value of X is accompanied by change in the value of Y. For example, “as ethnic diversity increases, so does the likelihood of civil war.” Correlations can be positive—when one variable increases, so does the other—or negative, meaning that when one variable increases, the other decreases.

The fact that attributes and outcomes appear to be associated with each other in a predictable way does not mean that one causes the other. **Causation** is defined as a process or event that produces an observable effect. Observing

correlation

a measure of observed association between two variables.

causation

a process or event that produces an observable effect.

causation is often difficult. For example, the old riddle asks, “Why did the chicken cross the road?” The riddle’s humor (however weak) lies in its ludicrousness, because we can’t ask chickens about their intentions. We don’t know what caused the chicken to cross the road, even though we certainly know how she did it—by putting one foot in front of the other. Without too much debate about poultry motivations, we can say that “walking” (the cause) produced “crossing the road” (the effect).

We can illustrate the difficulty of identifying causation with an example from comparative politics. Even though we do observe a correlation between ethnic diversity and war (the greater the diversity, the higher the likelihood of war), we cannot simply conclude that ethnic diversity causes civil war. Constructing a causal argument requires a systematic search for and comparison of relevant examples by marshaling as much reliable evidence as possible, an effort to rule out potential alternative causes, and the development of an explanation for *why* we observe a relationship between ethnic diversity and war. After all, more than one attribute could be correlated with a particular outcome. For example, suppose we find that both rough terrain and ethnic diversity are correlated with civil war. One attribute could be causally crucial, while the other could be irrelevant. It’s entirely possible that ethnic diversity and war have absolutely nothing to do with each other, even though they occur together frequently. This leads to the second challenge facing comparative research.

Identifying Causation

To know whether ethnic diversity really does cause civil war or not, we’d have to develop a plausible argument linking diversity to bloodshed. The fact that a correlation exists raises a series of questions: How does diversity cause animosities? How do animosities cause group mobilization along ethnic lines? How does mobilization turn violent? The problem is that there is no reason why diversity should always cause animosity, or why animosities should always cause mobilization, or why mobilization should always cause bloodshed. If we find a correlation between certain characteristics (such as ethnic diversity) and certain outcomes (such as war), we still need to explain how these things are causally connected—something that may ultimately rely more on logical argument than direct evidence.

Confirming a relationship between cause and effect in the social sciences is different from confirming such relationships in the natural sciences. In the natural sciences, researchers can conduct experiments in controlled laboratory settings—meaning they can fully isolate the causal impact of different attributes. Controlling all the conditions of an experiment is the only true way to isolate causality. Political scientists do not have the luxury of experimenting on or with people or events—and in any case, trying to “control” the complexity of politics only makes the research less and less applicable to the real world. Because reasonable people interpret history differently, and because we cannot re-run history like lab scientists can redo experiments, it is often difficult to reliably compare across cases, much less control for all factors that might affect the outcome we seek to explain. And because political scientists cannot replicate the real world in a lab

to test our theories, arguments about causality in the social sciences must rest on scholars' ability to accumulate evidence and construct a convincing argument that logically holds together.

Assessing Unreliable Information

Causal explanations in comparative politics are hard to pin down partly because the information we gather as social scientists is fundamentally different from the data that natural scientists produce in a laboratory setting. Social scientists cannot "control" or "isolate" factors to determine causality as chemists might be able to in a lab, nor can they conduct additional experiments to obtain more data. Social scientists have to make do with the information that the world provides—we cannot turn back time, change some social or political attribute, and "rewind" the world to see if the outcome would differ. Sometimes, the real world offers very few examples of either the attributes or the outcomes we're interested in exploring.

In addition, information can frequently be ambiguous or even downright confusing. For example, if scholars want to test the relationship between ethnic diversity and civil war, they have to agree on how to define "ethnicity," "diversity," and "civil war," which is not easy. Then, they have to agree on how to measure those concepts, which is even harder. And even if they agree on all of the above, they may find the historical record ambiguous in terms of membership in ethnic groups and the intensity of violence in particular countries.

Finally, even if scholars agree on definitions and the historical record is clear, the information needed to test a hypothesis might be difficult or even impossible to obtain. Information on such subjects as corruption, campaign finance, and lobbying activities is often unavailable to researchers. Interviewees are frequently unwilling to speak on sensitive issues such as religion, ethnic prejudice, or gender attitudes; and useful information is sometimes locked away in government archives. Some countries simply prohibit access to social scientists. And even if information is readily available, obtaining it may require months or years of work in the field, and years of preparation to learn a new language.

