

Second Edition

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

*Nations
and
Theories
in a
Changing
World*

LAWRENCE C. MAYER
JOHN H. BURNETT
SUZANNE OGDEN

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Nations and Theories in a Changing World

Second Edition

Lawrence C. Mayer

Texas Tech University

John H. Burnett

Texas Tech University

Suzanne Ogden

Northeastern University



Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mayer, Lawrence C.

Comparative politics : nations and theories in a changing world /
Lawrence C. Mayer, John H. Burnett, Suzanne Ogden. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-13-373325-4

I. Comparative government. I. Burnett, John H. II. Ogden,
Suzanne. III. Title.

JF51.M44235 1996

320.3—dc20

95-34433

CIP

***For Judy
and for Gabrielle, Arthur, Scotty, Joshua, and Etta***

Acquisitions editor: Michael Bickerstaff

Editorial assistant: Anita Castro

Editorial/production supervision

and interior design: Darrin Kiessling

Copy editor: Sherry Babbitt

Cover director: Jane Conte

Buyer: Bob Anderson



© 1996, 1993 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Simon & Schuster/A Viacom Company

Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

All rights reserved. No part of this book may
be reproduced, in any form or by any means,
without written permission from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-373325-4

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*

Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*

Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*

Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*

Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*

Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*

Simon & Schuster Asia Pte, Ltd., *Singapore*

Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

Preface

Faced with the plethora of new and established textbooks for a course called "Comparative Politics," the prospective author of an addition to this literature is faced with the formidable task of justifying the book. The mere claim that it is the most up-to-date contribution is inadequate justification, although being up-to-date is a considerable accomplishment in context of the rapid changes that constitute a theme of this book. A new book will quickly lose the glitter of being up-to-date. The unfolding of events soon overtakes that claim, and a more up-to-date book will soon be off the presses. Rather, the decision to write another textbook for an already crowded market should be based upon the intention to produce a work that is somehow unique in what it attempts to do.

It seems to us that a textbook should seek to carve out a distinctive place for itself, to go beyond the presentation of descriptive information about a series of governments, although the presentation of such information is needed. The contribution we hope to make with this volume is not only to present both theoretical and country studies, but to link the two kinds of material to provide coherent perspectives on the bewildering onslaught of changes that beset the world of politics.

Change itself is a vague theme, unless the content of that change is specified. Several patterns have emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s on which we focus in the second edition of this volume. The most predominant change in the world of this period is the widespread transformation from authoritarian to democratic political formats, which includes the collapse of the Soviet Empire. The collapse of that empire allowed the emergence of a second major pattern—the rise to

preeminence of the politics of ethnic or cultural defense, or the politics of irredentism. This phenomenon, which the present authors identified in 1977 as a growing force, has changed the face of cleavages in particular and politics in general in the democratic West as well as the less developed nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The consequent loss of a sense of community, or "nationhood," among many of the states of the world and the consequences of this explosion of the crisis of community for the structures and processes of nation-states are explored throughout the book. We have also continued to explore the growing importance of the technocracy throughout the world, manifested through such phenomena as the growth of public bureaucracy and corporatism, which lead to a convergence of the nature of political processes in much of the industrialized world, a convergence that may spread to the less industrialized systems as they advance their state of technology.

The very phenomenon of rapid and fundamental change both challenges and renders the task of finding patterns in that change more crucial than ever. It is through the discernment of such patterns that the events of the contemporary world acquire meaning. We work from the assumption that unless raw information about politics is incorporated in some theoretic framework, it is meaningless.

Yet, theory constructed independently of data degenerates into an exercise in metaphysics. Theory should be applied to actual political structures and events. We therefore present the theory chapters as the introduction to a section on a category of nations, and then make a serious effort to construct the

following country chapters to utilize and liberally refer to the theory chapters. The book is written without assuming that the student has any prior familiarity with either the theoretical literature or the politics and societies of the foreign systems that are covered. It is presented with the hope and expectation that students want more than information about other governments. A theoretical and explanatory perspective will allow the students both to enjoy the acquisition of this material and to retain it more effectively. Isolated data are quickly forgotten, while an understanding of structures, processes, and trends often stays with students after the course is over.

