

Intro to Comparative Politics

Politics is all around us. In its basic definition, politics is the struggle in any group for power that will give one or more persons the ability to make decisions for the larger group. Politics affect small organizations, such as Boy Scout troops, work place offices in corporations, local communities, states, countries, and even to some degree the entire global population. Politics is about power. Who has the power to make decisions? How did they get that power? What challenges do leaders face from others – both inside and outside the country's borders- in keeping the power? Comparative Politics examines political realities in countries all over the world. It looks at the many ways governments operate and the ways people behave in political life, to include how power is gained, managed, challenged, and maintained.

Essential Questions:

- How do we effectively compare political systems throughout the world?
- How do we distinguish between normative and empirical works of political research?
- What are the trends and shifts in comparative politics?

Module Minute

Have you ever considered why some countries are successful in the modern world, while others remain locked in poverty? Why are some countries democratic and others not? How are the political institutions of a country structured? Different countries answer these questions in different ways, but they all answer them in one way or another. These are the types of questions political scientists seek to answer by looking at several cases that explore patterns, processes and regularities among political systems. In Comparative Politics, a subfield of Political Science, the comparativist uses the comparative method as a way to make comparisons across cases and draw conclusions. By comparing two or more countries, we seek to make some generalizations about politics that could be valid in other cases.

Questions to consider:

1. What is politics?
2. Why do we study politics comparatively?
3. What is the comparative method?
4. How does the study of comparative politics change?

Normative or Empirical Study

As we learned in the introduction, when researching case studies in comparative politics, researchers generally use one of two approaches, either empirical or normative . Identifying the comparative method used can be tricky, mainly because it is subjective. Generally, the author will state in their thesis the argument they are proving based on the data they have collected; therefore, you can determine the approach of scholarly study by reading the thesis statement.

Question to consider: *How do we distinguish between normative and empirical works of political study assignment?*

Qualitative and Quantitative

The political scientist compiles data from countries to compare cases and draw conclusions. Data collection methods are either, [quantitative](#) or [qualitative](#) . When using quantitative data, we explore relationships using numeric data. When using qualitative data, the researcher uses textual data and is steeped in the knowledge and understanding of the subject, through in depth study. For more information about quantified and qualified data, check out the websites in the More Resources Sidebar.

Questions to consider: *How do we distinguish between Qualitative and Quantitative?*

Our Changing World: Trends and Shifts in Comparative Politics

Comparative politics can be traced back 2000 years to Aristotle, the first to study political systems, and Machiavelli the first who compared political systems. As our world changes so does our view of what is important to study politically.

Question to consider: *How does our changing world, change how we look at political systems?*

Have the events of September 11th established a new world political order? In 1993, after the fall of communism, Samuel Huntington wrote a thesis that asserted people's cultural, and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in a post-Cold War world. Huntington's thesis was reexamined after September 11th, when it was widely believed that the enemy of the U.S. was not a single country, but a religious ideology.

"The World is Flat 3.0" Question for Thought

Is the world indeed, flat? In the video "The World is Flat 3.0" Thomas Friedman proclaims that 21st century technology has dramatically changed economic factors, such as outsourcing, off shoring, and supply chaining (thinking about Walmart) worldwide and brought what was once thought of as remote countries (and their rising middle classes), into our back yards. You may want to read what the critics have written about Friedman's idea of the "world is flat". Has globalization 'flattened the globe?'

The Concept of Country

When we think about what we are studying, a few terms come to mind. Are we studying nations? Nation has come to mean people with a sense of identity and often the same culture, language or religion. Are we studying states? States, in terms of the fifty U.S. states, lack true authority in a federal system where the Constitution prevails. In this course we will use country which originally meant a rural area where people shared the same dialect and traditions. Today the term is broadened in meaning and is used synonymously with nation or state.

Essential Questions:

- How do we define "country"?
- What are the six core countries studied in AP Comparative Government?
- What five main factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing countries with widely varying political systems and values?
- What are the pros and cons of nationalism?
- What is the significance of ideology?

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This course looks at six countries, Great Britain, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran. As the course progresses, the framework will be established for each of these countries in the context of their geography, history, culture, population, and governmental systems. One way to study a country's political system is to ask what its people fight about. All countries quarrel over something, whether it is healthcare or civil wars or about who should rule the country. For each country the focus will be on a subject area, starting with underlying causes of current quarrels by focusing on impact of the past, key institutions, and political culture. Moving from underlying factors to current politics moves to the next two areas which are patterns of interaction and what people quarrel about.

Questions to consider:

1. How do we define "country"?
2. What are the six countries we will study in AP Comparative Politics?
3. What is the best way to study the six core countries?

We will learn to differentiate between nation, state and country. We will identify the six core countries studied in this course and their distinguishing characteristics, to include history, institutions, political culture, patterns of interaction and quarrels. We will also look at the rise of nationalism in the 20th century and define and explain ideology and its significance.

The Rise of Nationalism

The modern state is relatively new. It is a replacement of the old European feudal monarchies, under which powers were balanced between monarchs and nobles. There is no one event that developed the modern state, rather a series of events that steered this new concept. After the Thirty Years war, 'new monarchies' emerged who were absolutist, controlling and increasing their power through economic, administrative and military tools. This new sovereignty was celebrated, as it gave rise to the idea of

nationality or belonging to a nation, rather than rule under one monarch. By the nineteenth century modern nationalism was brought forth by the French Revolution when the French people came together to fight the enemies of the Revolution and of the *fatherland*. New ideas of nationalism were aroused as Napoleon marched his armies through Germany, Spain, Italy and Poland. The conquered peoples of became united in their hatred of the invaders, but also saw the power and strength of national feeling.