In comparative politics, articulating convincing answers to questions is always difficult and often contentious. The challenges noted in this section make comparing and contrasting across cases difficult—meaning that arguments in comparative politics are never perfect and are never final. The world is a very complicated and rapidly changing place, and sometimes our answers prove unsatisfying. Yet this does not mean that we simply shrug our shoulders and give up. An unsatisfying answer sparks additional questions, giving scholars reason to go "back to the drawing board" and continue the search for a better answer. And in any case, as we will see in later chapters, in many cases the comparative method succeeds, providing useful answers to questions about our complicated and messy world. This chapter's feature box pushes you to think about how to formulate and subject a hypothesis to scrutiny.

Hypothesis Testing

Montesquieu's Theory of Climate

BanksPhotos/E+/Getty Images



Christoph Lischetzky/Shutterstock



Canada and Saudi Arabia have very different climates. Based partly on the weather conditions, Montesquieu predicted whether these two places would have a democratic or non-democratic form of government.

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755), was a French nobleman and political philosopher. In his most famous book, *The Spirit of the Laws*, published in 1748, Montesquieu hypothesized that a country's climate, terrain, and agricultural conditions affect the temperaments and customs of its inhabitants. In turn, these temperaments account for why some countries are democracies, monarchies, or dictatorships.

According to Montesquieu, cold climates constrict our body's fibers—tendons, muscles, and blood vessels—while hot climates expand them. Montesquieu believed these weather-induced body changes affect our characters and temperaments: people who live in cold climates tend to be “vigorous and bold, phlegmatic [calm and unemotional], frank, not given to suspicion or cunning,” and relatively insensitive to pleasure and pain. In contrast, people who live in warm climates exhibit stronger but less durable sensations. They are “more fearful, more amorous, and more susceptible both to the temptations of pleasure and to real or imagined pain; they are also less resolute, and less capable of sustained or decisive action.”

These climactic factors, Montesquieu hypothesized, directly impact the nature of government that arises: excessive heat “enervates the body, and renders men

so slothful and dispirited that nothing but the fear of chastisement can oblige them to perform any laborious duty.” In contrast, “the bravery of those in cold climates has enabled them to maintain their liberties.” In short, non-democratic governments would be found near the equator, while democracies would be found closer to the poles.²

How far-fetched is Montesquieu’s theory? How would you go about proving or disproving a similar hypothesis today? Let’s hypothesize that *cooler climates tend to foster democracies while hotter regions tend to have non-democratic governments*. What sorts of empirical evidence would you need to gather to make your argument convincing?

Gather Evidence

Is there a relationship between climate and form of government? And if so, why is there a relationship between climate and form of government? To answer the first question, consider two countries with dramatically different climates: Canada and Saudi Arabia. These cases fit Montesquieu’s hypothesis well: Canada has been a democracy since its independence in the 1800s, while Saudi Arabia is a non-democratic monarchy. Why might this be so? Are Canadians particularly “vigorous and bold,” and thus more capable of self-government? Are

Saudis “fearful” and indecisive, and consequently in “need” of the iron fist of a non-democratic ruler?

Such stereotyping will not get us very far. Moreover, if we were to continue to gather information, we’d quickly find countries that seem to confound Montesquieu’s expectations. For example, consider Brazil and Russia. Crude stereotypes of Brazilians and Russians fit Montesquieu’s images—“Brazilians prefer spending the day at the beach rather than working,” while “Russians are dour and tough.” The tropical sun in Brazil certainly “enervates the body,” but Brazil is a democracy. In contrast, the Arctic cold in Russia would certainly “constrict the body’s fibers,” but Russia is not a democracy.

Assess the Hypothesis

These four cases do not confirm or disconfirm Montesquieu’s hypothesis. Using Table 1.2, can you brainstorm additional countries that fit in each box? The more countries you find that fit in the “Cold and Democratic” and “Hot and Non-Democratic” boxes, the stronger the evidence in Montesquieu’s favor. Conversely, the more countries that fit into the “Cold and Non-Democratic” and “Hot and Democratic” boxes, the weaker the evidence for this hypothesis.

On the one hand, you might think Montesquieu’s hypothesis is far-fetched. Even if you discovered that most countries are either “Cold and Democratic” or “Hot and Non-Democratic,” you might still wonder, “Why?” Many other things might explain why countries are democracies or not. Perhaps Montesquieu’s hypothesis is outdated—a product of an era when stereotyping was accepted, and unbiased information about the world was scant.

