

# apsa-cp

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Am erican Political Science A ssociation

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## Letter from the President

### Changes in the Section and Continuity in Professional Concerns

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#### Change of Newsletter Editorial Team s

This issue of the Newsletter marks a change in the Com para tive Politics Section. It ends an eight-year span during which the Newsletter was edited by successive team s from the D epartm ent of Political Science at the U niversity of California Los Angeles, first led by Ronald Rogowski, then by M iriam Golden and finally Daniel Treism an. W ith the cooperation of the m any contributors to the various issues, they created a high quality forum for the discussion of cutting edge research in com para tive politics and of in portant professional issues affecting the m em bers of the Section. Judging from feedback from a wide range of colleagues, the Newsletter has become one of the m ost widely read professional publications am ong com parativists. W e are all indebted to the UCLA editorial team s for doing such a terrific job and giving us a m eans of professional com m unication that we take very seriously and can be proud of. O n behalf of the m em bership, then, let m e express our collective thanks to Ron, M iriam, D an and their colleagues.

Following the rotation principle for leadership that is prevalent in m any professional and other voluntary associations, the Section established a procedure for com petitive bids for the Newsletter editorship, for cycles of four years. The selection com m ittee awarded the editorship for the next cycle to a team

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from the Department of Government and International Studies at the University of Notre Dame. The team will be led for the first two years by Michael Coppedge and Anthony Messina and then by Scott Mainwaring and Anthony Messina. They are poised to build upon the tradition of high-level scholarly debate and have begun work on their first issue, devoted to the topic Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide. Let me welcome the new team and thank them for their willingness to take on this important task.

### **Professional Concerns: Graduate Student Training, the Problem of Data and the Importance of Field Work**

Continuity is the hallmark of one of our key professional concerns, the appropriate nature of the training of graduate students. This concern, of course, is intimately linked to the question of the kind of research that is valued by the profession. We would all like to train our students to become contributors to the most highly valued kind of research. Yet, the question of valuation of different kinds of research has been contentious. In particular, the value of field research has been questioned in connection with a generalized attack on a vaguely defined notion of "area studies." It is not my intention here to review the "area studies" debate.<sup>1</sup> Rather, I would like to identify what I see as hopeful signs of an emerging consensus around the value of different kinds of research, alone or in combination, and to draw out the implications of this emerging consensus for graduate student training in general and the value of field research in particular.

In 1995, *World Politics* published a symposium on "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics" (Vol. 48, No. 1), with contributions from Peter Evans, Peter Katzenstein, Adam Przeworski, Susanne Hoebler Rudolph, James C. Scott and Theda Skocpol. In his concluding essay, Atul Kohli outlined three important areas of agreement among this diverse set of contributors. (1) Comparative politics is problem-driven; it seeks to understand phenomena of importance in the real world. (2) The search for understanding entails an effort to develop causal explanations and generalizations of the observed relationships to other cases, which requires theory building. (3) In the search for theoretically informed understanding of important phenomena, scholars use inductive and deductive strategies and macro or micro levels of analysis, without being able to make any valid claims for exclusive usefulness of one or the other.

Five years later, at the last APSA Meetings, parallel conclusions were reached by a roundtable on "What do we know in comparative politics, and how do we know it?" The participants (Robert Bates, David Latin, Margaret Levi, Sidney Tarrow, Theda Skocpol and I) came from diverse research traditions and reviewed knowledge in different areas of comparative politics, yet agreed that knowledge has been generated by three types of work: comparative historical studies, quantitative analyses and formal modeling.

(Continued on page 27)

# News & Notes

## **New Address for Newsletter Website**

The newsletter's website will shortly be moving from its previous home at UCLA to <http://www.nd.edu/~apsacp>.

## **Announcement of Nominations for New Officers 2002-04**

The Section's nominations committee has nominated Kathy Thelen and Pradeep Chhibber to serve as at-large members of the Executive Committee for 2002-2004.

## **Comparative Politics Section Awards**

The 2002 Sage Award for best paper in the field of comparative politics, presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting, has been awarded to James Gibson, Washington University, for "Does Truth Lead to Reconciliation? Testing the Causal Assumptions of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process." Honorable mentions went to Carlos Boix and Luis Garicano, "Democracy, Inequality, and Country-Specific Wealth," and Robert Kaufman and Alex Segura-Ubiergo, "Globalization, Domestic Politics, and Social Spending in Latin America: A Time-Series Cross-Section Analysis." The Award Committee consisted of Duane Swank (chair), Bernie Grofman and Ken Roberts.

The 2002 Luebbert Award for best article in comparative politics published in 2000/2001 was awarded to Guillermo A. O'Donnell, Notre Dame University, for "Democracy, Law, and Comparative Politics," published in *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 36 No. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 7-36. Honorable mentions went to Michael L. Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* Vol. 53 (April 2001), pp. 325-61, and Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond," *World Politics* Vol. 53 (April 2001), pp. 362-98. The Committee was made up of Jonathan Hartlyn (chair), Gary Cox and Meredith Woo-Cummings.

The 2002 Data Set Award went to Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi and Adam Przeworski for the ACLP Political and Economic Database (often referred to as the "Democracy and Development Data Set"). The Committee consisted of Alex Hicks (chair), Michael Bratton and Mitchell Seligson. ❖

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# C&M

## Committee on Concepts and Methods

[www.concepts-methods.org](http://www.concepts-methods.org)

The Committee on Concepts and Methods (C&M) of the International Political Science Association, hosted at FLACSO Mexico, strives to promote methodological discussion that takes seriously both concept analysis and qualitative methods. It also works as a Related Group of APSA. Its website ([www.concepts-methods.org](http://www.concepts-methods.org)) opens up innovative opportunities for methodological debate in political science.

### Award for Conceptual Innovation in Democratic Studies

The C&M Award for Conceptual Innovation in Democratic Studies rewards conceptual work of excellence in the comparative study of democracy and democratization. The award will be given every three years at the IPSA World Congress, beginning in July 2003. Any category of formal publication may be submitted.

### Strategies for Field Research

At APSA 2002 in Boston, C&M will sponsor a short course on strategies for field research in comparative and international politics. Instructors are Evan S. Liebman, Princeton University; Julia Lynch, University of Pennsylvania; and Marc Howard, University of Maryland. Contact Person: Colin Elman ([celman@mahexlasu.edu](mailto:celman@mahexlasu.edu)).

### The Bibliography on Political Concepts

The Bibliography on Political Concepts provides bibliographic information on concept analysis in political science. Authors may register their work online.

### Les Intraduisibles: Translating Politics

Les Intraduisibles: The Dictionary of Untranslatable Terms in Politics discusses political terms of difficult translation from and into English. Its current languages are Dutch, French, Italian, German and Spanish.

"brilliant" — Fredrik Galung (Cambridge University)

"irresistible" — Volker Frank (University of North Carolina)

"Great initiative! Useful, insightful and funny!" — Kurt Weyland (University of Texas at Austin)

For more information, visit the C&M website or contact C&M chairperson Andreas Schedler ([andreas@flacso.edu.mx](mailto:andreas@flacso.edu.mx)).

# Continuing Debate

## On the Measurement of Corruption

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Do we really know that corruption is greater in some places than others? If we do not know this, then we cannot really say much about variations in its causes or consequences. We have, of course, the frequently cited and often used Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, but that measure does not purport to get at the fact of corruption, but rather only the perception of it. And while we can hope that in this case perception is linked to reality, as it clearly is in so many other areas, the evidence is so far lacking. Indeed, as social scientists we should be skeptical of the wide variation implied by the Index, since we normally begin our research with the null hypothesis, which would assume that corruption should not vary significantly across nations. We would assume that since behavior responds to rational incentives, the motivation to engage in corruption ought to be largely universal and not vary from nation to nation.

In the papers published in APSA-CP (Winter 2002), several authors presented evidence that would help us reject the null and accept the hypothesis that corruption does indeed vary cross-nationally. An excellent paper by Rafael Di Tella draws on new research by J. Kunicova and S. Rose-Ackerman, as well as work by T. Persson, G. Tabellini and F. Trebbi, that finds that "closed-list proportional representation systems, especially together with presidentialism, are associated with higher corruption levels" (p. 12). The impact of electoral rules on corruption has recently been carefully demonstrated for the case of Italy (Golden and Chang 2001). We also learn from recent work by Daniel Treisman that in Protestant countries with a British colonial heritage there is less perceived corruption, and that, over time, democracies are perceived as less corrupt than dictatorships.

Yet, as David Samuels stresses (p. 17), we need to wonder if perception is closely enough linked to reality for us to trust these findings. As he states, "Whether longstanding democracies are in fact less corrupt should be an object of investigation." The two are, no doubt, positively associated, but that is not really the issue. The magnitude and the dynamics of corruption are of greatest interest. We should be skeptical that perceptions can tell us much about these two issues, since much research shows how unreliable perceptions can be and how heavily they can be influenced by the media. For example, a study of Buenos Aires found that in a given period press reports of crime increased by over 110 percent, whereas during that same time official crime statistics showed an increase of only about 5 percent. Citizens of Buenos Aires who read press reports might wrongly assume that they were experiencing a major crime wave (United Nations 1999, 14).

One wonders why the major indices of corruption, such as that published by Transparency International, have concentrated on perceptions rather than behavior. The obvious answer is that corruption by its very nature involves *sub rosa* activities, and those demanding a bribe or stealing from the public coffers work hard to conceal their involvement. If, on the other hand, we use the "tip-of-the-iceberg" approach and measure corruption only by the number of those who get caught, our indicator will be hopelessly dependent on the efficacy of the investigative authorities and contaminated by a possibly corrupt judiciary. One could hypothesize that a country's ability to catch and prosecute those involved in corruption would be inversely correlated with its overall level of corruption, so that the most corrupt countries would exhibit the lowest levels of arrest and conviction. Media reports of corruption are equally unreliable in many developing countries since the media there are either closely controlled by the state or are captives of political parties.

We can learn a lesson from criminologists, who have the same problem when it comes to gathering

data on common crime. If the police report more crimes, has crime really gone up or is it because the police are better at catching criminals, or because they want more police officers and/or higher wages? We just don't know. Surveys of victims, on the other hand, have grown to become a relatively reliable source of data on crime, even though we are aware of the problems of over- and under-reporting. Furthermore, what might be a crime for one person might be considered a normal event for another and not worth reporting. We are also aware of the systematic under-reporting of some forms of crime, such as incest, child abuse and rape. Yet, when compared to public perceptions of crime rates or to official reports of crime, especially in nations in which the quality of official reports is suspect, victimization studies may be as good as we can hope to get.