Questions to consider:

What is Nationalism?

What are the pros and cons of nationalism?

Nationalism Video Question for Thought

You will view two videos that will enable you to develop a definition of nationalism. The first video, "*World War I and Its Aftermath*", looks at the rise of nationalism at the onset of World War I. The second video, "*From the Barrel of a Gun*", discusses nationalism and the rise of communism in Asia. Once you have a definition, you should consider the pros and cons of nationalistic behavior. Write a half-page paragraph that defines nationalism and lists at least three pros and three cons to having this kind of extreme loyalty to a country. Be sure to give specific examples.

Ideology

When we look at the political culture of a country, much of what we consider as culture is evident in people's attitudes. One could argue that people's attitudes determine the government, but in some cases the government controls people's attitudes. For example, in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, United States citizens became cynical about their government. However, a decade later, those same citizens displayed patriotic fervor, when then President Ronald Regan talked tough and stood up to the United States' nemesis the Soviet Union. An underlying component to political culture is legitimacy. Legitimacy is the government's earned respect of its citizens. Regimes that are corrupt and unstable never win the peoples' respect, and are therefore considered to have low legitimacy. Those that endure and govern well have high legitimacy. Regimes within governments attempt to make their legitimacy stronger, by influencing symbols. One symbol that is easily manipulated is ideology. Political ideology is a belief system to improve society. One way to influence symbols is through propaganda. Two of our core counties used propaganda to sway the masses in their perception of government.

Questions to consider:

How significant is propaganda to a country's ideologies?

Citizens, Society, and the State

Government and politics are only part of the many features of a complex society. Religion, ethnic groups, race, and social and economic classes all interact with the political system and have a tremendous impact on policymaking. In this unit we will look at the factors that make up these divisions, such as social cleavages; attitudes and beliefs of citizens, to include political efficacy; political socialization; transparency; and types of political participation, including voting behavior. Finally, we will

look at the aim to bring about or resist fundamental change in an existing group or society through social movements.

Essential Questions:

- How are a country's political patterns influenced by the interactions between state and society?

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The study of Citizens, Society and State, in Comparative Politics, looks at the variety of ways a government is linked to its citizens. Ultimately, politics hinges on interactions between state and society, so by categorizing government-citizen relationships we can successfully compare and contrast how the two relate to each other and establish a level of political efficacy for the country. We do this by asking a series of questions, such as, "What mix of social classes, ethnic and racial groups, religions, and languages does a country have?", "Do citizens trust their government?", "Do electronic and print media shape the citizens' learning?", and "Do citizens in the country participate in regular elections?" In addition, social movements that aim to bring about or resist change in an existing society are also studied.

Social Cleavages, Social Movements, and Political Violence

Most societies are split along one or more lines. Often these splits or cleavages become the society's fault lines along which political views form. Some of the more politically relevant social cleavages include: social class, ethnic, religious, regional, and coinciding or cross-cutting. When studying countries, one should look at the mix of social classes, ethnic and racial groups, religions, and languages a country has. The depth of the cleavage and the degree to which they separate people from one another, or form social boundaries, should be considered. It is also important to consider how these cleavages are expressed in the political system, whether political elites come from one group or another, or if one group blocks other groups from participating in government. Social movements refer to organized collective activities that aim to bring about or resist fundamental change in an existing group or society. Members of social movements often step outside traditional channels for bringing about social change. The success of social movements varies from case to case, but even if they fail, they often influence political opinion. Political violence is a response to existing institutions; it is difficult to pin down exactly how it emerges, what motivates it, and how states should respond.

Social Cleavages

Motivations for Political Violence		
Explanation	Reasoning	Example

Institutional	Existing institutions may encourage violence or constrain human action, create a violent backlash	Presidentialism reduces power sharing and compromise and increases political polarization.
Ideational (having to do with ideas)	Ideas may justify or promote the use of violence	Some forms of religious fundamentalism; nationalism
Individual	Psychological or strategic factors may lead people to carry out violence.	Humiliation as a motivating force; a sense that one's own beliefs are denigrated by society.

Regime Type and Terrorism		
Regime Type	Risk of Terrorism	Result
Authoritarian	Low	The state can repress domestic terrorism
Democratic	Moderate	Civil liberties are likely to undercut public support for terrorism
Illiberal/Transitional	High	Weak state capacity, instability, and limited democratic institutions may generate opportunities and motivations for terrorism.

Social Cleavages Questions for Thought

- What cleavages can be identified in your chosen country?
- Would you classify these groups by social, ethnic, religious, regional or coinciding cleavages?
- Are these groups prone to violence? Why or why not?
- Give examples of the political violence that has been displayed by these groups and how the government responded.