On the other hand, scholars still take Montesquieu’s basic insight about the relationship between the environment and politics seriously. The further one goes

from the equator, the less common are dangerous tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. Moreover, one only finds large swaths of flat and fertile land in the temperate zones of both the northern and southern hemispheres. Lands nearer to the equator are often inhospitable to agriculture, as they are typically covered with jungle or desert. Some scholars have suggested that patterns of European settlement around the world in past centuries are related to the emergence of democracy and dictatorship today: where settlers set up farms and strong property rights, democracy later emerged. Where settlers could not survive due to heat and disease, colonizers ruled via force—and such patterns of rule continued long after the colonies gained independence. We will revisit this question again in Chapter 11.

Given this historical pattern, 250 years after Montesquieu, scholars who conduct research into questions such as why some countries are rich and others poor and why some countries are democracies while others remain non-democratic test for a connection between climate and government form by including the *latitude of a country’s capital city* in their analyses. Latitude measures how far a country is from the equator—and thus serves as a rough indicator of climate. And although Montesquieu was basically stereotyping and guessing, his intuition still finds support in technically sophisticated research: since about 1800, the further a country is from the equator, the more likely is democracy to emerge there.³

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Do you think that Montesquieu might have confused correlation with causation in his original hypothesis?
2. What else might cause the observed relationship between climate and form of government?
3. Is it proper to generalize about a country’s climate? Many larger countries encompass mountains, deserts, jungles, and grasslands. Most do not have “a” climate, but rather several climates. How might Montesquieu have responded to this?

Table 1.2 Exploring Montesquieu’s Theory of Climate

Hot	Cold
Democracy	Brazil
Non-Democracy	Saudi Arabia

Summary Table

Challenges to Comparative Politics Research

Separating Correlation from Causation	The fact that attributes and outcomes are associated with each other does not mean that one causes the other.
Identifying Causation Is Hard	Social science evidence is not generated in a lab, meaning scholars cannot fully isolate causal attributes.
Assessing Potentially Unreliable Data	Social scientists must rely on information provided by the real world—information that may be ambiguous or even unavailable.

Approaches to Doing Comparative Research

1.5 How do we obtain evidence to build arguments in comparative politics?

To meet the challenges facing comparative politics research, scholars have developed different ways to obtain evidence: quantitative and qualitative research. Let us explore these two approaches and consider their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Quantitative Research

How does one do comparative politics research quantitatively? **Quantitative research** relies on statistical data to assess relationships between attributes and outcomes, analyzing those data using computers. Sometimes scholars use data that others create. For example, to explore the hypothesis that economic performance impacts election outcomes, we might gather dates of elections and the percent of the vote of the incumbent party from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/past/>) and then find information on the state of the economy in the months or years preceding the election from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>), and then correlate the economic data with the election results.

Sometimes, researchers create their own quantitative data by transforming non-quantitative information into numbers. For example, a researcher may have precise measures of ethnic diversity, but no precise measure of civil war. As you might imagine, "measuring" the presence or absence of civil war is difficult. To simplify matters, a scholar might decide that countries that experience more than 1,000 battle deaths a year can be said to be in a state of civil war, and thus classify countries based on reports of battle deaths as "1" (war) or "0" (no war). Doing so would allow statistical analysis of the relationship between the degree of ethnic diversity and the emergence of war.

Quantitative research emphasizes breadth over depth. Quantitative researchers seek larger samples to reduce the likelihood that any patterns in the data are random, and to reduce the likelihood that the sample gathered is biased. For example, survey researchers trying to figure out who is going to win an election do not survey

quantitative research
relies on statistical data to assess relationships between attributes and outcomes, analyzing those data using computers. Emphasizes breadth over depth.

10 people—they need 1,000 or 2,000 people in order to obtain a “representative” sample of the national population, a sample that does not over or under-represent any demographic group. Only by increasing the sample size can scholars attempt to assess the “true average” of the entire population.

In going for breadth over depth, the primary advantage of quantitative research is that—in theory at least—it allows for precise assessment of the relationship between causes and effects. However, going for breadth is also the primary disadvantage of quantitative research—doing so may sacrifice depth of understanding of what is really going on, politically. Statistical data tend to be detached from the human environment, and they tend to assume that the world can be portrayed in fixed quantities, when in fact much that is interesting about politics is fluid and changing.