The University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project has been ongoing for a number of years, carrying out surveys in Latin America. Some of these surveys attempt to measure respondents' direct personal experience with corrupt practices. Because definitions of corruption can vary by culture, to avoid ambiguity we define corrupt practices by asking such questions as this: "Within the last year, have you had to pay a bribe to a government official?" We ask similar questions about bribery demands at the level of local government, in the public schools, at work, in the courts, in public health facilities and elsewhere. This provides two kinds of information. First, we

can find out where corruption is most frequent. Second, we can construct overall scales of corruption victimization, enabling us to distinguish between respondents who have faced corrupt practices in only one setting and those who have been victimized in multiple settings. As in studies of victims of crime, we assume it makes a difference if one has a single experience or multiple experiences with corruption.

We can do much with this data. First, we learn who are the victims of corruption. In Latin America males are more likely to be victims of corruption than females, largely because males are more frequently involved in formal transactions. In activities involving schools or health clinics, however, females are often more likely to be victims. The national scope of our surveys has enabled us to tap into urban-rural differences, and we have found that corruption is far more an urban problem than a rural problem, apparently because government officials are far more numerous in the cities than in the countryside. We have also found important regional variation, controlling for urbanization, that suggests that subcultural or institutional constraints vary within countries. Similarly, we have examined factors such as ethnicity, age and income, to see how corruption varies across different groups. All of this information can be useful in designing anti-corruption strategies, just as it can help in combating other forms of crime (Seligson 2001). Once we identify potential victims, it is far more cost-effective to concentrate on

prevention measures where the problem is the most serious.

For comparativists, an important benefit of studies of corruption victimization is that they allow us to directly test the null hypothesis noted above—namely, that corruption should be about the same everywhere. Instead, we find that levels of corruption vary dramatically from one country to the next. For example, in some European countries fewer than one percent of respondents report having been victimized by corruption, whereas (according to the University of Pittsburgh studies) places like Bolivia report levels of corruption twenty-five times higher. Interestingly, however, there is considerable variation within Latin America, with El Salvador reporting a far lower proportion of corruption victims than Bolivia. The next step is to determine why those differences emerge. Since (up until recent reforms changed the system of representation in Bolivia to make it look more like that of Germany), both countries utilized a form of proportional representation in multi-member districts for legislative elections, we would need to look elsewhere for the causes. Perhaps we would need to look at other institutional constraints or examine more closely variation in political culture.

Once we know that corruption victimization does in fact vary within and across countries, we can examine its impact on key political variables. For example, we can determine whether the incidence of victimization helps to undermine a regime's legitimacy and thus to weaken

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# Symposium

## Teaching "Introduction to American Politics"

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### Introduction

Another September, another lecture hall full of freshmen. Many of them will not have heard of "comparative politics" before they found it in the course catalog. And you look out at the sea of expectant faces. What to say to your 18-year-old listeners? What to have them read? How can you pass on a little of the passionate curiosity about countries' politics that has led you to your place behind the podium?

Many have struggled with this challenge. Many candidly admit to disappointment with the results. The introductory comparative course can easily degenerate into a travelogue of countries and political systems— if it's third week, this must be Belgium. Alternatively, it can end up a catalog of institutional details and dry debates that leave students wondering why they were interested in politics to begin with.

How should one teach "Comparative Politics 101"? Are there certain classic books or articles that all undergraduates should read early in their studies? What should a good course reader contain? Are there theories or facts that all who take such a course should encounter? What strategies have worked in the past to get students as fascinated about ideas and institutions as they usually are about the more exotic details of distant countries? Is there any way to give students a sense—right from the start—of what research in comparative politics is all about?

Some have occasionally wondered whether a general introduction to comparative politics should be taught at all. Are politics in the Middle East and Western Europe similar enough to make studying them together sensible? Are the concepts and questions useful for understanding Sudan the same as those one would need to make sense of Luxembourg? In short, do we even belong to a single, cohesive discipline?

We asked a range of scholars who have taught such an introductory course in recent years to share their experiences, positive and negative. Some of the featured writers are fresh to the challenge, others have been teaching an introductory course for years or decades. In the six pieces below, they offer a variety of thoughts, suggestions and the occasional cautionary tale.

### Teaching the Unknown

**Kelke S. Tsai**

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I never took Introduction to Comparative Politics (ICP) in college despite majoring in political science. Why? I had no idea what it was. My reaction was similar to what most undergraduates think when they see the listing in the course bulletin. Courses like American politics, political theory, international relations and even international political economy made sense. ICP did not.

The first time I attended an ICP lecture was in my capacity as a TA for the class when I was a second-year graduate student studying for comps. The disjuncture between my recently acquired notion of

comparative politics and the undergraduate syllabus was disconcerting, even shocking. During the lectures, which were delivered by two tremendously popular Barnard professors, my co-TA and I exchanged knowing, conspiratorial glances as we marveled at their theoretically superficial, policy-oriented and often normative character. That was not the way that we were trained in the graduate-level comparative politics survey across the street at Columbia.

We worried that the students were not being exposed to the appropriate literature, and attempted to redress the gaps in our weekly discussion sections. With an air of theoretical and methodological superiority, I entered my first several sections armed with the likes of Alexander Gerschenkron, Thomas Kuhn and Adam Przeworski. Despite my most impassioned efforts, several students stopped attending the section. By the end of the semester, those who had lasted through my initial attempt at replicating graduate-level training, seemed to be enjoying un-footnoted pieces from *The New York Times* and *The Economist*. Nonetheless, eye-popping statements such as, "The Mexican government should be sacked for brutally murdering college students in Tiananmen Square," still appeared in their final papers. In retrospect, I probably learned more from TA-ing ICP than the students learned from me.

Indeed, years later when I offered ICP for the first time as an Assistant Professor at Emory University, I realized that my

previous TA assignment was the only aspect of my graduate "training" that prepared me for teaching the undergraduate class on my own. My experience taught me clearly what not to do; more importantly, it taught me why not to do it. Because most college students do not know what ICP is about, it makes more sense to build on what they already find interesting. Whether their curiosity concerns particular countries, dramatic events such as protests and revolutions, or specific topical concerns such as women's rights, poverty and environmental degradation, taking ICP can help students understand apparently sui generis phenomena in broader analytic terms.

Now having taught the class three times at two universities (twice at Emory and once at Hopkins), my experience remains extremely limited, but all three times have been sufficiently varied that they offer some qualitative lessons about both the substance and style in teaching ICP that I will take with me when I offer it again.

### **Syllabus Content**

The structure of my syllabus suspiciously resembles the one that I criticized years ago as a TA for unreflectively perpetuating the anachronistic three-worlds approach to ICP, albeit with a linguistic twist.<sup>1</sup> Rather than actually calling the traditional, three-paired comparisons of Great Britain/Japan, Russia/China and Mexico/Nigeria the "First," "Second" and "Third" Worlds, respectively, the syllabus refers to "Advanced Industrial Democracies," "Communist/Post-Communist

Countries" and "Former Colonies." Between the first and second time that I taught ICP, the assigned textbook—Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger and William Joseph's *Introduction to Comparative Politics*—switched from the three worlds categorization to the regime-centric, "Established Democracies," "Transitional Democracies" and "Non-Democracies."<sup>2</sup> Discussing these variations on categorical nomenclature during the first class in an interactive manner seems to help in clarifying what comparative politics is all about, and conveying the more general lesson that what we call things has implications for how we view the world. The classification on my syllabus, for example, belies a bias towards the political economy of development rather than geographical region, national identity, or formal political institutions. With that confession out of the way, below I highlight the readings that have been effective vs. those that flopped.

In preparation for the traditional six-country tour, the first four classes are devoted to thematic and methodological issues. The following readings are challenging for freshmen and non-political science majors, but I always start and end each lecture with a reminder of why the theme of the week is important—and why it is necessary to trudge through some of the more difficult readings. The latter include Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is..and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* (Summer 1991) and Larry Diamond, "Is the Third



Wave Over?" *Journal of Democracy* (July 1996). The pieces are effective in revealing the wide range of variation among democracies, and for many students, it is the first time they realize that one could (and perhaps should) distinguish between procedural/electoral vs. liberal democracies. At the very end of the semester, we revisit the theme through Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* (1997), juxtaposed by Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (1999) and Benjamin Barber "Jihad vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly* (1992). These readings always spark lively in-class debates.

For methodological background, the Robert Keohane, Gary King and Sidney Verba volume on *Designing Social Inquiry* (1994) proved to be a bit too ambitious the first time I taught ICP; but the first chapter of Martin Hollis' *The Philosophy of Social Science on "Problems of Structure and Action"* seemed more accessible and helpful in distinguishing between explanatory vs. interpretive objectives; and to date, I continue to assign Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco's "Clubs, Clacks, and the Study of Politics," *World Politics* (July 1977). The latter refers to many theorists that students have never heard of (e.g., Karl Popper and Ernest Nagel), but the overarching cloud vs. clacks metaphor is tangible and one that I can draw on the board. I have yet to find a reading that presents the comparative method, hypothesis formation

and testing, and operationalization of variables in one neat piece, so I usually lecture through the issues by drawing on examples from the thematic readings on the relationship between economic and political development. Gabriel Almond's "Capitalism and Democracy," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (September 1991) succinctly delineates the possible relationships between capitalism and democracy, which gives students an opportunity to restate them as testable hypotheses and gives me an opportunity to introduce them to the language of independent, intervening, dependent and control variables; and draw arrows on the board to show causal direction and causal pathways. The following lecture reinforces these concepts by having students think more deeply about how to test hypotheses on countries in the absence of pure laboratory conditions. As a TA, I assigned James Fearon's article "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* (1991) to my discussion section; but since then, I have simply discussed the utility of counterfactuals in class. On that note, one head-spinning question that I have used on the midterm is for students to restate "No bourgeoisie, no democracy" as a hypothesis and then derive its counterfactual)

As for normative and prescriptive concerns, I still prefer not to appeal to their pre-existing or latent normative biases. Instead, I encourage them to be aware of policy prescriptions that are implicit in the apparently neutral work of

social scientists, and critically analyze the underlying causal explanations hidden in the explicit political agendas of works in pop political science. One of my favorite exercises, for example, entails having them read in the same week, chapters from Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) and Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (1999) because it is not difficult for freshmen and non-majors to identify their respective explanatory objectives, normative biases and the dramatically different policy recommendations that would logically follow. These methodological and analytical lessons are tested in a short written exercise that requires students to pick an op-ed from the *New York Times* and identify its normative agenda, implicit causal explanations, restating the latter as if-then hypotheses, deriving the counterfactual of the implicit hypotheses, and then evaluating the evidence provided for the argument.

After all that, most students seem relieved when we finally start trekking through actual countries, starting with Great Britain and ending with Nigeria. During the country-intensive portions of the class, I assign selections from Frank Wilson, *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Comparative Analysis* (1996) to address political culture, electoral systems, presidential vs. parliamentary systems, federalism, and praetorianism; and country-specific articles from *Current History*, *Foreign Affairs*

and Journal of Democracy. Students are also required to read at least the international section of the New York Times everyday.