Citizen/State Relationships

Governments connect to their citizens in a variety of ways. By categorizing government/citizen relationships, we are able to compare between countries and note similarities and differences. For example, citizens in democracies generally relate differently than do citizens governed by authoritarian rulers. The categories we use are listed in the chart below:

Category	Questions that determine relationship
Attitudes and Beliefs	Do citizens trust their government? What is the level of political efficacy among citizens?
Political Socialization	How do citizens learn about politics in their country?
Types of political participation	How active are citizens in the political process?
Voting Behavior	Do citizens in the country participate in regular elections?
Factors that influence political beliefs and behaviors	What cleavages are in the country? Do they make a difference in citizens' political beliefs and behaviors?

Level of transparency	Is the government open? Does it operate by keeping citizens informed about its operations, political issues and by responding to questions and advice?
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Transparency/Media Role Questions for Thought

Questions: To what degree is your chosen country's government transparent to its citizens? What role do the electronic or print media play in the transparency of your chosen country?

Civil Society

Civil society refers to voluntary organizations outside of the state that help people define and advance their own interests. Civil societies are usually strong in liberal democracies where individual freedoms are valued. Groups in civil society may be unpolitical, but they are important to the idea of freedom because they allow people to articulate and promote what is important to them. By their very nature, authoritarian states do not encourage civil society, and the state often feels its power is threatened by it, though some organizations, such as the Russian Orthodox Church do survive. In less developed or newly industrializing countries, individuals tend to be divided by ethnic, religious, economic, or social boundaries and do not identify with groups beyond their immediate surroundings. However, the idea of a global civil society is emerging in the 21st century with the rise of human rights and environmental groups that take shape in the form of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These groups are national and international organizations and are independent of any state.

Civil Society Research Question Assignment

Many Scholars think that civil society is important for the development of democracy.

1. Define civil society
2. Identify and explain two specific conditions within a political system that would enable civil society to thrive.

Comparing Citizen/State Relationships Project

When comparing the relationship between citizen and state in a country, establish the basis for which citizens relate to their government. In small groups, answer the following questions in regard to the case countries.

Questions to consider:

- Do citizens trust their government?
- What is the level of political efficacy among citizens?
- How do citizens learn about politics in their country?
- How active are citizens in the political process?
- Do citizens in the country participate in regular elections?

- What cleavages are in the country? Do they make a difference in citizens' political beliefs and behaviors?
- What is the level of transparency for your chosen country?
- What role do electronic and print media have in your chosen country?
- Is your chosen country prone to political violence? Why or why not?

Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

The idea of power is essential to understanding politics. The political scientist will ask questions such as, "Who has power?" and "Who has authority to rule?" Comparative Politics looks at power within states or countries; those that have legal authority over the population and territory and in essence are exercising sovereignty. The states or countries that are unable to answer the question of who has the power to rule are said to lack legitimacy, or the right to rule. With legitimacy a state or country must also have the appropriate degree of autonomy, which allows governments to govern effectively, while being held accountable to the population.

Essential Questions:

- Who has the power within states and countries?
- How is power and authority used in states and countries?
- How is power formed?
- What are the challenges of sovereignty, authority and power within states or countries?

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Sovereignty is a concept born with the rise of the modern state system in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. The officials of most national governments will strongly defend their state's sovereignty when they feel it is being challenged. Legitimacy and autonomy are the foundations of a stable sovereign state, the absence of, or the unbalanced mix of such, renders the state unstable because it is no longer independent and has little or no ability to govern its territory. Still, how does the idea of the modern state continue when countries voluntarily give up some of their sovereignty? The formation of supranational governments, such as the European Union or the Economic Community of West African States, presents new challenges to the altering concepts of sovereignty, authority, and power.

Sovereignty, Authority and Power

The idea of sovereignty, power and authority in a country is a category that enables us to make comparisons among the six core countries we study. As mentioned in earlier units, power is not individualized; rather it is territorially organized into countries that control what happens within their borders. German scholar [Max Weber](#) defined state as the organization that maintains a monopoly of violence over a territory. The state defines who can and cannot use weapons and force, and it sets the rules as to how violence is used. States often sponsor armies, navies, and/or air forces that legitimately use power and sometimes violence, but individual citizens are very restricted in their use of force. Countries also include institutions (bureaucracies, legislatures, judicial systems, and political parties, etc.) which help make the country stable and last long, helping it turn political ideas into policy. Countries exercise sovereignty by their ability to carry out actions or policies within their borders independently from interference either from the inside or outside. In order to compare countries, we group them into three categories, advanced democracies, communist and post-communist countries, and less developed and newly industrializing countries.

Question to consider:

What is the best way to group countries that when comparing in terms of Sovereignty, Authority and Power?

Supranational Governments, Integration and Devolution

Within a country, the central form of government remains, but all political systems exist within an environment that is affected by other governments. If you think about globalization and how countries interact with each other in terms of economic, social, environmental, and cultural activities, it is easy to understand that these factors cause countries to integrate, by pooling their sovereignty and

surrendering some individual powers in order to gain political, economic, or societal benefits. This poses important challenges to a country's national sovereignty, because it is relinquishing power upward to a central supranational system that oversees countries and has sovereign powers over the member states themselves. In contrast, devolution is a process by which political power is devolved, or sent downward to lower levels of government. Such is the case in Great Britain, which still has a unitary government, but has turned over powers of taxation, education, and economic planning in both Scotland and Wales. The devolved power in Scotland and Wales has put equality at the forefront of each region's agenda. Northern Ireland also experienced devolution, and given its own parliament. However, violence shut down its power for more than five years.

Questions to consider:

How do Supranational Governments pose a challenge to Authority?

