

Thomas M. Magstadt



NATIONS & GOVERNMENTS

Comparative Politics in
Regional Perspective

Third
Edition

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Thomas M. Magstadt



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<i>Sponsoring editor</i>	Beth A. Gillett
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<i>Senior editor, Publishing services</i>	Douglas Bell
<i>Project management and text design</i>	York Production Services
<i>Senior production supervisor</i>	Dennis J. Para
<i>Map illustrations</i>	GeoSystems Global Corporation
<i>Cover design</i>	Lucy Krikorian
<i>Cover art</i>	Conrad Represents/Rafael Lopez

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Nations and Governments

Comparative Politics in Regional Perspective

Third Edition

*To the loving memory of
Esther Vetter and Mary Jo Williams, and to Barbara Magstadt,
whose names changed along the way but whose unchanging goodness
has enriched my life in ways beyond counting*

Preface

The second edition of *Nations and Governments: Comparative Politics in Regional Perspective* followed more closely on the heels of the first than second editions often do, largely because of the sweeping changes set in motion by the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. That event not only transformed the Slavic world but also had a profound effect on politics in every other region of the globe. With the passage of half a decade since the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, in this third edition we can begin to examine the depth and breath of these events the world over.

This new volume goes well beyond an updating of the second edition, as must any revision of a book dealing with the constant-changing landscape of world politics. The book's basic structure continues to resemble the original in respect to its regional perspective, but the content has been extensively reviewed, reexamined, and rewritten. Anyone familiar with the first edition would hardly recognize the changes recorded here in Slavic Europe and South Africa.

Not only have the changes around the globe been sweeping; also dramatic have been the changes within the discipline of comparative politics. There is much debate about how best to teach students to begin the study of comparative politics. The debates encompass everything from which countries to study to which issues and theories to cover. While these debates continue, the globalization of economies, the explosion of the Internet, and issues like human rights, the ecology, and trade agreements have caused students in greater numbers to turn to comparative politics for an explanation of their world.

Plan of the Book and the Revision

For introductory students, the study of comparative politics can be overwhelming. To help organize it, the text focuses on six regions of the world: Western Europe, Russia and Slavic Europe, the Middle East, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. The importance of historical and contextual differences among regions continues to be reflected in the tripartite structure of this book, an approach that remains popular with students and instructors alike. Each region is covered in a three-chapter sequence; the first chapter focuses on history, geography, and other factors commonly known as the "political setting"; the second chapter examines contemporary political institutions and processes, or the "patterns of rule"; and the third chapter looks at the "problems and prospects" of key nations in each region. To oversimplify slightly, the first chapter looks at the past, the second at the present, and the third at the future. Patterns common to the region as a whole, as well as trends toward greater regionalism, are stressed wherever the facts warrant. In each section three countries are chosen for special emphasis and are tracked through all three chapters. Other countries are not ignored, of course; they are

examined, as appropriate, in the text, in tables, and in boxes. Thus, looking at comparative politics from a regional rather than a national perspective reveals patterns of inter-regional as well as international politics and helps students to put the information that they are learning into a larger context. The existence of such patterns is not new; what is new and becoming increasingly important is our recognition of them.

New to the Edition

Besides updating and revising the text to reflect recent political changes, I have added a number of features designed to help students understand why the study of comparative politics is both important and relevant in their lives. I have also tried to address the power and scope of resources available on the Internet and to encourage students to pursue research into issues that concern them.

- **What If?** These features pose hypothetical situations and encourage students to think critically about such concepts as democracy and freedom. More important, they allow students to see themselves in similar situations and to decide what they would do. These boxes spark classroom discussion and provide solid bases for research papers.
- **Who Cares?** These boxes address the issue of relevance to students by showing them how world events have direct consequences on them and their families. These features examine events like Japan's economic crisis and England's recent election through the students' eyes.
- **Web Watch** The Internet provides a vast amount of resources for studying comparative politics. Throughout the text students are given ample opportunities to explore these resources through Web Watch boxes. These boxes do more than list addresses; they tell students why to, where to, and how to access information about specific countries, issues, and organizations. All the sites discussed in the text, in addition to many more, can be immediately accessed through the St. Martin's Political Science Links page at www.smpcollege.com
- **Glossary** In response to reviewers, this edition adds an extensive end-of-book glossary. Boldface terms in the text signal defined terms, making them easy to locate for review.
- **Updated Maps, Tables, and Figures** With the addition of a second color, the updated maps, tables, and charts are now easier for students to understand important statistical information.