### Teaching Techniques

I have taught ICP three times using very different styles. The first time was the frantic fresh-out-of-graduate school style: My lecture notes were usually too long for the class period (50 minutes, three times a week) so I had to cut out films and conceptual classes half way through the semester just to get through all the countries. Part of the timing problem was because I did not anticipate that students would ask so many questions in class even though I asked them to do so.

The second time could be called the Socratic country panel style. I was determined to structure the class in an explicitly interactive manner by making their class participation on country panels 10% of the final grade. I randomly assigned each of the 65 students to three country panels—one country from each “unit” (i.e., one advanced industrialized democracy, one communist/post-communist country and one former colony). This meant that for any given country, half of the class would be officially responsible for answering any questions that I might pose. I entered each class with a list of student names for each country and reserved the right to look down the list and call on anyone on the country panel to answer the question based on readings and previous lectures. This modified Socratic approach was nerve wracking for many of

them, but it seemed to foster a combination of teamwork and healthy competition among country panel members. And more importantly, very few students ended up mixing up countries on exams and papers. It was still a six-country tour, but they had to know which country we were in on Wednesday versus Friday and be prepared. I really enjoyed that class. Instead of typing out dense lecture notes, I devoted more effort to thinking of provocative questions and combining the newspaper for ways to tie apparently country-specific concepts and historical issues to immediate contemporary concerns.

The third time I taught ICP could be dubbed the distanced mob sub-contracting style. It felt like a major step backwards. I moved to another university and had to teach it with nearly 140 students and three TA's for two rather than three hours a week. Lectures seemed painfully superficial given the loss of one lecture hour. I could not even begin to learn student names and ditched the country panels. Discussion would have to take place during the discussion sections run by TA's. Most of the questions that I posed to the class became rhetorical and I had to rely on my weekly meetings with the TA's for vicarious feedback on how things were going. In short, class size matters, but that is typically not within our control.

As I think about how I will teach it next spring (with an expected 160 students and 4 TA's), I am still trying to think of creative ways to expand the pedagogical space of their learning beyond the classroom

and library. I may add a current events message board to the course web page and structure participation in it with short assignments as part of the final grade. In the past I have used the course website mainly for announcements and follow-up on issues raised in class, and then students e-mail me with additional questions or line up during office hours. But as everyone reading this knows, the same questions come up over and over again. And inevitably, at some point in the semester, a major if not cataclysmic event occurs internationally (and/or in one of the countries covered in the course), which presents an ideal opportunity to engage key concepts in a memorable—rather than merely memorizable—manner. I would like to schedule chat room sessions experimentally to see if that medium of communication may appeal to those who never speak up in the lectures or discussion sections, but thrive in cyberspace. Paradoxically, what is popularly regarded as “distance learning” could bring me closer to the anonymous masses in the lecture hall.

And finally, yes, I think ICP is worth teaching and taking. ICP can be very exciting for undergraduates when they start to make the connections on their own between real world events and the issues that they are reading and hearing about in class. One does not need a PhD in comparative politics to understand why communism evolved along very different trajectories in the Soviet Union versus China, or why the LDP in Japan and the PRI in Mexico were able to monopolize politics

for so many decades, but taking ICP can help. In my concluding lecture, I always tell students that long after they have forgotten the sequence of coups and counter-coups in Nigeria, I hope that at a minimum they will maintain a healthy skepticism towards what they read and hear about political dynamics in countries around the world, including the United States. More specifically, I hope that they realize the explanatory limits of general terms like "democracy," "capitalism" and "political culture" when they are not defined transparently or tautologically conflated with the very political outcomes that they are being used to explain.

<sup>1</sup> It is available on-line at <http://junix.hcf.jhu.edu/~ktsai/190201S01.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph, eds., *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000). They classify Russia and Mexico as transitional democracies and China and Nigeria as non-democracies, which has not stopped me from maintaining the Russia/China and Mexico/Nigeria paired comparisons.

## Teaching Comparative Politics 101

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It is not easy to convince undergraduates that political science is a real discipline. They hear from their history professors that political science research mainly involves reading the New York Times. Their physics lecturers wonder why we don't come clean and drop the

"science" label altogether. The English faculty gumble about the differential pay scale. All students have studied history, physics and literature in school, and the best of them, with some reflection, can say in general how the study of one might differ conceptually from the study of the other. But political science? What most students expect to do in introductory political science classes looks remarkably like what used to be called "civics."

These problems are compounded in the comparative politics subfield. Not only do students have little familiarity with what makes the discipline a distinct field of intellectual endeavor, but they are also unlikely to have significant experience with political systems other than the American one. Anyone who has lectured to a freshman or sophomore class on the variety of electoral systems, for example, can confirm that undergraduates are prone to think that the main task of comparison may be to enumerate the ways in which foreigners have failed to achieve the unadorned genius of American democracy.

A general introductory course in comparative politics is valuable mainly because it is the most efficient vehicle for combating these two problems: the innate skepticism about our discipline and the ethnocentrism of the American undergraduate. The ideal course should find some way of meeting these goals. In what follows, I briefly address three points: the relationship between comparative politics and the other subfields; the role of theory in an introductory course and the task of imparting

an appreciation for theory as well as practical knowledge about politics outside the United States.

Most political science departments have some distribution requirements among the four major subfields. But the four-fold division in the American political science tradition is, of course, not an obvious one, and students should be told early on that the mental map used in the United States is not necessarily that of politics specialists in other countries. There is nothing about the methods or basic concepts of the American politics subfield, for example, to distinguish it from what comparativists do; in fact, things would probably be easier if our subfield—as in Britain and elsewhere—were called simply "politics" and then distinguished from the distinct set of theories and concerns of a subfield called "international relations" and one called "political philosophy." (No one can expect an undergraduate to know instinctively that "theory" means two very different things in our professional discourse.) Undergraduates can figure out the division of labor rather quickly if things are presented in this way.

The big question is the relationship between the American and comparative fields. In many departments, comparativists are the poor cousins of the Americanists, both in terms of the number of professors and the interests of undergraduate majors. But there may nevertheless be room for fruitful experiments in weaving the American case into a wider comparative politics discussion. Things would have to be handled carefully, otherwise

undergraduates can come away with the idea that non-U.S. political systems are simply evolutionary curiosities that at some point diverged from the American model. At best, however, undergraduates can acquire an even more sophisticated understanding of the U.S. case by deepening their knowledge of the political institutions and issues in other countries.

At Georgetown, the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service recently dropped its requirement that undergraduates majoring in "foreign service" (essentially, international studies with a liberal arts core) take a course in U.S. politics. The American case was to be incorporated into the required introductory course in comparative politics; the foreign policy dimensions of U.S. politics are already covered, to a certain degree, in the required international relations course. The curricular reform has not been carried through completely, but the intention, I think, was laudable.

Students also need some discipline, though. They need to understand what is distinctive about political science as a field, what particular lenses the discipline offers to help them make sense of the world. The difficulty here is that political scientists are themselves divided about the core components of their field (although, in this regard, we fare rather better than sociologists and literary theorists). But I don't think it is useful to avoid a meta-discussion about the state of the field only because one is teaching an introductory class. Properly

introduced, debates about what the field is and where it is going can stimulate undergraduates. I have often begun with one or two lectures on the history of the field—and here I have found the framework laid out in Ruth Lane's *The Art of Comparative Politics* (Alyn and Bacon, 1997) to be an exceptionally good one—so that undergraduates can see themselves as part of an evolving field. Students need to understand that at the heart of all good social science lies a puzzle, and they can only get to that point if they begin to see that disciplines are about argumentation and questioning.

The pitfall, of course, is that some undergraduates will simply see all this as yet another example of their pointy-headed professors' bickering over angels and pins. The focus has to be on the fact that the stakes in debates over methodology and approach really are pretty high; we get very different answers to basic social questions depending on which tools of analysis we use. The emphasis in such lectures has to be on theories—what they are, how they are formulated, how they matter—rather than just on concepts. Undergraduates usually come in with lots of the latter but very few of the former. Already in high school, they become very good at memorizing A's or B's definition of "modernization" or "democracy" without ever quite understanding what it means to use these concepts as part of a theory to explain political outcomes. It all seems just part of the arcane language that professors use when they talk with one another.

So, how to do all of this? In

my own introductory course (syllabus at [www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch](http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch)), I now begin with something close to a "great books" section, roughly the first third of the semester. Identifying what exactly the great books are—the ones suitable for undergraduates, anyway—is not easy. Great works in any discipline do two things: They mark off nodal points in the development of the field and, with some caveats, bear reading again. (It is easy to give a list of those that meet the first criterion but rather more difficult with the second.) My own list includes Aristotle and Bernard Crick (on what politics is), Marx and Weber (on ideology and culture), Dahl (on interests), Duverger (on institutions and elections), Huntington and Lipset (on order and democracy), among others. As much as possible, I would rather have students read entire books than "selections from," although this is not always practicable. The goal, again, is to get students to see these thinkers in debate with one another, across centuries sometimes, about fundamental questions of the distribution of power in society and the tasks of governance.

Students need to acquire some practical knowledge as well: how the Westminster system works, for example, or what proportional representation is. The trick, I think, is to present all this within the context of a set of puzzles and arguments. Very few lower-division undergraduates know what it means to explain something. They have plenty of experience with making arguments—I think abortion is wrong because X, I think

Heathcliff was a cad because X—but they are usually unclear on what it means to offer an explanation for some social outcome or to weigh competing explanations based on empirical evidence.

They can see how this is done most clearly if they are exposed to quantitative techniques. How much does level of education matter in accounting for support for Le Pen? Is household income a good predictor of support for democracy in Russia? But even short of that, finding a way to encourage students to see learning about different political systems as an investigative endeavor—not just an exercise in memorizing the institutions of Japan or checking off a list of pressing political issues in Argentina—is the basic idea.

We have to recognize our audience, however. Most students who come into introductory courses are fulfilling a general social science requirement; those who stay around to become political science majors are probably more interested in the American and international relations subfields—the ones they think provide entries to real-world jobs or to law school—than in comparative politics. Our real tasks, therefore, involve convincing them that what we do is more than current events and perhaps, if we are lucky, teaching them how to think critically about the political world along the way.

## Teaching Introduction to Comparative Politics

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I was not an undergraduate political science major, so when I was asked to develop an "Introduction to Comparative Politics" course several years ago I did not have a ready model in mind from my own experience. When I began to look at textbooks, as well as the model syllabi available in a number of collections, the dominant design was one in which students were taught about a group of countries which in some way represents the diversity of existing political systems. As I was already teaching two upper division courses with a country or area focus, this did not appeal to me.

This led me to consider alternatives to an "If this is Tuesday, this must be Belgium" approach. The obvious alternative is a theory-driven course, but comparative political theory has become so extensive, any sort of comprehensive overview is out of the question. As I began to try to narrow the focus, two other concerns came into play. First, I wanted to teach from my strength as a comparativist, so I decided to stress institutional themes rather than behavioral ones. Second, in order to keep the students engaged I wanted to focus the course thematically so as to fire their imagination. This was no small concern given that the course enrollment is large, ranging between 180 and 270 depending on the size of the available lecture hall.