We wish to stress that we have written and organized this text to accommodate diverse perspectives on what comparative politics ought to encompass. Therefore, while we have striven for a measure of coherence among the diverse parts of this text, we have written and organized it so that each chapter can stand on its own, if desired. This will give instructors flexibility in the order and content of their courses. Some instructors may choose to skip the theoretically organized chapters (1, 2, 6, and 9) and move directly to the country chapters. The country chapters may be read in this way on their own. In particular, some instructors will undoubtedly feel that a consideration of the methodological issues raised in Chapter 1 does not belong in any undergraduate text. However, given the fact that modern comparative analysis is defined as a method, many instructors will think that the logic of comparison should be part of a core course in comparative politics. The feedback we have received takes both sides of this question. Hence, we feel that this unique contribution of our book should remain available to those who wish to use it.

The principal authors of this text, Lawrence C. Mayer and John H. Burnett, are grateful to Suzanne Ogden for the skill and professional manner with which she has con-

tributed and now updated the chapter on China. China is too important a system to ignore, and the book clearly would be less complete without it. The principal authors have made the remaining chapters a cooperative effort from the outset. It can be fairly said that we jointly stand behind each of the interpretations made and conclusions drawn throughout the work.

In this second edition, in addition to a new chapter on Latin America, every chapter was substantially rewritten and updated in an effort to keep the book abreast of the unfolding of events and to reconsider the conclusions and inferences we have drawn. While many changes are dealt with and incorporated into the text, the main conclusions and generalizations of the first edition have been, we feel, reinforced rather than undermined by subsequent world events.

We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this text for their serious, constructive analyses. We have carefully considered each of their suggestions and incorporated many of them into the manuscript. We are especially grateful to Gary Elbow of Texas Tech University, whose expertise on Latin America and guidance helped immeasurably in preparing the new chapter on that area, and to Mr. Kalu Kalu, III, also of Texas Tech University, who shared his expert knowledge on his native country of Nigeria. Naturally, we assume full responsibility for any errors of fact and judgment that remain.

The authors are grateful to Prentice Hall for the encouragement and faith in this project that made a second edition possible. We are especially grateful for the skillful assistance of Nicole Signoretti, who helped guide the effort through editorial changes, and to the new editor, Michael Bickerstaff.

Lawrence C. Mayer
John H. Burnett
Suzanne Ogden

Contents

Preface vii

Chapter 1 Introduction 1

The Logic of Comparative Analysis	3
The Position That Nations and Events Are Unique	7
The Plan of This Book: Theory and Country Studies	8
Conceptual Frameworks: Some Commonly Applicable Concepts	9
Requirements for Effective Government	10
The Sequential Resolution of Crises	13
The Political Culture	14
Decision-Making Structures and Postindustrial Society	20
A Classification of Political Systems	21
Conclusions	27
Notes	27

PART ONE MODERN DEMOCRACIES

Chapter 2 Industrial Democracies: Ideals and Reality 29

Conceptualizing Industrial Democracy	29
The Rise of Postmaterialist Cleavages and Party Conflict	36
The Cultural Requisites of Democracy	37
Segmented Societies and the Problem of Community	41
The Structure and Format of Democracy and the Problem of Power	46
Trends in Program and Principle Among Western Political Parties	61
The Administrative State and Democratic Theory: The Role of the Technocracy	71
Neocorporatism and the Dominance of the Technocrats	74
Conclusions: The Crisis of Democracies	76
Notes	79

Chapter 3 Government and Politics in Great Britain 82

Political History: The Image of Continuity	84
The Sociocultural Context of British Politics	93
The British Party System: Myth and Reality	100
Political Structures and Processes	110
Public Policy and Performance: The Future of the British System	127
Continuity and Tradition in a Changing World: The Role of Education	132
The Government in Disarray: Division over the Nature of Change	135
Notes	138