Qualitative Research

Not all comparative politics questions are amenable to quantitative research. For example, although there have been relatively few cases of successful revolutions in world history, many people are interested in figuring out their causes. Due to their rarity, quantitative analysis of revolutions is impossible. Moreover, quantification of an attribute or outcome may miss what is truly important or meaningful. For example, perhaps a political leader’s charisma or use of cultural symbols, images, or rhetoric causes particular emotional or psychological responses that spur revolutionary mobilization. Such attributes—either a leader’s charisma or the reasons why people respond to charisma—are not easily quantified, if at all.

For these reasons, we must have an alternative to quantitative research to answer many important comparative politics questions. By definition, **qualitative research** does not attempt to quantify attributes and outcomes. Instead, where quantitative research focuses on breadth, qualitative research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the phenomena we’re interested in exploring. Because it digs deeper, using interviews, long periods of field research, and interpretation of archival records, qualitative research necessarily considers fewer cases than does quantitative research. In theory, this depth of knowledge helps to bolster causal arguments by strengthening our understanding of the mechanisms that link causes to effects.

qualitative research
focuses on an in-depth understanding of attributes and outcomes. Privileges depth over breadth.

There are three main disadvantages with qualitative research. First, it produces a causal argument for only the cases being compared, approaching the problem of generalizing from the specific. Second, qualitative research can get bogged down in relatively unimportant details and degenerate into description without explanation. Without conducting a broad examination of all potentially relevant cases, qualitative research may erroneously overemphasize a causal factor unique to a particular case. For example, a focus on one revolution might highlight the importance of a rebel victory in one particular battle—but fail to notice what is less obvious but crucial to explaining all successful revolutions—the overall political weakness of the incumbent government, when compared against cases of unsuccessful revolutions. Finally, although this problem also sometimes confronts quantitative research, it is often difficult to judge the relative validity of a qualitative argument, because it is impossible to “check” a scholar’s findings. After all, by definition, no “hard data” exist that another scholar could gather again and re-explore with statistical analysis.

Comparative politics research is almost never conducted in a laboratory, with controlled conditions that would give us an unimpeachable answer to our question. But the fact that many challenges face comparative politics research does not mean we should throw up our hands and simply suppose that we cannot build convincing arguments about how the world works. Today, scholars often employ **mixed methods research**, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques in an effort to build convincing claims about the relationships between attributes and outcomes. The best we can do is look for cases that are as similar as possible on certain variables and as different as possible on other variables, and then build an argument about the implications of such differences and similarities.

mixed methods research

uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques in an effort to build convincing claims about the relationships between attributes and outcomes.

Conclusion

The world is a dangerous and fascinating place, and only by learning about how politics works in other countries can we understand how best to engage those countries. We need to understand how and why politics works elsewhere in order to understand how other countries' politics impacts us, and how their politics impact other countries, as well. Comparative politics is about the systematic search for answers to questions about how people around the world make and contest authoritative public choices. To guide that effort, we use the comparative method, a way of thinking systematically about why the same outcome sometimes occurs in cases that are very different, and why different outcomes sometimes occur in cases that are very similar. The comparative method highlights some of the many challenges to finding convincing answers to our questions about comparative politics.

Comparative politics focuses on answering questions—on explaining complex political phenomena. The challenges it confronts means that explanations using the comparative method are always provisional—a fact that may be somewhat disappointing. Yet the demand for answers is as pressing as ever, given how complex the world has become and how fast the world is changing. The world needs more and better comparative politics research—and this text gives you the tools to make that happen, by focusing your attention on useful ways of asking and answering these key questions.

Every chapter in *Comparative Politics* poses an important question about politics around the world and then explores the ways scholars have sought to answer that question, using real-world examples to ground and clarify the discussion. The text's approach differs from that of other texts by offering a set of key questions in lieu of a set of important countries. This approach prioritizes the questions, not the country cases, because we want to develop convincing explanations—and doing so requires gathering information from beyond the borders of a limited number of countries. Because each chapter begins with a question of broad interest, you will gain experience learning how to develop arguments by comparing countries to each other.

The question that begins each chapter is posed within the context of an engaging real-world example. Consider Chapter 3: the question that chapter explores in depth is, "What is democracy?" The chapter starts off by drawing your attention to the Middle East, a region with very few democratic governments—but where protests ranging from mild to very violent have rocked autocratic governments in recent

years. No one knows whether democracy will flourish in the Middle East—but the question of what sort of democracy might emerge in this region is certainly among the most important for students of politics today.