The theme I chose was regimes and regime change. This has clearly been a major concern in comparative politics over the last twenty years and it also allows one to teach about some of the most compelling processes of political change of our age. A course so structured, I reasoned, would introduce the students to a central problem in comparative politics and hold their attention, thus serving them well. This choice had important ramifications for the textbooks I chose for the course. I needed books that did not have a country-case focus. The three main texts that I assign are Macridis and Burg; Sorenson; and Warda.<sup>1</sup> Macridis and Burg lends itself nicely to an institutional approach to regimes, but is seriously in need of an update (the last was in 1991). Warda presents a nice theoretical overview of the subfield over the last few decades and Sorenson is an excellent introduction to issues of democracy and democratization.

Despite assigning three texts, in order to present all the material I want to cover I also assign a packet of additional readings.<sup>2</sup> In these readings and in the lectures I also attempt to expose the students to works that I consider to be classics in the field. I also endeavor to use these readings to show students the diversity of comparative politics in terms of approach (historicist, rationalist and culturalist) and method (small-n, large-n and formal).

The semester is split into four major topics that build upon each other: 1) power, 2) regimes, 3) politics and economics, and 4) regime change. Prior to diving

into this material, I give a fairly standard lecture on "What is Comparative Politics?" Here I begin by distinguishing the subject matter of the subfield from those of the other major subfields (American, International Relations, Theory). I also talk about the kinds of research questions on which comparativists work. At this juncture I introduce fundamental social science concepts like cause and effect, necessary and sufficient conditions, case, and variables. This is also the time when students are first exposed to the comparative method. We spend some time talking about JS. Mill's methods of agreement and difference and illustrate their use by discussing (but not reading) the logics of comparison at work in Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon 1964) and Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge 1969). This lecture ends with a discussion of the scientific status of comparative politics. My take on this issue is very mainstream. I point out where we fall short of the natural science model, but talk about how, despite this, we can still attempt to theorize and make generalizations that transcend individual cases.

The first section of the course is devoted to the subject of power. After a general discussion of power the lecture turns to the concepts of the state and domination. We also discuss how domination legitimates itself in the modern age. I consider this a kind of necessary background for the rest of the course, given that in modern regimes domination consciously

and continuously organized by the state is the form that political power takes. Obviously, all this leads to a great deal of discussion of Weber and students read "Politics as a Vocation" (in Gerth and Mills, eds., *From Max Weber, New Edition*, Routledge, 1991) and the parts of *Economy and Society* (California 1978) devoted to the state, domination and the three ideal types of legitimate domination. The readings from Weber are supplemented by Amitai Etzioni's classification of the different forms that power takes (*Modern Organizations*, Prentice Hall, 1964) and Gianfranco Poggi's classic discussion of Schmitt's and Easton's views of the state (*The Development of the Modern State*, Stanford, 1978). I also use Etzioni's work as an opportunity to introduce the students to the notion of classification.

I realize at this point that most readers will probably consider me insane for trying to teach Weber to 200 undergraduates in a lecture format. However, I assign them small amounts of reading of the original and spend a great deal of time going over the text in detail during the lecture. When this fails, the graduate students who teach weekly recitation sections that accompany my lectures spend some time reviewing the lecture material that week. Some students even take to the difficult material, and suggest that I use more classical texts in other parts of the course.

After discussing power, I turn to a discussion of regimes. In this section, the central thinkers highlighted are Robert Dahl and Juan Linz. I begin with a

discussion of Dahl's Polyarchy (Yale, 1971) as the central way in which comparative politics has defined modern democracy. The lecture also goes into detail on the concepts of opposition and participation, the necessary conditions for polyarchy and Dahl's fourfold typology of regimes (polyarchy, competitive oligarchy, inclusive hegemony, exclusive hegemony). After introducing modern democracy, the course then turns to its varieties. Here the lectures focus on three main areas: executive power (presidentialism, parliamentarism, semi-presidentialism), party (two party, moderate multiparty, extreme multiparty), voting systems (plurality, majoritarian, proportional, mixed) and systems of interest intermediation (pluralist, corporatist).

After discussing polyarchies, the course turns to modern dictatorships and begins with a general discussion of the two major subtypes - totalitarianism and authoritarianism. To define and discuss their characteristics, I rely most heavily on Linz's well established typology. Here the students read excerpts from his classic essay "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes" (in *The Handbook of Political Science*, Greenstein and Polsby, eds. Addison-Wesley 1975). This also proves to be a good opportunity to discuss what a typology is and demonstrate how one is constructed. Additional sessions are devoted to discussing both totalitarianism and authoritarianism in greater detail. To illustrate the ways in which totalitarianism worked, one lecture is devoted to a comparison of Nazism and

Stalinism along the lines of the defining characteristics outlined by Friedrich and Brzezinski (*Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Prager, 1966). Given the greater variety of modern authoritarian regimes, I spend a fair amount of time simply discussing the characteristics of different sub-types (personalistic, dynastic, military, one-party developmental, bureaucratic-authoritarian, neo-theocratic, etc.) while providing some discussion of real world examples. Here the discussion in Macridis and Burg is useful.

Following the discussion of regime, the course turns to issues of comparative political economy. This section begins with a general discussion of the concept of development. It then turns to the issue of whether different regimes do a better job of promoting development. Here the proposition that authoritarianism promotes development better than democracy is shown to be considerably overstated, based primarily on the experience of a few countries (largely NICs and selected bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes). Other evidence is presented to show that there is little difference between the two in terms of promoting economic development. Here Sorenson's text has a good discussion of the important issues.

Following development, the course then turns to a discussion of the two main modern economic systems - capitalism and communism. This section begins with a discussion of market systems. I spend one lecture on basic concepts like

exchange, markets and property and then discuss issues of market failure and state intervention. The last part of the discussion on capitalism focuses on the relationship between a market economy and democracy. The lecture contrasts the idea of a market economy as a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for democracy with Lindblom's more critical discussion of the issue of the privileged position of business in polyarchy from *Politics and Markets* (Basic, 1977).

The discussion of communism focuses on its emergence as a developmental alternative to capitalism and discusses what it means to replace the market with bureaucratic administration of the economy. Most of the illustrations here are drawn from the Soviet experience as the archetype of an administered economy. A second lecture on this topic discusses the failure of the communist economic system in the last part of the twentieth century. I stress its capabilities for creating extensive growth (mobilizing underutilized and newly created endowments of capital and labor) and its poor performance in promoting intensive growth (improving the productivity of existing endowments). This shortcoming is seen as fatal to competing successfully in the most recent phase of development in the world economy.

The concluding section of the course focuses on regime change. It begins with a discussion of theories of prerequisite conditions for democracy. The discussion here focuses on older theories that link the rise of democracy with

religion, the civic culture and development. The lecture concludes that the search for prerequisites has been a failure. Even the strongest research of this sort, such as Almond and Verba (*The Civic Culture*, Princeton 1963) and Lipset (*Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*, APSR 1959) fall short of providing convincing evidence. The well known problem with causal direction between democracy and civic culture makes it difficult to consider civic culture a prerequisite. Similarly, the later work of Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (*Democracy and Development*, Cambridge 2000) on the relationship between development and democracy, makes it clear that while development promotes the survival of democracy, it falls short as an antecedent condition.

Following this discussion, the course turns to processes of regime change. Both democratic breakdown and democratization are covered. The lecture on breakdown again relies on Linz, but this time his seminal essay "Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration" (in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, Johns Hopkins, 1978), to discuss how democracies have found themselves in crisis and how they either stabilize themselves or perish. The last substantive issue to be discussed in the course is democratization. The students are introduced to the stages commonly associated with the process - liberalization, transition and consolidation. After introducing the concepts of

liberalization and transition, I present the extended version of Przeworski's game of transition from Democracy and the Market (Cambridge 1991) to the class to give them a sense of how the preferences and actions of actors can play a decisive role in the process. This lecture closes with a discussion of consolidation as a second transition (as conceptualized by Mainwaring, O'Donnell and Valenzuela in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*, Notre Dame 1992) in which a democracy becomes fully institutionalized.

Ultimately I find that this design for the course works reasonably well for three reasons. First, it is topically focused in a way that maintains student interest. Regime change seems to fire their imaginations. Several students have told me that the course is one of the reasons they selected political science as their major. Second, the material lends itself to a discussion of the diversity of our subfield in terms of approach and method. It thus functions as a true introduction to the subfield. Third, it allows me to teach from my own strengths in terms of substance and this keeps me engaged. While a course of this design is not for everyone, if those designing an undergraduate introduction to comparative politics keep these three issues in mind when designing their own courses, they will stand a better chance of success.

<sup>1</sup> Roy C. Macridis and Steven L. Burg, *Introduction to Comparative Politics, Regimes and Change*, Second edition, (New York: Harper Collins, 1991); Howard J. Warda, *Introduction to Comparative Politics, Concepts and Processes*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth,

1993); and Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> For a full list of all the readings, readers can consult the on-line version of my syllabus at <http://polisci.lapsu.edu/faculty/BERNHARD/SYLLABUS.pdf>.

## **Foundations of Political Analysis: Political Science 50**

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The Foundations of Political Analysis (PS50) is my version of Introduction to Comparative Politics. I have been teaching the course for about 20 years, and by now it has become my signature course at Brown. It embodies my rules of teaching: 1) Always emphasize modes of thought; 2) always teach skills; 3) never emphasize "names, dates and places"; 4) always teach to the top of the class and 5) never teach material that I find boring. Because the course is not about the politics of anything or anywhere, I feel no obligation to cover material about any particular place or substantive topic. Rather, I try to teach students how political scientists do political science.

PS50 has a distinctive place in our department's curriculum. First designated as "highly recommended" and now listed as one of three required courses, just about all political science concentrators take it. Because most students take political science in order to further their interests in substantive topics and because hardly any of them care

about the discipline of political science, most students find the course confusing, at best. "Why are we doing this, when I want to learn more about the Congress, the environment, globalization, or some other favorite?" "Why am I here, when I would much prefer a course about politics, not about political science?" These questions appear on most students' faces on the first day, and some of these quizzical looks never leave. (Some articulate their feelings directly.) Remember too that at Brown, there are no university-wide distribution requirements, so students hardly ever take courses because they "must" and faculty almost never teach students who "don't want to be there." And so confusion about the course's topic interacts with resentment of its quasi-obligatory status to offer a strong test of my teaching abilities.

I have already alluded to my approach to this challenge. I advance. I do not retreat. What does that mean in practice? I teach in a way that stretches the student's general intellectual abilities. The implicit message of the course (the sub-text as they now say) is that smart and committed students are able and should want to master this material, and one measure of how bright and dedicated you are is how well you do in PS 50. As I keep myself from being bored (principle five above) and I teach to the top of the class (principle 4 above), I challenge these bright and hard-working students to stay with me.