Chapter 4 Government and Politics in France: The End of French Exceptionalism 141

The Impact of the Past: France's Revolutionary Legacy	142
The Social, Economic, and Cultural Context of French Politics	150
The Constitutional Format: Parliamentary Democracy to Presidential Dominance	157
The Transformation of Party Politics in France	164
Interest Mediation in a Mass Society	169
Bureaucracy in the French Policy-Making Process: The Stalemate Society	172
Social Policy in France: Prospects for Adjustments to the Postindustrial Era	176
Conclusions: Stability and Change	177
Notes	178

Chapter 5 Germany: Emerging Superpower with a Troubled Past 181

The Impact of the Past: A Troubling Legacy	182
Engineering Political Culture: Cultural Change in Postwar Germany	188
The Constitutional Format of the Bonn Republic: The Engineering of Stability	198
Administration in German Politics	203
Parties and the Representation of Interests	204
Policies and Prospects in a New United Germany	209
Notes	213

PART TWO INDUSTRIAL AUTOCRACIES AND DICTATORSHIPS

Chapter 6 The Theory and Practice of Modern Dictatorships 216

Industrial Society	217
Autocracy or Dictatorship?	218
Totalitarian Dictatorship	219
Alternative Models	227
The Post-Communist Era	234
The Transition to Democracy	236
Conclusion: Change and Communist Systems	239
Notes	240

Chapter 7 Russia and the Former Soviet Union 242

Political History	245
Prerevolutionary Russia	246
Revolution	252

The Social and Cultural Context	257
Social Stratification	259
The Nationality Problem	259
The Political Party System	263
Government Structures	270
The Second Russian Revolution	279
Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict	289
The Question of Timing	290
Conclusion: A Look Back and Ahead	291
Notes	294

Chapter 8 The Nature of Political Development in the People's Republic of China 296

Political Culture and History: The Sociocultural Context of China's Policies and Institutions	296
Rebellion and Authoritarianism	296
Chinese Communist Party Regime Not Totalitarian	298
Resistance to Policies	298
Respect for Education	299
Xenophobia	300
A Secular World View	302
Lack of Institutionalized Channels for Change	302
Social Stratification	303
Political Structure	307
Interaction of Chinese Culture with Socialist Ideology	310
Secrecy	311
The Legal System	312
Socialist Democracy	314
Notes	317

PART THREE POLITICS IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Chapter 9 The Third World and Political Development 321

Conceptualizing Development: Economic, Social, and Political Dimensions	322
Political Development and Democratization	327
Explaining Underdevelopment: Leninism and Dependency	329
Alternative Explanations of Underdevelopment	336
Praetorianism and Modernization	344
Kinship Relationships and Clientelism in New States	345
Instability and Violence as Products of Rapid Change	347
Conclusion: The Distortion of Western Models in Third World Settings	349
Notes	353

Chapter 10 Nigeria: Tribalism and Cultural Diversity 356

The Roots of Nigerian Regionalism and the Heritage of Its Colonial Past	358
From Colony to Nation	362
The Cultural Basis of Nigerian Politics	363
The Nigerian Party System Through the 1964 Elections	365
Military Coup and Civil War	366
Postwar Nigeria and the Struggle for Civilian Rule	368
Praetorianism and the Factionalization of the Military	370
Political Institutions in Nigeria	371
Public Policy in Nigeria: Oil and Corruption	372
Conclusion: The Search for Elusive Democracy in a Segmented Society	374
Notes	378

Chapter 11 Modernization and Democratization in Latin America 379

The Historical Emergence of Modern Latin America	381
The Social and Cultural Context of Latin American Politics	385
Mexico: Managing a Stable, Institutionalized Revolution	390
Argentina: Praetorianism and Instability in a Developed Society	395
Brazil: The Struggling Colossus of the South	400
Conclusion: The Prospects for Democratization in Latin America	403
Notes	405

Chapter 12 Conclusions: Trends and Prospects in a Changing World 407

Modern Comparative Analysis: Fact or Fiction?	408
A World of Change	411
Technology and Convergence	415
Notes	418

Index 419

1

Introduction

"Books must follow sciences, and not sciences books."

