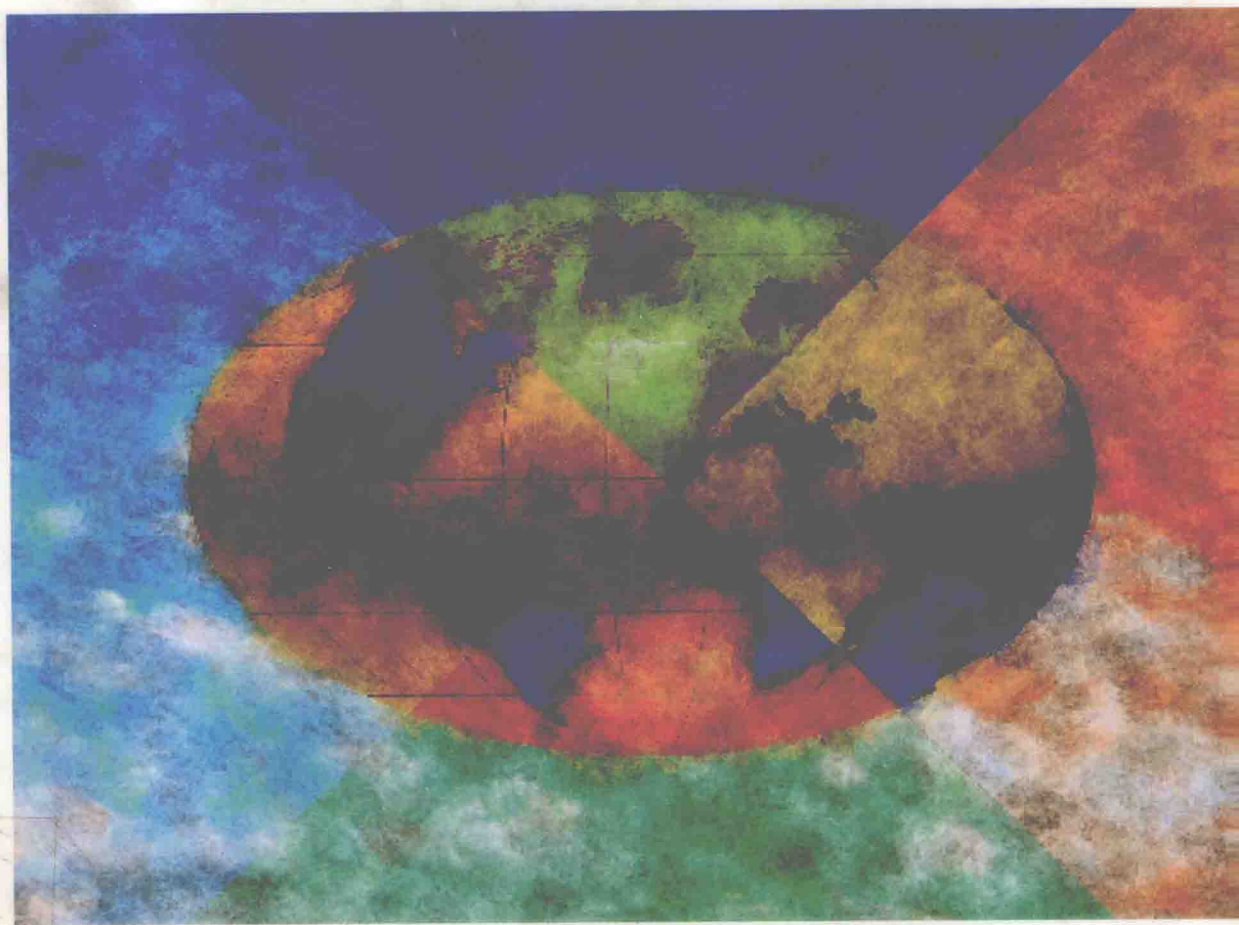


S I X T H   E D I T I O N

# COUNTRIES AND CONCEPTS

**AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS**



MICHAEL G. ROSKIN

SIXTH EDITION

# *COUNTRIES AND CONCEPTS*

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## *AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS*

**Michael G. Roskin**  
*Lycoming College*



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## A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS

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MY FEELINGS ABOUT THE PREVIOUS EDITION OF *COUNTRIES AND CONCEPTS* WERE contained in a possibly apocryphal early edition of *Pravda*, printed at the height of the Bolshevik Revolution, that advised its readers: "No news today. Events moving too fast." This sixth edition of *Countries and Concepts* was not quite so hard to do. Russia is still very much in flux, but the outlines of its emerging political system are a little clearer. The response to adding Japan to the previous edition was overwhelmingly favorable, so I retained it. Most political scientists believe it is so important and so interesting that it should now be standard in an introduction to comparative politics. I try to avoid the common traps of either Japan-praising or Japan-bashing. I find that Japan is not so strange or exotic as it is sometimes portrayed (what I call the *Mystique Mistake*); in fact, it readily submits to the same analytical approaches used for other countries. Japan is different, of course, but not totally different.

New to the sixth edition is Iran, accorded briefer treatment as one of the Third World political systems. I have been wanting to add Iran to the text for years, and for several reasons. First, the addition of Iran expands the scope into the Middle East, an inexhaustible fount of news events. Second, it gives students a chance to explore political Islam, one of the challenges of our day but one that we tend to get hysterical about. Third, it fits with the theme of revolutions, this one an Islamic revolution. And fourth, Iran lets us consider the tension, found in much of the world, between the imperatives of modernization and the tug of traditional culture. Can the two be combined?

How to handle political systems in flux? The way I handled Brazil in previous editions gave me a clue. Exasperated about being unable to say anything definite about Brazilian politics—a permanent work-in-progress—I backed away from the details of Brazilian governmental institutions and policies and accepted change and uncertainty as the Brazilian system. I learned to avoid saying things such as, "And so Brazil returned to civilian, democratic rule," when there was no telling what the politicians, electorate, and generals would do the next year. Change *is* the system.

Further, the upheavals in Russia and South Africa provide the opportunity to define and explore system change in general terms. How do we know a system has truly changed? When old elites are swept out? When new and different

institutions are established? Suppose—as in Japan—that change is more apparent than real? Defining system change can be tricky and challenging for students and an exciting opportunity for instructors.

Interestingly, reunited Germany did not really undergo system change. It was indeed a momentous event, but the institutions, parties, and economic system of West Germany simply expanded to encompass East Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany kept its name and its patterns of politics but just got bigger. (The impact of a united Germany on the European system is profound, but that is a question of international systems rather than of domestic systems, which is the chief concern in comparative politics.) Neither has China thus far undergone system change, despite its rapid economic growth, although the forces for it are clearly building.

The structure and purpose of *Countries and Concepts* continue as before. The book analyzes four European nations and Japan at some length and four Third World nations more briefly. It does not attempt to create young scholars out of college sophomores. It sees, rather, comparative politics as an important but usually neglected grounding in citizenship that we should be making available to our young people. I agree with the late Morris Janowitz (in his 1983 *The Reconstruction of Patriotism: Education for Civic Consciousness*) that civic education has declined in the United States and that this poses dangers for democracy. Our students are often ill-prepared in the historical, political, economic, geographical, and moral aspects of democracy, and to expose such students to professional-level abstractions in political science ignores their civic education and offers material that is largely meaningless to them. To repeat what I said in the first edition: An undergraduate is not a miniature graduate student.

Accordingly, the sixth edition of *Countries and Concepts* is designed to include a good deal of fundamental vocabulary and concepts, buttressed by many examples. It is readable. Many students don't do assigned readings; with *Countries and Concepts*, they have no excuse that the reading is long or boring.

Some reviewers noted that *Countries and Concepts* contains values and criticisms. This is part of my purpose. The two go together; if you have no values, you have no basis from which to criticize. Value-free instruction is probably impossible. If successful, it would produce value-free students, and that, I think, should not be the aim of the educational enterprise. If one knows something with the head but not with the heart, one really doesn't know it at all.

Is *Countries and Concepts* too critical? It treats politics as a series of ongoing quarrels for which no very good solutions can be found. It casts a skeptical eye on all political systems and all solutions proposed for political problems. As such, the book is not out to "get" any one country; it merely treats all with equal candor. *Countries and Concepts* tries to act as a corrective to analyses that depict political systems as well-oiled machines or gigantic computers that never break down or make mistakes. Put it this way: If we are critical of the workings of our own country's politics—and many, perhaps most, of us are—why should we abandon the critical spirit in looking at another land?