Does it work? I think so. As one should expect, students vary in their ability and willingness to learn the material (and I and my



teaching assistants vary in how well we convey it). Some catch on immediately and slice through the material like a hot knife through butter. Some never "get it," remaining confused all semester (and most of these fail the course). As the semester progresses, most catch on, and some of these are pleased with the accomplishment, while others decide that they did not want to know all that much about political science. There are other measures: Not only have the course's graduates gone on to exceptional careers (not uncommon at Brown), but several are accomplished political scientists in their own right, teaching at leading colleges and universities across the country. Occasional anecdotes reaffirm the point. Consider also the comments of a student, who had just decided to switch her concentration from biology to political science. "The course is the political science equivalent of organic chemistry. If you can do PS50, you can do any course in the department." All told, I have been very satisfied with the learning and teaching in the Foundations of Political Analysis.

Let me get more concrete about the course as it now exists (a version of a previous incarnation can be found in my book *Doing Political Science*, Westview Press, 1991). This semester the course has four macro-units:

1. It begins by focusing on issues of epistemology and ontology (i.e., theories of knowledge, especially how to describe and explain the political world, and how we know and perceive the

political world). Remember principle one: teach modes of thought. Here, I try to induce the students to think about these tasks, which are both central to what we do and usually distant from their own thoughts. The master theme here is that the political world "out there" is not "visible," without concepts and measures. It cannot be perceived by the student's intuition. Rather, we apply and propose mental constructs, which seek to capture the "grains" of politics (to borrow an image from Ernest Gellner). "How do we see a revolution, a war, an election?" When political scientists claim that variation in education explains variation in turnout, how should one define and measure the concepts "education," "turnout" and "explanation"? How do we know how good a job we are doing (issues of validity and reliability)? We explore alternative understandings of explanation: covering-law, cause, and explanations that use casting and staging to tell a story with an outcome. Depending on the readings and what else is going on, I might present here as well explanation as understanding. In addition and of great importance, we explore how political scientists devise their explanations. This moves to a discussion of different theoretical approaches. In past years, I spent a lot of time contrasting rational choice theory, approaches which emphasize political culture, and Marxian and Weberian approaches to political

analysis. This year, I focus this portion of the course on the contrast between bounded rationality and rational choice theory.

What do the students read in the first portion of the course? A particularly demanding article starts the course, Gudmund Hernes, "Virtual Reality," in Hedstrom and Swedberg's edited book, *Social Mechanisms*. It is the best concise introduction to issues of conceptualization and explanation in the social sciences that I know. It is not an easy read, and so it accomplishes several pedagogic goals at once: it conveys the material that needs to be presented and it signals that in order to make sense of the essay (and therefore the course) the student must work hard and think carefully. In order to lighten the student's burden, I also assign chapters from my book, *Doing Political Science*, which covers some of the same material in a gentler way and repeats some of them from lectures.

2. By this point, there is a strong need to make these abstract issues concrete and real. The course now turns to an assignment in elementary data analysis. Students offer explanatory hypotheses, defend the underlying general claims, propose and measure concepts/variables and test them with evidence from a data set. In order to do this, I introduce the students to SPSS, teaching them to create variables, run cross-tabs and interpret the patterns and their

attendant statistical results. The assignment accomplishes several critical tasks:

- concept formation comes alive;
- precise definitions are now more than ideals; they are required for the program to run;
- offering hypotheses allows the students to try to explain the political world, helping to make them active rather than passive learners;
- the tests help them see that their proposed ideas can sometimes be wrong;
- and they help them to feel a bit of the exhilaration that comes when one's ideas work.

The assignment requires that I vary the data set, so as to remove the temptation of using papers submitted in a previous year. Over the years, I have used material from the world values survey (in conjunction with Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*), from Verba, Scholzman and Brady, *Voice and Equality*, as well as data from my own research projects.

This section of the course also accomplishes principle two: teach new skills. None of the students enter with the ability to do data analysis; all learn it (or they drop out at this point). Some students master the task immediately. Indeed, some of these rapidly become bored by the elementary nature of the assignment (some are offended by SPSS's user-friendly nature). Others struggle, and decide never to

do this kind of work again. Still, all of them have learned something new, a major benefit.

3. Having spent time on what needs to be done in political science and having taken a turn at doing some, the students now examine how political scientists do what they do. Here, I introduce a selection of readings designed to introduce the students to the diversity of the discipline. In recent years, the students have read Bryan Jones, *Politics and the Architecture of Choice*; Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Dennis Chong, *Rational Lives*; Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation*; Jan Gross, *Neighbors*; Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*; Fouad Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*; as well as articles from the *American Political Science Review* and other first-rank journals. I choose these readings for several reasons: 1) They present alternative theoretical and methodological perspectives; 2) they are close to my current research, and so I fully command the material (remember principle five); 3) they introduce material from different politics and societies (a quick bow to "comparative politics"); 4) they cover substantive themes of fundamental importance (and so I usually assign selections on government brutality, and this year in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon I have included material on politics in Arab countries); and 5) finally, I never worry that

the material is too difficult. Most of my students are able to read and comprehend the best work in political science (remember principle four), and if they have problems, the TA's and I are there to help them (after all, that's our job).

4. The final unit of the course introduces the themes of how we know what we know; how the way we know what we know affects what we know; and the limits of knowledge in political science (and in the final lecture at the university taken as a whole). Political science as a science is not about "truth," as in agreed upon and codified knowledge. Rather, it strives to produce knowledge with "credentials," strong reasons to accept claims to knowledge. The more tests passed and the more demanding they are, the more reason there is to accept an analysis (the student's own or that of anyone else). However, there is no magic number of tests or kind of test that certifies knowledge. All efforts to explain the political world vary in certainty. This emphatically does not mean that political science is about tastes and opinions; analyses vary in how strong they are, and we strive and need to evaluate them. What do we read? Here, I assign Cook and Campbell's classic work on internal and external validity. I have also used Thomas Gilovich's study of "hothands" in basketball (from *How We Know What Isn't So*) and Richard Hamilton, *The Social Misconstruction of Reality*, a fascinating study of how

misunderstandings are codified and transmitted in the social sciences. The core text, however, remains my *Doing Political Science*.

Some final words on nuts and bolts: I distribute class notes before each lecture, telling the students that I don't think that most people can listen, think and write at the same time and that I want to maximize the first two and minimize the time they spend taking notes. Last year, I also put the lecture notes on the course's web-page. I discontinued that, because it seemed to increase the level of passivity among the students. This semester I also brought back in-class exams as well as two papers. This structure replaced six papers, which I used for several years running. Why did I go back to exams? Simply put, in-class tests focus attention much better than do papers, even the kind of carefully designed ones that I have used.

All this implies that PS 50 replaces the need for an introduction to comparative politics. Does this apply to my own department? No. A previous chair instituted the introduction to comparative without knowing or asking me anything about my course. Such are the vagaries of department politics and decision making.

The Foundations of Political Analysis succeeds because it challenges the students to grapple with intellectually demanding first-rate political science, and because it rewards the effort with new ways of thinking, new analytical tools and a guide to test other people's claims to knowledge. It is also a pleasure to teach.

## Debating Comparative Politics

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Comparativists are, by nature, an adventurous lot. Those who agree to teach the introductory course to our sub-discipline are especially so. The field of comparative politics is so wide-ranging in method, topic and geographical focus – it is more than challenging to organize a comprehensive introduction that does not degenerate into a dull catalogue of concepts, categories and countries.

When Grzegorz Ekiert and I took on the challenge of teaching this course we saw it as an opportunity to rethink the objectives of comparative politics 101. We identified four major goals for our course.

First, school students in the basic concepts of comparative analysis. Students should come away from a course like this with a precise understanding of the building blocks of our field – terms such as regime, state, democracy, citizenship, civil society, institutions, civic culture, revolution and power – that transcend our regional or methodological preferences and service us all.

Second, expose students to the **explanatory** enterprise that is at the heart of comparative analysis and practice them in the method of comparison and its utility for building and testing hypotheses about the political world.

Third, expose students to some of the great books of the field. Great reading is intellectually inspiring and establishes a model for good

writing. In addition it establishes a common set of referents for the field that fosters discussion across sub-specialties.

Fourth, engage students politically. Spark their imagination about politics. The beauty of comparative politics is that it gives students the analytic tools to unlock the dynamics of politics in their own backyards as well as the comparative scope to imagine politics differently. We sought to exploit this by focusing on big, real-world issues that were likely to engage the students and that had inspired our own passion for the profession.

Our organizing principle was to build the course around a set of themescast-asdebates rather than around a set of country studies. Despite our commitment to historically and empirically grounded political science, we felt that organizing the course in the conventional way – around snapshots of five countries with diverse regime types – would be less successful at engaging students in the explanatory enterprise of comparative politics. Our themes were chosen with an eye to hitting each of our four targets. That is, each theme aimed to introduce key concepts, practice students in the explanatory enterprise, boast a great book or two, and pass the "passion" test. We found that six themes were the maximum students could master over the course of one semester. This introduced an element of arbitrariness in our choice of topics. Clearly, we could not cover all the themes that comparativists might consider canonical.

The themes we settled on

changed over the years, in line with our evolving interests and changes in professorial staffing. (Steve Levitsky joined the course last year and added his own expertise and flair). The themes included the nature of the modern state, the historical evolution of citizenship, the dynamics of democracy and democratization, the causes and consequences of revolution, the political power of ethnicity, the cultural foundations of politics, the inter-relationship of economics and politics, and the importance of political institutions. Each theme was focused around a central question or debate, designed to be accessible to the students and to have real world significance. These questions included: why are some countries democratic and others authoritarian? Is it possible to introduce democracy and fundamental economic reforms at the same time? What constitutional choices are available for new democracies? What is the recipe for a successful revolution? When is ethnic cleavage likely to explode into civil war? Are there cultural preconditions for different regime types and what role does vibrant associational life play in this? Do institutions really matter in shaping political outcomes?

To "crack" these puzzles, students were exposed to different theoretical approaches, including classical Weberian, Marxist and pluralist traditions, alongside contemporary historical, institutionalist, cultural and leadership-centered explanations. They were then asked to apply and critically evaluate the utility of these different approaches by testing

them against empirical reality. For example, for the theme on revolution we had them study the cases of the Russian and Chinese revolution. For the theme on democratization we had them study the cases of South Africa and Sweden as well as Poland and Eastern Europe. And for the theme on civic culture and associational life we had them study the cases of Italy, the United States and Weinarm Germany. Choice of cases was governed by the intrinsic piquantness of the case as well as the availability of a "good read" on the topic. We expressly included the United States as a case in a number of our themes in order to engage the students, encourage them to draw upon their own experience, and to see comparative politics as having direct utility for understanding and reimagining their own political world.