How does devolution promote equality for all?

Supranational Government, Integration and Devolution Question for Thought

Supranational governments, integration and devolution are not without problems. Great Britain has experienced both devolution and being part of a supranational government. There are debates concerning Great Britain's role in the EU, and the EU expansion. There are also pros and cons to the devolved power given to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- What should be the plan of action moving forward for Great Britain?
- Should they remain part of the European Union?
- Should devolution be expanded to include a written Bill of Rights for individual citizens and a new electoral system?

Democracies and Authoritarian Regimes

A democratic regime, bases its authority on the will of the people. Most democracies are indirect, mainly because large populations make it almost impossible for individuals to have a great deal of direct influence on how they are governed. Democratic governments typically have three major branches: executives, legislatures, and judicial courts. Some democracies are parliamentary systems, while others are presidential systems. By contrast, in authoritarian regimes decisions are made political elites, without much input from citizens. These regimes may be ruled by a single dictator, a hereditary monarch, a small group of aristocrats or a single political party. The economy is generally tightly controlled by the political elite. Some authoritarian regimes are based communism, others practice corporatism.

Question to consider:

How can we differentiate between democratic and authoritative regimes?

Is it Legit?

For a country, legitimacy answers the question, who has political power? Legitimacy is the right to rule, as determined by citizens. Some countries enjoy high legitimacy, while others don't. You may wonder how communist China achieves legitimacy, or if Iran or Nigeria has any legitimacy at all. The degree of a country's legitimacy can be determined by looking at internal sources that contribute to its legitimacy.

Such sources include

- results, or whether the country is providing the basic needs of the people such as security, welfare and respect for human rights;
- habit, where people through time become accustomed to obeying the laws of the government; various historical, religious or ethnic sources, for example "Mother Russia;"
- by procedures namely, democratic elections; or fear, as is the case for some Arab regimes;
- belief systems, such as communism or fascism.

The factors that encourage legitimacy in both democratic and authoritarian regimes are: economic well-being, historical tradition/longevity, charismatic leadership, nationalism, and satisfaction with the government's performance or the responsiveness of government.

Questions to consider:

How does each core country account for legitimacy?

By what criteria do we judge the legitimacy of each core country?

Assignment -Legitimacy Essay

For this assignment, you will need to research each of the six core countries and determine whether a country has high or low legitimacy.

In your essay, you should analyze the six core countries in terms of how each show:

- Legitimacy by results
- Legitimacy by habit
- Legitimacy by historical, religious, ethnic identity
- Legitimacy by procedures
- Legitimacy by fear
- Legitimacy by belief system

Through your research, you may find that certain categories stand out more so than others, or some categories do not apply at all. However, you should be able to find evidence for each core country and make a determination of the legitimacy that country experiences.

Political Ideologies

Political ideologies are sets of political values held by individuals regarding the basic goals of government and politics.

Liberalism, for example places emphasis on individual political and economic freedom. Liberals seek to maximize freedom for all people, including free speech, freedom of religion and freedom of association.

Liberals also believe that citizens have the right to disagree with state decisions and act to change the decisions of their leaders. **Communism** in contrast to liberalism, generally values equality over freedom.

To eliminate inequalities and exploitation, communists advocate the takeover of all resources by the state that in turn will insure that true economic equality exists for the community as a whole. **Socialism** shares the value of equality with communism but is also influenced by the liberal value of freedom.

Socialists accept and promote private ownership and free market principles, but also believe that the state has a strong role to play in regulating the economy and providing benefits to the public in order to ensure some measure of equality. **Fascism** also rejects the value of equality and accepts the idea that people and groups exist in degrees of inferiority and superiority.

Fascists believe that the state has the right and responsibility to mold the society and economy and to eliminate obstacles (including people) that might weaken them.

No strictly fascist regimes currently exist, but fascism still is an influential ideology in many parts of the world.

The last ideology is **religion**. Most societies are secularized, so that religious leaders are usually not the same people as political leaders. However, when we consider our core countries, we find that the British monarch is formally the head of the Anglican Church (the state religion). Iran bases its entire political system on Shia Islam and in Nigeria; religious law (Sharia) is an important basis of legitimacy in the Muslim North but not in the Christian south.

Questions to consider:

What role does political ideology play in the authority of a country?

How can political ideology shape the values of individuals in a country?

Political Institutions

The study of political institutions in Comparative Politics, centers on the formal structure and workings of states and governments. The rules a state sets and follows collectively are referred to as a regime. Two categories of regimes in this unit that will be compared are democracies and authoritarian systems. In addition, this unit will compare the characteristics of democracies, to include parliamentary systems and presidential systems. Also, we will compare authoritarian system characteristics, which include a small group of elites that exercise power over the state, citizens with little or no input, no constitutional responsibility of leaders to the public, and restriction of civil rights and civil liberties.

Essential Questions:

- How does each of the core countries differ in the structure of their political systems?
- What is the relationship between executives and legislatures in the core countries?
- To what degree does each core country adhere to rule of law?
- What functions do political parties perform in authoritarian and democratic systems?
- How do interest groups influence government policy in the core countries?