Summary of Chapters

Part I: Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the study of comparative politics and explores why comparative inquiry is such a valuable aid to understanding the world. *Chapter 2* gives students a close look at various kinds of political systems and *Chapter 3* introduces important theories of economic and political development, with an emphasis on regional patterns

and trends. Taken together, these three chapters provide the foundation for the rest of the book.

Part II: Western Europe

Chapters 4 through 6 focus on Western Europe and the European Community. The results of the 1995 national election in France, the importance of the British parliamentary election in 1997, and the continuing problems facing a united Germany are among the notable features in this section. The fitful movement toward a unified EC economy is also considered.

Part III: Russia and Slavic Europe

Chapters 7 through 9 present a fresh look at the former Soviet bloc, a region that will, for the foreseeable future, continue to experience exhilarating changes and wrenching adjustments. The section is titled “Russia and Slavic Europe” in this edition because that rubric better fits the reality than did “Eastern Europe,” an epithet too closely associated with the Cold War. Not all the former Soviet-bloc nations are inhabited by Slavic-speaking majorities (two obvious exceptions are Hungary and Romania), but the vast majority of people living in this region are Slavic. As in the previous edition, three countries—Russia, the Czech Republic (formerly part of Czechoslovakia), and Yugoslavia (now a rump state encompassing only Serbia and Montenegro)—are used as case studies. The themes in this section include the breakup of several former states (the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia), the transition from centrally planned to market economies, the attempt to institute liberal democratic governments, and the political instability that has accompanied this remarkable and unprecedented transformation. The present edition expands the treatment of the war in Bosnia—an uneasy peace.

Part IV: The Middle East

Chapters 10 through 12 treat the Middle East and North Africa. The role of nationalism and tradition in Arab politics, the social stability imparted by an ancient and brilliant cultural and religious heritage, the tendency toward political extremism, and the sharp contrasts between fabulously rich Arab states and appallingly poor ones are some of the theses stressed in this section. The countries chosen for special treatment are Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—a study in sharply contrasting political systems. No consideration of contemporary politics in the Middle East can be complete without a discussion of Lebanon and the Palestinian question, issues so divisive that they impinge on domestic politics not only in Israel but also in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and other Arab countries geographically far removed from the zone of conflict. The 1996 election in Israel of a hawkish government led by Benjamin Netanyahu and deteriorating prospects for the success of the 1993 Israeli-PLO peace accords are among the new features found in Chapters 11 and 12, as is a good look at recent signs of creeping instability in Saudi Arabia.

Part V: Asia

The next three chapters (*Chapters 13 through 15*) explore politics in Asia, with a spotlight on China, Japan, and India. The challenge of a resurgent China continues to be

one of the major themes in this section. A new theme examines the recent tumult in Japan's political system, which for four decades was dominated by a single party. The fact that Japan's sparkling success as a trading nation has not brought commensurate gains in the quality of life for most Japanese remains another main theme, as does the remarkable staying power of India's embattled democracy.

Part VI: Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is covered in *Chapters 16 through 18*; Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa are again given special attention. New pressures from democratic reform throughout the region are illustrated by continuing developments in all three countries. As suggested earlier, South Africa's abandonment of apartheid and its tumultuous transition toward some form of multiracial democracy is one of the themes in this section.

Part VII: Latin America

The final part (*Chapters 19 through 21*) looks at the area of Latin America. The process of liberalization that brought popularly elected governments to nearly all the countries of South America in the 1980s has not been reversed, but democracy in many of these societies is still beset by various cross-currents. The challenges to democratic government continue to come in many forms: insurgencies, drug-related political violence, corrupt leaders, mushrooming budget deficits, dangerously high inflation and unemployment, and burdensome foreign debts. These problems are examined closely using Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina as case studies.