In the end we were not religiously consistent about testing these four approaches in each of our themes. While we wanted the students to become conversant in these different approaches to comparative explanation, we found that some themes were better explored in different ways. For example, in weeks where the approach itself was the subject of debate (e.g. Do institutions matter? Does culture shape politics?), we limited ourselves to empirical comparisons to decide the issue. We sacrificed consistency for liveliness and most students did not seem to mind.

But one thing that was consistent about the course was the **centrality of debate** to each theme and the grounding of all analysis in empirical cases.

Having to take a stand on big issues galvanized the students. Forcing them to back up their analysis with empirical evidence practiced them in the skills of responsible argument.

By the end of the semester our students came away with a mastery of key comparative concepts, familiarity with hypothesis testing, a sense of some real world cases and a taste for the chase. In addition they had read some very good books including work by T.H. Marshall on citizenship, Theda Skocpol and Barrington Moore on revolution, Clifford Geertz and Nelson Kasfir on ethnicity, Robert Putnam on associational life and James Scott on the art of resistance, among others.

Most of our students in Comparative Politics 101 are not destined to be professional political scientists. Our responsibility to these future lawyers, journalists, teachers and activists, is to give them the tools to be engaged and critical consumers and creators of political life. We can enliven their imagination through comparison and teach them to think outside the box of their own experience by exposing them to widely divergent cases taken from across time and space. Given the diversity of the field there may never be a single template for our introductory course. But so long as our courses all provide students with a foundation in basic political concepts, practice them in the comparative method and share at least a few bibles, we will not talk at cross purposes but rather will accumulate knowledge and improve our understanding of our wonderfully diverse quarry.

## Solving Problems in Comparative Politics

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In seven semesters of teaching the intro course I've encountered quite a few problems, some of which could crop up for you also. I've tried out many solutions, too, and below I explain the ones that worked out best. As you'll see, I argue that assigning a good text helps in several ways. A caveat is that I wrote a country chapter for *Comparative Politics*, Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach, eds., published by Cambridge University Press. Thus, I have (a remarkably small) interest in persuading you to adopt this particular one. The last paragraph has details about this and the other resources I mention in this essay. At any rate, here are five common problems, along with five solutions that you can try.

No scholar understands that many countries in depth.

Whether you aim toward generalization or specificity in your own work, a course that covers just what you know best is a great advanced seminar, but not an introduction to comparative politics. Most of us start our teaching careers with a one-country dissertation. In my case I wrote about four countries, but two were Switzerland and Belgium. Adding the other two, France and Germany, would produce a course about European politics. If you conduct mainly large-N comparisons in your research,

then you undoubtedly concentrate on just a few themes.

Use a textbook that presents material outside your area of expertise.

When your course gets beyond what you've researched yourself, your lectures can focus on questions and themes that you would like the students to explore with the material they read on their own. Each of the country authors in our textbook (and in most other collaborative texts) publishes on the country she or he writes about. So when I teach, I rely upon the students' reading of the chapters for information that I would otherwise have to present without much value added.

Students don't know very much about contemporary politics.

You will be tempted to use examples from the news to illustrate your points. I recently used Al Qaeda's attacks on the United States for debates about religion and politics. But how much do students really know about this empirical example? How many articles in a leading newspaper or newsmagazine can you assume your students to have read from start to finish? Is it even reasonable to expect college students to read the newspaper at breakfast? In a dining hall? If you want to evaluate students based on their analyses of current politics, you are going to have to provide them with the empirical material yourself.

Assign *The Economist*.

The weekly *Economist* is concise and manageable for everyone concerned (including

the professor) and it provides a non-U.S. perspective on the news. Bulk student subscriptions involve a minimum of hassle and cost to each student (\$1.67/week). You have to use current news for this to be effective. I pick out one or two particularly relevant articles and announce these early in the week. In a later class or section the students discuss those articles in light of that week's other readings. One of the criteria by which their papers are graded is their ability to bring in some evidence from these and other articles.

One scholar cannot responsibly represent our field's intellectual diversity.

Several theoretical traditions animate research in comparative politics, but each of us receives some specific training. In my own case, I work as an historical institutionalist with neo-Weberian and rational choice influences. How can you teach the research based in theories for which you do not have the requisite training?

Explain to the students your intellectual biases.

This is harder than it sounds, because, at some point in the course, you are going to have to spell out a bit of intellectual history and lay out the various approaches that you draw from and contend with. For each approach, you will have to lay out the key ideas, the approach's strengths and weaknesses, the main bodies of confirming evidence and so on. You can explain why there is intellectual diversity, why it is interesting and what you think will happen in the field in the near future.

Imagine that at the end of your course your students can state the basics of the main approaches, identify one or two exemplars of those approaches and account for the biases of the professor who taught them all of this. That would be a very successful introduction to comparative politics.

A text with an identifiable perspective makes accounting for biases easier. Our text's perspective is this: a country's position in the global context strongly influences its political development. Then you can balance a text with selected readings from other perspectives, such as one that argues that economic development is the prime motor of political change. Of course, you and your students can also argue that certain perspectives fit together, or are complementary to each other. In sum, by building out from your own foundation, you can make an understanding of the various perspectives in the field an integral part of the course.

Students aren't interested in professional comparative politics.

Sad but true. And their interest in current events will only get them so far. Many of your students will be taking the intro class in order to satisfy a social science distribution requirement. In fact, your intro course is the most advanced course in comparative politics that many students ever take, in their entire lives! In short, your audience consists of many people who are not there to begin a career in comparative politics, no matter what you do.

Pose interesting questions right now.

Here is where you should "teach for the test," which is ok, because you write the tests! In the spring of 2002, my course had a week of readings that included the text's chapter on Iran and several journalistic sources for other countries in the region. An essay question on the midterm asked this

President George Bush's "State of the Union" identified Iran and Iraq as two countries in an "axis of evil." Your essay does not have to support or oppose the evaluation and the associated policy, but it does have to explain the administration's position and to consider possible counter-arguments. First, describe and explain the political regimes in Iran and Iraq. Second, describe and explain the political regimes in two key U.S. allies in the region (choose from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan). Third, spell out some lessons from the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban for the upcoming policies of the United States

The other option for students on this test was to compare patterns of authoritarianism and democracy in Germany and Japan. Three-quarters of the class chose the former question.

Put a hot issue early in the semester. As part of your effort to cultivate their interests, you might have to rearrange the topics in your syllabus. This has been a hard lesson for me, because I used to go chronologically and thematically through the material. But this year I taught Iran in the third week. Then, when I got to a topic from my own research (the interaction of religious and political institutions in Germany), an otherwise esoteric

topic seemed relevant to the students. Two years ago the European Union was hot news and so I put the week on this topic right up front; it led us to the question how states formed in the first place (another topic that I like to cover). I don't advocate switching things around once the course starts because that annoys students. Make your best prediction in the few weeks before the semester which of your topics will be "top of the brain," and put that issue somewhere early on.

Scholarly materials are boring.

Anything outside a textbook or magazine was written for a very different audience from your students. You've already realized that most of them are not political scientists, much less comparativists. It is not surprising that the students are not naturally going to enjoy the best and most sophisticated readings in our field. But if the students don't enjoy the readings at least somewhat, how hard will they work on them?

Assign your favorite works.

It doesn't matter how complicated or sophisticated or (in most cases) how technical they are. If you think the readings are great, and you really know them, then you will be excited when you teach them and that excitement will get the students going, too. You will be as confident as you are about anything when you explain these particular readings, because these are the ones you know well in the first place. You can answer virtually any question about them, explain them in multiple

(Continued on page 31.)

# Book Review

## **Containing Nationalism**

By Michael Hechter

New York: Oxford UP, 2000

### **Seth K. Jolly**

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A Cause for Optimism? Federalism and Implications for Ameliorating Nationalist Conflict

From the Basque and Catalan regions of Spain to the Palestinian territories in Israel, to the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, conflicts rage over national self-determination. In *Containing Nationalism*, Michael Hechter focuses on indirect rule as a mechanism to alleviate such nationalist tension. Though his model has definite policy implications for all governments dealing with nationalist movements, politicians and scholars should be cautious as further systematic testing is needed to justify the conclusions.

Hechter addresses three main questions in his study on nationalism. First, why is nationalism a phenomenon of the modern era? Second, what causes the variance in nationalist tension between and within countries? Finally, are there mechanisms to ameliorate nationalist tension (3-4)?

Though many scholars debate why nationalism emerged only during the last two centuries, Hechter contends the reason is simple: the empires of previous centuries "did not provide a strong motive for the development of nationalism.

Missing was the demand for national self-determination" (25). Of course, as with any argument about nationalism, much depends on definitions. Hechter defines nationalism quite specifically: "collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit" (7). Note the use of the term 'governance unit' rather than state. The boundaries of the state do not necessarily matter as long as a nation controls its own governance unit (26). This distinction plays an important role in the development of the causal analysis.

Using this definition, it is not state-level sovereignty that matters. Rather, to borrow Arend Lijphart's language, it is segmental autonomy. As long as the agrarian empires such as the Ottoman or the Roman allowed indirect rule, nations had no need to pursue self-determination. Thus, the advent of direct rule introduced nationalism to the world (29). Direct rule for empires became a feasible option only in the last few centuries with innovations in fields such as transportation, communication, military technology and international trade (59). Therefore, we see the hypothesized causal sequence: given certain other necessary conditions, the introduction of direct rule leads to nationalism.

Unfortunately, though this hypothesis seems falsifiable, the reader is given neither in-depth case studies nor

systematic quantitative analysis to ascertain its accuracy. Instead, there is a brief and simple look at the Ottoman Empire. The author discusses the advent of nationalist movements and contends that 'peripheral nationalism' follows sequentially from the introduction of direct rule by the central ruler. He argues, "the sequence of peripheral nationalism in the Ottoman Empire follows the timing of the imposition of direct rule. Direct rule was first imposed in the western provinces and last in the eastern ones. Wherever there was sufficient cultural homogeneity to foster territorial solidarity, peripheral nationalism followed suit" (76). While the argument seems plausible, there is not enough evidence to convince the reader. It is not clear whether other factors in the western provinces led to a greater probability of nationalist tension. What if contagion played a role? More critical to Hechter's argument, what if the causal arrow runs not from direct rule to nationalism but from nationalism to direct rule? In other words, it seems plausible that an empire that noticed a nascent nationalist movement would be more likely to impose direct rule to try to stifle it. Time series statistical analysis or more detailed qualitative case studies (e.g., the British Empire and the French Empire) might help to support or falsify Hechter's theory vis-à-vis alternative hypotheses.

The second main question

raised by Containing Nationalism concerns the variance in nationalism between and within countries. As Hechter notes, if self-determination is a 'universal good,' why is it not universally pursued by all nations (116)? Quite simply, collective goods are the answer. Some groups do not pursue nationalist goals because they would be worse off in an independent state. According to this argument, "demands for sovereignty is a function of its net benefits" (122-3).