The sixth edition continues the loose theoretical approach of the previous editions with the simple observation that politics, on the surface at least, is composed of a number of human conflicts or quarrels. These quarrels, if observed

over time, usually form patterns of some durability beyond the specific issue involved. What I call *patterns of interaction* are the relationships among politically relevant groups and individuals, what they call in Russian *kto-kovo*, who does what to whom? There are two general types of such patterns: (1) between elites and masses, and (2) among and within elites.

Before we can appreciate these patterns, however, we must first study the *political attitudes* (both mass and elite) of a particular country, which leads us to its *political institutions* and ultimately to its *political history*. Thus we have a five-fold division in the study of each country. We could start with a country's contemporary political quarrels and work backwards, but it is probably better to begin with the underlying factors as a foundation from which to understand their impact on modern social conflict. This book goes from *history* to *institutions* to *attitudes* to *patterns of interaction* to *quarrels*; however, this arrangement need not supplant other approaches. I think instructors will have no trouble utilizing this book in connection with their preferred theoretical insights.

Inclusion of the Third World in a first comparative course is problematic. The Third World is so complex and differentiated that many (myself included) think the concept should be discarded. The semester is only so long. But if students are going to take only one comparative course—all too often the case nowadays—they should get some exposure to three-quarters of humankind. We continue, therefore, with briefer treatment of four non-European systems: China, Brazil, South Africa, and now Iran. They are not “representative” systems—what Third-World countries are?—but are interesting in their four different relationships to revolution: (1) a sweeping revolution in China; (2) an aborted revolution in Brazil; (3) a relatively peaceful revolution in South Africa; and (4) an Islamic revolution in Iran. Students like the stress on revolutions, and these four systems provide a refreshing counterpoise to the more settled systems of Europe. Instructors can and do omit some or all of these Third-World systems—for lack of time or in order to focus more closely on Europe—but this does not destroy the continuity of the text.

## SUPPLEMENTS



### THE NEW YORK TIMES SUPPLEMENT

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## POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY SUPPLEMENT

Students are often weak in the area of geography these days; the subject seems to have been dropped from most school curricula. At the behest of Lycoming's education department—students were doing poorly on the geography section of state teacher exams—I have been offering Political Geography at Lycoming for some years. Hearing similar concerns about students' lack of geographical knowledge from other instructors, I decided to write a brief supplement, *Political Geography of Countries and Concepts*, to introduce this subject. This supplement is designed to be used with *Countries and Concepts*, and copies are available without charge to adopters.

Contact your Prentice Hall representative for information about this supplement as well as the Instructor's Manual and test item files on diskette. Instructors' comments on any of these supplementary materials are greatly appreciated and can be sent directly to me (see addresses, below).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I welcome your suggestions on any area of the book. Many have generously offered their comments, corrections, and criticism. Especially valuable were the comments of Frank Myers, *State University of New York at Stony Brook*; Ronald F. Bunn, *University of Missouri–Columbia*; Said A. Arjomand, *State University of New York at Stony Brook*; Larry Elowitz, *Georgia College*; Arend Lijphart, *University of California at San Diego*; Cheryl Brown, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*; Thomas P. Wolf, *Indiana University, Southeast*; Susan Matarese, *University of Louisville*; Marianne C. Stewart, *Rutgers University (on Brazil)*; Paul S. Kim, *Gannon University (on Japan)*; and Carol Nechemias, *Penn State, Harrisburg*; Yury Polsky, *West Chester University*, and Marcia Weigle, *Bowdoin College (on Russia)*. I was especially grateful for the comments on my new Iran chapter from Lycoming colleagues Mehrdad Madresehee of our economics department, Bahram Golshan of our math department, and Jury Polsky of West Chester, again. As a visiting professor for three years at the U.S. Army War College—a most stimulating experience—I was able to have some excellent regional specialists comment on various sections. Offering valuable notes and corrections were Dr. Leif Rosenberger on the German economy; visiting Brazilian LTC Manoel Oliveira and Dr. Gabriel Marcella on Brazil; Walter Clarke of the State Department on South Africa; James Coyle on Iran; and Eugene Brown (*Lebanon Valley College*), Col. (ret.) Don Booze, and Col. Lynn Stull on Japan. All errors, of course, are my own. Professional comments and corrections may be sent to me personally at Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA 17701, or e-mail [roskin@lycoming.edu](mailto:roskin@lycoming.edu). I am grateful for any suggestions for subsequent editions.

Michael G. Roskin  
Williamsport, PA

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