

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS

Department of Political Science

Political Science 102-03
Spring 2010
TTh 12:30–1:45

**Office Hours: T 3-4
Th 9:30-11, 3:30-4:30**

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It is often said that democracy is the best system of government humans have devised. As countries in the former Soviet Union, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East attempt to democratize their governments, this belief appears to be becoming more widespread. But when we say that democracy is the best form of government, what do we mean? Is it the best form of government for managing ethnic conflict in divided societies? Is it the form of government best suited to addressing problems of poverty and social injustice? Can democracy take root in any country, regardless of that country's level of economic development or its culture or history?

To answer these questions, we will examine two established democracies – Great Britain and India - and compare them with the Soviet Union, Russia since the collapse of the USSR, and China. Many scholars have argued that a democratic political system cannot exist in a non-capitalist economy. If this is true, is the reverse also true: will a capitalist economy, given enough time, inevitably produce a democratic political system? We will examine these questions closely in the cases of the USSR (later Russia) and China. Both the USSR and China developed state-controlled economies accompanied by repressive authoritarian political systems. From the late 1980s Russia pursued a change from an authoritarian to a democratic regime AND a change from a state-controlled to a free-market economy. The Russian economy is now capitalist, but the political system is, after a short period of democracy, once again undemocratic. By contrast, China's Communist Party has basically adopted capitalism while only very slightly opening up its political system. Which strategy of change will be more viable in the long term, and what are the costs to Russian and Chinese citizens of each path?

The second topic we will address is that of poverty and economic development, particularly through the contrast of China and India. When the Communist Party took over China in 1947, and when India achieved independence in 1949, each country was overwhelmingly poor and economically underdeveloped, but each chose a different political system. The authoritarian regime of Communist China pursued rapid, state-controlled economic development; while millions of lives were lost, particularly to famine in the late 1950s, this rapid development greatly increased the standard of living of the average citizen. India chose a democratic system, and the Indian poor participate actively in politics, voting in much higher numbers than poor people in the U.S. But economic development which would improve the lives of the poor has come much more slowly in India than in China, and the average Chinese citizen today is better educated, lives longer, and is less likely to be poor than the average Indian citizen. Did the adoption of democracy in India slow economic development in any way? By increasing the standard of living and level of education in China, has

the authoritarian Communist regime created a population that is increasingly well-equipped to demand democracy and an end to Communist rule?

Course Requirements

The requirements for this course are a five page paper (20%), a midterm (20%), a ten page paper (30%), and a final (30%).

Readings

The following book can be purchased in the Holy Cross Bookstore:

- Siddharth Dube, *In The Land of Poverty: Memoirs of An Indian Family, 1947-1997*, (Zed Press, 1998)

Almost all of the readings for this class are reserve readings, available on electronic reserves (noted ER in the syllabus.) They can be accessed by going to the library's website, and then clicking on "electronic reserves." Choose either my name from the professor list or the course name from the course list, click on it, and then enter the password. Click on the title of the relevant article to read it. Make sure to ONLY read the pages listed on the syllabus.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Th Jan 21: Introduction

DEFINING THE BASIC TERMS AND TOOLS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

T Jan 26: What is Democracy?

- "What Democracy Is.....and Is Not," Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, reprinted in *Comparative Politics 98/99* (ER)
- Freedom House Checklist of Political Rights and Civil Liberties (distributed in class)

Th Jan 28: Forms of Democracy: Presidential and Parliamentary

Parliamentarism is the Better System

- "The Perils of Presidentialism," Juan Linz, *Journal of Democracy*, Winter 1990 (ER)
- "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism," Alfred Stepan with Cindy Skach, excerpted in *Readings in Comparative Politics*, eds. Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger, Houghton Mifflin, 2006 (ER)

The Advantages of Presidentialism

- “Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America: Rethinking the Terms of the Debate,” Matthew Shugart and Scott Mainwaring, in *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 14-18 and 29-40 (on p. 29 start at section “The Argument Agt. Presidentialism”) (ER)

T Feb 2: Political “Development” and Stability

- *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Samuel Huntington, pp. 1-8 and 39-59 (ER)

COMPETING THEORIES ABOUT THE CAUSES OF DEMOCRACY

Th Feb 4: *Is Wealth Necessary for Democracy? Does Oil Wealth Hurt Democracy?*

- “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Political Science Review*, Section II: “Economic Development and Democracy,” pp. 75-85 (ER)
- “National Income and Liberty,” Adrian Karatnycky, *Journal of Democracy*, January 2004, 88-92 (section entitled “Freedom, Wealth, and Poverty”) (ER)
- “The First Law of Petropolitics,” Thomas Friedman, *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2006 (ER)
- *The Spirit of Democracy*, 74-79 (ER)