After connecting a political science question to the real world of politics, each chapter is organized around the key arguments that scholars of comparative politics offer in answer to that question. This material is presented in a particular way—each section of each chapter first poses a “smaller” question that ties back to the chapter’s main question, illustrating how each section contributes to answering the chapter’s larger question. This approach is designed to get you to see how political scientists do their own work—often by engaging a smaller piece of a larger puzzle—engaging, debating, and coming up with plausible arguments to the key questions about politics in the world today.

Each chapter also contains a feature box that gives you an opportunity to apply what you have learned in the chapter and engage in the process of building a political science argument. Each box describes a real-world political puzzle related to the chapter’s main question. It then provides information necessary to critically engage the competing arguments and evidence that scholars have used in order to try to explain that puzzle and lays out competing hypotheses and expectations for addressing the question. This exercise helps you to learn how a scholar of comparative politics would reason about the issue at hand and provides you with opportunities to learn how to recognize and ultimately construct your own arguments about how politics works around the world.

The end of each chapter provides useful material for you to both review and use to deepen your understanding of what you’ve just learned. After the chapter conclusion ties everything together for you, you’ll find a list of the chapter’s key political science terms—which are also highlighted and defined at first mention throughout each chapter; a short set of review questions for you to use in assessing whether you’ve digested the chapter’s main points (and that can also help you study for exams); and several annotated suggestions for additional reading, if you find the chapter’s topic particularly interesting.

The chapters in this text—and thus the chapter questions—are ordered logically. Chapter 2 begins with Hobbes’s fundamental question, “How is political order established?” Considering this question sets the stage for the discussion of the purpose and evolution of the state. The next key question is, “How is power distributed within states?” Chapters 3 and 4 answer this question by focusing on the institutions of democratic and non-democratic regimes. Chapter 5 explores the question, “Why do transitions between democracy and non-democracy sometimes occur?”

The next few chapters shift the focus toward political identities, keeping in mind that identities cannot be fully separated from institutions or interests. After all, political institutions shape how identities gain representation in the formal realm of politics—and political identity is often the raw material from which individuals and groups construct their political interests. Chapter 6 asks, “What is political identity?” and focuses on explaining the conditions under which ethnicity and nationalism become politicized. Chapter 7 turns to another hot-button question—the compatibility between religious identity and democracy—while Chapter 8 explores the political consequences of changing conceptions of gender around the world.

The next two chapters turn to the general question of how and why individuals' political interests and identities are mobilized collectively. Chapter 9 explores peaceful forms of collective action—interest groups, social movements, and political parties—while Chapter 10 asks why people sometimes take up arms against the established political order. The last three chapters turn to pressing questions at the intersection of politics and economics. Chapter 11 asks, "Why are some countries rich and others poor?" and Chapter 12 explores why some countries tax and spend more than others. Finally, Chapter 13 explores the question of globalization and its impact.

In sum, this text provides the tools for you to learn how comparativists answer pressing questions about politics. It poses questions that will pique your curiosity about how politics works around the world and leads you through the different ways that comparative political scientists have endeavored to answer those questions. The text is organized around these questions, but uses cases from the real world to demonstrate how to build arguments in political science.

Key Terms

politics 4	comparative method 12	causation 16
comparative politics 4	method of agreement 13	quantitative research 21
hypothesis 10	method of difference 15	qualitative research 22
falsifiable 11	correlation 16	mixed methods research 23

Review Questions

1. What is comparative politics?
2. What is the difference between a falsifiable and nonfalsifiable hypothesis?
3. What is the method of agreement?
4. What is the method of difference?
5. What is the difference between correlation and causation?
6. Why is it hard to identify the true "cause" of something?
7. Why are data in comparative politics research often unreliable?
8. What is quantitative research?
9. What is qualitative research?

Suggested Readings

Fearon, James. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43 (1991): 169–196. Describes an important way to test arguments for which there is little or no direct empirical evidence—counterfactuals, or "thought experiments."

Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias

in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): 131–150. Explains why the challenges of comparative research frequently impede the development of convincing explanations for important events or processes.

Munck, Gerardo. "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics." In *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*, edited

by Gerardo Munck and Richard Snyder. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Contains interviews with top scholars describing their experience helping develop the comparative politics subfield.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. "Field Research." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited

by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, 123–146. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. A discussion of why it is crucial for comparative political scientists to spend extended periods of time in the places where they conduct their research.

Notes

1. Lasswell articulated this definition in his *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935).
2. This material can be found in Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, Book 17.
3. See Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91, 5 (2001): 1369–1401.