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Within the state or country are political institutions. In this unit, we will look at the governance of states, how internal state institutions are set up and how they shape the political decision making process. The rules that a state sets and follows in exerting its power are referred to collectively as a regime. In a democracy a regime bases its power on the will of the people. Democracies are characterized by parliamentary systems or presidential systems. In authoritarian regimes, decisions are made by political elites or by those that hold political power. Characteristics of authoritarian regimes include: a small group of elites, citizens with little or no input, no constitutional responsibility of leaders to the public, and restriction of civil rights and civil liberties.

Executive and Legislative

The executive office carries out the laws and policies of a state. In many countries the executive is split into two distinct roles: head of state and head of government. The head of state is a role that symbolized and represents the people, both nationally and internationally, and may or may not have any real policy making power. The legislature is the branch of government charged with making laws. Formal approval for laws is usually required for major public policies, although in authoritarian states, legislatures are generally dominated by the chief executive.

Questions to Consider:

- What is the role of the executive(s) in each of the core countries?
- How are legislatures assembled in each of the core countries?

- How do the executive and legislature work together in the core countries?

Judiciaries

The judiciary's role in the political system varies considerably from one country to another. All countries have some form of legal structure, and the role of the judiciary is rarely limited to deciding criminal cases. Courts in authoritarian systems generally have little or no independence and their decisions are controlled by the chief executive. Constitutional courts, which serve to defend the democratic principles of a country, are the highest judicial body that rules on the constitutionality of laws and other government actions. In this unit we will look at the varying degrees of rule of law (the idea that all people are treated equally under the country's legal procedures) in each of the six core countries. As you will see, some enjoy a high degree of rule of law, while others fall short.

Questions to consider:

- What type of judicial system do the six core countries have?
- What is Rule of Law?
- To what degree does each of the six core countries adhere to rule of law?
- What examples indicate a low adherence to rule of law?

Country	Legal System	Judicial Review	Independent
China	Code law	No	No
Great Britain	Common law	No	Yes
Iran	Sharia	No	No
Nigeria	Common law Sharia	Yes	Yes
Russia	Code law	Yes	No
Mexico	Code law	Yes	Yes

Rule of Law Question for Thought

For this assignment you will research the degree to which your chosen country follows rule of law. In the More Resources Sidebar, there are several websites to help you with your research. The core countries were ranked on their adherence to rule of law according to a percentile of 0-100. Where does your country rank? What factors contribute to this ranking? You may want to look for news items that show how your country handles rule of law issues in terms of human rights violations, torture, protestors, and unjust sentencing.

Where does your country fall in the Rule of Law ordering?

Explain why it is there, by giving examples from the case countries.

Parties, Electoral Systems, and Elections

Political parties perform many functions in democracies. First, they help bring different people and ideas together to establish how the majority will vote. Second, they provide labels for candidates that help citizens decide how to vote. Most democracies have multi-party systems; however communist systems have only one party. Electoral systems are the rules that decide how votes are cast, counted, and translated into seats in a legislature. All democracies divide their populations by electoral boundaries. Democracies also vary in the types of elections that they hold. A basic distinction between a presidential and parliamentary system is that the president is directly elected by the people and the prime minister is elected as a member of the legislature. The prime minister becomes head of government because he is the leader of his or her party or coalition.

Questions to consider:

- What type of functions to political parties perform in authoritarian and democratic systems?
- How do the core countries vary in terms of their electoral systems?
- How do social cleavages affect votes?

Party Functions Shared by Democratic and Authoritarian Systems	
Linkage Institutions	Staff Government
Recruit Leaders	Articulate Ideology
Mobilize Citizens	Aggregate interests
Propose policy/formation/shape	Political socialization
Legitimacy	

Electoral Systems		
Plurality System	Proportional Representation	Mixed System
Individual candidates run in single-member districts.	Voting is arranged in multimember districts.	Voting is arranged in combination of multimember and single member districts
Voters cast votes for individual candidates.	Voters cast votes for parties.	Voters cast votes for individuals and parties.

Candidate with more votes than other candidates wins the seat.	Seats are divided among parties on the basis of percentage of overall vote.	Some seats are filled by winners in plurality races; others are filled by party.
One result is a two (or few) party system.	Proportional representation generally results in a multi-party system.	A mixed system results in an in-between number of parties.

Political Parties in Multiethnic Societies Research Question

States vary in terms of their party system and electoral systems; explain one advantage each of multiparty, two-party, and one-party systems in a multiethnic society.

Social Cleavages Question for Thought

Social cleavages, including ethnicity, region, class and religion have important implications for political parties. Describe a major social cleavage in Mexico or Nigeria and explain how a specific political party has responded to it. For the response explained, describe one consequence of the party's response in Mexico or Nigeria.

Interest Groups

Interest groups are organizations of like-minded people whose goal is to influence and shape public policy. These groups of people may be based on almost any type of common interest, such as occupation, labor, business interest, agriculture, or community action. Most interest groups have a political side which focuses on influencing the decisions those governments make. By determining the degree of autonomy these groups have from the government, we are able see how much influence interest groups have on government policy making. Countries with authoritarian systems of government are rarely independent of the government, whereas most western industrialized democracies are very much so independent often raising their own funds and selecting their own leaders. Those interest groups have a greater chance of pressuring the government to make policies that favor their interests.

Questions to consider:

- How do interest groups influence government policy?
- How are interest groups different in authoritarian countries?
- How do governments in the six core countries respond to interest groups?