T Feb 9: *Are Certain Attitudes or Cultural Norms Necessary for Democracy?*

- “Transitions to Democracy: Toward A Dynamic Model,” Dankwart Rustow, *Comparative Politics*, April 1970 (ER)
- “Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” Fareed Zakaria, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994 (stop at “Multicultural Schisms”) (ER)
- “Singapore and the Asian Values Debate,” Donald Emmerson, *Journal of Democracy*, 1995, excerpts (ER)

-----**TH FEB 11: FIRST PAPER DUE**-----

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Th Feb 11: The Historical Development of Democracy in the United Kingdom

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 38-48, 61-66 (ER)

- *Social Origins of Dictatorship & Democracy*, Barrington Moore, Chapter 7 and Chapter 1 (read in this order) (ER)

T Feb 16: Contemporary British Politics & How Power Changes Hands

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 70-77 (ER)
- “The Reinvention of Gordon Brown,” *The Economist*, October 16, 2008 (ER)
- “Britons Outraged at Lawmakers’ Liberty with Spending Accounts,” Sarah Lyall, *New York Times*, May 12, 2009 (ER)
- “Britain’s Expense Scandal Hits Brown’s Wallet,” John Burns, *New York Times*, October 13, 2009 (ER)
- “Gordon Brown’s Woes,” *The Economist*, May 7, 2009 (ER)
- “Gordon Brown’s Lockerbie Problem,” *The Economist*, September 3, 2009 (ER)
- “Midwinter Madness: The Old Lessons of the Latest Push to Get Rid of Gordon Brown,” *The Economist*, January 7, 2010 (ER)

-----**TH FEB 18: NO CLASS**-----

INDIA

T Feb 23: The Foundations of Democracy

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 255-258 (ER)
- *Gandhi: A Very Short Introduction*, Bhikhu Parekh, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-24, 64-73, 94 (start with “The Economy”)-98 (ER)
- “Why Democracy Survives,” Ashutosh Varshney, *Journal of Democracy* 9.3 1998 (ER)

Th Feb 25: India’s Political System, and Caste and Poverty Historically and Today

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 269-290 (ER)
- *In The Land of Poverty: Memoirs of An Indian Family, 1947-1997*, Siddharth Dube, (Zed Books, 1998, London), 6-17, 22-38, 52-62

-----**SPRING BREAK**-----

T Mar 9: Caste and Poverty in India, Historically and Today

- *In The Land of Poverty*, 65-68, 105-124, 127-135, 200-209

Has Democracy Helped the Poorest in India?

- “Does Democracy Prevent Famine?” Michael Massing, *New York Times*, March 1, 2003 (ER)
- “Poor in India Starve as Surplus Wheat Rots,” Amy Waldman, *New York Times*, December 2, 2002 (ER)
- “Poor But Defiant, Thousands March on Delhi in Fight for Land Rights,” Randeep Ramesh, *The Guardian*, October 25, 2007 (ER)
- “The Battle for Employment Guarantee,” Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera, *Frontline*, January 14, 2009 (ER)

Th Mar 11: Corruption in India and the Effect on Poverty

- “*Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures*,” Vito Tanzi, International Monetary Fund, May 1998, 10 (starting at “Factors that promote corruption”) – 20 and 26 (“starting at “Effects of Corruption on the Economy”) -29 (ER)
- “Food Riots Expose How Corruption Hurts India’s Poor,” *Reuters*, October 12, 2007 (ER)
- “India Corruption Study 2005, Vol. 11, Corruption in Public Distribution System,” Center for Media Studies, New Delhi, 2005, 1-10 (ER)

COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST TRAJECTORIES

T Mar 16: The Basics of Marxism

- “Marxism,” in *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact*, Leon P. Baradat, (Prentice-Hall, 2000) (ER)
- “Oligarchy in the United States?” Jeffrey Winters and Benjamin Page, *Perspectives in Politics*, December 2009 (ER)

----- TH MAR 18: MIDTERM-----

CHINA

T Mar 23: The Chinese Revolution & The Contemporary Chinese Political System,

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 627-635 (ER)

- “The Former Landowner” in *The Corpse Walker: Real-Life Stories, China From the Bottom Up*, Liao Yiwu, (Pantheon, 2008) (ER)