Francis Bacon

Science is a concept that brings a positive image and a measure of legitimacy to an academic enterprise carrying that label. On the one hand, social scientists have long suffered a certain loss of respect because of the widespread perception that their work is not science. On the other hand, natural scientists are frequently regarded with a certain amount of awe because of the widespread identification of their efforts with science. Hence, in the 1950s many political scientists, along with other social scientists, began an effort to transform their field into one that enjoyed the many benefits of scientific respectability. Comparative politics, until that time always regarded as a subfield of political science, played a leading role in this effort.¹ In so doing, many of the leading scholars in comparative politics attempted to transform fundamentally their subfield into an integral part of "scientific" political science. This effort was only incompletely successful, and left the field of comparative politics internally divided and without a widely accepted sense of its own identity.

As any textbook that presumes to function as a core source for the field must do, this volume takes account of this internal disagreement. As such, it will present the materials

studied in comparative politics from more than one perspective. The basic disagreement among scholars of comparative politics is whether the field should be defined by its goal—to make political science scientifically respectable—or by its subject—nations other than the United States. These two perspectives are summarized in Table 1-1.

Scholars who take the former position emphasize the process of generalizing across national and cultural boundaries—the process of being comparative. They are less interested in given nations as such than in how patterns of political phenomena appear across nations. Scholars who take the latter position are more interested in investigating the arrangement of factors within a given nation. By emphasizing the uniqueness of each such arrangement, and by stressing that the meaning of any social or political phenomenon is affected by the national setting in which it occurs, this latter group of scholars in effect deny the feasibility of generalizing about such phenomena across national borders. One cannot generalize about labor-based parties, for instance, because the very nature of each such party is a product of the unique arrangement of historical, geographical, cultural, and technological factors that

TABLE 1-1 Two Perspectives on Comparative Politics

<i>The Traditional Perspective</i>	<i>The Explanatory Perspective</i>
Defines the field geographically as the study of foreign governments	Defines the field as a method of applying explanatory generalizations in a variety of national settings or of generalizing about the impact of the attributes of whole systems on such generalizations
Assumes that since political phenomena are unique, it is meaningless to generalize about them because they are inseparable from the pattern of other factors in that context	Assumes one can meaningfully generalize about political phenomena independently of their context
Purpose of political analysis is essentially descriptive. The scientific method is inappropriate for the study of human behavior	Purpose of political analysis is explanatory. The structure of scientific explanation applies to the study of politics with some modifications
Focuses attention on constitutionally designated structures of major Western powers	Focuses on contextual factors weakening boundaries between political science and other social sciences
Presents analyses on a country-by-country basis	Presents material topically, generalizing across national and cultural boundaries
Relies on impressionistic understanding of political phenomena	Seeks to gather sensory data to test propositions that could be falsified by such data

make up the context in which each occurs. The position of these scholars is that nations should be studied one at a time as a unique arrangement of phenomena.

Hence, the field of comparative politics is internally divided as to its very nature. Those scholars who seek to transform the field into one with scientific respectability stress the effort at generalizing across national and cultural boundaries as the core of what comparative politics has to contribute to political science. For them, the reason for the existence of comparative politics is its role in developing cross-nationally valid explanations of political phenomena. The second group stresses the in-depth description and impressionistic understanding of various nations considered one at a time. This group rejects the explanatory purpose of comparative politics as unfeasible at this time. Moreover, it argues that students of comparative politics are so lacking in the basic information about the structures and processes of foreign govern-

ments that any attempt to speak theoretically about patterns in such countries would be meaningless. One must know how these different governments operate before generalizing about them. Hence, even if the development of cross-nationally valid explanatory theory is ultimately feasible, the acquisition of basic information about other countries must precede this lofty goal at the undergraduate level.