Political and Economic Change

Political scientists are not only interested in the process of change, but the form and causes of change as well. Generally political and economic changes occur together and influence each other. This unit will look at such changes in the six core countries, in terms of types of change, to include reform, revolution, and coup d'états. Also, those who promote change have strong attitudes that influence the type of change. Such attitudes are radicalism, liberalism, conservatism, and reactionary beliefs. Finally, this unit looks at three trends that affect everyone in the contemporary world, democratization, the move toward market economies, and the revival of ethnic or cultural politics.

Essential Questions:

- What are the characteristics of democracy?
- Does Democratization lead to a market economy?
- How will the revival of cultural politics emphasize differences among nations?

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Profound political and economic changes have characterized the 20th and 21st centuries. The fall of communism in the Soviet bloc states, the emergence of the European Union, NAFTA, 9-11, a partly market economy in China, fragmentation in Nigeria, and revolution in Iran only scratch the surface of the changes that have occurred. Most recently, the politicization of religion has dominated world politics of the early 21st century. Change is constant in each one of the six core countries studied in this course. Rarely does political change happen without economic change and vice versa. In this unit we will discuss, through case studies, types of change, to include reform, revolution, and coup d'états, as well as attitudes that promote and influence change, such as radicalism, liberalism, conservatism and reactionary beliefs.

Democratization

How do we determine if a country is democratic? One broad, essential requirement for democracy is the existence of competitive elections that are regular, free and fair. Competitive elections offer a real possibility that the incumbent government may be defeated. A number of modern states call themselves 'democratic' but fall into a gray area that is neither clearly democratic nor clearly

undemocratic. Liberal democracies display characteristics such as civil liberties, rule of law, neutrality of the judiciary, open civil society, and civilian control of the military.

How is Democracy measured?

- **Political accountability** - In a democracy, political leaders are held accountable to the people of a country. Existence of regular, free and fair elections.
- **Political competition** - Political parties must be free to organize, present candidates and express their ideas. The losing party must allow the winning party to take office peacefully.
- **Political freedom** - Assembly, organization, and political expression, including the right to criticize the government.
- **Political equality** - equal access to political participation, equal rights as citizens, and equal weighting of citizens votes.

Characteristics of a Democratic Society	
Characteristic	Examples
Civil Liberties	Freedom of belief, speech and assembly
Rule of Law	Equal treatment of citizens
Neutrality of the Judiciary	Checks on abuse of power
Open Civil Society	Allows citizens to lead private lives, mass media to operate independently from government
Civilian Control of the Military	Restricts the likelihood of the military seizing control of the government

Questions to Consider:

- What are the characteristics of a democratic country?
- How do we measure democracy?
- How does change occur?

Revolutionary Components Worksheet and Essay Assignment

A government can be changed in many ways. Reform, revolution and Coup d'états, are three categories of change. Revolutions usually impact more than one aspect of life. In this assignment you will research revolutions in each of the six core countries, then write an essay that will elaborate on each component of revolution.

Move toward Market Economies

Political scientists disagree about the relationship between democratization and marketization. Mexico has moved steadily toward a market economy since the 1980s, and democratization appears to have followed. On the other hand, China has been moving toward capitalism since the late 1970s without any signs of democratization.

Questions to consider:

- Does Democratization lead to a market economy?
- How do we characterize a country's development?
- How do we distinguish between a market economy and a command economy?

Until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, developed and developing countries were divided into three groups. Developed countries with market economies were known as the "first world." Countries with communist command economies were known as the "second world." Developing countries outside of these two groups were known as the "third world." The economic development of a country can be measured in the following ways:

- **GDP per capita** - This figure is an estimate of a country's total economic output within its borders divided by its total population.
- **PPP (Purchasing Power Parity)** - This measure takes into account the actual cost of living in a particular country by figuring what it costs to buy the same bundle of goods in different countries.
- **HDI (Human Development Index)** - The United Nations has put together this measure based on a formula that takes into account the three factors of longevity (live expectancy at birth), knowledge (literacy and average years of schooling), and income (according to PPP).
- **Economic dependency** - A less developed country is often dependent on developed countries for economic support and trade. A country is said to be "developing" when it begins relying less on a stronger country to keep it afloat financially.
- **Economic inequality** - the economies of developing countries usually benefit the rich first, so characteristically the gap between the rich and poor widens.

Command Economy	Market Economy
Factories, Farms and Shops are controlled by the State	Factories, Farms and Shops are privately owned
Most production decisions are made by the State	Most production decisions are made by individuals

Most people are given work by and work for the State	People are responsible for finding their own jobs
The State decides what to sell	Producers sell what they think people will buy
Prices for basic goods are subsidized by the State and kept low	Prices are set by producers, according to what the market will bear
Unemployment is considered unacceptable	Some unemployment is considered acceptable

Ethnic or Cultural Politics

Fragmentation (divisions based on ethnic or cultural identity) has recently become important in world politics. Nationalism, identities based on nationhood, seemed to be declining in favor of increasing globalism. However, national identities remain strong in most parts of the world. The most dramatic is the politicization of religion that has dominated world politics of the early 21st century. For example, in the Middle East, political terrorism has been carried out in the name of Islam and caused tensions between Islamic and Christian states. This rise in ethnic or cultural politics tends to emphasize differences rather than commonalities.

Question to consider:

Does a world divided into political cultural regions threaten a peaceful coexistence?