Th Mar 25: The Politics and Economics of the New China

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 635-637, 640-659, 663-668 (ER)
- “1989: Massacre in Tiananmen Square,” BBC, June 4, 1989
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/4/newsid_2496000/2496277.stm
- “The New Inequality,” An Chen, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 14, No. 1, January 2003, 53 (start at “Social Stratification”) -57 (ER)
- “China’s ‘Haves’ Stir the ‘Have-Nots’ To Violence,” Joseph Kahn, *New York Times*, December 31, 2004 (ER)

T Mar 30: Worker Protests

- “China’s Social Unrest: The Story Behind the Stories,” Albert Keidel, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2006 (ER)
- “When Chinese Workers Unite, the Bosses Often Run the Union,” Joseph Kahn, *New York Times*, December 29, 2003 (ER)
- “China’s Workers Risk Limbs in Export Drive,” Joseph Kahn, *New York Times*, April 7, 2003 (ER)
- “The Labor Movement,” Ching Kwan Lee and Eli Friedman, *Journal of Democracy*, July 2009 (ER)
- “Despite Law, Job Conditions Worsen in China,” David Barboza, *New York Times*, June 23, 2009 (ER)

-----**EASTER BREAK**-----

T Apr 6: Farmer Protests, and the Question of Rule of Law

- *Wild Grass: Three Stories of Change in Modern China*, Ian Johnson, (New York: Pantheon Books 2004), 23-28,17-23, 34-86 (ER)

Th Apr 8: Corruption in China

- “Corruption Threatens China’s Future, Minxin Pei, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 55, October 2007 – start at p. 4 “Causes of Corruption” (ER)

- Minxin Pei, “Fighting Corruption: A Difficult Challenge for Chinese Leaders,” in *China’s Changing Political Landscape*, ed. Cheng Li, Brookings Institute, 2008, pp. 235-247 (ER)
- “Management Corruption in China’s Industrial Restructuring: How and Why State Assets Get Lost,” Ting Gong and Huangao Shi, *China Information* 2009, 411-420 (ER)
- “Chinese Trial Reveals Vast Web of Corruption,” Andrew Jacobs, *New York Times*, November 4, 2009 (ER)
- “The Next Asian Miracle,” Yasheng Huang, *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2008 (ER)

T Apr 13: The Problem of the “Missing Girls” in India and China

- “More than 100 Million Women are Missing,” Amartya Sen, *New York Review of Books*, December 20, 1990 <http://ucatlans.ucsc.edu/gender/Sen100M.html>
- “The Daughter Deficit,” Tina Rosenberg, *New York Times Magazine*, August 19, 2009 (ER)
- “No Girls Please, We’re Indian,” Kalpana Sharma, *The Hindu*, August 29, 2004 (ER)
- “China to Be Short 24 Million Wives,” Associated Press, January 12, 2010 <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/01/12/world/AP-AS-China-Gender-Gap.html?scp=1&sq=China%20%20sex%20ratio&st=cse>

THE SOVIET UNION AND RUSSIA

Th Apr 15 – T Apr 20: The Political and Economic System of the Soviet Union

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 355-362 (ER)
- *The Russians*, Hedrick Smith, (Crown Press, 1985), 57-69 (“Consumers”) (ER)

-----T APR 20: SECOND PAPER DUE-----

Th Apr 22: Capitalism Emerges.....

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 368-378 (ER)
- “The Russian Devolution,” John Lloyd, *The New York Times Magazine*, August 15, 1999 (ER)
- “Facing Oblivion, Rust-Belt Giants Top Russian List of Vexing Crises,” Celestine Bohlen, *New York Times*, November 8, 1998 (ER)

T Apr 27: But Does Democracy?

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 362-365, 380-385, 388-400 (ER)
- “Russia,” *Freedom in the World 2008*, Freedom House (ER)
- “Another Mystery in Moscow,” Ann Cooper, Committee to Protect Journalists (ER)
- “It Isn’t Magic: Putin Opponents Vanish from TV,” Clifford Levy, *New York Times*, June 3, 2008 (ER)
- “Chorus of Blame Follows Rights Worker’s Death, Andrew Kramer and Ellen Barry, *New York Times*, July 17, 2009 (ER)

Th Apr 29: Russian Citizens and the Shift Back to Authoritarianism

- “The Putin Popularity Score,” Pew Research Center, December 6, 2006
<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/103/the-putin-popularity-score>
- *Television, Democracy, and Elections in Russia*, Sarah Oates, Routledge, 2007, 10-16, 44-47, 52-61, 62-65 (ER)

T May 4: Wrap-up

-----Wed May 12 8:30 a.m. FINAL EXAM-----