This textbook, in attempting to present the field of comparative politics in its diverse aspects accurately, will alternate between the comparative, generalizing, and theoretical material on the one hand and the country-by-country description of political phenomena on the other. The combination of these two approaches between the covers of the same book affords the authors the opportunity to bridge in some small measure the gap between what has heretofore been two distinct enterprises. Hence, the country studies will note the relevance of material in the theory

chapters and the theory chapters will make liberal references to data in the country chapters. Theory, after all, should be about data, and data become meaningless unless incorporated into some kind of theoretic framework.

Despite this attempt to present and in some measure accommodate both of these different and in some respects incompatible views of comparative politics, the authors are sympathetic to the presumption that goals of generalizing across nations and explaining political phenomena are both feasible and desirable. In this view, and for the purposes of this text, the very definition of comparative politics is the construction of such cross-nationally applicable generalizations. When these generalizations logically imply facts or events, these facts or events are “explained.” By this definition, explanatory generalizations may draw data from any relevant setting, and the United States is thus no longer off-limits to students of comparative politics. Studies drawn from single countries or geographic regions may be part of the enterprise of comparative political analysis if they are framed in such theoretic terms that their findings are potentially applicable to diverse national or cultural settings. Hence, the country or regional studies presented in this volume, while hopefully meeting the criteria of those who prefer a country-by-country perspective, are not necessarily inconsistent with a comparative perspective.

In seeking to support the explanatory rather than merely descriptive purpose of political science to which lip service has been widely given in the post-World War II era, comparative politics has become the only subfield of political science that defines itself methodologically rather than by the subject matter studied. Supporters of this view argue that comparative political analysis is a method, one that plays an invaluable role in the enterprise of building scientifically re-

spectable explanatory theory of political phenomena. It is important to understand the logic of this argument in order to understand the underlying purpose of much of what goes in comparative politics.

THE LOGIC OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The argument presented here is that comparative analysis is one of three methods used to overcome the overriding problem in formulating scientific explanations in social science research: the fact that social and political phenomena are the product of more factors than can be analyzed in any given study.² For example, if one wanted a complete explanation of the prevalence of political violence in a particular setting, one would have to account not only for the impact of such factors as all the relevant aspects of the history, culture, social and political structures, demography, and geography, but also for the behaviors and interactions of every significant participant in the events to be explained. Such a task would be beyond the life's work of any scholar. Hence, in social science, only some of the potential causal factors are analyzed, and all explanations are incomplete, while in the natural or physical sciences, explanations are more nearly complete.

However, the structure of any scientifically respectable explanation is the same regardless of the subject. The phenomenon to be explained is shown to be a particular case of a general statement of a relationship between concepts or categories of phenomena. For example, assume the fact to be explained is the Labour Party vote of an Indian émigré in Great Britain, a person whose socioeconomic status is clearly lower class. One may “understand” such a vote as a particular case of the proposition that lower-class members of frequently oppressed ethnic or racial minorities

tend to vote for parties of the left. Since this individual is such a minority in this context, and since the Labour Party is the viable alternative on the political left, the case is scientifically “explained” by this general proposition. The individual case can be logically derived from the general proposition such that if the proposition were true, this case is what one should logically find in these circumstances. Such an explanatory proposition gives us the basis to predict the behavior of other cases not yet observed. Given the truth of the foregoing proposition, for example, it would be logical to expect that lower-class Hispanics and blacks in the United States would vote for the Democratic Party.

Implicitly, a proposition such as this infers causation. *Inference* is the mental process of moving from what is directly observed to a conclusion with some interpretation. The inference in this case is that there is something about the essential properties of being an oppressed minority and of voting for a party of the left such that the former properties cause the latter. In this way, the construction of explanatory theory allows us to draw inferences from the necessarily limited body of directly observed phenomena to an infinite class of expectations in given circumstances.