Different Cultures

Samuel Huntington in his article "[The Clash of Civilizations](#)" argued that future conflicts would be based clashes of civilizations, or cultures, rather than socioeconomic or ideological differences. He divides the world into different cultural areas that may already be poised to threaten world peace.

Cultural Divisions Question for Thought

Samuel Huntington's article "Clash of Civilizations" theory is not without critics. In this assignment, you will perform an Internet search on criticisms of "The Clash of Civilizations," then decide for yourself if his argument holds true. Are we becoming a world organized by cultures? Will some cultures be more at odds than others? Rather than cultural regions, should we be more concerned with conflicts within multicultural nations?

Public Policy

Policymaking is the result of questions asked by citizens of their government. Should we have nationalized healthcare? Should state run agencies be owned by the private sector or the public sector? Should we change our currency? Policies are set through the legislative vote, executive decision, judicial ruling, or a combination of the three. For governments, issues surrounding policy making include: economic performance, social welfare, civil liberties, rights and freedoms, and the environment. In this unit we will compare policy making strategies between the six core countries studied.

Essential Questions:

- What factors influence domestic and global policymaking in the six countries, as well as comparatively?
- How does economic performance drive policy within a country?
- What is gender discrimination and how is it addressed in the six core countries?
- What policies are in place to address poverty in the six core countries?
- How do the six core countries respond to environmental issues?

Module Minute

Should the government take a big interest in protecting the environment? What is the government's responsibility toward social welfare? How is our economy affected by international imports and exports? How do we know what civil liberties will be preserved? These and other questions are answered by governments through policymaking. Policies are set by institutions within a government, through legislative vote, executive decision, or judicial ruling. Policy concerns are broad and differ from country to country. In this unit we will comparatively look at domestic and global policy matters within the six core countries. In addition, we will discuss how policymaking is influenced by political institutions, shifts and changes in policy requirements, and global pressures put forth on policy makers in both developed and developing countries.

Common Policy Issues: Economic Performance

What determines the policies that are set relating to the economy of a given country? Countries are often concerned about the health, or problems within their own borders, however, most also participate in international imports and exports. The economic performance of a country determines what policies are made both domestically and abroad and each government has its own approach when making economic policies. The measurement of economic performance of a country can be measured in

a number of ways, including: Gross Domestic Product, Gross National Product, GNP per capita, and Purchasing Power Parity. The economic performance of a country can include policies that involve employment, inflation, and monetary policies, and income distribution.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways is economic performance measured?
- How does economic performance measures correlate to policy-making?

Economic Performance Chart and Research Question Assignment

For this assignment you will complete the Economic Performance Chart and Research Question. First you will complete the chart and determine the economic performance of each core country by the indicators discussed in this lesson. Then, you will conduct research to determine one or more economic policies or reforms that have occurred in each core country as a result of one or more of the indicators. In addition, when researching, you should use key words, such as: "economic policies of Russia", or "economic reforms of Mexico".

Common Policy Issues: Social Welfare

Citizens' social welfare needs include health, employment, family assistance, and education. States provide different levels of support in each area, and they display many different attitudes toward government responsibility for social welfare. Some measures of social welfare are literacy rates, distribution of income, life expectancy and education levels. Two commonly used measures of social welfare are: The Gini Index and the Human Development Index.

Gini Index

A low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income or wealth distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates unequal income or wealth distribution. "0" corresponds to perfect equality (everyone has the same income), and "1" corresponds to complete inequality (one person has all the income; everyone else has zero income).

Country	Gini Index
Great Britain	.36
Russia	.40
Nigeria	.44
Iran	.43
Mexico	.46

China	.47
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Human Development Index

The Human Development Index is a composite measurement of well-being (used to be standard of living). Rankings are "very high human development," "high very high human development," "medium human development," and "low human development." The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide.

Country	Rank	
Great Britain	28	Very High
Mexico	57	High
Russia	66	High
Iran	88	High
China	101	Medium
Nigeria	156	Low

Source

Question to Consider:

- What indicators tell us the poverty level of a country?

Social Welfare Question for Thought

For this assignment you will compare the social welfare in the six core countries. Look at the HDI and Gini Index for the six core countries and using the data collected and Internet research for each core country, answer the following questions:

- What policies are in place that address the poverty issue in each country?
- Which countries are leading the way to minimize poverty?
- Which countries are lacking adequate policies to address the issue?

Common Policy Issues: Gender Issues

You may think that women's rights are only an issue in countries where religion is law, such as many Muslim countries. Or even worse, some may think this is no longer an issue at all. The importance of women's rights and gender equality should not be underestimated as it furthers the cause of child survival and development for all society. Some important issues facing gender equality include: unequal