Similarly, Alesina and Spolaore Quarterly Journal of Economics 1997, 112, 4) consider the trade-off between the economies of scale and the "costs of heterogeneity" of large multinational states. The benefits of larger countries include cheaper per capita public goods, larger internal markets, less exposure to economic shocks and security (Alesina and Spolaore pp.1028). Alesina and Spolaore conclude that these advantages may be decreasing in regions experiencing economic integration (i.e. Europe), suggesting that nationalism should be highly correlated with economic integration (1042). Thus, expanding Hechter's argument, demands for sovereignty will increase when the benefits of autonomy exceed the benefits associated with larger state size.

The same logic holds for intra-national variance in demands for sovereignty. Those citizens whose livelihood is most dependent on the central state, rather than the region, should be less likely to support the nationalist cause (122-123).

Both the Basque and Quebec cases support this idea, in that capitalists dependent on intra-state trade are less supportive of the nationalist movements. Further, within Spain, it explains why the nationalist movement is more violent in the Basque region while the Catalan movement receives more widespread support (204-205).

While the logic put forth by Hechter is compelling, the empirical evidence he presents is distinctly limited. Certain observable implications of the causal mechanism are both falsifiable and seemingly easily testable. In particular, survey data in Europe and North America should provide data to test the implication that groups most economically dependent on the state are less supportive of nationalism. In the Catalan region in Spain, a time series analysis should show that capitalists rejected nationalist ideas when their economy was dependent on the state but supported the movement when their economy diversified. In short, while the theory is plausible, further testing would strengthen the argument.

Finally, Hechter addresses the policy question: "What might contain the dark side of nationalism?" While he acknowledges there are several ways to alleviate tension, he focuses on reducing the demands for self-determination and raising the cost of collective action (18). Both, he argues, can be accomplished through indirect rule (28). As defined above, nationalism arises when there is a disconnect between the nation and its governance unit. If a state institutes

federalism or indirect rule, then a nation has no reason to demand autonomy (36).

Using Ted Gurr's Minorities at Risk data, Hechter considers the correlations between federalism and nationalist tension to test his theory. As one might expect from the logic, the data suggest that there is in fact a positive correlation between centralization and rebellion (148). However, since this analysis is simply a bivariate correlation, it is merely suggestive of a causal link. A useful extension of this argument would be to test systematically the argument in a pooled cross-sectional time series analysis, including significant control variables such as historical conflict, socioeconomic variables, external threat, etc. Alternatively, more detailed qualitative case studies could flesh out certain cases to reveal better the causal sequence and other potentially significant variables. Without either of these types of analysis, the reader cannot assume the validity of the causal argument.

Hechter is certainly not the first to propose federalism or indirect rule as a solution to nationalist conflict. Among others, Arend Lijphart (1977) and Donald Horowitz (1985) include federalism as a potentially valuable tool in dealing with ethnic conflict in their respective models. Nonetheless, because of its extended analysis of issues of decentralization and regional autonomy, Containing Nationalism is a valuable addition to the literature on moderating nationalist tension.

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## Conference Announcement

### 2003 World Congress of the International Political Science Association

The 2003 IPSA World Congress will be held in Durban, South Africa, from June 29 to July 4, 2003.

Full details on how to participate in the conference are available on the IPSA web site:

[www.ipsa.ca](http://www.ipsa.ca). A summary of the "Theme" for the congress follows.

Please plan to join us in Durban for IPSA's first congress on the African continent.

Conveners: Paula D. McClain, Duke University (USA), James L. Gibson, Washington University in St. Louis (USA).

#### DEMOCRACY, TOLERANCE, JUSTICE: CHALLENGES FOR POLITICAL CHANGE

As the dust was settling over the ruins of the Berlin Wall, people everywhere, in all walks of life and of all ideologies, shared a moment of wild optimism toward the prospects of a more just and democratic world. In little more than a decade, it has become apparent that democracy may not be all it is reputed to be and, to some, justice seems to recede even as it is pursued. Democratic transitions are not easily consolidated, and past legacies of injustice continue to stand in the way of the best efforts to achieve a future as conducive to justice as to democracy. The theme of the 2003 World Congress asks how peoples can acknowledge, confront the past, or, in some instances, put aside the past in order to enjoy a future in which justice, tolerance, and democracy can flourish.

In many parts of the world, the consolidation of democratic changes has required addressing the past, in one form or another. This has meant holding former leaders accountable for their actions, prosecuting war crimes committed by both governments and individual citizens, managing the group conflict that many believe has been unleashed by democratization, redistributing land and paying reparations for past injustices. The process of nation-building is also frequently arrested by the political mobilization of ancient hatreds and collective memory of past calamities. Even stable democracies are facing stronger political and social demands that are predicated on a more robust sense of justice, especially from indigenous peoples and cultural minorities previously subjected to repression. Indeed, the very process of democratization may have contributed to unleashing such demands, as democracy has tended to give voice to previously disenfranchised groups, while at the same time legitimizing popular demands for justice. A specter is haunting the post-Cold War world – the specter of history.

In many countries throughout the world, this process of redressing the past is described as one of reconciliation. Though it has many meanings, the "minimalist" definition of reconciliation involves tolerance; a "maximalist" definition requires some sort of forgiveness as well. Yet, achieving some form of justice is surely necessary before one can move to the stage of forgiveness. Moreover, in many instances, the ultimate goal is justice – even retributive justice – that sometimes makes any prospect for reconciliation precarious. How political systems accommodate demands for justice and reconciliation without sacrificing tolerance and democracy itself is an important challenge for both established and developing democracies.

A wide variety of scholarship fits within this broad umbrella, ranging from micro-level inquiries into whether truth actually contributes to reconciliation to macro-level and historical analyses of intergroup and inter-state relations. Studies of individuals, of groups, of institutions, of politics and of cultures are welcome, and methodological eclecticism is encouraged, not just tolerated. The twenty-first century offers many challenges to established and emerging democracies, and the work of political scientists is central to identifying problems and providing guidance for resolution.

The sub-themes under this thematic rubric are:

1. Reconstructing the Past: The Politics of Remembrance
2. Political Tolerance
3. Globalization: Then and Now
4. Justice: Contextual, Universal, and Individual
5. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: Concepts, Structure, Institutions, and Attitudes
6. New Democracies: Colonial Past and Cultural Values
7. Cosmopolitanism, Patriotism, and Citizenship
8. Politics of Property, Territory, and the Environment
9. Making and Implementing Public Policy
10. Terrorism, Conflict, and Human Rights
11. Parliaments, Parties, and Elections
12. Courts and the Justice System

## APSA Announces Short Course

### Strategies for Research in Comparative and International Politics

sponsored by the Committee on Concepts and Methods and Section on International History and Politics

Time: Wednesday, August 28, 2002 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Info contact: Colin Elman, [elman@manix1.asu.edu](mailto:elman@manix1.asu.edu) <http://www.apsanet.org/mtg/sc16.cfm>

For scholars of comparative and international politics, field work is often an essential component of research. However, the task of gathering data in foreign countries frequently presents a host of very practical problems and concerns. Developing a well-planned research design is hard enough in its own right, and in practice, it may be difficult to implement. Key contacts may be unhelpful or unwilling to be interviewed, valuable collections may be so disorganized as to be unusable, and both time and money may run out before the necessary information has been collected.

This short course will focus on problems of conducting field research overseas, seeking to identify strategies for anticipating and addressing such problems. Among the issues we will consider are: how to use new technologies (e-mail, web, cell phones) to increase productivity in the field, how to organize and manage vast quantities of information, how to gain access to key contacts, how to interact with scholars in the host country, how to manage time effectively, and how to cope with uncomfortable situations.

Participants will be provided with document templates that may be useful for carrying out field research, including sample correspondence. The course will be valuable for first-time field researchers, for scholars who would like to consider how to improve field techniques and for those who teach classes in research methods.

### Washington University Summer Institute on the Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models

A Program for Advanced Graduate Students and Junior Faculty  
on the Methodological Challenges Posed by Theoretical Models

<http://w.c.wustledu/eitm.htm>

Washington University in St. Louis will hold its first summer institute on the Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) in June 2003. The institute focuses on the methodological challenges posed by theoretical models. The institute is designed for advanced graduate students and junior faculty. Summer institutes will be held in June of 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Participants will join four one-week seminars—a basic seminar and three advanced seminars. The Summer Institute program includes:

- a theoretical and methodological foundations seminar;
- seminars on the application of game theory, spatial models, quantal response models, and behavioral models;
- applied seminars on coalition theories, theories of judicial decision making, and theories of legislative politics;
- seminars on quantitative, experimental, and field methods.

The seminars are conducted by nationally recognized faculty who are drawn from universities throughout the country. Up to 25 advanced graduate students and junior faculty will be provided with travel and lodging subsidies each summer.

Application materials will be available online in the near future. The application deadline for the June 2003 summer institute will be in January 2003. More information about the Washington University EITM Summer Institutes will be available at:

<http://w.c.wustledu/eitm.htm>

To be added to the email list for notices about the program, email [eitm@w.c.wustledu](mailto:eitm@w.c.wustledu). The summer institutes are sponsored by Washington University's Weldenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy and the Department of Political Science; they are funded by the National Science Foundation.

(Continued from page 2)

Nobody was pressed to pass judgment on the relative merits of the three forms of generating knowledge, and nobody attempted to exalt one at the expense of the others. There was also strong support for the argument that a combination of approaches is particularly fruitful. If this symposium and roundtable indeed reflect an emerging consensus that different theoretical perspectives are desirable and all three methodological approaches to knowledge generation are equally valuable, then we can extract some guidelines for graduate education.

First, departments need to offer courses that provide a solid grounding in the major theoretical and methodological approaches. This seems to be self-evident, but methodology courses other than statistics and the mechanics of survey research have only become widely taught in the past decade. In terms of inter-institutional cooperation, the ICPSR Michigan summer courses have a venerable tradition of educating graduate students in statistical techniques. The Consortium for Qualitative Research Methods (CQRM), which held its first annual methodology institute this past January at Arizona State University, is much newer but is making an important contribution to raising the sophistication of graduate training in qualitative methods to the same level.<sup>2</sup>

Second, both comparative historical and quantitative work requires field research and mastery of a foreign language, in order to train individual

researchers as well as to generate high quality data available to the scholarly community. Making this argument for quantitative work may seem counterintuitive.<sup>3</sup> However, I would insist that the best data analysts in comparative politics know their cases – and their data. Knowledge of their cases allows them to form appropriate concepts and to develop valid and reliable measures for their concepts. Now, nobody could do field work even in all the 18 or so countries that are usually included in quantitative analyses of advanced industrial democracies, not to speak of all the countries included in analyses of developing countries. Still, immersion in at least one society other than one's own has a powerful sensitizing effect with regard to problems of concept formation and measurement validity. This effect carries over to the treatment of other cases and data.