The ability to predict based on an explanation is one way of distinguishing an explanation that is scientific from one that is spurious, or not due to actual causation. An explanation that generates precise predictions is testable. We tentatively accept an explanation to the extent that predictions logically generated from it conform to observed reality. We can never prove a proposition or theory true because, since scientific theories refer to an infinite future, we can never view all the relevant evidence.³ We can, however, set up the criteria for finding any proposition or theory false on the basis of not finding the phenomena that one expected to be logically generated from the theory. Thus, the biblical

account of creation, apart from any judgment about its ultimate truth, is not generally regarded by scholars as scientific because as a one-shot event, it does not logically generate any predictions about future findings; therefore, in principle it is not susceptible to falsification. There are no conceivable data to refute it.

The lack of correspondence between this classic model of scientific explanation and what is possible in the study of political phenomena should be immediately apparent. Political science is devoid of any general, theoretic propositions from which one can deduce the necessary occurrence of a reasonably significant and hence complex political event. The reason for this, as noted, is that such events or behaviors are the product of far more factors than could reasonably be encompassed in any given proposition or study. The action of even a single individual is the product of any number and combination of the almost infinite number and variety of experiences and stimuli in that person’s life. The causes of events that are the product of the interaction of many individuals are increased exponentially.

Hence, any proposition about the causes of political behavior or events can only isolate some of the major causes of those events and would only be necessarily true assuming all other relevant but unanalyzed factors cancel one another out. In other words, the claims to truth in political science are true, other things being equal. Thus, the explanations of complex political phenomena that political science can offer are always incomplete, and the predictions that are generated from such explanations are what we call *probabilistic*. This means that they predict what will probably occur in certain circumstances (with a probability significantly greater than random chance) rather than what must necessarily occur in those circumstances. The essential structure of explanation remains the same as

in the classic model: one deduces the prediction of the phenomenon to be explained from the general proposition. It is with regard to the accuracy of the prediction and the completeness of the explanation that political science differs from the natural sciences and the classic model of explanation.⁴

The incompleteness of our explanations is due to the aforementioned unavoidable presence of unanalyzed factors that affect the outcomes we wish to explain. Cases often do not conform to the predictions or expectations derived from an explanatory principle due to the influence of such unanalyzed variables. The next step in the analysis is to find patterns in these deviant cases and thereby to isolate the impact of one or more previously unanalyzed variable.

For example, one may find that there is a relationship between education and some kinds of political attitudes, such as a disposition toward tolerance of people with whom one disagrees. One may, however, find that among the educated people who show intolerance, contrary to the expectation such people are more tolerant, another trait may be common among these deviant cases and in fact may produce this deviance. For example, the active practice of a certain religion may produce intolerance even among the educated. One would then say that education produces tolerance in the presence of some religious orientations but not in the presence of others. By taking account of religion, we have made the explanation at once more complex and more accurate.

This difference between explanations in the natural sciences and in the social or behavioral sciences is reflected in the ability of the explanations in those respective classes of academic enterprise to generate predictions. Since the phenomena in the natural sciences can be isolated from other variables, predictions in those enterprises can be made *deterministically*. That is, if the explanatory theory

is presumed true, scientists can say in these circumstances that certain result *must* follow. In the social sciences, however, scholars can only predict with a known probability of being wrong that, given the truth of their theory, certain results are more likely to appear than not. These are called probabilistic predictions. We can measure the explanatory power of our theories by the extent to which we increase the probability of a correct prediction over a random guess. Explanations are sometimes proposed for complex events that provide an answer as to why the event occurred but that do not increase one's power to predict other, not yet encountered instances of that kind of event. For example, the Nazis in Weimar Germany explained the economic and political troubles of their society in terms of too much Jewish influence. Yet that explanation would not increase one's ability to predict similar difficulties in other societies with a certain percentage of Jews in their population or elites. While the explanation was psychologically satisfying to Germans and thereby had *explanatory appeal*, it had no *explanatory power*.