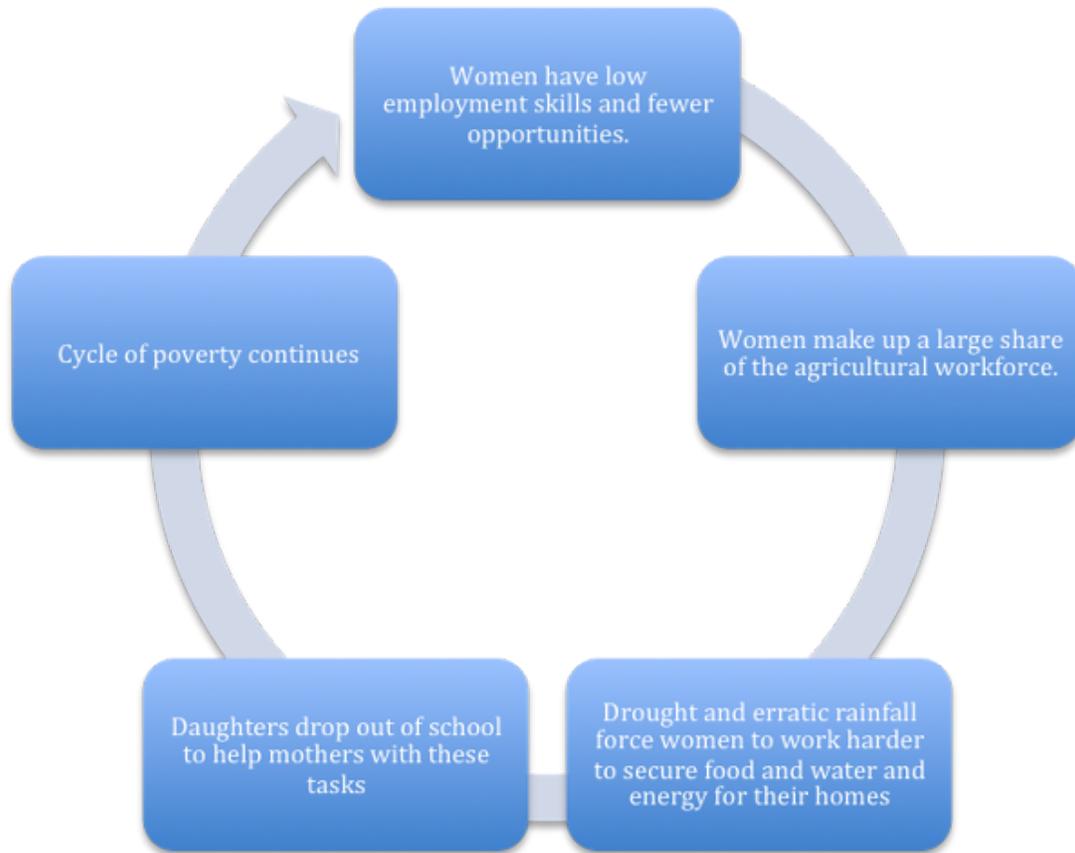
pay, gender discrimination, poverty, lack of education opportunities, reproductive rights/population issues, and lack of healthcare.

Questions to consider:

- What issues concerning women might countries look at to develop policies?

Global Gender Discrimination Throughout a Lifetime	
Feticide and infanticide	Economic or cultural preference for sons; misuse of pregnancy diagnostic tools can facilitate female feticide.
The middle years	Lack of access to, and completion of, quality primary and secondary education. With a few exceptions, it is mostly girls who suffer from educational disadvantage.
Adolescence	Among the greatest threats to adolescent development are abuse, exploitation and violence, and the lack of vital knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS.
Motherhood and old age	Women die in childbirth, particularly in developing countries, as a result of lack of basic healthcare. Elderly women face double discrimination on the basis of both gender and age. As a result, many face poverty.

Gender Discrimination and Climate Change



Estimated earnings for women are substantially lower than for men.	
Global Region	Percentage of Men's Earnings
Industrialized Nations	57%
Sub-Saharan Africa	51%
Middle East and North Africa	28%
Latin America and Caribbean	40%

Bottom of Form

Gender Discrimination Question for Thought

Rank the six core countries on their ability to provide gender equality. Which countries get it right and which countries get it wrong? Defend your choices with policies implemented by each country. While defending your ranking, you should discuss policies that affect each country both domestically and internationally.

Common Policy Issues: Environment

Some countries are very interested in protecting the environment, for example the EU countries have some of the strongest environmental standards developed over the last few decades. Their focus is on endangered species, and using natural resources more effectively. Some countries, such as Russia have environmental policies in place, but ignore the measures when it becomes too expensive to carry them out. Other countries, such as Iran, have no policies in place. However at the University of Tehran, environmental groups have put together policies in hopes that the government will put them into law. Some of the indicators for measuring the safety or impact on the environment are: air/climate, land/soil, water (fresh water and marine water), and natural resources (including biological and mineral).

Questions to consider:

- To what degree do countries take an interest in protecting the environment?
- How do environmental policies affect the core countries domestically and internationally?

Environmental Impact by Country

The table below shows the ranking and scores for the overall index along with each country's scores on two key objectives: Environmental Health and Ecosystem Vitality. Environmental Health refers to the extent to which deficiencies in water quality, air pollution, and other factors cause health issues and reductions in quality of life. Ecosystem Vitality measures the health of a country's ecosystem by evaluating such factors as agriculture, biodiversity and habitat, climate change, fisheries, and forestry.

Country	Ranking	
United Kingdom	9	Strong Performer
Mexico	84	Modest Performer
Russia	106	Weaker Performer
China	116	Weaker Performer
Iran	114	Weaker Performer
Nigeria	119	Weaker Performer

Environment Question for Thought

Give a description of environmental policies in a chosen case country. What geographic areas of the country are most affected? What are the current environmental issues concerning your country? If your chosen country has no environmental policies, are there groups that are pushing for environmental reforms? You should explain policies that affect your chosen country both domestically and internationally.