The concern with appropriate concepts and valid measures for comparative research is as old as the field, articulated in the 1970s by, among others, Przeworski and Teune. Though we are making progress in the form of greater attention paid to these issues, in forums such as the newly formed Committee on Concepts and Methods of the International Political Science Association and the American Political Science Association,<sup>4</sup> we are also in danger of slipping backwards. Indeed, one might argue that the greater availability of data sets over the internet has increased the temptation for researchers to impose concepts and measurements on new cases without carefully checking their

validity. Add to this the exclusive emphasis on the value of "theory" and the disdain for the "research assistant's work" of collecting data professed by some prominent members of the discipline, and you have a powerful incentive for graduate students to grab a canned data set and use the measures they find as indicators for concepts they are interested in, rather than developing their own, more valid measures and engaging in the painstaking work of collecting data for their own measures.

When you talk to colleagues – or for that matter advise graduate students – it becomes obvious how much we are still in need of good data for so many essential phenomena we want to study in comparative politics. Let me just pick a few examples to make the point. In the study of comparative political economy, the roles of business associations and labor unions are crucial, as are questions of concentration of economic power. For roughly 18-20 OECD countries there are reasonably good data available, but as soon as we go beyond, we are faced with a wasteland. Ever since working on my first book in the 1970s I have wanted solid comparable data on unionization in Latin America, and such data are still not available. Of course, there are data out there, but James McGuire compiled data from different sources for the eight largest Latin American countries for the mid-eighties, and they vary so widely as to make any use of them in statistical analysis exceedingly problematic.<sup>5</sup> Colleagues who study Africa or Asia would have much the same story to tell.

Or, let's take the study of democracy. One of the key explanatory factors in most theoretical accounts of survival and quality of democracy is the strength of civil society. Yet, we hardly have any comparable measures of this strength, for a large number of countries and time points. There are some data from the World Values Surveys on group membership, but only for the countries and time points in which the surveys were administered. In the case of Latin America, only four countries are included. Moreover, these data do not tell us anything about the organizational strength and political autonomy of these various groups. Then there is the Eurobarometer as an additional source of information, but as the name indicates - the data are restricted to Europe. There is a Latinobarómetro, but essentially those data are private property and cannot be freely accessed by the scholarly community.

We face the same problem in the study of gender. We would want to know, for instance, how women's political mobilization affects public policy. Yet, we don't have systematic, reliable data on strength of women's movements, or women's membership in political parties. Again, the World Values Surveys include a question on membership in women's groups, which is a great start but far from where we need to be, particularly if we want to go beyond the OECD countries.

Or how about studying judicial reform, a burning issue in Third Wave democracies? We have no solid comparable

data on judicial recruitment, tenure, remunerations, duties and prerogatives, case loads, etc. Or how about studying multilevel governance, a key theme in studies of the European Union? We simply have no systematic and comparable data on the extent of authority by policy area and level of government. And the list goes on...

The point is that a serious effort invested by dissertation students in data collection for their research can have enormous payoffs for the discipline as a whole, and we should steer our students towards that effort. Of course, we cannot expect any one student to, say, put together a data series on the strength of women's movements in Latin America since the 1960s, or comparable data for even just one point in time on judicial systems in sub-Saharan Africa. However, if they manage to do that for just one or two countries, and at five or ten year intervals, that would be a major contribution to knowledge accumulation, on which other scholars could build.

There is a problem here that we need to be aware of. Many students (and advisors) make a basic decision whether a dissertation is going to use qualitative or quantitative analysis. If they decide that the data are simply not there and they themselves cannot possibly collect the data necessary to warrant the use of statistical analysis, they tend to neglect collection of quantifiable data altogether. For the dissertation in question, it may not make a great difference whether an

increase in the strength of unions or women's movements is documented with expert judgments or with number of members and affiliation to unions or women's movements with different political orientations at the beginning and the end of the period under investigation, but for the usefulness of the dissertation to the field as a whole it does. This means that advisors should insist that their students be as precise and thorough as possible in supporting their assessments with quantifiable data, even for qualitative analyses of a single case.

By emphasizing the merits of data collection, I obviously do not wish to downplay the importance of theoretical explanation. Quite to the contrary; appropriate concepts and valid measurements have to come out of good theory, but we need good data to test these theories. Nor do I want to downplay the importance of the theoretically informed case study that uses process tracing to demonstrate cause and effect. Theoretically and empirically well grounded case studies constitute excellent sources of data on their own, for scholars who have to rely on secondary sources for more sweeping comparative analyses.

Given the state of the field of comparative politics with regards to the data available to test our theories about some of its core questions, such as survival and quality of democracy, performance of different models of political economy, women's mobilization and its consequences, quality of judicial systems and functioning

of multilevel governance, it is advisable, then, to in part to our graduate students the commitment to field research and to train them adequately for the task.<sup>6</sup> There are many pressures on us and on our students to eschew this responsibility. Particularly at public universities, support for graduate students tends to be limited to four years and tied to service obligations, and support for off-campus research is highly restricted. External funding for dissertation field research abroad is often difficult to come by. According to a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, private foundations—for a long time a crucial source of support for dissertation research—are turning away from higher education, which suggests that funding for dissertation field research will get even scarcer. Nevertheless, it is often possible to stitch together small grants from different sources to make field work possible. The profession as a whole, as well as individual advisors, need to send unambiguous signals that the prize is worth the effort.<sup>7</sup> The prize is nothing less than progress in the collective effort to accumulate knowledge about

comparative politics.

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, given that the original attack on "area studies" used changes at the Social Science Research Council to bolster its case, it is worth commenting briefly on my experience at the SSRC. I had the privilege of serving on the old Joint Committee on Latin America of the SSRC and the ACLS, and immediately thereafter on the new Regional Advisory Panel for Latin America. Paul Drake as chair of the committee and Eric Hershberg as program director guided us through the transformation, and under their dynamic leadership the committee/panel continued the same kind of interdisciplinary, comparative, theoretically informed work that it had done for many years before. The committee always evaluated projects from the point of view of their theoretical importance and methodological soundness, and it had and continues to have an international composition, with half of its members coming from outside the United States, mostly from Latin America, but also from Europe. Arguably, there were other committees who had a more U.S.-based composition and allegedly a more parochial orientation, but that had nothing to do with the intellectual foundations of "area studies" at the SSRC, simply with the personnel of these committees.

<sup>2</sup> More information on CQRM's website at [www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm](http://www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm).

<sup>3</sup> There is a debate about the importance of empirical testing of formal models. Some scholars insist that those who develop formal models do not necessarily have the responsibility to subject those models to empirical tests.

If tests are considered necessary, then there can be a division of labor. I very strongly disagree with this position. Modeling unconstrained by data can be extremely misleading, and the empirical checks have to come during the model's development to ensure a contribution from the model to knowledge accumulation. Thus, I would suggest that the argument about the importance of field research applies to those who build formal models also.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see their website at [www.conceptsmethods.org](http://www.conceptsmethods.org).

<sup>5</sup> Those data were published in James W. McGuire, *Peronism Without Perón: Unions, Parties, and Democracy in Argentina*, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 268. A discussion of newer figures on unionization in Latin America and Asia can be found in his article in *Studies in Comparative International Development* 33, No. 4 (Winter 1999).

<sup>6</sup> The APSA is doing its part by sponsoring a short course on *Strategies for Field Research in Comparative and International Politics* (SC 16) at this year's APSA Meeting.

<sup>7</sup> The Comparative Politics Section has sent an unambiguous signal regarding the importance of high quality data sets by establishing an annual award for the best data set. Given the great amount of work that goes into the collection of such data sets, the awards have gone to established scholars or teams of scholars. We need to expand the reach of this signal to graduate students and their advisors and communicate that more modest data collection efforts are highly valuable also. ❖

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consolidating democracies, or, as Huntington long ago argued, corrupt practices provide the grease that turns inefficient wheels and thus helps to bind rulers and the ruled. A comparative study of four Latin American nations has demonstrated the negative effect of corruption by showing how it systematically erodes political legitimacy (Seligson 2002). Moreover, the direction of causality is less open to doubt than in other areas, since public officials seeking a bribe could not reasonably know a victim's feelings about legitimacy in advance. Thus, if those who have been victimized exhibit greater political alienation, we can be reasonably confident in assuming that corruption is the cause. One challenge to this argument is the problem of systematic over- or under-reporting. For example, respondents who support the incumbent political party might be less willing to report corrupt practices than those who support the opposition. In other words, some might have an incentive to criticize incumbents and to claim to have been victimized to impugn those in power. However, when we studied this potential bias in a country like Nicaragua, where the population is deeply divided between Sandinistas and anti-Sandinistas, we found that even controlled for party identification, the relationship held.

The rapid expansion of surveys throughout the developing world opens numerous opportunities to measure corruption levels, the characteristics of its victims and

its effects on important political values and behavior. In addition to the University of Pittsburgh's work in Latin America, the Central European University Press has published a detailed monograph on four countries of Eastern Europe (Miller, et al. 2001). The next step should be to combine these regional databases from emerging democracies (de la Porta 2000) with work already well under way in the advanced industrial countries so that we might be better able to determine if it is indeed the case that corruption is far higher in some regions than in others.

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(Continued from page 22)

ways and draw all sorts of inferences and illustrations about the news today. Students like their professors to care about their (own) work; they will get energized by you.

I know which articles my students like because I ask them. Yet if you look over my syllabus, I doubt you could guess the top three readings. These are repeat winners from one semester to the next. They are great contributions to scholarship in objective terms (I think), but my students liked them (I think) because I enjoyed explaining them and because I frequently used the ideas from these readings when we were discussing empirical material. This is also why you should assign something from your own articles or books, even in an intro class.

A general way to solve problems in teaching this course is by now somewhat obvious: as problems arise, don't sweep them under the rug. Instead, think about them, talk to your students and colleagues about them and work your way toward resolving them as best you can. I've developed five solutions here that are worth using again. Use a text to cover material outside your own research. Assign top-notch, up-to-date journalism so you can engage your students' interest and teach your students how to think seriously about politics. You have an intellectual profile, so explain it to your students. Motivate their study of tough material by posing challenging questions about what is happening in the world today. Give the students your favorite

readings, no matter what. In the end, I think you'll find that you are providing an outstanding introduction to comparative politics.

**Resources:** Learn more about the text, *Comparative Politics*, Kopstein and Lichbach, eds., at [www.cup.org](http://www.cup.org). The hardback page allows you to preview the full Table of Contents and Chapter One in PDF format. You can order a free examination copy; the paperback costs \$35 for students. Place a class subscription order to The Economist by sending a FAX to Yajaira Delgado, (212) 541-9378. Include your mailing address (where you'll get a bulk delivery on Monday or Tuesday of each week), the number of students, the first and last weeks you want to receive the subscriptions and the number of complimentary copies for you and/or your TAs. To see my introductory syllabus, assignments and grading criteria, go to [www.nd.edu/~alfac/gould](http://www.nd.edu/~alfac/gould) and click on the link to the teaching page. ❖

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