Thus, we return to the assertion made at the beginning of this section that the task of accounting for the impact of previously unanalyzed variables is one of the most crucial contributions to the overall goal of building a body of explanatory theory in political science. Three basic research methods are utilized in this task. One is experimental research. Although the closest of the three to the natural science model, experimental research, involving as it does the deliberate application of the independent variable to an experimental group and the withholding of this variable from a control group, frequently raises serious questions of feasibility and/or practicality for political research. The second method, which is perhaps the most widely utilized by modern political science, is the use of statistics, especially inferential statistics. In-

ferential statistics may be viewed as a system for estimating the probability of error when drawing inferences about parameters (the attributes of the population to which one is referring) from the attributes of an observed sample or when inferring causation from an observed relationship among two or more variables. In social science, one almost always works from a sample of an infinite universe, a universe that the researcher never directly observes. Any given sample, randomly drawn, may be more or less representative of the universe as a whole. This notion of *sampling error* refers to the reality that the given samples will be more or less representative of the whole universe and does not imply mistake. Among the sources of error in causal inferences from a statistical relationship is the fact that the researcher is here again working from a sample and the unavoidable presence of unanalyzed variables.

Comparative analysis may be viewed as the third method for accounting for the unanalyzed variables that make the "other things being equal" qualifier an inescapable part of explanatory propositions in social research. Comparative analysis as a method in this sense may be defined as the construction of explanatory generalizations that are logically applicable to different national and hence different cultural settings. Comparative analysis becomes the appropriate method when the characteristics of the political systems themselves, if not the dependent or independent variables, are the previously unanalyzed factors for which one wants to account. Comparative analysis becomes the appropriate method for generalizing about political or social systems as whole units and thereby for taking account of the attributes of the context in which political behaviors and events occur. Among such contextual factors are a nation's historical experiences, geographical setting, social structure, and culture. These are factors for which the proper-

noun name of the system may constitute an adjective, such as the French attitude toward authority, the British insular geographical setting, or the Belgian cultural segmentation. Such factors may be presumed to have an impact on the response of individuals to any particular stimulus or experience such that an individual in one setting may react differently to a particular experience than an individual in another setting. Comparative analysis seeks to generalize about the impact of the settings or contexts in which political behavior and events occur.

For example, formal religious observance tends to promote a conservative orientation, and women up until recently have tended to be more religious; hence women have tended to be more conservative than men. Therefore, it was possible to offer the following causal model: gender \rightarrow religiosity \rightarrow political orientation. However, these relationships hold true in some nations and not in others. Specifically, the causal model seems to apply in those nations with a relatively higher degree of religiosity and not in those nations that are highly secularized. Among the latter group of nations, in England, for example, with only 2.5 percent of the population going to church at least once a month, the gender difference in religiosity disappears, as of course does the gender-based difference in political orientation. It will not do, however, to say that women are more conservative than men except in England, because England, being a proper noun, refers to a unique entity. Since the term *England* does not logically imply anything about any other nation, the explanation would stop at that point. Yet, explanatory principles must refer to infinite classes of cases to enable one to extrapolate from direct observation to prediction and thus to move beyond mere description. In the preceding example, therefore, one must be able to say what there is about England that causes it to be an exception to

the principle or to generalize about the factors in the English context that makes that system an exception to the foregoing rule. In the words of Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, one must translate the proper-noun names of systems into common-noun variables.⁵ In our example, this would mean translating the term *England* into the concept of highly secularized nations. This task may be viewed as another way of defining the essence of the comparative method.

In this way, knowledge is actually advanced when a proposition that had held true in some contexts does not hold true in other contexts. When the proposition is falsified in a particular context, the impact of that context can now be assessed and added to a now increasingly complex theory. Thus, the comparative method seeks to build knowledge incrementally over time and numerous studies.

It can be seen from the foregoing that the comparative method is the appropriate method to use when a generalization appears to hold true in some settings but not in others. Comparison in such cases enables one to formulate a principle that delineates the distinction between the two classes of settings. Yet, one cannot even find out whether contextual factors are relevant in determining whether a generalization will hold true unless one first applies a generalization cross-nationally or cross-culturally. In this way, political analysis may in the end be inescapably comparative, and comparative analysis defined as a method may be indistinguishable from the attempt to construct political explanations.