Acknowledgments

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A project of this magnitude always comes at a high cost to immediate family members. I hope that they will never think my work is more precious to me than they are. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Note to Instructors

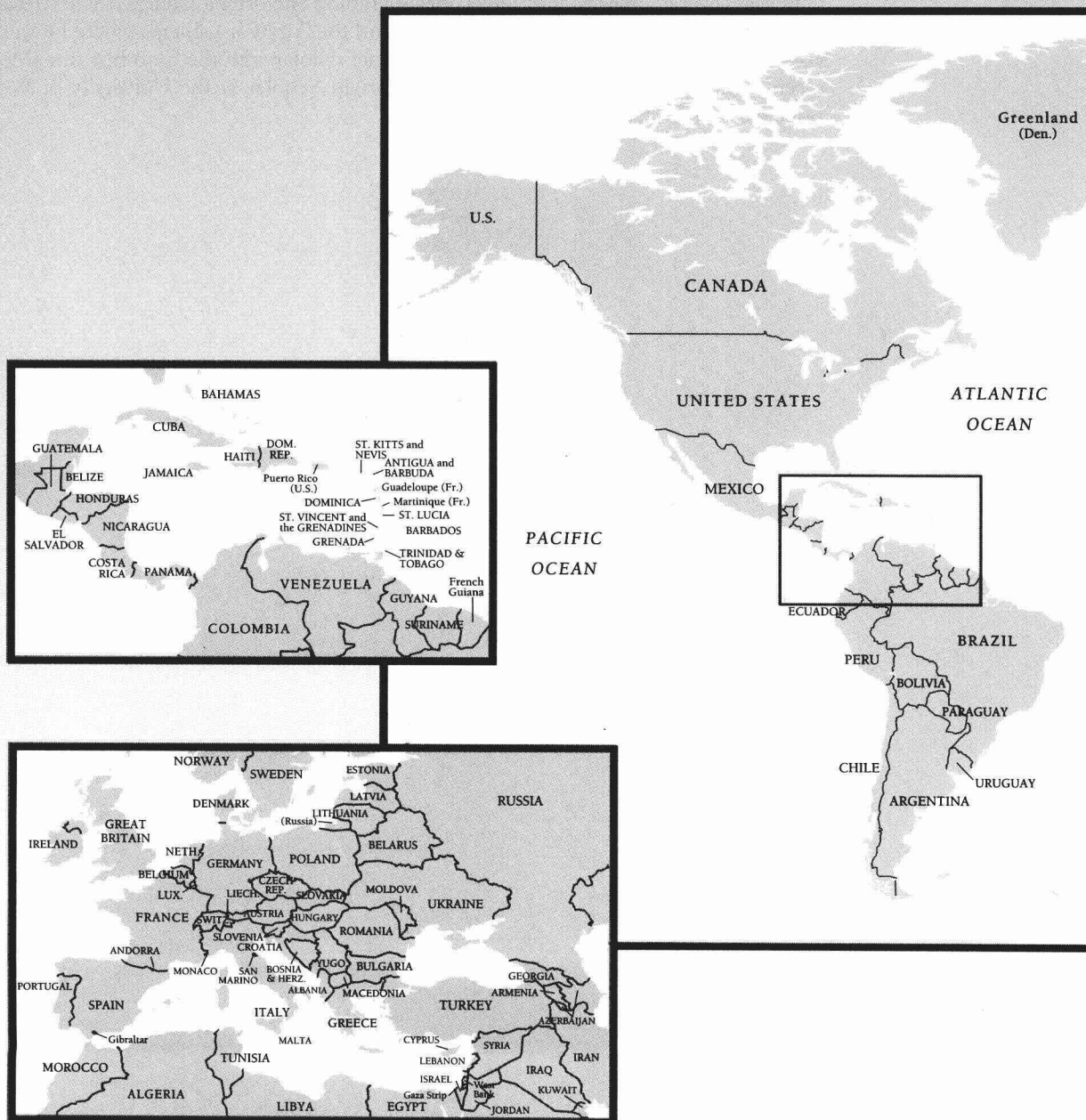
I would like to note the availability of *Instructor's Resources* on the Web at **www.smpcollege.com**. These include chapter outlines, summaries, and suggestions for classroom projects. In addition, a computerized test bank is available to adopters. For more information, please contact your local St. Martin's representative, call us at 1-800-446-8923, or email us at **faculty_services@sasmp.com**.

About the Author

Thomas Magstadt earned his doctorate at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He is the author, with Peter Schotten, of *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions, and Issues* (St. Martin's Press, 1996), which is now in its fourth edition. He has published many articles, essays, and papers in scholarly journals as well as in widely circulated newspapers and magazines. Professor Magstadt has taught at several colleges and universities including Augustana College (Sioux Falls), where he also served as Department Chair, and the Air War College, where he was a visiting professor for two years. He is an adjunct scholar with the Cato Institute. Most recently, he lectured for two years as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of West Bohemia in the Czech Republic.

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