This becomes obvious when the comparative method is viewed more broadly as the process of generalizing across contexts, whether they be time, space within a nation, or national boundaries. One may compare behavior within a given nation at different points in time, thus holding factors other than those associated with the modernization

process more or less constant. One also may compare regions within a nation. Thus, the comparative method is appropriate for generalizing among the states in the United States. In this sense and in the sense that explanation is, as we have seen, inherently a generalizing activity, comparative analysis may be synonymous with the scientific study of politics. The critics of the comparative method are not so much addressing the appropriateness of the method for the scientific study of politics as they are generally skeptical about the potential usefulness of the scientific study of politics itself.

While the comparative method may be understood in the broad sense of cross-contextual generalization, the field of comparative politics for the purposes of this text encompasses the building of cross-national explanatory generalizations about political phenomena as well as the identification and delineation of data about various nations and social systems that are cross-nationally applicable and hence can contribute to the aforementioned theory-building enterprise. In other words, this text views the discipline of comparative politics as being concerned with generalizing about different types of nation-states and their settings.

THE POSITION THAT NATIONS AND EVENTS ARE UNIQUE

We have acknowledged that the logic of the foregoing arguments for a comparative orientation and the assumption that one may meaningfully generalize across national and cultural lines is not accepted by all scholars in our discipline. In fact, one school of thought argues that nations and events constitute a unique pattern of factors that can never be duplicated and that constitute the very essence of these nations and events. Hence, there can never be another France with its

unique combination of historical, cultural, geographical, and demographic factors, not to mention the unique personalities that made up its unique history. Nor could there ever be another French Revolution occurring as it did at a particular point in history with a particular state of technology and particular persons present to influence its course.

Hence, it can never be meaningful, according to the extreme position of this school, to attempt to generalize about such unique phenomena. The meaning of phenomena is culturally specific, derived from the pattern of all of the contextual factors that comprise a given system. A social democratic party in Germany will thus necessarily connote something quite distinct from a social democratic party in Sweden or Great Britain. Therefore, one cannot meaningfully generalize about such parties across national or cultural boundaries.

Of course, scholars do not generally take extreme positions. The distinction between those who are optimistic about the possibilities of meaningfully generalizing across systems and those who, emphasizing the unique nature of such systems, are rather more pessimistic about the possibilities of such comparison is a difference of degree. Yet, there are scholars of this latter school who do tend to teach their courses and conduct their research on a country-by-country basis with little real attempt at comparison.⁶ Many other scholars who are in principle sympathetic to the concept of the comparative method are skeptical of its utility for specific instances of teaching and research. The claimed revolution that changed comparative politics from an essentially descriptive enterprise to a generalizing and explanatory one is clearly a very incomplete revolution.⁷

The claim that persons and political events are unique is undeniable; yet, admission of that fact does not necessarily deny the

possibility of meaningfully generalizing about them. The process of generalization and comparison in fact presumes that the objects of the comparison are in most respects unique. The process implies an inquiry into what common patterns may be found among objects that are in other respects different. A substantial body of research into the nature and causes of violence and revolution does denote a number of factors that such events have in common, despite the aforementioned uniqueness of the French and other revolutions. Moreover, the admission that political phenomena are affected by and thus cannot be studied in isolation from the context in which they occur does not mean that cross-contextual generalizations are futile. As observed, the essence of the comparative method involves generalizing about such contexts and their impact.

THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK: THEORY AND COUNTRY STUDIES

The authors of this text appreciate the value of the comparative method in building a body of increasingly complete explanatory theory as outlined above. Yet, we are also aware of the limits to what has been and can be achieved by this enterprise. In addition, we believe that there is merit in the skepticism many teachers express about attempting to teach cross-national theory to students who lack basic information and understanding about the structures and processes of types of political systems other than their own. It may be difficult to generalize about the preconditions of successful parliamentary democracy, for example, if students know little or nothing about how that type of system operates in general and in its numerous variations.

Thus, while we remain optimistic about